

“Viva Bacco e viva Amore”: Bacchic Imagery in the Renaissance

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## ABSTRACT

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The fifteenth century in Italy is often studied for its revival of antiquity, but looking at this revival through the particular lens of Bacchus and his band of ecstatic followers reveals a unique view of the complex texture of the intellectual, cultural, and artistic fabric of the Renaissance. Although Bacchus, as a god of wine and revelry, was not an obvious role model for Renaissance patrons, he appeared nonetheless in drawings, paintings, engravings, plaquettes, and sculpture, and in marriage parades, banquet entertainments, plays, and songs. This dissertation examines how and why such a god and his wild cohort could acquire such a broad appeal and what they signified to their contemporary audiences. Stepping off from Aby Warburg’s insight that emotionality is a third vector of historical measurement in addition to form and content, we first explore what it was in ancient Bacchic art that appealed to Renaissance artists striving to reinvigorate their work, finding that they were drawn to its expressive realism, shown with vigorous movement and figural variety, as well as its portrayal of lassitude and voluptuous pleasure. We look also at shifts in ideas about invention, imagination, composition, and imitation, and their impact on how artists viewed this antique inheritance and found inspiration in the Bacchic figures. Philosophical concepts, especially Neoplatonic ideas of inspiration and Aristotelian notions of Necessity, are considered for their impact on the meanings gleaned from Bacchic imagery.

Each member of the Bacchic retinue is then explored to determine how his or her gestural vocabulary was employed, and what meanings he or she was made to bear in new settings. The frenzied maenad, with her hints of madness and untamed eroticism, was transformed into

grieving Mary Magdalenes, heroic Judiths, and dancing Salomes, or was prettified into *all'antica* serving girls, nymphs, and personifications. The discovery of a sleeping Ariadne, unveiled by a satyr, contributed to one of the more popular motifs of the Renaissance, which even in new contexts retained associations with the epiphany and resurrection experienced by Ariadne when she was rescued by Bacchus. Revived epithalamic traditions employed the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne as a metaphor for both the taming forces of marriage and the bittersweet aura of youth and love. The frolicking, ithyphallic satyr embodied visions not only of a lost Arcadia, but also of the balancing forces of nature that require sexuality to sustain life. Tales of Silenus' wisdom inflected Renaissance depictions of the dissipated old satyr with contemporary notions of the morosoph, or wise fool. And as a symbol of the cosmos, Pan became the leader of a revived pastoral mode, a noble prince for a restored Golden Age.

As a fecund, frenzied god, Bacchus came to embody the newly awakened Neoplatonic notion of divine *furor*: the inspiration that fueled all transcendent thought and creative imagination. At a moment when visual artists were striving to attain the status of their poetic counterparts, Bacchus epitomized the nature of artistic frenzy as a complement to the poet's Apollonian *furor*. The Bacchanalian paintings commissioned for Alfonso d'Este's Camerino d'Alabastro in Ferrara were a final flourish to this revival of Bacchus (before the archaeological and mythographical rigor of the mid-sixteenth century reduced him to a stereotype). The god's associations with love and fertility enhanced the duke's self-presentation as a magnanimous, liberal, and prolific ruler. The presentation of Epicurean delights signified a true understanding of an elevated *voluptas*, which saw the greatest good attained through the metaphor of sensual pleasures. Titian's paintings fully materialized the energy and pathos that first attracted the early Renaissance artists to Bacchic imagery.

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<sup>1</sup> Bober, "Appropriation Contexts: *Decor, Furor Bacchicus, Convivium*," in *Antiquity and Its Interpreters*, ed. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner and Rebekah Smick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 229-243; "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 223-239; and with Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, 2nd ed. (London: Harvey Miller, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> Among their many works are Barkan's *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Barolsky's *Infinite Jest: Wit and Humor in Italian Renaissance Art* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1978); Baxandall's *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Brown's *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); and Eisler's *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini: The Complete Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989).

Other research has further informed my study, including work by Stephen Campbell, Anthony Colantuono, Charles Dempsey, and Maria Ruvoldt.<sup>3</sup> Each presents a model for viewing works of art not as a text to be translated but as a palimpsest of allusions, references, echoes, memories, and hidden jests; they move beyond labeling figures to the interaction of the work with its audience, the completion of meaning in the mind of the viewer, and, to arrive at this, an attempt to seek out the knowledge of what could be known and what thoughts might have been triggered by a picture and its content as well as by its setting and patron.

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<sup>3</sup> By Stephen Campbell: “*Sic in amore furens*: Painting as Poetic Theory in the Early Renaissance,” *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 6 (1995): 145-169; “Giorgione’s *Tempest*, *Studiolo* Culture, and the Renaissance Lucretius,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 (2003): 299-333; “Mantegna’s Triumph: The Cultural Politics of Imitation ‘all’antica’ at the Court of Mantua 1490-1530,” in *Artists at Court: Image-Making and Identity 1300-1550*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, distributed by University of Chicago Press, 2004), 91-105; *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d’Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). By Anthony Colantuono: *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation: Equicola’s Seasons of Desire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010) and related articles. By Charles Dempsey: *The Portrayal of Love: Botticelli’s Primavera and Humanist Culture at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). By Maria Ruvoldt: *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).



feel proud that their mother was able to pursue her intellectual goals and still be available for them. To my husband, Andy, no words can sufficiently convey my appreciation and love. We spent five years studying side-by-side in our carrels in Avery library. Since then he has become a lawyer, while I have remained “still finishing my dissertation.” But he never gave up hope in me, or let me wallow (too long) in self-doubt or recrimination, but has helped me to stand up and hold on to the finish.

For my children

Una

Kate

&

Cormac

*who have patiently awaited the birth of their little brother Bacchus*

and for Andy

*always and forever*

## PROLOGUE

*[Y]ou wonder what all this is about—suspect me, possibly, of being only too fresh from the company of Bacchus. Perhaps the explanation, involving a comparison of myself with Gods, will only more convince you of my exalted or my drunken mood; it is, that ordinary people are affected by literary novelties (my own productions, for instance) much as the Indians were by that experience. They have an idea that literary satyr-dances, absurdities, pure farce, are to be expected from me, and, however they reach their conception of me, they incline to one of two attitudes. Some of them avoid my readings altogether, seeing no reason for climbing down from their elephants and paying attention to revelling women and skipping satyrs; others come with their preconceived idea, and when they find that the thyrsus-head has a steel point under it, they are too much startled by the surprise to venture approval. I confidently promise them, however, that if they will attend the rite repeatedly now as in days of yore, if my old boon-companions will call to mind the revels that once we shared, not be too shy of satyrs and Silenuses, and drink deep of the bowl I bring, the frenzy shall take hold upon them too, till their evoes vie with mine.*

*Gentlemen, I have been pointing Momus-like at my own foibles; I need not trouble you with the application; you can make out the resemblance for yourselves. But if you find me babbling, you know now what has loosed my tongue; and if there is shrewdness in any of my words, then to Silenus be the thanks.<sup>4</sup>*

— Lucian, *Dionysus*

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<sup>4</sup> Lucian, *Dionysus* V and VIII, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, vol. III (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1905), 254-255, 256.

## PREFACE

*An intoxicated god, a mad god! Truly an idea which demands our deepest thought.*  
— Walter F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*<sup>5</sup>

From ancient literary sources, Renaissance readers learned of the basic mythology of Bacchus, which told of an adventurous, boisterous, surprising, and mysterious young god who traveled the world, introduced his miracle of the vine, and inseminated through often violent madness the worship of his cult.<sup>6</sup> Ovid offered a succinct description of the god and his cult at the opening of Book IV of the *Metamorphoses*:

...[Y]ou are blessed with endless youth: you are  
eternally a boy; high heaven's star—  
the handsomest of all; your face is like  
a virgin's when you don't display your horns.  
You've won the Orient; its farthest bounds  
are yours, where sun-scorched India is bathed  
by Ganges. You, the god men venerate,  
killed sacrilegious Pentheus and Lycurgus,  
the one who plied the two-edged battle-ax;  
it's you who seized the Tuscans—you who cast  
their bodies overboard. Your chariot  
rolls heavily across the mountaintops;

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<sup>5</sup> Trans. Robert B. Palmer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), 50.

<sup>6</sup> Several of the main textual sources available in the fifteenth century included Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Ars Amatoria*, *Heroides*, and *Fasti*, the *Homeric* and the *Orphic Hymns* (in manuscripts recorded in a list sent by Aurispa to Florence in 1424), Catullus' *Carmina* (known at least from the thirteenth century, and owned by Petrarch, Salutati, and Poliziano), Pausanias' *Descriptio Graeciae*, Euripides' *Bacchae* (in a manuscript found by Filelfo), Philostratus the Elder's *Imagines*, and Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* (known at least since 1425). See Remigio Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV*, ed. Eugenio Garin, reprint of vol. 1 (1905) and vol. 2 (1914) (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1967); Robert R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries, from the Carolingian Age to the End of the Renaissance*, reprint (New York: Harper Torchbooks, Harper and Row Publishers, 1964). The modern literature on Dionysus/Bacchus is extensive, including: Martin P. Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (New York: Arno Press, 1975); C. Kerényi, *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life*, trans. R. Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951); Robert Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1996); and Park McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos: Method in the Study of a God* (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1978).

it's drawn by lynxes, and it has bright reins.  
 Bacchants and satyrs follow in your wake,  
 together with Silenus: that old man  
 is drunk; he staggers, leaning on his staff—  
 or hardly keeps his seat upon the back  
 of the bent ass he rides. And where you pass,  
 young men and women chant and clamor—glad.  
 Palms beat the tambourines, bronze cymbals clash,  
 long flutes of perforated boxwood add  
 their strident music. Theban women cry:  
 'Be with us now, o merciful and mild!'  
 observing, as the priest had asked, your rites.<sup>7</sup>

Bacchus was the name of the god in Roman times, descended from Dionysus of the Greek pantheon and roughly equated with the Italian Liber Pater. In Greek tales, he was the offspring of one of Zeus' many adulterous assignations, conceived by Semele, a daughter of King Cadmus of Thebes and sister to Ino, Agave (the mother of Pentheus), and Autonoë (the mother of Actaeon). The pregnant Semele, lured into a death-trap by a jealous Hera, asked her lover to reveal himself to her in all his divine glory. The flash of lightning that constituted Zeus' true essence instantly incinerated her, but the god was able to retrieve the fetus from her womb (having been protected by spontaneously erupting ivy tendrils), which he then sewed into his thigh for the remaining gestation. Upon the child's birth, Zeus placed the infant with Ino, but the unsatisfied Hera made her mad, whereupon she leapt into the sea and became the sea-goddess Leucothea. Zeus then shepherded the babe to Mount Nysa, where the local nymphs reared him

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<sup>7</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV.17-32, verse trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1993), 109-110; prose trans. Frank Justus Miller, rev. G. P. Goold, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 178-180: "tibi enim inconsumpta iuventa est, / tu puer aeternus, tu formosissimus alto / conspiceris caelo; tibi, cum sine cornibus adstas, / virgineum caput est; Oriens tibi victus, adusque / decolor extremo qua tinguitur India Gange. / Penthea tu, venerande, bipenniferumque Lycurgum / sacrilegos mactas, Tyrrhenaque mittis in aequor / corpora, tu biiugum pictis insignia frenis / colla premis lyncum. bacchae satyrique sequuntur, / quique sensex ferula titubantis ebrius artus/ sustinet et pando non fortiter haeret asello. / quacumque ingrederis, clamor iuvenalis et una / femineae voces impulsaque tympana palmis / concavaque aera sonant longoque foramine buxus. / 'Placatus mitisque' rogant Ismenides 'adsis,' / iussaue sacra colunt."

in the shelter of their grotto.<sup>8</sup> Tutored by the elderly satyr Silenus, the young god grew to attract many worshippers through his gifts of ecstasy and the cultivation of the vine. With the nymphs-turned-Bacchae, and other maenads, satyrs, fauns, and Silenus at his side in a divinely-induced state of enthusiastic frenzy, Dionysus embarked on a campaign to spread his gifts of wine and inspiration and to convince doubters of his divinity.<sup>9</sup>

Bacchus' adventures included being kidnapped by pirates (whom he turned into dolphins); granting the golden touch to King Midas; journeying to the Underworld to transport his mother to Olympus; as well as boldly and easily conquering India.<sup>10</sup> In Thebes, his aunt Agave and cousin Pentheus were punished for their skepticism, as told in Euripides' *Bacchae*: the god drove all the women into the mountains in a mad frenzy, and as Pentheus attempted to snoop on their nighttime Bacchanalia he was caught up by his own mother and torn to pieces, in

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<sup>8</sup> The name of the land of his upbringing, Nysa, is part of the name of Dionysus (*Dio-nysos*), which may mean "the divine Nysos" or "the Nysos of Zeus." See Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 61. Some accounts report that Hermes was also entrusted with the child and that it was he who brought the infant, disguised as a goat, to Nysa, as in Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Library (Bibliotheca)* III.4.3, a Greek compendium of mythology traditionally given to Apollodorus of Alexandria but now thought to be second century A.D.

<sup>9</sup> The terms satyr and faun were interchangeable in Roman lore (and indistinguishable in the Renaissance); the classical Greek type of satyr—a male with human legs and horse's tail and ears—gradually morphed into the more typical representation of a male with goat's legs, horns, and ears (first appearing in the fourth century B.C.). The more raucous nature of the Greek satyr of mythology was transposed onto the more pastoral Italian Faunus, a god of the groves and of agriculture, who was himself visualized with the haunches and horns of a goat, akin to the representations of the Arcadian Pan. Roman art sometimes depicted among the typical satyrs a male "faun" with human legs and a tiny goat tail and pointed ears, which distinguish him from a true man. All these types were generalized as flocks of fauns, satyrs, pans, or panisks (young pans) in Latin literature and mythology. We will label all these Bacchic revelers as satyrs, unless they are otherwise specified as the individual god Pan. We will refer to the fully human type of male worshipper as a Bacchant, said by some to be a son of a satyr and nymph.

<sup>10</sup> The seventh *Homeric Hymn* tells the tale of the Tyrrhenian pirates and their transformation into dolphins, as does Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III.582-691 (as a tale told by Bacchus, disguised as a young votary of the rites, to Pentheus). This episode is also included in Philostratus, *Imagines* I.19. The story of Midas is told in *Metamorphoses* XI.80-146. Hyginus (*Fabulae* 251), Diodorus Siculus (*Library of History* IV.25.4), and Pausanias (*Description of Greece* II.37.5) tell of the god's descent to Hades. His conquest of India is recounted at length in the late antique *Dionysiaca* of Nonnos and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* IV.20, Pliny's *Natural History* IV.39, Seneca's *Oedipus* 467, and many others, some including Hercules on his campaign.

an act of *sparagmos*.<sup>11</sup> Far from being merely a god of carefree pleasure, his violence and military might shared the nature of Ares/Mars, and he was called the first *triumphator*.<sup>12</sup> But this was a god also known for his many loves, and who was linked with Venus, Ceres, and Ariadne. He encountered the latter, a daughter of King Minos of Crete, abandoned upon the island of Naxos by her beloved, the hero Theseus. The maiden's frenzied grief, exhausted slumber, and her awakening upon the arrival of Bacchus and his raucous followers are described by the ancient poets.<sup>13</sup> Bacchus married the girl and ensured her immortality by setting her garland or crown into the heavens as the constellation Corona. As a reflection of this varied and wide-ranging mythology, it was said of Bacchus that he could bring bliss and freedom from cares but, as easily, madness and violence. His retribution to those who refused his worship was swift and brutal. But his generosity and indulgence of those who followed him was absolute and wonderful.

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<sup>11</sup> For fifteenth-century manuscripts of Euripides, see Agostino Pertusi, "La scoperta di Euripide nel Primo Umanesimo," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 3 (1960): 101-152; idem, "Il ritorno alle fonti del teatro greco classico: Euripide nell'umanesimo e nel Rinascimento," *Byzantion* 33 (1963): 391-426. The Medici family were in possession of at least one manuscript that included the *Bacchae* (called "Pentheus") among other Euripides texts recorded in an inventory made by Fabio Vigili of the Medici holdings in Rome after 1510 from texts restituted to the family from San Marco and seen there previously in inventories from 1495 (Pertusi, "La scoperta di Euripide," 117-119). The story of Pentheus is also recounted in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III.511-733.

<sup>12</sup> Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 197; n. 52-53 list several ancient sources that describe Dionysus as a war god: Euripides, *Bacchae* 302; Plutarch, *Vitae Parallelae Demetrius* 2; Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.19.1; Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* IV.5.2; Arrian, *Anabasis* VI.28.2; Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* I.10.8; and Tertullian, *De Corona* VII.12.

<sup>13</sup> The versions of the myth by Ovid, Philostratus, and Catullus were best known in the Renaissance.

## INTRODUCTION

*Wine is, therefore, something proper and natural to man alone, like language. What praise would really be worthy of such a good? O wine, author of delight, master of joys, companion of happy times, solace in adversity! You are ever the chief of banquets, leader and guide of nuptials, arbiter of peace, concord, and friendship, father of sweetest sleep, restorer of strength in tired bodies (as your cultivator, Homer, says), liberator from anxiety and cares. Finally, you change us from weaklings into strong men, from craven into brave ones, from tongue-tied mutes into orators. We greet you, therefore, sure and constant delight of every age, of each sex.*

— Lorenzo Valla, *On Pleasure*<sup>1</sup>

The fifteenth century in Italy witnessed the reawakening of the ancient god of wine. One among many pagan deities brought back to life, Bacchus was exceptional for his frequent lack of godly decorum and grandeur. As a god of intoxication and revelry, lust and pleasure, sexuality and fecundity, he was not a natural fit for a Christian culture intolerant of open sensuality. But thrive he did, along with his rowdy cohort of maenads and satyrs, appearing in Renaissance drawings, engravings, reliefs, sculptures, paintings, poetry, and ephemeral decorations. The enthusiasm for Bacchic imagery produced some of the most well-known paintings of the period: Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* and Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* and *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, created for Alfonso d'Este's Camerino d'Alabastro in Ferrara in the first quarter of the

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<sup>1</sup> Lorenzo Valla, *De voluptate (On Pleasure, 1431)* I.xxiv.3-4: "Vinum igitur proprium ac naturale hominum est sicut sermo. Quod bonum qua digna satis prosequare laude? [4] O parens leticie vinum! O gaudiorum magister, felicitatis comes, adversi solatium! Tu preses semper es conviviorum, tu dux ac rector nuptiarum; tu pacis, concordie, amicicie arbiter, tu dulcissimi somni pater, tu virium in defessis corporibus, ut cultor tuus Homerus ait, reparatio, tu solitudinis curarumque laxatio. Tu denique reddis nos de imbellibus fortes, de timidis audaces, de infantibus eloquentes. Salvete ergo omnis etatis, omnis sexus certe assidueque deliciae" (trans. Maristella de Panizza Lorch and A. Kent Hieatt [New York: Abaris, 1977], 106-107).



sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Like Valla's paean to wine glorifying the sweeping range of the god's gifts, these paintings were the culmination of an enlightened appreciation for the breadth of the powers of Bacchus.

There had been waves of recovery before—"renascences," as Erwin Panofsky calls them.<sup>3</sup> But there was something truly different about the rebirth that occurred in the fifteenth century, when the gods of love and sensuality came back to life once again.<sup>4</sup> In a world where, in theory at least, sex and excessive eating and drinking were despised, Bacchus and Ariadne paraded in elaborate *intermezzi* at lavish wedding banquets or across the interiors of courtly *palazzi*; drunken and aroused satyrs frolicked over manuscript pages or decorated desktops as bronze statuettes; dancing Salomes tossed back their heads like ecstatic maenads; and Michelangelo's large-scale statue of the god appeared inebriated and yet inspired. And Lorenzo de' Medici could write a song to Bacchus as a celebration of youth, love, joy, and beauty, exclaiming hopefully: "Viva Bacco e viva Amore!"

By looking at the fifteenth-century revival of antiquity through the lens of Bacchic art we are able to discover how this seemingly voluptuous and hedonistic imagery could make its way into Renaissance life. Bacchus, like the wine he represented, was a paradox, alternately gentle and raging, peace-loving and bellicose, softly feminine and heroically masculine, inspiring and

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<sup>2</sup> For the emergence of mythological art as a genre in the Renaissance, see Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Luba Freedman, *The Revival of the Olympian Gods in Renaissance Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Malcolm Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods: How Renaissance Artists Rediscovered the Pagan Gods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), chap. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and Its Place in Renaissance Humanism*, trans. Barbara F. Sessions, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 5.

maddening. Bacchus was the god of bodily sensation and, at the same time, of insensate frenzy. Such contrasts—between reason and emotion, reality and fantasy—captured the unique character of the fifteenth century itself. Artists, poets, and humanists all struggled with the conflicting demands to pursue both *ratio* and *fantasia*, as both were prized.<sup>5</sup> The revival of antiquity would reflect this dichotomy, such that Apollo could embody proportion, clarity, and calm, while Bacchus incarnated the other forces permeating Renaissance culture: the uncontrollable, the irrational, the ignoble, as well as the creative, emotional, and fantastic. Bacchus personified this culture of contradiction and *paragone*, a culture that fostered ferment and competition—between the art forms, between its artists, and between its contemporary genius and the *ingegno* of the past.

Early in the Quattrocento, Leonardo Bruni, humanist scholar and chancellor of Florence, upheld a traditional stoic view of civic virtue, railing against intemperance, pleasure, and lust.<sup>6</sup> Leon Battista Alberti likewise derided *amore venereo*, comparing *voluptas* to *virtus*, writing: “There madness, here reason; there shame, here praise; there vice, here honor; there cruelty, here gentleness.”<sup>7</sup> Even the father of Renaissance Neoplatonism, Marsilio Ficino, exhorted: “Stay away from these heavenly feasts, stay away, I say, you profane people, who are covered with earthly filth, who are completely enslaved to Bacchus and Priapus, and who trample the heavenly

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<sup>5</sup> Leon Battista Alberti’s *De Pictura* (*On Painting*, 1435-36) articulated the contrasting demands faced by artists for rational, technical learning on the one hand and for imagination and what we would call creativity on the other.

<sup>6</sup> In his *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae* (1424-1426), Bruni acknowledged Epicurus’ idea that virtue is itself a pleasure, but denied that any sensual pleasure could incur true *voluptas*. Paul Watson, “Virtù and Voluptas in Cassone Painting,” Ph.D. diss. (Yale University, 1970), 242-243; Alison Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> *Della famiglia* II: “Ivi furia, qui ragione; ivi biasimo, qui lodo; ivi vizio, qui onestà; ivi crudeltà, qui pietà” (as quoted by Watson, “Virtù and Voluptas,” 242).

gift of love in the dirt and mud, like swine.”<sup>8</sup> Such attitudes were commonplace in the fifteenth century—even among humanists—the outcome of a Christian society permeated by an institutional condemnation of sensual pleasures and lascivious desires.<sup>9</sup>

But some voices began to speak of an alternative way of viewing the world. Boccaccio defended even the amorous fables of pagan poets as worthy of being read, writing: “[T]hese ancient poets, despite not being Christians, were gifted with such prudence that no creation of human genius ever veiled in fiction more cleverly, nor adorned more beautifully in the splendor of words. This makes it clear that they were imbued with the great worldly wisdom their peevish detractors very frequently lack.”<sup>10</sup> There is much pleasure to be gained from those ancient myths, Boccaccio insisted, and claims of its risk are overrated:

This...is the sincere faith and eternal truth which is so deeply implanted in my heart, that by no influence of pagan antiquity nor any other power can it be torn out, or be cut off, or fall away. Sinner that I am, I am not by grace of Christ like young Cherea, in Terence, who by looking at a picture of Jove falling in a shower of gold from the roof to the lap of Danae, was inflamed to the desire of a similar misdeed. Any weak susceptibility of that sort, if it ever existed—and I am not at all sure that it did—left me with my youth.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love (De amore)*, VI.1, trans. Sears Jayne (Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, 1985), 107-108.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Albert and Ficino were both priests, like many humanists; even those who did not take full orders were often employed in the papal curia as secretaries.

<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* I.preface I.44, trans. Jon Solomon, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 21: “etsi non catholicos, tanta fuisse prudentia predictos, ut nil artificiosius humani ingenii fictione velatum sit, nec verborum cultu pulchrius exornatum. Ex quibus patet liquido eos plurima mundana sapientia imbutos fuisse, qua sepiissime carent stomachosi reprehensores eorum.” Some poetry, however, Boccaccio does admit can lead men to “vicious” thoughts, such as Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* and Catullus. See Charles G. Osgood, ed., *Boccaccio on Poetry: Being the Preface and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Books of Boccaccio's Genealogia Deorum Gentilium in an English Version with Introductory Essay and Commentary* (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1956), xxxvi and n. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium* XV.ix, trans. Osgood, 127.

Even to show these subjects in art should not be feared: “if Praxiteles or Phidias...should choose for a statue the immodest subject of Priapus on his way to Iole by night...shall we therefore condemn these arts? Downright stupidity, I should call it!”<sup>12</sup>

Another voice of change belonged to Lorenzo Valla, who offered in 1431 a reevaluation of Epicureanism, long—and wrongly—despised as condoning hedonism.<sup>13</sup> *Voluptas* was actually the highest good, he said, because the rapture of receiving communion with God must share some affinity with the earthly experience of pleasure.<sup>14</sup> Sensual pleasures offered a glimpse of that divine union, and so could not be all bad. Such cracks in the stolid façade of medieval culture exemplify the start of a new openness to ideas and influences that had previously met stalwart resistance. In the early fifteenth century, there was a new-found receptiveness to mingling a Christian present with a pagan past. What ensued was an age of antique revival, in which pagan gods, with all their dalliances and delights, were in full view. Classical authors like Ovid and Nonnos were freshly available in authentic Latin or Greek, their poetry dripping with references to love and sexuality. Collectors of all stripes began hoarding ancient gems and bits of relief, the imagery teeming with nude men and women cavorting in pagan bliss. A humanist awakening had somehow to integrate this classical eroticism as an

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<sup>12</sup> Boccaccio, XIV.vi, trans. Osgood, 38. In n. 8, Osgood points out that there is no story of Priapus with Iole, but that Boccaccio likely meant Lotis, from *Fasti* I.415-50, of which he owned a copy.

<sup>13</sup> Epicureanism was also despised by Christians for its avowedly heterodox views of the universe, its denial of divine providence, Creation, and the immortality of the soul. See Jill Kraye, “Epicureanism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. James Hankins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 102-106.

<sup>14</sup> Valla, *Opera omnia*, 789b: “Let each one call it as he likes: *voluptas* or *fruitio* or *delectatio* or *gaudium* or *felicitas* and *beatitudo*, provided it remain perfectly clear that no true *virtus* can exist besides the one of serving God...” (as quoted in Maristella de Panizza Lorch, “*Voluptas, Molle quoddam et non invidiosum nomen*: Lorenzo Valla’s Defense of *Voluptas* in the Preface to his *De Voluptate*,” in *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. Edward P. Mahoney [New York: Columbia University Press, 1976], 218). The preface appeared only in the first 1431 edition; other editions appeared in 1433, and 1440-49.

ordained and acceptable part of a renewed antique mode. Bacchus and the many raucous members of his entourage stood at the nexus of this Renaissance challenge.

Erwin Panofsky described the Renaissance motif of “Hercules at the Crossroads,” which came to supersede the medieval image of man torn between a devil and an angel, as exhibiting the epitome of the new humanist ideal of man’s freedom to choose between virtue and vice.<sup>15</sup> Bacchic imagery, as we will see, expanded even further this ideal of freedom and choice past the typical limits of good and evil. In the fifteenth century, Bacchic imagery was at the same crossroads, but it blurred the distinctions between *virtus* and *voluptas*. Pleasure, it seemed, need not always be a vice. Maenads were not always vacantly delirious. Satyrs were not always lowly or lascivious. Silenus was not always a slothful or ridiculous creature. And Bacchus was not always silly or effeminate but could be noble and triumphant. The Bacchic experience entails both physical sensuality as well as the transcendence of the senses. This inherent paradox surfaced in the fifteenth century: though Bacchus was sometimes dismissed as an effete hedonist, he could also be justified as an inducer of mystic frenzy and divine inspiration.

This study will range over approximately a century, from the earliest-known drawn studies after Bacchic antiquities in the 1420s to what is arguably the consummate expression of the iconography in the paintings of the Camerino d’Alabastro (1514-1525). It is a period exhibiting a vast range in attitudes and approaches toward antiquity and its mythology and philosophy, from the heartiest embrace to the most emphatic rejection of what could be deemed vulgar or voluptuous. But the sensibility that truly reflects the novelty of this period is that of fervent curiosity, along with the profound pleasure that came from discovering a past that had

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<sup>15</sup> *Hercules am Scheidewege und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst* (1930) (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, reprint with afterword by Dieter Wuttke, 1997); idem, “Artist, Scientist, Genius: Notes on the ‘Renaissance-Dämmerung’,” in *The Renaissance: A Symposium* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum, 1953), 77-93.

previously seemed irretrievable. After the 1520s, by contrast, there was a sobering of the previous century's frank and open embrace of things antique.<sup>16</sup> The condemnations of Protestant reformers struck a chord with latent Catholic fears that vice had slipped into Italian cultural, religious, and political life. Students were discouraged or prevented from reading Lucretius and Catullus. Erasmus decried the irrationality condoned by the papacy, which made Rome, "with its passion for stylishness and ancient pomp...nothing more than a den of paganism."<sup>17</sup> With exaggerated mockery, Erasmus's counterpart Bulephorus declared in *Ciceronianus*:

How we gape, how we stand stupefied if we find an image or even the fragment of an image of the ancient divinities, while we look askance at the images of Christ and the saints! How we marvel at an epigram or epitaph found in some decaying rock or other.... Notwithstanding we find very often in passages of this kind, not only foolish and pagan sentiments, but also extraordinary solecisms; yet we cherish them, venerating and almost adoring antiquity, while we deride the relics of the apostles. [...] Our eyes linger on the portrayal of bacchanalian feasts and festivals of Terminus full of disgrace and obscenity rather than on "The Raising of Lazarus" or "The Baptism of Christ by John." These are mysteries hidden under the veil of the Ciceronian name. Under the show of a beautiful name, I assure you, snares are held out to simple minded and credulous youths. We do not dare to profess paganism. We plead as an excuse Ciceronianism. But how much better it would be to be silent!<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Julia Haig Gaisser notes how the works of Catullus were analyzed and assessed with an openness and frankness from 1480 to 1520 that would not be matched again for another 450 years (*Catullus and His Renaissance Readers* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993], 77). Ingrid Rowland points out that there is a shift in the 1510s and 1520s away from the "picture puzzle" mode of making and interpreting paintings—which opens up multiple levels of meaning—to the "flat certainties" of the emblem books to come ("Titian: The Sacred and Profane," in her *From Heaven to Arcadia: The Sacred and the Profane in the Renaissance* [New York: New York Review Books, 2005], 130). In her work on Lucretius, Alison Brown notes the particular quality of the century between the rediscovery of Lucretius' *De rerum natura* in 1417 and its banning in Florentine schools in 1516-1517 (*The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence*, introduction, vii, and passim).

<sup>17</sup> André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome, 1527*, trans. Beth Archer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 5, citing Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly* (1511) and *Ciceronianus* (1528).

<sup>18</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Ciceronianus: Or, A Dialogue on the Best Style of Speaking (1528)*, trans. Paul Monroe (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1908), 74-75.

The Sack of Rome in 1527 put a physical and symbolic end to what for many had seemed a long, luxurious *symposium*. In the period that followed, moralists would excoriate artists who took liberties depicting the human body with sensuous abandon, and civic associations slapped fig leaves on works of art. Compounding the Reformationists' sobriety, the sixteenth century saw a shift toward a more analytical, proto-archaeological approach to the study of ancient remnants.<sup>19</sup> In the new, chastised Rome, the pursuit of antiquity became a more serious and rational task. Bacchic iconography was codified and often restricted to hedonistic or negative readings, limiting imaginative inventions. Bacchus and his followers regularly slipped into the category of decorative, even frivolous, aristocratic art, with maenads and satyrs cavorting in villa and palace evocations of Olympian heavens. It is therefore the period before this shift that will occupy us here, the age of "inventive flexibility,"<sup>20</sup> when myths, as Boccaccio said, had "no unique interpretation... rather are *polisenus*, or, 'of multiple interpretations'."<sup>21</sup> If we look at the course of Bacchus' revival during the early Renaissance, we will see that this pagan god of wine, revel, madness, and inspiration mirrored the enthusiastic, frenzied joy of the scholars, artists, and patrons who reawakened him.

As we begin our study, we will examine what it was that prompted Renaissance artists to look more closely at antiquities, and what it was in Bacchic art that particularly caught their

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<sup>19</sup> See Erna Mandowsky and Charles Mitchell, eds., *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities: The Drawings in Ms XIII.B.7 in the National Library in Naples* (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1963); Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, and Rebekah Smick, eds., *Antiquity and Its Interpreters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Ian Jenkins, ed., *Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum* (Milan: Olivetti, 1992).

<sup>20</sup> Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 13.

<sup>21</sup> Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* I.iii.7, trans. Solomon, 51: "his fictionibus non esse tantum unicum intellectum, quin imo dici potest potius polisenum, hoc est multiplicium sensum."

attention. The art historian Aby Warburg argued that fifteenth-century artists were not interested in some neoclassical ideal, the Apollonian “noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur” that Winckelmann saw in classical art.<sup>22</sup> Rather, Warburg observed that the revival of antiquity involved a reawakening of expression and emotionality that could be observed in timeless evocations of forms of pathos. What was sought in antique art was the passion and vitality deemed lacking in previous styles, what Warburg dubbed the “images of life in motion.”<sup>23</sup> His insight illuminates this study, because it is exactly the frenzied, erotic, and expressive characters of the Bacchic retinue that come to life in the Renaissance.

We will explore in Chapter One why Renaissance artists valued these qualities in antique art, and how this expressivity was especially prevalent in Bacchic imagery. From early humanists’ rhetorical studies, the ekphrastic mode of praise came into common use, and with it an admiration for variety, expressiveness, naturalism, and realistic detail.<sup>24</sup> While few humanists addressed the visual arts specifically, we can deduce from their comparisons of paintings to poetry, in which the former were considered as “silent poems,” that comparable visual qualities

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<sup>22</sup> Aby Warburg, “The Entry of the Idealizing Classical Style in the Painting of the Early Renaissance,” in *Art History as Cultural History: Warburg’s Projects*, ed. Richard Woodfield (Amsterdam: G & B Arts International, 2001), 7-31, especially p. 26, quoting Winckelmann referring to the *Laocöon*. Warburg’s essay is translated from the German transcript of Warburg’s 1914 lecture “Der Eintritt des antikisierenden Idealstils in die Malerei der Frührenaissance.” A précis only appears in Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 271-273, being a translation of *Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike: Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance*, ed. Gertrude Bing (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner Verlag, 1932). See also Charles Dempsey’s “Response” to Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, “Historia and Anachronism in Renaissance Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 87 (2005): 416-421.

<sup>23</sup> Warburg, “Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*: An Examination of Concepts of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance,” in *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 141; see also Warburg, “The Entry of the Idealizing Classical Style,” 7-31.

<sup>24</sup> Given his life-long educational career and influence on many of the great intellectuals of the fifteenth century, Guarino da Verona was critical to the perpetuation of the *ekphrasis* in Italy. See especially Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).



were valued. One of the few to write explicitly about the visual arts, Leon Battista Alberti praised *historie* that displayed *copia et varietas rerum*: that is, abundant and diverse assortments of people, objects, and animals. Such works, he asserted, provided the viewer *voluptas*, “[j]ust as with food and music novel and extraordinary things delight... so with everything the mind takes great pleasure in variety and abundance.”<sup>25</sup> Alberti urged artists to find a way to make the inner workings of the mind reveal themselves through the movements of the outer body.<sup>26</sup> These *affetti* were distinct from cognitive-intellectual processes, and moved the body by way of the soul, not the mind. The repertoire of ancient bodies presented an inspiring entry into the potential range of embodied thought and emotion.

The Bacchic sensibility, in particular, evinced just this kind of pathos-filled experience, and for early Renaissance artists it afforded a visual source to satisfy their yearnings. A Bacchic sarcophagus might typically be decorated with a wealth of figures, from animals and mythical beasts to men and women in wide-ranging poses and emotional states. Bacchic figures exposed a novel physical reality: a body that was opened outward, unfolding in space and time, with a psychological dimension that was not hidden but revealed on the surface of the physical self.

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<sup>25</sup> Alberti, *De Pictura* II.40, in *On Painting and On Sculpture: The Latin Texts of De Pictura and De Statua*, trans. and ed. Cecil Grayson (London: Phaidon Press, 1972), 78-79: “Ut enim in cibis atque in musica semper nova et exuberantia cum caeteras fortassis ob causas tum nimirum eam ob causam delectant quod ab vetustis et consuetis differant, sic in omni re animus varietate et copia admodum delectatur.”

<sup>26</sup> *On Painting (Della Pittura)*, Book II, trans. John R. Spencer (from a collation of Italian and Latin manuscripts), 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), esp. 77, 81: “The *istoria* will move the soul of the beholder when each man painted there clearly shows the movement of his own soul. [...] [W]e weep with the weeping, laugh with the laughing, and grieve with the grieving. These movements of the soul are made known by movements of the body.” The most recent assessment is that from 1435 to 1436 Alberti drafted his text in the vernacular, dedicated to artists and to Brunelleschi in particular, from which he translated into Latin a definitive text (a copy of which was given as a gift to Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua), which Alberti continued to refine as late as 1466-1468. Regarding the debated chronology of the versions and a new translation of the Latin Basel 1540 edition, see Rocco Sinisgalli, *Il nuovo De Pictura di Leon Battista Alberti/The New De Pictura of Leon Battista Alberti* (Rome: Edizioni Kappa, 2006); and Sinisgalli’s introduction to *Leon Battista Alberti: On Painting: A New Translation and Critical Edition*, trans. Rocco Sinisgalli (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3-14. See also Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, n. 10 on p. 126.

This body stood in marked contrast to the traditional, Christian body, which was self-contained and self-possessed. A satyr or maenad, Ariadne or Silenus, Pan or Bacchus offered a range of feeling and an expanded vision of physicality; one saw the body drunken, delirious, aroused, dissipated, frenzied, enervated, and inspired. One could see the physical manifestation of divine transport, or the experience of the mind leaving the body—a state that was not then restricted to the Bacchic characters but could be applied to all experiences of ecstatic *furor*, religious, spiritual, and intellectual. Such visionary poses correlated with contemporary thinking about the nature of inspiration, which was exploring the idea that a certain lack of rational control was part of the very fabric of genius. We will examine how such intellectual shifts, especially a revised Neoplatonism, contributed to interpretations of Bacchus and his followers that elevated them from their association with vice and hedonism to more esoteric themes—ideas that were closer to the true, original import of the imagery in antiquity.

In the following chapters we will take up each member of the Bacchic retinue individually to examine his or her gestural vocabulary, to see how he or she enters into Renaissance contexts, and to explore what meanings each of them was made to bear. As artists considered and imitated ancient forms, their newly acquired knowledge altered their ingrained habits and norms, allowing the antique characters to evolve in a process of “renovatio.” The mythical figures were not merely copied and repeated, but were absorbed and adapted so that each appeared with a new life and feeling that was entirely of the fifteenth century. Maenads, Ariadne, satyrs (along with Silenus and Pan), and Bacchus himself were depicted (alone or interacting together) in a vast number of works in a variety of media. Our study will consider their appearances in diverse objects, including drawings, engravings, bronze statuettes,

plaquettes, stone reliefs, sculpture, and painting, as well as literary analogues in poetry, drama, and ephemeral celebrations.

In Chapter Two we address the maenad, the frenzied female follower of the god—one of the first Bacchic figures to appear in drawings after antiquities in the early fifteenth century. Characterized by her ecstatic postures and flowing drapery, we will question the ways in which this wild and exposed female figure could find a use in Renaissance art. We will take up Aby Warburg's concept of the *Pathosformel*, and his particular interest in the exemplum of the maenadic "Nympha" figure. In Renaissance versions of Bacchic narratives, the maenad rarely retained her ancient fervor, yet her maenadic passion was transferred to other, biblical females, such as Mary Magdalene, Judith, and Salome. Novel characters, such as the *all'antica* serving girl or personifications of Abundance, acquired the swirling skirts, billowing mantles, and dancing gait of the maenad but were stripped of the violent frenzy of their maenadic forebear. This nubile figure of the nymph would emerge as a vital symbol of Quattrocento spirit.

Chapter Three examines imagery portraying the other significant female in Bacchus' retinue: his beloved and wife, Ariadne. She appears in two main classes of iconography: her discovery on Naxos and her triumphant ride with the god. We will consider the various ways in which she was shown in fifteenth-century art, and the significance of her different poses and contexts. Ancient sarcophagi typically showed Bacchus encountering Ariadne asleep on the shore. This image of a sleeping Ariadne unveiled by a satyr contributed to the emergence of one of the most popular motifs of the Renaissance. In depictions of the actual Bacchic myth, however, Renaissance artists endeavored to attain better literary accuracy than even the ancient images allowed, showing Ariadne alert and raving at the time of her divine encounter, as she was so often described in classical texts. Imagery including Ariadne had particular connotations,

gleaned by Renaissance scholars and artists, regarding love, marriage, and joy, but also about the concept of divine salvation, epiphany, and the fervor of spiritual enthusiasm, since she was the human surrogate who, with the grace and influence of the divine, became immortal. The happy lovers began appearing in wedding gifts and celebrations and in palace decorations and paintings. The divine pair did not always present an image of unmitigated bliss; they could evoke a feeling of *dolce-amaro*, or the bittersweet, associated with a sense of longing, ephemerality, and nostalgia, as expressed in the indelible words of Lorenzo de' Medici's "Canzona di Bacco."

In Chapter Four, we investigate the satyr, the goat-footed follower of Bacchus, who in the broadest interpretation in medieval allegory had been a symbol of vice; his bestial appearance and lecherous appetites represented the lowly, uncivilized, sinful qualities of man. Yet despite having inherited this simplified picture, fifteenth-century artists adopted the satyr for use in a variety of contexts and arrived at several different modes that served to elevate, even ennoble, him. This chapter will take up where the image of the languid, sleeping Ariadne left off, by considering the meaning for a Renaissance audience of the seemingly lascivious satyr who appears to discover her (or her nymph-like proxy). The motif of a beast unveiling a beauty bore meanings that reverberated beyond the superficial pleasures of titillating arousal into the evocation of more exalted ideas about generative necessity, human creativity, spiritual awakening, and divine inspiration. Troupes of these hairy-legged satyrs appeared in manuscript illuminations, in engravings, and in desktop statuettes—all rarefied, scholarly, or at least elite, venues—which prompts us to question their designation as stereotypical symbols of debauchery and opens up the possibility of associations with imagination and intellectual fertility. We will also look at the side of this culture that tolerated ribald humor and behavior and that could

embrace depictions of the blubbery Silenus not merely as moralized chastisements of dissipation but as *all'antica* versions of the traditional satirical mocking of folly and as evocations of the wise fool.

The rise of the pastoral mode towards the beginning of the sixteenth century reinforced the role of the satyr, and of Pan in particular, in evoking a nostalgic, melancholy vision of a lost and longed for Arcadia. The *renovatio* of antiquity made the fifteenth century seem to many to be the dawn of a new Golden Age. As a god of love and bounty, Bacchus could be a patron of such an age of abundance, peace, and happiness. This idea was played out especially with the figure of Bacchus' companion Pan, who could be understood as a god of birth and death, rediscovered from the writings of Virgil, Servius, Macrobius, and in the Orphic Hymns to be an all-powerful god overseeing matter in all its forms and thus the ultimate Nature deity. In his omnipotence, Pan could govern the seasons, the passions, and prosperity. Lorenzo de' Medici was an enthusiast of the god Pan, encouraging a revival of the cult at his villa at Careggi.<sup>27</sup> In his early poem, *L'altercazione*, written when he was only twenty, he explored the significance of the Arcadian god:

Pan quale ogni pastore onora e venera,  
 Il cui nome in Arcadia si celebra,  
 Che impera a quel che si corrompe o genera.<sup>28</sup>

The new Golden Age would be ushered in like dawn in Arcadia.<sup>29</sup> And Bacchus stood as a beacon of this new world, the Liber Pater of this optimistic and fertile era.

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<sup>27</sup> André Chastel, "Melancholia in Sonnets of Lorenzo," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 (1945): 66.

<sup>28</sup> "Pan, to whom every shepherd pays devout homage, whose name is famous in Arcadia, the lord of death and birth" (*L'altercazione*, chap. IV, as quoted in *ibid.*, 66).

The ennobling qualities that began to alter the meaning of the satyr permeated the figure of Bacchus himself. As we ask how a god of wine, love, and revelry could become a god of high ideals, we discover that for a short time the Renaissance humanist, patron, and artist believed he could be precisely that. In Chapter Five we will consider the ways in which Bacchus emerged as a divine force for inspiration and genius, having previously been a simplistic figure easily dismissed as a hedonistic god of sinful pleasure. By the start of the sixteenth century, the first enthusiastic, creative phase of antiquarianism culminated in the sculpture gardens of Roman humanists, who embraced this enlightened and yet convivial view of Bacchus. We will consider how artists like Mantegna and Michelangelo used their work to reveal a novel conception of Bacchic inspiration, and in particular, its connection to artistic production and creativity. Bacchic *furor* was not measured in musical notes, poetic lines, or mathematical computations, but in enthusiasm, imbalance, and even wordlessness. But perhaps this frenzy was like artmaking itself: a messy rush of ideas, materials, and color. Of course, drunkenness, like melancholy, could lead to fatigue and limp uselessness. But perhaps the highest form of this madness could lead to something more passionate and unknowable, something even divine. This vision of Bacchus showed him to be a prototype for the artist as genius.

The artist proved himself to be closely allied with a Dionysian process of generation and creativity in his inherent physical closeness and sensual interaction with the materials of his artistic production. The painter or sculptor must necessarily touch, stroke, move, and shape his media. This physical contact placed him within his work of art in a way that was fundamentally different from the act of making engaged by the poet. This contrast was not one that was

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<sup>29</sup> Basinio de' Basini of Parma (1425-1457) would write in his panegyric of Pope Nicholas V, c. 1447, of the dawn of a new Golden Age. See W. Leonard Grant, "New Forms of Neo-Latin Pastoral," *Studies in the Renaissance* 4 (1957): 81.

brought to bear in the typical comparison between the arts, the *paragone* instigated in Horace's famous dictum declaring "ut pictura poesis," which suggested that painting could be argued to affect its viewer as powerfully as poetry its listener.<sup>30</sup> But as we will explore, the *action* of creating, and not just the outcome of that expression, might also be compared. And it was the Dionysian sensibility of sensual, enthusiastic, embodied creating that corresponded to the actions of the visual artist.<sup>31</sup> As Vasari would say of Donatello's sculptural style in his Cantoria, there is more beauty in the bold strokes of a sketch (*una bella bozza*), "born in an instant from the frenzy of art" (*nascendo in un subito dal furore dell'arte*), just as "poems dictated from the poetic frenzy are the true and good ones, and better than those made with great effort; so, too, the works of men excellent in the arts of design are better when made at one stroke from the force of this

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<sup>30</sup> In its original context, Horace's statement was actually intended to explain the emotive effect of poetry as being comparable to that of painting, and not the other way around. It is a poem that can move us like a painting might, in other words, and not necessarily a painting that will move us like a poem. In the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, the desire to find a language with which to discuss the value of the visual arts required a certain amount of cribbing of the authoritative and customary texts on rhetoric. The vocabulary was borrowed, and then the argument in defense of painting effected a shift of some of that traditional criticism of poetry onto itself, thus the defense of painting as being just as effective without words as a poem is with them. See Rensselaer W. Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting," *Art Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (1940): 197-269; published also as *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967). I say "listener," because ancient poetry was affiliated with music and was meant to be sung and heard, and not solely, or even, read. See Angela Voss, "Orpheus Redivivus: The Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino," in *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, ed. Michael J. B. Allen and Valery Rees with Martin Davies (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 227-242.

<sup>31</sup> A few other scholars have considered a Bacchic metaphor for art-making. Svetlana Alpers argues for Rubens being obsessed with Silenus as his self-reflexive model of ecstatic generativity; see *The Making of Rubens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), especially chap. 3. Alpers writes that "the Dionysian model is more appropriate to a painter than to a writer whose physical act of writing is necessarily separate from his text" (141). In *Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2005), John Moffitt argues for the originating role of Bacchus in the emergence of the concept of artistic inspiration. Moffitt is fundamentally concerned with a modern idea of inspiration, which he deems to be Bacchic, and therefore looks backward to find the earliest manifestation of this perceived reality. He finds Michelangelo's *Bacchus* to be the prototype, but ultimately his evidence for the positive association of Bacchus with (artistic) inspiration is derived more from textual sources (of which he sees Michelangelo's statue as the visual expression) than from the visual realization of that concept. We will take up Michelangelo's *Bacchus* in Chapter Five, where an approach that looks more closely at the appearance and form of the sculpture will be used to explain the importance of that work as a visible articulation of Bacchic inspiration.

frenzy....”<sup>32</sup> There was at this time a corresponding shift in the critical language employed to talk about artists, which started to use references to their divine inspiration and to apply to them the attribute of divine genius, or *divino ingenium* (traditionally the province only of prophets and evangelists, and later, of philosophers and poets). The concept of *divino furor*, that rapture of beatific influence, would come to describe the visual artist’s moment of inspiration.<sup>33</sup>

This multivalent god became the hero of the cycle of paintings commissioned by Alfonso d’Este for his Camerino d’Alabastro in the Palazzo Ducale of Ferrara. Chapter Six delves into the meaning of these works as they embodied and epitomized all the previous themes reawakened in Bacchic imagery. Instead of seeing the paintings as symptoms of the patron’s supposed hedonism and frivolity, as they are often viewed, we will explore what the works tell us about themselves, in the context of a court in Northern Italy and the intellectual currents of the day. The artistry of Titian is revealed in his masterful synopsis of the joyful yet complex and esoteric Bacchic motifs, ideas, and emotionality. The Bacchic vocabulary we observed in Chapter One comes full circle, to create not reworked antiques but fully original *poesie*. The combination of Bacchus and Venus, revelry and love, creates the celebration of life and the senses evident in the cycle at the most basic level. But the underlying significance of Bacchus and his association with strength and virility, fertility and reproduction, inspiration and understanding, youth and time, nostalgia for the past and hope for the future, are also conveyed,

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<sup>32</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence: Sansoni, 1906, 1973 reprint), vol. 2, 171: “come le poesie dettate dal furore poetico sono le vere e le buone e migliori che le stentate; così l’opere degli uomini eccellenti nell’arti del disegno sono migliori quando son fatte a un tratto dalla forza di quel furore....”

<sup>33</sup> See Maria Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration: Metaphors of Sex, Sleep, and Dreams* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). I owe a debt of gratitude to Maria Ruvoldt’s study tracing the emergence of a “pictorial vocabulary” for the expression of ideas about divine inspiration. Her work has shown me the possibilities for investigating the multiple layers of meaning in Renaissance imagery, and for seeing the positive side of iconography traditionally perceived as negative.



and contribute to making the room a unique—and supreme—example of the efflorescence of Bacchus in the Renaissance.

It was precisely this multifacetedness of Bacchus and his followers that gave them the flexibility of meaning that allowed them to be accommodated in this new world. Prior to the standardization imposed by the mid-sixteenth-century mythographers, there was a great deal of variation and improvisation in the depiction and interpretation of pagan mythology.<sup>34</sup> The lack of codification was what allowed artists to employ antique imagery as a vehicle for self-exploration and to push the limits of conventional art-making. In order to appreciate works of art such as Mantegna's *Bacchanal* engravings, Michelangelo's sculpted *Bacchus*, and Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* and *Bacchanal of the Andrians* canvases, we will consider the ideological, cultural, and historical forces that contributed to their meaning. Others have dealt with these works individually. But to bring these works together with contemporary images, descriptions of ephemeral productions, poetry, and philosophy that also employed Bacchic imagery will allow us to appreciate the multilevel meanings such works were allowed.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> See Jean Seznec regarding the proliferation of these mythographic manuals in the mid-sixteenth century (*Survival of the Pagan Gods*, especially Book II, part I, "The Science of Mythology in the Sixteenth Century," 219-256). These texts include Lilio Gregorio Giraldi's *De diis gentium varia et multiplex historia (The History of the Gods)* (Basel, 1548); Natale Conti's *Mythologiae sive explicationis fabularum libri decem (Mythology)* (Venice, 1551); and Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini de i dei de gli antichi (The Images of the Gods)* (Venice 1556). Works such as these were themselves still very much part of the medieval tradition passed on through Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* from Albricus, Fulgentius, and Macrobius, among others. The sixteenth-century compilers dipped haphazardly into late antique and medieval literature as well as classical sources, without regard to authenticity, time, or place, giving all sources equal authority. Their consequently rather syncretistic mythologies often bore little resemblance to the ancient gods, and, when illustrated, these images were often created from verbal descriptions in complete disregard of the visual record. Their focus remained, as in the medieval tradition, on allegorical interpretation, intent on finding contemporary aphorisms veiled beneath the ancient forms.

<sup>35</sup> A few scholars have sought to address the Bacchic phenomenon more generally. Besides Moffitt (mentioned above), Andreas Emmerling-Skala completed a dissertation in 1992 on Bacchus in the Renaissance from the standpoint of classical philology (*Bacchus in der Renaissance* [New York: Georg Olms Publishers, 1994, Ph.D. diss., Karlsruhe University], 2 vols.). It is a sweeping study, scanning the Renaissance afterlife of the pagan god, as manifested in visual works from all over Europe but also in every surviving classical text and in later medieval and humanist literature, including treatises, poetry, and lexicons. The second volume of his thesis is a compendium of these sources from Agricola to Zamberti da li Sonetti. He traces the changing attitudes toward Bacchus from

To see these works of art as they were viewed—that is, as almost hieroglyphic—is to see them as, in Marsilio Ficino’s words, “ideograms and pictograms embodying the wisdom of the divine mysteries that can be grasped intuitively.”<sup>36</sup> Unlike words, which have more conventional meanings, the picture is “sine litteris,” making it comparatively unfixed, with a range of meanings and interpretations possible.<sup>37</sup> This allows the picture to embrace many connotations, functioning like Colonna’s elusive *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, with its amalgamated, fantastical language interweaving image and made-up words, to create a dream-like experience in which the viewer must absorb the meaning. As Paolo Cortesi wrote in his *De cardinalatu* c. 1500: “We recommend the depiction of riddles and fables. Their interpretation sharpens the intelligence and [inspection of] their learned representation fosters the cultivation of the mind.”<sup>38</sup> By following Bacchus, and not one particular artist or patron or setting, we approach a wider range of

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medieval Christian unease with his lascivious and intemperate associations to a Renaissance embrace of the god as a spirit of natural fecundity and, at least in elite circles, of hedonistic revelry. Emmerling-Skala’s study is dense and wide-ranging, and in contrast to our purpose, treats works of art only secondarily as adjuncts to texts. Ultimately, Emmerling-Skala does present an argument that in the fifteenth century Bacchus did not stand merely for vice, but could represent positive interpretations of his gifts of wine and revelry, not just with Neoplatonic ideas of spiritual ecstasy but in and of themselves. I, too, endeavor to reveal these positive meanings for Bacchus and his followers, but will delve more wholly into the manner in which visual sources manifest these ideas. By looking at images first, I will concentrate on retracing the path from artistic choice to representation to viewer to meaning. I also consider the part played by all of Bacchus’ followers—the maenads, satyrs, Pan, and Silenus—to create a more complete picture of the import of Bacchic imagery.

<sup>36</sup> Ficino’s gloss on Plotinus’ *Enneads*, quoted in Giancarlo Fiorenza, “Dosso Dossi and Celio Calcagnini at the Este Court of Ferrara,” in *Artists at Court: Image Making and Identity 1300-1550*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004), 176.

<sup>37</sup> Elite Renaissance audiences enjoyed complex iconography, as in emblems and devices, and a sort of parlor game of interpretation, which valued new, witty, and obscure readings. Alciati’s *Emblematum liber* (1531) epitomized the interest in picture puzzles, or emblems, that disguised moral messages (didactic meanings that in turn derived largely from the long medieval tradition of mythography that preceded him). See Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 100-103. As Seznec says of Botticelli’s audience, they formed a “coterie of littérateurs and pedants, men who delighted in the spinning of farfetched theory” (114). See Martin Kemp, *Behind the Picture: Art and Evidence in the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); and Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>38</sup> Paolo Cortesi’s *De cardinalatu*, as quoted in Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 12, from Kathleen Weil-Garris and John F. D’Amico, “The Renaissance Cardinal’s Ideal Palace: A Chapter from Cortesi’s *De cardinalatu*,” *Memoirs of*

phenomena. Looking at the breadth of the god's appearances grants us a deeper appreciation for the rich panoply of meaning available to Renaissance audiences.

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By late antiquity, features of Bacchic imagery had already been incorporated into Christian iconography, given the compatibility of vine, grape, and wine with Eucharistic doctrine. Early Christian mosaics, reliefs, and illuminations borrowed motifs like “putti at the vintage” and images of abundant grapes, lush tendrils of vine, and ivy to articulate the enduring sacrifice of Christ and the analogy to the Eucharist.<sup>39</sup> The linking of Bacchus to soteriological meanings made evident in his placement on sarcophagi lent the joyful parade of maenads and satyrs a paradisiacal importance. As Bacchus and his followers began to reappear as themselves in fifteenth-century imagery, the remembrance of these Christian associations was not lost. And at the same time, these figures began to act and move with the newly recovered memory of their original meanings, gleaned from so many rediscovered texts.

But when we look at fifteenth-century examples of Bacchic subjects, what so often becomes apparent is a rift between story and style.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes the triumph of Bacchus is portrayed anachronistically, as if it were a costumed parade. Elsewhere satyrs frolic with

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*the American Academy in Rome 35: Studies in Italian Art and Architecture, Fifteenth through the Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Henry A. Millon (1980): 96-97.

<sup>39</sup> It is in the fifteenth century, in fact, when explorers rediscovered some of the catacombs that lay under Rome, with their remnants of ancient paintings showing an early Christian synthesis of profane Roman figurative subjects and themes. They also puzzled over the antique Santa Costanza, which they perceived must be a Temple of Bacchus because of its plethora of Bacchic imagery. See Rodolfo Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892); Giovanni Battista De Rossi, “L’Accademia di Pomponio Leto e le sue memorie scritte sulle pareti delle catacombe romane,” *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* ser. V, I (1891): 81-94; Richard J. Palermino, “The Roman Academy, the Catacombs and the Conspiracy of 1468,” *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 18 (1980): 117-155; and Irina Taïssa Oryshkevich, “The History of the Roman Catacombs from the Age of Constantine to the Renaissance,” Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> See Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences* (esp. p. 84), for the discussion of his principle of “disjunction,” explaining the disconnect between form and content in the revival of classical subjects.

manifestly contemporary women. Mantegna evoked the look of ancient sarcophagi in his *Bacchanal* engravings but with a bevy of fantastical, imaginary, and original creatures. And Michelangelo carved a statue of the god with utter independence from the noble proportion of antique prototypes, making Bacchus exhibit instead the very effects he marshals. A fifteenth-century rendition of a Bacchus, in other words, whether in a painting, an engraving, or a *fiesta* production, was essentially a creature of this new moment. His trappings may look antique: the artist may remember to give him a grape wreath for his head, or a *thyrsus*-type staff; may remember that he was the patron of wine, and so present him as tippling or swayingly drunk. But he could not be the actual Roman divinity of wine anymore. If he was no longer a real *god*, what function did he fulfill? This is the question we seek to answer: what did Bacchus then become?

If fifteenth-century artists were looking at antique art for its heightened sense of life, then there were few better figures to study than Bacchic ones. The appearance of Bacchic figures in the art of the Quattrocento indicates that, far from shunning the more erotic, lascivious, or abandoned bodies of antiquity, the Renaissance artist embraced the sensual as part of his investigation of form and illusion. The Dionysian subject, as opposed to the Apollonian, related more intimately to the sensual and erotic consequences of naturalistic representation. The frenzy this imagery evoked came to be valued as the particular *furor Bacchicus*, by which the Muses inspire genius. Pico della Mirandola would hold forth on the divine inspiration that stems from this source: “Bacchus, the leader of the Muses, by showing in his mysteries...the invisible things of God...will intoxicate us with the fullness of God’s house....”<sup>41</sup> Through the process of

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<sup>41</sup> Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486), section 16, trans. Elizabeth Livermore Forbes, in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 234.

experimentation and invention with these forms, the artist came to explore his unique means of expression and the sense of his artistic identity and self-worth.

Developments in the intellectual life of the Renaissance pushed the exploration of antique imagery into new realms and enhanced viewers' understanding of what they saw there. The presence of Greek-speakers in Florence at the turn of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century and the subsequent spread of the knowledge of Greek made a huge impact in the Italian West. With greater knowledge of ancient texts, enhanced by translations and the advent of printing, familiarity with ancient figures was disseminated through the cultural and social echelons, from humanists to their elite patrons and to artists. An enhanced appreciation of poetry spurred the desire for works of art that functioned with the subtlety and complexity of poems. Contact with the thought and writings of Plato and the Neoplatonists fostered debate about concepts of pleasure, reason, and inspiration. Innovative thoughts about the idea of love and beauty were especially influential in artistic spheres as they impacted notions regarding the depiction of female beauty and the nude. These fresh views naturally had an effect on Bacchic representation, with its abundance of irrational and sensuous bodies.<sup>42</sup>

At the same time, propriety and decorum were of essential importance in fifteenth-century culture, both as prescribed by the Church and as socially constructed. This period would witness persecutions stemming from accusations of paganism, witchcraft, and demonic magic,

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<sup>42</sup> Marsilio Ficino was the key figure in the translation of Plato in the fifteenth century. On Ficino, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943); Michael J. B. Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino: A Study of His Phaedrus Commentary, Its Sources and Genesis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). On the impact of humanism and Renaissance Neoplatonism on the arts, see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968); Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*; Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators and Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*; Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and the Arts: Collected Essays*, expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); and Charles Dempsey, *The Portrayal of Love: Botticelli's Primavera and Humanist Culture at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

and its perceived consequences: voluptuousness, intemperance, excessive materiality, illicit sexuality, secularity, or even just too much dancing and carousing.<sup>43</sup> Contemporary preachers decried what they perceived as rampant vice amongst their flock, and ordered the destruction of paintings and other “vanities” that they thought contributed to such profligacy.<sup>44</sup> There was also a dilemma as to “whether to regard the culture of pagan Rome as a Golden Age whose decline and fall was a tragedy or as an era of spiritual blindness whose passing should be celebrated.”<sup>45</sup> Many believed Christ’s Passion had overturned and vanquished paganism, leading to the deserved ruination of classical civilization. In many fifteenth-century religious paintings, crumbling columns and broken statues functioned as symbols of that fallen past.<sup>46</sup> The condemnatory message was that all those “snakes, satyrs, and sacrifice denote a world of paganism which kills Christian saints.”<sup>47</sup>

Yet the artistic and antiquarian urge to reconstruct accurately an ancient time and place was reinforced by repeated discoveries of texts and objects. A new pictorial decorum sought to

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<sup>43</sup> A love of things antique was not incompatible with a fear of too much antique influence. Pope Paul II (Pietro Barbo) was an avid collector of ancient glyptics, and yet was the instigator of the prosecution of Pomponius Laetus (Pomponio Leto) and the members of his Accademia Romana in 1468 on fear of treason cloaked in dubious charges of paganism. See Palermينو, “The Roman Academy.”

<sup>44</sup> San Bernardino of Siena and Fra Savonarola of Florence are two examples of preachers who instigated *brucciamenti*. See Franco Mormando, *The Preacher’s Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>45</sup> Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 133, 138-139.

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, Mantegna’s frescoes in the Eremitani Chapel in Padua, where the pagan sacrifices on the walls around St. James before the Emperor may serve to show how St. James suffered at the hands of the pagans. See Fritz Saxl, “Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1939), 350, n. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

show ancient (including Christian) events against ancient settings.<sup>48</sup> And gradually, pagan mysteries and myth were deemed valid subjects on their own. The pagan ruin could then itself be a symbol, a wistful allusion to past grandeur, a melancholic reference to the passing of time and the deterioration of even great art. Armed with the mythological tales, Renaissance humanists sought a deeper insight into the sacred mysteries of antiquity, suspecting that more universal truths lay beneath the veils of myth. Fifteenth-century philosophers like Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola were particularly enthralled by the possibility of forming a syncretic union of Christianity and paganism, believing that a primary and divine wisdom—a *prisca theologia*—underlay and revealed itself through all religions.<sup>49</sup> The Dionysian mysteries lent themselves easily to such beliefs, having grown out of many of the same psychological needs as Christianity. Initiation into the cult was through secret rites, which brought the individual into the embrace of an inner community and into a personal relationship with the god. Dionysianism had been particularly popular because of its emphasis on this personal connection with the god, achieved through the attainment of *ekstasis*—that is, of being outside of oneself—sought through the delirium induced by the orgy.<sup>50</sup> Like other mystery

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<sup>48</sup> Jennifer Fletcher, “Mantegna and Venice,” in *Mantegna and Fifteenth-Century Court Culture*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis and Anka Bednarek (London: University of London, Birkbeck College, 1993), 22; Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 126.

<sup>49</sup> Such an endeavor was not without risk, as seen in the charge of heresy brought against Pico upon the release of his nine hundred *Conclusiones philosophicae, cabalasticae et theologicae* in 1486. See Kristeller’s introduction to the *Oration* in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, 217; Brown, *The Return of Lucretius*, x. Pico asserted in his *Oration* that “not only the Mosaic and Christian mysteries but also the theology of the ancients show us the benefits and value of the liberal arts.... For what else did the degrees of the initiates observed in the mysteries of the Greeks mean? [...] What else can that perception possibly be than an interpretation of occult nature by means of philosophy? Then at length to those who were disposed came that...observation of things divine by the light of theology. Who would not long to be initiated into such sacred rites” (section 16, 233).

<sup>50</sup> Turcan, *Cults of the Roman Empire*, 295; John Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), chap. 7, “Personal Religion”; Hugh Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). It is interesting to note that the literal translation of the Greek

religions, it offered the hope of a resurrection after death and a blessed afterlife, experienced as an eternal banquet. The prevalence of Bacchic sarcophagi attested to the power of this belief and, as the main source of iconography for Renaissance artists, telegraphed its meaning. The Renaissance humanists were especially taken with the Orphic Hymns, many of which were addressed to Dionysus, and their allusions to the afterlife.<sup>51</sup> Orphism and Hermeticism (known in the fifteenth-century through the *Pimander* of the supposed Hermes Trismegistus, believed to be an ancient Egyptian *magus*) complemented the works of Plato in revealing the secrets and hidden teachings of that One faith.<sup>52</sup>

The ancient poets revealed other aspects of Bacchus' nature and influence to Renaissance readers, paralleling the imagery in the copious art production of the Roman luxury market.

Propertius and Horace described Bacchic inebriation and its concomitant madness as

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*ekstasis* into Latin is *superstitio*, which comes to have a much different meaning: superstition with its fear of evil influences rather than the ecstatic embrace of divine influence characteristic of the Greek mystery religion.

<sup>51</sup> Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 40-44. The idea of a banquet of the dead as an eternal celebration that would bless those who had believed was a central part of the interrelated Orphic mysteries. The Orphic theme of sleep and reawakening, patterned in the biennial or triennial celebrations of the *orgia*, also reiterated this idea of a resurrected god. The story of Dionysus' descent through the Alcyonian lake to Hades to retrieve his mother Semele from the bonds of death, and his ability to restore her to immortal life in Olympus, as he did also for his wife Ariadne, instilled in his followers the hope for their own immortality. Another dominant myth in Orphism was of the god's own death and resurrection, represented in the story of his role as the child Zagreus, torn apart by giants and thrown into a lake only to be reconstituted and reborn by divine means. See Orphic Hymn 53, in Apostolos N. Athanassakis, *The Orphic Hymns: Text, Translation and Notes* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 71: "In the sacred halls of Persephone he slumbers and puts to sleep pure, Bacchic time every third year. When he himself stirs up the triennial revel again he sings a hymn, accompanied by his fair-girdled nurses, and, as the seasons revolve, he puts to sleep and wakes up the years." Also, D. P. Walker, "Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Neoplatonism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953): 100-120; Martin L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), chap. 5, "The Eudemian Theogony (Continued): The Death and Rebirth of Dionysus," and passim.

<sup>52</sup> Orpheus was considered the father of Greek philosophy, ancestor of Pythagoras and Plato; Hermes, the originator of Egyptian philosophy; and Zoroaster, of the Persian. Attributed to Zoroaster were the texts known as the *Oracles*, translated early in the fifteenth century by Georgios Gemistos, known as Pletho. Cabbalist writings, considered the root of ancient Judaism (although actually of medieval origin) were also prized by the humanists, especially Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Despite their mythological origins, these figures and writings were of central importance to Renaissance Neoplatonists. Ficino translated the *Pimander* (*Corpus Hermeticum* I-XIV) in 1463. See James Hankins and Ada Palmer, *The Recovery of Ancient Philosophy in the Renaissance: A Brief Guide* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2008), 68-71.



contributing to erotic love, but also as a soothing balm for its woes.<sup>53</sup> As the second-century author Achilles Tatius declared:

Cupid and Dionysus are two of the most violent of the gods; they can grasp the soul and drive it so far towards madness that it loses all restraint; Cupid fires it with the flames which are his attribute, while Dionysus supplies wine which is as fuel to the fire: for wine is the very sustenance of love....<sup>54</sup>

Dionysus' ancient Greek role as the god of theater was also well-known, and common images of putti playing with Silenus masks evoked that link to ancient Greek theatrical practice while illustrating an allegory of foolish fears.<sup>55</sup> Bacchus was also tied to notions of poetic inspiration, articulated especially in the work of Horace, linking him to the Muses and to artistic creativity; he became part of the general idea of a "poetic landscape," which suffused the Renaissance Roman idea of a pleasure garden. Bacchus and his many followers, including all the little *amorini*, became elements of this fertile, peaceful, idyllic and pleasurable realm.

In the fifteenth century it was still possible to believe that antiquity was a closed entity, one that *could* be recovered, as if from a time capsule.<sup>56</sup> There was something intoxicating in the

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<sup>53</sup> For example, Propertius, *Elegies* III.17, and Horace, *Odes* III.21. For ancient Bacchic art objects, see Jon H. Van de Grift, "Dionysiaca: Bacchic Imagery in Roman Luxury Art of the Late Republic and Early Empire," Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1985).

<sup>54</sup> Achilles Tatius, *The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon* II.2.4, trans. Stephen Gaselee (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Loeb Classical Library, 1917).

<sup>55</sup> Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 98. See Charles Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 99-101; Otto Kurz, "Sannazaro and Mantegna," in *Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri* (Naples: L'Arte Tipografica, 1959), 277-283.

<sup>56</sup> See D. J. Gordon, "Roles and Mysteries," in idem, *The Renaissance Imagination: Essays and Lectures*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 23 and passim. Also Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, passim. As Arnaldo Momigliano noted: "The Middle Ages did not lose the classical interest in inscriptions and archaeological remains. Inscriptions were occasionally collected. Monuments were noticed. What was lost...was the Varronian idea of 'antiquitates'—the idea of a civilization recovered by systematic collection of all the relics of the past" ("Ancient History and the Antiquarian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 [1950], 289).

discovery of ancient objects, that, like the buried True Cross, seemed to appear miraculously.<sup>57</sup> The fragmentary remnants of antiquity called for imaginative reconstructions of a once whole and intact past.<sup>58</sup> What might appear to us as a naïve or romantic attitude was to them without conflict or falsehood.<sup>59</sup> There was a natural union of “antiquarianism and arcadian pleasures.”<sup>60</sup> This fantasy-land ideal of the past as it intersected with the present helped foster the particular interest in the ahistorical, mythological creatures that populated their poetic, artistic vision: the satyrs, centaurs, sea monsters, nymphs, and putti. In pursuing their antiquarian studies, which could veer toward idyllic adventures, humanists like Cyriaco d’Ancona and Felice Feliciano admired and valued ancient relics as if they were the bones of their Christian saints.<sup>61</sup> They, and others like them, did not sense a tension with Christianity. Patricia Fortini Brown has remarked upon “the ease with which a well-educated man of the late fifteenth century could reconcile the Christian present with the newly rediscovered Roman past. [There was an] absence of any

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<sup>57</sup> Leonard Barkan explains that the true science of archaeology does not emerge for almost two centuries after the discovery of the visible remains of antiquity became an important theme in the fifteenth century. In large part, this delay was because ancient Rome remained a metaphor and symbol for so long that it was difficult to transform that idea into a concrete time and place, to realize that ancient Rome *was* physically present, just twenty to fifty feet underneath modern Rome. “[Y]ou cannot travel through symbolic space with a shovel. [...] [T]he Renaissance resists the archaeological...belief that ancient Rome simply got buried under fifteen hundred years of debris” (*Unearthing the Past*, 25-26).

<sup>58</sup> We should keep in mind that the particular idyllic vision of ancient Rome existed in the face of the actual reality of modern Rome, which in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was utterly decayed. Petrarch speaks of modern Rome as being desolate, and the papacy was relocated to Avignon for much of that period. It was not until the later part of the fifteenth century that the popes began extensive building and planning of the city. See Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 60; Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 24, citing Petrarch from his letter to Giovanni Colonna, *Familiar Letters*, 6:2.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy,” in *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 455-483; and Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 126, 159-169, 189, 222.

<sup>60</sup> Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 158.

<sup>61</sup> Ancient carved gems were themselves used during the Middle Ages to decorate ecclesiastical objects, including relic-shrines. See W. S. Heckscher, “Relics of Pagan Antiquity in Mediaeval Settings,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1 (1937-38), 204.

necessity to make a moral distinction between the two.”<sup>62</sup> As we will see, this enthusiastic view of antiquity was one that inspired the Roman purveyors of a renewed spirit of pagan sensibility to emulate ancient conviviality, reading poetry and drinking wine, while reclining in gardens graced with antiquities and modern works of art.<sup>63</sup> What they managed to create was not, of course, antiquity itself, but an amalgamation, interpretation, and adaptation of sources, which combined to form something entirely of its own moment. Antique forms and antique ideas were endowed with new metaphorical meanings, attuned to and enlivened by their contemporary context. These humanists with their pretensions to conviviality were living “all’antica” by allusion: not as a literal recreation of an actual antique lifestyle or setting, but within the bounds of a fully Christian one.

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While Bacchus and his followers continued to appear through the sixteenth century and afterward, there is a noticeable shift away from the multifaceted, subtle, and enthusiastic reception he received at this earlier moment. Mythographic handbooks by Giraldi, Conti, and Cartari sought to codify and define his qualities. Bacchus was often reduced to a drunken figure, a “fat baby” type derived from Silenus, who functioned as a metaphor for vice or folly. Or he stood with Apollo or Minerva as an allegory for *discordia concors*, for harmony in opposition. In fresco cycles, as in the Palazzo Te, Bacchus would be part of grand set-pieces depicting Olympian revels, or as in the Villa Farnesina, reduced to minor depictions of mythological events as part of a larger cycle of *all’antica* decoration. When Caravaggio makes his self-

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<sup>62</sup> Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 159.

<sup>63</sup> Phyllis Pray Bober, “Appropriation Contexts: *Decor, Furor Bacchicus, Convivium*,” in *Antiquity and Its Interpreters*, ed. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, and Rebekah Smick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 229-243.

portraits as Bacchus in the last years of the sixteenth century there is again a glimpse of that complicated, melancholic god that captivated artists more than a hundred years before, but his is an effete, eviscerated god, one who has lost his positive gifts. And Poussin's mythologically complex depictions of the god partake of the Baroque need for archaeological precision and cerebral pretension, which was absent from the earlier unencumbered exploration of antiquity. It is in that earlier Renaissance Bacchus that we find articulated all the multifarious moods and contradictory meanings that were latent within the god and released upon his reawakening.

## Chapter One

**Initiation: The Fifteenth-Century Experience of the Mystery of Bacchus**

*Blessed among men upon the earth is he who has seen these things; but he that is uninitiated in the rites and has no part in them has never an equal lot in the cold place of darkness.*

— *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*<sup>1</sup>

*Who would not long to be initiated into such sacred rites? Who would not desire, by neglecting human concerns, by despising the goods of fortune, and by disregarding those of the body, to become the guest of the gods while yet living on earth, and, made drunk by the nectar of eternity, to be endowed with the gifts of immortality though still a mortal being? Who would not wish to be so inflamed with those Socratic frenzies sung by Plato in the Phaedrus...? Let us be driven, Fathers, let us be driven by the frenzies of Socrates that they may so throw us into ecstasy as to put our mind and ourselves in God.*

— Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*<sup>2</sup>

Once buried by the volcanic eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, which consumed the resort town of Pompeii in 79 A.D., the Villa of the Mysteries now reveals a series of wall paintings depicting the presumed initiation of a woman into the cult of Dionysus (fig. 1.1).<sup>3</sup> Strange and obscure to this day, the imagery seems to demonstrate secret rites and yet leaves inexplicable certain aspects

<sup>1</sup> *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, hymn 2, ll. 480-483, in *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, The Loeb Classical Library, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 16, 233-234.

<sup>3</sup> Earlier known as the Villa Iam, it was discovered in 1909 outside of the walls of Pompeii and displays 28 life-sized figures painted in tempera over a frescoed background. For the villa and its decorations, see Otto J. Brendel, "The Great Frieze in the Villa of the Mysteries," trans. Maria Brendel, in idem, *The Visible Idea: Interpretations of Classical Art* (Washington, DC: Decatur House Press, 1980), 91-138; Karl Lehmann, "Ignorance and Search in the Villa of the Mysteries," *Journal of Roman Studies*, 52 (1962): 62-68; Alan M. G. Little, *A Roman Bridal Drama at the Villa of the Mysteries* (Kennebunk, ME: Star Press, 1972); Jocelyn Toynbee, "The Villa Iam and the Bride's Ordeal," *Journal of Roman Studies* 19 (1929): 67-87; and P. B. Mudie Cooke, "The Paintings of the Villa Iam at Pompeii," *Journal of Roman Studies* 3 (1913): 157-174.

of this ancient mystery religion. The women of the household and their guests are thought to have used this room for their cult gatherings and Bacchic worship, the images telegraphing a parallel heavenly dimension to their earthly practices. There, against a vibrant red background, are Bacchus and Ariadne, maenads, Silenus, and satyrs, as well as human figures posed upon a narrow green stage. By its very nature as a mystery religion, the rites of the cult were kept secret, and the paintings made here could only suggest those rites without explicitly revealing them. But attempting to understand these images places us in a position very much like that of a Renaissance artist or scholar who looked at antiquities and sought to peel away the veil of obscurity and ignorance that kept him from knowing their meaning. These mysteries, alluded to in ancient art and literature, encompassed beliefs and traditions that touched on the most profound experiences of life. They helped their adherents contemplate death and rebirth, encountered metaphorically through the transfigurative sensations of intoxication and expurgatory flagellation. The Bacchic rites delved into the frenzies of love and fear; the powers of music and nature; the passions of womanhood, childbearing, and marriage; and the bliss of transformation into one of the initiated and the *furor* of divine inspiration. The intersection of the human with the divine, as of initiates with mythical creatures, was conveyed through ancient images that could still be seen in the Renaissance, giving a tantalizing glimpse into the mythical world of Bacchus and his cohort of ecstatic followers. And as Pico put it, “Who would not long to be initiated into such sacred rites?”

With the fall of ancient Rome and the rise of Christianity, such rituals and their visual traces were lost, obscured, or suppressed, by human as well as natural means. Those images that survived often confounded their viewers, their meaning shaded by time, misunderstandings, and distortions. Some mythology survived in the sheltering guise of allegory, which had evolved out

of the ancients' own attempts to understand and explain their gods' existence in terms of historical, physical, cosmic, and moral phenomena.<sup>4</sup> Gods became metaphors, real men, or natural substances. During the medieval period, it was largely through such attempts at disempowering pagan beliefs that the raw material of those faiths was coincidentally preserved.<sup>5</sup> Yet some iconography virtually disappeared from view. As Boccaccio prefaced his massive consolidation of facts about the pagan gods: “[T]he huge corpus of gods and noble princes, [had been] torn limb from limb, beaten, and reduced nearly to ashes.”<sup>6</sup> In *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, Jean Seznec observed that, unlike other aspects of pagan myth, “[t]he kingdom of Aphrodite and Bacchus, peopled by nymphs and satyrs, with the Antiope of Correggio and the Ariadne of Titian as its reigning princesses, is in truth a new universe, rediscovered [in the Renaissance] after the lapse of centuries.”<sup>7</sup> Seznec contended that at least with regard to these “profane” and “voluptuous” themes there was truly something inherently different about the

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<sup>4</sup> Jean Seznec described at least four mechanisms for the manipulation, secularization, and consequent preservation of ancient gods: euhemerism, astrology, allegory, and encyclopedias. See *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 11-147. See also Don Cameron Allen, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970).

<sup>5</sup> Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art*, trans. Frances Lobb et al. (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 159. Gregory of Tours disapproved of the allegorical tradition, which in the process of deriving moral lessons from the pagan myths actually ended up preserving them. But despite such protestations, Church Fathers themselves frequently invoked the ancient tales as parables, given that allegory was an essential part of the Bible as well. See Seznec, *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 87-89. The euhemeristic tradition would persist in the fifteenth century, as in the work of Polidoro Virgilio da Urbino (Polydore Vergil), who wrote in the preface to his *De rerum inventiborus* (Venice, 1499) that “whatsoever things may have been attributed by us to Saturn, Jove, Neptune, Dionysus, Apollo, Aesculapius, Ceres, Vulcan, and to such others as have the name of gods, we have thus attributed to them as to mortal men, and not as to gods, even though we still call them by that name” (III.3, as quoted in Seznec, 22). Polidoro groups Bacchus with other forerunners of civilization, as a character who taught men how to make wine.

<sup>6</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* I.preface I.50, trans. Solomon, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Seznec, *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 5. Seznec’s study traces the means by which the less sensual pantheon survived: the planetary deities and heroes. Unlike Panofsky, who observes an eventual reintegration of classical style with its original meaning, Seznec argues that the Renaissance versions of the gods may appear superficially more classical but actually retain a continuous, reiterated tradition of interpretation and meaning inherited from the Middle Ages.

Renaissance period, in contrast with the medieval reticence to confront hedonistic and sensual subjects. In the Renaissance, Seznec asserted, there was a “spiritual revolution,” where “[o]nce again poets dare[d] to sing of ‘*l’amour...*’ and to glorify Desire as master of gods and men.”<sup>8</sup>

Even with love and sensuality as some of their primary traits, Bacchus and his motley band of followers began to reappear in the fifteenth century. We must wonder at what attitudes toward antiquity and art could have spurred artists to engage these voluptuous relics of the past. In part, there was a curiosity about the notion of ancient mystery religion with its hidden codes and secret meanings. As Boccaccio claimed to do in his *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, “this work of mine removes the veil from these inventions, shows that poets were really men of wisdom, and renders their compositions full of profit and pleasure to the reader”<sup>9</sup>; “[Y]ou will see aspects of nature, once shrouded in mystery, that will amaze you....”<sup>10</sup> The Orphic Hymns and the recently rediscovered writings of “Hermes Trismegistus” emphasized this alluring idea of mystic veils cloaking a universal, syncretic wisdom.<sup>11</sup> Pico della Mirandola wrote that

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<sup>8</sup> Seznec, 5. While not focusing on these themes himself, Seznec noted: “Even the games and dances, the idylls and the Bacchic triumphs, whose sole object is apparently to delight the senses and transport the imagination, often embody some meaning or *arrière-pensée*—are intended, in short, as food for the mind” (6).

<sup>9</sup> Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium libri XV.i*, ed. Vincenzo Romano (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1951), vol. 2; trans. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, xv.

<sup>10</sup> *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* I.preface I.45, trans. Solomon, 21. For an early humanist assertion of the secret monotheism of the pagan poets and defense of reading pagan poetry, see Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 295-305.

<sup>11</sup> The first manuscript of the Orphic Hymns brought to Italy came to Venice with Giovanni Aurispa from Constantinople in 1423; Filelfo found another in 1427. Both are since lost. See Athanassakis, introduction to *The Orphic Hymns*, xiii. The Orphic Hymns read as prayerful invocations to one and all gods, with laundry lists of epithets added as hopeful guarantees for winning divine influence. The Corpus Hermeticum arrived in Florence c. 1460 in the hands of Leonardo da Pistoia, a monk who found it in Macedonia for Cosimo de’ Medici (Codex Laurentianus 71.33). In the Renaissance, these writings were believed to house ancient Egyptian wisdom, but they date in fact from the second century A.D. and represent a syncretic, Greek, and Oriental hodge-podge of paganism, which was itself enthralled by an imagined ancient Egyptian religion. Hermes Trismegistus was believed to be a



“Orpheus protect[ed] the mysteries of his dogmas with the coverings of fables, and conceal[ed] them with a poetic veil, so that whoever should read his hymns would suppose there was nothing beneath them beyond idle tales and perfectly unadulterated trifles.”<sup>12</sup> To lift these veils, untie the “knots of riddles,” would reveal to scholars the true wisdom lying hidden therein.<sup>13</sup> The enthusiastic embrace of Hermetic natural magic, with its aspiration to draw down the powers of the cosmos into the physical stuff of the world, and its expression in enlightened ecstasy, reveals an underlying desire in the fifteenth century for passionate mystical experiences, for gnosis.

“There is no latent force in heaven or earth which the magician cannot release by proper inducements,” asserted Pico; this magic “brings forth into the open the miracles concealed in the recesses of the world, in the depths of nature.”<sup>14</sup> Egyptian hieroglyphs, Greek inscriptions, and visual remnants of cultish art objects seemed to them relics and ciphers holding the key to that secret code.<sup>15</sup> The exploration of the ancient world was like a stealthy infiltration of an overarching mystery cult, one they believed could reveal truths about their own faith as well. But with so much hidden or obscured by time and loss, and without the benefit of a priest or guide to perform the initiation, the Renaissance neophyte had to decipher the rituals, rules, and meanings for himself.

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real man, who with some of his uncanny foreshadowings, revealed the truth behind Christianity. See Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 2-19.

<sup>12</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration*, section 37, 253.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, section 34, 250.

<sup>14</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones magicae*, no. 5, and *Oration*, as quoted in Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 110-111.

<sup>15</sup> See Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*; Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, and Rebekah Smick, eds., *Antiquity and its Interpreters*; Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

The Bacchic mysteries may seem a surprising focus for fifteenth-century attention since they presented ideas that appear anathema to a Christian worldview. Here was a god who was multivalent and contradictory, a drunken god who could bring madness and destruction as easily as happiness. This was an ancient deity who seemed to harbor all that was pagan and dangerous in the age before Christ, all that had been eradicated by the Church.<sup>16</sup> But as he was remade through a contemporary lens, Bacchus was allowed to act in all his various modes with an unprejudiced authenticity, which granted him relevance and potency. As we follow the emergent and developing figuration and interpretation of the character of Bacchus over the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, we will see how such a god could come to embody many of the primary struggles, moods, and concepts of this fertile time. In particular, the translation and dissemination of Plato's texts spurred the idea of a unique Bacchic inspiration.<sup>17</sup> An effort to express with visual forms this distinct madness or *furor* would capture the imagination of certain artists, who would manifest an enlightened and elevated evocation of Bacchus. The question of what ideas and works of art emerged from this enthusiasm for the Bacchic figures will be the focus of this dissertation. In this chapter we will appraise the traits of the *rinascita dell'antichità* in the fifteenth century and explore the Renaissance initiation into the Bacchic mysteries. We will consider what was known of the god, his mythology, imagery, and iconography, and what drew artists and their patrons to this numinous figure.

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<sup>16</sup> Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444) gained his reputation preaching against *luxuria* and sloth, as he articulated the main obstacles for fifteenth-century society: "the feminine and feminine power, the body and sexuality in all varieties, the unconquerable allure of paganism, and the failures and limitations of Christianity as a coherent, universally convincing response to the mystery of God and life" (Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons*, 220).

<sup>17</sup> Ficino's translation of and commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* (written in the 1460s and published in 1484) was a key factor in reviving the notion of Bacchic inspiration. See Michael J. B. Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino: A Study of His Phaedrus Commentary, Its Sources and Genesis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

## THE MEDIEVAL INHERITANCE AND RENAISSANCE RENOVATIONS

Bacchus and his followers did not spring fully formed into the Renaissance but emerged after a long and transformative gestation. Even in antiquity, Christian imagery already evoked its shared ideology with Dionysianism by borrowing the grapevine, ivy, wine, wine-press and vat, and putti at the vintage from Bacchic iconography. More than decorative motifs, the evergreen vine and blood-like wine were metaphors for the beliefs held by both religions in a resurrected savior and the hope for a blessed afterlife.<sup>18</sup> The church of Santa Costanza in Rome bore fourth-century mosaics depicting wingless putti harvesting grapes from an elaborate vine or pressing the grapes in a large covered vat, in a typical late antique convergence of Bacchic and Christian iconography, but one which led Renaissance observers to call it the Temple of Bacchus (fig. 1.2).<sup>19</sup> A porphyry sarcophagus once housed there was also decorated with putti at the

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<sup>18</sup> See Francis Legge, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity, Being Studies in Religious History from 330 B.C. to 330 A.D.*, 2 vols. (New York: Peter Smith, 1950), vol. 1, 145-146: "...[B]ut for the rise of Christianity and other religions, there can be little doubt that the whole of Graeco-Roman deities would eventually have merged in Dionysos." Diodorus, *Library* III.lxii.6, relates the story of Dionysus' death at the hands of the Titans and subsequent resurrection to the stages of the vintage: the Titans' slaughtering of Dionysus represents the harvesting of the grapes; their boiling his torn limbs relates to the tradition of boiling wine; and Demeter's reconstituting the god's limbs symbolized how the vine too is restored after pruning. See Constance Gibbons Lee, "Gardens and Gods: Jacopo Galli, Michelangelo's 'Bacchus,' and Their Art Historical Settings," Ph.D. diss. (Brown University, 1981), 108-109. Christianity's fixation on the body and blood of Christ might even have been an appropriation of or coincidence with the older cult's belief in consuming the body of their deity, in the form of his gift of the fruit of the vine and in their practice of *sparagmos*, the ripping apart of live, wild animals, and *omophagia*, the eating of the raw flesh, by which worshippers believed to be taking within themselves the god and his powers. The New Testament liturgy of the Mass, with its ritualized imitation of the Last Supper, also emphasized the important metaphorical role of wine, as it was articulated in Mark 14:23-25: "Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God, and handed it to them; and they all drank from it. Jesus said, 'This is my blood which is poured out for many, my blood which seals God's covenant. I tell you, I will never again drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine in the Kingdom of God.'"

<sup>19</sup> Karl Lehmann cites I. B. Marliani, *Antiquae Romae Topographia Libri Septem* (Rome, 1534) Book VII, chapter 15: "Via Nomentana, citra secundum lapidem, occurrit a sinistra S. Agnetis ecles., prope quam visitur vetustissimum Bacchi Templum, Spherica forma, columnis circumquoque in gyrum dispositis, templique testudinem sustinentibus. Ubi e musivo opere ornamenta picturae et ipsius dei gesta effigiate cernuntur, et Porphyreticum sepulcrum vitibus, et uvis insculptum, quod Bacchi esse multi fabulantur" ("Sta. Costanza," *Art Bulletin* 37 [1995]: 193-196, n. 5).

vintage, and was thought to be the “Tomb of Bacchus” (fig. 1.3).<sup>20</sup> Even if these were pagan works later adapted to Christian use, Christian artists nevertheless began readily adopting the long tendrils of grapevines and the putti harvesting grapes to conceptualize cherubim tending the metaphorical vine of Christ, in evocation of the words of John 15:5: “Ego sum vitis, vos palmites” (fig. 1.4, 5).<sup>21</sup> The grapes naturally alluded to the blood and wine of the Christian Eucharist, and the pagan god’s association with natural fecundity conferred this significance on Christian iconography of garlands, cornucopia, wheat, and fruit borrowed from Bacchic sarcophagi. Early medieval Christians were even capable of reusing ancient sarcophagi themselves as tombs, baptismal fonts, or decorative marble incrustations in the walls of churches.<sup>22</sup> Bacchic sarcophagi showing the Triumph of Bacchus in any form (whether it be after the conquest of India, a wedding triumph with Ariadne, or simply the god and his *thiasos* alone) symbolized the triumph over death, the afterlife of bliss and pleasure suggested by the jovial retinue and the free-flowing wine.<sup>23</sup> This banquet of heaven was an idea compatible with

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<sup>20</sup> It was in fact the tomb of the daughters of Emperor Constantine, Constantina and Helena, which was removed to the Vatican Museums in the eighteenth century.

<sup>21</sup> Clement of Alexandria interpreted Christ saying “I am the vine” to mean that Christ was “the grape trampled for our salvation, the blood of the vine” (as quoted in Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 64). Dempsey adds, “The symbolism of the Bacchic Vindemia is founded in the red blood of the newly pressed vine, and this symbolic equivalence was early adopted in Christian exegesis.”

<sup>22</sup> See Bernard Andreae and Salvatore Settis, eds., *Colloquio sul reimpiego dei sarcofagi romani nel medioevo*, Pisa 5-13 September 1982 (Marburg/Lahn: Verlag des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars, 1984). Marble sarcophagi or pieces thereof were also installed in gardens and palace *cortili* through the Renaissance period. In Rome, to the side of the main door of S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura, there is a large marble chest depicting “putti at the vintage” (*eroti vendemmianti*) which was reused in 1048 to hold the bones of the first pope to be buried in an antique sarcophagus, Damascus II (see Giovanni Agosta et al., “Visibilità e reimpiego: ‘A Roma anche i morti e le loro urne camminano’,” in *Colloquio sul reimpiego*, 159).

<sup>23</sup> See Friedrich Matz, *Die antiken Sarkophagesreliefs, Vol. IV. Die dionysischen Sarkophage*, ed. Friedrich Matz, Carl Robert, and Gerhart Rodenwaldt, 4 parts (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1968-1975), part 1, p. 88. (abbr. after as Matz, *ASR*, IV). Matz interprets the sarcophagus imagery of Bacchus and his *thiasos* as representing the spiritual life to come experienced by those initiated in the Bacchic religion. Robert Turcan asserts that the imagery reveals the nature of the god’s sacred mania or ecstasy, which likewise delivers the initiate’s soul from death (*Les*

the Christian promise of a blessed hereafter. The shared iconography and eschatological ideology made certain Bacchic motifs familiar and more acceptable to Renaissance audiences.

The image of putti at the vintage alluded to the very serious idea of the “angels’ labor filling the communion cup,” at the same time as it evoked the drunken orgies of the Bacchic cult.<sup>24</sup> On an antique relief in Pisa seen by Donatello, putti stomp grapes, fill vats with fruit, sample wine, fall about drunkenly, tease each other, sleep, and urinate (fig. 1.6).<sup>25</sup> Some hold their heads, suffering boozy headaches; others climb on their mates so as to achieve a better reach. Renaissance artists found abundant inspiration in these jubilant and rambunctious sprites. But despite the apparent lightheartedness of the ancient subject, its import was of the highest seriousness, for this drunkenness was intended to be of a spiritual nature, one emulated on earth through the ritualistic consumption of wine but only attained in its spiritual purity on reaching the afterlife. These putti stood for the spirits of the Bacchic initiates who joined in heaven with the godhead in an endless abundant harvest and the joy of an eternal revel. They were also a metaphor, as articulated by Virgil’s second *Georgic*, for the young tender shoots of the vine.<sup>26</sup> As such they would be understood less as embodiments of the sensations of drunkenness as of the “nourishing, life-supporting spirits contained in the fruits of the earth.”<sup>27</sup> And this sense combined with the eschatological, allowing putti at the vintage to transform easily into a

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*sarcophages romains a représentations Dionysiaques: Essai de chronologie et d’histoire religieuse* [Paris: E. de Boccard, 1966], 548). See also Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” 110.

<sup>24</sup> Colin Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini: The Complete Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 205. See Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 55-67.

<sup>25</sup> This relief was known early, as Nanni di Viterbo writes in a letter of 1430 that Donatello had singled it out for its praiseworthy “ispiritegli.” See Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 16 and n.24, 55, and fig. 14.

<sup>26</sup> *Georgics* II.362-396.

<sup>27</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 66.

Christian metaphor for Christ as the vine, his followers as the branches, and Christ as the grape squeezed of its blood as the sacrifice prelude to the Resurrection.<sup>28</sup>

As Colin Eisler has noted, “[s]uch ambiguity, twice blessed by classical authority and Christian doctrine, explains the special popularity of these cheery folk and their leader Bacchus, carefree god of the vine and of healing, with his entourage of satyrs and maenads, centaurs and silenoi.”<sup>29</sup> Jacopo Bellini drew lithe, wingless putti scrambling over an elaborate wooden trellis gathering and mashing now invisible grapes (fig. 1.7).<sup>30</sup> The subject was also popular in engraving (as in an example by the Master of the Tarocchi, fig. 1.8) and in painting (fig. 1.9).<sup>31</sup> Donatello showed juvenile putti gathering grapes in a bronze relief on the triangular base of his sculpture of *Judith and Holofernes*, with scenes of putti drinking from the wine vat and cavorting with a Bacchic term statue on the other two sides.<sup>32</sup> These little nature spirits, or *spiriti naturale*, associated with the fruits of the earth inherently embodied wine’s effects, animating those elements in the grape that ferment and “can invade and take possession of the mind and body, producing progressive sensations of merriment, giddiness, loss of judgment, nausea, and ultimately narcotic sleep.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Consider, for example, the sarcophagus of the Good Shepherds in the Museo Pio Cristiano in the Vatican, in which Christ as the good shepherd stands at the center of a great harvest of grapes from a massive vine teeming with industrious winged infants (fig. 1.4). Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 205.

<sup>30</sup> London Book, fol. 59v, in *ibid.*, pl. 73. Cf. Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, who argues that Bellini’s drawing need not have any narrative or allegorical meaning at all (“‘Subject or Nonsubject’ in a Drawing by Jacopo Bellini,” *Commentari* 24 [1973]: 148-153).

<sup>31</sup> Arthur M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving, Part I: Florentine Engravings and Anonymous Prints of Other Schools* (London: Published for M. Knoedler, NY, by B. Quaritch, Ltd., 1938), vol. 1, E.III.18. Figs. 1.8a-d demonstrate the popularity of the motif. The round painted panel is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

<sup>32</sup> These will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>33</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 55.

Wine and drinking were notable features of many Christian texts, and were often attributed elevated meanings. The story of Christ's miraculous production of wine at the wedding at Cana recalled Dionysus' many wine miracles, including the appearance of a spring of wine on Naxos at the marriage of the god with Ariadne.<sup>34</sup> Stories such as the mocking of the naked and drunken Noah were given typological significance relating to the story of Christ. Noah's consumption of wine was deemed by St. Augustine to be a metaphor for God's adoption of human form.<sup>35</sup> Images of "Christ in the Wine Press" found a particular cultish fascination at times, and articulated literally the idea of Christ as sacrificial grape from which the wine, that is blood, is squeezed.<sup>36</sup> The Cult of the Precious Blood (popular especially in Mantua and carried on despite Pius II's decree banning such worship) pursued a mystic devotion to its relics and worship.<sup>37</sup> Part of this worship entailed a desire to achieve the sensation of being "drunk with

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<sup>34</sup> N. Yalouris, "Mystical Rites of Dionysos and the Miracle of Cana in Galilee," in *Mélanges offerts au Cardinal Louis-Albert Vachon* (Québec: Université Laval, 1989), 582-586. Pliny described the event on the isle of Andros in the *Natural History* II.106. The wedding at Cana of Galilee appears in John 2:1-10.

<sup>35</sup> Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 23.

<sup>36</sup> Fritz Saxl, "Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1939): 349. See also Alois Thomas, *Die Darstellung Christi in der Kelter: Eine theologische und kulturhistorische Studie, zugleich ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Volkskunde des Weinbaus* (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1981), 115 and passim.

<sup>37</sup> A vociferous controversy had arisen around the idea of the Holy Blood, peaking in the 1460s. The question centered on whether Christ's blood itself should be seen as divine. The party lines were taken by the Dominicans and the Franciscans, with the former asserting the blood's divine powers of redemption. In a Bull of 1464 entitled *Ineffabilis* Pope Pius II declared a moratorium on the debate, but it was not until the publication in 1472 on *De Sanguine Christi* (composed in 1467) that Sixtus IV advanced the Franciscan side, arguing that although "the blood of animals in pagan sacrifice prefigured the spilling of Christ's blood, ... mankind had been saved not by the blood of the Redeemer but by his death" (Allan Braham, "The Transformation of Bellini's 'The Blood of the Redeemer,'" *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 2 [1978]: 11). Sixtus wrote: "The expiations of the Old Testament, effected through the blood of slaughtered animals, prefigure the expiation of the sins of mankind by the Blood of Christ through His Death and Passion. That this is so becomes apparent to those reading the glosses to the ninth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews" (as quoted in Leopold D. Ettlinger, *The Sistine Chapel before Michelangelo: Religious Imagery and Papal Primacy* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965], 84). The depiction of a fictive relief showing a satyr participating in an ancient sacrifice on the left side of a parapet in Giovanni Bellini's *The Blood of the Redeemer* (National Gallery, London, c. 1460s) exemplifies how pagan imagery could be used to allude to Christ's sacrifice and, metaphorically, to the sacrifice of the Mass and the Eucharistic wine, which read Christ as having replaced the animal, shedding his own flesh and blood upon the altar, as was reenacted at every mass. See

the blood of Christ.”<sup>38</sup> Certain early Church fathers considered drunkenness to be a metaphor for the experience of true religious ecstasy.<sup>39</sup> The concept of *sobria ebrietas* (or “sober drunkenness”), from the Greek *naphalios methē*, was familiarized by several classical authors. The Jewish philosopher Philo, who by accommodating ancient Greek philosophy to Christianity was a key figure in the allegorization of Old Testament scripture, used the oxymoronic term to describe the spiritual rapture experienced by the soul in leaving the body.<sup>40</sup>

The Renaissance was also bequeathed a long mythographical and allegorical tradition that had functioned to preserve certain elemental facts (and biases) about Bacchus and his followers. The very similarities that Christianity had with Dionysianism may have heightened its desire to purge itself of any pagan taint. There was certainly a fear of “backsliding” into idol worship and primitive superstition, and “pagan” practices were characterized as evil, demonic, and sinful.<sup>41</sup> Drunkenness and dancing were deemed particular vices of the pseudo-converted,

Troy Thomas, “The Pagan Reliefs in Giovanni Bellini’s *Blood of the Redeemer*,” *Studies in Iconography* 10 (1984-1986): 67-78; Ettliger, *The Sistine Chapel Before Michelangelo*, 81-82; Colin Eisler, “The Golden Christ of Cortona and the Man of Sorrows in Italy, Part Two,” *Art Bulletin* 51 (1969): 235-236; Giles Robertson, “The Earlier Work of Giovanni Bellini,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 23 (1960): 46, 48.

<sup>38</sup> Saxl, “Pagan Sacrifice,” 350.

<sup>39</sup> See Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 25; see also Ronald M. Steinberg, “Fra Bartolomeo, Savonarola and a Divine Image,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 18 (1974): 319-328, regarding Fra Savonarola’s use of the analogy of drunkenness to the divine *furor* of the union with God.

<sup>40</sup> See Alexander Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 94. It was an idea that would be picked up by Saints Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. See for example Ambrose’s interpretation of Psalm 103 and 35 and Song of Songs 5:1

<sup>41</sup> Ken Dowden, *European Paganism: The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 152, 159-160; J. M. Wheeler, *Paganism in Christian Festivals* (London: The Pioneer Press, 1932), 21: “It is difficult for Christians to realize how close was the resemblance which the rites adopted by the Church in honour of Christ’s resurrection bore to those practiced by the Greeks, Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, Hindoos, and many other nations in honour of the god of resurrection, under the names of Adonis, Dionysos, Thammuz, Osiris, Krishna, etc.” Many purportedly Christian holidays were aligned with pagan festivities and traditions, like the placement of Christmas near the winter solstice and the Saturnalia and Feast of Janus. The Feast of St. John the Baptist coincided with the summer solstice and May Day continued as a festival of jollity and raucous celebrating, which linked it to the pagan rites of Dionysus Sabazius (Wheeler, 36, 43).



and their abandonment was ordered in the name of a purer Christianity. As Maximus of Turin bemoaned in his sermon of c. 410 A.D.:

And so, anyone who wants to share in the divine should not be a comrade of idols. It is joining the idol to inebriate the mind with wine, to distend the stomach with food, to rack the limbs with dancing and to be so engaged in wicked actions that you are forced into ignorance of the nature of God.... If we are the temple of God, why is festivity of idols worshipped in the temple of God? Why where Christ lives, who is abstinence, temperance and chastity, do we introduce feasting, drunkenness and debauchery?<sup>42</sup>

Just as drunkenness led the Israelites to set up their golden idol in Exodus 32:6, Christians were in danger of falling into pagan error if they indulged in wine and its concomitant vice, sex.<sup>43</sup> The idea of sin became part of Christian ethics, which inculcated a notion of shame and a distrust of the body.<sup>44</sup> The suppression of the body and its senses was the antithesis of Bacchic ecstasy, which had sought out the experience of the divine through the material, physical, and emotional sensations of the body. In the Christian code, those experiences became known as *voluptas* and *luxuria*: pleasure and lust, passion and excess, wantonness and dissolution.

Popular beliefs, fostered by Christianity itself, were pervaded with notions of demons and devils that threatened and infiltrated daily life. Evocative of suppressed Bacchic energies and mysticism, traditional folklore and songs reiterated age-old themes of magic, lust, and treachery.

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<sup>42</sup> Sermon 63.1, as quoted in Dowden, *European Paganism*, 156-157.

<sup>43</sup> Caesarius, Archbishop of Arles from 502-542 A.D., Sermon 46.5: "What sort of Christian is that who scarcely ever comes to church, and when he does, doesn't stand in the church or pray for his sins.... [A]fter he has got drunk, he rises to dance (*ballare*) like a frenetic madman in a diabolical way, to dance (*saltare*), to sing shameful, amatory, indulgent (*luxuriosa*) words. This sort of man would not hesitate to commit theft or fear to engage in adultery, to give false evidence, to curse, to perjure" (as quoted in *ibid.*, 162-163).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 163. See also Carl Nordenfalk, "The Five Senses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 48 (1985): 1-22.

Meanwhile, itinerant preachers railed against intemperance and luxury.<sup>45</sup> Though not a new fear by any means, a dread of the consequences of sensual and material excess was amplified during the fifteenth century, in part a reaction to the devastations of plague and war but no doubt exacerbated by contemporary interest in sensuous, secular, and arguably un-Christian themes. The intoxicated maenad might evoke an hysterical woman, or—worse still—someone possessed, her body taken over by the devil. The mounting numbers of nude bodies traipsing through Quattrocento art undoubtedly aroused anxiety.<sup>46</sup>

From Bernardino da Siena in the 1420s to Savonarola in the 1490s, “bonfires of the vanities,” or *bruciamenti delle vanità*, periodically consumed “immoral” objects, including feminine cosmetics and accessories, gambling devices, carnival decorations, and musical instruments, as well as music and writings (even those of famous authors such as Boccaccio, Dante, and Petrarch), paintings, prints, and sculptures deemed immodest or indecent. Savonarola was convinced that “humanity [was] given over to the base pleasures of vile bodies and to sensuous, material waste.”<sup>47</sup> He censured the new artistic style not only for displaying bodies in a sensual and naturalistic way but also for having turned too heavily to mythological subjects and

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<sup>45</sup> See Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 149; Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers: Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) and Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444)* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2001); Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons*; Ronald M. Steinberg, *Fra Girolamo Savonarola, Florentine Art, and Renaissance Historiography* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1977); Martines, *Fire in the City*.

<sup>46</sup> A true backlash against the depiction of the nude would not become firmly established until the Counter-Reformation. The acceptance of the nude form in the visual arts until then extended well back into medieval times, and was not exclusively an advent of the revival of antiquity in the Quattrocento. See Michael Baxandall, “A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d’Este: Angelo Decembrio’s *De Politia Litteraria* Pars LXVIII,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26 (1963): 308; Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Paperback Edition, 1984).

<sup>47</sup> Martines, *Fire in the City*, 10.

motifs, sweeping aside Christian subjects, or worse, depicting both side by side.<sup>48</sup> While Savonarola's vitriolic campaign ultimately failed and led to his execution for heresy in 1498, the underlying doubts he aroused never fully went away.

Yet it was the Church's own allegorical methods that had allowed so much about the pagan gods to be remembered. When scholars and Church Fathers alike began investing pagan figures with typological significance or dissecting the origins of mythologies through etymological analysis, they unintentionally ensured that the gods did not fall into oblivion.<sup>49</sup> They sought to explain the features of the gods according to a logical, allegorical scheme that related everything to a Christian moral world view. But it was this faith that the ancient deities were merely personifications of abstract or natural phenomena or ideas that would at first allow the Renaissance artist to reinvest such creatures with their antique appearance. Because the gods were no longer real, no longer in danger of threatening Christian hearts and minds with pagan worship or belief, they were deemed harmless.<sup>50</sup> It was as if they had been exorcized.

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<sup>48</sup> Steinberg, *Fra Girolamo Savonarola*, 18.

<sup>49</sup> The particular prevalence of a belief in astral magic, formulated by Arab philosophers in the Middle Ages and then brought West through translations from the Arabic in the twelfth century, perpetuated in particular the memory of the seven planetary gods: Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. These seven planets could be related in number and character to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit or the seven Beatitudes, doctrines advanced by St. Ambrose and of particular importance in the Middle Ages. But Bacchus, though an Olympian, was not a planet. Consequently, in many Medieval discourses or in early attempts at illustrating or depicting the pagan pantheon, Bacchus does not appear, since those efforts centered on the gods of whom most was known and who retained the most relevance for a society that came to be strongly influenced by a belief in astrology and cosmology. Certain gods had also been linked through centuries of analysis with the four humors, and thus this humoral theory and its concomitant notion of the four temperaments helped perpetuate Saturn (the melancholic disposition), Mars (the choleric), Venus (the phlegmatic), and Jupiter (the sanguine). See Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, Part II, esp. 127, 179-180; Seznev, *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, passim.

<sup>50</sup> Paul Holberton, "Of Antique and Other Figures: Metaphor in Early Renaissance Art," *Word and Image* 1 (1985), passim. As Pico della Mirandola would later write: "The names of the gods of whom Orpheus sings are not those of fraudulent demons, from whom evil and no good comes, but they are the names of the qualities of nature and of God" ("Nomina deorum, quos Orpheus canit, non decipientium daemonium, a quibus malum et non bonum provenit, sed naturalium virtutum divinarumque sunt nomina") (*Opera Omnia* [Basle, 1572], i, p. 106, as quoted by Holberton, 35).

The medieval mythographic tradition used allegorical, euhemeristic, historical, and etymological interpretations to explain the pagan gods.<sup>51</sup> Proceeding from works such as Albricus' *Liber imaginum deorum* and Petrarch's *Africa*, Petrus Berchorius sought to describe all the gods in an "orderly manner" in his eminently popular *Ovidius moralizatus*, one in a long line of *Ovides moralisés*.<sup>52</sup> By emphasizing that "some natural truth is hidden beneath the fables," he helped legitimize the reading of authentic texts—despite his allegorizing of those texts:<sup>53</sup>

[B]ecause I have seen that Scriptures use fables to communicate natural or historical truths, it has seemed proper to me that after my moralization of the properties of things and of the works of nature I moralize the fables of poets so that through man-made fictions I may be able to confirm the mysteries of morals and faith. For, if he is able, a man may collect grapes

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<sup>51</sup> Some of the most prominent earlier works in the genre (which formed the basis of much of the medieval commentaries to follow) were Hyginus' *Fabulae* (not actually by him and compiled in the second century), Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid* (early fifth century), the *Narrationes* of pseudo-Lactantius, Macrobius' *Saturnalia* (late fourth/early fifth century), Fulgentius' *Mythologiae* (sixth century), and Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* (c. 600). Fulgentius included allegorizations of Ovid and depended heavily on etymology. Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) included a chapter entitled "De diis gentium" in his work the *Etymologiae*, or *Origines*. This chapter was repeated nearly verbatim in a work of Rabanus Maurus entitled *De rerum naturis*, and included an entry on Bacchus. See Robert Edwards, "The Heritage of Fulgentius," in *The Classics in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. S. Bernardo and S. Levin (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1990), 141-151; Alan Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3-31.

<sup>52</sup> See William Donald Reynolds, "The *Ovidius Moralizatus* of Petrus Berchorius: An Introduction and Translation," Ph.D. diss. (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1971), 35-36; Ernest H. Wilkins, "Descriptions of Pagan Divinities from Petrarch to Chaucer," *Speculum* 32 (1957): 511-522. Berchorius's *Ovidius moralizatus* was composed in Latin prose c. 1340-1342. Albricus (the so-called Third Vatican Mythographer, identified perhaps as Alexander Neckham of London) composed his book c. 1200. For the phenomenon of the *Ovide moralisé*, see Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 78 n. 2. Berchorius, otherwise known as Pierre Bersuire, was a contemporary of Petrarch, whom he knew in Avignon and whose *Africa* was an important influence and source (though that text does not include a treatment of Bacchus). His *Ovidius moralizatus* was actually Book 15 of a larger compendium entitled the *Reductorium Morale*, but was already separated as an independent volume by c. 1340. His first chapter, on the appearance of the gods, *De formis figurisque deorum*, was ultimately disseminated around the year 1400 in an independent volume, known as the *Libellus de imaginibus deorum*. The *De formis* included descriptions of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Venus, Mercury, Diana, Minerva, Juno, Cybele, Neptune, Pan, Bacchus, Pluto, Vulcan, Hercules, and Aesculapius. The *Libellus* had twice the entries minus the moralizations, making it a handy sourcebook. See Reynolds, 13-19; Wilkins, "Descriptions of Pagan Divinities," 519-520. Rivalled only by Boccaccio's, Berchorius's *ekphraseis* "constituted the most important source of information wherever classical divinities had to be depicted or described" (Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, n. 2 on p. 79).

<sup>53</sup> Berchorius, *De formis figurisque deorum*, trans. Reynolds, "The *Ovidius Moralizatus* of Petrus Berchorius," 33.

from thorns, suck honey from rocks, take oil from the hardest rock....  
Ovid says that it is proper to be taught by an enemy.<sup>54</sup>

Although he viewed the god as a pagan enemy, Berchorius described Bacchus fairly accurately as the god of wine, having the appearance of a boy with the face of a woman, being semi-nude, horned, crowned with vines, and riding tigers.<sup>55</sup> These features he took point by point, first through negative moralization as metaphors for aspects of drunkenness and the drunken man (with a plethora of biblical quotations to support his analogies), and then with positive allegories, giving analogies with more godly virtues. In the case of the former, Bacchus' physical traits marked certain vices: horns—the pride of a drunkard; the body of a boy—the ignorance of drunks; a womanly face—the lust for women stirred up in drunken men or the debilitation of drunks, which makes them womanly; nudity—the inability of drunken men to keep secrets or the poverty induced by drunkenness.<sup>56</sup> Then Berchorius offered the flipside of his interpretations:

Or, for a good explanation, say that wine is the grace of God or the fervor of the Holy Spirit. He is called a boy because of purity, and woman-like because of piety, nude because of truth, and horned because of authority. He rides on tigers—that is demons and tyrants—by treading them under foot. He is crowned with a vine—that is with the cross of Christ—by meditating on the passion. He is called Dionysius [sic]—that is 'separated from' or 'Fleeing eagerly'—by shunning the world and sins and by patiently sustaining the evil judgments of others.<sup>57</sup>

The rapid oscillation between negative and positive allegories is characteristic of Berchorius's compilatory style. A meaning for horns, for example, appears also in the entry for Diana, where there is a description of satyrs:

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<sup>54</sup> Berchorius, *De formis figurisque deorum*, 33-34.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-99.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

Bands of satyrs—that is sinners who in the field of this world are considered gods and eminent personages and who are called ‘horned’ because of their pride—should dance and run about while seeking from her kindness and mercy and imploring help against demons and sins. So in the Church is sung: ‘We run to the odor of your ointments. The young maidens who loved you greatly.’ Or say also that the satyrs, the gods of the fields, are prelates and especially bishops who wear horns—that is mitres—who should run around Diana—that is the Blessed Virgin—by obeying her devoutly. They should also frequent her altar because of devotion, affection, and obedience and say the words of Cantic of Canticles 1:3: ‘Draw me: we will run after you to the odor of your ointments.’<sup>58</sup>

The translation of a satyr into a bishop is unexpected, yet typical of how medieval mythographers could derive Christian meaning from ancient myth. Berchorius gave Bacchus’ ivy a positive evaluation, and concluded of his inebriation: “Through Bacchus who is drunk is perceived the true faith which makes the servants of Christ drunk with the fervor of devotion.”<sup>59</sup>

Bacchus could even be a type for Christ:

Or say that Bacchus is Christ who is called fire-born and twice-born. Deuteronomy 4:24: ‘Our God is a consuming fire.’ He was born twice, from His Father to divinity and from His mother to humanity. Wound up in ivy—that is in human flesh—He is given to the nymphs—that is to holy souls in the sacrament of the altar and is very devoutly accepted by them through faith and is nourished with the milk of devotion.<sup>60</sup>

The medieval mythographic tradition culminated in Boccaccio’s *Genealogia deorum gentilium* (*Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*). Boccaccio adduced knowledge derived from ancient literature to build, correct, and modify the hand-me-down descriptions.<sup>61</sup> His liberal use of

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<sup>58</sup> Berchorius, *De formis figurisque deorum*, 76.

<sup>59</sup> Berchorius, *Ovidius Moralizatus*, gloss on *Metamorphoses* III.260ff, in *ibid.*, 189.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-190.

<sup>61</sup> This highly serious humanist work in Latin would stand in contrast to his earlier vernacular fiction. See Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 174. See also Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, introduction. Boccaccio worked on this enormous task throughout his later life, beginning sometime between 1340 and 1350, with books 1-13 likely in a completed state by 1360. Books 14-15, which stood as an almost independent defense of

classical quotations and his scholiast's desire for completeness created a virtual mythographic encyclopedia, which would not be superseded until the publication of the great mythographies of the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Boccaccio's descriptions nevertheless remained indebted to medieval precedent, and because of its predominant popularity over the next two centuries, his *Genealogy* served to perpetuate that tradition for much longer.<sup>63</sup> His descriptions afford a step-by-step review of the various interpretive methods, offering historical and naturalistic as well as allegorical and Christian explications. Indeed, much of the allegorical interpretation of Bacchus parses the god's myths and attributes into moralistic metaphors for the effects of drinking wine, a tack logically derived from the primary identification of Bacchus as the god of wine.<sup>64</sup> "Lynxes are attributed to him, so that we understand that wine taken in moderation increases our strength, boldness, and perspicacity. Tigers draw his chariot so that we see the savagery of drunks, for someone heavy with wine spares no one."<sup>65</sup> The epithets of the god are related to qualities of wine, as in the lines: "First he is called Bacchus because it means the same as 'furor,' for wine, and especially new wine, has such burning furor that it cannot be held in any container and fills

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poetry, were therefore likely later. The *Genealogia* became highly influential in the following centuries. In his chapter on Bacchus (Book V.xxv), Boccaccio cited numerous classical and late antique sources by name, including Ovid, Statius (first century A.D.), Accius (170-86 B.C.), Servius, Eusebius (a Greek Christian, 260-340 A.D.), Pomponius Mela (Spanish, first century A.D.), Orosius (fifth century A.D.), Seneca the Younger (first century A.D.), Macrobius, Fulgentius, Lactantius, Varro, Tullius, and Virgil.

<sup>62</sup> Such as Giraldi's *De deiis gentium historia* (1548), Conti's *Mythologiae* (1551), and Cartari's *Imagini de i dei* (1556).

<sup>63</sup> Reynolds, "The *Ovidius Moralizatus* of Petrus Berchorius," 23: "It looks backward more than it does forward."

<sup>64</sup> For example, Boccaccio wrote that Bacchus is said to dress like a woman because drinking too much makes men weak; that he is nude because drunks reveal all their secrets or have drunk themselves into poverty or are too hot; that he is boyish because drunkards are cheerful and like youths, do not have their full intellect, recalling Berchorius' interpretations. *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, V.xxv.25, trans. Solomon, 719.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, section 18, pp. 714-715: "Lynxes autem illi attribuuntur, ut intelligatur vinum moderate sumptum vires, audaciam et perspicaciam augere. Tygres autem ideo currum trahunt, ut ebriorum ostendatur sevitia. Nemini enim parcat onustus vino."

those consuming it immoderately with furor, as said before,” associating the god with the idea of frenzy.<sup>66</sup>

He was aware that Bacchus could be seen as young and effeminate: “The ancients used to depict him in the clothing of a woman as well as nude and boylike, and they celebrated his rite nocturnally with flutes and cymbals and shouting, and they used to call this an orgy.”<sup>67</sup> He noted that in addition to the grapevine and wine, Bacchus was associated with ivy—and poets:

In addition they say that ivy was sacred to Bacchus. I believe this was because their vines produce an abundance of shoots and ivy berries are similar to the berrylike grapes, and because it remains green in perpetual verdure; in this way wine reveals its continuous youth, for wine never grows old insofar as its power is concerned. Also, poets used to be crowned with it because they were sacred to Bacchus on account of their eloquence, and because this demonstrated the long life of their poetry.<sup>68</sup>

By noting Bacchus’ affinity with frenzy and poetry, Boccaccio introduced a more accurate and influential reading of the god, one that would have a significant impact on his manifestation in the following century. In addition, he noted that Bacchus was associated with Nysa, one of the two peaks of Parnassus.<sup>69</sup> He cited that purification was part of the rites of the god, with inebriated vomiting paralleled by a spiritual purification, “like grains by a winnowing basket.”<sup>70</sup> And

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<sup>66</sup> *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, section 26, pp. 718-719: “Dicitur igitur primo Bachus, quod idem sonat quod ‘furor,’ eo quod vinum, et potissime novum, tam ferventis furoris est, ut nullo queat clastro continere, et immoderate sumentes, ut predictum est, facit etiam furiosos.”

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, V.xxv, section 8, trans. Solomon, pp. 706-709: “Pingebant etiam eum antiqui in habitu muliebri, et nudum atque puerulum, ei nocturno tempore tybiis et cymbalis et clamore sacrum, quod orgia vocabant, celebrantes.”

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, section 20, pp. 716-717: “Ederam preterea Bacho sacram dicunt, credo quia vites edere tramites luxuriantes plurimum et botros uvarum imitentur corimbi, nec non quia vireat viriditate perpetua, per quam ostenditur vini iuventus continua; nunquam enim quantum ad vires senescit vinum. Hac etiam poete coronari consuevere, eo quod Bacho ob facundiam sacri sint, et ad perpetuitatem carminum demonstrandam.”

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, section 29, p. 721.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, section 21, p. 717.



Boccaccio also unveiled the soteriological significance of the god, relating Dionysian ideas of resurrection to Christian ones.<sup>71</sup>

What made Boccaccio's study unique among medieval mythographies was his faith in his antique literary sources. He "regards poetry, classical antiquity, and mythology, as pretty much one and the same thing, a deep and abounding source of civilization and spiritual energy; and his task is to defend, explain, and revive this regenerating power."<sup>72</sup> Consequently, Boccaccio included sections on Bacchus, Ariadne, Pan, and satyrs with an honesty and inclusiveness that, while attempting to extract Christian implications from the ancient gods, did not shrink away from explaining their more sensual characteristics. As Boccaccio argued, the deeds of the pagan gods might be bad, but the poetry is good. Reading that poetry, or looking at antiquities, would not make one into a pagan:

[P]oetry does not... deserve universal condemnation, since it offers us so many inducements to virtue, in the monitions and teaching of poets whose care it has been to set forth with lofty intelligence, and utmost candor, in exquisite style and diction, men's thoughts on things of heaven. [...] Such then is the power of fiction that it pleases the unlearned by its external appearance, and exercises the minds of the learned with its hidden truth; and thus both are edified and delighted with one and the same perusal. [...] [O]ne can never escape the conviction that great men, nursed with the milk of the Muses, brought up in the very home of philosophy, and disciplined in sacred studies, have laid away the very deepest meaning in their poems....<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> See Lee, "Gardens and Gods," 127. Boccaccio was aware of Bacchus being a "resurrected" god from his reading of ancient sources (including the stories of his being torn to pieces by the Titans), but the fact that Bacchus was in some way related to the ancients' idea of an afterlife would also have been conveyed later by the presence of Bacchic imagery on sarcophagi, the ancient tombs of the dead on which were depicted hopes for a happy life after death.

<sup>72</sup> Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, introduction, xvi.

<sup>73</sup> Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium* Book XIV.vi, .ix, .x, trans. Osgood, 38-39, 51, 54.

This levelheaded approach would induce others to take up the study of ancient sources and works of art for themselves, and not to regard them as something rife with peril, to be feared and bowdlerized.<sup>74</sup>

Boccaccio's attitude toward classical literature and especially poetry represented a significant step in the legitimization of the study of antiquity and the drive for authenticity. His defense of poetry at the end of his *Genealogia* justified the reading of ancient texts not solely for extracting Latin grammar or perfecting rhetoric, but for the pure joy of language and the stimulation of the imagination. Poetry he called "a sort of fervid and exquisite invention, with fervid expression, in speech or writing, of that which the mind has invented. It proceeds from the bosom of God.... [...] This fervor of poesy is sublime in its effects; it impels the soul to a longing for utterance...."<sup>75</sup> He likewise instructed the poet-scholar to study "the monuments and relics of the ancients."<sup>76</sup> Ultimately, Boccaccio's conviction that antique poetry and art could help stimulate new masterpieces would become a rallying cry for humanists and likeminded artists in the fifteenth century.

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<sup>74</sup> For example, Boccaccio bravely tackled aspects of phallic ritual associated with Bacchus in antiquity, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, V.xxv.35: "Sed quicumque hic fuerit Liber, ostendit Augustinus in libro De Civitate Dei, ei a priscis obscena celebrata sacra, et inter alia dicit, quod eius in honorem pudenda virilia colebantur in patulo, adeo ut festis diebus Liberi membrum virilem elevatum ex compitis deferretur in urbem, verbis flagitiosissimis omni concessa licentia; inde per forum transvectum, et in lucum eidem deputatum depositum, oportebat ut honestissima omnium mater familias illi coronam imponeret" ("But whichever Liber this was, Augustine reveals in his City of God that the ancients celebrated obscene rites to him, and among other things he says that in his honor masculine genitals were worshipped in public to the extent that on the festival days of Liber a masculine member was lifted from the crossroads and carried into the city, and every license was given to use the most disgraceful words; after it was transported from there into the forum and deposited in a grove reserved for it, the most reputable mother of all was obliged to put a crown on it") (pp. 724-725).

<sup>75</sup> Boccaccio, Book XIV.vii, trans. Osgood, 39: "fervor quidam exquisite inveniendi, atque dicendi, seu scribendi quod inveneris."

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, Book XIV.vii, trans. Osgood, xxviii.

As part of their endeavor to master classical style, humanists read texts previously deemed less edifying, and envisioned an idyllic antique world in which *voluptas* reigned. In 1424 Guarino da Verona praised those who could write with the gravity of Virgil but also with the “elegance of style and aptness of speaking of the comic, lascivious, satirical and wanton writers.”<sup>77</sup> While some educators may have held up the texts of the latter as negative moral exempla, it is clear that many took pleasure and found artistry in those works.<sup>78</sup> Boccaccio bemoaned his weakness in Greek, but the turn of the next century would see numerous tutors enter Italy and disseminate this new key with which to unlock ancient literature. Travelers to Byzantium returned with manuscripts bearing complete works of Aristotle and Plato hitherto unknown in the West. As readers sought out more and better examples of Latin texts, the works of Ovid, Catullus, Horace, Propertius, Plautus, Terence, and Virgil could be read in unadulterated editions, their original language unsullied and intact.<sup>79</sup> Avid reading stimulated

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<sup>77</sup> Guarino’s speech praising Zeno, Bishop of Verona: “lascivos comicos et porcaces satyros stili suavitate et orationis decore redolent et mirum in modum effingunt” (as quoted in Campbell, “*Sic in amore furens*,” 148).

<sup>78</sup> A manuscript of Catullus, including his *Carmina* recounting the tale of Bacchus and Ariadne is known to have been in Verona, Guarino’s birthplace, and in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice. Eisler, *Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 204.

<sup>79</sup> The fifteenth century saw the first comprehensive translation of the Platonic oeuvre, including texts of the ancient Neoplatonists such as Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, and the so-called Dionysius the Areopagite. While some of the Greek manuscripts of Plato had been known in a haphazard way, they had for centuries been unreadable in the Latin West and were understood only through glosses and secondary quotations. Dante, for example, referred indirectly to Platonic ideas of Love and Beauty through the intermediary of Plutarch and others, but had never himself read the original texts. The teachings of Aristotle, on the other hand, preserved via a different route of provenance from the Arabic and Spanish worlds, had retained through the Middle Ages the status of authority, with his philosophy becoming the mainstay of Scholastic education. But with the arrival in Florence at the end of the Trecento of Manuel Chrysoloras (1350-1415) and others, Greek studies finally took hold in Italy. By the 1420s the discoveries of Greek manuscripts by Filelfo and Poggio Bracciolini, among others, and of those imported from the East by the book collector Giovanni Aurispa, had quickly expanded the knowledge of pagan literature. In 1423 Aurispa brought back to Florence 238 volumes (some likely duplicates) of Greek texts from his searches East, including a complete Plato manuscript. Filelfo had a library of 40 Greek works. Leonardo Bruni translated six of Plato’s dialogues into Latin, including the *Phaedrus* (up to 257C) and part of the *Symposium* (215a-222a). In 1435 Pallo Strozzi took his Greek library with him to Padua upon his exile from Florence, thereupon establishing another stronghold for the study of Greek. In Venice, Cardinal Bessarion sought to amass the first truly complete library of Greek literature, which he gifted to the Republic in 1468. The efforts of such classical book hunters achieved a complete library of Plato’s writings, and the impact of Greek teachers in Italy allowed for the first time for these

fervent looking, and the interrelatedness of mythology, poetry, and art seeped into the Renaissance consciousness.

## FIRST VISUAL ENCOUNTERS

In 1407, Vasari tells us, Donatello passed through a church in Cortona on his way back to Florence from Rome, where he was captivated by a remarkable ancient sarcophagus, which depicts a battle between Bacchus and the Amazons (fig. 1.10).<sup>80</sup> When Brunelleschi in turn heard about the sarcophagus's craftsmanship, he:

became fired with an ardent desire to see it, and went off on foot just as he was... , without saying where he was going, and allowed himself to be carried to Cortona by the devotion and love that he bore to art. And having seen the sarcophagus, and being pleased with it, he made a drawing of it with the pen, and returned with that to Florence... [,] whereat Donato marvelled not a little, seeing how much love Filippo bore to art.<sup>81</sup>

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texts to be translated into Latin and therefore approached directly and without mediating interpreters. See L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 148; N. G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (London: Duckworth, 1992); Michael J. B. Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer* (Los Angeles: University of California Press and the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, UCLA, 1981), 5; John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love: The Context of Giordano Bruno's Eroici furori* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 21, 68; Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci*; Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), chaps. 1-2; Oronzo Pecere and Michael D. Reeve, eds., *Formative Stages of Classical Traditions: Latin Texts from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1995).

<sup>80</sup> Museo Diocesano, Cortona. Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 237. See Anna Maria Maetzke, ed., *Il Museo Diocesano di Cortona* (Florence: Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, 1992), 19-24; Antonio Paolucci, "The Cortona Sarcophagus: Donatello and Brunelleschi at the Start of the Renaissance," in *In the Light of Apollo: Italian Renaissance and Greece*, ed. Mina Gregori (Athens: Silvana Editoriale, 2003), 181. The sarcophagus is thought to have been found in 1240 and was used within the church to hold the remains of the Blessed Guido Vagnotelli.

<sup>81</sup> Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Brunelleschi," in *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Everyman's Library, 1996), vol. 1, 332-333. Idem, *Le Vite*, ed. G. Milanesi, vol. 2, 339-340: "nel passar poi da Cortona, entrò in Pieve e vide un pilo antico bellissimo, dove era una storia di marmo, cosa allora rara, non essendosi disotterrata quella abbondanza che si è fatta ne'tempi nostri: e così seguendo Donato il modo che aveva usato quel maestro a condurre quell'opera, e la fine che vi era dentro, insieme con la perfezione e bontà di magisterio; accessesi Filippo di una ardente volontà di vederlo, che così come egli era in mantello ed in cappuccio ed in zoccoli, senza dir dove andasse, si partì da loro a piedi, e si lasciò portare a Cortona dalla volontà ed amore che portava all'arte; e veduto e piaciotogli il pilo, lo ritrasse con la penna in disegno, e con quello tornò a Fiorenza...." See also Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, introduction, 27-28, and

Vasari tells this story as part of his narrative-building enterprise, in which he reveled in constructing and elaborating tales of artistic competition and emulation. But the antiquity of the object and its imagery are important subtexts to the invention of these artists' identities. Why were Donatello and Brunelleschi so excited by what they saw there?

The Cortona sarcophagus shows a vigorously lunging Bacchus standing in his chariot, nude but for a *nebris* about his torso and a mantle wound around his left arm. Victory advances nearby, while battle-ready centaurs pull the god into the fray. Nude warriors, fallen victims, and embattled Amazons and their horses fill the rest of the scene: a compact display of bodies in action, interwoven in a two-dimensional space. It is no wonder that the relief sparked the admiration, and fantasy, of two artists dedicated to the study of the antique.<sup>82</sup> We know that they had previously undertaken an extended sojourn in Rome, where they became known as “treasure-hunters” because of their digging and measuring.<sup>83</sup> Vasari proclaimed that

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cat. 144. It was not unusual to find ancient sarcophagi in and around churches, where they were inserted into the walls as usable stone or decoration, or were reused as altars and tombs. See Andreae and Settis, *Colloquio sul reimpiego dei sarcofagi*; Isa Ragusa, “The Re-Use and Public Exhibition of Roman Sarcophagi During the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance,” M.A. thesis (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1951); Heckscher, “Relics of Pagan Antiquity.”

<sup>82</sup> Donatello used the masks on the corners of the lid to this sarcophagus as inspiration for his St. Louis tabernacle on Orsanmichele.

<sup>83</sup> They were in Rome from around 1402 to 1406. Vasari says the people in Rome believed they were practicing geomancy in order to find buried treasure: *Le Vite*, vol. 2, 337-338: “...Filippo e Donato...risolverono insieme partirsi di Fiorenza, ed a Roma star qualche anno, per attender Filippo all’architettura e Donato alla scultura. [...] Tutte le volte nell’antico aveva notato e disegnato, e sopra ciò del continuo studiava; e se per avventura eglino avessino travato sotterrati pexxi di capitelli, colonne, cornici e basamenti di edifizj, eglino mettevano opere e gli facevano cavare, per toccare il fondo. Per il che si era sparsa una voce per Roma,...gli chiamavano quelli del tesoro; credendo i popoli, che fussino persone che attendessino alla geomanzia per ritrovare tesori: e di ciò fu cagione l’aver eglino trovato un giorno una brocca antica di terra, piena di medaglie.” These Roman explorations are also described in Antonio Manetti’s “Life of Filippo di Ser Brunellesco”: “...[T]ogether they made rough drawings of almost all the buildings in Rome and in many places in the environs, with the measurements.... In many places they had excavations done.... [A]t that time no one gave any thought to the [ancient method of building, nor had for hundreds of years.... [T]hey were generally called the treasure-men, in the belief that they were spending treasures and seeking them. [...] It is true that sometimes, although seldom, one finds in such excavations medals of silver and even of gold, and also carved gems, calcedons, cameos, and similar stones. That was the source of the belief that

Brunelleschi's efforts rendered his genius (*ingegno*) "very well able to see Rome, in imagination, as she was when she was not in ruins."<sup>84</sup> While the implied competition between these artists is at the forefront of Vasari's narrative, he at the same time suggests that ancient art served as inspiration for the novel Quattrocento style of which they were the founders.

We have further testimony that Donatello studied Bacchic reliefs in a letter of 1430 from Nanni di Viterbo to Matteo Strozzi, attesting that Donatello saw antiquities in Lucca and Pisa: "Qua si dicie che gliè il campo a Lucha e che sono ante chastela, s'io fusi chostà andr'io tra Pisa e Lucha a tore due sipolture antiche che vi sono ispiritegli alluna, allaltro è la storia di Baccho. Donato l'a lodate per cose buone, sarebbe agievole averle."<sup>85</sup> The relief in Pisa overflows with little putti playing with various Bacchic cult objects and drinking wine from a large vat (fig. 1.6 and 11).<sup>86</sup> The sarcophagus he saw in Lucca is likely the one now in the Palazzo dell'Arcivesovcado showing a Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, who ride on a wagon pulled by centaurs surrounded by barely dressed maenads and satyrs (fig. 1.12).<sup>87</sup> It is easy to deduce the influence such pieces had on the creator of the Prato pulpit and Florentine Cantoria,

they were digging for treasure" (excerpted in Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, ed., *A Documentary History of Art: Volume I, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981], 178-179).

<sup>84</sup> *Lives*, vol. 1, 332; *Le Vite*, vol. 2, 338: "...fu tale questo studio, che rimase il suo ingegno capacissimo di poter vedere nella immaginazione Roma, come ella stava quando non era rovinata."

<sup>85</sup> Carlo Roberto Chiarlo, "'Donato l'à lodate per cose buone': il reimpiego dei sarcofagi da Lucca a Firenze," in *Colloquio sul reimpiego dei sarcofagi*, 121-132. See also Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 16, n. 24.

<sup>86</sup> Camposanto, Pisa. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 53b. See also cat. 53, fragment in the Louvre, known from as early as the fourteenth century: it shows a putto urinating with his shirt pulled up, which is the motif borrowed by Titian in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* and which appears also on the Porta della Mirandola of the Florentine Duomo c.1400.

<sup>87</sup> Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 90. This relief is a variant of the one in the British Museum, London, which was in Rome from at least the early fifteenth century (fig. 1.16). Cf. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 83. Erika Simon argues that a Bacchic sarcophagus now in Princeton is the one Donatello saw in Lucca ("Dionysischer Sarkophag in Princeton," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Römische Abteilung* 69 [1962]: 136-158).

each bursting with dancing putti, or the bronze *David*, with his supple, effeminate, Bacchant-like form.<sup>88</sup>

Why did these artists begin to look closely at Bacchic imagery? The answer is found by asking what it was they were looking for in ancient art and what they were subsequently attempting to introduce into their own. In Aby Warburg's view, it was a drive to make what they depicted come alive that led Renaissance artists to imitate the ruffling, vibrant life-force that pervaded ancient, and especially, Bacchic art.<sup>89</sup> Consider Brunelleschi's and Ghiberti's contrasting competition panels auditioning for the commission of new bronze doors for the Baptistery in 1401 (fig. 1.13). Each artist showed himself to be already steeped in the antique, Brunelleschi even quoting the figure of the *Spinario*, the boy pulling the thorn from his foot.<sup>90</sup> But while Brunelleschi quoted a static pose, Ghiberti's piece exuded the swirling energy of the antique. It was his pulsating rock, breath-filled drapery, and perfected antique nude youth that won the admiration of the judges (and the competition). A few years later Donatello's relief for the St. George Tabernacle at Or San Michele, with its *Battle of St. George and the Dragon*, shows the influence of his trips to Pisa and Cortona, his rearing horse suffused with the memory of the one he saw on the Bacchic sarcophagus (fig. 1.14, 15). His damsel in distress, moreover, reveals his mastery of the *all'antica* maiden, the old "Gothic S-curve" translated into a maenad with her fluted peplum, swaying pose, tucked chin, and subtly revealed figure.<sup>91</sup> When one lists

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<sup>88</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, chap. 1, "Donatello and the Invention of the Putto."

<sup>89</sup> Warburg, "The Entry of the Idealizing Classical Style," 26.

<sup>90</sup> For the appeal of the *Spinario*, visible at least since the twelfth century, see Richard Cocke, "Masaccio and the *Spinario*, Piero and the *Pothos*: Observations on the Reception of the Antique in Renaissance Painting," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 43 (1980): 21-32.

<sup>91</sup> H. W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 30.

the attributes of early Renaissance art, most often adduced are the emergence of one-point perspective and three-dimensional volume (typified by Masaccio). Donatello's relief, however, reveals an alternative: his *rilievo schiacciato* appears like a gossamer veil, atmosphere and matter thinly draped through space, his figures lightly stepping across a shallow stage before an illusionistic backdrop. The spirit of Bacchic sarcophagi, with their layering of figures and exuberant filling of surface with limbs, props, and drapery alike, is captured in this radical new Renaissance style.

Bacchic antiquities were helpful for observing the nude and its naturalistic postures, but many different antique subjects showed naked bodies. What was special about Bacchic art that helped artists to push their style into new arenas? No contemporary artist recorded his reaction to ancient depictions of Bacchus or why he was so captivated by ancient art. But other accounts speak about what qualities were deemed praiseworthy in a work of visual art. Some, like those of Guarino da Verona and Bartolomeo Fazio, come from humanists focused on literary arts and the ancient ideals of rhetoric, not painting. Yet their exposure to newly discovered texts and Byzantine heritage and learning expanded their view of composition and style. Guarino in particular was greatly influenced by his reading of Greek *ekphraseis*, verbal descriptions of works of art undertaken as epideictic exercises in the art of rhetoric.<sup>92</sup> The qualities admired in these were variety, expression, depiction of the natural world, and realism, or lifelikeness. Accordingly, in his praise of an inkstand that had been gifted to him (whose description suggests it may have depicted something like the Bacchic subject of "putti at the vintage," as the babes clamber about some trees with the "wantonness of childhood"), Guarino pointed out facial

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<sup>92</sup> Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 87ff.



expression and its variety as being of note, and elaborated on naturalistic and realistic details.<sup>93</sup> By extending the ekphrastic language of praise to speak about actual artists and works, Guarino suggested a guiding vocabulary with which to evaluate the visual arts. Fazio discussed artists more explicitly, but his humanistic criteria distinguished in Italy only Pisanello and Gentile da Fabriano as paragons of a new style, praising them especially for their *ethopoeia*: the expression of character and emotion “enlivened by a certain vigour,” what might be called “expressio.”<sup>94</sup> Despite these artists’ evident study of the antique, we would not judge that either translated that study into a truly *all’antica* style; they do not exhibit the “buona maniera moderna” of Masaccio or Donatello.<sup>95</sup> Yet to Fazio, their interest in complexity, varied detail, and naturalistic authenticity revealed the effects of their classical enlightenment.

It was these qualities that were found in abundance in Bacchic art. A work like the Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus in the British Museum (thought to have then been at Santa Maria Maggiore), inspired multiple artists with its long, narrow relief packed with a variety of figures stepping forth as if on a shallow stage (fig. 1.16).<sup>96</sup> Drawings on either side of a single

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<sup>93</sup> Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 91.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>95</sup> This is what Vasari calls the fully evolved modern manner of Michelangelo, the third age, which grew out of the greatness of the Quattrocento artists. Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 162.

<sup>96</sup> This relief was probably housed in Santa Maria Maggiore by the 1420s, and was a virtual tourist attraction. An inscription repeated thrice on drawings after the relief by Amico Aspertini, c. 1500, in the so-called Wolfegg Sketchbook fol. 31v-32r, states “a santa maria maggiore,” written between the legs of the centaurs, again between the legs of the donkey supporting the drunken Silenus, and to the left of the satyr with an infant on his shoulders all from the sarcophagus front. Since the earliest drawings after the sarcophagus appear to be from 1420-1430, we may presume that the sarcophagus was then also to be seen in or around S. Maria Maggiore, perhaps when Martin V was in residence at the papal palace there from 1421-1424. In the later sixteenth century, the relief was next door in the Villa Montalto. See Ruth Olitsky Rubinstein, “A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance,” in *British Museum Yearbook 1: The Classical Tradition* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1976), cat. 11, fig. 192, and p. 113; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 83; Gunter Schweikhart, *Der Codex Wolfegg: Zeichnungen nach der Antike von Amico Aspertini* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London,

sheet in the Louvre derive from the side reliefs of the sarcophagus: one side displays satyrs carrying a drunken Pan, and the other satyrs preparing to whip a restrained Pan (figs. 1.17, 18, 19, 20).<sup>97</sup> At the right of each drawing stands a piping satyr seen from the back, shown from a slightly different angle in each case, who does not appear on the sarcophagus.<sup>98</sup> The fact that artists studied these reliefs, or copied drawings after them, mixing and matching motifs, shows a pervasive urge to gain competence in the style and iconography. The array of form to be seen on the sarcophagus—nude and draped, male and female, animal and hybrid—offered an anthology of Bacchic iconography. There were Bacchus and Ariadne reclining languidly in their wagon; centaurs playing a *cithara* and *aulos*; Pan with his goatish legs and face holding his panpipes; maenads dancing or ecstatic; old Silenus on his ass; and putti and ithyphallic satyrs in abundance—all motifs that would soon become familiar additions to Renaissance art. Here, too, were the realistically moving clothes and hair, bodies rushing along or stilled in languor, and faces conveying multiple levels of expressivity, portraying pain, pleasure, frenzy or surfeit. What artists discovered was that the ancient gods “enabl[ed] the representation of troubling areas

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1986), pl. X, fig. 15, pp. 77-80. Other variants, some more worn and fragmentary, show similar imagery and were known in Pisa, Lucca, and Genoa. Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 89, cat. 90, cat. 116.

<sup>97</sup> Louvre, Paris, n. 5611 recto and verso. See Bernhard Degenhart, “Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo: Disegni dall’antico e il camino ‘della Iole,’” *Bolletino d’Arte* 35 (1950): 208-215.

<sup>98</sup> This figure does not appear on the sarcophagus front either, but may show an original figure lost from the front or on another Bacchic relief. As we will discuss in Chapter Three, this piping satyr appears in the Camino della Iole relief in the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, which otherwise copies the front of the same British Museum sarcophagus, suggesting that this figure may have originally been at the center of that sarcophagus relief. Consequently, some scholars attribute the drawings to the sculptor of the Camino, Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo. Luisa Scalabroni tentatively gives the Louvre drawings to a Neapolitan artist by the name of Andrea dell’Aquila, who had a Roman sojourn 1447-1553, worked with Francesco Laurana in Naples 1453-1458, executing reliefs in the Cappella Palatina di Castelnuovo based on the same British Museum sarcophagus, and likely followed Laurana to Urbino after 1458 (“Il sarcofago bacchico di S. Maria Maggiore,” in *Da Pisanello alla nascita dei Musei Capitolini: L’antico a Roma alla vigilia del Rinascimento*, ed. Anna Cavallaro and Enrico Parlato [Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1988], 165-167).

of human experience which Christianity would assign to the domain of sin and error.”<sup>99</sup> And what the Bacchic figures gave especially was a visual form for extreme emotion.

In the delirious flurry of getting reacquainted with classical imagery, many artists drew upon any and every motif they could find. For artists, glyptic sources were easily copied in casts and impressions, which transmitted features as readily as the originals. Their vaguely grasped or even misunderstood features were laboriously copied and reproduced in the new art, which nevertheless seemed to be steeped in antiquity.<sup>100</sup> Artists might be drawn to a certain piece for its design or figural motifs, without concern for the actual iconography.<sup>101</sup> Drawings with amalgamations of motifs from different reliefs were common. One appears to be by the same artist who drew the Pan reliefs, and collects figures from multiple sources, two of them Bacchic: the maenad from a sarcophagus now in Amsterdam and the infant-carrying satyr from the right of the British Museum relief (fig. 1.21, 22).<sup>102</sup> A leaf from a northern artist in the circle of

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<sup>99</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 19.

<sup>100</sup> As Ghiberti said of Niccoli’s intaglio: “...[I]t had on it the figure of a youth with a knife in his hand. [...] In his left hand he had a cloth with which he held a small idol. It seemed that the youth was threatening the idol with his knife,” as he was unable to identify the actual subject: the theft of the Palladium, by Diomedes. In Holt, *A Documentary History of Art*, 166. *I commentarii* III.iii.3: Niccoli “aveva questo calcidonio el quale è perfettissimo più che cosa io vedessi mai. Era di forma ovale, in su esso era una figura d’uno giovane aveva in mano uno coltello, era con uno piede quasi ginocchioni in su un’altare e la gamba dextra era a ssedere in sull’altare, e posava il piè in terra el quale scorciava con tanta arte e con tanto maesterio, era cosa maravigliosa a vederlo” (ed. Lorenzo Bartoli [Florence: Giunti, 1998], 109).

<sup>101</sup> Nicole Dacos, “Le rôle des plaquettes dans la diffusion des gemmes antiques: Le cas de la collection Medicis,” in *Italian Plaquettes*, ed. Alison Luchs (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1989), 71-91; Toby Yuen, “Glyptic Sources of Renaissance Art,” in *Engraved Gems: Survivals and Revivals*, ed. Clifford Malcolm Brown (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1997), 137.

<sup>102</sup> Louvre, Paris, R. F. 38. The fact that this sheet records so many different antique sources may indicate that the artist was himself copying drawings from a model book, picking and choosing the poses in which he was most interested artistically. Rubinstein, “A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance,” 113. That such drawings were in circulation is indicated by the numerous appearances of individual poses from this and other ancient sarcophagi. Ghiberti, for example, used the pose of the satyr with infant on his shoulders and the nude maenad with billowing mantle from the British Museum sarcophagus for his figures of Adam and Eve, which he designed for the frames of Andrea Pisano’s Baptistery doors, and were executed by his son Vittorio around 1456-1464. The sarcophagus, formerly in Hever Castle, Kent, is in the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam. Matz, *ASR*, IV, 1, cat. 44. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 86.

Jacopo Bellini copies various satyrs, pans, and animals from more than one sarcophagus fragment (fig. 1.23, 24, 25).<sup>103</sup> Again, despite ostensibly drawing after the antique model, the artists were less concerned with making accurate reproductions of the ancient works at hand than with plumbing these models for new ideas, both formal and stylistic.<sup>104</sup>

Gentile da Fabriano is known to have compiled several drawing books, with studies and models that were used for the production of paintings, which he bequeathed to his follower Pisanello upon his death in Rome in 1427.<sup>105</sup> Pisanello, in turn, produced, and had his apprentices produce, numerous drawings studying the antiquities visible in Rome. A drawing attributed to his circle, c. 1431-1440, shows a drunken Bacchus with maenads and satyr taken from a sarcophagus relief that would be inserted into a wall in the Belvedere Courtyard of the Vatican (fig. 1.26, 27).<sup>106</sup> Another depicts battling figures from a fragment of an Indian Triumph

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<sup>103</sup> Louvre, Paris, R. F. 524. See B. Degenhart and A. Schmitt, "Ein Musterblatt des Jacopo Bellini mit Zeichnungen nach der Antike," in *Festschrift Luitpold Dussler: 28 Studien zur Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte*, ed. J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, Marcell Restle and Herbert Weiermann (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972) fig. 21 and 53; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 69a. At the top of the page are figures copied from a sarcophagus now in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin: Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 157. (Jacopo Bellini borrows his capital-bearing man from the satyr carrying a large krater of wine at the far left of this relief: Louvre Drawing Book, fol. 85.) Lower in the drawing is seen Silenus dandling an infant Bacchus, taken from a type of relief of which the example known in the Renaissance is lost, but another in Museo delle Terme, Rome, includes the same figural grouping as in the drawing (and in a Fra Carnevale painting of the *Birth of the Virgin* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York): Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 206; Bober and Rubinstein, cat. 69.

<sup>104</sup> Ruth Rubinstein, "A Drawing of a Bacchic Sarcophagus in the British Museum and Folios From a Sketchbook," in *Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum*, ed. Jenkins, 66. Rubinstein cites the first solid indication we have of a shift in this attitude is a letter of 1542 by Claudio Tolomei outlining a project for the Accademia Vitruviana to record systematically in twenty volumes all the antiquities then visible in and around Rome. See also Mandowsky and Mitchell, eds., *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*; and Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini: Sketchbooks in the British Museum* (London: the Warburg Institute, 1957). Even in Aspertini's ostensible recordings of ancient reliefs like the one in Santa Maria Maggiore, he reveals many misunderstandings and errors. Aspertini was also quite creative in his renditions, as he was not concerned with the order of the figures, or in maintaining the integrity of a single work of art. His studies are more rightly called "invenzioni all'antica." Rubinstein, "A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance," 118.

<sup>105</sup> Russell Panczenko, "Gentile da Fabriano and Classical Antiquity," *Artibus et historiae* 1, no. 2 (1980): 9-27.

<sup>106</sup> Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, inv. F.214 inf. 15 recto. See Cavallaro and Parlato, *Da Pisanello*, cat. 25, p. 97; Luke Syson and Dillian Gordon, *Pisanello: Painter to the Renaissance Court* (London: National Gallery, with Yale University Press, 2001), fig. 5.35, p. 218; Bernhart Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, "Gentile da Fabriano in Rom

of Bacchus, adding a dragon, incongruously, along the right edge of the page (fig. 1.28, 29).<sup>107</sup> In these early drawings, artists typically excised certain figures from the original reliefs, and reduced others to their major physical facts. Cultic details such as tambourines, drinking cups, and fawn skins were removed and replaced with flowing draperies. Such ellipses are possibly due to a lack of comprehension on the part of the artist, but may also stem from the fact that in making such studies, the draughtsman was seeking essentials and not iconographic precision or archaeological record-keeping.

Even when the specifically Bacchic content was removed, however, the study of Bacchic figures had an impact since a focus on pose and the nude body was part of “the task of infusing into their characters a vitality as unconstrained as that which animated” the antique figures.<sup>108</sup> This interest is revealed in a Pisanellesque drawing now in Oxford, which records two maenads from the sarcophagus in Amsterdam (fig. 1.30).<sup>109</sup> The almost nude maidens step lightly across the space, banging tambourines, with their heads tossed back and torsos arched. The artist took great care to capture the fleshy fullness of their buttocks, bellies, and thighs. A contemporary tolerance and even admiration of the nude form is revealed in comments made by Leonello d’Este in Angelo Decembrio’s dialogue, *De politia litteraria*, written in the 1450s:

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und die Anfänge des Antikenstudiums,” *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 11, 3rd ser. (1960), part 1, fig. 71 pp. 108-110, attributed to Gentile da Fabriano. The sarcophagus is now in the Vatican galleries. Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 171, pl. 192.

<sup>107</sup> Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, inv. F.214 inf. 14 recto. The sarcophagus is in Museo del Monumento Nazionale della Badia Greca, Grottaferrata. Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, fig. 3.55, p. 135. Note the similar motif, minus the fallen warrior under the rearing horse, at the far right of the Cortona sarcophagus front seen by Donatello.

<sup>108</sup> Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 175. See another page depicting a variety of nude torsos studied from the antique (which appear to include seated river gods, Tritons and Nereids): Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, MS. F. 265 inf., fol. 92r, illustrated in Baxandall, “A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d’Este,” pl. 36d.

<sup>109</sup> Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv.P.II.41 verso. See Syson and Gordon, *Pisanello*, fig. 3.52.

For it is not every fashion of clothing that pleases every subsequent generation and race.... But the artifice of Nature is supreme, no period fashions change it. [...] [I]f you saw... leopards and tigers bridled and harnessed to a chariot with the triumphant Bacchus, and him half-naked, you would pay more attention to the subtlety of the features of the face and bare body than to the clothes and trappings. You would study the way in which sinews or muscles fit together, the circuits and tensions of the veins, the representation of the skin, hair or plumage.<sup>110</sup>

Leonello complains that current artists often failed to do this, though a few painters were beginning “to imitate the ancients.” In this fledgling revival, with its return to the elements of natural imitation, Leonello saw an improved realism.<sup>111</sup> He articulates the accepted wisdom that ancient artists had already mastered the study of nature, so that today’s artists need only turn to antiquity to learn proper imitation.<sup>112</sup> Leon Battista Alberti also urged artists to begin their paintings of the figure with the nude form: “So in painting the nude we place first his bones and muscles which we then cover with flesh so that it is not difficult to understand where each muscle is beneath.”<sup>113</sup>

Warburg argued that what early Renaissance artists sought from antique art was exactly the sense of life and movement exhibited in lightly dancing feet and billowing cloth.<sup>114</sup> “The

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<sup>110</sup> Pars LXVIII, trans. Baxandall, “A Dialogue on Art,” 314, 316. Decembrio’s dialogue is set at Leonello d’Este’s court in Ferrara in 1441-1444 but was likely composed retrospectively in the 1450s, with a dedication copy made to Pope Pius II in 1462 (Vatican Codex lat. 1794).

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 318.

<sup>112</sup> See Jan Bialostocki, “The Renaissance Concept of Nature and Antiquity,” in *Studies in Western Art, II: The Renaissance and Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 19-30; Martin Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ To ‘Fantasia’: The Quattrocento Vocabulary of Creation, Inspiration and Genius in the Visual Arts,” *Viator* 8 (1977): 347-397; and Lee, “Ut Pictura Poesis,” esp. 203-207, citing Ludovico Dolce, declaring, “the ancient statues contain all the perfection of art.” See also Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, introduction, 36.

<sup>113</sup> *On Painting*, Book II, p. 73. *De Pictura* II.36, ed. Grayson, 74: “in nudo pingendo prius ossa et muscoli disponendi sunt, quos moderatis carnibus et cute ita operias, ut quo sint loco muscoli non difficile intelligatur.”

<sup>114</sup> Aby Warburg, “Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*: An Examination of Concepts of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance” (1893; doctoral dissertation of 1892), in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 89-156.

concern... with capturing the transitory movements of hair and garments... finds its most telling expression in Alberti's *Libro della pittura*.<sup>115</sup> Unlike Guarino or Fazio, Leon Battista Alberti was himself an architect, speaking directly to the visual artist. Like the humanists, Alberti praised "copiousness and variety of things": "a painting in which there are bodies in many dissimilar poses is always especially pleasing."<sup>116</sup> He preferred upward, lifting movements in the depiction of hair and drapery:

The painter, wishing to express life in things, will make every part in motion.... The most graceful movements and the most lively are those which move upwards into the air. [...] I am delighted to see some movement in hair, locks of hair, branches, fronds and robes. [...] Thus you will see with what grace the bodies, where they are struck by the wind, show the nude under the draperies in suitable parts. In the other parts the draperies blown by the wind fly gracefully through the air.<sup>117</sup>

It was these very forms that commonly pervaded Bacchic works of art, with their ecstatic, dancing maenads and triumphant processions of elated and drunken followers. The swelling veils and fluttering skirts in the Bacchic *thiasos* presented a training ground for the Renaissance artist seeking to fulfill Alberti's prescription. As Warburg observed, capturing the motif of "accessory forms in motion" was integral to the very success of reviving antique art.

A lightness of movement and quickness of feet soon connoted the new *all'antica* sensibility, regardless of content. Many *cassone* painters, for example, embraced antique subject

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<sup>115</sup> Warburg, "Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus and Spring*," 96.

<sup>116</sup> *On Painting*, Book II, trans. Spencer, 75. *De Pictura* II.40, ed. Grayson, 78: "copia et varietas rerum"; "Sed in omni historia cum varietas iocunda est, tamen in primis omnibus grata est pictura, in qua corporum status atque motus inter se multo dissimiles sint."

<sup>117</sup> *On Painting*, Book II, 74, 81. *De Pictura* II.37, p. 76: "Ergo quae corporum simulacra pictor viva apparere voluerit, in his efficiet ut omnia membra suos motus exequantur. [...] Ac maxime hi membrorum motus vivaces et gratissimi sunt qui aera in altum petunt."; II.45, p. 86: "Sane et capillorum et iubarum et ramorum et frondium et vestium motus in pictura expressi delectant. [...] Ex quo gratia illa aderit ut quae corporum latera ventus feriat, quod panni vento ad corpus imprimantur, ea sub panni velamento prope nuda appareant. A reliquis vero lateribus panni vento agitati perapte in aera inundabunt."

matter, but cloaked their figures with only the barest hints of antique form, depicting pageant-like costumes and fantastical frills, all in the vogue of being “all’antica.”<sup>118</sup> In the hands of some artists, “unthinking repetition of superficially agitated motifs of motion” did result.<sup>119</sup> But a fascination with these motifs did not necessarily reduce them to superficiality. Rather, Warburg argued that these movements conveyed something grander, what he termed *Pathos*.<sup>120</sup> Warburg saw in the revival of the fluttering exteriors of antique art a deeper renewal of the inner passions and emotions of ancient beings.<sup>121</sup> For Warburg, *Pathos* meant movement, intense emotion, and vital energy.<sup>122</sup> A gesture or pose that appeared to transcend time and reappeared in art to convey this emotion and energy Warburg termed a *Pathosformel*, or “pathos formula.” In his notes for his unfinished picture-atlas, the Mnemosyne project, he wrote about these potent

*Pathosformeln*:

It is in the zone of orgiastic mass-seizures that we must look for the mint which stamps upon the memory the expressive movements of the extreme

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<sup>118</sup> Ellen Callmann, *Beyond Nobility: Art for the Private Citizen in the Early Renaissance* (Allentown, PA: Allentown Art Museum, 1980), xx. Around the middle of the fifteenth century, *cassoni* artists shifted from chivalric and romantic subjects, like the garden of love, to the humanist-inspired subjects of classical tales of heroic valor. Being unresponsive to the advances in classical style, however, their Roman figures rarely portrayed antique appearances. See Paul F. Watson, *The Garden of Love in Tuscan Art of the Early Renaissance* (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance, 1979), 126-127; Ernst H. Gombrich, “Apollonio di Giovanni: A Florentine Cassone Workshop Seen Through the Eyes of a Humanist Poet” (1955), in *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon Press, 1966), 20

<sup>119</sup> Warburg, “Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus and Spring*,” 141. Alberti himself warns artists of showing meaningless movements. *On Painting*, Book II, p. 80: “...I have seen not a few err in these things.... You will find that in expressing too violent movements...some think to be praised because they hear that figures appear most lively which most throw about all their members. [...] Because of this they are not only without grace and sweetness but moreover they show the too fiery and turbulent imagination of the artist.”

<sup>120</sup> See Fiorella Bassan, “Il pathos delle immagini in Aby Warburg,” in *Simbolo, metafori, linguaggi*, ed. Guido Coccoli and Caterina Marrone (Rome: Gutenberg, 1998), 185-201.

<sup>121</sup> Warburg, “Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus and Spring*,” 141.

<sup>122</sup> Felix Gilbert, “From Art History to the History of Civilization: Gombrich’s Biography of Aby Warburg,” *Journal of Modern History* 44, no. 3 (1972): 384. The term *Pathos*, in German, does not mean “suffering” or “conveying pity,” but contains within itself both an idea of grandeur as well as the stilted excess of theatricality.



transports of emotions, as far as they can be translated into gesture language, with such intensity that these engrams of the experience of suffering passion survive as a heritage stored in the memory. They become exemplars, determining the outline traced by the artist's hand as soon as maximal values of expressive movement desire to come to light in the artist's creative handiwork.

Hedonistic aesthetes can easily gain the cheap favours of an art-loving public when they explain this change of form by the greater sensuous appeal of far-sweeping decorative lines. May he who wants be satisfied with a flora of the most odorous and most beautiful plants; that will never lead to a botanical physiology explaining the rising of the sap, for this will only yield its secrets to those who examine life in its subterranean roots.<sup>123</sup>

Underlying the invention of these superlative gestures were the passions of Bacchic frenzy and madness, Warburg believed. Without these, Renaissance art would not, in turn, have had access to the heights of emotion and depths of expression that it was then able to convey. Alberti urged artists to depict these very emotions in the outward appearances of the body, and Marsilio Ficino likewise attested that artists' portrayals could elicit profound sympathies in their audience:

“Whatever the emotion of the artist his work will usually excite in us an identical emotion, a mournful voice often compels us to weep, an angry one to become furious, a sensual one to be lascivious. For the works which pertain to vision and hearing are closest to the artist's mind.”<sup>124</sup>

The emotive effect of the work of art was essential to its meaning.

The idea that what Renaissance artists saw in antique art were fluttering accessories and emotionality may seem counterintuitive, given the more common characterization of the antique as showing weighty stillness. It contradicts the perception of a sober Greek culture and of

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<sup>123</sup> Warburg's notes for the introduction to his Mnemosyne Project (1929), B. 4-5, as quoted in Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970), 245.

<sup>124</sup> Ficino, *Opera Omnia* (Basel, 1576), p. 229, as quoted by Ernst Gombrich, “Botticelli's Mythologies: A Study in the Neo-Platonic Symbolism of his Circle (1945),” in *Gombrich on the Renaissance: Vol. 2: Symbolic Images* (London: Phaidon Press, 1985), 59; Creighton Gilbert, “On Subject and Not-Subject in Italian Renaissance Pictures,” *Art Bulletin* 34 (1952): 205. Alberti, *On Painting*, Book II, p. 77.

classical art viewed as “Olympian” or “Apollonian.” But the fifteenth-century consciousness of something wild and freeing in ancient art is not unlike Nietzsche’s own radical view, more than four hundred years later, that Greek culture actually consisted of strongly clashing, opposite forces: the frenzied and destructive Dionysian and the ordered and restrained Apollonian.<sup>125</sup>

Nietzsche observed that there was a creative consequence to that tension, such as the invention of tragedy and the dithyramb. Dionysian forces, moreover, engendered mystical experiences that took the Apollonian individual outside of himself, making him one with a larger whole.<sup>126</sup> As Warburg would also note: “We are learning more and more to see antiquity as symbolized, as it were, in the two-faced herm of Apollo and Dionysus. Apollonian ethos together with Dionysian pathos grow like a double branch from one trunk....”<sup>127</sup> Far from being inconsequential, in other words, it was this sensitivity to Bacchic expression in the fifteenth century that contributed to the development of the Renaissance artistic language, and which ultimately expanded views of the nature of the artist himself.

Notwithstanding the excitement induced by literary sources, there was something especially visceral and authentic to be gained by contact with antiquity’s physical remnants. A book might have been several hands removed from its author, copied repeatedly over the

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<sup>125</sup> For the characterization of Dionysian and Apollonian as archetypal contrasts, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* [1872] *and Other Writings*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs, trans. Ronald Speirs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-116. See also McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos*, 39-40; and Alice Fiola Berry, “Apollo Versus Bacchus: The Dynamics of Inspiration (Rabelais’s Prologues to Gargantua and the Tiers Livre),” *PMLA* 90 (1975): 88-95. E. R. Dodds also notes the significant role of ecstasy and the irrational to the makeup of Greek consciousness (*The Greeks and the Irrational*).

<sup>126</sup> McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos*, 40.

<sup>127</sup> Warburg, “Entry of the Idealizing Classical Style,” 28.

centuries, but a sculpture or cameo had been touched by the artist himself.<sup>128</sup> The physicality of the work of art factored in the *paragone* of word and image. The invention, or idea, for an artwork could be seen as a kind of soul, which could exist apart from the body, the material medium.<sup>129</sup> Matter, on the other hand, the stuff of which art—and bodies—were made, was earthbound, sensual, and mortal. During the course of the fifteenth century, the medieval discomfort and suppression of the body was replaced with an *all'antica* embrace of the physical self. This body was like the “image,” while the “word” symbolized the soul, such that the visceral, material stuff of the world—the Bacchic essence—could be represented by the Bacchic image, and the ethereal spirit by the Apollonian. Aquinas wrote that “the soul requires the body in order to achieve the true perfection of its nature.”<sup>130</sup> The work of art must be as essential as the work of poetry, then, because the flesh and blood of imagination are brought together with the soul. As Alberti said: “[P]ainting contributes to the most honourable delights of the soul and to the dignified beauty of things.”<sup>131</sup> This enhanced valuation of the image correlated to an altered view of the body—and an increasing frequency of Bacchic figures.

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<sup>128</sup> However, the fifteenth-century artist or collector at the same time did not have the means to distinguish between ancient Greek and Roman art, early and later styles, nor between originals and copies. Their notion of authenticity would have been more flexible and expansive than ours. See Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, especially chap. 10, “The Discovery of the Greek World”; Luigi Beschi, “La scoperta dell’arte greca,” in *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte Italiana*, ed. Salvatore Settis, vol. 3 (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), 295-374; and Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, “Interventions: Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism,” *Art Bulletin* 87 (2005): 404-415.

<sup>129</sup> As Alberti said, an *invenzione* could be beautiful “even without painting.” *On Painting*, Book III, p. 90.

<sup>130</sup> Gordon, *The Renaissance Imagination*, 20.

<sup>131</sup> *On Painting*, Book II, p. 63. *De Pictura*, II.25: “Iam vero ad delitias animi honestissimas atque ad rerum decus quantum conferat pictura....”

Beyond questions of value, rarity, and authenticity, the quest for expression was central to why collectors and artists were looking at antiquities. In 1411, Manuel Chrysoloras elaborated on why people admired works of art:

It is that we admire not so much the beauties of the bodies in statues and paintings as the beauty of the mind of their maker. [...] [T]he artist's [soul] disposes the outward form of the stone, stubborn and hard though this may be, or the bronze or pigments, disparate and alien though they are, so that through portrayal and skill the passions of the soul can be seen in them. The artist's mind... impresses these passions [of 'laughter or pleasure, anger or sorrow'] on the materials.<sup>132</sup>

He articulates an idea that would become important for the artists of the fifteenth century: the idea that an artist is capable of impressing in the work of art the movements of the soul. This pursuit was central to Alberti's *On Painting*.<sup>133</sup> For any artist seeking to attain the height of his practice—that is, of speaking without words—the virtual anthology of expressive mannerisms and gestures contained in Bacchic reliefs was a treasure trove of possibilities. But this drive was governed not solely by a desire on the part of artists to enliven their art by making more naturalistic figures who appeared to move and feel; it was also tied up with the very development of artistic identity and status. Alberti urged artists to strive to depict the inner movements of the soul via outer movements of the body and its accessories:

The *istoria* will move the soul of the beholder when each man painted there clearly shows the movements of his own soul. It happens in nature that nothing more than herself is found capable of things like herself; we weep with the weeping, laugh with the laughing, and grieve with the

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<sup>132</sup> A formal letter of 1411 to Demetrius Chrysoloras, translated from the Greek and quoted in Michael Baxandall, "Guarino, Pisanello, and Manuel Chrysoloras," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965): 197-198.

<sup>133</sup> John R. Spencer, "*Ut rhetorica pictura*: A Study in Quattrocento Theory of Painting," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20 (1957): 41: "Alberti constructed a discussion of gestures and their emphatic responses that culminates in a revolutionary concept for the art of painting—movements of the body reflect and project emotions of the soul. Affective gesture is at the core of Alberti's theory of painting as it is in Cicero's theory of rhetoric."

grieving. These movements of the soul are made known by the movements of the body.<sup>134</sup>

We hear in Alberti's prescription an appreciation for the authentic connection of the artist with what he endeavors to depict. This notion borrows from Horace's *Ars poetica*, in which the poet was exhorted to feel the emotions he attempts to describe: "Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi," "If you would have me weep, you must first feel grief yourself."<sup>135</sup> By transplanting this requirement—and skill—to the *visual* artist, Alberti acknowledged his capacity to affect the viewer as deeply as the poet, without recourse to words. Artists aspired for their visual eloquence to rival that of the poet's and even to surpass it.<sup>136</sup> This essential rivalry between artist and poet came to a head in the early sixteenth century, and it was Bacchic forms, I contend, that gave artists the essential power to compete. For the artist to visualize the greatest passions and strongest emotions, he had to go through those feelings himself. A viscerally imagined Dionysian initiation would prove a surrogate for those deepest and darkest sensations. His scrutiny of the ancient Bacchic figures would inculcate in him the authentic pathos in which he had to be trained.

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<sup>134</sup> Alberti, *On Painting*, Book II, p. 77. *De Pictura* II.41, p. 80: "Animos deinde spectantium movebit historia, cum qui aderunt picti homines suum animi motum maxime prae se ferent. . . . ut lugentibus conlugeamus, ridentibus adrideamus, dolentibus condoleamus. Sed hi motus animi ex motibus corporis cognoscuntur."

<sup>135</sup> Horace, *Ars poetica* 102-103, in *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 458-459. See Lee, "Ut pictura poesis," 218.

<sup>136</sup> Patricia Emison, "The Word made Naked in Pollaiuolo's *Battle of the Nudes*," *Art History* 13, no. 3 (1990): 271. As Ghiberti noted in his *Commentaries*, the visual arts should not be discussed in the same terms as poetry: "Imperò che non si scrive della scultura o della pictura come di storia poetica. Le istorie tengono per sé gli lettori, imperò ch'egli àno varie aspettationi di nuove cose; e delli poetici versi li metri e li piedi, o nobili dispositioni di parole e di sententie intra le persone distincte, pronuntiatione di versi, rallegrando li sentimenti delle genti, produce senza offesa alla somma terminatione delli scriptori. E questo non può esser fatto nelle cosscriptione dell'arte statuaria e di nobili scultori e pictori, ché •lli proprii vocaboli della necessità concepti nel consueto sermone nuococono alla oscurità et alli sensi" (III.i.1, ed. Bartoli, 99).

## BACCHIC IMAGERY IS REBORN

While we do not have Brunelleschi's, Donatello's, or Ghiberti's drawings of antiquities, other evidence attests to an early interest in ancient Bacchic imagery. Rivalled only by sea *thiasoi* in their appeal for Renaissance artists, antiquities showing Bacchus and his retinue were some of the most common.<sup>137</sup> The evidence for artists studying these antiquities surfaces in the increasingly frequent appearance in other media of figures borrowed from the antique, though at first stripped of their pagan attributes so that they could function within a Christian context. The Camposanto of Pisa offered artists numerous examples of Bacchic antiquities.<sup>138</sup> One of the most famous of these was a large krater, which at that time stood upon the back of a lion on a pedestal in front of the Cathedral, around which danced a train of Bacchic revelers: satyrs, maenads, Pan, Silenus, and an aged, bearded Bacchus (fig. 1.31, 32, 33).<sup>139</sup> This elderly version of Bacchus was known to Nicola Pisano, who borrowed the figure for that of a Patriarch in his relief of the Presentation in the Temple on the marble pulpit of 1260 for the Pisa Baptistery (fig.

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<sup>137</sup> Phyllis Pray Bober once pointed out that “a Nereid sarcophagus...belongs to a class of monuments which shares honors with Bacchic sarcophagi and reliefs as the most cherished source material for the Renaissance” (“An Antique Sea-Thiasos in the Renaissance,” in *Essays in Memory of Karl Lehmann*, ed. Lucy Freeman Sandler [Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin, for the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1964], 46). Matz's catalogue of ancient sarcophagi includes an entire four-part volume dedicated to Dionysian subjects. See also Turcan, *Les sarcophages romains a représentations Dionysiaques*. “La geste de Dionysos en effet est la plus populaire à partir du III<sup>e</sup> siècle.... Dionysos est le seul dieu dont des scènes imagées nous racontent la vie, depuis sa naissance jusqu'à son apothéose triomphale. [...] [C]'est à lui qu'on demandait le plus souvent de protéger les morts” (Fernand Benoit, “Revue: Robert Turcan, *Le sarcophages romains*,” *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 45 [1967], 909). Imagery related to Bacchus was popular in Roman domestic arts, including drinking vessels and mural painting, that were not known in the Renaissance.

<sup>138</sup> There were many ancient sculptural fragments in Pisa as a side effect of the grain trade between the Arno and Tiber river valleys. From around 1200 on, ships sailed south from Pisa laden with grain for Rome and returned from Ostia filled with a ballast of sarcophagi and other ancient sculpture as well as stone building materials. See Cornelius Vermeule, *European Art and the Classical Past* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 3.

<sup>139</sup> Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 91. The elaborate display of the krater appears to date from 1319. The relief repeated a ubiquitous series of figures repeated frequently in antiquity, some of which appear on the similarly renowned “Triclinium” reliefs, depicting Bacchus visiting the poet Icarus (of which there are now thirteen versions extant, see cat. 90).

1.34, 35).<sup>140</sup> Pisano also included a Silenus-masked putto at the bottom of the relief of the *Last Judgment* on the baptismal font in Pisa and on the pulpit for the Duomo of Siena (fig. 1.36, 37).<sup>141</sup> Silenus and Pan masks were part of the Bacchic apparati in ancient reliefs, and would become a commonly used *all'antica* motif in the Renaissance, especially in architecture and sculptural relief, but for Pisano the grotesque face translated easily into a demon in Hell.

This separation of classical form from its original content was typical of the renaissance of the twelfth century, as Erwin Panofsky explains in *Renaissance and Renascences*.<sup>142</sup> In this process of “disjunction,” pictorial form, isolated from any taint of pagan meaning, could be employed in the depiction of Christian subjects without charge of impropriety. The actual pagan gods, in contrast, could only be represented in bastardized, anachronistic forms, which stripped them of any potency (fig. 1.38).<sup>143</sup> Although the ancient myths had never truly vanished and antique reliefs had always been visible here and there, medieval mythographers (even within a scholastic tradition of reading classical texts) did not depend upon *looking*. Illustrators

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<sup>140</sup> Warburg, “Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*,” 97; Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, fig. 46 and 47. A youthful male nude, identified as a Herculean type but also evocative of the beautiful Bacchus type seen on numerous antique reliefs, appears on his pulpit as the figure of Fortitude, and is thought to be the first return to the classical nude after the age of antiquity (in Panofsky, fig. 48). A similar, *all'antica* nude Hercules appears on the Porta della Mirandola, 1391-1396, on the Duomo in Florence (Panofsky, 149, n. 4). See also Richard Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 280, fig. 6. For the survival of antique forms in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Dorothy K. Miner and Marvin Chauncey Ross, “The Greek Tradition in Painting and the Minor Arts,” in *The Greek Tradition in Painting and the Minor Arts*, ed. George Boas (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, Walters Art Gallery, 1939), 53-89; Anne Markham Telpaz, “Some Antique Motifs in Trecento Art,” *Art Bulletin* 46 (1964): 372-380; Michael Greenhalgh, *The Classical Tradition in Art* (New York: Harper and Row, Icon Editions, 1978); and Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*.

<sup>141</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 103 and fig. 72.

<sup>142</sup> Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, chap. 2, esp. p. 84, regarding the “principle of disjunction.” “From the eleventh and twelfth centuries, then, mediaeval art made classical antiquity assimilable by way of decomposition, as it were. It was for the Italian Renaissance to reintegrate the separate elements” (100).

<sup>143</sup> One of the few medieval appearances of Bacchus can be found in the illustration of “Vulcan, Pluto, Bacchus, Mercury” in the copy of the *De rerum naturis* of Rabanus Maurus preserved in the library of Monte Cassino, MS. 132, c. 1023 (Seznec, *Survival of the Pagan Gods*, fig. 65, p. 166). The image revealed some knowledge of the classical gods’ original appearances, but completely lacks classical style.

attempting to recreate the gods from verbal descriptions created absurd and inaccurate personages. Even fifteenth-century artists, having access to such written records, could perpetuate medieval misapprehensions. This began to change in the Renaissance period, when a reintegration of form with its original content gradually allowed the ancient gods to appear again as fully integrated figures, a reconstituted “idiom in which new poems could be written.”<sup>144</sup> This convergence was spurred in part by the reading of newly discovered texts, which made possible a more accurate understanding of the gods.<sup>145</sup> But something prompted a few artists to look at antiques with their own eyes, perhaps a desire to find something more authentic that corresponded with what had been uncovered from classical texts. That looking, in turn, fed a curiosity for something more vibrant and moving than the art they already knew, and artists and their audiences became attuned to classical form as a legitimate and beautiful vehicle for storytelling. Bacchic art, so readily abundant, had the energy and vitality they sought. It captured the eye with its particular vigor and emotionalism, which appeared different and fresh, thus initiating the evolution of a new visual vocabulary: the rushing maenadic female, the voluptuous reclining nude, the ithyphallic satyr, and the inspired genius.

As the century went on, the interest in antiques only increased, many collecting and hoarding whatever they could get their hands on. This fervor prompted, in turn, the quotation of the antique in figurative arts, as this now connoted the *all’antica* style that had become a criterion for fashionable art. In seeking out new finds, collectors were inspired to find visual

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<sup>144</sup> Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 100, 177; a process Panofsky sees emerging in the sixth decade of the fifteenth century and completed in the High Renaissance art of Raphael.

<sup>145</sup> Particularly important in this shift was the remastering of the Greek language in Italy in the early fifteenth century, thanks to the likes of Manuel Chrysoloras in Florence and his pupil Guarino da Verona to the north. See Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*; and Baxandall, “Guarino, Pisanello, and Manuel Chrysoloras,” 183-204.



complements to what they were increasingly able to understand from newly recovered ancient texts.<sup>146</sup> While book hunters like the humanists Niccolò Niccoli, Poggio Bracciolini, Francesco Filelfo were avidly searching out Latin and Greek manuscripts from as far away as England and Byzantium, they were looking for objects and inscriptions as well.<sup>147</sup> Their ability to translate their humanist learning into more accessible terms caused these ideas to filter out to a wider public, and their growing collections of exotic and rare artifacts inspired others to collect, fundamentally changing their vision of art.<sup>148</sup> Of course, the realization that ancient Rome was actually still physically present, buried under a millennium of debris, dozens of feet beneath the modern city, was hard for fifteenth-century minds to grasp fully.<sup>149</sup> It was not until much later

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<sup>146</sup> Hunting for and collecting antiquities had begun in earnest in the fourteenth century, but there was a noticeable escalation to this trend during the fifteenth century. Evelyn Welch mentions a moneylender from Treviso, Olivero Forzetta (1300-1373), who recorded a list in 1335 of varied items he hoped to acquire on a trip to Venice, including classical statues, medals, bronzes, manuscripts, as well as drawings (*Art and Society in Italy 1350-1500* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], 304). See also Lanciani, *Pagan and Christian Rome*, 17-18; P. F. Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 60.

<sup>147</sup> See Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolò Niccoli, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*, trans. Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*. Regarding the ancient texts that were or became available during the Renaissance, see Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci*; and Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage*. Regarding the discovery of ancient literature more generally, see Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*. Cyriaco d'Ancona (1391-1452) traveled to the East several times from 1417 to the 1430s, bringing back artifacts as well as drawings and transcriptions of ancient monuments and inscriptions. See Cyriac of Ancona, *Later Travels*, ed. and trans. Edward W. Bodnar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). His sketchbooks have been largely lost, but many of the drawings were copied by Giuliano da Sangallo in the Codex Barberini (Vatican) which in turn were copied in the Codex Escorialensis by the workshop of Domenico Ghirlandaio. See Amanda Claridge and Ian Jenkins, "Cassiano and the Tradition of Drawing from the Antique," in *The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo* (Milan: Olivetti, 1993), 13-26. See also Mandowsky and Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, 8-11.

<sup>148</sup> Christopher Fulton, "The Medici Palace Collection in Fifteenth-Century Florence: A Study in the Privatization of Art," Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1993), 20-30. Cosimo de' Medici traveled with Poggio Bracciolini to Tivoli and Ostia in 1424 and with Niccoli to northern Italy in 1430-31 to view ruins and seek out obscure manuscripts. In 1430, Ghiberti set Cosimo's Apollo and Marsyas carnelian in an opulent gold frame, indicating the preciousness and value such antique treasures were awarded. Vespasiano also tells us that Niccoli opened his house and collection to artists, *litterati*, young students, courtiers and patrons alike, was considered an expert on ancient artifacts, and upon his death bequeathed his collection of manuscripts to the library of San Marco so that they would be "available for all." See Vespasiano da Bisticci, *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, trans. William George and Emily Waters (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 395-403.

<sup>149</sup> Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 24-25. Flavio Biondo was among the first to take a more systematic approach to the study of archaeological and sculptural remains of antiquity, composing in 1444-1449 his *Roma Instaurata*, a

that the idea of systematically digging down, peeling back the physical layers of time in order to reveal the past, would take hold. Still, despite the lack of a concept of systematic research and excavation, the fifteenth-century antiquarian sought exposure to every remnant of the past that he could lay his hands on.<sup>150</sup>

Alongside more scholarly investigations, there was a parallel upsurge in a generalized cupidity for things antique.<sup>151</sup> Antique items such as coins, medals, cameos and intaglios, reliefs, sculptural fragments, and even miniature statuettes came to fetch high prices and incur awe, envy, and greed among the many competing collectors.<sup>152</sup> Noblemen and princes, whether dilettantes and amateurs or more serious students, surrounded themselves with poets, humanists, and artists with whom the remnants of antiquity could be viewed and discussed.<sup>153</sup> The small

topographical description of ancient Rome, which integrated literary sources and visual artifacts. Biondo's other antiquarian works included *Italia Illustrata*, a historical description of all of Italy finished in 1453, and *Roma Triumphans*, a reconstruction of ancient Roman civilization, 1457-1459. See Mandowsky and Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, 13-14.

<sup>150</sup> As Arnaldo Momigliano would write: "[T]he notion of the 'antiquarius' as a lover, collector and student of ancient traditions and remains—though not a historian—is one of the most typical concepts of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanism" ("Ancient History and the Antiquarian," 290).

<sup>151</sup> The bibliography on collecting extends widely and deeply, but particularly relevant to our purposes are the studies by Clifford Malcolm Brown on Isabella d'Este, including "'Lo insaciabile desiderio nostro de cose antique': New Documents for Isabella d'Este's Collection of Antiquities," in *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance: Essays in Honour of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976); and idem, "A Ferrarese Lady and a Mantuan Marchesa: The Art and Antiquities Collections of Isabella d'Este Gonzaga (1474-1539)," in *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs*, ed. Cynthia Lawrence (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 53-71. Also, Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti's *Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>152</sup> John Cunnally, "Ancient Coins as Gifts and Tokens of Friendship During the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Collections* 6 (1994): 129-143; Nicole Dacos, Antonio Giuliano, and Ulrico Pannuti, eds., *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico, I: Le Gemme* (Florence: Sansoni Editore, 1973); Melissa Meriam Bullard, "Possessing Antiquity: Agency and Sociability in Building Lorenzo de' Medici's Gem Collection," in *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt*, ed. Christopher S. Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 85-111.

<sup>153</sup> In the 1440s Leonello d'Este helped establish Ferrara as an important locus for the study of antiquity. See Alessandra Mottola Molfino and Mauro Natale, eds., *Le muse e il principe: arte di corte nel rinascimento padano* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore, 1991). With the establishment of Vittorino da Feltre's school in Mantua under the auspices of the Gonzaga court in 1424 and Guarino da Verona's in Ferrara (1429-1460), many aristocratic

chamber or *studiolo* emerged in the fifteenth century in part to house the many items an intellectual or aristocratic person might acquire (fig. 1.39). Around the *studiolo* there developed a culture of contemplation, admiration, and discussion, which simultaneously served to enhance the reputation and prestige of the owners.<sup>154</sup> Those who could afford to do so commissioned agents to travel around Italy and abroad seeking antique statues and fragments with which they could decorate their gardens and inner chambers. A letter from Poggio Bracciolini to Niccoli from 23 September 1430 brings this quest to life:

I gave some specific errands to Master Franciscus of Pistoia when he left us. Among them the most important was to look for any marble statue, even if it were broken, or any unusual head which he could bring back to me with him. I said that there was a great supply of them in the places through which he was going. He has indeed been quite careful in carrying out my commissions; for yesterday I received letters from him written from Chios in which he informed me that he was holding in my name three marble heads by Polycleitus and Praxiteles. They are heads of Juno, Minerva, and Bacchus, which he praises highly and says that he will carry with him as far as Cajeta. I do not know what to say about the names of the sculptors; as you know, the Greeks are very wordy and perhaps they have made up the names in order to sell the heads more dearly. I hope that I am wrong to suspect this. [...]

I know that when you read this you will be on fire with a desire to go there and you will want wings to fly.... I think that these statues are of gods because of their heads and that they were hidden in some shrine. He writes that the head of Minerva has a laurel crown and that of Bacchus two horns. When they arrive, I shall place them in my little gymnasium. The Minerva will not feel out of place with us; I shall put her among my books. The Bacchus ought to feel grand, for if he deserves a lodging anywhere it is certainly in my country where he is particularly

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sons, as well as humanists, received a sophisticated education attuned to humanist and classical learning. See Baxandall, "A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este," and "Guarino, Pisanello, and Manuel Chrysoloras"; William Harrison Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1963).

<sup>154</sup> Wolfgang Liebenwein, *Studiolo: Die Entstehung eines Raumtyps und seine Entwicklung* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1977); trans. by Claudia Cieri Via as *Studiolo: storia e tipologia di uno spazio culturale* (Ferrara: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1992); Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

worshipped. We shall also have a place for Juno, for since at one time she was the wife of an adulterer, she will now be a concubine....<sup>155</sup>

Poggio's casual acceptance of Bacchus into his fold is noteworthy, because it shows that a sculpture of the god was considered appropriate for his collection, even with a wink toward his finding a compatible Bacchic temperament in Italy.

Some of the pleasure aroused by Bacchic imagery derived, of course, from older, ingrained cultural habits, which had always delighted in farcical humor and lascivious jesting.<sup>156</sup> The satyr easily took the place of the buffoon or wildman in traditional scenarios of mockery or savagery, which were now updated to be more "antique." The classical origin of such licentious characters or stories only enhanced their legitimacy and acceptability. Isabella d'Este might have complained about the sexually explicit puns in the performance of several plays of Plautus during her brother's wedding festivities, but one can be assured that these provoked more laughter than boos. Bacchic themes such as the mocking of Silenus or the image of a drunken or horny satyr jibed with the taste for caustic *facetiae*, or witty jests. A culture primed to laugh and joke, even at the expense of others, was one inherently open to the world of Bacchus and his cohort, a world in which pleasure, inebriation, sensuality, and sexuality often came together.

The celebrations of the Feast of St. John the Baptist, so important to the city of Florence, harkened back to pre-Christian midsummer feasts that reeked of a Bacchanal. The figure of

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<sup>155</sup> Poggio Bracciolini, Letter LXXXIV in *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, 166-167. In Tonellis' Latin edition as *Epistola XII, Poggii Epistolae*, ed. Thomas de Tonellis, (Florence, vol. I, 1832), 322f: "...nam heri redditae mihi sunt ab eo [magister Franciscus Pistoriensis] litterae scriptae Chii, quibus mihi significat se habere nomine meo tria capita marmorea Polycleti, et Praxitelis: Junonis scilicet, Minervae, et Bacchi.... Cum venerint collocabo ea in gymnasiolo meo. Minerva apud nos non omnino male erit; collocabo enim illam inter libros meos; Bacchus autem optime; nam si quo in loco diversorium meretur, in patria mea recte esse potest, in qua et colitur praecipue. Junoni item locum dabimus: cum enim fuerit olim uxor adulteri, nunc pellex erit" (as quoted in Lee, "Gardens and Gods," 174).

<sup>156</sup> See Paul Barolsky, *Infinite Jest: Wit and Humor in Italian Renaissance Art* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978); Campbell, "Sic in amore furens," 165-166.

*Carnevale*, who “usually took the form of a fat man, pot-bellied, ruddy, cheerful, often hung about with eatables (sausages, fowl, rabbits), seated on a barrel,” would ultimately merge with a stereotypical representation of Silenus/Bacchus on a barrel.<sup>157</sup> And phallic symbols, once part of the Bacchic cult, were occasionally sighted amongst the Carnival paraphernalia.<sup>158</sup> Weddings likewise involved banquets with flowing wine and enormous quantities of food, as well as singing, dancing, and music-making. Grape harvests annually heralded a great party. City-dwelling aristocrats maintained their link with the land in their suburban *vigne*, which not only ensured their personal supply of wine but also involved them in the cycles and celebrations of the earth. Bacchus, as a god of joy, freedom, and liberality, was compatible with a fifteenth-century appreciation of the liberating pleasures of food and drink, dance and song, joking and laughter. These were still the cathartic tools used in the Renaissance, just as in ancient times, to take one outside of oneself, in the true sense of *ekstasis*.<sup>159</sup>

Even the Bacchic emphasis on symposial pleasures was not anathema to Christian thinking. Where the consumption of alcohol was abused, contemporary moralists would use terms related to Christian ideas of vice, such as intemperance and dissipation.<sup>160</sup> The Church condemned intoxication, and ethicists excoriated the abuse of Reason and Will incurred by drunkenness. Secular authors enjoyed mocking the inebriated fools among their peers, as Lorenzo de’ Medici did in his poem *Symposio*, or *I Beoni* (*The Drunks*). But there was often a time and place in which the indulgence of wine could safely take place. In the Renaissance, as in

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<sup>157</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1994), 185.

<sup>158</sup> Burke, *Popular Culture*, 187. These may in turn have spurred the development of the long-nosed and horned masks that would later become a popular feature of Carnival costumes.

<sup>159</sup> Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 76, and n. 82.

<sup>160</sup> Jean-Charles Sournia, *A History of Alcoholism*, trans. Nick Hindley and Gareth Stanton (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), xi, 5, 12-17.

antiquity, drinking was largely a social activity linked to the “fellowship of the table,” one which extended to some extent across all divisions of society. And when seeking to ennoble the act of drinking, Anacreon and Horace guided Renaissance readers to the beneficial powers of Bacchus and his wine:

O faithful jar that was born  
 like me when Manlius was consul,  
 whether you bring complaints, or jokes  
 or insensate quarrels and love, or easy sleep, [...]
 You apply a gentle compulsion to wits  
 that are otherwise dull; you and jesting  
 Bacchus uncover wise men’s  
 preoccupations and secret counsels;  
 you bring back hope to despairing minds;  
 add spirit and strength to the poor,  
 who after you tremble neither at the crowns  
 of angry kings nor at the soldiery’s weapons.<sup>161</sup>

The medieval compilation *Carmina Burana* bears witness to the lasting cultural heritage of celebrating the bottle, as in the “Archpoet’s Confession” from twelfth-century Pavia, which touts wine’s inspiring fire:

nothing but the very best on the wine-list showing  
 kindles my creativeness, gets me really going.

The more I drink, the more I write—that’s the plain equation...  
 ah! but when I’ve had a bit Ovid comes off second!

Never did the flighty muse titivate my pages  
 till my stomach had received something of its wages:  
 not before Lord Bacchus reigns over my endeavour  
 can Apollo sparkle me into something clever.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Horace, *Ode* III.21, “O nata mecum,” in *The Complete Odes and Epodes*, trans. W. G. Shepherd (New York: Penguin Books, 1983), 153.

<sup>162</sup> CB 191, *Estuans intrinsecus*, “The Archpoet’s Confession,” stanzas 17-19, *Selections from the Carmina Burana: A Verse Translation*, trans. David Parlett (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 156, and note pp. 233-234.

Nevertheless, Pisano's early imitations of Bacchic figures were not matched until the early fifteenth century, when artists such as Lorenzo Ghiberti began to borrow more systematically from the antique.<sup>163</sup> Ghiberti would translate a tambourine-playing maenad into Miriam (fig. 1.40) or another scarf-wearing maenad into a Prophetess on the frame of his Gates of Paradise for the Baptistery (fig. 1.41), but his perfected *all'antica* figures were still not pagan.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, as Panofsky says: “[Donatello’s] most classical nude is not an Apollo but a David. [...] The orgiastic *putti*... sound their pipes and timbrels not in honor of Dionysus but of Christ.”<sup>165</sup> Other artists studied the antique, but seem not to have altered their style or subject matter as a consequence. Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello, artists who spent time in Florence and Rome, as well as northern cities such as Mantua and Venice, left behind some of the first surviving visual records of their studies of Bacchic antiquities, yet remained masters of the International Gothic Style and not a single finished piece depicts those Bacchic forms.

Gradually there were appearances of reintegrated Bacchic imagery, but as Stephen Campbell has discussed, these were typically relegated to marginal spaces, where the presence of

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<sup>163</sup> Ghiberti's enthusiasm for antique statuary is revealed in the third of his *Commentaries*, in which he described the finding of a sculpted hermaphrodite “fatta con mirabile ingegno” in a drainage ditch in Rome in 1447 (III.iii.1); a broken statue preserved in an underground vault under a house in Florence in the Trecento that he saw in 1424 in Padua (III.iii.2); a statue signed by Lysippus in Siena “della quale ne feciono grandissima festa” and which had been mounted on the Fonte Gaia before being destroyed in 1357, of which Ghiberti saw a drawing by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (d. 1348) in 1416 (III.iii.2); and a chalcedony intaglio (showing the theft of the Palladium) owned by Niccolò Niccoli, “el quale è perfettissimo più che cosa io vedessi mai,” “the most perfect thing I ever saw” (III.iii.3). *Lorenzo Ghiberti: I commentarii*, ed. Bartoli, 107-109; trans. in Holt, ed., *A Documentary History of Art*, 163-166.

<sup>164</sup> See Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, chap. 18, “Ghiberti and Antiquity,” and Appendix A, “Handlist of Antiques.” A similar maenad is drawn in the Codex Coburgensis, fol. 195, Coburg, Castle Library, and can be seen on the Amsterdam sarcophagus that Pisanello or a follower drew (*ibid.*, fig. 145). Another tambourine-playing woman appears in the background of Ghiberti's relief on the same doors of David and Goliath (*ibid.*, pl. 114b). Ghiberti's son Vittorio would use a maenadic figure (as on the British Museum Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus) for that of Eve on his frame for the South Doors by Pisano.

<sup>165</sup> Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 169-170.

the pagan gods would not threaten the truth of the dominant Christian subjects.<sup>166</sup> Little scenes of satyrs and maenads, centaurs and nymphs, or tritons with nereids, appear as fictive architectural reliefs in the backgrounds of numerous fifteenth-century altarpieces (fig. 1.42).<sup>167</sup> With this sort of liminal placement, “the gods can be idols or demons, they can be *spolia*, signs of cultural capital and *vetustas* (antiquity), or they can be coded as negative *exempla*, or as empty poetic figments.”<sup>168</sup> In this way, several scenes of Bacchanalian frenzy adorn the borders of Filarete’s bronze doors for St. Peter’s, commissioned by Pope Eugenius IV (r.1431-1447) (fig. 1.43).<sup>169</sup> Such borrowings were not seen as inappropriate, anachronistic, or indecorous, but served to create visually varied and interesting scenes that together gave the doors an aura of antiquity, decorative complexity, and narrative subtlety—those very humanistic qualities that were admired. They served, moreover, to contrast the depiction of truth with the pagan fantasies

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<sup>166</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 14.

<sup>167</sup> We have already alluded to the motif in Fra Carnevale’s *Birth of the Virgin* of man holding up an infant, which is derived from Childhood of Bacchus sarcophagus in the Museo delle Terme, Rome. Mantegna’s San Zeno altarpiece is another example of a religiously-themed and -located artwork that contained multiple fictive architectural reliefs depicting pagan figures.

<sup>168</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 14.

<sup>169</sup> The scenes include Bacchanalian figures, animal scenes from Aesop’s fables, figures from Greek myth, Roman history, and pastoral literature, as well as motifs drawn from medieval manuscript illumination. Despite the apparent lack of logical order, there likely was some driving motivation for their selection. Filarete depicted in episodes the unusual subject of Bacchus and the Tyrrhenian sailors, as told in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* III.607-690, on the left of the left door, bordering a scene of the martyrdom of St. Peter. The scenes show: 1) the sailors meeting the infant Bacchus; 2) carrying him away; 3) taking him onto their boat; and 4) being turned into dolphins. For the scene showing the sailors dragging the infant Bacchus away, Filarete likely borrowed from a little understood gem showing satyrs playing *ephedrismos*, in which one rides the other and scoops up a ball while running. Elsewhere there are scenes with Silenus awakened by two boys and the nymph Aegle (from Virgil’s *Eclogue* VI), a Midas-like figure with ass’s ears piping in a cave (*Metamorphoses* XI.147ff), two satyrs holding a tortoise and a fish chasing each other, Eros and Pan, a satyr struggling with a woman, a fight between boys and satyrs, and two horn-blowers. The last four scenes, all on the left border of the right door, are taken in sequence from Ovid’s description of a Bacchanal in *Metamorphoses* III.570. There are fictive architectural reliefs showing a triumph of Bacchus and another with a Pan led on a triumphal cart. See Helen Roeder, “The Borders of Filarete’s Bronze Doors to St. Peter’s,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 10 (1947): 150-153; for the gem, Yuen, “Glyptic Sources,” 144; and John R. Spencer, “Filarete’s Bronze Doors at St. Peter’s,” in *Collaboration in Italian Renaissance Art*, ed. Wendy Stedman Sheard and John T. Paoletti (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 33-57.



that Christianity had swept aside. Donatello, likewise, depicted putti in vintaging and reveling scenes on his bronze pulpits in San Lorenzo and on the base of his statue of *Judith and Holofernes*.<sup>170</sup> His Bacchic *spiritelli* more easily ally with Eucharistic and eschatological metaphors, yet remained, nevertheless, peripheral to the central biblical subjects.

Appropriation and study, however, eventually evolved into the making of fully realized and independent Bacchic *poesie all'antica*. One of these is Donatello's *Genietto* (or *Genius*), which in its utter originality defies interpretation (fig. 1.44, 45).<sup>171</sup> Donatello captured the quintessence of tipsy bibulousness in the figure of a sprightly putto with a satyr's tail. Unlike the representation of putti at the vintage, this putto stands alone, but is adorned with various significant Bacchic attributes, which make him not an erote or *amorino* per se, but more rightly a "genius of wine" named Ebrietas, a *spiritello del vino* or wine spirit.<sup>172</sup> Besides his satyr's tail, the figure bears wings, leather chaps (which look like contemporary vintager's hose) hung from a rustic belt, winged sandals, and a diadem imprinted with a poppy.<sup>173</sup> Poppy pods, with their sleep-inducing seeds, are embossed along his belt. These capsules were common symbols of

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<sup>170</sup> These will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>171</sup> Bargello, Florence, c. 1440. Vasari mentions the statue, calling it a "Mercury" that is "clothed in a certain bizarre manner" ("vestito in un certo modo bizzarro") (*Le vite*, vol. 2, pp. 417-418). In older literature the work was referred to as *Attis* (*Atys*) (which would likely not have been a familiar mythological character at all, and who, moreover, is usually shown as castrated) or Cupid (*Amorino*). See Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, cat. and pl. 67, pp. 143-147; Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 58-60. Panofsky called him "Time as a Playful Child Throwing Dice" (*Renaissance and Resuscitations*, 169 n. 1). Wind called him an Eros-Pantheos (that is, an Eros combined with attributes of several other gods) (*Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 164 n). Maurice Shapiro identifies the figure as a genius, or Roman guardian spirit ("Donatello's *Genietto*," *Art Bulletin* 45 [1963]: 136). See also Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 24. Erika Simon identifies him as a baby Priapus representing the vice of *superbia* ("Der sogennante Atys-Amorino des Donatello," in *Donatello e il suo tempo* [Florence: Convegno internazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1968], 331-351).

<sup>172</sup> Janson names him the former; Dempsey, the latter.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. the vinicultural workers in Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes in the Camposanto of Pisa. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 145; Shapiro, "Donatello's *Genietto*," 135. Janson and Barolsky postulate that he may have once held a wine cup or dangled a bunch of grapes from his upheld hand.

fertility, often combined with images of naked boys on birth salvers.<sup>174</sup> The exposure of the boy's genitalia, in conjunction with the poppy pods, stresses the theme of fertility, which in turn relates back to Bacchic ideas of natural fecundity and to the general figure of a genius, the "begetter" who ensured men would have healthy offspring.<sup>175</sup> His similarity to satyrs reinforces the allusion to sexual reproduction, as those creatures bore associations with fertility. About his feet is a slithering snake—ubiquitous on Bacchic sarcophagi—to which the young fellow seems oblivious.<sup>176</sup> The satyr's tail transforms him from the sweet putto or *Eros* to the impish, even lascivious, *Satyriscus*, "the sensual spirit (and often demon) of lustful phantasms."<sup>177</sup> His swagger and self-exposure may suggest the titillating sensations induced by drink, yet at the same time, the wings serve to elevate him above earthly sensations. The winged sandals, not themselves typically seen on putti, suggest the flighty, ethereal qualities of alcohol, and the volatile, "mercurial" effects of drink, especially its metaphorical effect of an enlightening, spiritual intoxication.<sup>178</sup> The statue is Donatello's improvisation on the Bacchic *spiritelli* he so admired.

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<sup>174</sup> Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 130-131.

<sup>175</sup> See the *Oxford Concise Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. Ian Chilvers and M. C. Howatson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), "genius," p. 236. As Shapiro notes, the Roman guardian spirit genius is associated with the bedchamber and the marriage bed, and with the fertility engendered therein. Musacchio (*The Art and Ritual of Childbirth*, 138) and Barolsky (*Infinite Jest*, 24) suggest that the statue may have been made on the occasion of a marriage and possibly for a bedroom.

<sup>176</sup> The household snake was an attribute of a genius.

<sup>177</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 60.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 60. Also Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 146: "What associations ankle-wings as such could have evoked in the minds of fifteenth century humanists is, needless to say, hard to ascertain. On the other hand, considering the extreme complexity of the symbolic ideas connected with the Bacchic cult in the Renaissance, it is not inconceivable that our statue actually had a mercurial—or better, "hermetic"—aspect."

One of the first artists to take up the idea of the Triumph of Bacchus, not as a copy of an antique relief or as a marginal decoration but as a novel composition in its own right (though in a drawing, not a commissioned piece), was Jacopo Bellini. In two densely illustrated folio volumes of drawings made from the 1440s through the 1460s, Jacopo recorded his wide familiarity with classical art and subjects.<sup>179</sup> The books (one in London and the other in Paris) were intended and used as a *liber studiorum*, a compilation of studies for the benefit and education of the artist, his students, and heirs.<sup>180</sup> In spite of this practical context, Jacopo took up the Bacchic figures not as mere motifs to be imitated, but as reimagined living and breathing beings. A Triumph of Bacchus in the London Book shows the svelte, nude god riding upon an upright chariot, pulled by a single horse ridden by a satyr (fig. 1.46, 47). Jacopo's familiarity with Bacchic imagery is revealed in motifs such as the satyrs carrying a drunken companion or the satyr holding aloft a fruit bowl (fig. 1.48, 49). But no motif was precisely lifted from an antique.<sup>181</sup> The two-page drawing includes goat-footed, horned, and ithyphallic satyrs, pipes and

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<sup>179</sup> See Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, for an overview of the artist's oeuvre and reproductions of all 220 drawings in the two books. See also Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, "Jacopo Bellini und die Antike," in their *Corpus der italienischen Zeichnungen 1300-1450*, Part II (Berlin: Mann, 1968-80), vol. 5, 192-233.

<sup>180</sup> Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 77. The London book has 101 remaining folios with 134 drawings in silverpoint, a few of which have been worked over in pen and wash. The rag paper has a watermark first used in the 1440s. This book is recorded in the will of Jacopo Bellini's widow in 1471, giving it to Gentile, who then bequeathed it to his brother Giovanni, who died in 1516. The book remained in the Veneto until 1855, when it was purchased by the British Museum. The Paris book has 93 remaining sheets, some tinted and some from older manuscripts; one paper insert; and of 13 removed pages, three loose leaves were recovered and are likewise in the Louvre. The drawings of metalpoint were relined in pen and ink by at least five different hands. This book was also inherited by Gentile in 1471. This second book may have been taken by Gentile on his diplomatic mission to Constantinople in 1479-1480 where it may have been sold or given as a gift to the Sultan, Mehmed II "the Conqueror." More recent scholarship points doubt at this notion, since the book is first recorded in 1728 in Izmir (Smyrna), where it may have arrived in due course through popular trading routes. It was acquired by the Louvre in 1884. See Deborah Howard, "Venice, the Bazaar of Europe," in *Bellini and the East*, ed. Caroline Campbell and Alan Chong (London: National Gallery Company, 2005), 12; and Alan Chong, "Gentile Bellini in Istanbul: Myths and Misunderstandings," in *ibid.*, 113, 118-119.

<sup>181</sup> A few exceptional features in Jacopo's drawing suggest that he may have known, perhaps through a drawing, the relief in Cortona seen by Brunelleschi and Donatello in 1407. The satyr sleeping at the bottom of the page, below the hooves of the horse above, may stem from a misunderstanding of the role of the supine warrior shown felled at

flutes, a wineskin, and bowls of abundant fruit—all attributes of the god of wine. Jacopo reimagined a troop of satyrs moving through his characteristic landscape of swirling, sedimentary hills. There is an unfettered freshness to his composition as he experimented with contrasting foreground and depth. Most tellingly, by showing him sober, straight, and serious, Jacopo captured the awe-inspiring grandeur of the god.

Jacopo's drawings, isolated in studio folios, would remain secluded explorations (benefiting only his students), since the artist did not translate his imaginings into finished paintings. But following in his footsteps, Mantegna would create two masterpieces depicting a Bacchic triumph and revel in engraving, a medium which would allow such visceral *fantasie* to be seen by a wider audience.<sup>182</sup> Mantegna had been instructed by Francesco Squarcione (c. 1395-1468), a prolific instructor in Padua, known to have trained scores of artists in his school, where he amassed a wide range of artifacts, drawings, and plaster casts of antiquities.<sup>183</sup> Indeed, Squarcione claimed to have traveled, like Cyriaco d'Ancona, to Greece. Best known as the teacher and adopted father of Mantegna, Squarcione helped disseminate the *all'antica* style in northern Italian art. His encouragement of his pupils to draw from antiquities and from drawings after such works gradually became conventional instructional practice.<sup>184</sup> Mantegna's

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the bottom of the Cortona sarophagus. Another misinterpretation might be indicated by the placement of a satyr upon the back of a horse pulling Bacchus' chariot, where the antique shows centaurs.

<sup>182</sup> These engravings will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

<sup>183</sup> David Chambers, Jane Martineau, and Rodolfo Signorini, "Mantegna and the Men of Letters," in *Andrea Mantegna*, ed. Jane Martineau (Milan: Electa, for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1992), 9, and in the same volume, Catalogue Part I, "Early Works," pp. 95-99; Francis Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 52, 57-58.

<sup>184</sup> Squarcione was not alone, of course, and other artist/instructors had collected drawings and casts, if not actual ancient fragments, from which to teach their students, including Ghiberti, Jacopo Bellini, Mantegna, Benozzo Gozzoli, the Pollaiuolo brothers, Verocchio, and Fra Bartolommeo. See Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, 180; Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, 53-58, 79-85. Mantegna's collection was so well-known that Lorenzo de' Medici specifically planned a visit to Mantegna's studio

enthusiasm for things classical surely derived in part from his experiences in Squarcione's *studium*, complemented in turn by his exposure to Jacopo Bellini's wide-ranging drawing books after joining that artistic family following his marriage to Jacopo's daughter, Nicolosia. In his pair of *Bacchanal* engravings, he translated that knowledge and study of antiquity into completely original inventions, which took as much of the *idea* of Bacchus as of the classical form the god once had to create a Renaissance god of frenzy and genius. Carrying on from Jacopo and Mantegna, the artists of the next generation would give material form to this imaginative Bacchic energy in full-scale sculpture and wall painting. Together, their work embodied an emerging ideal of creativity.

This gradual transformation of Bacchic imagery from copying to originality was itself part of a cycle of *imitatio*, *aemulatio*, and *renovatio*, which reflected the contemporary concern with how an artist should imitate the antique. Humanists had long debated the role of imitation as they sought to perfect their use of Latin style.<sup>185</sup> Imitation served as a tool in traditional scholastic education: students learned Latin by copying lines verbatim from classical literature. Petrarch and other late medieval humanists began to press beyond the limits of literal imitation, however, confident that the neo-Latinist writer could attain something innovative after taking in the lessons of the past.<sup>186</sup> Slavish imitation should never be the goal, but rather the complete

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during his trip to Mantua in 1483. Paul Davies, "Quattrocento Palaces in Mantua and Ferrara," in *Mantegna and Fifteenth-Century Court Culture*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis and Anka Bednarek (London: University of London, Birkbeck College, 1993), 80. Isabella d'Este would wrangle an antique bust of Faustina from Mantegna in exchange for financial aid, even as his health was waning and he begged to keep it as it gave him so much solace. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 55-56, 63.

<sup>185</sup> See E. H. Gombrich, "The Style *all'antica*: Imitation and Assimilation," in *Gombrich on the Renaissance: Vol. 1 Norm and Form*, 4th ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1985), 122-128.

<sup>186</sup> See G. W. Pigman, III, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980): 1-32. The doctrines of imitation were laid out for the fifteenth-century writer in Seneca's *Epistulae morales*, 84. Petrarch, *Familiars (Le familiari)* XXIII.19.78-94, wrote: "what is like should be hidden so as to be grasped only by the mind's silent enquiry, intelligible rather than describable. We should therefore make use of another man's inner

absorption of the original to the point at which new compositions would emerge as fresh and contemporary inventions.<sup>187</sup> This idea reiterated the classical ideal of *aemulatio*, or emulation, in which the style, having been fully grasped, becomes a vehicle for original expression. For the artist, likewise, it was not enough merely to copy and insert costumes, gestures, and poses in one's work. To do so skirted the fine line between anachronism and modern renewal. As Petrarch urged: "Take care that what you have gathered does not long remain in its original form inside of you: the bees would not be glorious if they did not convert what they found into something different and something better."<sup>188</sup>

So through study and familiarity fifteenth-century artists began to move beyond imitation to emulation, and then to *renovatio*, a true renewal that was at once evocative of the antique but something modern as well. Once comfortable with the style of representation itself, an artist could absorb it and express original images and ideas within that mode. Antique style ceased to be something to harness or borrow, but an inspiration that infused the imagination. Before myths and iconography were codified and confined to their interpretations, before artifacts were analyzed according to a strict system of scientific archaeology, it was possible to have a malleable and emotional interaction with the images of that past. There was, as Campbell says,

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quality and tone, but avoid his words. For the one kind of similarity is hidden and the other protrudes; the one creates poets, the other apes" (as quoted by Gombrich, "The Style *all'antica*," 122).

<sup>187</sup> Erasmus, for example, encouraged writers to hide the fact of their imitation. Cristoforo Landino also encouraged inconspicuous emulation. Pigman, "Versions of Imitation," 10-11 and n. 17.

<sup>188</sup> Petrarch, *Familiars* I.8.23, as quoted by Pigman, "Versions of Imitation," 7. An interesting corollary to this process of imitation in the minds of many writers was the interjection of envy and rivalry. For many, the act of looking back in order to move forward entailed bettering the very predecessors one sought to emulate. This competition or strife, known as *eris*, could be a productive and stimulating one, or a negative and warlike one that only leads to suffering, according to Hesiod's *Theogony*. For many Renaissance thinkers, such as Pico della Mirandola, this rivalry and provocative envy were the necessary prods to greatness. *Ibid.*, 16-20.

“such inventive flexibility.”<sup>189</sup> Bacchic imagery was particularly supple since the veil of cultic mystery often shrouded its meaning, leaving open the interpretation of its figures and gestures. The mix of animal, human, and divine captured the entire cosmos, and its expression of heightened emotion drew out the full range of conceivable experience, making Bacchic imagery easily adaptable and translatable. But how would all these strange creatures be understood?

The theoretical construct through which early Renaissance thinkers could articulate and conceptualize poetic (and consequently, artistic) aesthetics was based upon the premise of *mimesis*, that is, the representation of the real world.<sup>190</sup> For medieval critics, the idea of “creativity” was difficult to appreciate, since “creation” was the distinct province of God, and *fantasia* could be seen as the output of madness or, worse, the influence of demons.<sup>191</sup> Since the work of men was inherently understood to derive from the stuff of His creation—in *imitatio*—it was incompatible to think of men as original creators.<sup>192</sup> The term “invention” encompassed within its meaning the recovery of something, the finding of something that had been lost, as opposed to an exclusive concept of creating something entirely original that had never before existed.<sup>193</sup> But in the Renaissance, the idea that the poet might endeavor to make original,

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<sup>189</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 13.

<sup>190</sup> William J. Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” in *Humanity and Divinity in Renaissance and Reformation: Essays in Honor of Charles Trinkaus*, ed. John W. O’Malley, Thomas M. Izbicki and Gerald Christianson (New York: E. J. Brill, 1993), 19; Murray W. Bundy, “‘Invention’ and ‘Imagination’ in the Renaissance,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 29 (1930): 535-545.

<sup>191</sup> Bundy, “‘Invention’ and ‘Imagination’,” *passim*; Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” 19-20.

<sup>192</sup> Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” 20; Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ To ‘Fantasia’,” 347. This assertion was particularly emphasized by Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>193</sup> As in the meaning of the “Invention of the True Cross.” Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” 17-34; Bundy, “‘Invention’ and ‘Imagination’,” 538-539; Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ To ‘Fantasia’,” 349-356.

imaginative inventions began to emerge.<sup>194</sup> Still, his *invenzione*—his ideas and how he composed them—had to obey the laws of decorum and judgment.<sup>195</sup> As Alberti articulated in his *De Pictura*, the *invenzione* of a painting is the conception behind the substance and appearance of the work; it is the idea or content:

A beautiful invention has such force, as will be seen, that even without painting it is pleasing in itself alone. [Consider the invention of the Calumny of Apelles:] If this story pleased as it was being told [by Lucian], think how much pleasure and delight there must have been in seeing it painted by the hand of Apelles.<sup>196</sup>

The written word, he explained, can guide the ensuing visual composition, indicating the appeal of ancient *ekphraseis* as sources for new paintings.

The Horatian idiom “ut pictura poesis,” framed in reference to the nature of poetry, became relevant to the discussion of painting as well.<sup>197</sup> The *paragone* of the arts asked whether a painting could be like a poem, but speak without words. The idea developed that painters manifested poetical ideas through the medium of their materials and via visual forms, and that the art object was itself a wholly integrated and independently existing art form with a power comparable to the greatest poetry. Leonardo would argue: “[I]f you, O poet, represent a story by depicting it with your pen, the painter with his brush will so render it as to be more easily

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<sup>194</sup> Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” 17-18.

<sup>195</sup> Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ To ‘Fantasia’,” 350-351. As Francesco di Giorgio wrote in his treatise, the power of invention is an innate gift, but must still accord with “discrezione e giudizio” (quoted in *ibid.*, 353).

<sup>196</sup> *On Painting*, Book III, pp. 90-91. *De Pictura* III.53, pp. 94-96: “Atqui ea quidem hanc habet vim, ut etiam sola inventio sine pictura delectet. . . . Quae plane historia etiam si dum recitatur animos tenet, quantum censes eam gratiae et amoenitatis ex ipsa pictura eximii pictoris exhibuisse?”

<sup>197</sup> Horace, *Ars poetica* 361: literally, “as is painting so is poetry.” Lee, “*Ut Pictura Poesis*,” esp. 197-200. Aristotle and Plutarch, too, had adhered to the idea that painting was mute poetry and poetry was a speaking picture. Aristotle, *Poetics* I-II, and Plutarch, *De gloria Atheniensium* III, refer to the similar aphorism of Simonides (Lee, 197 n. 1). The ancient authors, however, were really arguing that poetry could create pictures in the mind as well as a painter could, and not necessarily the other way around. For the importance of rhetoric, and especially Cicero and Quintilian, in formulating a theory of the visual arts, see Spencer, “*Ut rhetorica pictura*,” 26-44.



satisfying and less tedious to understand. If you call painting ‘dumb poetry,’ then the painter may say of the poet that his art is ‘blind painting.’ Consider then which is the more grievous affliction, to be blind or to be dumb!”; “[Y]ou cannot attain with the pen where [the painter] attains with the brush.”<sup>198</sup>

Nevertheless, painters in the fifteenth century regularly depended on written instructions for their *invenzioni*. Even Titian followed a program for his Bacchanals for Alfonso d’Este. Alberti therefore urged artists to become acquainted with scholars and humanists:

For their own enjoyment artists should associate with poets and orators who have many embellishments in common with painters and who have a broad knowledge of many things. These could be very useful in beautifully composing the *istoria* whose greatest praise consists in the invention. A beautiful invention has such force... that even without painting it is pleasing in itself alone.

[...] I advise that each painter should make himself familiar with poets, rhetoricians and others equally well learned in letters. They will give new inventions or at least aid in beautifully composing the *istoria* through which the painter will surely acquire much praise and renown in painting. Phidias, more famous than other painters, confessed that he had learned from Homer, the poet, how to paint Jove with much divine majesty. Thus we who are more eager to learn than to acquire wealth will learn from our poets more and more things useful to painting.<sup>199</sup>

The reliance on poetic sources, however, ensured that Bacchus and his followers would be seen in full flower. The expressiveness and passion of the Bacchic mythology lent itself to the stimulation of the type of painted *poesie* that were increasingly in demand. Like Lorenzo de’

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<sup>198</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. and ed. Edward MacCurdy (New York: George Braziller, 1958), 832, quoting from ms. 2038 Bibliothèque Nationale fol. 19r.

<sup>199</sup> *On Painting*, Book III, pp. 90-91. *De Pictura* III.53, p. 94: “Proxime non ab re erit se poetis atque rhetoribus delectabuntur. Nam hi quidem multa cum pictore habent ornamenta communia. Neque parum illi quidem multarum rerum notitia copiosi litterati ad historiae compositionem pulchre constituendam iuvabunt, quae omnis laus praesertim in inventionem consistit”; III.54, p. 96: “Idcirco sic consulo poetis atque rhetoribus caeterisque doctis litterarum sese pictor studiosus familiarem atque benivolum dedat, nam ab eiusmodi eruditissimis ingenii cum ornamenta accipiet optima, tum in his profecto inventionibus iuvabitur, quae in pictura non ultimam sibi laudem vendicent.”

Medici's "Canzona di Bacco," in which all the joyful pleasure and wistful longing of life were intertwined, so works of art depicting Bacchus revealed these same mysteries but with light, color, pose, and action.

Much of the praise for works of visual art at this time was based on their capacity to imitate nature or for the excellence of their invention.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, the idea that a great artist is not a mere ape of nature, but one who sees something deeper beneath the surface of nature, was gaining ground.<sup>201</sup> It was an altered concept of imagination that would transform artists from illustrators to poets. Cennino Cennini alluded to the idea of artistic *fantasia*, or imagination, in his *Craftsman's Handbook*, but it was not until the later fifteenth century that this notion gained cognitive ground.<sup>202</sup> For a patron to appreciate original imagery, he had to possess a concept that valued and respected an artist's authorial integrity and creativity.<sup>203</sup> This conception developed by the end of the fifteenth century, and was stimulated in part, I contend, by the exploration and acceptance of Bacchic imagery. For it was this body of work that revealed previously unexplored areas of physicality, emotionality, and spirituality. And it was this pagan world that embodied the mode of expression that Renaissance artists sought to grant them access to the frenzied inspiration that had previously been the exclusive purview of the poet. The enthusiasm for an ecstatic maenad gives birth to swirling dervishes of female beauty. The embrace of the lecherous satyr with his hairy haunches and exposed phallus gives rise to a

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<sup>200</sup> Baxandall, "A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este," 318; Bouwsma, "The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity," 21.

<sup>201</sup> Bouwsma, "The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity," 22. Petrarch, *Familiars* 23.19.

<sup>202</sup> See Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, chapter 8, "Artistic Licence, Invention and Fantasia." Cennini's example of an artistic fantasia was a portrayal of a half-man, half-horse creature—that is, of a centaur, which at this time was blurred with the concept of satyrs.

<sup>203</sup> See also Bundy, "'Invention' and 'Imagination,'" passim.

ubiquitous Renaissance metaphor for both necessary sexuality and lofty ingenuity. The enticing figure of the languidly sleeping Ariadne encourages a passion for the nude form that had not been known for centuries. These novel motifs and ideas evolved out of Bacchic forms, giving status and authenticity to an otherwise incomprehensible expression of *fantasia*.<sup>204</sup> Without Bacchic origins, a satyr is a lascivious, frightening demon, and a maenad is just a hysterical, possessed woman. But with antique credentials, such figures emerged in imaginative ways with fresh life and meaning appropriate to the age.

#### THE RENAISSANCE PHILOSOPHICAL REVOLUTION

The rediscovery of the work of Lucretius contributed to changing attitudes that would impact the meaning of Bacchus and his followers. The misapprehension that Epicurus advocated “sensual delights” had been spawned in antiquity by the pejorative assessments of Zeno, Plutarch, and Galen, which were then later followed those of St. Augustine and St. Jerome.<sup>205</sup> But the Renaissance interest in understanding Epicureanism and a reconsideration of the meaning of *voluptas* stemmed from Poggio Bracciolini’s finding of the *De rerum natura* in 1417.<sup>206</sup> In 1431 Lorenzo Valla published his *De voluptate*, in which he proclaimed:

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<sup>204</sup> As Bundy writes, fantasy was considered “the function of recombining the images of past experiences, of making new syntheses” (“‘Invention’ and ‘Imagination’,” 541). Cf. Coluccio Salutati’s assessment of human creativity: “Believe me, we create nothing new but, like tailors, we refashion garments from the oldest and richest fragments, which we give out as new” (as quoted in Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” 32-33). But Philostratus the Elder argued that “mimesis can only create handiwork which it has seen, but *fantasia* equally that which it has not” (as quoted in Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, 186).

<sup>205</sup> See Don Cameron Allen, “The Rehabilitation of Epicurus and His Theory of Pleasure in the Early Renaissance,” *Studies in Philology* 61 (1944): 1-15. As Anthony Grafton states: “Ancients with erroneous views—like Epicurus—[medieval philosophers] merely abused as believers in the primacy of sensual pleasures, including fornication” (“The Availability of Ancient Works,” in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 771).

<sup>206</sup> Allen, “The Rehabilitation of Epicurus,” 1-3; Grafton, “The Availability of Ancient Works,” 774: “[Epicurus] seemed to have recommended such reasonable positions as the acceptance of moderate pleasure from the good

Pleasure... is a good, from whatever source, located in a sense of delight felt by the soul and the body. [...] [H]onor [*honestas*] is not to be desired for itself, as something severe, harsh, and arduous, nor is it to be desired for the sake of earthly profit; it is to be desired as a step towards the perfect happiness which the spirit or soul, freed from its mortal portion, will enjoy with the Father of all things.... Who would hesitate to call this happiness 'pleasure'...? We find in Psalms: 'thou shall make them drink of the torrent of pleasure....' Love itself is pleasure.... The act of love itself is delight or pleasure or beatitude or happiness or charity, which is the last end....<sup>207</sup>

Such a blatant embrace of sensual pleasure did not, of course, escape misunderstanding and censure. Poggio Bracciolini would attack Valla's stance, and what began between the two as an argument over Latin style degenerated into mutual accusations of drinking too much wine.<sup>208</sup>

While a negative impression that Epicurus had advocated hedonistic pleasures continued, Marsilio Ficino's contemporary study of Plato and the revival of Neoplatonism that he initiated expanded the appreciation of *voluptas* as the height of the soul's flight to God and its ecstatic union with the divine.<sup>209</sup>

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things of the natural world or the pursuit of perfect tranquillity of soul." See also Alison Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

<sup>207</sup>Valla, *De vero falsoque bono*, ed. Maristella de Panizza Lorch (Bari: Adriatica, 1970), 21, 26-31, 114, 13-15, as quoted in Lorch, "Lorenzo Valla's Defense of *Voluptas*," 220.

<sup>208</sup>Valla took the first shot, charging Poggio with his love of wine. In response, Poggio admits to liking wine, but counters with the recollection of a feast at which Valla drank too much, arguing: "Nunc sane video, cur in quodam tuo opusculo, in quo Epicureorum causam quantam datur tutaris, vinum tantopere laudasti." He also notes that Valla had been known to extol wine: "Bacchum compotatoresque adeo profuse laudans, ut epicureolum quendam ebrietatis assertorem te esse profitearis" ("Since you profusely praise Bacchus and his drinking companions, you may be said, like a certain little epicurean, to be a defender of drunkenness") (Poggio, *Opera* [Basel, 1538], 217-218, quoted in Allen, "The Rehabilitation of Epicurus," 8, with translated lines by Prof. Louis Waldman, University of Texas at Austin, personal communication).

<sup>209</sup>In his early work *De voluptate* of 1458, he dealt with questions of hedonism and pleasure. A devoted Platonist, Ficino's early attention to Lucretius was likely because he had been told by George of Trebizond's 1455 anti-Platonist diatribe that Lucretius had been a disciple of Plato (Jayne, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium*, introduction section IV, p. 16, n. 15). But it was his later interpretation of Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy, as found in his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium* and on the *Phaedrus* and in his sweeping *Platonic Theology*, that was significant in urging a positive reevaluation of *voluptas*. His translation of Plato's *Symposium*, finished in 1469 and published in 1484, was fundamental in articulating the theory of the progress of the human soul. It was a central

This intellectual shift underlay the process by which Bacchic characters became versatile bearers of meaning in the Renaissance. Engaging the god of wine and his retinue, with its frolicking grotesque satyrs and sensuous nudes, inevitably carried some risk. The themes of love, sexuality, inebriation, and even madness might push the artistic imagination into dangerous realms. Take the enervated, drunken sleep of a Bacchic follower, for example, which would confound the moralizing judgment of early Renaissance viewers. With the appearance of being absent from reason and carried over by self-indulgence, such a sleeper could be associated with sloth and *luxuria*.<sup>210</sup> Yet what becomes clear in the course of fifteenth-century explorations of the ecstatic and sleeping figure is that the particular attitude of its pose could manifest different aspects of meaning. Neoplatonic thought allowed sleep to be seen as a mechanism for *vacatio*, a state so removed from awareness of the material and sensual self—that is, *alienatio*—as to induce a union with the divine.<sup>211</sup> Drunken sleep might convey vice or just oblivion, but could also be nudged into connoting the passing of the mind from the rational to the irrational—to the realm of inspiration. The frenzied maenad, likewise, exhibited improper feminine decorum. Yet

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tenet of ancient Neoplatonic thought that the human soul was understood to devolve from the divine, descending into imperfect flesh, but then by virtue of man's special capacities to be capable of ascending back to a reunion with the One, understood as the supreme goodness that is the highest level of the universe. This was characterized by the triad of emanatio, raptio, and remeatio, which could be visualized in the analogous union of the Three Graces. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Virginia Conant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943); Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, chap. 3, esp. pp. 46-62; Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, chap. V, "The Neoplatonic Movement in Florence and North Italy," esp. pp. 129-143; Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 182-188; Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, 68-70, 75-84; Cassirer, Kristeller, and Randall, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, introduction to chap. III on Marsilio Ficino by Josephine L. Burroughs, 185-192; Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*. For the history of Plato's texts in the Middle Ages, see Raymond Klibansky, *The Continuity of the Platonic Tradition during the Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (Millwood, NY: Kraus International Publications, 1982).

<sup>210</sup> Millard Meiss, "Sleep in Venice: Ancient Myths and Renaissance Proclivities (1966)," in *The Painter's Choice: Problems in the Interpretation of Renaissance Art* (New York: Harper and Row, Icon Editions, 1976), 224; Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, Part I, chap. 2, esp. pp. 70-75.

<sup>211</sup> See Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, chap. 2, esp. 58-59; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, chap. 1.

her *ekstasis*, like the “sleep of reason,” showed her to be taken out of herself, in an anesthesia of the senses that brought her into direct communion with her god.

The notion of divine inspiration, an essential part of the Dionysian mysteries, was reawakened by Ficino’s work with Plato’s texts. The Platonic concept of the ascent of the human soul, effected by degrees through philosophical inquiry or dialectic but inspired by Beauty, or *Pulchritudo*, and spurred by the influence of Love, or *Amor*, to the heavenly height of true *Voluptas*, or joy, intrigued Ficino and his cohort, including Angelo Poliziano and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. The idea of Love as a powerful, virtuous force for good was a radical departure from medieval assessments of love as blind and strictly sensual. For the Neoplatonists, in contrast, there accrued value in a blindness spurred by ecstasy—a drunkenness of the spirit, so to speak—a state beyond reason and intellect.<sup>212</sup> It was this state of ecstasy that ultimately brought the soul closer to God.<sup>213</sup> In his translation of and *Commentary* on the *Phaedrus*, Ficino laid out Plato’s theory of the four forms of divine madness: poetic madness under the Muses, telestic/hieratic madness under Dionysus, prophetic madness under Apollo, and erotic madness under Venus.<sup>214</sup> The mystical, or Bacchic, madness was coessential with the other three for

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<sup>212</sup> See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, chap. IV: “Orpheus in Praise of Blind Love.”

<sup>213</sup> Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 56-66.

<sup>214</sup> Ficino, *Commentary* Chapter 2 and 4 (on *Phaedrus* 245A-C, 265B) and *De amore*, Speech 7, chapter 14, in Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 74-76, 82-84, 220-222. See Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Harper and Row, Icon Editions, 1972), 140. Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 244A. Likewise, in the *Aeneid* VI, 50-80, Virgil describes the prophetic madness of the sibyl in response to the divine inspiration of Apollo. A wild frenzy is induced in her by the presence of the god. Such madness, in other words, appears as the unifying and leveling essence of any inspiration, regardless of its source (Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 175). In Ficino’s *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, he attempts to pick apart the meanings of these various furors. In *Summa* 7, he names Dionysus as the patron of the Nymphs (with whom he had, of course, been associated with from birth, since he was reared by the Nymphs of Nysa), while Apollo stands above the Muses. Pico della Mirandola goes even further, however, naming Bacchus himself the leader of the Muses, derived probably in part from the assertion gleaned from Plutarch, Macrobius, and Athenaeus that Nysean Nymphs and the Muses were one and the same. Pico’s *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, 234; Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 31 and n. 74; Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 232. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.18.3:

instigating divine *furor*. As one step on the way of the soul back to the One, “this madness directs the intention of every part towards the intelligence, which worships God.”<sup>215</sup>

Ficino supported the notion that great art derives from a certain divine inspiration. For his translation of Plato’s *Ion* (1466-1468), Ficino gave the work the subtitle *De furore poetico*, since Plato had written:

for the epic poets, all the good ones, have their excellence, not from art, but are inspired, possessed.... So is it also with the good lyric poets: as the worshipping Corybantes are not in their senses when they dance, so the lyric poets are not in their senses when they make these lovely lyric poems. No, when once they launch into harmony and rhythm, they are seized with the Bacchic transport, and are possessed—as the bacchantes, when possessed, draw milk and honey from the rivers....<sup>216</sup>

One of Ficino’s earliest treatments of the theme was written in 1457 when he was twenty-four, in a letter to the teenaged Peregrino Agli, in which he told him that any ability Agli had displayed in his poetic composition derived not from study or technique alone, but from “divine frenzy”: “[Y]ou are inspired and inwardly possessed by that frenzy; and this power, which is manifested in external movements, the ancient philosophers maintained was the most potent proof that the divine force dwelt in our souls.”<sup>217</sup>

says Apollo and Liber were worshipped as one god on Parnassus. See Bober, “The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia,” n. 69.

<sup>215</sup> Ficino, trans. Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 222.

<sup>216</sup> Plato, *Ion* 533e-534a, trans. Lane Cooper, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 220. See Linda A. Koch, “Michelangelo’s Bacchus and the Art of Self-Formation,” *Art History* 29 (2006): 369.

<sup>217</sup> Ficino, *De divino furore*, Letter no. 7, in *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, trans. Members of the Language Department of the School of Economic Science, London (Dallas: Shephard-Walwyn, 1979), vol. 1, p. 42. This letter was written before Ficino’s own translation of the *Phaedrus*, and therefore his knowledge of the myth of the Phaedran charioteer may derive from a reading of Leonardo Bruni’s partial translation of 1424. See Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 205.

Similarly, Pico della Mirandola asserted in the *Oration* he intended to deliver on the occasion of the release of his 900 *Theses* in 1486 that the greatest good for man is to lift his soul up to heaven through reason and divine inspiration—to refit, in other words, his soul with the wings lost when it was first bound to material flesh.<sup>218</sup> The idea of a spiritual frenzy, a metaphorical drunkenness (paralleled, even spurred, by the literal inebriation of initiates in Bacchic mysteries), was for Pico a feature of freeing the soul from material concerns and lifting it toward a more direct communion with the divine, to be filled with “the holy and unspeakable wisdom by whose nectar the angels are made drunk.”<sup>219</sup> This idea was understood as a *furor divinus*—one of the divine madnesses that Ficino understood Plato to have outlined. In his *Oration*, Pico urged his audience to strive for such Bacchic *furor*:

[L]et us be driven by the frenzies of Socrates, that they may so throw us into ecstasy as to put our mind and ourselves in God. [...] Thereupon Bacchus, the leader of the Muses, by showing in his mysteries, that is, in the visible signs of nature, the invisible things of God to us who study philosophy, will intoxicate us with the fullness of God’s house....<sup>220</sup>

The metaphor of intoxication, as for Ficino, is integral to Pico’s understanding of the means of *vacatio*, or suspension of reason, by which man may experience divine inspiration and ultimately ascend to higher things, to “be stirred by the frenzy of the Muses and drink the heavenly harmony with our inmost hearing.”<sup>221</sup> But what Pico also makes clear, in spite of his sensual symbolism, is that man may only “take part in the holy rites, that is, the mysteries of Bacchus”

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<sup>218</sup> See Paul Oskar Kristeller’s introduction to the *Oration* (later called *Oration on the Dignity of Man* by Pico’s nephew) in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, 215-222. See also Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 20-21. The metaphor of the winged soul is derived by Pico from Zoroaster. *Oration*, section 19, 236.

<sup>219</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 15, 232.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, section 16, 234.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*



by separating himself from his physical desires and pleasures.<sup>222</sup> He attests to a perception of the Bacchic mysteries not as hedonistic revels but as genuine spiritual encounters.

While it is clear that these philosophers understood spiritual drunkenness to be something distinct from physical inebriation, induced by over-consumption of alcohol, it is significant that their perception of the glorious rapture stemming from the true insight into the nature of God was understood as being like that of a state induced by a pagan god of wine.<sup>223</sup> Notably, such a distinction was present in the Bacchic cult itself, where literal intoxication was both a vehicle toward and metaphor for *divino furor*. Bacchic initiates in antiquity used alcohol to disinhibit the body and unfetter the mind so that they might become open to actual divine inspiration, the *enthousiasmos* that filled the initiate and induced an even greater rapture. Likewise, there are antique depictions of a woozy Bacchus supported on his chariot, but the god was not understood as drunk himself, rather as embodying the spiritual intoxication that he offered as a gift to his believers. The metaphor of intoxication could be used even in Christian contexts. In the 1490s, Fra Girolamo Savonarola frequently made use of the concept of being “fuora da se,” of being “outside of oneself” in the literal sense of *ekstasis*, and related the experience to that of drunkenness. “Divinus amor extasim facit” captured for him the idea of the passionate frenzy induced by the action of divine love upon the soul of the faithful elevated up to the heights of

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<sup>222</sup> Pico, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 18, 235. As Pico says, one may only experience this spiritual bliss after having first, “through the agency of moral philosophy, both voided the lax desires of our too abundant pleasures and pared away like nail-clippings the sharp corners of anger and stings of wrath...” (ibid.). See Ruvoldt, “The Sleep of Reason: Inspiration and Creativity in Renaissance Imagery,” Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1999) 40-41, 69.

<sup>223</sup> In his *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, Ficino defines two types of drunkenness: “one the delirious earthly kind where the soul is put below itself and the other the divine kind where the soul is put above itself” (quoting Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, 96).

heavenly conversation.<sup>224</sup> Such ideas contributed to the popularity of sleeping female nudes among northern intellectuals and courtiers at the turn to the sixteenth century. Like exhausted drunken maenads, these nudes possessed qualities of sensuality and abandon that also conveyed the divine inspiration that had overwhelmed them. In these figures, sensuality is not presented as mere dissipation but becomes actual *ekstasis*. The pose with thrown-back head and exposed armpit, instead of the age-old head-in-hand pose, connoted this more frenzied level of sleep: a state that exhibits in physical movements the actual breathing-in, literally *inspiration*, from the divine.<sup>225</sup>

The interest in divine mysteries, and a belief in divine inspiration filtering down through ordained prophets, was stimulated by a simultaneous revival of Orphism and Hermeticism. Along with the *Corpus Hermeticum*, or the *Pimander* as Ficino called his translation of the collection, the Orphic Hymns appeared to reveal a more ancient wisdom underlying the philosophy of Plato.<sup>226</sup> The idea of mysteries revealed through arcane texts that were once again comprehensible—translated, as if from code, from cryptic Greek to lucid Latin—gave the humanists a sense of magical power. The writings themselves supported a view of the world as

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<sup>224</sup> Steinberg, “Fra Bartolomeo, Savonarola and a Divine Image,” 325. The words derive from one of Savonarola’s favorite authorities, Dionysius the Aeropagite.

<sup>225</sup> Moshe Barasch, “The Tossed-Back Head: The Ambiguity of a Gesture in Renaissance Art,” in *Imago Hominis: Studies in the Language of Art* (Vienna: IRSA, 1991), 152-160.

<sup>226</sup> Ficino and other humanists believed in a descent of ancient wisdom from “Mercury” Trismegistus, through Orpheus, Pythagorus, and ultimately to Plato, which may explain Cosimo de’ Medici’s insistence that Ficino translate the Hermes manuscript for him first. “Egypt was before Greece; Hermes was earlier than Plato.” See Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 12-15; Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), chap. 5: “Hermes Trismegistus,” esp. pp. 201-205. Ficino’s *Pimander* was evidently his most popular work, printed first in 1471 and widely dispersed (Yates, 17). Ficino had mastered Greek under the instruction of John Argyropoulos by 1462, and proceeded to translate into Latin the Orphic Hymns, the Sayings of Zoroaster, and the writings of the supposed Hermes Trismegistus before moving on to the complete Platonic dialogues, which he finished in 1469. See Arthur Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); also Athanassakis, *The Orphic Hymns*, introduction. Of the hymns, 7 were dedicated to Dionysus, more than any other deity, and many of the others included Dionysian epithets.

infused with divine and living energy, with forces subjectable to human manipulation and influence. As the divine worked its way through the cosmos, man grasped the opportunity to use prayer and natural magic to shape his destiny. In an era that seemed battered by fortune, such hope for control and divine exigency was most appealing. The Neoplatonic concept of being filled up with the god, itself a Bacchic precept, was enhanced by Orphic and Hermetic faith in conjuring divine influence. The artistic reimagining of ancient sacrifice involving satyr actors emerged as a part of the creative enterprise of reconstructing and revivifying classical antiquity.<sup>227</sup> In religious paintings, such motifs served to suggest a pre-Christian time or place, and implied the idea of a conquering new order that would eliminate such barbarian practices and peoples. But as part of a purely antiquarian search for the quintessentially antique, the image of the pagan sacrifice stood out as being supremely “other” and ancient. The subject came to stand on its own “in a painted and sculpted mythic past peopled by fauns and satyrs.”<sup>228</sup> It evoked emotions, fears, tremulation, and excitement that few other subjects could capture. Its allusions to magic and distant divinities further stimulated the contemporary imagination that was primed for the contemplation of human power over fate and the workings of the universe. Man’s own creative powers and spirit of invention could be expressed in the primal manipulations of the satyr and his human consorts hovering over the sacrificial fire on an altar.<sup>229</sup>

Similarly, Donatello’s *Genietto* may evoke the Bacchic imagery linking the satyric putto to the intoxicating effects of wine. His physique, pose, and attributes suggest the noble

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<sup>227</sup> Satyrs were commonly part of the apparati of ancient sacrificial iconography, as on the Campana relief in the Louvre, Paris, no. 4940, represented in H. v. Rohden and H. Winnefeld, *Architektonische röm. Tonreliefs* (Berlin, 1911), pl. 122, I, text p. 298. Pan may have had a particular place in such imagery for his role in escorting the dead to Hades. Braham, “The Transformation of Bellini’s ‘The Blood of the Redeemer’,” 16.

<sup>228</sup> P. F. Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 141.

<sup>229</sup> See Saxl, “Pagan Sacrifice,” 363.

drunkenness of the soul, the “eschatological *Ebrietas*, that eternal drunkenness in the afterlife described by Orphic and Pythagorean writers.”<sup>230</sup> Having the “winged feet” that Pico della Mirandola says assist the soul’s flight, this Bacchic spirit suggests that elevating ascent.<sup>231</sup> Orphism also addressed the purification of the soul, which could be achieved through Bacchic purgation, or vomiting, or through the punishment of the baser elements of nature inside us, as symbolized in the spanking of Pan on the British Museum sarcophagus.<sup>232</sup> Boccaccio referred to this cleansing experience in the *Genealogia*: “[T]hey asserted that if anyone should become so enebriated that he vomited, after he got past the stupor of the brain, his mind would remain tranquil, his wearisome cares cast off and expelled.”<sup>233</sup> The Bacchic motif of putti frightening each other with a Silenus mask—encountered in antique reliefs and gems—appears frequently in the Quattrocento; it is seen in a drawing after Mantegna and in bronze plaquettes (fig. 1.50, 51).<sup>234</sup> The theme was taken up by humanists as an *all’antica* metaphor signifying the emptiness

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<sup>230</sup> Shapiro, “Donatello’s *Genietto*,” 135. Shapiro, for his own part, discounts the idea that the *Genietto* relates to wine or Bacchus at all. See also Franz Cumont, *Recherches sur le Symbolisme Funéraire des Romains* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1942), 372.

<sup>231</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 14, 231.

<sup>232</sup> Servius discussed Bacchic purgation of the soul in his commentary on Virgil’s *Georgics*, I, 166.

<sup>233</sup> Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, V.xxv.21, p. 717: “asserentes, si quis in tantam ebrietatem procederet, ut in vomitum usque veniret, post preteritum cerebri stuporem, animum, exutis curis tediosis atque eiectis, remanere tranquillum.” He cites Servius and Seneca’s *On the Tranquility of the Mind* as sources.

<sup>234</sup> Examples could have been seen on ancient sarcophagi (one in the Albani collection in Rome was likely known to Mantegna) and gems. See Waldemar Deonna, “Éros jouant avec un masque to Silène,” *Revue archéologique*, 3rd ser., 5 (1916): 74-97. The drawing is in the Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris, inv. 5072, nouveau 2854, c. 1485-1495. A plaquette from as early as 1465 is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, inv. 1942.9.190, A-1512. See Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, figs. 68 and 70. The drawing appears to reflect the subject of a wooden vessel supposed to have been painted by Mantegna that is recorded in Jacopo Sannazaro’s *Arcadia* as showing “many things by the hand of Mantegna of Padua, the most clever and ingenious [ingegnossissimo] of artists; among other things a naked nymph, all of whose limbs were most beautiful, apart from the feet, which were like those of a goat. She was seated on a swollen bladder, and suckled a little satyr, and looked at him with such tender wonderment that she seemed totally overcome by affection and love. The boy, meanwhile, suckled at one breast, and stretched out his sweet little hand to the other, and looked at it, as if afraid that it would be taken from him. A short way from them were to be seen two boys, also naked, who had donned two horrible face masks, and were

of fear: only the ignorant can be made afraid by bugbears when the intellect is the protector from childish terror. That the mask is Bacchic may symbolize the effects of excessive alcohol on reason, the drunkard being vulnerable to delusions and fanciful frights. But the motif also alluded to Neoplatonic metaphors for the profound but terrifying journey from sublimated reason to divine inspiration, which Pico della Mirandola described in vivid terms: “[W]e shall sometimes descend, with titanic force, rending the unity like Osiris into many parts, and we shall sometimes ascend, with the force of Phoebus collecting the parts like the limbs of Osiris into a unity, until, resting at last in the bosom of the Father who is above the ladder, we shall be made perfect with the felicity of theology.”<sup>235</sup> Imagery like that of the little putto frightening his friends, sleeping drunkenly, and urinating, or the satyr deep in his cups, or Silenus falling from his donkey came to embody meanings to be appreciated on multiple levels, beneath the external veil depicting drunken vice.

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sticking their little hands through the mouth-holes of them to frighten two others, who were standing in front of them. One of these latter turned round as he fled, and cried out in fright. The other had already fallen to the ground in tears, and unable to help himself in any other way, stretched out his hand to scratch the mask” (*Arcadia* XI.35-38, as quoted in Martineau, *Andrea Mantegna*, cat. 149, p. 45). The drawing does appear to match Sannazaro’s *ekphrasis*, with the nursing nymph identifiable at the right cut edge, where she can be just made out by the indication of a leg and the edge of a wine bladder. See Otto Kurz, “Sannazaro and Mantegna,” in *Studi in onore di Riccardo Filangieri* (Napoli: L’Arte Tipografica, 1959), 277-283; Paul Holberton, “Poetry and Painting in the time of Giorgione,” Ph.D. diss. (Warburg Institute, University of London, 1989), 297-299. Jacobo Sannazaro, *Opere Volgari*, ed. Alfredo Mauro (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1961), 101: “E subito ordinò [Ergasto] i premii a coloro che lottare volessono, offrendo di dare al vincitore un bel vaso di legno di acero, ove per mano del padoano Mantegna, artefice sopra tutti gli altri accorto et ingegnossissimo, eran dipinte molte cose; ma tra l’altre una Ninfa ignuda, con tutti i membri bellissimi, dai piedi in fuori, che erano come quegli de le capre. La quale sopra un gonfiato otre sedendo, lattava un piccolo Satirello, e con tanta tenerezza il mirava, che pareva che di amore e di carità tutta si struggesse; e ‘l fanciullo ne l’una mammella poppava, ne l’altra teneva distesa la tenera mano, e con l’occhio la si guardava, quasi temendo che tolta non gli fusse. Poco discosto da loro si vedean due fanciulli pur nudi, i quali avendosi posti duo volti orribili di mascare, cacciavano per le bocche di quelli le picciole mani, per porre spavento a duo altri che davanti gli stavano; de’ quali l’uno fuggendo si volgea indietro e per paura gridava, l’altro caduto già in terra piangeva, e non possendosi altrimenti aiutare, stendeva la mano per graffiarli. Ma di fuori del vaso correva a torno a torno una vite carica di mature uve; e ne l’un de’ capi di quella un serpe si avvolgeva con la coda, e con la bocca aperta venendo a trovare il labro del vaso, formava un bellissimo e strano manico da tenerlo.”

<sup>235</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 11, 230. Osiris and Bacchus Zagreus were a blended divinity in Orphism.

Ficino's *De Vita Triplici* (*Three Books on Life*) of 1489 was suffused with an interest in natural magic, and wine as a potent ingredient for life appeared throughout.<sup>236</sup> His Proem, dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, addressed Bacchus first:

The poets sing that Bacchus, the supreme prelate of priests, was born twice—signifying perhaps either that one who is going to be a priest should be reborn at the moment of his initiation or else that when one is at length a perfected priest, his mind, deeply drunken with God, seems now to have been reborn. Or perhaps, in a less exalted sense, they mean that wine (the seed of Bacchus) is born once on the vine (Semele) when the clusters are ripe beneath Phoebus, and born again after the thunderbolt of the vintage as pure wine in its proper vessel (the thigh of Jupiter). [...] [P]erhaps a more prudent author might have begun a work of medicine under the auspices of Phoebus the first of doctors rather than under those of Bacchus. But what if there might be a sign not without meaning in my mouth just now happening to utter “Bacchus”? For he perhaps heals more salubriously with his nourishing wine and his carefree jollity than that Phoebus with his herbs and songs.<sup>237</sup>

The same drink that could be a sensual deceiver could also be a spiritual salve and supplement: “[T]o this [‘spiritual’] body wine is in the place of earth, odor of wine takes the place of water, song and sound acts as its air, light represents the element of fire. By these four especially, the spirit is fed: by wine, I say, by its odor, by song, and similarly by light.”<sup>238</sup> Ficino advised: “take wine in the same proportion as light—abundantly, so long as neither sweat nor dehydration... nor drunkenness occurs. But besides the substance of wine taken twice daily, absorb more frequently the odor....”<sup>239</sup> The Christo-Bacchic metaphor of a human sprouting from and fostered by the vine is carried into Ficino's text with the idea of the vine connecting men to

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<sup>236</sup> Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, in conjunction with the Renaissance Society of America, 1989).

<sup>237</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, Proem, 103.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, III.24, p. 379.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

heaven: “[F]rom the very living body of the world, a more vigorous life might be propagated as if from a vine into our own body, which is in a way a part of the world’s body.”<sup>240</sup> Ficino’s theory elevated otherwise base and hedonistic concepts of desire and love, creating out of them an idea of Beauty that was a feature of the Godly. The action of Love is realized through *raptio*, or Rapture, an experience that had an affinity with the exaltation of Bacchic inspiration.<sup>241</sup> For while Ficino maintained the function of Reason and Mind in enacting man’s elevation of the soul, Rapture was the necessary manifestation of contact with the stimulus of Love, without which no amount of Reason could attain the sublime.<sup>242</sup> As Lorenzo de’ Medici wrote in his poem *L’altercazione*: “[T]he soul by love acquires more divine goodness than it does by knowledge.”<sup>243</sup>

The philosophical reckoning with the notion of *voluptas* is what elevated Bacchic myth from the mire of base sensuality. Bacchus was a god of love and beauty, but here was an idea that elevated those previously sinful passions. A concept of heavenly *voluptas* allowed sensual experiences to exist as metaphors for that divine experience. The union with the highest good—the *summum bonum* (or *l’ultimo bene*) that was the apex of the universe—was experienced as a certain kind of ecstasy, a pure and perfect pleasure, transforming the meaning of a word that had previously connoted only vice.<sup>244</sup> No god better embodied the essence of that ecstasy than

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<sup>240</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, Proem, 105.

<sup>241</sup> Ficino also called this phase *conversio* or *vivificatio*. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 37; Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 58.

<sup>242</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 54.

<sup>243</sup> IV, 104f, as quoted and trans. in *ibid.*, 79. “Che amor merita più, provare intendo, / E che più l’alma amando in vita acquista / La divina bontà, che inquirendo” (*L’altercazione* IV, ll. 103-105, in *Opere di Lorenzo de’ Medici detto il Magnifico*, ed. Leopold II, Grand-Duke of Tuscany [Florence: G. Molini, 1825], vol. 2, 184).

<sup>244</sup> See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 49-50.

Bacchus. Such enlightened understanding of sensuality and pleasure is captured in the couplets Angelo Colocci composed and placed at the entrance to his garden, at the base of a sculpture of a sleeping nymph, his “genius” of *voluptas*:

Hic genii locus est; Genii una cura voluptas  
 Aut genii vivas legibus, aut abeas.  
 Hic jocus, hic felix habitat, sine lite voluptas  
 Et Genius, cedant jurgia, cura, labor.<sup>245</sup>

“No better summary could be written of pleasure legitimized as a balm for the soul, of voluptas imbued with Christian morality....”<sup>246</sup> The frenzied inebriation and loss of self induced by Bacchanalian rites presented an experience analogous to the passionate *furor* experienced by Neoplatonic man as his soul journeyed toward a reunion with the divine. The Bacchic mysteries, in other words, served not only as a mechanism for achieving the *vacatio*, or suppression of self, that leads to divine inspiration, but also as a metaphor for the ecstatic *furor* achieved by the man who has elevated his soul by means of Love to the greatest heights of heaven. Bacchic imagery afforded an apt and *all’antica* vehicle for visualizing this divine frenzy, its portrayal of sensual pleasures a metaphor for more sublime ecstasies. The Triumph of Bacchus embodied not only an exultant afterlife but also the hope for a spiritual ascent in one’s lifetime. The *ekstasis* (that “standing outside” of the body) and *enthousiasmos* (being filled with the breath of the god) of Bacchic inspiration were like the elevation of the soul and consequent sacred frenzy sought by Neoplatonists. The accommodation of the irrational in the process of returning the soul to God stimulated the idea that greatness might owe itself to forces outside of Reason. As Socrates asserted in the *Phaedrus*: “[I]n reality, the greatest blessings come by way of madness, indeed of

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<sup>245</sup> Bober, “The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia,” 239. See also Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 104.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.



madness that is heaven-sent.”<sup>247</sup> So the Renaissance view of inspiration and creativity began to imagine that true greatness derived from divine blessing—that genius was *divino*.<sup>248</sup>

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The fierce, frightening, complex Dionysus whom the Greeks knew came back to life for a time in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Humanists uncovered a fairly accurate appreciation and perception of the ancient god and the forces that surrounded him. They noted from ancient literary sources his link to the development of the dithyramb and theatrical drama; they saw the creative and inventive seeds within his mad frenzy; they admired his noble calm amidst his lascivious or indecorous followers.<sup>249</sup> They were familiar with the Platonic saying *Vinum ingenii fomes*, that is “wine is the kindling of the mind, of genius.”<sup>250</sup> As Nietzsche would later argue, they also perceived that a reawakening of this Dionysian spirit might offer a vitality previously restrained by the “life-denying instincts of Christianity.”<sup>251</sup> Mantegna would reveal this dignified Bacchus, crowned for his glorious gifts and his inspirational genius, surrounded by a less than ideal cohort. Titian would let spring forth a beautiful and enthusiastic god, a beacon of heavenly love and spiritual enlightenment, standing apart from a throng of more materially bound, pleasure-seeking companions. This appreciation of Bacchus’ other gifts—his grace and inspiration—appears alongside his more obvious ones, the sensual pleasures of wine

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<sup>247</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a, trans. R. Hackforth, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 491.

<sup>248</sup> Patricia Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist: From Dante to Michelangelo* (Boston: Brill, 2004), passim.

<sup>249</sup> They had knowledge of many ancient sources that attest to the inspirational powers of wine-drinking, as in the familiar work of Horace and Plutarch, among others.

<sup>250</sup> M. A. Screech, “The Winged Bacchus (Pausanias, Rabelais and Later Emblematists),” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 260, citing *Timaeus* 60A and Plutarch’s *Table-talk* VII.10-715.

<sup>251</sup> McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysus*, 1.

and sex. The attention given to Neoplatonism helped in part to readmit the subtle and powerful qualities that had once pertained to the god and his gifts. Madness, *furor*, inspiration, ecstasy: all were perceived as aspects of Bacchus, elevating him from exclusively hedonistic or sinful connotations. Still, the intense, wrathful Dionysus of Euripides' *Bacchae* was not the same as the bibulous Roman Bacchus. In ancient Roman times, emphasis had shifted toward the pleasant and joyful celebration of the Bacchic rout and the personal gifts that cult membership promised, especially a happy afterlife. And ultimately it would be the jolly Roman god that would come to dominate the later Renaissance perception of the Bacchanal.<sup>252</sup> The earlier, short-lived consciousness that there was something much more powerful and more essential in drunkenness than mere tipsiness would be superseded. But until then there was an understanding of the power of wine to take man outside of himself, outside of reason and society and custom, both to sink him into the essence of his animal nature and to elevate him to divine heights of intuition, inspiration, and creativity.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> E. R. Dodds, *Bacchae* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), introduction, x.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, xi-xviii. See also Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 101, 148; Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*.

## Chapter Two

**Frenzy: The Pathos, Ecstasy, and Beauty of the Maenad**

*Liknitan Bacchus, bearer of the vine,  
Thee I invoke to bless these rites divine:  
Florid and gay, of nymphs the blossom bright,  
And of fair Venus, Goddess of delight.  
'Tis thine mad footsteps with mad nymphs to beat,  
Dancing through groves with lightly leaping feet.  
— Orphic Hymn<sup>1</sup>*

In a letter to Gallo, Cicero wrote:

You compare these Bacchantes with the Muses of Metellus.... [T]hey [the Muses] at least, would have been appropriate for my library and in keeping with my interests. But these Bacchantes, where could I ever put them in my house? They are, of course, pretty little figures. I know them very well, and have often seen them. I would have commissioned you to buy these specific works, which were known to me, if I had approved of them.<sup>2</sup>

For a self-respecting Roman intellectual, evidently, there was no place for “pretty little figures.”

Cicero suggested not only that these dancing females were merely pretty, but furthermore, that he did not “approve” of them. Perhaps he deemed them unserious, unintellectual, or even more insidious, too sensual. Nevertheless, Cicero’s opinion was not the dominant one; these decorative figures found a place in many a Roman house. The popularity of Bacchic decoration

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<sup>1</sup> Orphic Hymn 46, trans. Thomas Taylor, *Orphic Hymns* (London: 1792), hymn “XLV”, 178-179. Cf. trans Athanassakis, 63: “I summon to these prayers Dionysos Liknites, born at Nysa, blossoming, beloved and kindly Bacchos, nursling of the nymphs and of fair-wreathed Aphrodite. The forests once felt your feet quiver in the dance as frenzy drove you and the graceful nymphs on and on....” See also W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), 287-288.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *ad Familiares*, VII.23.1-3, quoted in Lori-Ann Touchette, *The Dancing Maenad Reliefs: Continuity and Change in Roman Copies* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1995), 55.

actually increased significantly in the Roman era, driven not only by true religious belief but also by the appeal of such imagery to luxury-minded consumers.<sup>3</sup>

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Bacchus and his entourage found their way back into domestic decoration in furniture painting, prints, carved reliefs, figurines, and antique collectibles. And the quintessential Quattrocento nymph, derived from her maenadic sisters, was born. Yet as satyrs gambol around Bacchus in early mythological works such as Jacopo Bellini's drawings, the maenads—so inescapable on ancient sarcophagi depicting similar processions—are largely absent. In Mantegna's engraved *Bacchanals*, men and satyrs intermingle without a single woman, save the very unmaenadic obese female being given a piggyback ride. The frenzied female followers of the god were inexplicably excised from the *thiasos*. Maenads were reproduced in explicit copies of antique works of art—usually found in drawings and *all'antica* reliefs; yet there, too, they were often shown isolated from their original context or with only a few of their original fellow Bacchantes (fig. 2.1, 2).<sup>4</sup>

However, this absence of the specifically Bacchic maenad does not imply a rejection of her form. While her mythical role and actions appear to have been suppressed, her physical appearance and evident emotionalism were transposed onto a variety of divergent Renaissance characters. The maenad was transformed into a grieving Magdalene, a heroic Judith, a dancing Salome, a beautiful nymph, an allegorical abstraction, or even a simple serving girl. For some of these personae the frenzy of the ancient prototype was apposite to the new role and afforded artists a wider range of expressive possibilities. For others, like the nymph, the function of this visual energy is less clear; the originally passionate form was in danger of becoming merely

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<sup>3</sup> See Van de Grift, "Dionysiaca: Bacchic Imagery in Roman Luxury Art."

<sup>4</sup> See the drawing, c. 1460, depicting a maenad from the Bacchic sarcophagus in the British Museum. Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F. 237 inf. 1707 recto.

decorative. This chapter will explore not only why the maenad was avoided in her original context but also what meanings her form was made to bear when usurped for other purposes.

#### THE WARBURGIAN MODEL OF THE “PATHOS FORMULA”

The maenads of myth and cult were virginal young maidens, the nymphs of Nysa, or matrons drawn away from their households. These women delved into ecstatic trances induced by dance and wine and the direct enthusiasm of Bacchus himself. Their frenzy was not one of sexual arousal but of *ekstasis*: divine inspiration taking them outside of themselves, away from merely physical sensations. The ithyphallic satyrs in ancient images might feast upon the sight of such a maenad or even attempt to lure her into an embrace, but the maenads resisted with persistence, even violence. Yet the maenad was still viewed as a willfully erotic figure. The Bacchanalia were feared in antiquity, presumed to foster sexual orgies during the secret rites, and ancient artists deliberately depicted maenads in erotic ways, with body-hugging diaphanous drapery, bared breasts, and exposed thighs. The characteristic tossed-back head was evocative of the throes of female orgasm.<sup>5</sup> Inherently, the physical manifestations of extreme emotional frenzy—whether in spiritual or sexual ecstasy, hysteria, or anguish—all appeared much the same. This physical reality made the conceptual blurring of these states inevitable. If the tossed-back head and arched back were sexual as well as emotional signs, their use was inevitably ambiguous.

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<sup>5</sup> Both “the rapture of sexual union [and] the mystical experience of divine vision” are shown by the same pose of head. Moshe Barasch, “The Tossed-Back Head: The Ambiguity of a Gesture in Renaissance Art,” in his *Imago Hominis: Studies in the Language of Art* (Vienna: IRSA, 1991), 153.

Sir Joshua Reynolds observed in the late eighteenth century that the grieving Marys at the Crucifixion, as in a drawing by Baccio Bandinelli (fig. 2.3), appeared to derive from classical depictions of maenads:

There is a figure of a Bacchante leaning backward, her head thrown quite behind her, which seems to be a favourite invention, as it is so frequently repeated in basso-rilievos, cameos, and intaglios; it is intended to express an enthusiastic frantic kind of joy. This figure Baccio Bandinelli... has adopted... to express [the] frantic agony of grief. [...] It is curious to observe, and it is certainly true, that *the extremes of contrary passions are with little variation expressed by the same action.*<sup>6</sup>

To depict the physical manifestations of the inner workings of the mind and heart is an elemental ambition for artists. In the fifteenth century, the drive for emotive expression, urged especially by Alberti, was intensified. And it was in antique imagery, and especially in the figure of the maenad, that artists rediscovered the anatomy of pathos, and with it, the paradox that the “frenzy of joy” and the “frenzy of grief” could inhabit the same body (fig. 2.4, 5, 6).

What Reynolds had noted became a preoccupation for Aby Warburg. He saw this frenzied figure—with hair and clothing whipping about the body, head tossed back, arms twisted—grieving beneath the cross in Bertoldo di Giovanni’s relief of the *Crucifixion*, c. 1475, now in the Bargello (fig. 2.7).<sup>7</sup> Warburg observed: “Only a few of his works have been preserved, but they prove that like almost no other, Bertoldo... subscribed to the ancient formula

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<sup>6</sup> (Emphasis added.) Reynolds, *Discourse* no.12, quoted in Edgar Wind, “The Maenad Under the Cross: Comments on an observation by Reynolds,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1 (1937): 70-71. The drawing referred to by Reynolds is believed to be the one in the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris. Cf. a drawing by Reynolds showing a grieving Magdalene (British Museum, London). Alberti likewise observed: “Who, unless he has tried, would believe it was such a difficult thing, when you want to represent laughing faces, to avoid their appearing tearful rather than happy?” (“Tum, quis hoc nisi qui expertus sit, crediderit usque adeo esse difficile, cum velis ridentes vultus effigiare, vitare id ne plorabundi magis quam alacres videantur?”) (*De Pictura*, II. 42, pp. 80-81). We must note that Bandinelli’s grieving figure owes much to the dying Creusa in the Medea sarcophagus in Museo Nazionale, Ancona (Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 110). She also shares a lot with the slumping figure of the young maenad on the Triclinium reliefs and on the Bacchic Krater in Pisa (*ibid.*, cats. 90 and 91). See figs. 2.5 and 6.

<sup>7</sup> Warburg “The Entry of the Idealizing Classical Style,” 7-31. For the importance of tossing the head in maenadic behavior and representation, see Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 237ff.

of pathos with body and soul. Just as a maenad tosses an animal that has been torn apart, so too Mary Magdalene, mourning at the base of the cross, clenches the hair she has torn out in an orgy of grief.”<sup>8</sup> Warburg detected, like Reynolds, the uncanny recurrence of this maenadic form, and noted that the same movements that once expressed ecstatic joy could be used to embody instead overwhelming sadness. Such “energetic inversion,” as he called it, would change the sense but not the “pitch” of the emotion.<sup>9</sup> In Warburg’s theory, this reawakened style of emotive expression depended upon the survival of these “pathos formulae” or *Pathosformeln*: eternal figures that encapsulated unconscious feelings inherent in the human psyche, and remained formally consistent even as their meaning changed. His concept of the *Pathosformel* sought to explain the diachronically persistent and fixed posture of the maenad.<sup>10</sup> He believed there was a “psychology of human expression” that manifested itself in certain “primitive words of passionate gesture language” that remained innate in human memory over time.<sup>11</sup> Maenadic

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<sup>8</sup> Warburg “The Entry of the Idealizing Classical Style,” 25.

<sup>9</sup> See Moshe Barasch, “‘Pathos formula’: Some Reflections on the Structure of a Concept” and “The Tossed-Back Head” in his *Imago Hominis*, 119-127 and 152-160. Barasch characterized the innate intensity of a “pathos formula” as its “pitch.”

<sup>10</sup> Warburg’s theory of the *Pathosformel* or “emotive formula” (as translated in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*) was first articulated, though not well-defined, in his essay on the *Death of Orpheus* drawing by Dürer. “Dürer and Italian Antiquity,” (1905), in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 553-558. See Barasch, “‘Pathos formula,’” 124. Ernst Gombrich notes that the germinal idea of Warburg’s *Pathosformel* with its connection of antique formulae with ‘pathos’ may relate to a comment made by Burckhardt: “Wo irgend Pathos zum Vorschein kam, musste es in antiker Form geschehen” (Gombrich cites the source of this quote as K. H. v. Stein, *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik* [Stuttgart, 1897], 77, in *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* [London: The Warburg Institute, 1970], 179n). Many have examined the meaning of Warburg’s diffuse concept. See in addition to the sources referred to above, Fiorella Bassan, “Il pathos delle immagini in Aby Warburg,” in *Simbolo, metafori, linguaggi*, ed. Guido Coccoli and Caterina Marrone (Rome: Gutenberg, 1998), 185-201; Salvatore Settis, “Pathos und ethos, Morphologie und Funktion,” in *Vorträge aus dem Warburg-Haus*, vol. 1, ed. Wolfgang Kemp et al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 31-73; Saul Ostrow, ed., *Art History as Cultural History: Warburg’s Projects* (Amsterdam: G & B Arts International, 2001); Giovanni Careri, “*Pathosformeln*: Aby Warburg e l’intensificazione delle immagini,” in *Aby Warburg e le metamorfosi degli antichi dèi*, ed. Marco Bertozzi (Modena: Panini, 2002), 50-63.

<sup>11</sup> Notes to his *Mnemosyne* project (1929), cited by Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 222, and Kurt Foster’s introduction to *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 31. Warburg’s complete introduction to the *Mnemosyne* may be read in Italian translation by Giovanni Sampaolo in *Mnemosyne: L’Atlante della memoria di Aby Warburg*, eds. I. Spinelli and R. Venturi (Rome: Artemide, 1998), 23-26. See also Sigrid Schade, “Charcot and the Spectacle of the Hysterical

frenzy in particular was a generative source for much of this language. As Gombrich observed: “Without the primeval passion which was discharged in maenadic dances and Bacchantic frenzy, Greek art would never have been able to create those ‘superlatives’ of gestures with which the greatest of Renaissance artists expressed the deepest of human values.”<sup>12</sup> In Warburg’s words:

*It is in the zone of orgiastic mass-seizures that we must look for the mint which stamps upon the memory the expressive movements of the extreme transports of emotions, as far as they can be translated into gesture language, with such intensity that these engrams of the experience of suffering passion survive as a heritage stored in the memory. They become exemplars, determining the outline traced by the artist’s hand as soon as maximal values of expressive movement desire to come to light in the artist’s creative handiwork.*<sup>13</sup>

Something intrinsic in the maenad’s pose captured and expressed, both for the woman herself and her audience, the psychological essence of pathos—that is, extreme emotion. Whether this pathos emanated from the divine *enthousiasmos* of Dionysus (that presence of the god within the maenad) or from the anguish of grief—that is, whether from joy or sorrow—would not alter its physical manifestation. Frenzy was frenzy regardless of its tone or source. The reemergence of the pose in the work of Renaissance artists was for Warburg like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis; it bore within it the memory of its former life, the imprint of its original Bacchic frenzy.

It is this process of ‘undemonizing’ the inherited store of impressions that fear had once created which embraces the whole

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Body: The ‘pathos formula’ as an aesthetic staging of psychiatric discourse — a blind spot in the reception of Warburg,” trans. Aileen Dereig, *Art History* 18 (1995): 499-517. Gombrich discusses and excerpts Warburg’s unpublished notes for the *Mnemosyne* in *Aby Warburg*, 105-112, 147-185. Gombrich’s biography of Warburg is an important resource for the many notes and comments that Warburg made regarding work that was never published but is not an entirely unbiased treatment of the art historian. See Edgar Wind’s review, originally published anonymously in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 25 June 1971, pp. 735-736, and reprinted with his authorship revealed in the collection of his essays edited by Jaynie Anderson, *The Eloquence of Symbols: Studies in Humanist Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 106-113.

<sup>12</sup> Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 243.

<sup>13</sup> (Emphasis added.) Warburg’s introductory notes to *Mnemosyne*, quoted in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 245.



gamut of expressions in the grip of emotions.... It also imparts to the dynamics of human expressive movements which lie between the extremes of orgiastic seizures... the hallmark of an uncanny experience.<sup>14</sup>

The revived gestures, in other words, may no longer depict maenadic frenzy, but they bear in their “subterranean roots” the memory of that emotion and are not merely added for the “greater sensuous appeal of far-sweeping decorative lines.”<sup>15</sup>

Bertoldo’s wildly flailing and frenzied mourner embodied for Warburg the essence of what was revived from antiquity in the fifteenth century: Dionysian movement, energy, and passion—the “style of life in motion” epitomized by the antique maenad. Renaissance artists, Warburg argued, found the perfect means by which to articulate intensity of feeling in the wild dance, undulating draperies, and wind-tossed hair of their classical predecessors’ maenad. Poets too captured the maenad’s characteristics in words, following antique models, and made her a nymph, or *ninfa*, the ideal beloved of their heroes.<sup>16</sup> As visualized in his final *Mnemosyne Picture-Atlas*, left unfinished at his death in 1929, Warburg saw the maenad reemerge in the fifteenth century in the form not only of grieving Magdalenes, but also of Judiths, Salomes, and servant girls—figures who embodied what he called the “Nympha,” and who captured, for him,

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<sup>14</sup> Warburg’s introductory note to *Mnemosyne* dictated to Gertrude Bing, quoted in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 291.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1929, B. 4-5, quoted in Gombrich, 245.

<sup>16</sup> As in Poliziano’s *Stanze per il Gioiello*, for example, where he describes Europa as having “drapery that flutters backward,” a motif borrowed from Ovid’s description of the fleeing Daphne in *Metamorphoses* 1.527-530: “The winds bared her limbs, the opposing breezes set her garments a-flutter as she ran, and a light air flung her locks streaming behind her. Her beauty was enhanced by flight” (trans. Miller, 39). See Warburg, “Sandro Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*,” 89-156. Also, Panofsky, “Albrecht Dürer and Classical Antiquity,” in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 241, n. 15. Where authors wanted an *all’antica* name for “maiden” or “beloved” they now called her “ninja.” Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 242, n. 21.

the essence of the new *all'antica* style (fig. 2.8, 9).<sup>17</sup> This figure captivated Warburg's imagination.<sup>18</sup> Again and again in his writings he referred to her as the epitome of what the fifteenth-century artist sought to recapture from the art of antiquity: physical action, vigorous movement, and visceral passion. Inherent in the Nympha was the memory of the terrible frenzy of that antique "head huntress," as Warburg called her, even if she now stepped with a joyful gait and bore a basket of fruit instead of a thyrsus and carcass (fig. 2.10).<sup>19</sup> Her form, her hair, and her dance still resembled that of the maenad.<sup>20</sup> But what this figure may have signified to Renaissance audiences must be questioned. Did the *ninfa* actually retain the emotional intensity—that heightened "pitch"—of her antique model? Grief and joy, it will be seen, are not completely alike after all. The ancestry of those "accessories in motion" and the use to which they are put did in fact shape their meaning and the depth of their pathos. In other words, in some manifestations of the maenadic form, the ancient frenzy inhered in the visible attributes but also in the essence of a new character; in others, however, the "fluttering" became more purely aesthetic—as it had in Cicero's "pretty little figures."

Warburg often veered from discussing the excessive passion of the mourning figure to the expressive gestures of the dancing maid without distinguishing the very different natures of

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<sup>17</sup> Compare plate 46 and 47 of the *Mnemosyne*. See Aby Warburg, *Aby Warburg: Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II. 1), ed. Martin Warnke and Claudia Brink (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000); also *Mnemosyne: L'Atlante della memoria di Aby Warburg*, ed. Spinelli and Venuti.

<sup>18</sup> Warburg had planned on producing a full-length study on the Nympha, but abandoned this project in the early 1900s.

<sup>19</sup> As Warburg's notes on the Nympha said: "On headhunting: Judith, Salome, maenad, via the Nymph as a bringer of fruit, Fortuna, the Hora of Autumn, to the server of the water at the well..." (*Mnemosyne*, quoted in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 287). Compare, for example, the maenad on a Neo-Attic relief in the Uffizi with Ghirlandaio's rushing handmaid in the Tornabuoni Chapel in Santa Maria Novella.

<sup>20</sup> Panofsky discussed the ubiquity of the motif of flowing hair in Quattrocento art, in "Dürer and Classical Antiquity," 243, n. 23.

their respective emotions.<sup>21</sup> Nor did he specify what he meant by a “maenad” or what that creature might have specifically signified to Renaissance observers. Despite seeing something Bacchic in the Nympha, he used the term “maenad” generically. Warburg was not alone in using the appellative “like a maenad” in a generic way, without specifying, first, whether there was a true similarity (that is, to a maenad and not more generally to some other type like a Grace or Hora) and second, what a true similarity would have signified for the Renaissance figure.<sup>22</sup> Regarding the *alla ninfa* female figure in the Otto print “Amor vuol fe” of c. 1465-1480 (fig. 2.11), Warburg wrote:

The skirt, from which her feet emerge in pagan nakedness, was never seen with so lightsome a swirl on any contemporary flesh-and-blood woman. It is like the dresses of *the flying Victories* on Roman triumphal arches, *or of those dancing maenads*, consciously imitated from the antique, who first appeared in works by Donatello and Filippo Lippi. Those figures revived the loftier antique style of life in motion, . . . grafting eternal shoots of pagan antiquity onto the withered rootstock of Flemish-influenced bourgeois painting.<sup>23</sup>

There is a significant difference, however, between a Victory and a maenad; the weight of maenadic meanings must burden any figure that truly resembles her. Warburg saw the Nympha, as used, for example, by Ghirlandaio, as a successful use of the classical formula of the maenad or Victory to inject a “gust of movement and violent motion” and “expressiveness and ‘pathos’” into his work.<sup>24</sup> Warburg perceived the nymph’s insertion to be an act of “liberation and

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<sup>21</sup> See the “Nympha” notes in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 106-128.

<sup>22</sup> See Barasch, *Gestures of Despair in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> (Emphasis added.) Warburg, “On *Imprese Amoro*se in the Earliest Florentine Engravings” (1905), in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 174; quoted also in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 150.

<sup>24</sup> See Warburg’s essays, “The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie: Domenico Ghirlandaio in Santa Trinita: The Portraits of Lorenzo de’ Medici and His Household” (1902) and “Francesco Sassetti’s Last Injunctions to His Sons” (1907) in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 185-262. See also Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 179.

emancipation” from medieval emotional and psychological suppression.<sup>25</sup> But could the nymph—in contrast to Bertoldo’s grieving Magdalene—truly embody this “pathos”? In other words, does the memory of the frenzied maenad still inflect her meaning, or have the emotions been shed to create a purely decorative figure?

Frederick Antal pondered this same question regarding maenadic borrowings: “Detailed analyses, not only of the monuments, but also of the conception of life embodied in them, are needed to elucidate the different shades of pathos and ecstasy which occur, their meanings in different epochs, their dissimilarities and affinities.”<sup>26</sup> His call for inquiry is indeed one worth attempting. If we pursue more literally Warburg’s insight that the Nympha owed much to the maenad, we see that the maenad supplied more than a generic model for movement and frenzy, but could infuse distinct meanings into her Renaissance reincarnations. To examine this phenomenon, we must first investigate what information about the maenad was available in the fifteenth century and what perception of her might have emerged from this.

## THE RECEPTION OF THE ANCIENT MAENAD IN THE RENAISSANCE

Images of maenads, ubiquitous in antiquity, were still prevalent in the fifteenth century on ancient cameos, gems, reliefs, kraters, and sarcophagi.<sup>27</sup> There was a great variety in the character and context of the Bacchantes depicted, who could be seen dancing, processing, or

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<sup>25</sup> Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 127.

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Antal, “Some Examples of the Role of the Maenad in Florentine Art of the Later Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Century,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1 (1937): 73.

<sup>27</sup> In ancient Rome, the original fifth-century Greek and later Hellenistic prototypes had been enthusiastically hoarded and copied. “[The maenads’] extraordinary reputation in later centuries caused them to be copied or otherwise reproduced so many times that they may claim to share with the Polykleitan Doryphoros the title of the most widely known work of Greek art during the Roman imperial age” (R. Carpenter, *Greek Sculpture* [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960], 157, as quoted in Lori-Ann Touchette, *The Dancing Maenad Reliefs: Continuity and Change in Roman Copies* [London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1995], 31).

sleeping, often approached by a libidinous satyr.<sup>28</sup> Hellenistic exempla, imitated in later Roman art, exhibited a cultic realism, displaying rituals, sacrifices, instruments, and postures with morbid seriousness. In Roman works, there was often a “domestication and ‘prettification’ of the Bacchic rites.... The frenzy of Dionysiac inspiration is rendered as a civilized dance accompanied by the music of the tympanum.”<sup>29</sup> Yet, as Lori-Ann Touchette notes, maenadic imagery was not used by Roman artists merely as “art for art’s sake.” Rather, the Dionysian religion still inflected these figures, which continued to manifest the experience of divine *ekstasis*.<sup>30</sup> Individual maenads themselves may have begun to appear in domestic settings in seemingly decorative roles, but the religious background inevitably permeated even the most secular-seeming maiden.<sup>31</sup> Bacchic iconography proliferated in Roman art on sarcophagi, peaking in the second century A.D., and maenads were there included amongst the *thiasos* of frenzied followers, dancing beside satyrs and animals, holding up cymbals or a sacrificial vessel. The relief of the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne now in the British Museum served as a compendium of maenadic poses: the pretty dancing, the fluttering draperies, the tossed-back

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<sup>28</sup> The motif of satyr and sleeping maenad, or nymph, will be treated in the following chapters.

<sup>29</sup> Touchette, *The Dancing Maenad Reliefs*, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 56. McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos*, 56. In his essay “Maenadism in the Bacchae,” E. R. Dodds argues that some anthropological and psychological truth must underlie the motivation for a cult practice which included maenadism, in which girls and women would engage in nocturnal dancing upon mountain tops in midwinter in imitation of their mythical forerunners. He suggests that various actual or perceived female maladies, such as hysteria and dancing madness, themselves bred of gendered and restrictive societies, would have provided real phenomena on which the maenad’s behavior could have been modelled (*Harvard Theological Review* 33 [1940]: 155-176).

<sup>31</sup> Touchette, *The Dancing Maenad Reliefs*, 33. As evinced by the artistic remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the Bacchic cult itself remained a pervasive and potent religious force in ancient Rome, at least through the second century A.D.

head, the basket carrying, the drum beating. Only by the third century had true maenadism ceased to be practiced in earnest, having degenerated into frivolous revelry.<sup>32</sup>

Antique representations of maenads could themselves veer into the indistinguishable category of classical nymphs, when lacking the specific attributes of the Bacchic cult.<sup>33</sup> Of course, nymphs were part of Bacchus' entourage and iconography, having nursed the infant god in a grotto in the Mountain of Nysa.<sup>34</sup> There was also variety in the visual repertoire of the maenad, ranging from the violently frenzied maenad to the blissfully dancing one. The maidens on three reliefs in the Louvre and Uffizi, for example, are not explicitly maenadic (and are sometimes called nymphs or, even more generically, "dancing maidens," in the modern literature), although they share formal characteristics with other figures whose specifically Bacchic settings identify them as maenads (fig. 2.12, 13, 14).<sup>35</sup> The Renaissance was supplied with a wealth of ancient images of nymphs, Muses, Horae, Graces, as well as maenads, and was surely incapable of distinguishing between them all. Such formal malleability causes Warburg's identification of the *ninfa fiorentina* as an embodiment of the maenadic "pathos formula" to become somewhat tenuous, since it is not clear that the sweetly dancing maiden at her source really has the same qualities as a "true" maenad, whom he deemed to be madly raging. Warburg

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<sup>32</sup> Albert Henrichs, "Greek Maenadism from Olympias to Messalina," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 82 (1978): 155.

<sup>33</sup> Lillian Bridges Joyce mentions that it is not even clear that ancient artists intended to distinguish between maenads and nymphs when creating Bacchic art ("Maenads and Bacchantes: Images of Female Ecstasy in Greek and Roman Art," Ph.D. diss. [University of California, 1997], 3).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> For example, the two figures one over from the left on the Louvre relief showing five women are the same as the two right maenads on the Bacchic Pisan krater (fig. 2.13). Cf. Hauser's characterizations of different neo-Attic maenad types (fig. 2.14). Bober and Rubinstein refer to them only as "Dancing Maidens" (*Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 59A and B). See Albert J. Dobrick, "Botticelli's Sources: A Florentine Quattrocento Tradition and Ancient Sculpture," *Apollo* 110 (1979): 114-127, fig. 20.

saw the fluttering draperies and flowing hair as emotive signs, but it is not clear that the nymph really retains the emotional passion—the *pathos*—of a maenad.

That maenadic images were available and interesting to fifteenth-century artists is clear from drawings in sketchbooks that copy these female figures, sometimes alone, sometimes with a few of their original companions. In Gentile da Fabriano's "taccuino di viaggio," which was inherited by and subsequently added to by Pisanello and his workshop, there are drawings of portions of the antique sarcophagi now in the Vatican and in Amsterdam (fig. 2.15, 16, and 1.22).<sup>36</sup> In his own drawing book Jacopo Bellini drew two maenads, taken directly from an extant funerary altar that he could have seen in Padua, dancing atop an imaginary pedestal with a Latin inscription (fig. 2.17).<sup>37</sup> In copying such antiquities, artists seem struck by the lightly stepping figure of the maenad, with her draperies billowing above her head and around her feet. Her diaphanous "draperie mouillée" revealed the forms of her body underneath, enticing with her eroticism and teaching with her bared structure. Warburg related the interest in flowing accessories to the prescription advocated in Alberti's *On Painting* to depict greater movement of hair and clothing. Yet despite her visual appeal, in contemporary works which borrow the theme of the Bacchic *thiasos* the maenads are often completely missing, as in Falconetto's Paduan

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<sup>36</sup> The first is a sarcophagus with Bacchic cortège, in a wall of the Belvedere Courtyard, Vatican, at least since the eighteenth century; drawing, c. 1431-1432, attributed to Pisanello's workshop, now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F. 214 inf. 15. See Cavallaro and Parlato, *Da Pisanello alla Nascita dei Musei Capitolini*, cat. 25, p. 97. The second is an oval sarcophagus, in Rome from at least the first half of the Quattrocento, now in Amsterdam University, Allard Pierson Museum; drawing attributed to Pisanello workshop, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. See Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 86, p. 120, and fig. 86 and 86a.

<sup>37</sup> Jacopo Bellini, Louvre Drawing Book, fol. 48. The antique relief is now in the Museo Civico, Padua, inv. 248. See Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 88, p. 121, fig. 88 and 88a; Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, "Gentile da Fabriano in Rom und die Anfänge des Antikenstudiums," 2 parts, *Münchener Jahrbuch* 11, 3rd ser. (1960): figs. 93-95. Curiously, Bellini copied two of the maenads exactly, but transposed them to the top of an antique base as if they were freestanding sculptures or statuettes (of which very few survived from antiquity and were unknown in the Renaissance). Thus even as he borrowed directly from an antique, he purposefully created something entirely new and fantastical. See Joyce, "Maenads and Bacchantes," 144. Skopas made a sculpture of a frenzied maenad shortly after 400 B.C., an extant ancient small-scale copy of which can be found in the Dresden maenad.

relief deriving from the British Museum Triumph (all male except for one nude, unmaenadic woman, fig. 2.18<sup>38</sup>); or, in works which literally derive from classical models, the maenads are simplified (as in the Camino della Iole relief in Urbino, c. 1460s, fig. 2.19<sup>39</sup>), stripped of their attributes (as in the school of Pisanello drawing, fig. 2.16), or just awkward (as in Matteo Balducci's *cassone*, fig. 2.20<sup>40</sup>). Vittorio Ghiberti borrowed a maenad but harnessed her nudity to depict a beautiful Eve, completely stripping her of any maenadic "taint" (fig. 2.21). When Bellini reimagined the Triumph of Bacchus in his drawing books, he ignored the lovely maenads he had drawn elsewhere.<sup>41</sup> Later Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini would not include maenads in their Bacchic stories either. The drawn studies demonstrate that artists could have depicted her with great vigor. Why might they have excluded her from their formal work?

To answer this question we must consider what a maenad might have signified to a fifteenth-century artist, in terms of both her character and her form. The available Bacchic mythology conveyed an accurate sense of maenadic attributes and sensibility. Ovid, Catullus, Philostratus, and Nonnos, for example, brought to life in literary form the picture of the Bacchic *thiasos*. Ancient condemnations of the Bacchic cult and descriptions of the insidious activities of its female followers were also preserved for Renaissance readers, most vividly in Livy's *History*

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<sup>38</sup> Terracotta relief, attributed to design of Giovanni Maria Falconetto, above the door that leads from the Loggia into the Odeo, home of Alvise Cornaro, the Odeo Cornaro, Padua. See Gunter Schweikhart, "Un rilievo all'antica sconosciuto nell'Odeo Cornaro," *Padova e la sua Provincia* 21, no. 7-8 (1975): 8-11.

<sup>39</sup> Attributed to Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo. It copies the Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus now in the British Museum more literally than Falconetto's relief, above. See Chapter Three.

<sup>40</sup> *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, cassone*, early 1500s, Pinacoteca, Gubbio. Derived from the Bacchic sarcophagus in Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire; Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 80, pl. 96.

<sup>41</sup> British Museum fol. 94; Louvre fol. 40.



of Rome and in Euripides' *Bacchae*.<sup>42</sup> Livy (IV.39.8-41) recounted the Senatorial suppression of the Bacchanalia, which took place in 186 B.C. Motivated by a suspicion of outside religion and a disgust for sexual license, Livy described the condemned activities as debauched and perfidious.<sup>43</sup> His accounts of male and female sexual abandon occurring during the nighttime, hill-top rituals fueled the idea that women were "the source of this mischief."<sup>44</sup> The second-century B.C. plays of Plautus, revived in the fifteenth century, presented a more comical treatment of contemporary Bacchanals, but one which was still negative, deriding the ecstatic fury of the rites.<sup>45</sup> The idea of the maenad as an erotic and libidinous creature much like her notorious companions, the satyrs, held sway.

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<sup>42</sup> Livy, *History of Rome*, Decades I, III, and IV (including Book 39) of Livy's history were well-known since the Middle Ages. See Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci*, II, 231. The fifth-century B.C. *Bacchae* was known in part as early as the fourteenth century, with a manuscript ending up in Florence (Laurentianus XXXII.2) that contained several of Euripides' plays amongst other ancient authors, but preserving the *Bacchae* only through line 755 (that is, before the death of Pentheus scene). A complete version of the play was available towards the end of the fourteenth century, in a manuscript that was split into two, the Vatican Palatinus 287 and Laurentianus Conv. Suppr. 172; the first part holds the *Bacchae*, including lines 756-1392, and was used by Marcus Musurus as the basis for the Aldine edition published in 1503. See Dodds, intro to his Greek edition of the *Bacchae* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), xlix-li. See also Agostino Pertusi, "La scoperta di Euripide nel primo umanesimo," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 3 (1960): 101-152. Pertusi notes that the library of Pope Nicholas V had four codices of Euripides, according to a 1455 inventory, cited in E. Muentz-P. Fabre, *La bibliotheque du Vatican au XVe siecle*, Paris 1887, 337-338: "Item aliud ex papiro ejusdem forme, copertum [corio] rubeo, et intitatur Sophocles et Euripides; Item unum aliud ex papiro ejusdem forme, copertum corio rubeo, et intitatur Euripide Trajedie; Item unum volumen de quatuor cartis folium comunis forme de papiro, copertum corio rubeo, et intitatur Euripide Trajedie; Item unum aliud ex papiro cum uno poste sano, alio medio sine copertis, et intitatur Euripides poeta tragicus" (114, n. 3). The Medici possessed several manuscripts that included Euripides as well, including at least one that according to an inventory by Fabio Vigili in the early sixteenth century had the "Pentheus" (that is, the *Bacchae*) (119). See also, more generally, Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*. Before 1481, there is a manuscript of Euripides including the *Bacchae* that is marked as having been owned by Filelfo (Cod. Laur. XXXI, 1) (Bolgar, 497).

<sup>43</sup> Joyce, "Maenads and Bacchantes," 130.

<sup>44</sup> Livy, *History of Rome*, VI.39: 15.9: "Primum igitur mulierum magna pars est, et is fons mali huiusce fuit" (trans. Even T. Sage [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958], vol. XI, 261).

<sup>45</sup> Plautus' exaggerated portrayal may in fact have primed the Roman audience for the senatorial suppression. Joyce, "Maenads and Bacchantes," 122-123, and n. 60. See Walter R. Chalmers, "Plautus and His Audience," in *Roman Drama*, ed. T. A. Dorey and Donald R. Dudley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 21-50. For the plays' revival, see A. Luzio and R. Renier, "Commedie classiche in Ferrara nel 1499," *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 11 (1888): 177-189; Henry David Jocelyn, "Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini's *Chrysis* and the Comedies of Plautus," *Res publica litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition* 14 (1991): 101-113.

The idea of females prancing in an ecstatic frenzy and intermingling with lascivious satyrs, virile centaurs, innumerable putti, and an effeminate god was far beyond the normative modes of Renaissance feminine behavior. Though wild and drunken satyrs formed the male counterpart to the maenad, a significant distinction was made between the two in that the satyr was essentially a mythological beast, an animal only partly human. The maenad, by contrast, was still a woman, making even her mythical behavior seem less reassuringly distant or imaginary.<sup>46</sup> In the Renaissance, the very idea of women and girls gallivanting about without male supervision would have been frightening and deemed immoral, even dangerous. Religious and civic authorities mandated that women were subject to the authority of husbands and fathers, and marriage was the central vehicle for controlling female sexuality.<sup>47</sup> The visualization of a physically uninhibited woman was almost invariably linked to men's sexual arousal, as in Boccaccio's description of Mensola, his *ninfale fiesolana*, as she flees her pursuer:

So swiftly did the nymph take to her heels,  
 She seemed to fly. She'd kilted up her skirts  
 In front, to lend her terror greater speed,  
 And tied them to her belt in such a way  
 That openly, above the shoes she wore,  
 It showed her legs, and such a charming knee  
 As must arouse desire in anyone.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Joyce, "Maenads and Bacchantes," 36. It is for this reason that Joyce postulates the ancients did not represent maenads in free-standing, three-dimensional, let alone life-size, form, while satyrs were regularly portrayed as such. The mythical nature of the satyr safely distanced him from real men, but the very human appearance of the maenad made her behavior too real. Concomitantly, this may explain why the human Bacchant/faun or man-like satyr is largely avoided in fifteenth-century portrayals, this humanness perhaps making him, like the female maenad, appear more incendiary.

<sup>47</sup> Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: Studies in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 18. See also Samuel K. Cohn, *Women in the Streets: Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Guido Ruggiero, "Marriage, Love, Sex, And Renaissance Civic Morality," in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Italy: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. James Grantham Turner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 12.

<sup>48</sup> Boccaccio, *Ninfale fiesolana*, stanza 109: "La Ninfa correa si velocemente, / Che pareo che volasse, e' panni alzati / S'avea dinanzi per più prestament / Poder fuggir, e aveagli attaccati / Alla cintura, sì che apertamente / Di sopra a'

Even women's licit public movements were highly restricted and could easily give rise to charges of erotic mischief or even grave sin. "Actual women were constantly encouraged to be modest in their glance, decorous in their movements, and to avoid vigorous, athletic, or strenuous activities."<sup>49</sup> In the years following the Black Death, moreover, people were anxious to condemn and inhibit any behavior that might incur further divine retribution in the form of the plague.

Women were more intensely targeted, with sumptuary laws attempting to restrict their appearance and activities.<sup>50</sup> Even though men were themselves perceived as equally sinful, women were still understood to exhibit a more insidious—that is, female—vice.<sup>51</sup> Analogously,

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calzerin, ch'avea calzati / Mostrò le gambe, e'l ginocchio vezzoso, / Che ognun ne diverria disideroso" (as quoted by Warburg, "Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*," 123).

<sup>49</sup> Cristelle L. Baskins, "Il Trionfo Della Pudizia: Menacing Virgins in Italian Renaissance Domestic Painting," in *Menacing Virgins: Representing Virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 124. Compare this to the foot races accompanying the annual Palio di San Giorgio in Ferrara. Women ran their own race in which they were able to run in the streets with complete physical abandon, a visual record of which is preserved in the frescoes painted from 1467 to 1469 by Francesco del Cossa in the Palazzo Schifanoia. The sexual connotations of such free and public movement, however, still appertain. Deanna Shemek has revealed that these were not "respectable" women but were instead the local prostitutes (*Ladies Errant: Wayward Women and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998], chap. 1). Other races of prostitutes were held in many cities on the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene. It is noteworthy too that the Palio of St. George coincided in April with the ancient Roman festival of wine, dedicated first to Jupiter then to Venus. The races actually derived from earlier "military insult displays" in which the lowest rungs of society were made to glory before the defeated enemy. In the subsequent *palio* games, these women participated in what was in fact a ritualized reconfirmation of social hierarchy. But their presence was still a source of concern in the fifteenth century, with Borso and Ercole d'Este both making unsuccessful efforts to replace them with "pure" country girls or to eliminate the women's race altogether (Shemek, 24-35).

<sup>50</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, 15; Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Diane Owen Hughes, "Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy," in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. John Bossy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 69-99, passim.

<sup>51</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, 16. In the tradition of the nine female Worthies or in Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*, famous women were somehow miraculously virtuous or courageous and, while suitable as models for real women, were not indicative of women's true, realistic capabilities. Such texts in praise of women "are exercises in paradox: women, like folly, baldness, and the ass, have not traditionally been valued, and the proof that they ought to be is an essay in proving the unprovable. Examples of the Renaissance delight in 'serio ludere'; they demand to be appreciated for the skill with which they manipulate rhetoric in the service of an absurd topic" (Pamela Joseph Benson, *The Invention of the Renaissance Woman: The Challenge of Female Independence in the Literature and Thought of Italy and England* [University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992], 2-3).

the libidinous urges of satyrs could be written off as humorous, or at least natural, while the merest hint of sexuality in the maenads was given an immoral taint. Accounts of maenads' strange nocturnal revels presented a picture similar to contemporary visions of the witches' sabbath and the gyrations of hysterical or possessed women. As the witch craze intensified over the course of the fifteenth century, the image of the frenzied, sexual, and mad maenad would have been frighteningly similar to that of the witch, perhaps explaining in part the evident reluctance of artists to depict the maenad, even in purely mythological art.

In the Renaissance world, there were many perceived feminine threats, creating anxieties and suspicions that would have infiltrated and colored the reception of maenadic frenzy. A fear of madness, dementia, or demonic possession was ongoing and pervasive, but the perceived incidence of specifically gendered maladies appeared to increase in the fifteenth century.<sup>52</sup> Hysteria was commonly deemed an affliction of women, seen since antiquity as having its origin in the womb and manifested physiologically in frenzied gestures and manic, excessive behavior.<sup>53</sup> The hysterical woman became insensate, arched her body and threw back her head or tucked in her chin, in a thoroughly maenadic pose of abandon.<sup>54</sup> This “woman’s problem”

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<sup>52</sup> For possession and exorcism, see Andrea Aldridge Begel, “‘Suffering in His Flesh’: Raphael’s *Transfiguration* and the Representation of Exorcism in Italian Art, 1230-1520,” Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 2004).

<sup>53</sup> The understanding of the phenomena of hysteria remained basically the same in the Renaissance period as it was described by the ancient Greek medical writers. The Hippocratic text *De morbis mulierum* (“On the diseases of women”) linked hysteria (derived from the Greek word *hystera*, or uterus) to the wandering of the uterus throughout the body. Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 7.

<sup>54</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, when the phenomenon of hysteria was made into a theatrical spectacle, the similarity of the frenzied “dance” of the hysteric, the ancient maenad, and early modern representations of possessed women and exorcisms was a source of great interest. Charcot, the famous hysteria analyst, and Paul Richer actually published a book, *Possession in Art* (1887), which presented the art historical “evidence” for “hysterical arching” occurring throughout history, in scenes as diverse as exorcisms, lamentations, martyr executions, etc. Such a visual compilation is not entirely unlike Warburg’s later *Mnemosyne* project, in which he amassed a visual record of similar poses, or pathos formulas, across time and cultures. Schade, “Charcot and the Spectacle of the Hysterical Body,” 506-511; Georges Didi-Huberman, “*Dialektik des Monstrums*: Aby Warburg and the Symptom Paradigm,” *Art History* 24, no. 5 (2001): 629.

was believed to come from her subrational sexuality; an ancient maxim against feminine sexuality read: “salacitas major, major ad justeriam proclivitas,” “the greater the salaciousness, the stronger the proclivities to hysteria.”<sup>55</sup> The diagnosis and cure—through marriage and condoned intercourse—served the attempt to control women’s behavior by eradicating “nonconforming and emotionally threatening conduct.”<sup>56</sup>

During the Middle Ages hysteria’s link to sexuality caused it to be seen as the work of the devil. The hysteric became “someone more or less willfully possessed, bewitched, in league with the devil, and even heretical.”<sup>57</sup> Early on, a somewhat skeptical St. Augustine acknowledged in *The City of God* (written 413-426) the pervasive, perhaps superstitious, belief that evil spirits provoked the lustful desires of women:

There is... a very general rumour, which many have verified by their own experience, or which trustworthy persons who have heard the experience of others corroborate, that sylvans and fauns, who are commonly called ‘incubi,’ had often made wicked assaults upon women, and satisfied their lust upon them; and that certain devils... are constantly attempting and effecting this impurity is so generally affirmed, that it were impudent to deny it. From these assertions, indeed, I dare not determine whether there be some spirits embodied in an aerial substance (for this element, even when agitated by a fan, is sensibly felt by the body), and who are capable of lust and of mingling sensibly with women....<sup>58</sup>

It is hard not to see mirrored in this fear the ancient image of satyrs menacing maenads. The idea that such demons caused the carnal desires of women dominated theological as well as popular thinking through the Renaissance period.

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<sup>55</sup> David B. Allison and Mark S. Roberts, “On Constructing the Disorder of Hysteria,” *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 19 (1994), 249.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>57</sup> Veith, *Hysteria*, 47.

<sup>58</sup> *The City of God*, Book XV. 23, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 511-512; cited by Veith, 51.

Witches were increasingly blamed for the onset of hysteria and other perceived possessions. In early fifteenth-century Italy, orgies of the witches' sabbath were already described much like the ancient Bacchanalia; they occurred at night in the countryside, with mixed company, illicit sensual exploits, and even baby- or animal-killing.<sup>59</sup> The Siense preacher San Bernardino aggravated fears of witches by preaching against such gatherings and urging listeners to turn witches in, which resulted in a trial and execution of two women in Rome in 1426.<sup>60</sup> The mere gathering of women, alone or with young men, was deemed suspect and even evil.<sup>61</sup>

Women's very movements and bodies were viewed as capable of inciting lust in men.<sup>62</sup> Negative perceptions of woman as a sexual creature abounded. As Rabelais would later write in *Pantagruel*:

[The womb] is extremely nervous and sensitive—[and sometimes] the entire feminine body is shaken, all the senses ravished, all the passions carried to a point of repletion, and all thought thrown into confusion. To such a degree that, if Nature had not rouged their foreheads with a tint of shame, you would see them running the streets like mad women, in a more

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<sup>59</sup> Franco Mormando, "Bernardino of Siena, Popular Preacher and Witch-Hunter: A 1426 Witch Trial in Rome," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 24 (1998): 88, 93.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-86.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 94, 96. See Bernardino, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena 1427*, ed. Carlo Delcorno (Milan: Rusconi, 1989), 1012-13, quoted and translated in Mormando, 94, and n. 57. Bernardino also preached against the dangers of too much freedom for women, contrasting the life of Mary Magdalene to that of the cloistered Virgin (Mormando, n. 62). Similar attitudes were codified in the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*, written in 1494 by the inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, charged by Pope Innocent VIII to persecute the practitioners of witchcraft. This prurient and sadistic document gave way completely to the tide of fear and superstition, and articulated the misogynist underpinnings of the witchhunt, which saw women as morally weak and sexually deviant. "What else is woman but a foe to friendship, an unescapable punishment, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, an evil of nature, painted with fair colours!" (*Malleus*, trans. Montague Summers [London: Pushkin Press, 1951], 43, as quoted in Veith, 63).

<sup>62</sup> See Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, passim and 22; in general, women were "associated with weaker reason, stronger passions, and greater inherent vice."

frightful manner than the Proetides, the Mimallonides, or the Bacchic Thyades on the day of their Bacchanalia ever did....<sup>63</sup>

Biblical sources also associated women with irrational sensuality, and men, by analogy, with reason.<sup>64</sup> Such notions were used to explain the original transgression of Eve, who was deemed less capable of reason than Adam, and so became, in Tertullian's phrase, the devil's gateway (*diaboli ianua*).<sup>65</sup> Contemporary literature abounded with comic tales of men seduced, and thereby destroyed, by wily women.<sup>66</sup> The onus of leading men astray lay on women, regardless of their intent. Socially and sexually, women's lives were constrained at almost every turn, as they danced the fine line of decorum. In his early play *Philodoxeos fabula*, Leon Battista Alberti revived an *all'antica* ideal of the proper scope of beauty and respectability for women, affirming that women should be modest and discreet, their movements and walk becoming of an honorable matron.<sup>67</sup> Contemporary dance manuals confirm the essence of this "behavioral decorum," requiring women to maintain a certain *misura*, marked by self control and inward containment of the body.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Pantegrue*, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York: 1946), 477-478, as quoted in Veith, 107.

<sup>64</sup> Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman*, 16, and note 67.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 15. Also, Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 89. See Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*.

<sup>66</sup> In the *Decameron* Boccaccio's young Florentines relate tales of men humiliated by women or, conversely, improved by a woman's rebuke. Of course, tales are told of oversexed men too, but it is the women who have a certain immoral and manipulative quality. The traditional theme of the Triumph of Love, as popularized by Petrarch and frequently illustrated in the fifteenth century, revealed the negative power of love by including examples of famous couples (such as Aristotle and Phyllis or Samson and Delilah) in which the woman was master of the man. See Boccaccio, *Decameron* I.9, I.10, II.10, VI.7, VII.2-9, and IX.1. For Petrarch, see Konrad Eisenbichler and Amilcare A. Iannucci, eds., *Petrarch's Triumphs: Allegory and Spectacle* (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Editions, Inc., 1990).

<sup>67</sup> Alberti's play is cited and discussed in Anthony Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 4.

<sup>68</sup> Until such guides to courtly decorum as Baldassare Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano* appear later in the sixteenth century, the Quattrocento dance manuals were the primary guide for standards of physical deportment. Sharon Farmor, "Decorum in Figural Movement: The Dance as Measure and Metaphor," in *Decorum in Renaissance*

In defilement of this measured comportment, there were at this time periodic bouts of the so-called “dancing madness,” in which waves of people would take to the streets or countryside with an unrestrainable, contagious impulse to dance for hours or even days on end.<sup>69</sup> The frenzied dancers seemed possessed, and their mania was often considered the work of the devil; exorcisms were sometimes attempted.<sup>70</sup> While not confined to women, such outbursts were seen as especially nefarious for women, as it unleashed their sexuality and put others at risk. Women were also seen as more vulnerable to the influences of the devil, contributing to the rapid spread of the contagion.<sup>71</sup>

Any situation in which women were unrestrained was anomalous and frightening. Following the devastation of the Black Death and with the regular recurrences of the plague, fears of sexual license were heightened, as such acts were believed to bring about the wrath of God and to subvert attempts to regenerate the population and enhance social stability through

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*Narrative Art (Papers delivered at the Annual Conference of the Association of Art Historians, London, April 1991)*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis and Anka Bednarek (London: Department of History of Art, Birkbeck College, University of London, 1992), 78-88. In 1445 the dancing instructor Domenico da Piarenzo, for example, wrote: “Maintain the middle of your movement, so that it is neither too much nor too little, but has such smoothness that you appear like a gondola pushed by two oars through little waves which the sea makes when it is calm according to its nature, the said waves rising gradually and falling swiftly” (*De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi*, Bib Nat, Paris, MS. It. 972, fol. 1v, as trans. in Fermor, 81). In Book 3 of *the Courtier*, Castiglione writes that women’s movements should be sweet and refined (“aver una tenerezza molle e delicata, con maniera in ogni suo movimento di dolcezza femminile... senza similitudine alcuna d’omo”), and that “in dancing I do not wish her to use movements which are too *gagliardi* and *sforzati*,” referring to the type of affected vigor and bravura display that was becoming à la mode amongst male courtiers. *Il libro del cortegiano* (Milan: Garzanti, 1998), III.iv, p. 265; III.viii, p. 270. See Fermor, “Movement and Gender in Sixteenth-Century Italian Painting,” in *The Body Imaged*, ed. by K. Adler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 132.

<sup>69</sup> See J. F. K. Hecker, *The Dancing Mania of the Middle Ages*, trans. B. G. Babington (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970); Alfred Martin, “Geschichte der Tanzkrankheit in Deutschland (2 parts),” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 24 (1914): 113-134, 225-239. The first main source documenting such outbreaks is the Chronicle of Limburg, 1374. These outbursts were more common in the North, but did occur in Italy as well, where there was also a native plague to the south of “Tarantism,” mad dancing thought to be provoked by the bite of a spider (i.e. tarantula), hence the dance called the tarantella.

<sup>70</sup> Hecker, *The Dancing Mania*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> E. William Monter, “The Pedestal and the Stake: Courtly Love and Witchcraft,” in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), 128, 131.



marriage.<sup>72</sup> Still, women were not excluded from public or dancing. Even in relatively prudish Florence women participated in public balls and other *feste* that involved dancing out-of-doors or in public buildings.<sup>73</sup> Yet the line between women being in public and being “public women” was always thin.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, the need to assure that women’s activities were indeed *onesto* pervades the documentary record.<sup>75</sup>

The views of some churchmen, such as Domenico Cavalca, on women dancing could be quite harsh, believing they would lead men’s souls astray with their seductive movements.<sup>76</sup> The Florentine St. Antoninus was less severe, but still warned that while dancing itself was not necessarily a sin, sins could ensue from it if the dance inspired lust in a man watching.<sup>77</sup> Consequently women’s, as well as men’s, dance movements were choreographed according to a moral code. Matteo Palmieri’s comments in his *Della vita civile* regarding the pomposity of billowing drapery indicate that the appropriate movement for the citizen in daily life had a moral dimension.<sup>78</sup> Excessive or violent movements were to be particularly avoided by all, but women

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<sup>72</sup> Nicholas Davidson, “Theology, Nature and the Law: Sexual Sin and Sexual Crime in Italy from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century,” in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 96.

<sup>73</sup> Judith Bryce, “Performing for Strangers: Women, Dance, and Music in Quattrocento Florence,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54 (2001): 1075-1107.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 1087.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 1088.

<sup>76</sup> Cavalca (c. 1270-1342). *Ibid.*, 1088.

<sup>77</sup> Antonio Pierozzi (1389-1459). Bryce, “Performing for Strangers,” 1088-1089. The very act of females making music could likewise be deemed immoral; in 1495 Savonarola would call the famous musical activities of the nuns of the Benedictine convent of Le Murate “satanic” (*ibid.*, 1100).

<sup>78</sup> Fermor, “Decorum in Figural Movement,” 83. Another fifteenth-century choreographer, Guglielmo Ebreo (that is, Giovanni Ambrosio), advised that one should dance so as not to ruffle your garments: “E bisogna che tutti li suoi gesti e movimenti siano gravi e tanto suave tanto quanto che he debito che porta e performa che quella turcha o pano longho che porta indosso non faccia agire movendo troppo in qua et in la” (“It is necessary that all your movements and gestures should be sedate, and so *suave*, according to that which you are wearing and performing, that you do not ruffle whatever long gown or long garment you may be wearing by moving around too much from side to side”)

in particular were required to heed a more restrictive and limited deportment. Bending backwards or to the side or moving the arms freely were particularly singled out as being sexually provocative.<sup>79</sup> In his *Reggimento e costumi di donna* of the early fourteenth century, Francesco da Barberino warned that a woman “should certainly not attempt to jump, like a tumbler, lest it be said she is not of sound mind.”<sup>80</sup> The idea that wild dancing was not just a sign of sexual promiscuity but also of madness highlights the perceived potency and danger of dance. Only a prostitute, an hysterical woman, a drunk, or one gone mad, in other words, would move in such a provocative and exuberant fashion.

Correspondingly, much of the art commissioned for the domestic sphere was focused on encouraging female chastity and marital loyalty. In the early Renaissance, ancient mythology came to be employed on *cassoni* and other decorated domestic items towards this end.<sup>81</sup> One

(*De practica seu arte tripudii vulgare opusculum*, Giovanni Ambrosio, Bib. Nationale, Paris, Ms. It. 476, fol 24r, as quoted by Fermor, “Studies in the Depiction of the Moving Figure in Italian Renaissance Art, Art Criticism and Dance Theory,” Ph.D. diss. [The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1990], 50 and n. 147). Movements not only reflected emotions—pathos—but also strength of character—or ethos. As Alberti reflects on the gestures of an angry man being similar to those of “a raging drunkard” (“uno ebbro furioso”), the inability to restrain those gestures reflects a weak reason and inability to control one’s irrational passions, as if one were dissipated by drink (*De Ichiarchi*, 1468, in *Opera volgari*, vol. II, 205-206, cited by Fermor, “Studies in the Depiction of the Moving Figure,” 73).

<sup>79</sup> Fermor, “Decorum in Figural Movement,” 84. The fact that such movements are deemed sexual is perhaps brought home by the fact that Leonardo recommends that depictions of women avoid such gestures, while urging *old* women be shown having bolder movements. Leonardo says the young painter should learn “[h]ow women should be represented in modest attitudes, with legs close together, arms folded, and with their heads low and bending sideways; [and] [h]ow old women should be represented as bold, with swift passionate movements like the infernal furies, and these movements should seem quicker in the arms and heads than in the legs” (quoted in Edward MacCurdy, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* [New York: George Braziller, 1958], 863).

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Fermor, “Decorum in Figural Movement,” 84, from Francesco da Barberino’s *Reggimento e costumi di donna*, ed. Giuseppe Sansone (Turin: Loescher-Chiantore, 1957), 13. It is not just women who can appear mad through overly excited movements; in his *Dialogue on Painting* in the sixteenth century, Ludovico Dolce recommends to artists that the men they depict not “move so boldly that they appear like madmen” (as quoted in Fermor, “Poetry in Motion: Beauty in Movement and the Renaissance Conception of *leggiadria*,” in *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art*, eds. Francis Ames-Lewis and Mary Rogers [Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998], 132).

<sup>81</sup> For *cassoni* in general, see Ellen Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); Graham Hughes, *Renaissance Cassoni: Masterpieces of Early Italian Art: Painted Marriage Chests 1400-1550* (London: Art Books International, 1997); Cristelle L. Baskins, *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender in Early Modern Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Caroline Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence: The Courtauld Wedding Chests* (London: The Courtauld Gallery, with Paul Holberton Publishing, exhib. cat., 2009).

need only think of the many images of Apollo and Daphne—an image of attempted rape—that appear on these marriage chests to appreciate how the pagan gods could be employed to encourage wifely submission and to warn against the excesses of passion and lust.<sup>82</sup> The near total absence of Bacchic imagery from these early domestic pieces suggests the difficulty of adapting maenadic frenzy to conjugal themes. When the subject does appear on later *cassoni*, the maenads have adopted the contemporary styling of the prettily dancing nymphs of Ghirlandaio and Botticelli.<sup>83</sup> Even though Dionysus marries his beloved, the theme of the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne was not popular until the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, perhaps due to the evident clash between the ideals of a sober, Christian marriage and the appearance of the wild, pagan revel. But as we will see in the following chapters, the hedonism of these scenes gradually came to be tolerated. The idea of Bacchus as a jolly god of wine lent the image of his parade of followers the aura of a light-hearted revel. The inclusion of

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See also Anne B. Barriault, *Spalliera Paintings of Renaissance Tuscany: Fables of Poets for Patrician Homes* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), on the paintings that served as the backrests above *cassoni*.

<sup>82</sup> I wrote on this theme in my undergraduate thesis, “Passion, Pride, and Poetry: Images of Apollo and Daphne in the Domestic Art of the Renaissance,” Senior thesis, 1994, Yale University. See Baskins, “*Il Trionfo della Pudizia*”; Ellen Callmann, “The Growing Threat to Marital Bliss as Seen in Fifteenth-Century Florentine Paintings,” *Studies in Iconography* 5 (1979): 73-92; Christina Olsen, “Gross Expenditure: Botticelli’s *Nastagio degli Onesti* Panels,” *Art History* 15, no. 2 (1992): 146-170; Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The “Heroic” Tradition and Its Alternatives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

<sup>83</sup> *Cassoni* might depict powerful, triumphant women, such as Chastity, the Amazons, or Judith, who provide “an extreme example both of feminine virtue and masculine renunciation” (Baskins, “*Il Trionfo della Pudizia*,” 124). But a raving maenad—though as a “menacing virgin” she renounces men—does not fill a comparable role, since she has breached all the other norms of feminine behavior and decorum. The early sixteenth-century *cassone* attributed to Matteo Balducci (Pinacoteca, Gubbio), with its Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne adapted from an ancient sarcophagus now at Woburn Abbey, is one of the few examples of Bacchic *cassoni* (fig. 2.20). Here the conjugal theme is ensured by the inclusion of Ariadne, while the hedonism of the revel was more tolerable in this later climate. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, fig. 82a; Paul Schubring, *Cassoni: Truhen und Truhenbilder der italienischen Frührenaissance* (Leipzig: Verlag von Karl W. Hiersemann, 1915), no. 518, pl. CXX. See also Bartolomeo di Giovanni’s pair of the Legend of Theseus *cassoni*, showing the *Abandonment and Discovery of Ariadne* on the second chest (Musée de Longchamp, Marseille) (fig. 3.3). Again, maenads appear in the divine procession at the right and, as a student of Botticelli, they resemble his *Nymphae*, but either due to a sense of decorous constraint or merely to the limited talent of the artist, the maenadic poses and gestures are quite stiff and unnatural. It is as if the artist was trying on the new *all’antica* style but did not believe in it naturalistically. Schubring, no. 381-382, pl. LXXXIX.

Ariadne among the Bacchic throng ultimately helped to legitimize the themes of love and pleasure inherent in the ancient mythology and imagery, which was then mirrored in the *spettacoli* accompanying weddings and other celebrations. Within this context, the dance of the maenad could be more often condoned. Perhaps it is natural, then, that in fifteenth-century depictions maenads reappear in the *thiasos* more often when Ariadne has also been included, thereby creating a festive wedding triumph. Only in Baccio Baldini's engraving of the *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* are lightly stepping nymphs combined with maenads of greater savagery, who bear the slaughtered corpses of animals they have killed in their delirium (fig. 2.22).<sup>84</sup> Although his maenads lack archaeological accuracy, Baldini managed to reveal a more accurate knowledge of maenadic behavior and come closer to capturing an authentic antique feeling of frenzy and revelry than appeared elsewhere, even though he represented more a fantastic carnival float than an antique Bacchanal.

Alone, however, maenadic sexuality remained threatening, because although the mythological maenads were, in fact, devoutly chaste, and ancient imagery showed them repelling satyrs' advances, their independence from the traditional household appeared as a rejection of traditional sexual mores. The maenads were in this important sense unlike Diana's virginal nymphs, who had never been part of human society and the domestic sphere, for maenads had been drawn by the power of the god away from families, husbands, and even children. Their abandonment of duty and perceived reckless disregard for their chastity made them seem uncontrollable and threatening.<sup>85</sup> Seemingly normal virgins as well as matrons could come

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<sup>84</sup> Solitary impression in the British Museum, London. Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, A.II.26.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Halpern, "Puritanism and Maenadism in *A Mask*," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 95.

temporarily under the spell of this cult. It is thus not surprising that Diana and her virgins could become models for Renaissance chastity while maenadic virgins could not.

## MAENADIC MADNESS

In Euripides' *Bacchae*, known in humanist circles during the fifteenth century, the mythical violence of the maenads was depicted in extremely violent and horrific detail. Whipped into a frenzy by an enraged Dionysus, Agave and her cohorts fall upon her son, Pentheus (whose denial of the god invited Dionysus' divine fury), and rip him limb from limb. In the mythical tradition, maenads had been known to dismember live animals, even to eat their flesh raw. Greek vase paintings and Roman reliefs show them lost in an inner fury with ecstatically contorted bodies, holding their thyrsi like spears, clenching the severed shank or head of a goat or wielding a knife (fig. 2.23, 24, 25, and 2.10). Euripides' account of the death of Pentheus goes beyond the tradition, however, in its misogynist vision of the wrathful, wild, and murderous females.<sup>86</sup>

There is a glimmer of this sort of mad maenad in the Renaissance. In his youthful play *Orfeo*, Angelo Poliziano took up the theme of the death of Orpheus, who like Pentheus was murdered by a frenzied band of maenads.<sup>87</sup> In her critical edition of the text, Antonia Tissoni

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<sup>86</sup> Euripides was himself reimagining an ancient cult practice that by his day survived only in a few remote pockets of the Greek world, such as Delphi and Macedonia. Dodds, "Maenadism in the *Bacchae*," 168, 170.

<sup>87</sup> In a letter of 1483 to Carlo Canale, a close associate of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, Poliziano stated that the play was commissioned by the Cardinal for a *rappresentazione* and written in two days, but we do not know precisely when it was composed. Critical edition by Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti, *L'Orfeo del Poliziano*, Medioevo e Umanesimo, 61 (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1986). Translation and introduction by Elizabeth Bassett Welles, "Poliziano's *Orfeo*," *La Fusta* 4 (1979): 99-120; also Louis E. Lord (London: Humphrey Milford and Oxford University Press, 1931). The tale of the death of Orpheus was told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* XI, and in Virgil's *Georgics* IV, ll. 507-527. The play has been traditionally thought to have been composed in the early- or mid-1470s; some scholars propose the occasion of the Cardinal's entry into Mantua in 1472 as the inaugural performance, making it the work of a mere teenager (Tissoni Benvenuti, 1-3, 58). Another tradition is represented by Louis Lord, who states that the play was performed in Mantua first in July, 1471, for the visit of Duke Galeazzo

Benvenuti proposes that the play was contemporary with Poliziano's writing of the *Stanze per la Giostra* (that is, after 1475), and that it was written in the context of close relationships among the author, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, and Lorenzo de' Medici.<sup>88</sup> In a letter of 1483 Poliziano derided the script in what was perhaps simply a self-deprecating pose—a gesture of authenticity and unique inspiration, claiming to compose the work with “subitus calor.”<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, the play became well-known and popular, due in part to the later fame of its author.<sup>90</sup>

As the tale draws to its inevitable conclusion in the rending apart of Orpheus by enraged and vindictive maenads, Poliziano has him declare his renunciation of womankind, after losing Eurydice forever to the Underworld, and a determination to love only men in the future:

e poi che sí crudele è mia fortuna,

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Maria Sforza and Bona di Savoia. Warburg also asserts the 1471 date in “Dürer and Italian Antiquity” (1905), but in n. 106 of his dissertation, he says 1472. Phyllis Pray Bober, asserts that it was performed in Mantua, perhaps for Carnival (“Appropriation Contexts,” 237). See also Cynthia Pyle, who argues that it served as an *intermezzo* at a banquet (“Politian's ‘Orfeo’ and Other ‘favole mitologiche’ in the Context of Late Quattrocento Northern Italy,” Ph.D. diss. [Columbia University, 1976]). Others argue that the play was commissioned by the Cardinal in 1480 on the occasion of the engagement of Clara Gonzaga to Gilbert de Montpensier and Francesco Gonzaga to Isabella d'Este, a point when Poliziano was himself known to have been in Mantua. See Giovanni Battista Picotti, “Sulla data dell' ‘Orfeo’ e delle ‘Stanze’ di Agnolo Poliziano” (1914), in *Ricerche Umanistiche: Scritti di G. B. Picotti* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1955), 102-105; and Welles, “Poliziano's Orfeo,” 99-102. The fact that there is no evidence that the *fabula* was ever performed in Mantua at all, and Cardinal Gonzaga's pontifical seat was in Bologna from 1471 on, has led others to propose that the play was actually performed in Bologna (Tissoni Benvenuti, 59).

<sup>88</sup> Tissoni Benvenuti, *L'Orfeo*, 64-70. It is probable that it was written as early as 1473 or around 1477. It must have been written prior to the death of Cardinal Gonzaga in 1483. The play was at some point performed for the Cardinal with Baccio Ugolini (who had been in the service of the Gonzaga previously but from 1472 onwards was in the home of the Medici) in the role of Orpheus (42). Welles states that the play was adapted *alla greca* by Antonio Tebaldi in 1486, after Poliziano's return to Florence, renamed *Orphei Tragoedia*, and likely performed there (“Poliziano's Orfeo,” 102).

<sup>89</sup> Poliziano wrote: “... I wished that the tale of Orpheus, which, by requisition of our very revered Mantuan Cardinal, I composed in two days' time, in continuous confusion, in the vulgar style so that it would be better understood by the spectators, would be immediately, not otherwise than Orpheus himself, torn apart, since I knew this my little daughter to be of a quality to cast shame rather than honor on her father and would make him melancholy rather than happy. [...] She lives, thus, because it pleases you, but I strongly protest that such pity is really cruelty; and I wish this letter to be witness of my judgment” (trans. Welles, “Poliziano's Orfeo,” 103). See also Tissoni Benvenuti, *L'Orfeo*, 10. Later in life, Poliziano did come to look down upon his earlier vernacular work on pagan themes, and, if the work is to be dated to 1480, he devoted his energies to philosophical studies after this play until his death in 1494.

<sup>90</sup> Tissoni Benvenuti, *L'Orfeo*, 12.

già mai non voglio amar più donna alcuna.

Da qui innanzi vo' còr e fior' novelli,  
 la primavera del sesso migliore,  
 quando son tutti leggiadretti e snelli:  
 quest'è piú dolce e piú soave amore.  
 Non sie chi mai di donna mi favelli,  
 po' che mort'è colei ch'ebbe 'l mio core;  
 chi vuol commercio aver co' mie sermoni  
 di femminile amore non mi ragioni.<sup>91</sup>

Poliziano's Orpheus bemoans his fate to the classic refrain of "la donna è mobile." His submission and ultimate undoing by love, in other words, is entirely the woman's fault. He cries:

Quant'è misero l'uom che cangia voglia  
 per donna o mai per lei s'allegra o dole,  
 o qual per lei di liberta si spoglia  
 o crede a suo' sembianti, a suo parole!  
 Ché sempre è piú leggier ch'al vento foglia  
 e mille volte el dí vuole e disvole;  
 segue chi fugge, a chi la vuol s'asconde,  
 e vanne e vien come alla riva l'onde.

Fanne di questo Giove intera fede,  
 che dal dolce amoroso nodo avinto  
 si gode in cielo il suo bel Ganimede;  
 e Febo in terra si godea Iacinto;  
 a questo santo amore Ercole cede  
 che vinse il mondo e dal bello Ila è vinto:  
 conforto e' maritati a far divorzio,  
 e ciascun fugga el feminil consorzio.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Poliziano, *L'Orfeo*, ll. 267-276; trans. Welles, "Poliziano's Orfeo": "And since my fortune is so very cruel / I never wish to love another woman. / From now on I shall clip the tender buds / Of this the springtime of the better sex, / When they are all slender and beautiful. / This is a sweeter and a gentler love. / Let no one talk to me of women now, / Since she is dead who once did own my heart. / Whoever wishes to converse with me — / Speak not to me about a woman's love." Cf. Lord trans.: "And since my fate hath been so cruel never more shall I wish for woman's love. Henceforth I would cull flowers, maidens [sic.] in their spring when all are fair and lithe. This is a love more gentle and more sweet." Lord avoided the correct, homosexual translation, writing "maidens" for "the better sex" ("il sesso migliore"), i.e. males.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 277-292, ed. Tissoni Benvenuti, 162-163; trans. Welles, "Poliziano's Orfeo": "How sad is he who for a woman would / Change his will, ever suffer or rejoice; / O he gives up his liberty for her, / He, who believes her glances and her words. / For she is lighter than a leaf in wind, / Wants and unwants a thousand times a day, / Seeks him who flees, yet flees him who seeks her, / And comes and goes like waves upon the shore. / Thus, Jove, enthralled by that delicious knot / Shows faith in what I have to say of love, / For Ganymede he did enjoy in heaven,

The misogyny of this tirade echoes contemporary notions of woman's changeability, inconstancy, and frivolity but is, at the same time, *all'antica*.<sup>93</sup> Poliziano reiterated views (as he does again in the *Stanze*, I.14) that he would have garnered from multiple sources, including Ovid and Virgil.<sup>94</sup> Nor was Poliziano alone in his own time; similar attitudes were expressed by Boccaccio and Alberti, among others.<sup>95</sup> The common association of women's sexuality with cruelty is given extreme form in the savage dance of the maenads in the final scenes of Poliziano's play:

Una Baccante:

Ecco quel che l'amor nostro disprezza!  
 O, o, sorelle! O, o, diamoli morte!  
 Tu scaglia il tirso; e tu quel ramo spezza;  
 tu piglia o saxo o fuoco e gitta forte;  
 tu corri e quella pianta là scavezza.  
 O, o, facciam che pena el tristo porte!  
 O, o, caviangli il cor del pecto fora!  
 Mora lo scelerato, mora, mora!

Torna la Baccante colla testa di Orpheo e dice:

O, o! O, o! mort'è lo scelerato!  
 Euoè! Bacco Bacco, i' ti ringrazio!  
 Per tutto 'l bosco l'habbiamo stracciato,  
 tal ch'ogni sterpo è del suo sangue sazio.  
 L'habbiamo a membro a membro lacerato  
 in molti pezzi con crudele strazio.

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/ While Phoebus had sweet Hyacinth on earth. / And to this blessed love did Hercules cede, / Who won the world and was by Hylas won. / To married men, a comfort is divorce, / So each may flee the company of women."

<sup>93</sup> As others have also noted, the revival of the classics did not necessarily enlighten men's views of women but in some regards actually impaired women's status by reawakening antiquity's misogyny. Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly*, ed. Catherine R. Stimpson (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), 19-50; Margaret King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

<sup>94</sup> Tissoni Benvenuti, *L'Orfeo*, note on page 162 re ll. 277-84. She cites Ovid, *Heroides* V.109-110: "Tu levior foliis, tum cum sine ponder suci/ mobilibus ventis arida facta volant"; and Virgil, *Aeneid* IV.569-70: "varium et mutabile semper/ femina."

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* She cites Boccaccio, *Filostrato* I.22 and VIII.30; and Alberti, *Deifira*. See also Anthony F. D'Elia for the classical tradition of misogyny in epithalamia ("Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides in the Wedding Orations of Fifteenth-Century Italy," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55 [2002]: 379-433).



Or vadi e biasimi la teda legittima!  
 Euoè Bacco! accepta questa vittima!<sup>96</sup>

Like Pentheus, Orpheus is torn limb from limb, and like Agave dangling the head of her son, we can envision a maenad brandishing the severed head of the bard.<sup>97</sup> With blood on their hands, the maenads sing out their worship of the god Bacchus in a wild ecstasy spurred by blood and wine. In Poliziano's play Orpheus dies for his rejection of women. But he is punished moreover for turning away from the world and giving up on life—a message suited to a pleasure-seeking, aristocratic audience. The play's violent and angry imagery hardly seems appropriate for a possible engagement celebration, especially with the added fact that Orpheus spouts misogynist vitriol, and in railing against women's fickleness, declares a preference for ephebes and even advocates divorce. But Poliziano is merely evoking an ancient tradition of literary misogyny. Alberti, likewise, wrote in his *Deifira*: “Pazzo, piú volte pazzo chi crede in femmina mai essera costanza alcuna.”<sup>98</sup> But even criticism that seems harsh to us could have been part of the tradition of the Latin *epithalamia*—marriage speeches that often included caustic touches,

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<sup>96</sup> Poliziano, *L'Orfeo*, ll. 293-308, ed. Tissoni Benvenuti, 163-165; trans. Welles: “An angry BACCHANTE invites her companions to the death of ORPHEUS: / ‘Here’s the one who scorns our love! / Sisters, sisters, to the kill — / Snatch that staff [thyrsus], and break that branch! / Take rocks, take fire, and throw them hard! / Run, run, tear up that bush. We’ll bring / Him a pain that really hurts. / Let’s tear his heart out of his chest. / Death to the scoundrel! Kill! Kill!’ / A BACCHANTE returns with the head of ORPHEUS and speaks thus: / ‘O now the enemy is dead, / Hurray [evoè] for Bacchus, thanks to you. / We’ve devastated all the wood. / Each stump is sated with his blood, / We’ve torn him cruelly limb from limb, / Cut him into little pieces! / Go and blame the rightful culprit! [Lord trans.: “Go now and scorn the wedding torch.”] / Accept our victim, Bacchus, Hail!’”

<sup>97</sup> The vividness of this frantic and brutal attack owes much to Ovid's account of the death of Orpheus in *Metamorphoses* XI.1-84 and to Euripides' imagery in the *Bacchae*. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 3-73: “But now the Thracian women—all had cast the hides of beasts around their frenzied breasts—down from a high hilltop, spied Orpheus as he attuned his lyre and his sweet voice. And one of these—hair streaming loose beneath light winds—cried out: ‘He’s there! The man who dares to scorn us.’ Through the air she hurled her staff against Apollo’s poet... But nothing now can check the wild attack; fanatic Fury whips their rage. [...] [H]is lyre is drowned by shrieks and caterwauls, the raucous sounds of drums and twisted Bercynthian flutes, bacchantes pounding hands, and strident howls. [...] Then the bacchantes chose to slaughter first the countless birds, the serpents, and the throng of savage beasts—all who were still spellbound by Orpheus.... Then, with their gory hands, those women turned to Orpheus himself. ... And they—in desecration—murdered him. [...] Orpheus’ limbs lay scattered, strewn about...” (Mandelbaum trans., 359-361).

<sup>98</sup> Tissoni Benvenuti, *L'Orfeo*, note to ll. 277-284, p. 162.

sexual punning, and even licentious teasing.<sup>99</sup> In the amorous context of wedding celebrations, Orpheus would be seen as being put in his place, so to speak, for rejecting love and women. Given a marriage-centric context, this take on the ancient story is an appropriate and up-to-date one. The finale of the play, moreover, is a raucous and joyous call to drink and be merry, an incantation to the god Bacchus and a glorious celebration of his gift of wine. The audience is called on to join in:

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!

Chi vuol bere, chi vuol bere,  
venga a bere, venga qui.  
Voi 'mbottate come pevere:  
i' vo' bere ancor mi!  
Gli è del vino ancor per ti,  
lascia bere imprima a me.

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!

Io ho voto già il mio corno:  
damm'un po' 'l bottazzo qua!  
Questo monte gira intorno,  
e 'l cervello a spasso va.  
Ognun corra 'n za e in là  
come vede fare a me.

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!

I' mi moro già di sonno:  
son io ebria, o sí o no?  
Star piú ritte in pie' non ponno:  
voi siate ebrie, ch'io lo so!  
Ognun facci come io fo:

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<sup>99</sup> Welles, "Poliziano's Orfeo," 100-101, and n. 9: "The epithalamium, though originally Greek, was taken over by the Romans, and especially Catullus who combined the Greek form with jocular Fescennine verses sung at weddings in Italy from the earliest times. Although originally sung at the door of the bridal chamber, epithalamia came to be sung at the wedding celebration itself to bring good fortune. They were a combination of invocation to Hymen and good-natured ribaldry."

ognun succi come me!

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!

Ognun cridi: Bacco, Bacco!  
e pur cacci del vin giú.  
Po' co' suoni faren fiacco:  
bevi tu e tu e tu!  
I' non posso ballar piú.  
Ognun gridi: euoè!

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!<sup>100</sup>

The hedonistic revelry of the final maenadic song would likely have been followed up in the courtly banquet hall. This was a celebration of life and pleasure, not a condemnation of sodomy. In his own youthful state, Poliziano's sly insertion of the reference to Orpheus' supposed vice (for which Poliziano himself would later be known) seems more an artful gesture of empathy for the condemned humanist hero.<sup>101</sup> For him, the import of the wild maenads was two-pronged: while their ecstatic, celebratory dance in honor of Bacchus was a call to harmless festivity, behind their joy remained the blood of a great man. Poliziano's articulation of mad frenzy as existing beneath the surface of cheering, dancing maenads offers a verbal counterpart to

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<sup>100</sup> Poliziano, *L'Orfeo*, ll. 309-341, pp. 165-167. Trans. Welles: "Hail Bacchus, lord of the drink! / We follow you, hurrah, hurrah! / Who wants to drink, who wants to drink? / Come here and drink, O come drink here, / Pour it in just like a funnel. / I want some more, some more for me. / There's still a little left for you, / But first let me, let me drink first! / Hail Bacchus, lord of the drink, / I've emptied my horn once tonight, / Give me some from that pouch there. / This mountain's going round and round, / My brain is going for a walk, / Let everyone go here and there— / As you see me do, you do it too. / Hail Bacchus, lord of drink. / I'm already dead with sleep, / Am I drunk, yes, or no? / I can't stand straight upon my feet, / But you are drunker that I know. / Let everyone do just like me! / Everyone drink, just like me! / Hail Bacchus, lord of drink. / Altogether, Bacchus, Bacchus! / Pour the wine right down the hatch! / Then let's make a lot of noise! / Drink up you, and you, and you, / I cannot dance another step. / Altogether shout hurrah! / Hail Bacchus, lord of drink / We follow you, hurrah, hurrah!"

<sup>101</sup> Avigdor W. G. Posèq refers to Ludovico Ariosto's comments in his *Satira* ("Left and Right Orientation of a *Pathosformel* in Dürer," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 16, no. 1 [1996]: 15). *Satira* VI, ll.25-27, 31-33: "Few humanists are without that vice that did not so much persuade as force God to lay waste Gomorrah and its neighbour! [...] The vulgar laugh when they hear of someone who possesses a vein of poetry and then they say, 'It is a great peril to turn your back if you sleep next to him'" (as quoted in Davidson, "Theology, Nature and the Law," 74).

Warburg's maenadic "pathos formula." The energy in those shouts of "euoè" is like the heightened sense of life in the imagined fluttering of their drapery. The pathos of the maenad is retained even when she sends out a festive call to drink.

Maenadic intensity is maintained in particular in Quattrocento images depicting the death of Orpheus. The antique image of Pentheus crouching or lying beneath the blows of the maenads was familiar to contemporary artists, one preserved on a sarcophagus lid in the Camposanto of Pisa (fig. 2.26, 27).<sup>102</sup> Perhaps due in part to the Mantuan connection of Poliziano's play, Mantegna included a fictive relief of the killing of Orpheus in a spandrel of the ceiling of the Camera degli Sposi in 1474.<sup>103</sup> Later, an artist in the milieu of Mantegna made a drawing of Orpheus being attacked by two club-wielding maenads and an infant (fig. 2.28).<sup>104</sup> These maenads appear more like manly Amazons, their strong legs and shoulders bared with unsensual severity. The pose of the crouching Orpheus, who kneels on one knee and protects his head with the opposite hand, is copied in reverse in an anonymous Ferrarese engraving of the

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<sup>102</sup> The familiarity of this configuration of an attack is shown also in the Middle Ages, as in a representation of the *Stoning of St. Stephen* on the tympanum of the south transept portal of Notre Dame in Paris. See W. Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture in France 1140-1270* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), pl. 269. The Pisan lid was known to Nicola Pisano, who borrowed the supine pose of Pentheus in scenes showing a man torn by demons from the Last Judgment in the pulpit reliefs for the Pisa Baptistery in 1260. See Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 87. Given Donatello's familiarity with the works in Pisa, it is likely that he saw this Bacchic sarcophagus and lid there, since he used the sitting pose of the victim seen there in the relief of "the Irascible Son" on the massive bronze altar of San Antonio in Padua, 1446-1450. See Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, pl. 85a.

<sup>103</sup> Castello di S. Giorgio, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua. Three spandrels depicting the story of Orpheus appear above the fresco of the court on the north wall. The grisailles are painted atop fictive gold mosaic backgrounds, giving them the appearance of stucco reliefs. At the left, Orpheus plays his lyre, at the center he soothes Cerberus and a Fury, and at the right the maenads kill him. In the last scene, Mantegna shows Orpheus sprawled upon the ground, leaning on his forearms, while three maenads attack him with clubs. See Rodolfo Signorini, *Opus Hoc Tenue: La Camera Dipinta di Andrea Mantegna: lettura storica iconografica iconologica* (Mantua: Belleli, 1985), 214-216.

<sup>104</sup> The drawing is in the British Museum, where it is attributed to Marco Zoppo. Charles Ephrussi, "Quelques remarques à propos de l'influence italienne dans une oeuvre de Dürer," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 17, series 2 (1878): ill. facing p. 446. This Orpheus has the oddly Herculean attribute of the lion skin draped over his back, the tail appearing between his legs. Note the rabbit fleeing into his hole to the right.

*Death of Orpheus* of about 1470-1480 (fig. 2.29).<sup>105</sup> Though an anachronistic substitute for the more authentic lyre, a lute has been placed in the foreground to identify the victim. The engraver has retained the idea of including only two female attackers from the drawing, one of whom has her face hidden from us, but places them on either side of Orpheus, while the little putto now flees away from the scene toward the left (fig. 2.30).<sup>106</sup> The frontal maenad with the club swung behind her head was probably copied from the Pisan sarcophagus (or a drawing after it), and the other one is almost the same figure seen in reverse.<sup>107</sup> The fierceness and savagery of the women's attack is somewhat tempered by the nymph-like delicacy of the figures.<sup>108</sup> Unlike the cruel creatures in Poliziano's play, these personifications do not quite uphold their brutal rage. The modulation of the fierceness of the maenads may stem from the artist's sense of feminine

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<sup>105</sup> Warburg, *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 125, 555. The engraving is in the Kunsthalle in Hamburg. Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, part I, E.III.17. Hind notes the similarity of this crouching pose to that of antique representations of fallen gladiators or warriors, such as that in the Museo di San Marco, Venice, and to that of the fallen figure in the engraving after Pollaiuolo of *Hercules and the Giants* (Hind, D.I.2) (p. 257).

<sup>106</sup> Dürer made a drawing (Kunsthalle, Hamburg) after the Mantegnesque print during his journey to Italy in 1494, reproducing the details of the figures but replacing the lute with a lyre and setting them before a little wooded copse with a tree hung with a book and a banderole bearing the words, "Orfeus der erst puseran" ("Orpheus, the first sodomite"). The work is discussed by Posèq, "Left and Right Orientation," 7-17; and by Edgar Wind, "'Hercules' and 'Orpheus': Two Mock-Heroic Designs by Dürer," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1939): 214-216. See also Panofsky, "Albrecht Dürer and Classical Antiquity," 238-244; and Warburg, "Dürer and Italian Antiquity," where he states: "The true voice of antiquity, which the Renaissance knew well, chimes with the image. For the death of Orpheus was more than a studio motif of purely formal interest: it stood for the dark mystery play of Dionysian legend, passionately and knowingly experienced in the spirit and through the words of the ancients" (555).

<sup>107</sup> This sort of "bilateral juxtaposition," as commonly exhibited by Pollaiuolo, was clearly a favored compositional motif at this point in the later fifteenth century. See Posèq, "Left and Right Orientation," 9-12; David Summers, "Figure come fratelli: A Transformation of Symmetry in Renaissance Painting," *Art Quarterly* 1 (1977): 59-88. This artist used the sort of swirling, sedimentary landscape typical of early Mantegna (as in the *Agony of the Garden*, National Gallery, c. 1450s). This sort of landscape is seen in turn in Jacopo Bellini's London drawing book, fols. 43v and 44r. Giovanni Bellini also inherited from his father an interest in this sort of mystical landscape (e.g. his *Agony in the Garden*, c. 1465-70, also in London). This artist's figures, on the other hand, are much more lithe and flowing, like the later Mantegna as in the *Parnassus* of c. 1497. Indeed, the rear-facing maenad on the right is quite similar to the central and left-most Muses in Mantegna's painting, even down to the detail of the headband and ponytail.

<sup>108</sup> The similarity of pose and features between the print and Mantegna's other known work would lead me to believe that the unknown engraver (the swirl-like signature mark in the center of the plate is unidentified) followed a lost design or even finished work by Mantegna, for whom such a subject would not have been atypical.

decorum. This engraving appears to have inspired the design for a woodcut illustration of the *Death of Orpheus* for the Italian translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* published in Venice in 1497. More maenads are added, however, and the simple arching lines of their bodies against the blank background serve to enhance the energy and frenzy of their attack. A bronze plaquette from the last quarter of the fifteenth century likewise portrays the wild orgy of the murder, with one maenad's dress falling off her body and another standing on her victim while holding his arm (fig. 2.31).<sup>109</sup> In these examples, the artists have better captured the deranged fury of the maenads, the rough-hewn techniques suited to vivid expression.<sup>110</sup>

One artist, Baccio Baldini, went further than any other artist toward capturing an authentic maenadic frenzy in his two-page engraving of the *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* from the 1470s (fig. 2.32, 33).<sup>111</sup> Characterized overall by a fifteenth-century version of *all'antica* parade wear with its imaginative headdresses, clothing, and sandals, Baldini also included three maenads who match Poliziano's in wild fury. In a manner not commonly depicted in ancient Bacchic triumphs, these three hold the quarry of their midnight hunts: here wolves and boars. The three wear loose mantles that reveal one breast, and hold up the carcasses as they run. The last figure behind the chariot holds up a piece of game with a gruesome slice across its belly, while her hair is loose and streaming in matted disarray, her feet are bare, and her minimalist mantle billows out indecorously, like an Amazon exposing her breast. In

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<sup>109</sup> There are only two extant versions of the plaquette, one in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and a poorer one in Berlin. See John Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Reliefs, Plaquettes, Statuettes, Utensils and Mortars* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 1965), cat. 122, fig. 80.

<sup>110</sup> The arrangement of figures would soon be transposed onto other, unrelated subjects, as in Piero di Cosimo's *The Finding of Vulcan on Lemnos*, c. 1490-1500 (Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford) and Luca Signorelli's *Cupid Chastised*, c. 1509 (National Gallery, London).

<sup>111</sup> British Museum, London. Mark J. Zucker, *The Illustrated Bartsch: vol. 24 & 25 Early Italian Masters (vol. 13 of Adam von Bartsch's Le Peinture-Gravure)* (New York: Abaris Books, 1980-1993), 2403.126; Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, A.II.26.

contrast, the music-making trio of the left sheet evokes the contemporary pageant feeling, with their discreetly tied dresses and *all'antica* sandals; one even has a string of bells tied around her upper arm. Unlike these three more prettily dancing maenads, the last on the right, in her disheveled and unaware appearance, epitomizes the delusional, trance-like frenzy of a maenad in the full force of Bacchic enthusiasm. The accuracy of feeling that Baldini captured was rarely matched in works that directly copied antique maenads, and perhaps owed something to a greater understanding of Bacchic literature.

The comparison of the engraving to Poliziano's writings has been made before for their general shared articulation of Bacchic celebration.<sup>112</sup> But more careful examination of the actual similarities between the works—beyond mere “mood” or superficial subject matter—is merited.<sup>113</sup> What is most often perceived in the Baldini print is what appears as a festive spirit—conveyed through the movement of draperies and running and dancing bodies, as well as through the sense of music, noise, and celebration conveyed by the figures. This evokes Poliziano's *Orfeo*, with its final raucous chorus of drunken maenads that “resembles a *trionfo* in its form, its reckless spirit, and its dramatic action.”<sup>114</sup> That chorus feels like an all-out drinking song resembling the contemporary *canti carnascialeschi*. But as we have seen, Poliziano's *Orfeo* is not just a Bacchic party. It includes a scene of horrific maenadic frenzy in the tearing apart of Orpheus, and the wild refrain of the women is inflamed by blood and wine. The serious and

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<sup>112</sup> For example, Herbert Horne, *Sandro Botticelli, Painter of Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 83-84.

<sup>113</sup> Zucker simply notes the contemporary literary parallels of Lorenzo's “Canzona di Bacco” and Poliziano's *Orfeo* and *Stanze per la Giostra*. Horne quotes Lorenzo and Poliziano only to say they share a contemporary mood; he writes: “The chorus of Maenads with which Angelo Poliziano concludes his ‘Orfeo,’ possesses that strain of the mediaeval spirit, the sense of something noisome and overhasty in the wine-cup, which permeates Botticelli's [attribution later changed to Bartolomeo di Giovanni, according to Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*] design” (Horne, *Sandro Botticelli*, 81).

authentic frenzy of Baldini's maenads is shared by Poliziano's "Baccante," who tears Orpheus limb from limb. The virulence of Poliziano's Bacchantes is potent, and Baldini similarly captures this deadly capacity of maenads, though within the confines of an otherwise celebratory triumph.

## MAENADIC BORROWINGS

As the work of these artists and writers shows, there was an attraction to this imagery despite an uneasy view of maenads. Maenads provided a powerful vehicle for the visual articulation and exploration of the body in those states of ecstasy, frenzy, and madness believed to be uniquely feminine.<sup>115</sup> The fifteenth century presents an interesting turning point in the visual arts, because it was a moment in which misogynistic presumptions came head to head with changing artistic ideals regarding the representation of the female form. Artists, like choreographers, were compelled to preserve restraint and modesty in their work and in the figures they depicted.<sup>116</sup> Yet meeting the demands of narrative decorum while controlling the physicality of one's figures was no easy task. Alberti asserted that artists could achieve narrative clarity by expressing inner emotions in outward gestures:

[E]ach person's bodily movements, in keeping with dignity, should be related to the emotions you wish to express. And the greatest emotions must be expressed by the most powerful physical indications. [...] [I]n those who are angry, their passions aflame with ire, ...the movements of

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<sup>114</sup> Maurice Bowra, "Songs of Dance and Carnival," in *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. E. R. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 348.

<sup>115</sup> See Joyce, "Maenads and Bacchantes," 36, 82.

<sup>116</sup> Fermor, "Decorum in Figural Movement," 79.



all their limbs are violent and agitated according to the fury of their wrath.<sup>117</sup>

But Alberti warned against excess and extravagance in movement, which cause figures to lack dignity and decorum. “Movements should be moderated and sweet”; “They should be used with moderation.”<sup>118</sup> But when was the line into excess crossed? The maenad presented a challenging figure for fifteenth-century artists, one whose emotions demanded flailing limbs where decorum urged inhibition. Where the balance lay was a matter of sensibility and perception, with the figure of the maenad threatening to fall either way, her grace on one side and her grossness on the other.

From the image of the maenad, fifteenth-century artists ventured forth into the realm of depicting the beautiful, the erotic, the frenzied, and the sexual. The maenad afforded a prime example not only of the body in motion but of the outward effects on that body of its inner emotions as well. The drawings of Jacopo Bellini and of Pisanello’s circle reveal their notice of the maenad (fig. 1.30, 2.17). Each extrapolated the figure he was imitating out of her original context, and placed an emphasis on pose and drapery, not iconographical accuracy.<sup>119</sup> The contorted postures and billowing veils of these Bacchantes clearly captured the fancy of these artists, and copying them gave a lesson on how to depict the female body moved by frenzy and

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<sup>117</sup> *De Pictura* II. 44, p. 84: “Denique pro dignitate cuique sui motus corporis ad eos quos velis exprimere motus animi referantur. Tum denique maximarum animi perturbationum maximae in membris significationes adsint necesse est.”; *ibid.*, II. 41, p. 80: “Iratis vero, quod animi ira incendantur, ... membrorumque omnium motus pro furore iracundiae in eisdem acerrimi et iactabundi sunt.”

<sup>118</sup> *On Painting*, Book II, pp. 81, 79. *De Pictura* II.45, p. 86: “Sed sint motus omnes... moderati et faciles...”; II.43, p. 82: “...qua moderatione his motibus utendum sit.”

<sup>119</sup> In the Ambrosiana drawing the Pisanellesque artist was interested in the poses and drapery; but besides the wreath and garland on the central figures, he removed all other Bacchic attributes: the maenad’s tambourine, Bacchus’ drinking vessel, the panther, and the mask. Far from overly concerning himself with accurate transcription or documentation, the artist even replaced the figure on the right with one from the left part of the original so as to create what seemed to him a harmonious composition. In the other two drawings mentioned earlier, the tambourine,

abandon. Given her beauty as well as erotic mystery, one would then expect to find the maenad immediately transported into a variety of Renaissance contexts. Yet these drawings of the 1430s and 1440s were at first without progeny.<sup>120</sup> Unlike a medieval artist who lacked visual models for his mythical figures, the maenad became familiar in the fifteenth century. Yet as literary knowledge of her meaning was enhanced—which should have allowed a *rapprochement* of this meaning to her form—we do not at first see this sort of reconstitution. The maenadic form would remain separate from her content for some time to come. Perhaps the inherent conflict between the new Albertian expression and the old code of decorous restraint handcuffed artists in their first explorations of excess. As even Alberti cautioned, at some point the extravagance of a gesture may surpass the point of narrative urgency.<sup>121</sup> Nevertheless, the sensuality and madness of the antique maenad did capture the imagination of Renaissance artists and audiences. Her features were ultimately borrowed to enhance the expressivity of other characters, but *which* persons were deemed appropriate for such frenzy—and whether it was depicted as joyous or mad, ecstatic or merely pretty—is quite telling.

The scandalous and frightening freedom of the mythological maenad may have made her truly mad and frenzied depiction overly pagan and dangerous, but her *furor* did translate well to other, biblical characters for whom her violence, madness, and sensuality suited their narratives.

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cymbals, tympanum, and thrysus of the originals were maintained, and the maenads dance in free space or upon a pedestal.

<sup>120</sup> As Creighton Gilbert has said, “[d]rawings might well function as the medium of private experimentation when paintings would not. Like the marginal figures of Gothic manuscripts, Renaissance drawings at times predict, in their obscure role of personal fancy, what will only become standard public property in a succeeding generation” (“On Subject and Not-Subject,” 209).

<sup>121</sup> Alexander Nagel discusses how Michelangelo gloried in the possibilities of gestural excess and realized its function as a means of release (*Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, 86-87). Regarding the necessary postponement of certain classical themes, see David Rosand, “*Ekphrasis* and the Renaissance of Painting: Observations on Alberti’s Third Book,” in *Florilegium Columbianum: Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. Karl-Ludwig Selig and Robert Somerville (New York: Ithaca Press, 1987), 147-165.

And so fifteenth-century artists invented the maenadic grieving Magdalene, the inspired Judith, and the seductive Salome. In time this mad frenzy was tempered and prettified, and the sweetly stepping maenad came to dominate. As a personification of Abundance or a Muse, a basket-carrying serving girl, birth attendant, or liling nymph, she appeared in the work of Ghiberti, Agostino di Duccio, Fra Filippo Lippi, Pollaiuolo, Ghirlandaio, and Botticelli, among others. Subtle formal variations produced differences in meaning that would have been discernible to Renaissance artists and audiences, who would have viewed the images in light of contemporary ideas regarding femininity, decorum, and piety.<sup>122</sup> This sweetened type became the more popular form and truly penetrated into the contemporary visual style, inhabiting the fluttering accessories in motion and the upward moving gestures sought out from ancient art. The “*ninfa-as-maid*” ultimately suppressed the original passion and frenzy of the maenad from whom her form was borrowed, in the pursuit not of *pathos* but of beauty, sensuality, and an *all’antica* ideal.

— MAENADIC GRIEF: MARY MAGDALENE

The wildly grieving Magdalenes in Bertoldo’s *Crucifixion* and in Donatello’s *Lamentation* of the 1460s from the San Lorenzo pulpit undoubtedly owe some of their formal language to images of maenads.<sup>123</sup> These stylized portrayals of grief emerged in part from the

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<sup>122</sup> Warburg saw a “pathos formula” as the visual appearance—that is, the “symptom”—of the primitive self, which is everlasting across time. This symptom is always manifested through conflict and compromise—with the body and with the culture—and is thus revealed with differences. See Didi-Huberman, “*Dialektik des Monstrums*,” 622, 636.

<sup>123</sup> Compare Bertoldo’s Magdalene to the maenad on a krater in Naples and Donatello’s to other common Neo-Attic maenad types. See Antal, “Some Examples of the Role of the Maenad.” Another example of maenadically grieving women can be seen in the terracotta model of a Crucifixion attributed to Donatello or his circle, c. mid-1440s, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. 7619-1861. See Bruce Boucher, ed., *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), cat. 4. Then there are even more extreme examples of grieving, as in Niccolò dell’Arca’s *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, a full-scale terracotta grouping in the Bolognese Confraternity of Santa Maria della Vita, 1463, or Verrocchio’s *Death of Francesca Tornabuoni*, from her tomb, Bargello, Florence. These take features from ancient scenes of the Death of the Niobids, for example, yet still evoke something of the maenad in their rushing figures and fluttering garments, as

repertoire of mourning that had followed a virtually unbroken line from the classical *conclamatio*.<sup>124</sup> Scenes of the Lamentation provided an occasion for depicting women in unusually frantic poses, with gestures of mourning derived from ancient Roman conventions, which included them rending their cheeks, tearing their hair, and beating their breasts.<sup>125</sup> Sarcophagi, with their scenes of mythological tragedies like the death of Meleager, Hippolytus, or the Niobids, also showed these frantic expressions.<sup>126</sup>

What is curious, however, is that it was *maenadic* frenzy that was so often associated with the derangement of grief in literature.<sup>127</sup> Though presumably a figure of ecstatic joy, the heightened intensity of her *furor* stood for the maximal expression of irrational emotion of any kind, be it inspiration, love, arousal, drunkenness, wrath, or devastation. The lack of control and irrational emotions of the mourning female evoked the maenad's wild movements, even if hers were spurred by bliss (though the maenads' frenzy was not itself exclusively happy or

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in the Triumph of Bacchus relief visible in Pisa (Roberto Papini, ed., *Catalogo delle cose d'arte e di antichità d'Italia: Pisa*, serie I, fasc. II, parte II [Rome: La libreria dello stato, 1912], cat. 64). See Randi Klebanoff, "Passion, Compassion, and the Sorrows of Women: Niccolò dell'Arca's *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* for the Bolognese Confraternity of Santa Maria della Vita," in *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, ed. Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 146-172. See also Evelyn Welch, *Art and Society in Italy 1350-1500* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 15, 22, fig. 8; Barasch, *Gestures of Despair*, fig. 58.

<sup>124</sup> For the Italian usurpation of the traditional Byzantine motif of the *threnos*, or Lamentation, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Kurt Weitzmann, "Origins of the Threnos," in *De artibus opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York: New York University Press, 1961), 476-490.

<sup>125</sup> Lecture, Anthony Corbeill, "Blood, Milk, and Tears: The Gestures of Mourning Women in Ancient Rome," October 23, 2001, at the University of Texas, Austin; Barasch, *Gestures of Despair*, 22.

<sup>126</sup> Barasch, *Gestures of Despair*, 23; James David Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni: Sculptor of the Medici Household* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 129. See the Death of Meleager sarcophagus, Torno Collection, Milan (formerly Palazzo Montalvo, Florence), in Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, fig. 114; and Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 125 (the accompanying image in fig. 15b, however, is labeled the Death of Alcestis but is actually the Death of Meleager in Milan). Warburg noted: "I showed in 1901... that Giuliano da Sangallo's source [for the Sassetti tomb] was the Meleager sarcophagus, together with the Alcestis sarcophagus, which also influenced Verrocchio's relief of the death of Tornabuoni." It is from the antique example, says Warburg, that Sangallo's mourners learn "their forbidden excesses of orgiastic grief" ("Francesco Sassetti's Last Injunctions to His Sons," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 125 and n. 65, 261, 245).

<sup>127</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.467-560; Catullus, LXIV.

innocuous, since the ancient myths testify to their marauding and killing, or refer to normal women being drawn into madness against their will). A long tradition conflated grief with maenadic madness. In the *Illiad*, Homer described Andromache, upon the death of Hector, as tearing through the house with movements “like a maenad” (*mainadi ise*).<sup>128</sup> In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, the goddess runs after her stolen daughter Persephone as “a maenad, frenzied, rushes down the forested mountain.”<sup>129</sup> In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the already despairing Amata is driven mad by Allecto, “Grief’s drear mistress,” “and with insane abandon roamed the city.”<sup>130</sup> She is described as throwing herself into a false Bacchic frenzy and acting like a maenad:

So restless, wheeling like a spinning top,  
Amata sped on....  
[...] Worse, she feigned  
Bacchic possession, daring a greater sin  
And greater madness. Off into the woods she ran....  
[...] “Evoë,  
Bacchus,” she shrilled out....<sup>131</sup>

Ariadne herself is described as being “like a maenad” in her grief upon her abandonment by Theseus in Catullus’ *Carmen* LXIV.<sup>132</sup> She grows mad (“in corde gerens Ariadna furores”) with despair as she sees his ship sailing away.<sup>133</sup> Her hair is loosened and her garments fall off her body, as she sobs with great passion, so that she appears “effigies bacchantis.”<sup>134</sup> One fifth-century patristic writer explained that Christ’s controlled grief at the tomb of Lazarus showed us

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<sup>128</sup> *Illiad* XXII.460, cited in Joyce, “Maenads and Bacchantes,” 20.

<sup>129</sup> l. 386, trans. Thelma Sargent (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973).

<sup>130</sup> *Aeneid* VII, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Vintage Classics edition, 1990), l. 445, p. 207; l. 520, p. 209.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, ll. 528-532, 535-536, p. 209.

<sup>132</sup> Cited by Joyce, “Maenads and Bacchantes,” 124. *Catullus*, trans. Francis Warre Cornish, ed. G. P. Goold, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 101-103.

<sup>133</sup> Catullus, *Carmina* LXIV, l.54, p. 100.

that we too should not become “bacchantically frenzied” in our mourning.<sup>135</sup> Even the humanist cleric Gregorio Correr could compose a youthful play in the early fifteenth century in which a grieving woman cries: “Simulabo Bacchi: maior hic lateat furor” (“I shall pretend that I am overcome by Bacchus; let here the wilder frenzy lie hid”).<sup>136</sup>

In the fifteenth century, artists began representing maenadically frenzied women in grief, despite the fact that contemporary social norms, philosophy, and sumptuary laws were all aimed at curtailing actual women’s exhibitions of mourning.<sup>137</sup> Their artistic choices may reflect (in contrast to the social limits on grieving) the surge in pious texts encouraging a more visceral and emotional contemplation of the Passion. In the *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* prayer, for example, the devout sought to feel inebriated by the cross and blood of Jesus:

Fac me plagis vulnerari,  
fac me Cruce inebriari,  
et cruore Filii.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Catullus, *Carmina* LXIV, l. 61, p. 102.

<sup>135</sup> Barasch, *Gestures of Despair*, 35, n. 9, quoting Isidor Pelusiotes, *Epist.* L, 2, 137, as in Zappert, “Ausdruck des geistigen Schmerzes,” p. 76, n. 19.

<sup>136</sup> Correr’s *Progne*, as quoted in Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 18.

<sup>137</sup> Sharon Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Klebanoff, “Passion, Compassion, and the Sorrows of Women,” 146-172; Elena Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith,” in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 35-70; Catherine Kovesi Killerby, “Practical Problems in the Enforcement of Italian Sumptuary Law, 1200-1500,” in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 99-120; idem, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Timothy Verdon, “‘Si tu non piangi quando questo vedi...’: penitenza e spiritualità laica nel quattrocento,” in *Niccolò dell’Arca: seminario di studi, atti del convegno 26-27 maggio 1987*, ed. Grazia Agostini and Luisa Ciammitti (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1989), 151-166.

<sup>138</sup> “Let me be wounded with distress, and let me be inebriated by the Cross and by the blood of your son.” The thirteenth-century *Stabat Mater* is a hymn to the Virgin Mother’s grief during the Crucifixion and Lamentation and a prayer for the supplicant to feel that grief and pain along with her and her son. Latin and vernacular “Laments of the Virgin” abounded in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Niccolò dell’Arca’s terracotta *Lamentation* also elicited this sort of empathetic participation, enhanced by its lifesize depiction of the characters. There was also the widely popular *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, thought to have been written by St. Bonaventure, which stressed the presence of Mary at the foot of the cross. See the edition by Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, Paris, Bibliothèque

Paralleling such devotions, Donatello gave outward, visible form to the internal emotions of the devout observer in the imagery for his *Entombments* for the Tabernacle of the Sacrament in St. Peter's (1432-1433) and for the High Altar in San Antonio, Padua (1446-1450), taking classic gestures of hair pulling and arm raising and infusing them with a rushing, savage, frantic quality (fig. 2.34).<sup>139</sup> The draperies of the wildest figures pull at and reveal their bodies, in contrast to the more stolid figures whose heavy garments mark the solemnity of their grief. Donatello's expressive figures on the bronze pulpits for San Lorenzo of the 1460s thrash about in despair beneath the Cross (fig. 2.35, 36). One woman pulls at her hair, her head tossed back, as she stands near the head of Christ in the *Deposition* on the north pulpit.<sup>140</sup> Later, Donatello's student Bertoldo created the bronze relief of the *Crucifixion* already noted, in which a voluptuous Magdalene reaches up to the Cross, torn hair in her fist, while standing on tiptoe, head thrown back, hair and draperies aflutter. The arched back, extended arms, upturned face, and revealed body indisputably link her to a maenadic motif.<sup>141</sup> Donatello's grieving figure in the *Deposition*, while less decorative and pretty in her outlines, shares a similar three-quarter profile and arched back, with foreshortening that causes her feet to appear as if up on tiptoe. Her right arm is upraised, cocked at the elbow, while the other is held straight down behind her—a maenadic

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*Nazionale MS. Ital. 115*, trans. Isa Ragusa (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), lxxviii. See Nerida Newbiggin, "The Decorum of the Passion: The Plays of the Confraternity of the Gonfalone in the Roman Colosseum, 1490-1539," in *Confraternities and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Italy: Ritual, Spectacle, Image*, eds. Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 176, 182-183.

<sup>139</sup> Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, pls. 88a and 42a.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. 107.

<sup>141</sup> One source may have been the maenad shown dancing on a marble vase depicting the birth of Bacchus, now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples (fig. 2.4, right). Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni*, 129, fig. 78.

convention.<sup>142</sup> In the *Death of Francesca Tornabuoni*, attributed to a follower of Verrocchio, a spectrum of grieving women and matrons is capped at the right with a frenetically despondent maiden.<sup>143</sup> The motif of loosened hair was one of the quintessential features of the ancient maenad, perhaps even her prerogative, and stood in the Quattrocento not only as the prototypical sign of antique style but epitomized the purest form of abandon that could be captured and reawakened from antique life.<sup>144</sup> As Warburg thought, it was as if the pagan pathos of the ancient maenad was transferred into the hair and flowing draperies of the Renaissance figures.<sup>145</sup> In contrast to the reserved *dolorum* of the Virgin Mary, the Magdalene-as-maenad was allowed to lose control, tear her hair, and cry out in despair, offering a displacement of frenzied grief that

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<sup>142</sup> As seen, for example, in a stamnos in the Museo Nazionale Archeologico, Naples, painted by the Dinos painter. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, pl. 2.

<sup>143</sup> Verrocchio relief in the Bargello, Florence. See Andrew Butterfield, *The Sculptures of Andrea del Verrocchio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>144</sup> In reference to the ubiquity of the motif of flowing hair in fifteenth-century art and literary description, which became a virtual “hallmark of the *maniera antica*,” Panofsky asserted on the authority of his colleague Carl Robert Halle that “only Maenads were represented with flowing hair in classical antiquity...” (Panofsky, “Dürer and Classical Antiquity,” 243, n. 23). However, there are antique representations of grieving or dying women with loosened hair (on Meleager, Medea, and Clytemnestra sarcophagi), and there are literary descriptions of Diana, for example, with flowing hair, as in Claudian’s *De raptu Proserpinae* II.30-35, which includes the line: “her straying locks fluttered in the gentle breeze.” See Stanko Kokole, “*Cognitio formarum* and Agostino di Duccio’s Reliefs for the Chapel of the Planets in the Tempio Malatestiano,” in *Quattrocento Adriatico: Fifteenth-Century Art of the Adriatic Rim*, ed. Charles Dempsey (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1996), 193 and n. 44.

<sup>145</sup> See Didi-Huberman regarding this sort of “displacement of pathetic intensity” (“*Dialektik des Monstrums*,” 638-639). Giuliano da Sangallo’s relief of the late 1480s for the tomb of Francesco Sassetti is an almost literal reproduction of the death of Meleager sarcophagus in Milan, though the artist has added loosened hair to the figure with thrown-back arms where there is none in the antique—indicative of that very maenadic influence of which we speak. See Frida Schottmüller, “Zwei Grabmäler der Renaissance und ihre antiken Vorbilder,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 25 (1902): 401-408. Later in the sixteenth century, Marcantonio Raimondi would reduce the grieving figure to these pathetic essentialities in his engraving of *Despair*, showing a woman in body-hugging *all’antica* gown, fluttering in the wind, pulling at two massive hunks of her long, waving hair. *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 27, *The Works of Marcantonio Raimondi and of his School*, 437 (329), perhaps by or after Francesco Francia.



was otherwise suppressed and a transferal of passionate devotion into the form of a more acceptable piety.<sup>146</sup>

That a dancing, frenzied, drum-beating Bacchante could become a hair-pulling, sobbing Mary Magdalene or other female mourner is significant. Here a pagan figure was allowed to exist in a completely Christian setting. This apparent conflict fascinated Warburg and became the impetus for his conceptualization of the *Pathosformel*. As Ernst Gombrich said, Warburg “s[aw] in the ‘Nympha’ the eruption of primitive emotion through the crust of Christian self-control and *bourgeois* decorum.”<sup>147</sup> Warburg described these formulas in linguistic terms as “superlatives,” which represent “the extremes of physiognomic expression in the moment of the highest excitement (pathos) or of profoundest contemplation (ethos).”<sup>148</sup> These gesture formulas are not abstract motifs with inherent meaning, but are visual symptoms of biological and psychological essences.<sup>149</sup> As Georges Didi-Huberman explains: “... In Bertoldo di Giovanni’s *Magdalene*, the Antique maenad only ‘survives’ as well as she does because pain and desire are maintained in their *conflict*, tense but tangled in a skillfully selected ambiguity, an ambiguity that makes possible the compromise between the pagan dancer in a trance and the tearful Christian

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<sup>146</sup> Barasch, *Gestures of Despair*, 35. See Donna Spivey Ellington, “Impassioned Mother or Passive Icon: The Virgin’s Role in Late Medieval and Early Modern Passion Sermons,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (1995): 227-261. For the evolution of the character of Mary Madgalene in contemporary sermons, see Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>147</sup> Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 125.

<sup>148</sup> Warburg’s notes, quoted by Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 179. See also Gertrude Bing, “Aby M. Warburg,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965): 299-313, esp. 309-310.

<sup>149</sup> Didi-Huberman, “*Dialektik des Monstrums*,” 622-623. See also Edgar Wind’s Review of Gombrich’s *Aby Warburg*, in *The Eloquence of Symbols*, 111, and “Warburg’s Concept of *Kulturwissenschaft* and Its Meaning for Aesthetics,” in same, 27 and n. 19. Didi-Huberman describes this tension as typical of Warburg’s “dialectic of the monster,” a manic-depressive sort of vacillation from the ecstasy of the nymph to the depressiveness of the river-god. The *Pathosformeln*, then, are “corporeal crystallizations of the ‘dialectic of the monster’” (Didi-Huberman, 626-627).

saint.”<sup>150</sup> In other words, the maenadic form is a physical and emotional symptom of intense passion and feeling; and the blending of sensuality and tragedy in the maenad is present in the Magdalene as well. Mary Magdalene literally becomes the erotic temptress that she once was, and her wild gesticulation and flowing hair reinforce the taint of sin that is still attached to her. The linking of errant sexuality with passionate gesticulation, even in mourning, was unavoidable. The eroticism of the maenad, far from being inappropriate, served to remind the viewer of Mary Magdalene’s sexual past and to reinforce the realization that the sensual beauty of her body had been subsumed by a spiritual frenzy.

— MAENADIC *EKSTASIS*: JUDITH

As artists began to show the grieving Magdalene arching her spine and throwing back her head in a maenadic frenzy, another biblical figure—Judith—began to move with a passion and madness that harkened back to the Bacchic model. The Apocryphal tale of Judith relates the story of her bravery in the face of tyranny when she volunteered to murder the general Holofernes (who was serving King Nebuchadnezzar’s imperial goals), gaining access to his tent by pretending to let him seduce her, befuddling him with wine, and, while he slept, severing his head with his own sword.<sup>151</sup> Judith assured the salvation of Israel through her stealth. But her actions were intertwined with sexuality and ignobility.<sup>152</sup> Some saw in her, as Ruskin would say,

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<sup>150</sup> Didi-Huberman, “*Dialektik des Monstrums*,” 636.

<sup>151</sup> The Book of Judith was excluded by the Protestants after the Reformation, but preserved with the Council of Trent in 1546 as part of the traditional Catholic Vulgate Bible.

<sup>152</sup> Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith,” 35. John Ruskin was drawn to explain the attraction of these “vile pictures” which hint at Judith’s “ignoble sin.” He found Botticelli’s small painting *The Return of Judith to Bethulia* in the Uffizi to offer a beautiful and chaste exception. See his *Mornings in Florence* (Kent, England: G. Allen, 1875), 65-67, examined also in Jane Davidson Reid, “The True Judith,” *Art Journal* 28 (1969): 376-387, and by Ciletti.

“the mightiest, purest, brightest type of high passion in severe womanhood offered to our human memory,” and stressed her chastity in the face of Holofernes’ attempted seduction and her commitment to celibacy in her later life.<sup>153</sup> In the Middle Ages this allowed her to be equated typologically with Mary.<sup>154</sup> Yet having put herself—a pious and chaste widow—in great sexual peril, her actions created moral paradoxes, since she had been duplicitous and had deployed “feminine wiles.”<sup>155</sup> In Northern European art of the Reformation period, Judith would be represented as a seductress or conflated with Salome, who was more obviously seen as a siren.<sup>156</sup> The obvious differences between her and Salome were elided by the conviction that “whenever women exert power over men, it is by definition sexual and lethal.”<sup>157</sup>

Like Judith, maenads were inextricably associated with eroticism and death. The sensuality of their bodies was glaring, even when their minds had taken them beyond the flesh to the otherworld of divine inspiration. It was in such stupors that they committed acts of murder,

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<sup>153</sup> Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence*, 67, as quoted in Ciletti, 39. As Judith states to the Israelites upon her return with the head of Holofernes, “he wrought no deed of sin with me to defile me or cause me shame” (The Book of Judith 13:16, as quoted in Ciletti, 41, from the Greek Septuagint version, in the translation of Morton Enslin and Solomon Zeitlin [Leiden: Brill, 1972]).

<sup>154</sup> Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith,” 42. In the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, Judith is cited as a type of Mary, and a pair of illustrations in the fourteenth-century Paris Bib. Lat. 9484 of the *Speculum* shows the Virgin overcoming the Devil beside Judith killing Holofernes. See Sally Struthers, “Donatello’s Putti: Their Genesis, Importance, and Influence on Quattrocento Sculpture and Painting,” Ph.D. diss. (Ohio State University, 1992), 211-212, citing ed. of the *Speculum* by M. R. James and Bernhard Berenson (Oxford, 1926), 55.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 50. See also Mira Friedman, “The Metamorphoses of Judith,” *Jewish Art* 12-13 (1986-87): 239ff.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 50. The belief in the “pernicious power of women,” as commonly articulated in Reformation Europe as *Weibermacht*, was not unheard of in the south and at earlier dates. Creighton Gilbert has postulated this as a theme in the lost Giotto fresco cycle of c. 1330 in Naples (“Boccaccio Looking at Actual Frescoes,” in *The Documented Image: Visions in Art History*, eds. G. Weisberg and L. Dixon [Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987], 225-242). In such a view, Judith is as evil as Salome or Delilah; and Holofernes, instead of epitomizing evil, “joins the ranks of saints and wise men, pathetic victims who have lost their heads (either literally or figuratively) to ‘feminine wiles’” (Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith,” 52). This disparaging interpretation of Judith is not the subject of her depiction in fifteenth-century Italy; yet despite her heroism and moral high ground, Judith’s subversive sexual devices are never far behind. She is still a woman, and a woman no less who is capable of great and terrible acts against a man.

killing Orpheus or Pentheus. The mythology tells us that maenads ripped Pentheus limb from limb, just as they did wild animals during their orgies. The blood-thirsty propensity of the maenad gave her ecstatic dance and physical allure a terrifying dimension of savagery. An ancient gem depicting Agave with the head of Pentheus in one hand and her upraised dagger in the other offers a chillingly similar prototype for many of the fifteenth-century representations of Judith, such as the Florentine engraving from the circle of Baccio Baldini of the early 1470s (fig. 2.37, 38).<sup>158</sup> On the gem Agave appears in mid-stride with her upper body and face turned back towards the head that hangs down from her hand. In the Otto print, Judith has the newfound grace of the *ninfa fiorentina*, with a billowing chiton belted at her hips and waist, elaborately brocaded “parade” sleeves, an undulating stole, flowing long hair, and a pair of wings sprouting from her headdress. But like Agave on the gem, she stands with her sword arched above her head and the severed head dangling from her other hand, its hair entwined around her wrist.

A drawing by Jacopo Bellini also evokes the antique composition, perhaps made after having seen a similar cameo or gem that was part of a patron’s or friend’s collection (fig. 2.39).<sup>159</sup> Bellini drew Judith in the moment after she has severed the head of Holofernes, whose lifeless body lies diagonally on the ground beside her. She seems about to rush away with her prize; her long hair flows out behind her and her skirts fold and ripple. Her arms reach forward, the right gripping the scimitar, the left bent up at the elbow, grasping the ugly head by the hair. She looks back at the body with a horrified expression, her brow furrowed, as if not yet fully

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<sup>158</sup> For the gem, Gisela Richter, *Catalogue of the Engraved Gems in the Metropolitan Museum* (New York: 1956), cat. 410, pl. LI. For the engraving, an Otto print with versions in the Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, Chicago, Cleveland, and Vienna, see *The Illustrated Bartsch*, v. 24, pl. 13 (147), and commentary p. 129; Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, A.IV.1. A second Otto print depicts Judith in similar fashion, though with swordtip resting on the ground. Hind, A.IV.2, British Museum, London. See Adrian W. B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics, and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) chap. 6, esp. 269-271.

<sup>159</sup> London Book, fol. 35.

convinced of the righteousness of her deed (especially in view of the approaching army on the facing page).

Ghiberti depicted Judith in a similarly wind-swept pose on the border of the Gates of Paradise of the Baptistery in Florence (1430s-1440s) (fig. 2.40).<sup>160</sup> Her upraised sword and uplifted face convey more of a sense of moral and spiritual victory than does Bellini's fearful Judith. Ghiberti's Judith is the symbol of heroic chastity, as described in Petrarch's *Trionfi* or Boccaccio's *De claris mulieribus*.<sup>161</sup> But like Bellini, Ghiberti employed the flowing draperies of a maenad. Her stole billows up above her head, as in the Pisanellesque drawing in Milan of a Bacchic sarcophagus (fig. 2.16), and her body is arched in a graceful curve. She is a variation on the type of maenad that could have been seen on a Bacchic sarcophagus in the Camposanto of Pisa (fig. 2.41).<sup>162</sup> That Ghiberti saw this piece, or one just like it, is demonstrated by his much more literal borrowing of this maenad (minus the overarching scarf) for his *Miriam* elsewhere on the border (fig. 1.40).<sup>163</sup> (His study of Bacchic prototypes is suggested further by the appearance of the head of Holofernes, who looks strikingly like Silenus.<sup>164</sup>) From these precedents, the *all'antica*, heroic Judith was popularized in smaller domestic pieces such as a bronze *Judith*

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<sup>160</sup> Ciletti, "Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith," fig. 12. This borders, appropriately enough, onto the panel depicting David and Goliath.

<sup>161</sup> Petrarch's Triumph of Chastity ("Triumphis Pudicitie") includes Judith amongst the chaste women who bind and punish Cupid; Boccaccio includes Judith among his famous women. See Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 237; Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 229.

<sup>162</sup> See Papini, *Catalogo delle cose d'arte: Pisa*, cat. no. 62; Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 170. The death of Pentheus scene is on the lid of this sarcophagus. The pose is also similar to one found on the far left of a Bacchic sarcophagus in Palazzo Rospigliosi, Rome (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 96) and in the Belvedere Courtyard of the Vatican (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 171).

<sup>163</sup> Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, pl. 129a.

<sup>164</sup> This would not be the first time that a Silenus head was used to depict evil figures. See Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, chap. 2. In Nicola Pisano's *Last Judgment* for the pulpit of the Baptistery in Pisa one devil has a face like an antique Silenus mask (Barasch, *Gestures of Despair*, fig. 1).

statuette from the circle of Antonio del Pollaiuolo (c. 1470) and an enameled terracotta version (c. 1520) from the workshop of Giovanni della Robbia (fig. 2.42, 43).<sup>165</sup>

A later drawing by Mantegna of Judith now in the Uffizi (c. 1491) shows an alternative maenadic pose (fig. 2.44). With her sword still held fast in her right hand, the head in her left about to drop into an awaiting sack, his Judith has the intense posture of the type of maenad who, instead of arching backwards with her face tilted up, tucks her chin down to her chest.<sup>166</sup> In this type, the maenadic pathos is expressed in a different form, suggestive of a more contemplative mood than the wild ecstasy and outward abandon indicated by the tossed-back head. The inward-turning pose allowed Mantegna to express the disconnected state of Judith's mind, the interior bent of her frenzy. One senses the melancholy induced by great and terrible deeds. The borrowing of maenadic postures for these Judiths was not just about making visually interesting pictures with *all'antica* style, but externalizing the intense *furor* inspired in her by her determination and sense of divine duty—her truly divine inspiration.

The case of Donatello's sculpture of *Judith and Holofernes* is particularly noteworthy because of the three Bacchic panels on its base (fig. 2.45, 46). Possibly commissioned by Cosimo de' Medici, it was made around 1460 and ultimately displayed in the garden of the Palazzo Medici, until moved to the Palazzo Vecchio in 1495.<sup>167</sup> Donatello's *Judith* is a heroic figure who looks more like a nun than a sensual maiden and who has not yet committed the act

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<sup>165</sup> The bronze is in the Detroit Institute of Arts; the terracotta in the Museo Bardini, Florence. See Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, and Family*, 239, figs. 250 and 251.

<sup>166</sup> See Touchette's examples of this pose, *The Dancing Maenad Reliefs*, pl. 1, nos. 25 and 26, schematic drawings of maenads by Susan Bird based on Friedrich Hauser's classification numbers in *Die Neuattischen Reliefs* (Stuttgart, 1889). See the antique reliefs on a round altar base in Museo dei Conservatori, Rome, as illustrated in Touchette, fig. 8, and the Dancing Maenads relief in the Uffizi. See Nicole Dacos, "Ghirlandaio et l'antique," *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 34 (1962): 419-455, pl. XXI, fig. 30.

of beheading.<sup>168</sup> Instead she stands above the unconscious general, pulls up Holofernes's head by the hair, and raises her sword. Her body and face are not tense, but rather stilled for a moment of determination before her sword takes the irreversible plunge. Her eyes have a far-off look, and her arm is not truly aimed. Her pose does not have the physical frenzy of a maenad, but as H. W. Janson has noted, "her face... expresses with penetrating insight a psychological state that skirts the borders of delirium."<sup>169</sup> She appears as if embodied momentarily by a will that is not entirely her own, but which is strengthened and directed by a higher power. Such a state of *enthousiasmos* is just what propelled the maenads through their acts of *sparagmos*. Donatello's Judith seems to be experiencing the anesthesia that, as much as frenzied abandon, can result from divine inspiration.

Originally there were two inscriptions on the pedestal supporting the statue (removed and replaced by a city-sponsored message after 1495).<sup>170</sup> The first of these read: *Regna cadunt luxu surgent virtutibus urbes caesa vides humili colla superba manu* ("Kingdoms fall through luxury, cities rise through virtues; behold the neck of pride severed by the hand of humility"). Piero de' Medici, perhaps upon inheriting the work or inspired by some other political event, added a second inscription sometime between 1464 and 1469 that read: *Salus Publica. Petrus Medices Cos. Fi. liberati simul et fortitudini hanc mulieris statuam quo cives invicto constantique animo*

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<sup>167</sup> Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 198-205. For an extensive study of the sculpture, see Francesco Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici: Storia del David e della Giuditta*, 2 vols, Fondazione Carlo Marchi, Studi 14 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2000).

<sup>168</sup> Some scholars have argued that what is represented is the moment before the second of the two blows described in the Book of Judith 13:6-10, citing a perceived split in the neck (Sarah Blake McHam, "Donatello's Bronze *David* and *Judith* as Metaphors of Medici Rule in Florence," *Art Bulletin* 83 [2001]: 35 and n. 27). Others have discounted the identification of the split in the bronze on Holofernes' neck as a gash, attributing it instead to the casting. See *Donatello e il restauro della Giuditta*, ed. Loretta Dolcini (Florence: Centro Di, 1988).

<sup>169</sup> Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 204.

<sup>170</sup> The following inscriptions and translation are in *ibid.*, 198.

*ad rem pub. redderent dedicavit* (“Piero Son of Cosimo Medici has dedicated the statue of this woman to that liberty and fortitude bestowed on the republic by the invincible and constant spirit of the citizens”).<sup>171</sup> Edgar Wind interpreted the appearance of *Judith and Holofernes* in relation to the first inscription (which he believed Donatello approved) and to the characters’ medieval symbolism.<sup>172</sup> That Holofernes was identified in the Middle Ages with the Devil is certain; moreover, explained Wind, he was further understood as *Enervans vitulum saginatum* (“he who weakens the fattened calf”). In other words, he signified “that particular power of the Devil by which Man was first tempted and seduced: Incontinence, or by her Latin name, Luxuria.”<sup>173</sup> So, as the first inscription testifies, Holofernes represents pride (Superbia) but also, and more importantly according to Wind, *luxuria*, that is, lust.<sup>174</sup> His drunken lassitude and partial nudity signal his baseness and debauchery, which are exaggerated in contrast to Judith’s modest attire and solemn expression.<sup>175</sup> She then represents the victory of Sanctity over Lust, or Humility over Pride. As a Medicean symbol, she could assert the ascending power of the family. Taken to the Palazzo Signoria with Donatello’s other Medici statue of David after the fall of the family, the two then stood for the power of republican virtue and liberty over tyranny.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> An alternative translation is offered by Nicolai Rubinstein: “The salvation of the state. Piero de’ Medici son of Cosimo dedicated this statue of a woman both to liberty and to fortitude, whereby the citizens with unvanquished and constant heart might return to the republic” (as quoted by Christine M. Sperling, “Donatello’s Bronze ‘David’ and the Demands of Medici Politics,” *Burlington Magazine* 134 [1992]: 219, n. 6).

<sup>172</sup> Edgar Wind, “Donatello’s *Judith*: A Symbol of ‘Sanctimonia’,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1 (1937): 62-63. Reprinted in Wind, *The Eloquence of Symbols*, 37-38.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> See Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology,” 58. The political and moral ideology alluded to by the statue of Judith towering over Holofernes is like the message delivered by the image of David victorious over Goliath: that even the small and weak can conquer evil and tyranny and deliver the righteous and good into freedom and autonomy. Such malleability of interpretation is exactly what made this sculpture amenable to being coopted by the Florentine



Far from being mere *all'antica* decoration, Wind then concluded, the three reliefs on the base of the *Judith* continue this symbolism by playing out the world of Bacchanalian hedonism from which Holofernes came, the vice that led to his fall.<sup>177</sup> The Book of Judith tells us that Judith plotted her victory as Holofernes drank himself unconscious on “exceedingly much wine, more than he had ever drunk in one day since he was born.”<sup>178</sup> The twelfth-century John of Salisbury wrote in his *Policraticus* (widely read in the fifteenth century) regarding the legitimacy of tyrannicide that:

Holofernes fell a victim not to the valor of the enemy but to his own vices by means of a sword in the hands of a woman; and he who had been terrible to strong men was vanquished by luxury and drink, and slain by a woman. [...] [S]he prayed, ‘... that he may be caught in the net of his own eyes turned upon me...’ [and] she who had not come to wanton, used a borrowed wantonness as the instrument of her devotion and courage.<sup>179</sup>

The reliefs, which form the literal support for Holofernes’s enervated body, would thus appear to form the symbolic base of his decadence.

In light of this, the Bacchic panels have been read as constructing a metaphorical vision of Holofernes’ decline.<sup>180</sup> But are these reliefs only a metaphor for Holofernes’s debauchery—

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commune after the overthrow of the Medici. Judith can be seen to represent the triumph of the Medici over their local opposition or, as easily, of Florence over its external enemies.

<sup>177</sup> Wind, “Donatello’s *Judith*,” 63. As Ulrich Middeldorf says: “It is a grimly humorous allusion to the drunkenness of Holofernes, whom vice lead to perdition” (in his review of Hans Kauffmann, *Donatello: Eine Einführung in sein Bilden und Denken* [Berlin: Grottesche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1935], *Art Bulletin* 18 [1936]: 579, n. 9).

<sup>178</sup> The Book of Judith, trans. M. Enslin and S. Zeitlin (1972) XII, 20, as quoted in Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology,” 40.

<sup>179</sup> *Policraticus*, 8.20, where John is quoting from the Book of Judith 9:12-15 (as quoted in McHam, “Donatello’s Bronze *David* and *Judith*,” 40).

<sup>180</sup> See Laurie Schneider, “Some Neoplatonic Elements in Donatello’s *Gattamelata* and *Judith and Holofernes*,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 87 (1976): 41-48. Schneider suggests that this vision may be based on Plato’s discussion of the consequences of drunkenness in the *Laws* and the *Republic*. Drunken children are shown instead of grown men, she argues (citing *Laws* I, 639-645 and *Republic* IX, 573), because Plato says drunkenness reduces men to the spiritual state of childhood. The “revelling, orgiastic putti on the pedestal... do not represent Holofernes the man, but are rather a picture of the platonic state of his soul—regressed to childhood under the influence of alcohol and destroyed by the tyranny of his own libidinal ‘Eros,’” that is, his lust for Judith.

an allegory of drunkenness—and nothing more? A closer examination of these panels shows that the artist actually took great pains to make alterations from the traditional iconography of “putti at the vintage” in order to grant more complex meaning to the ensemble. As we have seen in Chapter One, the putto is more properly understood according to its fifteenth-century appellation *spiritello*, with its vernacular associations of youthful sprightliness and innocent guilelessness.<sup>181</sup> The *spiritello* is likewise an embodiment of the inner sensations of the body, including the irrational and uncontrollable.<sup>182</sup> The Bacchic nature of such a figure is obvious, and he was commonly included in Bacchus’ *thiasos* in ancient imagery, where putti embodied the life of the vine, the blameless sensations of the fermented grape, the hope of the initiated to be reborn in a blissful afterlife, and the exaltation of divine inspiration. In the fifteenth century, the increasingly ubiquitous *spiritello* came to have a function similar to that of satyrs in ancient Greek theater, meaning the putto, like the satyr, could represent the sensual, unconscious, inner passions of our bodies, hearts, and minds that might not otherwise be revealed by human actors.<sup>183</sup> And like the satyr, the *spiritello* could allude to the physical and emotional transformations induced by alcohol, not all of which were negative. Consequently, such a figure, as Charles Dempsey attests, “is not merely the static embellishment to some other scene, but a participant in its larger meaning, and even an independent bearer of meaning itself.”<sup>184</sup> This is an important distinction, since on the base of Donatello’s *Judith and Holofernes* these “spiritelli del vino” serve to underlie and elaborate the significance of both the figures above.

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<sup>181</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, xiv.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 26, citing Wilhelm Bode, “Versuche der Ausbildung des Genre und der Putto in der florentiner Plastik des Quattrocento,” in *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, 4th ed. (Berlin: Verlag von Bruno Cassirer, 1921), 230-231.

The reliefs themselves depict a progression from harvest to revelry, culminating in the scene that would be visible to the viewer when positioned opposite the “main” side of the statue in view of Judith’s face.<sup>185</sup> Moving clockwise around the statue (as the viewer certainly could have done since it was designed as a garden centerpiece to be viewed in the round<sup>186</sup>), one then encounters the scene of putti at the vintage (“la Vendemmia”) (fig. 2.47), followed by putti treading the grapes (“la Pigiatura”) (fig. 2.48), and finally the Bacchanal of putti (“la Bacchanale”) (fig. 2.49). Donatello saw that sarcophagus in Pisa (likely during his sojourn there in 1426) depicting putti (“ispiritegli”) at the vintage (fig. 1.6).<sup>187</sup> In the Pisan antiquity, stubby, winged infants scramble about the sacred Bacchic cult instruments, including the winnowing basket and snake, fill a vessel with fruit, and loll drunkenly around a giant drinking bowl. One impishly dunks another’s head into the wine as the latter leans over to drink. Donatello borrowed this theme of the *vendemmia*, but, in the first two scenes at least, starkly transformed

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<sup>184</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 49.

<sup>185</sup> For the statue and its reliefs, and the controversy regarding the commission, see Antonio Natali, “Exemplum salutis publicae,” in *Donatello e il restauro della Giuditta*, ed. Loretta Dolcini (Florence: Centro Di, 1988), 29-30; Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 203; idem, “La signification politique du David en bronze de Donatello,” *Revue de l’art* 39 (1978): 33-39; Volker Herzner, “Die ‘Judith’ der Medici,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 43 (1980): 159-163. I think the panels were an integral part of the composition and were at least planned by Donatello as part of the work if not completed by him before his death. Technically and stylistically there is a distinct difference between the panels, but I would argue that the final revel is indeed by Donatello. It would have been logical for him to do at least the one relief that would be on the “front,” so to speak, of the sculpture and would be uninterrupted by Holofernes’ feet, which dangle one in front of each of the other scenes. This scene is, moreover, the culminating episode of the sequence. The other reliefs were more likely created by his workshop, perhaps from his designs, either in his waning days or after his death.

<sup>186</sup> Whether the statue itself was a fountain is an issue of contention. The traditional view that the three reliefs had spouts for water, or even that the four corners of the pillow were jets (J. Pope-Hennessy, *Donatello* [Florence: Cantini Edizioni d’Arte, 1985], 210, makes the unlikely contention that this cushion served as a wine cask), has come into question by the recent restoration of the sculpture. See Francesco Caglioti, “Donatello, i Medici e Gentile de’ Becchi: Un po’ d’ordine intorno alla ‘Giuditta’ (e al ‘David’) di Via Larga,” *Prospettiva* n.78 (1995): 32. Natali notes the fact of the unpierced reliefs and questioned the idea of the statue being intended originally as a fountain, but then posits the possibility of there being some hydraulic retrofit later on when the sculpture was brought into the Medici garden (“Exemplum salutis publicae,” 27, n. 94-95).

<sup>187</sup> See Chapter One. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 15-16 and n. 24, and p. 235. Another ancient relief he may have known was drawn by Dal Pozzo and is now in the Louvre (figs. 1.11 and 11a).

the mood from childish jocularly to cultic spirituality. His putti have grown from babies to preadolescent youths, exuding a certain seriousness and focus.

The second panel depicts a wine-pressing scene, with motifs taken more literally from antique examples, but here the separate treading and drinking bowls have been conflated into one large tureen, with putti standing in the very bowl from which others drink. But here again Donatello has removed the jocularly and sprightliness of the ancient putti. At the far right, Donatello depicts a putto lifting his garment to urinate, like that seen in the Louvre relief.<sup>188</sup> This has been read as a sign of drunken incontinence, of the sort of dissipation that brought down Holofernes.<sup>189</sup> Others have argued that the putto *pisciatore* was intended to provoke laughter.<sup>190</sup> But the urinating putto was not a pejorative or wholly lighthearted symbol in itself, but had been inherited by medieval Christian art to represent the innocent, pious soul drunk with the wine of Christ, and then had appeared regularly in the Renaissance as an apotropaic and fertility symbol.<sup>191</sup>

In the culminating episode, putti prance about a cult statue of Bacchus holding a wine jug and cornucopia. It could be argued that this collection of putti display the various stages of drunkenness and its effects, from tipsy giddiness to jolly singing and dancing, erotic fantasies,

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<sup>188</sup> Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, 91, assert that this urinating putto also appears on the Porta della Mandorla (but I have not been able to verify this).

<sup>189</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 58.

<sup>190</sup> Henry Murutes, "Personifications of Laughter and Drunken Sleep in Titian's *Andrians*," *The Burlington Magazine* 115 (1973): 518-525.

<sup>191</sup> See the urinating baby on the reverse of a birth salver (*desco da parto*) by Bartolomeo di Fruosino (dated 1428) and another in Lorenzo Lotto's *Venus and Cupid*, both in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1, 130, and fig. 2. Görel Cavalli-Björkman, "Worship of Bacchus and Venus: Variations on a Theme," in *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, ed. G. Cavalli-Björkman (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, symposium papers, 1987), 99.

delusional folly, and ultimately sleep.<sup>192</sup> They could then be read as a metaphor for the drunkenness that took over Holofernes and ensured his doom.<sup>193</sup> Like the foolish putto clinging to the statue, Holofernes fell for Judith's feigned sensuality and mistakenly sought to fulfill his lustful, sexual desires. Like the ignorant putto below, Holofernes believed in a phantom, signified by the empty mask, or *larva*.<sup>194</sup>

But the conclusion that this final relief simply encapsulates the cause of Holofernes's downfall does not take into account that the final scene is one of celebration, not enervation. The very fact that these putti were understood as "spiritelli"—that is, not flesh, but spirit—points to the idea that they were intended to represent something beyond the human experience of the body: a *spiritual*, not sensual, pleasure. Bacchic putti were clearly employed in this manner throughout the history of Christian art, where they were depicted at the vintage as an allegory for the Eucharist and the hope for salvation that Christ's sacrifice gave to mankind.<sup>195</sup> As Berchorius had articulated in the *Ovidius moralizatus*: "Through Bacchus who is drunk is perceived the true faith which makes the servants of Christ drunk with the fervor of devotion."<sup>196</sup> It is likely that Donatello would have been conscious of the Eucharistic overtones of putti at the vintage as well as the ancient role of Bacchic putti as symbols of the hope for salvation and a happy afterlife. Moreover, he used similar *spiritelli* in many of works, not only as main

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<sup>192</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 58.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 63. Struthers states: "The putti from the three scenes represent wine and its negative effects: drunkenness, sleep, and impolite behavior, the unleashing of the drinker's inhibitions. These scenes do not relate to Christian uses of wine (in the Eucharist), as scenes of wine-making could, but back to classical Dionysiac or Bacchanalian scenes of revelry" ("Donatello's Putti," 214). But this view fails to see that the two are not, in fact, mutually exclusive, as we shall see.

<sup>194</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 58.

<sup>195</sup> As in the mosaics in Sta. Costanza in Rome or on the sarcophagus of the Good Shepherd.

characters in the Prato pulpit and the Florentine *Cantoria*, but also as marginalia, as on the early *Cavalcanti Altar* in Santa Croce and the bronze pulpits for San Lorenzo, which are framed at the top by a frieze of putti who dance, lift a herm, gather grapes, drink, make love, and sleep (fig. 2.50, 51).<sup>197</sup> It is clear that these putti do not manifest a disrespect for the scenes below, but rather were intended to offer a metaphor for the soteriological themes there represented by articulating the hope embodied in the Eucharist.<sup>198</sup>

We must likewise consider that the base, and its panels, do not just support the figure of Holofernes but of Judith as well. The similarity of the frolicking putti to those on Donatello's *Cantoria*, Prato pulpit, and especially the San Lorenzo pulpits, while acknowledged, is never explained.<sup>199</sup> But why are the Bacchanalian putti on the *Judith* base thought to represent vice, while the putti on these other reliefs are seen as elevating, joyous, and Christian?<sup>200</sup> It is possible that the formal similarity of these reveling putti signifies a deeper underlying affinity, alluding to

<sup>196</sup> *Ovidius moralizatus*, in Reynolds, 189. David Brumble, *Classical Myths and Legends in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Dictionary of Allegorical Meanings* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 49.

<sup>197</sup> Two scenes above the Resurrection and Ascension on the South Pulpit appear to derive from a sarcophagus type depicting the Childhood of Dionysus as seen in an example at Princeton University. Donatello's putti imitate the investiture of a comrade and the raising of a herm. See Erika Simon, "Dionysischer Sarkophag in Princeton," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Römische Abteilung* 69 (1962): 136-158.

<sup>198</sup> See Struthers, "Donatello's Putti," 223-228. She reads these putti, unlike those on the *Judith*, as having Eucharistic and eschatological meaning. Cf. Kauffmann, *Donatello: Eine Einführung in sein Bilden und Denken*, and the review by Middendorf; also Caglioti, *Donatello e i Medici*, 244, n. 83. In contrast to my more modest proposal, Kauffmann argued that the *Judith* sculpture was a fountain, and that the supposed spouts (3 from the panels, 4 from the corners of Holofernes' cushion) had numerological significance, making the fountain a *fons vitae*. The Bacchic reliefs were then seen as Eucharistic metaphors, with the statue of Bacchus in the center of the final relief representing a figure of *Caritas*, and the small border figures around these reliefs representing prophets and sibyls. All, including Janson (*The Sculpture of Donatello*, 203, n. 6), have rejected this reading.

<sup>199</sup> This similarity is noted by Natali, "Exemplum salutis publicae," 29; H. W. Janson, "Donatello and the Antique," in *Donatello e il suo tempo: Atti dell'VIII convegno internazionale di studi sul Rinascimento, 1966* (Florence: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento, 1968), 81-84; Struthers, "Donatello's Putti," 223-228. Struthers says of the San Lorenzo pulpit putti: "The putti in this are bacchic in reference, but engaged in an 'everyday' activity, not in scenes of drunken revelry. [T]he connotations of the putti... are entirely different" (223, 228). These scenes, however, clearly include imbibing and overindulging in wine.

<sup>200</sup> Cf. Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 45-47.

the elevated spirit of Christian faith and the victory of the Church over heathenism. It is conceivable that the reliefs refer not just (or even) to the drunken downfall of Holofernes, but rather portray a typological representation of the victory of Christ. Judith's victory over Holofernes had traditionally been held as the antetype for the victory of Mary, and thereby of the Church, over Satan.<sup>201</sup> The base may contribute to this idea as well. The cult of the Holy Blood (the *Preziosissimo Sangue*), popular in the Renaissance and particularly in Mantua as well as Padua where Donatello had spent many years, employed and revitalized what was Bacchic imagery, including the image of the grape harvest and the wine press, to express the sacrifice of Christ and the sanctity of the Eucharistic wine.<sup>202</sup> The worship of the Holy Blood focused on the Transubstantiation of the Eucharistic wine, giving particular import to those traditional images of putti at the vintage. The panel showing the Bacchic revel is on the very side from which we see Judith frontally, in the act of decapitating Holofernes, a telling metaphor for the end of the pagan past, which allowed the age of Christ to enter. A scene of jubilation by putti (appropriately winged, like angels) below is a perfectly logical addendum.<sup>203</sup> This interpretation also explains

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<sup>201</sup> Friedman, "The Metamorphoses of Judith," 233; McHam, "Donatello's Bronze *David* and *Judith*," 35.

<sup>202</sup> Dempsey quotes Clement of Alexandria, who interprets Christ's saying "I am the vine" (John 15:5: *Ego sum vitis*) to refer to "the grape trampled for our salvation, the blood of the vine." Dempsey writes: "The symbolism of the Bacchic *Vindemia* is founded in the red blood of the newly pressed vine, and this symbolic equivalence was early adopted in Christian exegesis" (*Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 64). For the Cult of the Holy Blood, see Franco Strazzullo, *Il sangue di Cristo: iconografia e culto* (Naples: Arte tipografica, 1999); Michele Donega, "I reliquiari del sangue di Cristo del tesoro di San Marco," *Arte documento* 11 (1997): 64-71; Béatrice Laroche, "Le sang du Christ dans la littérature italienne de la fin du Moyen Âge," in *Le Pressoir Mystique: actes du colloque de recloses 27 Mai 1989*, ed. Danièle Alexandre-Bidon (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1990), 69-77; Padre Natale da Terrinca, *La Devozione al Prez.Mo Sangue di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo: Studio Storico Teologico a proposito di un trattato inedito di S. Giovanni da Capestrano "De Christi Sanguine Pretioso..."*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Edizioni Primavera Missionario - Albano Laziale, 1987); and M. Horster, "'Mantuae Sanguis Preciosus,'" *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 25 (1963): 151-180. Imagery of Christ in the Wine-Press, popular in Northern countries, was rare in Italy. Relics of Holy Blood were housed in churches, however, and images of grapes, vines, and putti at the vintage were instead readily employed to emphasize worship of the Eucharist.

<sup>203</sup> Looking at the whole from this angle also reveals the similarity of the intertwined pose of the putto with the cult idol in the relief to that of Judith with Holofernes above them. Both have their legs wrapped around insensate creatures.

the seriousness and sobriety of the putti collecting the harvest in the first panel, whose task is now understood as laying the groundwork for the coming of Christ, the Holy Blood, the sacred wine.<sup>204</sup>

Classical texts such as Servius's *Commentary on Virgil's Fifth Eclogue* and the *Orphic Hymns* asserted that participation in the Bacchic orgy served to liberate the individual from the ego; that such depersonalization led to the divine life; and that initiation offered admittance to the eternal banquet of the afterlife.<sup>205</sup> The triumphant orgy on the front relief recalls this Dionysian idea of the eternal banquet of heaven, as invoked by humanists such as Pomponio Leto and his cohort of convivialists in Rome who stressed that this revel of the spirit was compatible with Christian faith. Moreover, if we look at the *Judith* within her context—that is, in conjunction with Donatello's bronze *David* and the Medici palace courtyard medallions (which transform a Discovery of Ariadne and a Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne scenes into metaphors for the triumph of virtue)—we see the repeated use of Bacchic iconography to announce both the Triumph of Christian Virtue and the Triumph of Political Liberty.<sup>206</sup> We should see the Judith reliefs in relation to the possible *Triumph of amor caelestis* on Goliath's

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<sup>204</sup> Cf. the depiction of wine-sacrifice made at an altar attended by a satyr in the background of Giovanni Bellini's *Blood of the Redeemer*. There, too, the reference to pagan sacrifice is made to signify the continuity of antiquity and Christianity, with ancient rites prefiguring the ultimate sacrifice of Christ's blood, the Holy Wine, which then superseded all other rites.

<sup>205</sup> Turcan, *The Cults of the Roman Empire*, chap. 7, pp. 291-327; Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 133.

<sup>206</sup> The courtyard medallions will be discussed further in the following chapter. Judith and David were analogous Old Testament Worthies, and could both be allegories for courage. Note how Ghiberti placed his Judith on the Baptistery Doors border next to the scene of David and Goliath on the Gates of Paradise. See Friedman, "The Metamorphoses of Judith," 235. The relief on the Goliath's helmet shows a large putto in triumph, upon an elaborate parade wagon pulled by several small winged putti. The umbrella-like baldachin above the enthroned "ruler" recalls that over Bacchus in the familiar Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus in the British Museum. The relief may also relate to the triumph depicted on the gem that was copied in the Medici courtyard (then in Pope Paul II's collection), sharing with it the putto pushing the wheel and another standing on the chariot's yoke.



helmet<sup>207</sup> and the *Triumph of Virtus* in the roundel of the courtyard near where she stood.<sup>208</sup>

Both are open to positive interpretations in which Bacchus and his putti propagate virtuous meanings. The Bacchic putti on the Judith base might likewise serve to celebrate the consequence of her triumphant act.

While Donatello's *Judith* does not exhibit the sort of physical, maenadic exuberance of the Mary Magdalene figures, the Bacchic frenzy displayed beneath her feet may serve to displace her *furor*. Instead, Judith retains the sort of inward-focused delirium that often distinguished antique maenads. Such internal enthusiasm is conveyed by her unfocused eyes and tucked-down chin and the frozen otherworldliness of her static posture (fig. 2.52). That Donatello conveys an authentic maenadism is evident from the borrowing of his composition by other artists depicting more obviously maenadic subjects, as on the bronze plaquette showing the murder of Orpheus (2.31) or an engraving called *The Beheading of a Captive* (fig. 2.53).<sup>209</sup> In these, each artist

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<sup>207</sup> The relief of putti on the visor of Goliath's helmet in Donatello's bronze *David* has many interpretations. It has been read as a Triumph of Bacchus, understood in political terms as a Triumph of Liber, that is, *Libertas*, brought about by Goliath's ignominious defeat, and a metaphor for Florentine liberty as well (Leach, "Images of Political Triumph," 121-134); as a Triumph of *amor caelestis*, where the drunken putto could represent the intoxication of love, and the putto's triumph is a triumph of heavenly love (Ames-Lewis, "Art History or Stilkritik? Donatello's Bronze *David* Reconsidered," *Art History* 2 [1979]: 139-155; Laurie Schneider, "Donatello's Bronze *David*," *Art Bulletin* 55 [1973]: 215). In contrast, Struthers discounts such theories, arguing that the relief represents the vice of Superbia, or pride, so that David is represented victorious over it ("Donatello's Putti," 160-161); Janson offers a more negative reading of the relief as a satirical mockery of the imperial ambitions of the Florentine enemy, the Visconti of Milan, a reading contingent upon his identification of the helmet as referring to those of the Visconti of Milan and a dating of the work to c. 1425-30, while others date it to c. 1460 ("La signification politique du David en bronze de Donatello," 36). Others see it as a *parody* of a Triumph of Love: e.g. John W. Dixon, Jr., argues that the putti represent "unrestrained, non-rational energy, ... the non-moral erotic energy of the Philistine which has been overcome by all that David represents" ("The Drama of Donatello's David: Re-Examination of an Enigma," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 93 [1979]: 9).

<sup>208</sup> See Ursula Wester and Erika Simon, "Die Reliefmedallions im Hofe des Palazzo Medici zu Florenz," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 7 (1965): 15-91; McHam, "Donatello's Bronze *David* and *Judith*"; Wendy Steadman Sheard, "Antonio Lombardo's Reliefs for Alfonso d'Este's Studio di Marmi: Their Significance and Impact on Titian," in *Titian 500*, ed. Joseph Manca (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1993), esp. 327-328, 330-334; and Patricia Ann Leach, "Images of Political Triumph: Donatello's Iconography of Heroes," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 1984).

<sup>209</sup> For the plaquette, see Herzner, "Die 'Judith' der Medici," 156-157, fig. 15. There are only two impressions extant: one in Berlin, the other in the National Gallery in Washington, DC. See Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance*

retained the motif of a dominating woman standing above a fallen, helpless man. The suggestion, given through her pose and cold expression, that the female figure is a virago acting heartlessly toward her victim supplants the initial perception that she must represent Chastity overcoming Lust.<sup>210</sup> Indeed, the discomfort with Judith's act would kindle her depiction as a seductress in the sixteenth century.<sup>211</sup> Already in 1504, Francesco di Lorenzo Filarete, the herald of the Signoria of Florence, argued that Michelangelo's *David* should replace Donatello's *Judith* on the *ringhiera* outside the Palazzo Vecchio because "the Judith is a deadly symbol [*segno mortifero*] and does not befit us..., nor is it good to have a woman kill a man."<sup>212</sup> The Bacchic reliefs are there to demonstrate that the power of wine has lived up to its opposite extremes: to impair Holofernes and reduce him to a vulnerable fool; and by sympathy, to inspire Judith with the divine and raise her to triumphant heights. Just like the maenads who do not themselves need

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*Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, cat. 122 and fig. 80: the plaques are attributed to the Master of the Orpheus Legend and dated to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. For the engraving of the 1470s in the Kunsthalle, Hamburg, see Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, A.II.11, pl. 96. The menacing, serpentine sphinxes that appear at either side of this virago suggest a metaphor for the women's cruelty, impenetrability, and lack of empathy. The bonds that tie the man to the pedestal on which he is perched relate his status as hapless victim. The pose of the captive may derive from that of Marsyas bound on the famous Medicean sardonyx gem (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples). See Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, figs. 4.25 and 6.13, and 271-275. A small *niello* print, c. 1470, in the Louvre, Paris, depicts a nude woman tying up the arms of a nude man seated at her feet. Similarly, the initial message of Love overpowering Lust is complicated by her pitiless behavior and his pleading, guileless, "St. Sebastian"-like expression. The latter part of the fifteenth-century saw an increasing modulation of the treatment of allegories of love and chastity, in debt to Petrarch's earlier evocation of the cold, heartless beloved, but complicated by Neoplatonic musings on the nature of love and the revival of classical *epithalamia*. See Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 238-239, 274-275.

<sup>210</sup> Cristelle L. Baskins, "Il Trionfo della Pudizia: Menacing Virgins in Italian Renaissance Domestic Painting," in *Menacing Virgins: Representing Virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), 117-131; Ciletti, "Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith," *passim*.

<sup>211</sup> Friedman, "The Metamorphoses of Judith," 245-246. For Judith's changing reputation, see also Margarita Stocker, *Judith, Sexual Warrior: Women and Power in Western Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>212</sup> The *Judith* was relocated, placed first on the ground inside the palace, and then a few years later moved under the newly restored Loggia dei Lanzi. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 198-199; Friedman, "The Metamorphoses of Judith," 239-240.

to imbibe in order to achieve such ecstasies, her *enthousiasmos* grants her the divine power to act at a level above and beyond her normal self.

— MAENADIC SEXUALITY: SALOME

A more sinister complement to Judith is the figure of Salome, whose sensual manipulations also won her the head of another, in this case of John the Baptist. It is therefore not surprising that she too was often represented in the fifteenth century with the form of a maenad. She had previously been shown dancing frenetically, even acrobatically, as on the tympanum of the West Portal of the Cathedral at Rouen, c. 1240, or on the doors of San Zeno in Verona, c. 1030 (fig. 2.54). Such indecorous portrayals displayed the increasingly unsympathetic attitude toward her. In the biblical account of the feast of Herod, Salome was merely the pawn of her mother—without evil intent herself—but by the fourth century she was understood as a wanton temptress.<sup>213</sup> A distrust of dancing converged with the story of Salome to create a morality tale illustrating the potential evils of dance.<sup>214</sup> As the veneration of St. John the Baptist increased, the moral standing of Salome only suffered. Still, in the fourteenth century, as in Andrea Pisano's panel of the *Feast of Herod* on the doors of the Baptistery, she could appear composed, her dance barely perceptible (fig. 2.55). The evolution of her maenadic deportment, however, added energy and sensuality to these scenes, and showed dancing with a greater speed, freedom, and eroticism than would have been acceptable for women of the day.<sup>215</sup> Literally dancing like the maenads themselves, Salome also shared with the maenads their

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<sup>213</sup> Helen Grace Zagona, *The Legend of Salome and the Principle of Art for Art's Sake* (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1960), 20.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

terrible power and seductive danger as “an archetype of destructive femininity.”<sup>216</sup> The appropriation of the maenadic form allowed artists to convey Salome’s immorality.

Donatello’s depiction of the *Feast of Herod* on the bronze Siena Baptistery font of c. 1425-1427 was the first to borrow wholeheartedly the maenadic pose (fig. 2.56, 57).<sup>217</sup> His Salome is seen in profile, her chin tucked down, her left arm and leg extended in opposite directions while seeming to balance momentarily on tiptoe, her skirt fluttering around her legs and feet. The pose, with its exposed back and downturned head, blends the maenads on the Pisan krater Donatello had seen.<sup>218</sup> In his slightly later marble relief of the *Feast of Herod* now in Lille (c. 1433-1435), Salome is again depicted mid-dance, her upraised arms holding a scarf aloft, her diaphanous skirts rippling around her, with the lightness and movement of antique maenads (fig. 2.58, 59).<sup>219</sup> Yet the tilt of her head and the twist of her body (as well as the upraised arms which recall the gestures of grief examined above) maintain in her a quality of passion and intensity that keeps her from becoming merely pretty. The torsion of her body, like her counterpart in the Siena relief, indicates the lethal power of her dance as a tool not just of pleasure but of destruction. Fra Filippo Lippi’s depiction of Salome in the frescoes of Prato

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<sup>215</sup> Zagona sees the Renaissance Salomes as *less* frenzied than earlier ones. This does not take into account, however, what dance and the movements of the female body signified in the fifteenth century.

<sup>216</sup> Ciletti, “Patriarchal Ideology,” 50.

<sup>217</sup> If we look at Andrea Pisano’s Salome from the first set of bronze doors for the Florentine Baptistery of almost a hundred years earlier (1330-36), for example, we can see how still and stiff the figure seems in comparison (fig. 2.55).

<sup>218</sup> Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, fig. 91. A similar sequence of figures can be seen in a relief now in the Louvre (see Dobrick, “Botticelli’s Sources,” fig. 20), though without a specifically Bacchic context as on the krater, these maidens seem more generically “nymphs” than maenads. For this semantic question, see below. She is similar, also, to the maenad on the right of a relief now in the Uffizi (Dobrick, fig. 19). That this relief might have been available to Donatello is enhanced by the further similarity of the left-most maenad to the figure of Salome in his Lille relief of the *Feast of Herod*.

<sup>219</sup> As on a relief in the Louvre, where the garments billow up behind them; Salome holds up her shawl like the maenad on the left of the Uffizi relief. Dobrick, “Botticelli’s Sources,” figs. 18 and 19.

Cathedral (1452-1465) is similarly disposed: mid-stride, aflutter, with downturned face and grave expression indicative of the serious consequences of her dance (fig. 2.60). One senses the mad drive, wild frenzy, and sexual dynamism of a woman whose dance has the power of complete persuasion and domination.

Not all Salomes were equally frenzied. In Antonio Pollaiuolo's composition of the *Dance of Salome* for the embroidered vestments of the Baptistery (1469-80), Salome's body is shown in a vigorous tilt, which here seems more decorative and Gothic, especially due to the unclassical French costume she wears and to the immobile pose of her feet; her body bends and her dress waves but both feet are planted on the floor (fig. 2.61).<sup>220</sup> Her hands are on her hips, not gesturing like a maenad's. Instead of looking down and inward (which conveyed the inner frenzy of the other Salomes), she looks out at the viewer, making her seem more a coquette than the powerful and insidious figure that she is. Domenico Ghirlandaio's Salome in the choir frescoes of Santa Maria Novella (1485-1490) has also shed some of her power; instead of maintaining the maenad's vertical, zigzagging torsion, she simply lunges forward, arms bent stiffly at her sides (fig. 2.62, 63). Her skirt crinkles artificially behind her. Her body has lost the motivating logic of the dance, and she seems merely to dash across the floor. Nevertheless, these artists depicted their Salomes dancing with a vigor, speed, and exaggeration of gesture that deviated from the current norms.<sup>221</sup> Treatises on dance theory stressed the importance of maintaining decorous restraint and revealed that unbridled movements were seen as typical of

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<sup>220</sup> Of course, as Warburg came to think, the Gothic style is not entirely inimical to the classical: "[S]o the violent movement of the *Moresca* dancers manifests that same will to unrestrained gesticulation and passionate motion which was to give birth to the new style of classical maenads and battle scenes" (as quoted in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 164-165, and fig. 16c). For the vestments, see Alison Wright, *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: The Arts of Florence and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 257-285.

the insane, the drunk, and the unrefined. To avoid appearing sexually provocative and immodest, women were urged not to move their arms too much or to let their skirts rise above their feet.<sup>222</sup> Moreover, contemporary audiences would have appreciated the moral connotations of Salome's dance, which were conveyed by the evocation of the mad maenad. Characterizing Salome's dance in the form of an orgiastic maenad, drunk with the enthusiasm of Bacchus, emphasized her depravity and menacing sexuality.

— MAENADIC GRACE: THE NYMPHA

The maenadic form was naturally appropriated to represent these three biblical women. More than a generic model for showing movement or energy, the specific mood and character of the maenad herself suited them. In the case of Magdalene, it was the maenad's extreme emotion and carnality; in the case of Judith, her violence and divine inspiration; and in the case of Salome, her sensuality and lethality. And like the maenad, all three were associated with sexuality, effectively evoked by the borrowing of maenadic form and demonstrative of Warburg's everlasting *Pathosformel*.

Compared to the heightened emotion and powerful *furor* of these women, it is hard to find the same in the pretty Renaissance serving girl—a visual phenomenon that so preoccupied Warburg, in whom he saw the surviving essence of the pagan “head huntress.” But can the same “pathos formula,” indicative of heightened emotion, pertain to this manifestation of the Nympha? We see her rush into the room to assist at the birth of the Virgin in Fra Filippo Lippi's “Pitti”

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<sup>221</sup> Lippi, in Prato Cathedral, 1452-65; Pollaiuolo, embroidered Baptistery vestments, 1469-80 (Museo dell'Opera del Duomo); and Ghirlandaio, choir of Santa Maria Novella, 1485-90. Compare to the maenads on the Neo-Attic relief in the Uffizi and to the maenad on a Bacchic sarcophagus in Pisa.

tondo of the mid-Quattrocento—a jaunty servant girl carrying a basket on her head with another basket in the crook of her elbow (fig. 2.64).<sup>223</sup> Virtually the same figure alights upon the scene of the birth of John the Baptist in Antonio Pollaiuolo’s panel for the Silver Altar in the Florence Baptistery (1478-1480)<sup>224</sup> and in Ghirlandaio’s Santa Maria Novella frescoes (1488-1490) (fig. 2.65, 66).<sup>225</sup> Warburg called her “a maenad turned lying-in attendant,”<sup>226</sup> and wondered at her unseemly pagan energy and how it could be tolerated within this sober Christian and bourgeois world.<sup>227</sup> He found her movement and liveliness indicative of a Dionysian “will to life.”<sup>228</sup> But

<sup>222</sup> Fermor, “Studies in the Depiction of the Moving Figure”; Francesco da Barberino, *Reggimento e costumi di donna*, early fourteenth century, ed. G. Sansone (Turin: Loescher-Chiantore, 1957), 13, cited in Fermor, “Decorum in Figural Movement,” 84.

<sup>223</sup> *Madonna and Child with the Birth of the Virgin* (“Bartolini” or “Pitti” tondo), 1452-53, or mid-1460s, Palazzo Pitti, Florence. Jeffery Ruda, *Fra Filippo Lippi: Life and Work, with a Complete Catalogue* (London: Phaidon Press, 1993).

<sup>224</sup> Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, Florence, c. 1478. See Leopold D. Ettlinger, *Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo: Complete Edition with a Critical Catalogue* (Oxford: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1978), cat. 50, fig. 102.

<sup>225</sup> Dacos, “Ghirlandaio et l’antique,” 439. Ghirlandaio’s version is almost a replica in color of Pollaiuolo’s earlier maiden, down to the fruit-laden platter and the reed-bound double wine flask. The painter adds a light-as-air scarf billowing behind the girl’s shoulders, as well as a more pronounced bent knee on the forward leg, both of which enhance the sense of her rushing movement. Ghirlandaio’s maiden is not necessarily a copy of Pollaiuolo’s, for it shows a much closer replication of the similarly posed maenad at the far right of that familiar Death of Pentheus relief in Pisa. Ghirlandaio’s sketchbooks reveal his intensive study of antiquities, which may have been relayed into his work here. But it is also interesting to observe that Botticelli depicted a similarly fluttering girl carrying a bundle of sticks on her head in his fresco of *The Temptation and the Purification of the Leper* in the Sistine Chapel, 1482, where Ghirlandaio also was, the two working side-by-side.

<sup>226</sup> “Mänade als Wochenstubenwärterin” (quoted by Forster, in the introduction to *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 15, from Warburg’s “Grundbegriffe” II [notes, 1929], 20: London, Warburg Archive).

<sup>227</sup> He was stumped by how this “strangely delicate plant” could emerge from “the sober Florentine soil.” Warburg wrote: “... [W]urzelt denn dieses seltsam zierliche Gewächs wirklich in dem nüchternen florentinischen Erdboden?” (as quoted in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 113). See Warburg’s unpublished notes on the Nympha discussed and quoted by Gombrich, 105-127, 147-185.

<sup>228</sup> Gombrich reminds the reader in his biography of Warburg that the art historian himself needs to be contextualized. For Gombrich, or for viewers today, the rushing handmaid may not appear so exceptional or provocative. But at the turn of the nineteenth century, when women were just then liberating their bodies from their restrictive garments, the sight of a passionate, willowy, unfettered woman would have been remarkable, stirring, and even erotic. Warburg’s opinions regarding the advance of the new classical manner betray the prejudices of his own *fin-de-siècle* moment, in which a dark and ascetic medieval attitude was seen as standing as an obstacle to the flowering of true beauty. Warburg found tension in the appearance of the Nympha, since he saw the figure as wholly pagan and thus counter to the Christian piety intended to be expressed by the commission. But, of course,

while her body and dress may evoke something of that ancient maenad, without grief, fear, madness, or passion to inhabit them, she does not emit the maenad's emotional frenzy. Was she merely an excuse for depicting a pretty figure?

Vasari noted Ghirlandaio's nymph, describing her as "una femmina che porta, all'usanza fiorentina, frutte e fiaschi della villa; la quale è molta bella."<sup>229</sup> Indeed the motif of a woman carrying a basket on her head, a canephora type, was a traditional figure in Trecento scenes depicting Elizabeth's or Anna's lying-in.<sup>230</sup> The Quattrocento artists infused the creature with a billowing life-force, endowing her with all the *all'antica* energy absent in the sober characters around her. The maenadic example served to enhance the movement of the drapery and the articulation of the legs in a stepping pose. An imaginative riff on the figure-in-motion, combining a traditional figure with an *all'antica* air, this canephora-type Nympha recalls the Bacchic devotee who carries articles of the secret rites in a sacred winnowing basket, or *liknon*, or the maenad who carries grapes in a basket upon her head, like the girls in Renaissance images of the vintage.<sup>231</sup> This servant-girl variation on the Nympha became popular in the later fifteenth

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this is a false dichotomy, since the fifteenth century is more accurately understood as a moment in which pagan and Christian were seen as contiguous and reconcilable. Warburg, moreover, himself admits that his generation was primed to see the Dionysiac because of the powerful influence of Nietzsche. See Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 109-110, 157, 184-185.

<sup>229</sup> *Le Vite*, vol. III, 267. An artist would not have had to look far to see women around him carrying loads upon their heads. Indeed, Ghiberti's renditions of such a figure in the Joseph panel of the Gates of Paradise looks much as one would imagine a contemporary servant or washer-woman carrying her burden.

<sup>230</sup> Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 346. Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, 346.

<sup>231</sup> For the *liknon*, see the maenad at the far right of the sarcophagus fragment now in the Staatliche Museum, Berlin. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 81. Also in the Woburn Abbey sarcophagus, *ibid.*, cat. 82. She appears later in Balducci's *cassone* in Gubbio. For the harvesting figure, see Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco of the grape harvest, part of the scene of the *Drunkenness of Noah*, in the north corridor of the Camposanto of Pisa, 1468-1469. As Diane Cole Ahl writes: "Benozzo's citation of a Bacchic figure would have been especially appropriate, given the vinicultural context of the *Drunkenness*, and it paid homage to the Roman origins of which Pisa was especially proud" (*Benozzo Gozzoli* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996], 157-164, n. 62, and pl. 205). See also Raimond van Marle, *Iconographie de l'art profane au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*, vol. 1 (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1931-32), fig. 437, p. 435. Ahl cites the Pisan krater and the Pentheus relief as possible sources for Gozzoli's figure. However, the actual figure is not just a generic maenadic type, that one can say derives from



and early sixteenth centuries, appearing both in works of art and ephemeral performances—a ubiquitous nod to the fashionable antique style.<sup>232</sup> Contemporaries described this *alla ninfa* type as showing grace and beauty; but Savonarola found her to be a sign of pagan life and her billowing veils an embodiment of “worldly wantonness.”<sup>233</sup> Warburg was right, then, to see her as presenting a delicate balance between an antique “will to life” and contemporary decorum. In this sense, despite her delicate beauty, she is still the “pathos formula”—the unchanging imprint of passion still moving within her.

The connotations of rushing steps, swirling skirts, and exposed limbs did not solely convey vice and sexuality, but also broadcast information about class, status, and character. The quickly moving maid conveyed her servility and promptness. Her light-as-air demeanor meant she did her work in a timely manner, without imposing on or disturbing her mistress. Her energy expressed the joy of the birth, exhibiting a liveliness that noble patrons could not themselves reveal within the constraints of decorum. The way she moved marked her morally and socially as of a lower class than the reserved and upright patrician women (the actual patrons of the chapel) depicted near her.<sup>234</sup> Indicative of this shifting idea of the maenadic formula is Ghirlandaio’s small painting of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, where the “pathos formula” of frenzy has been shifted away from Judith, who now stands weighty and still, to her serving

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any and all maenadic representations. Rather, the two works she cites offer very different examples of the maenad. It is more likely that Benozzo’s type derives from a Bacchic *thiasos*-type representation, such as on the front of the sarcophagus of which the Pentheus scene is actually the lid (Matz, *ASR*, IV., 3, cat. 170, pl. 191) (fig. 2.26).

<sup>232</sup> See Warburg’s essay on “Theatrical Costumes for the Intermedi of 1589,” in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 379-382, where he discusses the *Nympha* style. See also Patrizia Castelli, “Aby Warburg e Ghirlandaio: questioni di metodo,” in Wolfram Prinz and Max Seidel, eds., *Domenico Ghirlandaio 1449-1494: Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Firenze, 16-18 Ottobre 1994* (Florence: Centro Di, 1996), 204-205.

<sup>233</sup> Warburg, “Theatrical Costumes,” 381.

<sup>234</sup> Fermor, “Decorum in Figural Movement,” 86.

maid, who bears the distinctive pose of the canephora-type (fig. 2.67).<sup>235</sup> This is true of Botticelli's *Return of Judith from Bethulia*, as well, in which the serving maid, bearing the head in a basket on her head and the wrapped vessels in her free hand, rushes to keep up with her mistress, her skirts fluttering behind her (fig. 2.68).<sup>236</sup>

Adding underlying significance to her character, the nymph-like serving girl evolved also from Donatello's statue of *Dovizia* from about 1430, which once stood atop a column in the Mercato Vecchio (fig. 2.69, 70).<sup>237</sup> A female embodiment of civic wealth and productivity, she stood with *all'antica* grace balancing a fruit-laden basket upon her head with her right hand and holding a bursting cornucopia in the crook of her left arm. Now lost, we know her by later evocations of the work as it appears in paintings of Florence, terracotta statuettes, and Botticelli's drawing of *Abundance* in the British Museum (fig. 2.71).<sup>238</sup> Her appearance borrowed from antique iconography of fecundity, but she was also a descendent of the maenad, who along with Bacchus, was a figure of abundance and fertility, often the bearer of grapes and wine offered in sacrifice to the god Priapus.<sup>239</sup> This connotation of fertility and prosperity was inherited by the

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<sup>235</sup> Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

<sup>236</sup> Uffizi, Florence.

<sup>237</sup> See Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, chap. 1: "Common Wealth: Donatello's *Ninfa Fiorentina*," 19-75. See also Sarah Blake Wilk (now McHam), "Donatello's *Dovizia* as an Image of Florentine Political Propaganda," *Artibus et historiae* 7, no. 14 (1986): 9-28; David G. Wilkins, "Donatello's Lost *Dovizia* for the Mercato Vecchio: Wealth and Charity as Florentine Civic Virtues," *Art Bulletin* 65 (1983): 401-423. The name "Dovizia" was a corruption of the Latin *divitiae*, meaning "riches" or "wealth." Donatello's sandstone statue eventually eroded away, and was replaced in the early eighteenth century with a new version.

<sup>238</sup> R. W. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), vol. 2, fig. 54, cat. D3. At least five paintings, including an anonymous painting of the Mercato Vecchio in Florence (in the Bernini Collection at Calenzano), show the statue atop its column; the *Ideal City View* in Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, depicts a similar figure. There are in addition numerous painted terracotta derivations from the Della Robbia workshops c. 1500. See Wilkins, "Donatello's Lost *Dovizia*," figs. 3-16.

<sup>239</sup> This fusion is revealed by the use of an almost identical figure to Botticelli's *Abundance* in a painting by the workshop of an *Allegory of Drunkenness* (Musée Condé, Chantilly). Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, vol. 2, C8, c. 1481 or late 1480s-1490s. Botticelli's *ninfa* is accompanied by several putti, including one who holds a bunch of

Nympha, and suited her to accompany scenes of birth, where she aptly evoked nubility and generative sexuality. The tension and trepidation that accompanied contemporary childbirth—not only with imminent peril and fear of death, but also intensified by the social and political threat of a low birthrate—made the accompanying allegorical figure of hopeful fertility all the more appropriate for scenes depicting birth.

The beautiful optimism of this fluttering nymph proved suited to convey a range of allegorical concepts, from classical Muses and Christian Virtues to humanist ideals.<sup>240</sup>

Ghiberti's work on the Gates of Paradise abounded with maenadic women. A *Prophetess* or *Miriam*, simple revelers or ladies-in-waiting have the lilting pose and flowing dresses of their antique sisters (fig. 1.40 and 41).<sup>241</sup> Agostino di Duccio was another early adapter of the *alla*

grapes. Note that in the workshop painting there is a grape-carrying putto grappling with a snake—an even more explicit Bacchic borrowing (which also appears in Botticelli's *alla ninfa* figure carrying a bundle of sticks on her head in his fresco of *The Temptation and Purification of the Leper* in the Sistine of 1481-1482). Snake-handling is also mentioned in the *Bacchae* (101ff, 698, 768) and Dionysus himself can appear as a snake (1017f). After Euripides, snakes became a regular feature of literary portraits of maenads. See Dodds, "Maenadism in the *Bacchae*," 163. Catullus tells us that maenads girded themselves with snakes. We also know of smaller Laocoön groups being uncovered in the fifteenth century, before the monumental version discovered in 1506, including one in 1488. See Warburg, *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 273, and addendum on p. 468, and 558, n. 3, citing Gaye, *Carteggio degli artisti* 1:285, no. 123: excavation report of Luigi di Andrea Lotti di Barberino to Lorenzo de' Medici, Rome, 13 February 1488. The interconnectedness of the varied Nympha types identified by Warburg is brought home by two enamelled terracotta statuettes from the workshop of Giovanni della Robbia: a *Dovizia*, c. 1494-1513 (Minneapolis Institute of Arts, fig. 2.67) and a *Judith*, c. 1520 (Museo Bardini, Florence, fig. 2.43), that employ the exact same female figure, perhaps even from the same mold, with small modifications for iconography. The fact that the exact same *contrapposto* and *all'antica* drapery could be used for both an allegorical symbol and a biblical heroine show their common source in that Warburgian *Pathosformel*.

<sup>240</sup> The cycle of the Muses that was made for the *studiolo* of Leonello d'Este's villa Belfiore from 1447 to 1463 is of primary significance for the bold decision made there to depict not medieval Worthies, *Uomini famosi*, or biblical virtues but patently antique Muses instead. Guarino Veronese devised the program and Cosmè Tura among others completed the work. While stylistically *all'antica*, these enthroned, rather staid figures do not have the stepping maenadic poses typical of the Nympha. See Mottola Molino and Natale, eds., *Le muse e il principe*, esp. J. Anderson, "Il risveglio dell'interesse per le Muse nella Ferrara del Quattrocento," vol. 2, 165-185.

<sup>241</sup> The *Prophetess* is on the border of the *Abraham* panel. Krautheimer suggests a maenad such as preserved in a Dal Pozzo Collection drawing (Royal Library, Windsor) served as half of the figural prototype for the *Prophetess* (Lorenzo Ghiberti, 349-350, fig. 140). Krautheimer also proposes that the figure of Selene, as on an Endymion sarcophagus now in the Palazzo Guistiniani in Rome, is also behind the pose (fig. 135). Nicole Dacos suggests the maenad on the British Museum sarcophagus from Santa Maria Maggiore (as drawn in the Codex Wolfegg, fol. 31v) ("Ghirlandaio et l'antique," 445). Krautheimer compares the *Miriam* to the tambourine-playing type of maenad as on the Blenheim sarcophagus, a type drawn in the Codex Coburgensis, fol. 195, Coburg, Castle, Library, a remnant of which may be in Rome, Villa Aldobrandini, p. 350, fig. 145 (Lorenzo Ghiberti, 289, pl. 129a). She is, of course,

*ninfale* style, filling the avowedly pagan Tempio Malatestiano commissioned by Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta of Rimini with relief after relief of long-haired maidens with whirling, creased drapery, and depicting an array of personified themes taken straight from the medieval Scholastic tradition, ranging from intellectual and cultural phenomena to astrological signs (fig. 2.72, 73, 74).<sup>242</sup> Giovanni Santi depicted a tambourine-playing maenad (the virtual twin of that very maenad that first caught Pisanello's eye in the early 1430s) as *Tersicore* among a series of Muses painted with Timoteo Viti for the Tempietto of the Palazzo Ducale of Urbino (fig. 2.75, 76).<sup>243</sup> Mantegna induced the Muses to dance again in his *Parnassus*, with choreography leading them into a formation like that on the ancient maenadic reliefs in the Uffizi and Louvre. Though demonstrative of "life in motion," they suggest less of the heightened pitch of frenzy. It is the sweetly dancing maenad that is seen here, not her ecstatic, possessed sister. But like a veil over

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also like the maenad in the Pisanellesque drawing after the Amsterdam sarcophagus. See also the procession in the background of the *Joshua* relief and the quite literal transposition of a tambourine-playing maenad as a welcomer to Jerusalem in the background of the *David*. There are maenadic women in the *Moses* and *Isaac* reliefs as well.

<sup>242</sup> For the Tempio, see Charles Mitchell, "The Imagery of the Tempio Malatestiano," *Studi romagnoli* 2 (1952): 77-90; Stanko Kokole, "Agostino di Duccio in the Tempio Malatestiano 1449-1457: Challenges of Poetic Invention and Fantasies of Personal Style," Ph.D. diss. (Johns Hopkins University, 1997); Charles Hope, "The Early History of the Tempio Malatestiano," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 55 (1992); C. Brandi, *Il Tempio Malatestiano* (Turin: Radio Italiano, 1956); Catherine King, "Mnemosyne and Calliope in the 'Chapel of the Muses', San Francesco, Rimini," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 51 (1988): 186-187; Ulrich Middeldorf, "On the Dilettante Sculptor," *Apollo* 107, no. 194 (1978): 310-322. For the reliefs, see also Sez nec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, 132-134. Agostino's format was not entirely novel either. The motif of representing personifications singly within a vertical space was common before this, as in Giotto's Virtues and Vices in the bottom register of the Arena Chapel. Unlike the soft and puffy (and fantastical) dresses of Ghirlandaio's and Botticelli's girls, Agostino's bear the striated marks of their folds, giving them an abstracted, sinuous form, like ripples in water. The result is ultimately more authentically antique, like the Roman hellenizing reliefs of maenads discussed above. Cf. a relief by Agostino of the *Miracle of San Bernardino* in Perugia, which shows a figure on the right with copious, stringy drapery and a large mantle *velificato*. She stands in stark contrast to the sober women depicted near her. He also copies a maenad, as on the altar drawn by Jacopo Bellini (Paris Book, fol. 48; fig. 2.17), in his relief of King Sigismund encountering an angel (Castello Sforzesco, Milan) (fig. 2.74a).

<sup>243</sup> Now Galleria Corsini, Florence. His is an almost identical derivation from the so-called *Tarocchi del Mantegna* engravings of c. 1460, where she was called Erato. Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, E.I.14, a and b, pl. 333; *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 24, 31-A (133). The Tarocchi engravings were used in turn as inspiration for the illustrations in the *De gentiliū deorum imaginibus* by Ludovico Lazzarelli, made for Borso d'Este in 1471, but subsequently rededicated to Federico da Montefeltro after 1474 (two versions, cod. Urb. Lat. 716 and 717, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).

ancient mysteries, the billowing, diaphanous draperies and sweeping movement of these figures served to give them an otherworldly quality that conveyed their symbolic nature and transposed them into another space, apart from the contemporary and the mundane.<sup>244</sup> They may be without madness, bloodlust, or rampant sexuality, but they still recall the appearance of those pagan dancing maenads. She captured the essence of what the Quattrocento saw in and reawakened from antiquity.

The Nympha, in other words, borrows accessories from the maenad's mildest, sweetest form. Still, any antique maenad inherently possessed the pathos characteristic of her genre, even if she seemed just to be dancing, because her dance originated in something more than mere pleasure and delight; her joy was intense, ardent, and impassioned—comparable to the upsurge of religious ecstasy also experienced in the Christian faith. The maenads were giddy in their proximity to the god; they danced because Dionysus inspired in them the frenzy released by knowledge of divinity. Is this *furor* carried over into these more charming characters? Warburg saw the memory of the terrible aspect of the maenad living on even in the birth attendant. But unlike the frenzied biblical figures, the *all'antica* Nympha has a pathos of an attenuated sort, eventually being converted into a formula for ideal beauty that inhibited the actual expression of pathos. Her pose did become a cliché. Her new significance, however, would lie instead in being the embodiment of an elevated, ethereal Neoplatonic idea of Beauty.

This beautiful form would be the hallmark of Botticelli's style, and would be used for angels as well as mythological nymphs. The attending nymph at the birth of Aphrodite steps forward effortlessly to cover the new-sprung goddess like the joyful maenad at the center of the

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<sup>244</sup> The visual style is part of the classicizing program, integral to the display of "knowledge of forms," the *cognitio formarum* to which Roberto Valturio alludes in his *De re militari*, dedicated to Sigismondo around 1455. Kokole, "Cognitio formarum and Agostino di Duccio's Reliefs," 177-79.

Triumph of Bacchus relief in Pisa.<sup>245</sup> Dancing angels encircle the heavens in his *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints John the Evangelist, Augustine, Jerome and Eligius* and in his *Mystical Nativity*.<sup>246</sup> The upward moving lightness of these spiritual figures, embodying what sixteenth-century writers would call *leggiadria*, attuned Botticelli's work with contemporary Neoplatonic notions.<sup>247</sup> Physical lightness, with feet barely touching the ground, conveyed that inner spiritual flight of the soul; her billowing garments seem lifted by the breath of God. Her serene, delicate features give her beauty an otherworldly, perfected quality, sent from Heaven not Earth. While not truly maenadically frenzied, the *ninfa fiorentina* of Quattrocento art was adamantly more than just a pretty figure. In her *all'antica* authenticity, she was a striking, complex, and even sensual figure, who would have stood out in contemporary eyes—as much as they did to Warburg's—as something new, wild, and even a little dangerous. In that sense, she did convey pathos to contemporary viewers, even if she had not the frenzied, violent, impassioned character of her sisters Magdalene, Judith, and Salome.

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Ultimately, in the art of the fifteenth century the maenad underwent more of a separation of classical form and content than a rejoining of the two. Perhaps due to the frightening implications of a truly integrated maenad, actual depicted maenads often did not display the most intense frenzy or accurate antique form. Yet her terrible passion and active pose were reborn in other non-maenadic figures. Where Panofsky would see reunification in the Renaissance, Warburg had seen conflict, polarity, and inversion; and in the figure of the Nympha, he was right

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<sup>245</sup> Papini, *Catalogo delle cose d'arte: Pisa*, cat. 64.

<sup>246</sup> The first is in the Uffizi, Florence; the second, the National Gallery, London. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli*, vol.2, fig. 33 and pl. IX.

<sup>247</sup> Fermor, "Poetry in Motion," 129-130.

to see these tensions played out. His concept of the *Pathosformel* revealed that there was more than just form and subject matter to be borrowed from antiquity, but a third—more nebulous—quality as well: emotion. Though the tone of an emotion might change, the “pitch” or intensity expressed by his “pathos formulae” was understood by Warburg to be constant. In the case of the Nympha, however, his generic invocation of the maenad did not fully articulate the way this antique form survived to convey a wider range of specific meanings and different levels of emotional intensity in the art of the Renaissance. The particular role and character of the maenad—her ethos—impressed itself upon the soul of her descendents as much as her physical and emotional appearance shaped their outward appearances. In the Magdalene, Salome, and Judith figures, the memory of the maenad’s violence and sexuality inhered in the physical form. Without madness or lust defining them, the fluttering nymphs of Renaissance art may have been more like the “pretty little figures” that Cicero so easily dismissed. Yet even these expressed the energy that was seen to exist in ancient art, and specifically in the maenad, and they made of it an iconic figure of the fifteenth century: the *ninfa*.

## Chapter Three

**Epiphany: The Discovery of Ariadne and the Rapture of Love**

*Cupid and Dionysus are two of the most violent of the gods; they can grasp the soul and drive it so far towards madness that it loses all restraint; Cupid fires it with the flames which are his attribute, while Dionysus supplies wine which is as fuel to the fire: for wine is the very sustenance of love....*

— Achilles Tatius<sup>1</sup>

*Lo! Bacchus calls to his poet: Bacchus too helps lovers,  
Fosters that flame with which he burns himself....*

— Ovid<sup>2</sup>

Like the maenad, the figure of Ariadne underwent similar ruptures of classical content and form in the Renaissance as artists sought to create novel yet still *all'antica* imagery, attempting to integrate both ancient myth and what they perceived to be ancient style with contemporary taste and mores. The beautiful, delicate flower that was the *ninfa fiorentina* appears as Ariadne in Baccio Baldini's engraving of the *Cretan Labyrinth with Theseus and Ariadne*, c. 1460-1470 (fig. 3.1).<sup>3</sup> Here Ariadne has the same "accessori del costume"—the fanciful dress, winged headdress, serpentine body, and stepping pose—of the nymph in the contemporaneous Otto print inscribed "Amor vuol fe" (fig. 2.11).<sup>4</sup> But in the *Labyrinth* print,

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<sup>1</sup> *Leucippe and Cleitophon* II.2-3, trans. Stephen Gaselee (New York: G.P. Putnam's sons, 1917), 61. The late 3rd c. A.D. text was known in the Renaissance, with two manuscripts (in the Vatican and Florence) dating to the thirteenth century. See introduction to the Loeb ed., xi.

<sup>2</sup> Ovid, *Ars amatoria* I. 525-526, trans. Peter Green (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 182.

<sup>3</sup> British Museum, London. Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, A.II.16.ii; *The Illustrated Bartsch*, v. 24, part 1, 2403.123 S2.

<sup>4</sup> That nymph may represent Lorenzo de' Medici's beloved, Lucrezia Donati. See Warburg, "On *Imprese Amoroze* in the Earliest Florentine Engravings," in *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 171-177; Randolph, *Engaging Symbols*, 225-



the generic, antique *ninfa* becomes an actual mythological character (literally labeled in a banderole beneath her feet), standing alongside an equally fanciful, quasi-antique Theseus, his feathered headdress evocative of contemporary Florentine parade garb. The classical hero and the princess who saves him stand impassively, as she presents him with a cloth filled with the skeins of thread that will allow him to escape from the Labyrinth. This Ariadne is not typical of those seen in ancient art, having not yet faced the travails of her abandonment nor experienced the great pathos ancient authors, such as Ovid, attributed to her:

...[I]t was in this labyrinth of Crete  
that Minos jailed the monstrous Minotaur,  
the biform bull-and-man. And  
[...] the beast was killed by Theseus, Aegeus' son.  
He, helped by Ariadne, Minos' daughter,  
was able to retrace his steps: she gave  
a thread to him, which he would then rewind,  
and so he found the entrance gate again—  
a thing that none before had ever done.  
Without delay he sailed away to Naxos.  
He'd taken Ariadne with him,  
yet showed no pity: on that shore he left  
the faithful girl. And Ariadne wept  
till Bacchus came....<sup>5</sup>

In this engraving, the dramatic moments of the narrative are either hidden (with the killing of the Minotaur invisible within the Labyrinth) or enacted with smaller figures in the background. At the upper left, the artist depicted the abandonment of Ariadne, showing her standing upon a cliff (in the same pose as below but facing the opposite direction), looking out to sea at Theseus' departing ship, and waving her scarf tied to a stick.<sup>6</sup> Incongruously, she then appears either to be

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226. The banderole held between the man and woman reads “Amor vuol fe e dove fe nonne Amor non puo” (“Love demands faith, and where faith is not, Love cannot be”).

<sup>5</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.169ff., trans. Mendelbaum, 253-254.

<sup>6</sup> These are details that appear in the ancient sources. E.g. Ovid, *Heroides* X.41: “upon a long tree-branch I fixed my shining veil...” (trans. Grant Showerman, 2nd ed. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977], 125).

attempting to swim out to him by leaping from the cliff into the sea or to be attempting suicide, whereupon she is rescued by a nude, winged, youthful god labeled not “Bacco,” as we would expect, but “Giove.” To the right, “Giove” can be seen carrying “Adrianna” as they fly up to heaven.<sup>7</sup> We might dismiss such errors as quaint miscomprehension by an artist just becoming familiar with his ancient subject matter. But given that there were numerous familiar antique images depicting Ariadne, it seems the artist was motivated by some other vision. He was experimenting instead with the novel *all’antica* language, and, inspired by the contemporary *alla ninfale* mode, he sought to reimagine this narrative in the new, Florentine idiom.

The heroic story of Theseus was a familiar one, related in Plutarch’s *Life of Theseus* and by poets such as Ovid, Catullus, Statius, and Seneca, and retold by the likes of Berchorius and Boccaccio.<sup>8</sup> The Labyrinth was even familiar in the Middle Ages, its image carved on church walls or floors, as in Lucca, where an accompanying inscription read:

Hic quem Creticus edit  
 Daedalus est labyrinthus,  
 De quo nullus vadere,  
 Quivit qui fuit intus,  
 Ni Theseus gratis Ariadne  
 Stamine intus.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The only mention of Zeus/Jupiter in relation to the discovery of Bacchus and Ariadne is in Hesiod, *Theogony*, ll. 947-949: “And golden-haired Dionysus made brown-haired Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, his buxom wife: and the son of Cronos [ie. Zeus] made her deathless and unageing for him” (trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White, *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, 149).

<sup>8</sup> Life of Theseus, in *Plutarch’s Lives*, vol. 1, trans. John Dryden, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), 1-24, esp. 7-12. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.169-182 and *Heroides* 10; Catullus, *Carmina* LXIV; Statius, *Thebaid*; and Seneca, *Phaedra*. Berchorius, *Ovidius moralizatus*; Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, Story of Ariadne, Book XI, and *De casibus vivorum illustrium*, story of Theseus, Book I.

<sup>9</sup> “This is the Labyrinth which Daedalus the Cretan built, from which nobody escaped who had gone inside, nor Theseus without the help of Ariadne,” (as quoted by Simon Tidworth, in Anne Ward, et al., *The Quest for Theseus* [New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970], 186).

Baldini clearly knew many of the facts of the myth, having included details such as Ariadne tying her veil to a stick to signal Theseus' ship (as she does in Ovid's *Heroides X*) and Aegeus throwing himself to his death at the sight of his son's still-black sails.<sup>10</sup>

Theseus' story, especially the events around the Labyrinth, was depicted by other artists, often on *cassoni* or other domestic pieces where the myth was well-suited to fifteenth-century interest in heroic feats and adventures.<sup>11</sup> In the early sixteenth century Bartolomeo di Giovanni (or the so-called Master of the Campana Cassoni) created a pair of *spalliere* on the quest of Theseus, in which the first panel showed the hero's ship, his meeting Ariadne and her sister Phaedra on Crete, and the antecedent story of the Minotaur in the distance beyond the Labyrinth (fig. 3.2).<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on Phaedra's presence here and in the second panel, showing the abandonment of Ariadne and her discovery by Bacchus and his retinue (fig. 3.3, 4), suggests a

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<sup>10</sup> Aegeus had told his son, before his departure to Crete, to hang white sails instead of the usual black if the ship was returning with Theseus alive and victorious after his bout with the Minotaur. Theseus, however, in his excitement to return to Athens forgot to make this crucial sign, and his father impetuously committed suicide in distress at the perceived loss of his beloved son.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the fragments of a *cassone* by Cima da Conegliano, c. 1505, with the portion showing *Theseus Killing the Minotaur* in the Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan, and *Theseus and the Court of Minos*, private collection, Zürich, illustrated in Peter Humfrey, "Two Fragments from a Theseus Cassone by Cima," *Burlington Magazine* 123 (1981): figs. 17-18. See Michael Koortbojian regarding Theseus sarcophagi in which the episode of his abandonment of Ariadne is just one moment in the story of the hero's exploits that were celebrated, it appears, on sarcophagi for men (*Myth, Meaning, and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995], 96).

<sup>12</sup> c. 1500-1515, Campana Collection 799, 800, Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon (formerly on loan to the Musée de Longchamp, Marseilles, from the Louvre, Paris). A sister pair of panels (Campana Collection 201, 202, also Avignon) depict Minos Attacking Athens and Pasiphaë and the Bull. The panels were attributed by Paul Schubring to Bartolomeo di Giovanni, a student of Domenico Ghirlandaio, documented in Florence in 1488 (*Cassoni*, no. 381 and 382, pl. LXXXIX). A date in the first decade of the sixteenth century and the style of the clothing and armor seem to me to point, however, to a North Italian artist, in proximity to Mantua or Ferrara. Further evidence for such an attribution is the fact that the artist has been much influenced by the *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat* engraving of Mantegna. This painter was identified with an oeuvre attributed to a northern Master of the Campana Cassoni by Federico Zeri ("Una congiunzione tra Firenze e Francia: Il Maestro dei cassoni Campana," in *Diari di Lavoro 2* [Turin: G. Einaudi, 1976], 75-87), and as Maestro di Tavernelle, thought to be a late follower of Fillippino Lippi (perhaps one Niccolò Cartoni) by Everett Fahy (*Some Followers of Domenico Ghirlandajo* [New York: Garland Publishing, 1976], 200-201). The influence of Piero di Cosimo and Ercole de' Roberti have also been noted in this artist's work, while others have surmised his having a French origin. See Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*, cat. IV.15, vol. 1, p. 292.

literary model in popular fourteenth-century sources; there Theseus was said to have taken Phaedra as his bride instead of Ariadne, leaving the latter asleep on Naxos.<sup>13</sup> The second panel shows the hero in contemporary armor and dress, leading the reluctant sister back to his awaiting ship, while the jilted Ariadne lies naked and asleep, in a most Renaissance of beds, complete with pillows, white sheets, green coverlet, and elaborate canopy.<sup>14</sup> The artist has her rest her head upon her lower shoulder but then drapes that arm back up over her head, as if he recalls the antique pose of sleep in which the upper arm dangles back over the head (fig. 3.5), but cannot remember which arm it should be.<sup>15</sup> In the left distance, we see the abandoned Ariadne, her back to us, as she waves her scarf tied to a stick to the retreating ship nearing the horizon. And then to the right, we see a fantastic and bizarre conglomeration of Bacchic characters processing along the beach to encounter a third Ariadne, seated and utterly alert.<sup>16</sup> The artist has invented the creatures that pull Bacchus' chariot: snake-headed, horse-bodied, and camel-footed nightmares,

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<sup>13</sup> This follows a variation on the legend of Theseus, recorded in the *Ottimo Commento* on Dante *Divine Comedy*, Berchorius, and Boccaccio, in which Ariadne's sister accompanies the pair on their voyage on the understanding that she would marry Theseus' son, Hippolytus, but then is taken by Theseus instead, as alluded to in Ovid's *Heroides* IV, letter of Phaedra to Hippolytus. Berchorius mentions Phaedra, even though Ovid does not in this context (in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 169ff, trans. Reynolds, 303-305). See also book XI, chapter 29 (Ariadne) and 30 (Phaedra), of Boccaccio's *Genealogia deorum gentilium* in the translation of Melanie Hoover, "Book Eleven of *The Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* of Giovanni Boccaccio," M.A. thesis (University of Florida, 1985), 69-71. For the *Ottimo Commento*, see below.

<sup>14</sup> Compare her to the similar fourteenth-century sleeper depicted in the fresco attributed to Memmo di Filippuccio in a tower room of the chamber of the Podestà in San Gimignano. The bared breasts of both women may be intended as a sign of their lack of virginity, each being available for intercourse.

<sup>15</sup> Compare this Ariadne to the sleeping nude in the Master of the Campana Cassoni's *Cimon and Iphigenia* (so-called), a *spalliera* of the early sixteenth century now in the Wildenstein collection, New York, illus. in Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*, cat. IV.15, p. 214.

<sup>16</sup> Some of these characters are derived from Mantegna's *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat* engraving (fig. 5.35): Bartolomeo's nude holding a cluster of grapes above his head copies in reverse the nude holding his arm up to grasp the wreath in the print; the pose of the seated Bacchus mimics that of Mantegna's fellow riding on the shoulders of the Herculean nude; the bald, hunched satyr drinking from a bowl is taken from the cauliflower-headed satyr drinking at the right of the print; and the blubbery, bald Silenus on the donkey in the distance recalls Mantegna's depiction of the old satyr in his accompanying *Bacchanal with Silenus* engraving (fig. 5.36). It is curious that Bartolomeo takes his figures in reverse from the first engraving, which might suggest that the engravings were themselves made after paintings or drawings by Mantegna that Bartolomeo could have known.

who hiss at the wretched girl. Yet the narrative potential for the depiction of Ariadne's emotive pathos is left unharnessed, replaced instead with a stock gesture of alarm. Unlike antique representations of her discovery, this Ariadne is neither asleep nor frantic, but establishes instead an entirely independent iconographic tradition that would recur through the sixteenth century, in works as diverse as sword-hilt plaquettes and a Tintoretto painting for the Doge's Palace in Venice: an Ariadne shown seated, awake, and unruffled (fig. 3.6).<sup>17</sup>

While Theseus had his own stories and could garner works of art dedicated to him in which Ariadne and Bacchus only played secondary roles, we will be interested in this chapter in exploring how the figure of Ariadne herself developed during the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, and how her representation influenced and was shaped in turn by the emerging role of Bacchus during this time. The theme of the Discovery of Ariadne stimulated artists to explore the intersection of text and image, as they used what they learned from reading as well as looking to create new imagery. And the iconography of the Triumph of Bacchus with his bride combined an existing interest in triumph with an antique subject, instilling a sense of

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<sup>17</sup> The seated posture Ariadne assumes at her discovery in Bartolomeo's painting is similar to that of a presumed Ariadne on Naxos on a bronze plaquette signed IO. F. F., perhaps to be identified as a North Italian master of the turn of the sixteenth century. Although the subject is vague—with various nudes, satyresses and pans approaching the seated woman bearing torches, animal-head trophies, and a ship's prow—the use of a similarly posed woman to represent Ariadne in Bartolomeo's and, later, Tintoretto's paintings lends credence to a reading of the plaquette's image as representing the return of Bacchus from his Indian triumph, as in Ovid's *Fasti* III.8, where she complains of his vacillating like a ship at sea: "Lo, yet again, ye billows, list to my like complaint!" (ll. 471-472, trans. James George Frazer, rev. G. P. Goold, 2nd ed. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003], 155). See Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, cat. 97, fig. 128.

Jacopo Tintoretto's *Bacchus and Ariadne with Venus* of 1576 depicts the coronation and marriage of Ariadne (also described in the *Fasti*), commissioned for the Sala Dorato of the Doge's palace in Venice (hanging now in the Sala dell' Anticollegio). There Ariadne is arranged in a similarly knock-kneed, splayed-footed, seated pose, suggesting that the posture on the popular plaquette was part of the common visual memory bank of these other painters. For Tintoretto's painting, see Charles de Tolnay, "Tintoretto's Salotto Dorato Cycle in the Doge's Palace," in *Scritti di storia dell' arte in onore di Mario Salmi* (Rome: De Luca, 1963), vol. 2, 117-131. Anna Gallo catalogues nineteen Pompeian wall paintings that depict Ariadne abandoned by Theseus (and occasionally simultaneously discovered by Dionysus) with the unusual iconography of her being shown seated, awake, and calm, and sometimes including a ship's rudder on the shore ("Le pitture rappresentanti Arianna abbandonata in ambiente pompeiano," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 2 [1988]: 57-80). Although she is not shown this way on sarcophagi, it is possible that some descendent of this type was known to artists in the fifteenth century.

classical authenticity that would, at the same time, generate meaningful content and feeling to satisfy contemporary audiences.

## BACCHUS AND LOVE

Unlike the maenad, whose savage and disruptive behavior could disturb Renaissance audiences, Ariadne had the potential to convey not only pathetic beauty but also dutiful love. Her taming influence appeared in images where Bacchus rode in procession with her, the triumph becoming less one of military conquest or raucous celebration than one of wedded bliss. Bacchus was, of course, inherently associated with the theme of love. As Ovid said, “Bacchus too helps lovers, Fosters that flame with which he burns himself....”<sup>18</sup> Bacchus was affiliated with Venus, Ceres, Comus, and Priapus, gods and goddesses of earthy sensuality, generation, revel, and even lasciviousness. In *Problemata XXX*, then attributed to Aristotle, the author stated that “wine makes people affectionate; ...wine works as an aphrodisiac and Dionysus and Aphrodite are correctly said to be with each other....”<sup>19</sup> Horace repeatedly returned to the theme of wine aiding the progress of love, or soothing the pain of heartbreak.<sup>20</sup> In *Elegy III.17*,

Propertius wrote:

You are capable of quelling insane Venus’ blasts,  
and there is a cure for trouble in your pure.  
By you are lovers joined, by you separated:

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<sup>18</sup> Ovid, *The Art of Love (Ars amatoria)*, ll. 525-526, trans. Peter Green, 182.

<sup>19</sup> *Problems XXX.1*, 953b, trans. Robert Mayhew (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 281-283. The Greek lyric poet Anacreon was famed for his declarations on wine and love, and despite the fragmentary survival of his opinions, he was renowned in the Renaissance, inspiring numerous verses in his style.

<sup>20</sup> Horace, *Ode*, III.21, “O nata mecum” (quoted previously in Chapter One, p. 84); *Ode*, I.18: “[T]he gods have ordained that everything should be hard for the abstemious, and there is no other way to dispel the worries that gnaw the heart. After wine, who rattles on about the hardships of war or poverty? Who does not rather talk of you, Bacchus, and you, lovely Venus?” (“siccis omnia nam dura deus proposuit, neque / mordaces aliter diffugiunt sollicitudines. / quis post vina gravem militam aut pauperiem crepat? / quis non te potius, Bacche pater, teque, decens Venus?”) (*Odes and Epodes*, trans. Niall Rudd [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004], 61).

dissolve the vice, Bacchus, from my soul.  
 [...]
   
 A sober night tortures jilted lovers....
   
 But if, Bacchus, across my temples burning with your gifts,  
 longed-for sleep will settle on my bones.<sup>21</sup>

In his *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, Boccaccio remembered that Bacchus was not only a god of wine, but also (or perhaps because of this) a god of love.<sup>22</sup>

Bacchus was also linked with Ceres, the fecundity of the earth symbolizing the fertile union of love. The famous aphorism popularized by Terence, “Sine Cerere et Baccho, frigit Venere” (“without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus grows cold”), expressed the idea that the wine and grain of the earth, gifts of these gods, fueled and sustained the flames of passion and love (fig. 3.7).<sup>23</sup> Bacchus and Ceres are paired together with Venus several times in the *Hypnerotomachia*

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<sup>21</sup> *Elegy* III.17.3-6: “tu potes insanae Veneris comescere flatus, / curarumque tuo fit medicina mero. / per te iunguntur, per te soluuntur amantes: / tu uitium ex animo dilue, Bacche, meo. / ... / semper enim uacuus nox sobria torquet amantis; / ... / quod si, Bacche, tuis per feruida tempora donis / accersitus erit somnus in ossa mea...” (*The Complete Elegies of Sextus Propertius*, trans. Vincent Katz [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004] 302-303).

<sup>22</sup> *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, Book V.xxv, regarding Bacchus; V.xxvi describes Hymen, the god of marriage, as the son of Bacchus and Venus; XI.xxix, regarding Ariadne. In the first chapter of his *Ameto*, Boccaccio picks out Bacchus for his “wantonness,” suggesting that Bacchus was seen as sexually promiscuous as well.

<sup>23</sup> In his play *Eunouchus* (*The Eunuch*), 732, a comic play based on Menander’s *The Eunuch*, Terence referred to this age-old maxim:

Chremes [a young country gentleman]: ‘Help! I’ve been led astray. The wine I’ve drunk has done me in, though when I was reclining at the table I seemed beautifully sober. Since I got up, neither foot nor mind has been functioning as it should.’  
 Pythias [chief maid to Thias, a professional woman]: ‘Chremes!’  
 Chremes: ‘Who is it? Oh hello, Pythias! Wow! How much more beautiful you look now than you did a while ago!’ (he tries to embrace her)  
 Pythias: ‘Wee, you certainly look a good deal more cheerful.’  
 Chremes: ‘The proverb turns out to be true: “Without Ceres and Bacchus Venus is cold.”....’ [*Sine Cerere et Libero friget Venus*]

That is, “without food and wine, love is cold.” In this humorous context, the expression was given a literally sexual meaning: a full belly and head full of wine make the blood run hot and even an ugly woman appear desirable. Cicero dissected the meaning of Terence’s phrase in his *De natura deorum* II. 23: “Thus sometimes a thing sprung from a god was called by the name of the god himself; as when we speak of corn as Ceres, of wine as Liber, so that Terence writes: ‘when Ceres and when Liber fail, Venus is cold.’” Alfred Henderson offers analogous proverbs: “Love would soon perish, unless nourished by Ceres and Bacchus” or “Without Ceres and Bacchus, Venus will starve”; “When Want comes in at the door, Love flies out at the window”; and from Byron, “Some good lessons / Are learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus, / Without whom Venus will not long attack us” (*Latin Proverbs and Quotations* [London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869], 414). In *Leucippe and Clitophon* II.3, Achilles Tatius also wrote: “Dionysus supplies wine which is as fuel to the fire: for wine is the very sustenance of love” (*The Adventures of Leucippe and Clitophon*, trans. Stephen Gaselee [New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1917], 61). These

*Poliphili*, published in Venice in 1499, such as upon the base of an altar dedicated to Priapus, where reliefs depicting Venus, Ceres, Bacchus, and Aeolus personify the four seasons, with the last indicating the freeze that sets in when the spring of love fueled by autumn's grapes and summer's wheat passes into winter.<sup>24</sup> In another portion of the text, an inscription on an ancient building is described as reading "Diis Veneri et filio Amori, Bacchus et Ceres de propriis (scilicet substantiis) Matri peintissimae" (and its equivalent in Greek), meaning "To the gods Venus the most reverent Mother and her son Cupid, Bacchus and Ceres have given of themselves."<sup>25</sup>

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words were familiar throughout the Middle Ages, when, for example, students cited them to their parents when asking for more money—since certainly before wine and bread could foster love (and learning), they must be bought. (I am indebted to Anthony Grafton for this information.) Boccaccio also touched upon Terence's aphorism in the *Ameto*, where he goes so far as to make Bacchus and Ceres lovers, and the parents of offspring. See *Ameto*, chapter 26, trans. Judith Serafini-Sauli (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), 71. See also Sarah Wilk (now McHam), "Tullio Lombardo's 'Double-Portrait' Reliefs," *Marsyas* 16 (1972-1973): 84, n. 77. Ficino also had Mercury allude to this aphorism in his *De Vita Triplici* II.16: "And lest I should be more stingy than Venus, who gets cold without Bacchus, receive this nectar through me from Father Liber himself: Those of you who get very cold, let them take at cold seasons twice every week two ounces of sweet wine..., with one ounce of bread, three hours before a meal..." (*Three Books on Life*, trans. Kaske and Clark, 215). The theme became a popular subject in the visual arts later in the sixteenth century, with over fifty Baroque depictions of the proverb, including works by Henrick Goltzius and Bartholomeus Spranger. See Wilk, 85. Terence's play was well known in the Renaissance, with over forty *incunabula* of the classical author's work, and was especially popular in the North. In Ferrara, Ariosto was fond of the theme. Pietro Bembo's father owned a particularly important manuscript of Terence. And one sixteenth-century commentary on Terence read: "[Q]uesto proverbio è vero, senza Cerere, cioè senza mangiare e senza Bacco, Venere, cioè la libidine e fredda e non val nulla, cioè senza bene bere, e ben mangiare, l'amore dorme" (Giovanni Fabrini da Fighine ed. of Terence [Venice, 1558], 145, as quoted in Jaynie Anderson, "The Provenance of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* and a New/Old Interpretation," in *Titian 500*, ed. Joseph Manca [Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1993], 276, and n. 35).

<sup>24</sup> Francesco Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, m4 v – m5 v, trans. Joscelyn Godwin (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 192-194. See Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo's 'Double-Portrait' Reliefs."

<sup>25</sup> Literally: "To the gods, Venus, the most reverent Mother, and to her son, Cupid, Bacchus and Ceres [have given] of their own, that is, essence" (as trans. in Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo's 'Double-Portrait' Reliefs," 80, n. 60). The inscription appears on the entrance door to the enormous dream building reconstructing the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, c6 v, trans. Godwin, 51: "To the blessed Mother, the Goddess Venus, and to her Son, Amor, Bacchus and Demeter have given of their own (substance)." A third time, the triad is mentioned, as the decoration on a fountain of Venus. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, z2-z2 v, trans. Godwin, 363.



However, critics of *voluptas* saw in love moral intemperance and suspension of reason, which they deemed the underlying forces of Bacchus' insidious power.<sup>26</sup> Some held that to indulge in sensual pleasure, even within marriage, would drain (male) cerebral activity and ultimately lead to madness.<sup>27</sup> Traditional Psychomachia held Venus and Bacchus to be on the side of Vice, where they were placed in opposition to the Virtue represented by Minerva.<sup>28</sup> In Perugino's *Combat of Love and Chastity* and in Mantegna's *Minerva Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, both painted for Isabella d'Este's Studiolo, Venus and her compatriots (who include putti, satyrs, and other perverse creatures) represented vice. In his *Trattato dell'architettura*, c. 1460, Filarete described in his imaginary ideal city Sforzinda a "House of Vice."<sup>29</sup> With a figure of Vice in the form of a satyr placed over a "fonte di bruttura" carved at the main entrance, it was a place where individuals who had sinned or perpetuated vice were sent, where they were forced to wear a garland of grape leaves and grapes or to hold a vase of wine and a cup or a priapic symbol as punishment.<sup>30</sup> Filarete wrote: "Things that cannot be permitted and that were done because of Bacchus were punished as they merit."<sup>31</sup> An image of

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<sup>26</sup> Such as Leonardo Bruni in his *Isagogicon moralis disciplinae*. See Watson, "Virtù and Voluptas in Cassone Painting," 242.

<sup>27</sup> D'Elia, "Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides," 411.

<sup>28</sup> Ernst Gombrich, "Hypnerotomachiana (1951)," in *Gombrich on the Renaissance, volume 2: Symbolic Images* (London: Phaidon, 1985), 105-108.

<sup>29</sup> Filarete (Antonio di Piero Averlino), *Treatise on Architecture*, f. 148r, XVIII, trans. John R. Spencer (with facsimile of presentation copy dedicated to Piero de' Medici, probably before 1465) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 253-254.

<sup>30</sup> Lynn Frier Kaufmann associates this fountain with the squalid pond in Mantegna's painting of *Minerva Expelling the Vices* ("The Noble Savage: Satyrs and Satyr Families in Renaissance Art," Ph.D. diss. [University of Pennsylvania, printed by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI, 1979], 68 and 127-128).

<sup>31</sup> Bacchus says, "Oh, all you who enter, remember to use my liquor which will make you happy and a friend of Venus," recalling the ancient wisdom that wine fosters love.

Bacchus was painted at the entrance to the first circle of the city, along with his “son, Priapus,” Venus, and Cupid.

But Filarete’s description of the House of Vice was not solely didactic; it also allowed for the ambiguity inherent in any representation of pagan figures from ancient mythology, the gap between honorable love and sensual passion being small.<sup>32</sup> By including a House of Vice, moreover, Filarete indicates that it was a necessary part of even the Ideal City. As Marsilio Ficino likewise acknowledged, sexual love could not be evil, must be good even, because it was natural and necessary.<sup>33</sup> The desire for procreation was not vile because there are “sparks” of divine beauty even within matter. As he explained:

The soul... has the power of understanding [Heavenly Venus], and it has the power of procreation [Vulgar Venus]. These twin powers are two Venuses in us.... When the beauty of a human body first meets our eyes, our intellect, which is the first Venus in us, worships and esteems it as an image of the divine beauty, and through this is often aroused to that. But the power of procreation, the second Venus, desires to procreate a form like this. On both sides, therefore, there is a love: there is a desire to contemplate beauty, here a desire to propagate it. Each love is virtuous and praiseworthy, for each follows a divine image.<sup>34</sup>

In light of such tolerant views, Ariadne could stand for the virtuous wife; abandoned by one husband, yes, but enamored and faithful, and to the second husband, sensual and sobering. In contrast to her appearance in classical literature, in which she was most often described in her moment of abandonment—frenzied, distraught, and overcome with grief—the emphasis in antique imagery was on her discovery by Bacchus while she slept and on the calming effect of her sensuous beauty. The Bacchic revelers freeze and hush at the sight of her (fig. 3.8, 9). When

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<sup>32</sup> See Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 160-163, and n. 58.

<sup>33</sup> See Jayne, introduction to Ficino, *De amore*, 16.

<sup>34</sup> Ficino, *De amore* II.7, 54. And later, VI.8, 119: “[T]he procreation of offspring is considered to be as necessary and virtuous as the pursuit of truth.”

riding the chariot or wagon, it is Ariadne who is more often shown clothed, alert, upright, and still; she supports her husband, giving him succor and comfort (fig. 3.10, the British Museum sarcophagus, and 3.44, the Woburn Abbey sarcophagus).

It is in this guise of faithful wife that she introduced a great deal of Bacchic imagery into Renaissance art. Better access to literary sources prompted artists to show this mythology with a vigor and accuracy more authentic to the texts and not just copied from antiques. With the influence of Neoplatonic thought, the soteriological significance of Bacchus and his associations with amorous sensuality merged together, so that imagery depicting the discovery of Ariadne (and, in consequence, corollary imagery showing the revelation of a sleeping nude) and the triumph of the god with his bride could attest to the awakening of spiritual love, the ascent of the soul, the ecstasy of divine furor, and the triumph of heavenly bliss. The epithalamial nature of this imagery lent itself well to wedding themes, where Bacchus and Ariadne could encapsulate the joys and fecundity promised by marriage. Their youth and happiness, though, also spoke to the inherent attraction of poets to the melancholy idea of the bittersweet and swift passing of time.

#### THE DISCOVERY OF A SLEEPING ARIADNE

Ancient texts told of how Bacchus returned from his triumphant journeys to find love with the beautiful Ariadne, daughter of King Minos of Crete, so recently abandoned on the island of Naxos by her erstwhile lover, Theseus.<sup>35</sup> Immediately upon discovering the maiden, Bacchus

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<sup>35</sup> The loci classici for the story of Bacchus and Ariadne are Ovid's *Fasti* III.viii, *Ars amatoria* I.525-64, and *Metamorphoses* VIII.169-182; Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* I.15; Propertius, *Elegiae* III.17; Catullus, *Carmina* LXIV; and Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* XLVII.265ff. Some authors report that Bacchus encounters Ariadne on his way to India or after his adventures there (Nonnos), or they tell of a second encounter, as in the *Fasti* III.viii, wherein he in turn had abandoned Ariadne to go to India and then returns.

took her as his bride and rode off with her in triumph upon his chariot. To ensure her honor and immortality, Bacchus converted her crown into a circular constellation of nine stars, the Corona Ariadnis. In the literary sources, Ariadne first lay peacefully asleep in her lover's bed, while unbeknownst to her Theseus ran off in the night, leaving her to awaken abandoned, dishonored, and alone on the island of Naxos. In his *Heroides X*, Ovid put into the form of a letter Ariadne's anguish upon awakening: "I send to you from that shore from which the sails bore off your ship without me, the shore on which my slumber, and you, so wretchedly betrayed me—you, who wickedly plotted against me as I slept."<sup>36</sup> Ovid's Ariadne describes her terrible agony when she realized what had happened:

Half waking only and languid from sleep, I turned upon my side and put forth hands to clasp my Theseus—he was not there! [...] Fear struck away my sleep; in terror I arose, and threw myself headlong from my abandoned bed. Straight then my palms resounded upon my breasts, and I tore my hair, all disarrayed as it was from sleep.<sup>37</sup>

She climbs a cliff and then spots Theseus' ship sailing away in the distance, a heart-breaking image that Renaissance artists rarely failed to include. She describes her mad grief as literally rendering her "like to a Bacchant roused by the Ogygian god [Bacchus]."<sup>38</sup> In the *Fasti*, Ariadne is again awake and raving, "pacing the winding shore with disheveled locks," but in this telling the moment precedes the return of Bacchus, who evidently had abandoned her just like Theseus

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<sup>36</sup> Ovid, *Heroides X*, ll.3-5, trans. Grant Showerman, 2nd ed. rev. by G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 121.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, ll.9-16, p. 121-123.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, l.48, p. 125. "Ogygian" can mean "primal" or "from the earliest ages," but alludes here to Dionysus' supposed origins in Thebes, for which the word became an epithet, deriving from Ogyges, the name of the mythological first king of Thebes' predecessor city (and in some traditions either the son or father of Cadmus, father of Semele). See <<http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Ogyges.html>>.

to go off and conquer India and comes back, moreover, with a pretty captive.<sup>39</sup> For Catullus she looked “like a marble figure of a bacchanal.”<sup>40</sup> When Bacchus and his wild followers come thundering over the landscape and espy this beautiful maiden, her terror increases. In the *Ars amatoria* Ariadne faints at the sight of this wild collection of divine and beastly creatures; then “thrice she tried to run, thrice stood frozen with fear, shivering like the thin breeze-rustled cornstalk.”<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to such poetic testimony, when ancient artists chose to illustrate this moment, Bacchus usually appears as coming upon the first, still-sleeping, unknowing girl, an elision that necessarily eliminated the sight of her sorrowful raving upon awakening.<sup>42</sup> A typical sarcophagus shows Bacchus calmly stepping down from his chariot, with the support of a lithe

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<sup>39</sup> *Fasti* III.viii.Id.8th. In *Elegy* I.3, Propertius merges the two figures—the Philostratean image of the sleeping Ariadne with the Ovidian plaint against an unfaithful lover—in his literary image of the poet approaching his sleeping beloved, Cynthia, after a night of drunken revels: “She lay, Theseus’ ship sailing away, / languid on lonely shores, the Knossian girl; / ...no less the Edonian bacchante, worn from dances, / when she fell by the grassy Apidanus: / so seemed she, breathing gentle quiet, / Cynthia, supporting her head on relaxed hands, / when I was dragging my feet drunk with much Bacchus, / ...Not yet having completely lost sensation, / I try to approach softly, pressing on the couch, / and although a pair commanded me, gripped with lust— / Love on one side, Liber the other, each a hard god— / to test her lightly, lifting up her arm, / and to take kisses, my weapon in hand, / yet I didn’t dare disturb my mistress’ quiet, / fearing the outbursts of her well-known cruelty...” (trans. Katz, 10-11). On awakening, though, Cynthia’s vitriol is free-flowing, claiming sleep had been the only cure for her crying.

<sup>40</sup> *Carmina* LXIV, l. 61: “effigies bacchantis prospicit” (trans. Cornish, 102-103).

<sup>41</sup> *The Art of Love* I.539, 552-553, trans. Green, 182-183.

<sup>42</sup> Sheila McNally, “Ariadne and Others: Images of Sleep in Greek and Early Roman Art,” *Classical Antiquity* 4, no. 2 (1985): 158-161. Images of the sleeping Ariadne, in the moment of her abandonment, not her discovery, appear first c. 480 B.C., and these tend to be part of the Theseus iconography, as opposed to Bacchic imagery (e.g. Matz, *ASR*, III.3, no. 430). Ancient wall paintings showing Theseus abandoning Ariadne, on the other hand, tended to show her awake and surprised, with gestures of alarm such as her hand over her mouth or a finger raised to her chin. See Michael Koortbojian, *Myth, Meaning, and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 95-96, and fig. 54 of an example in the British Museum, London. Representations of Bacchus approaching her where she is shown asleep begin in the fourth century B.C. There are no literary references that describe Ariadne as asleep when Bacchus arrives, except for Philostratus (who was describing art, perhaps the painting Pausanias describes seeing in Athens, *Description of Greece* 1.20.3: “Ariadne asleep, Theseus putting out to sea, and Dionysus on his arrival to carry off Ariadne”) and Nonnos (who, being much later, was surely influenced in turn by the artistic tradition, and sought to combine in hodge-podge fashion all the sources he could find). Nonnos, moreover, is the only author to attempt to avoid that elision, by combining in one scene both her lamentous abandonment and her joyous discovery. See Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* XLVII.265-467. See McNally, “Ariadne and Others,” 161-163, 179-181.

satyr, to view Ariadne, who lies asleep at his feet.<sup>43</sup> A little pan or putto from the god's entourage may rush forward to pull back her garments gently, revealing her soft flesh without waking her.<sup>44</sup> Philostratus the Elder described just such an image in his *Imagines* (I.15):

...Dionysus comes to the side of Ariadne, 'drunk with love'.... And look at Ariadne, or rather at her sleep; for her bosom is bare to the waist, and her neck is bent back and her delicate throat, and all her right armpit is visible, but the left hand rests on her mantle that a gust of wind may not expose her. How fair a sight, Dionysus, and how sweet her breath! Whether its fragrance is of apples or of grapes, you can tell after you have kissed her!<sup>45</sup>

Just as the authors had likened Ariadne's raving frenzy to a maenad's, so ancient artists showed her sleep to be like a maenad's, depicting her in the same pose of languorous, semi-nude lassitude that had demonstrated the drunken, depleted collapse of the possessed maenad.<sup>46</sup> The

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<sup>43</sup> See for example the sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum, illustrated in Erika Tietze-Conrat, "Botticelli and the Antique," *Burlington Magazine* 47 (1925): fig. B. Also another in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, illustrated in Marion Lawrence, "Three Pagan Themes in Christian Art," in *De Artibus Opuscula XI: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York: New York University Press, 1961), fig. 9. A sarcophagus now in Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, depicts the discovery of Ariadne, with a swaggering Bacchus and reveling maenads and satyrs coming upon a listless Ariadne draped over the lap of Somnus. Matz, *ASR*, part 1, cat. 45; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 80. The Blenheim sarcophagus was drawn by a Mantuan artist c. 1480. See Matthias Winner, *Zeichner sehen die Antike: Europäische Handzeichnungen 1450-1800* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen, 1967), cat. 68.

<sup>44</sup> A Greek coin depicts a similar moment, with Dionysus standing with his staff, casually gazing down at the supine Ariadne, while little satyrs prance about excitedly. See Max Bernhart, "Dionysos und seine Familie auf griechischen Münzen: Numismatischer Beitrag zur Ikonographie des Dionysos," *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* I (1949): pl. VI, fig. 18.

<sup>45</sup> Philostratus, *Imagines* I.15, trans. Arthur Fairbanks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 61-65. Philostratus cites Anacreon, "the Teian poet," as calling those "overmastered by love" as being "drunk with love." Anacreon, Frag. 21: "Lo! I climb up and dive from the White Cliff into the hoary wave, drunken with love" (*Lyra Graeca*, trans. J. M. Edmonds, rev. ed. [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964], vol. II, 149). Writing in the third century A.D., Philostratus is responding to a long-established visual tradition. In describing the image, Philostratus' account of the mythological details is dependent on this visual tradition, and not the literary one, and so he describes what he sees, which showed Ariadne still in her first sleep, unaware of Theseus' treachery, at the moment of Bacchus' arrival. The visual tradition, in other words, tended to conflate these moments into one.

<sup>46</sup> Maenadic sleepers more often appeared on gems or ceramic wine vessels. For an early example of such a gem, see the c. fifth-century-B.C. blue chalcedony in John Boardman, *Intaglios and Rings — Greek, Etruscan and Eastern* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), cat. 31 and p. 14. In Roman literature, other women came to be attacked by satyrs while sleeping: Antiope (by Zeus in the form of a satyr; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI.1) and Amymone (by a satyr and then Poseidon; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 1519A or 169). McNally, "Ariadne and Others," 157, n. 16. An example of a sarcophagus that shows a sleeping maenad, depleted from her frenzies, is in Museo Archeologico, Naples, and was known in the Renaissance (fig. 4.16). The maenad is dressed but her gown slips

choice to portray Ariadne this way afforded the artist an opportunity to display the insensible, languid body of his subject for the delectation of his audience.<sup>47</sup>

But while the insensate maenad was vulnerable to attack by lascivious satyrs, the sleeping Ariadne prepared for an encounter of a far different kind. Ariadne's sleep served as a metaphor for death and rebirth.<sup>48</sup> She is often shown lying in the lap of a figure, sometimes Somnus, or Sleep, but also Death, a Fury, or other figure related to the Underworld (fig. 3.11). As such, her sleep would not be any normal rest, but symbolic of the eternal slumber from which she would awaken to find herself in the presence of the god, an awakening that will lead to her apotheosis.<sup>49</sup> The expectation of her reawakening stood for the ultimate epiphany sought by any devout follower of the Dionysian Mysteries—the witnessing of the divine and firsthand communion with Bacchus.<sup>50</sup> The process of initiation induced an ecstatic state, a *hieros gamos*, that was a foretaste of the final union.<sup>51</sup> The eschatological reference was clear for the deceased lying within, whose own hope would have been to attain a similar resurrection and blissful afterlife at

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from her shoulders, and she is shown supine on a couch, her left arm dangling and her right arm thrown far back over her reclining head. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 70. For a list of sleeping maenads in ancient art, see Lacey Davis Caskey with John D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), vol. 2, 96-99. Propertius, *Elegies* I.3, uses the analogy of Ariadne's sleep to describe his beloved Cynthia and reveal their caustic relationship.

<sup>47</sup> This is an aesthetic motivation that will factor in the popularity of the sleeping nude woman in early sixteenth-century Venetian art too, as we will see below. See Meiss, "Sleep in Venice," 225.

<sup>48</sup> See Emeline Richardson, "The Story of Ariadne in Italy," in *Studies in Classical Art and Archaeology: A Tribute to Peter Heinrich Von Blanckenhagen* (Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustine Publishers, 1979), 189-195. Also Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 154.

<sup>49</sup> Richardson, "The Story of Ariadne," 193-194; McNally, "Ariadne and Others," 165-170.

<sup>50</sup> Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire*, 138-139.

<sup>51</sup> Plutarch and others described the experience of initiation, and this ritual of hierogamy, as resembling a death. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 156, and n. 15.

the banquet of heaven “through the touch of divinity.”<sup>52</sup> In conjunction with this higher purpose, the unveiling act being depicted was quite serious; the satyrs do the god’s bidding with reverence and awe, not like the impression given by the more prurient unveiling of a sleeping maenad. It may have further evoked acts of revealing the body in the initiation rites that the cult followers would have encountered.<sup>53</sup> The unveiling of the body also recalled the Platonic notion of the body being like a mere garment, a veil for the soul.<sup>54</sup> Just as the initiate into the cult underwent a transformation into a new self, so Ariadne was understood to have undergone just such a momentous change. The metaphor of sleep was key, since sleep was often literally the vehicle by which initiates underwent this transformation.<sup>55</sup> Sleep induced a state of *vacatio*, just as frenzied dancing and intoxication created *ekstasis* (and often ended in exhausted slumber), and both opened the initiate to communication with the divine.<sup>56</sup> The anticipation of Ariadne’s reawakening likewise evoked spring vegetation festivals, a part of Bacchic cult practice and his role as a fertility god, which celebrated the metaphor of awakening the earth each spring with song, dance, and the new wine, symbolized by the god’s reveling entourage.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ferguson, *The Religions of the Roman Empire*, 138; McNally, “Ariadne and Others,” 168-170; Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 40-41, 131-135; Turcan, *Les sarcophages romains à représentations dionysiaques*.

<sup>53</sup> McNally, “Ariadne and Others,” 184. Consider the Villa of the Mysteries frescoes, in which one young female initiate bears her back to the whip of the winged figure. For ancient Greek images of satyrs approaching maenads, see *ibid.*, 157-158.

<sup>54</sup> Plato, *Phaedo* 83. See Bober, “The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia,” 232.

<sup>55</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia: De anima* frg. 178, describes the experience of the initiate as mirroring that of the experience of death. Cited in McNally, “Ariadne and Others,” 186.

<sup>56</sup> See Meiss, “Sleep in Venice,” 224; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> T. B. L. Webster, “The Myth of Ariadne from Homer to Catullus,” *Greece and Rome* 13, 2nd. ser. (1966): 22-23; McNally, “Ariadne and Others,” 159-161, 183; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), 146.



Early in the fifteenth century, when artists studied antique iconography, they appear intrigued by the novel and expressive depictions of the recumbent naked body, exploring her form in drawings.<sup>58</sup> When literally illustrating Bacchic mythology in new works of art, however, they tended to circumvent these nudes, cloaking characters instead in contemporary garb and posing them in more familiar late medieval stances. One sees this incongruity at work in one of the first post-antique illustrations of the discovery of Ariadne, in an illumination of Dante's *Divine Comedy* by Giovanni di Paolo (c. 1440-1444) (fig. 3.12).<sup>59</sup> A pseudo-antique Theseus stands on the left, slaying a club-wielding Minotaur (appearing as a centaur) with a sword in a barren landscape lacking the Labyrinth.<sup>60</sup> Across the sea to the right, a fully Quattrocento Ariadne, dressed in a long, simple gown, lies asleep upon a small island in a typical medieval position: on her side with her head resting down on the shoulder of the arm bent upon the ground (as opposed to the classical position with the upper arm thrown over her tossed-back head).<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Similar to a reclining Ariadne, Gentile da Fabriano drew a sleeping Rhea Silvia and a dead Clytemnestra from two different sarcophagi on one sheet now in Milan, clearly intrigued by this languid form (fig. 3.25). Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Cod. F 214, fol. 13r. See Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, "Gentile da Fabriano in Rom und die Anfänge des Antikenstudiums," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 11, 3rd ser. (1960): 94-95, fig. 44, cat. 18. The Mars and Rhea Silvia sarcophagus is thought to have been installed in the wall of S. Giovanni in Laterano in Rome by the early fifteenth century and is now in the Palazzo Mattei, Rome, where it was installed by 1613 (Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 25). The Orestes sarcophagus may have been in front of S. Stefano in Cacco where it was located at least in 1530, and is now in the Palazzo Giustiniani, Rome (ibid., cat. 106).

<sup>59</sup> The image accompanies Canto XIII.14-15 of the *Paradiso*, in which Dante compares the lights of Heaven revolving around him and Beatrice to the Corona Borealis, derived from Ariadne's crown. Ms. Yates-Thompson Codex 36, British Museum, London, c. 1438-1444, made for Alfonso V d'Aragona. John Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso: The Illuminations of Dante's Divine Comedy by Giovanni di Paolo* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), 47, 122-123. The lines of the fourth and fifth tercets of canto XIII are: "Imagini / la boca di quel corno / che si comincia in punta de lo stelo / a cui la prima rota va dintorno, / aver fatto di sè due segni in cielo, / qual fece la figliuola di Minoi / allora che senti di morte il gelo" (quoted in Pope-Hennessy, 47). See also Benjamin David, "The Paradisal Body in Giovanni di Paolo's Illuminations of The *Commedia*," *Dante Studies* 122 (2004): 45-69, esp. 52-55.

<sup>60</sup> The illustration is on fol. 152r. Theseus wears the typical *all'antica* helmet, cuirass, skirt, and leg armor of "Roman" and "Greek" heroes as on contemporary *cazzoni*.

<sup>61</sup> See Meiss, "Sleep in Venice," 216 and n. 25.

Above her, a youthful, nude, winged male figure (be he an Amor, an emissary of love from Bacchus, or “a sort of medieval, angelic Bacchus”) swoops down and takes up the hand of the still sleeping maiden.<sup>62</sup> He is not the god represented on ancient sarcophagi—that swaggering youth supported by satyrs—but appears in the only way, perhaps, that the artist could imagine a god “magically” descending from heaven: as a winged *spiritello*.<sup>63</sup> There are no traces of Bacchanalian revelers or paraphernalia in the image; nonetheless, despite its unclassical appearance, the artist or his advisor knew the basic elements of the story of Ariadne and Theseus, which was not itself included in Dante’s text. His knowledge was surely influenced by the popular commentaries on the *Divine Comedy*, especially the anonymous fourteenth-century *Ottimo Commento*, where the allusion to Ariadne in the *Paradiso* was related to the earlier

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<sup>62</sup> Meiss, “Sleep in Venice,” 215. Pope-Hennessy identifies this figure as an Amor, which reappears in the illumination to Canto XVII, on fol. 158r, to seduce Hippolytus’ stepmother, Phaedra, after Theseus’ departure from Athens. See also David, who argues that the winged figures in each of these illuminations reflect embodiments of the variations of the women’s love. David writes: “The naked winged figures set up but simultaneously dissolve an opposition of visualizations of sexuality” (“The Paradisal Body,” 54-55). The winged love, or Amor, appears in several illuminations, including one accompanying *Paradiso* 1.79, in which Dante mentions the “amor che ‘l ciel governi,” whom Giovanni di Paolo depicts as a naked, winged youth suspended within concentric spheres. An identification of the flying god as Jupiter, as he is labeled in Baldini’s engraving, is not entirely implausible since in Hesiod’s *Theogony* the author states that “the son of Cronos made her deathless and unaging for him [Dionysus]” (*Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns and Homeric Hymns*, ll. 947-949, trans. Evelyn-White). But in the *Metamorphoses* and other sources, it is Bacchus who makes Ariadne immortal and sets her bridal crown amidst the stars. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII.170-182: “[T]hrough him she won a place in heaven as the Northern Crown—Corona—an eternal constellation; for from her brow, he took her diadem and sent it up to heaven. Through thin air, it flew, and in its flight, its gems were changed: they blazed as flames—but its crown-shape was saved” (trans. Mandelbaum, 254). The conflation of Bacchus with a winged figure, whether Jupiter or not, may derive from the presence in many similar scenes on sarcophagi of a winged cupid or winged Hypnos near the sleeping figure of Ariadne. There is also a reference in Pausanias, *Description of Greece* III. *Laconia*, xix, 6 to the Bacchic epithet “*psilax*,” meaning “winged”: “The natives worship the Amyclaeon god and Dionysus, surnaming the latter, quite correctly I think, *psilax*. For *psila* is Doric for wings, and wine uplifts and lightens their spirit no less than wings do birds” (trans. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Omerod [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918]). Although this source is not mentioned until Rabelais picks up the idea of a winged Bacchus in his *Quart Livre* (1552), it could be possible that some faint memory of this association had survived during the Middle Ages and into the fifteenth century. In *Carmina* LXIV, l. 251, Catullus, moreover, writes: “At parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus,” “On another part of the tapestry young Bacchus was flying, or flitting, about.” Such an idea could have been visualized as Bacchus literally flying with wings. See M. A. Screech, “The Winged Bacchus (Pausanias, Rabelais and Later Emblematisers),” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 259-262.

<sup>63</sup> Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, chaps. 1 and 2.

reference to the Minotaur in the *Inferno*.<sup>64</sup> Giovanni di Paolo was unconcerned with replicating the features of the myth as revealed in ancient reliefs, however, and created instead a free interpretation and innovative illustration of mythological figures in ahistorical guise, with only the merest hints at antiquity.

Bartolomeo di Giovanni's Ariadne is also a Renaissance woman in a Renaissance bed, even though she is nude and has the added motif of her arm draped over her head (even if "incorrect"). Perhaps depicting a nude woman lying on a beach was too risqué, due in part to medieval allegories that decried the morals of these ancient characters. Consider the assessment of the late antique Christian author Lactantius (245-325 A.D.), whose "Of the False Worship of the Gods" (Book 1 of his *Divine Institutes*) was aimed at cultivated pagan readers:

[Bacchus, or Liber] was most shamefully overpowered by love and lust. For, being conveyed to Crete with his effeminate retinue, he met with an unchaste woman on the shore; and in the confidence inspired by his Indian victory, he wished to give proof of his manliness, lest he should appear too effeminate. And so he took to himself in marriage that woman, the betrayer of her father, and the murderer of her brother [the Minotaur], after she had been deserted and repudiated by another lover.<sup>65</sup>

Such pejorative opinions survived to taint the perception of her conduct into the Renaissance.

Boccaccio attributed her behavior to drunken lassitude, having succumbed with typical womanly

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<sup>64</sup> *L'Ottimo Commento della Divina Commedia: testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante*, ed. Alessandro Torri (Pisa: Presso Niccolò Capurro, 1829), reprinted with a preface by Francesco Mazzoni (Bologna: Arnaldo Forni Editore, 1995). The *Ottimo Commento* was the earliest Florentine commentary on the Divine Comedy, and might be by Ser Andrea di Ser Lancia. David, "The Paradisal Body," 48. See also Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso*, introduction, 12-13. David translates *L'Ottimo Commento* in reference to *Paradiso* 13.13-15, vol. 3, 312: "And [because the commentator has told the story already in reference to *Inferno* 12.18] therefore it is not necessary to repeat how Theseus, through the teaching of Ariadne, killed the Minotaur, and he took Phaedra, her sister [*sirocchia*] with him to Athens, the one for his wife and Phaedra for Hippolytus; and how [when] Phaedra pleased him more than Ariadne, he left Ariadne on an island in the sea, where Bacchus descended and took her with him into Heaven, and then she was turned into that constellation of the crown: but the truth was that she died there, and the poets pretend that she was changed by the gods into a constellation, which are two semicircles, one enclosed within the other" ("The Paradisal Body," 53, n. 27).

<sup>65</sup> Lactantius, *Institutiones divinae* or *Divine Institutes* I.10, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, ed. Alexander Roberts et al. (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886) as quoted in Ward et al., *The Quest for Theseus*, 187-188.

weakness to the natural abundance of wine on the island of Naxos, which in turn was what induced Theseus to leave her. She was called Bacchus' wife, he said, only as a metaphor for her drunkenness. Her crown was taken up into the sky a sign of her shame, a beacon for all to see. In sum, Boccaccio wrote: "Not only is the terrible disgrace of the scandal also brought to man through his mouth, but under the influence of wine, a woman sullies herself in the embraces of anyone at all."<sup>66</sup> At the same time, however, others could deem what happened to Ariadne as a metaphor for just rewards. As Berchorius argued in his *Ovidius moralizatus*: "Such pious persons are rewarded by God, for it frequently happens that what is held back by ungrateful men is made up by liberal ones." Berchorius related Ariadne's good fortune at being taken up by a god to Seneca's statement: "Expect a reward from someone other than the one you did the deed for."<sup>67</sup>

More than anything, however, it seems that artists sought, or were urged by their advisors, to depict the ancient mythology "correctly," that is, according to literary sources. This drive for textual authenticity reiterates the persistence of the supremacy of word over image. Despite artists' evident interest in recording and learning from extant visual images, there was still a desire for the myths to be shown accurately, according to the newly acquired, and newly readable, classical texts. Consequently, in most fifteenth- and sixteenth-century depictions of the Discovery of Ariadne, she is shown exactly as she was described: awake and, to some extent or another, frantic. This triumph of literalism was also a triumph of antiquity of sorts, in its

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<sup>66</sup> Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium*, Book XI.xxix, trans. Hoover, 70-71. It had been commonly understood that alcohol and women were two of the main culprits that hindered men's attainment of virtue. See, for example, the twelfth-century *Moralis Philosophia de Honesto et Utili* (a set of short definitions of ethical terms plus quotations from the Bible and other sources), which cites *Fasti* I, 301 ("Their lofty natures neither love nor wine did break") in conjunction with Ecclesiasticus 19:2 as testimony for this assertion. See Reynolds, "The *Ovidius Moralizatus*," introduction, 4.

<sup>67</sup> Seneca, quoted by Berchorius, *Ovidius moralizatus*, regarding *Metamorphoses* VIII, 169ff, trans. Reynolds, 305.

reassertion of the ancient texts themselves and in the manifestation of a new aura of emotive accuracy that more truly evoked the spirit of the antique.

#### THE ABANDONMENT AND DISCOVERY OF A FRENZIED ARIADNE

Around 1520, Girolamo del Pacchia portrayed the abandonment of Ariadne on a *cassone* now in Siena with an attempt to embody the impassioned grief and terror of the abandoned girl (fig. 3.13).<sup>68</sup> He followed quite literally the description of her abandonment provided by Catullus' *Carmina* and Ovid's *Ars amatoria* (the texts behind Titian's contemporaneous image of *Bacchus and Ariadne*). She is the dominant figure in the painting, and her frenzy is articulated in a maenadic figure, rushing upon the shore, loosened draperies flying in the breeze, pulling away from her bared body. She holds up her veil as a small white flag, just as she had in the Baldini engraving, in one last effort to draw Theseus' attention. As Catullus described her, so the artist shows her:

with streaming eyes..., like a marble figure of a bacchanal, [she] looks forth, alas!, looks forth tempest-tost with great tides of passion. Nor does she still keep the delicate headband on her golden head, nor has her breast veiled by the covering of her light raiment, nor her milk-white bosom bound with the smooth girdle; all these, as they slip off around her whole body, before her very feet the salt waves lapped.<sup>69</sup>

She calls out a warning to all womankind: "Henceforth let no woman believe a man's oath, let none believe that a man's speeches can be trustworthy. [...] [A]s soon as the lust of their greedy mind is satisfied, they remember not their words, they heed not their perjuries."<sup>70</sup> So del Pacchia shows her, looking out beseechingly at her viewers. She reaches toward the retreating ship, yet

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<sup>68</sup> Del Pacchia was a Siennese painter (1477-c. 1530). *Cassone* in the Chigi Saracini Collection, Siena. Illustrated in Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*, cat. VII.9, pp. 268-269.

<sup>69</sup> Catullus, *Carmina*, LXIV, ll. 60-66, trans. Cornish, 103.

her gaze is fixed not on her lover, but on the viewer, pinning on him her sorrow and loss, her violated chastity and trust.<sup>71</sup>

Appearing on pieces of domestic furniture, the subject was appropriate for a wedding commission: Ariadne's abandonment instructs the groom to adhere more faithfully to his promises, and the bride to strive to keep her husband. Hope is conveyed in del Pacchia's work by the small figure of Bacchus, parading across the sky in a sled-like chariot drawn by four paired cheetahs. As in Ovid's *Ars amatoria*, "then came the god, his chariot grape-clustered, / Paired tigers padding on as he shook the golden reins."<sup>72</sup> No author described the chariot riding through the sky, but in strict accord with fifteenth-century tradition of *all'antica* depictions of the planets (where the deities ride aloft upon chariots, fig. 3.14), del Pacchia conveys the god's arrival in the fashion to which he was accustomed (and which was suited to the more traditionalist medium of *cassoni*).<sup>73</sup>

Ultimately, Titian would capture the true frenzy of Ariadne in his painting of her discovery by Bacchus, created for the Camerino d'Alabastro of Duke Alfonso I d'Este of Ferrara (fig. 3.15).<sup>74</sup> From approximately 1520 to 1523, the Venetian painter derived from the same

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<sup>70</sup> Catullus, *Carmina*, LXIV, ll. 143-144, 147-148, 107.

<sup>71</sup> In a similar work, attributed to Buonsignori, a more demure Ariadne stands at the edge of a cliff, hands clasped, staring full-faced into our own. Lanz collection, Amsterdam, in Schubring, *Cassoni*, vol. II, pl. CLXII, cat. No. 688.

<sup>72</sup> Ovid, *Ars amatoria*, Book I, ll. 549-550, trans. Green, 183; "Iam deus in curru, quem summum texerat uvis, tigris adiunctis aurea lora dabat."

<sup>73</sup> Such planetary triumphs can be seen in the Baldini-esque engravings of the Children of the Planets, in the series of Tarrochi engravings showing Luna and Sol (where the planets are based on their descriptions in the *Libellus de imaginibus deorum*), or in paintings such as the Palazzo Schifanoia zodiac frescoes.

<sup>74</sup> *The Discovery of Ariadne*, traditionally called *Bacchus and Ariadne*, National Gallery, London. The literature on the painting and the Camerino as a whole is extensive, and will be delved into further in Chapter Six. The critical sources regarding this painting include John Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara: A Study of Styles and Taste* (New York: Phaidon Publishers, 1956); Cecil Gould, *The Studio of Alfonso d'Este and Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne: A Re-Examination of the Chronology of the Bacchanals and of the Evolution of One of Them* (London: National Gallery, 1969); Philip Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus in Bellini's and Titian's Bacchanals for Alfonso

literary sources as del Pacchia a masterpiece of innovative classicism.<sup>75</sup> Here it was not the abandonment so much as the discovery that was his focus.<sup>76</sup> Where Catullus' text emphasized the depiction of Ariadne's reaction to her desertion, Ovid synthesized all her emotions into a few lines and integrated this into the seamless telling of the arrival of Bacchus and his revelrous followers. Ariadne is described frantically wandering the shore of Naxos, "crazed out of her mind, fresh-roused from sleep, in an ungirt robe, blonde hair streaming loose, barefoot, calling

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d'Este," *Studies in the History of Art* 6 (1974): 37-9; Arthur Lucas and Joyce Plesters, "Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 2 (1978): 25-47; Paul Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus and Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne'," *Burlington Magazine* 128 (1986): 347-350; John Shearman, "Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," in *"Il se rendit en Italie": études offertes à André Chastel* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987), 209-230; G. Cavalli-Björkman, ed., *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens* (Stockholm: Nationalmuseum, 1987); Peter Humfrey, "Titian's *Bacchanals* for Duke Alfonso's Camerino: A Re-Examination of the Chronology," in *L'età di Alfonso I e la pittura del Dosso: atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Ferrara, Palazzina di Marfisa d'Este, 1998* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 2004), 179-186; and Anthony Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation: Equicola's Seasons of Desire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010). See also the discussion of the painting in works on Titian's oeuvre, including Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, Vol. 3: *The Mythological and Historical Paintings* (London: Phaidon, 1975); Filippo Pedrocchi, *Titian: the Complete Paintings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001); Jaffé, *Titian*; and Patricia Meilman, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Titian* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>75</sup> The order of execution of Titian's three paintings for the Camerino and the correlating dates of each is contended, with the earlier tradition holding that the *Bacchus and Ariadne* was painted last, from 1522 (when it was seen in the artist's studio) to 1523, when it was delivered (Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*). Gould (*The Studio of Alfonso d'Este*), followed by Charles Hope ("The 'Camerino d'Alabastro' of Alfonso d'Este, 2 parts," *The Burlington Magazine* CXIII [1971]: 641-650, 712-721), Fehl ("The Worship of Bacchus and Venus"), and Shearman ("Alfonso d'Este's Camerino") among others, shifted the order, so that the *Worship of Venus* (or *Cupids*), 1518-1520, was to be followed by the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, thought to be commissioned in 1520 to replace Raphael's contribution following that artist's death, and then the *Andrians* last, painted 1523-1524/25. Recently a few scholars have shifted back to the former order, which sees the *Bacchus* as the final and more mature work, and as an independent commission and not a completion of Raphael's commission. See Humfrey, "Titian's Bacchanals." To me, the *Andrians* seems like the culmination of the cycle, however, as we will discuss in Chapter Six.

<sup>76</sup> Theseus' ship may be just visible at the far left, but some doubt even this because the ship sails a white instead of black sail, as in the legend. Still, it seems that the main literary source is the *Ars amatoria* and not the *Fasti* III.459-516; that is, that the image shows the first encounter of Bacchus and Ariadne, and not his second, especially since most classical sources imply that he is returning from his triumph in India upon his first encounter with Ariadne anyway. See Warren Tresidder, "The Cheetahs in Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne'," *Burlington Magazine* 123 (1981): 481-485. Scholars who have proposed the *Fasti* as the source include Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic: The Wrightsman Lectures* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 142-144; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 58; David Rosand, *Titian* (New York: Abrams, 1978), 79; and Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, vol. 3, 29-41, 143-153. Panofsky argues that the cheetahs are intended to indicate Bacchus' return from India, but as Tresidder convincingly proves, a "cheetah" is simply the sixteenth-century visual manifestation of the Latin "tigre," which was translated only in terms of the feline variety known in Italy at the time, that is, a *pardo* or *leopardo*. Cheetahs were common in courtly "zoos" and were used as hunting cats; these would have been the "tigers" that Alfonso and his circle would have expected, and which Titian could have studied closely. The

‘Ah cruel Theseus!’ to the deaf waves....” Thereupon “the whole shore echoed with frenzied drumming, the clash of cymbals...,” at the sight of which Ariadne faints in terror:

And then came the god, his chariot grape-clustered, paired tigers padding on as he shook the golden reins. Poor girl: lost voice, lost colour—lost Theseus. Thrice she tried to run, thrice stood frozen with fear, shivering.... ‘I am here for you,’ the god told her. ‘My love will prove more faithful. No need for fear. You shall be Wife to Bacchus, take the sky as your dowry, be seen there as a star, the Cretan Crown, a familiar guide to wandering vessels.’ Down he sprang from his chariot lest the girl take fright at the tigers; set his foot on the shore, then gathered her up in his arms—no resistance—and bore her away. [...] Loud cheers, a riotous wedding: Bacchus and his bride were soon bedded down.<sup>77</sup>

Most of the iconographic features of Titian’s painting, including Bacchus’ leap and the presence of the crown of stars, can be traced to Ovid’s text. For his part, Catullus provided an *ekphrasis* of imagery on the coverlet on the marriage bed of Pelius and Thetis, which included the sad scene of Ariadne’s abandonment and her triumphant discovery by Bacchus:

...[T]here, looking forth from the wave-sounding shore of Dia [Naxos], Ariadna sees Theseus, as he sails away with swift fleet, Ariadna bearing wild madness [*furores*] in her heart. [...] [N]ow first wakened from treacherous sleep she sees herself, poor wretch, deserted on the lonely sand. [...]

In another part of the tapestry youthful Bacchus was wandering [*volitibat*] with the rout of Satyrs and the Nysa-born Sileni, seeking thee, Ariadna, and fired with thy love; ...who then busy here and there, were raging with frenzied mind, while ‘Evoe!’ they cried tumultuously....

Some of them were waving thyrsi with shrouded points, some tossing about the limbs of a mangled steer, some girding themselves with writhing serpents.... Others beat timbrels with uplifted hands, or raised

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popularity of Philostratus at the Este court, and that author’s repeated association of “leopards” with Bacchus may also contribute to forming this visual association.

<sup>77</sup> Ovid, *The Art of Love* 1.549ff, trans. Green, 183. *Ars amatoria* 1.549-564: “Iam deus in curru, quem summum texerat uvis, / Tigribus adiunctis aurea lora dabat: / Et color et Theseus et vox abiere puellae: / Terque fugam petiit, terque retenta metu est. / Horruit, ut graciles, agitat quas venturs, aristae, / Ut levis in madida canna palude tremit. / Cui deus ‘en, adsum tibi cura fidelior’ inquit: / ‘Pone metum: Bacchi, Cnosias, uxor eris. / Munus habe caelum; caelo spectabere sidus; / Saepe reges dubiam Cressa Corona ratem.’ / Dixit, et e curru, ne tigres illa timeret, / Desilit, inposito cessit harena pede: / Implicitamque sinu (neque enim pugnare valebat) / Abstulit; in facili est omnia posse deo. / Pars ‘Hymenaeae’ canunt, pars clamant ‘Euhion, euhue!’ / Sic coeunt sacro nupta deusque toro” (*Art of Love and Other Poems*, trans. J. H. Mozley, 2nd ed., rev. G. P. Goold [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979], 50).



clear clashings with cymbals of rounded bronze: many blew horns with harsh-sounding drone, and the barbarian pipe shrilled with dreadful din.<sup>78</sup>

Titian's careful ear for the texts (likely assisted by the written instructions provided him by Alfonso's humanist advisors) inspired him to push the visual forms of his subject matter.<sup>79</sup>

Freeing himself from both antique and contemporary convention, Titian twisted Ariadne away from the picture plane, rendering her face almost invisible (fig. 3.16).<sup>80</sup> But even though we can no longer see her tear-stained cheeks, our recognition of her emotion is by no means diminished. In one swift and continuous gesture Titian has compressed the passage of time, so that we read the progression of her psyche from the initial perception of abandonment—her calling and

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<sup>78</sup> *Carmina*, LXIV, ll. 52-54, 56-57, 251-264, trans. Cornish, 101-103, 115-117.

<sup>79</sup> The elaborate written instructions that the artist received were likely from Mario Equicola, although they do not survive. In a letter of October 1511, from Equicola to Isabella, he writes: "The Lord Duke [Alfonso] wants me to stay eight days: the reason is the painting of a room in which will go six fables of histories; I have already found them and written them down" (as quoted in Shearman, "Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 213). See also Andrea Bayer, "Dosso's Public: The Este Court at Ferrara," in *Dosso Dossi, Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara*, ed. Peter Humfrey and Mauro Lucco (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, exhib. cat., 1998), 33. Another source for the composition may have been Poliziano (who described the meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne in his *Stanze per la Giostra*, i.110-112), and other advisors may have been Battista Guarino (whose edition of Catullus' *Carmina* with commentary was published in 1521 with a dedication to Alfonso, though composed likely in the 1490s), and Ludovico Ariosto (whose 1516 *Orlando furioso* contained allusions to both Catullus' and Poliziano's *ekphrasis*) (Bayer, 36-37). Titian himself referred to his instructions in a letter of 1518, saying that his painting was the body to the "soul" provided by the program, or "*istruzione*." See Anthony Colantuono, "Tears of Amber: Titian's *Andrians*, the River Po and the Iconology of Difference," in *Phaethon's Children: The Este Court and Its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara*, ed. Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 226-227. See also Shearman, who argues for Ariosto being the main advisor for the *Bacchus and Ariadne* (*Only Connect... Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992], 255-258). Also Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus," 347-350.

<sup>80</sup> Gould notes the uncommon use of the *profil perdu* by Titian in this work, and relates it to the possible study of drawings by Raphael (perhaps even from a *disegno* for his unfinished commission), since the latter used this sort of pose in the *Fire on the Borgo* and the *Expulsion of Heliiodorus* in Rome ("The Studio of Alfonso d'Este"). See Jodi Cranston regarding Raphael's use of the *figura serpentinata* in the kneeling woman in his *Transfiguration*, 1517-1520 ("Tropes of Revelation in Raphael's *Transfiguration*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 56 [2003]: 1-25). Also David Summers, "Maniera and Movement: The Figura Serpentinata," *Art Quarterly* 35 (1972): 269-301; Joanne Snow-Smith, "Michelangelo's Christian Neoplatonic Aesthetic of Beauty in his Early *Oeuvre*: The *Nuditas Virtualis* Image," in *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art*, eds. Francis Ames-Lewis and Mary Rogers (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998). Besides Michelangelo, Leonardo also developed the serpentine pose early on in his *Leda and the Swan* of c.1504. Titian's Ariadne, in fact, recalls a much earlier use of this sort of pose, by Agostino di Duccio in his relief of King Sigismund encountering an angel on his way to Agaunum, c. 1450-57, thought to have originally been part of the Chapel of St. Sigimund in the Tempio Malatestiano (Castello Sforzesco, Milan) (fig. 2.74a). See Joachim Poeschke, *Donatello and His World: Sculpture of the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Russell Stockman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 416.

waving out to the sea (where we see the ship sailing away on the horizon)—to her fearful and shocked awareness that she is no longer alone, all the way to her immediate consciousness of divine love and moment of transcendence. Titian's depiction of her *figura serpentinata*—her body spiraling from past, present, and into future—embodies this experience of transformation, a literal spiritual and religious conversion.<sup>81</sup> The synchronization is furthered by the depiction of the ring of stars, her constellation, in the daylit sky above her. Bacchus has not even landed on the earth yet, his hair and stole still twist and fly, rising before falling, and yet already all of time has happened, and the divine and the human have been united (fig. 3.17).<sup>82</sup>

The novelty of Titian's *Discovery of Ariadne* lies in the fact that his Bacchus does not surreptitiously unveil a sleeping beauty but rather springs upon her quickly and noisily. The tambourines and cymbals are clashing, the aulos is blowing, the wild man is grunting, the dog is barking, and feet are stomping. Although Bacchus fills the center of the composition—momentarily frozen in mid-air, caught between chariot and earth—we immediately relate to Ariadne's standpoint, as she spirals away in startlement and fear. In classical treatments of the subject, the viewer is made part of Bacchus' train of followers, coming with them from left to right, toward the revelation of the sleeping Ariadne. In Titian's composition, the viewer takes Ariadne's viewpoint instead; she turns away from us, as if we stand right behind her, which draws us to look over her shoulder to observe and react to the same tumultuous vision she encounters. She serves almost as an intermediary figure, like that called for in Alberti's *On Painting*, who resides in the liminal space between picture and audience. We watch as this intimidating band of odd and inhuman characters emerges from the wood from the right and

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<sup>81</sup> Cranston, "Tropes of Revelation," 16.

<sup>82</sup> Panofsky identifies an antique model for Bacchus' leaping pose in an Orestes sarcophagus, in the Lateran, Rome (*Problems in Titian*, 142, fig. 57).

descends the hill upon us as upon her (fig. 3.18). And Titian gives her a more natural, human reaction than had been shown before. The element of rape, or at least seduction, underlies every meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne. But instead of idealizing this encounter, presupposing in sexual conquest the theme of love (as is usually done in Renaissance imagery of rape), Titian chose to show Bacchus' quarry as terrified and reluctant.<sup>83</sup> Yet despite her apprehension, she does not lose control; she is not completely the frenzied maenad, incoherent and insensible. Her eyes look with fierce self-knowledge and control into the longing, piercing eyes of the god. Titian's insight was to lock the new lovers in this impassioned gaze, which pulls the two together like an invisible thread (fig. 3.19). What Titian articulates by this connection is that what unites the two is greater than mere physical passion or the overpowering and dominating love of a god for a mortal. Rather, Ariadne is experiencing a divine epiphany and will come away from the encounter with immortality. Bacchus is himself moved beyond reason, as his vision evokes an instantaneous suspension of thought and an all-encompassing love. The emphasis on sight as the sense that unites the two, and us to them, corresponds with the Neoplatonic *paragone* of the senses, in which vision could be deemed superior for its unmitigated directness.<sup>84</sup> Unlike poetry,

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Yael Even, "Daphne (Without Apollo) Reconsidered: Some Disregarded Images of Sexual Pursuit in Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art," *Studies in Iconography* 18 (1997): 143-159; Diane Wolfthal, *Images of Rape: The "Heroic" Tradition and Its Alternatives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). As Even says, "most representations of rapes, attempted rapes, and sexual pursuits are viewed not from the perspective of their female but from that of their male protagonist; they appear as his, not her, dramatic tale" (p. 157). Compare this to Titian's depiction of other rape victims, such as Europa (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston); Leonard Barkan remarks: "What separated Titian's Europa from its classical prototypes was the concentration upon the heroine and the intensity of her own emotional experience" (*The Gods Made Flesh*, 206). It is interesting that in his painting of Europa, some forty years after his Ariadne, Titian is still working on the same pose: with the right arm up and the face looking back over the shoulder, just seen from the front now, and reclining, instead of from the back. Note also that the pose of the little putto riding the dolphin in the water in the *Rape of Europa* also recalls the flying Bacchus in the Camerino picture.

<sup>84</sup> Rosand, "Ermeneutica Amorosa: Observations on the Interpretation of Titian's Venuses," in *Tiziano e Venezia: Convegno Internazionale di Studi, Venezia, 1976* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1980), 378. See Ficino's *De amore* I.4, where he argues that the highest Love is the love of Beauty, which can only be loved through sight, hearing, and the mind. Also Ficino, *Letters* 4.66, for a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici and Bernardo Bembo arguing that vision is itself more potent than words for inspiring love. As Ruvoldt notes, Ficino deemed sight as the direct path to the soul,

which was filtered through words, the painted image was directly accessible to the eyes. As Leonardo asserted, the eye was truly superior, the only organ to gather all the senses into it.<sup>85</sup> Titian's work manifests this vision.<sup>86</sup>

As if to force our recognition of this bond between the lovers, a knowing glance aimed at the viewer has been assigned to the infant satyr in the central foreground of Titian's painting (fig. 3.20). This little *caper* (Latin for he-goat) literally capers along, skipping to the head of the Bacchic train, while figuratively he stands for the caper—the leap—of the god above him. Between the legs of the childish satyr is another caper, the white flower sprouting upon the cliff top.<sup>87</sup> The *satyriscus* has been identified as Cupid himself, in disguise, his knowing glance an indication of his complicity if not outright agency in concocting this love affair.<sup>88</sup> One may doubt the little fellow's authority as agent, however, given that Bacchus is fully capable of inflaming his own and other's passions by himself. Yet this tiny pan does connote the concupiscible element of love, thereby tipping a wink to the courtly viewer about the understood outcome of this beatific leap: an impassioned embrace. The dog barking at the satyr further clinches the joke, since as domestic protector of a homeless "maiden" already lacking her

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above the baser sensations of the body, thus allowing for the transcendence of true love (*The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 85-86). The older tradition of vernacular love poetry, the *dolce stil novo* of Guido Cavalcanti, Dante, and Petrarch, also emphasized the role of sight in the lover's spiritual progress. See *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici*, trans. Cook, 8.

<sup>85</sup> See Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 86; Mary Pardo, "Artiface as Seduction in Titian," in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. James Grantham Turner (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 65, citing Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting*, ed. McMahon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), vol. 1, 28-30.

<sup>86</sup> See Rona Goffen, *Titian's Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 159.

<sup>87</sup> The flower is identified as a caper by Nicholas Penny in Jaffé, *Titian*, cat. 13.

<sup>88</sup> Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," 69.

maidenhead, the dog does not have much to protect, and it is hardly the little satyr whom he need fear.

Titian played with the idea of love at first sight, alluding to the elevated, divine nature of their love, making it the Love of Beauty attained through the eyes, the ears, and the intellect. And yet at the same time he hinted at the physical love that comes, just as he lavished attention on sensual urges in the adjacent *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, where the languishing nude (in the more typical pose of an Ariadne that his actual Ariadne is not given) attracts the viewer's erotic gaze (fig. 3.21). But even the sight of that sort of beauty is transformative, as the sleeping woman in the *Andrians* exhibits Bacchic frenzy taken to its highest attainment of spiritual enlightenment.

#### THE EMERGENCE OF THE SLEEPING NUDE

Despite the tendency toward textual literalness in the depiction of the Discovery of Ariadne (and the appeal of its consequent dramatic confrontation), the alluring pose of the antique sleeping Ariadne would contribute nevertheless to the emergence of one of the iconic topoi of the sixteenth century: the nude, sleeping maiden.<sup>89</sup> Sleeping women had been depicted before, often appearing on the inside surface of *cassoni* lids (as did sleeping, though mostly clothed, men) (fig. 3.22).<sup>90</sup> Their depiction there was likely intended to confer encouragement to

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<sup>89</sup> There is a rather extensive bibliography on this motif. Sources include Meiss, "Sleep in Venice," 212-239; Elizabeth B. MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph: Origins of a Humanist Fountain Type," *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975): 357-365; Bober, "The Coryciana and the Nymph Corycia"; Jaynie Anderson, "Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus," in *Tiziano e Venezia: convegno internazionale di studi, Venezia, 1976*, ed. Massimo Gemin and Giannantonio Paladini (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980), 337-342; McNally, "Ariadne and Others," 152-192; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, esp. chap. 4, "Sleeping Beauties."

<sup>90</sup> Schubring, *Cassoni*, pl. LXIX, figs. 289-290, now Statensmuseum for Kunst, Copenhagen (pair of *cassoni* with sleeping, almost nude man and nude woman); pl. XXXVIII, fig. 185, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, attributed to the Paris Master (nude sleeping woman; a possible pair to this *cassone*, in the Uffizi, shows an awake

marital consummation and fertility, and not to allude pejoratively to medieval notions of sleep as indicative of sloth or satiated lust.<sup>91</sup> These sleepers maintained a traditional medieval pose, like Giovanni di Paolo's Ariadne: on their side, with their head resting on their lower shoulder, the lower arm bent at the elbow against the ground.<sup>92</sup> In contrast, classical Ariadnes manifested prototypical gestures of languid sleep: reclining in a semi-seated position, legs crossed at the ankles, the lower arm hanging down or bent at the elbow with head leaning on the back of the hand, and the upper arm stretched all the way back over the head, revealing the armpit (fig. 3.23).<sup>93</sup> Typically, a Pan or putto was shown gently pulling aside her ungirdled gown to reveal her to the god, who stood at a short distance admiring her. This motif of discovery or unveiling that was so often a part of Ariadne images captured the interest of early sixteenth-century artists, who would transplant it from a Bacchic context into a wide variety of scenes in a multitude of media. The sleeping nude woman would literally come out of the (*cassone*) box and take her place, for all to see, in the cabinet picture. The discoverer himself would be displaced out of the picture, becoming the viewer who awaits and takes in the view as the unknowing beauty is revealed to him.

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and clothed, reclining man, who is labeled "Paris"); pl. XXX, figs. 156-157, London, show reclining figures but they are awake.

<sup>91</sup> Baskins, *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender*, 38, and figs. 13, 41-42; Marina Vidas, "Representation and Marriage: Art, Society, and Gender Relations in Florence from the Late Fourteenth through the Fifteenth Century," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, 1997). Regarding sleep as a symbol of the vice of *accidia* or sloth, see Meiss, "Sleep in Venice," 224.

<sup>92</sup> One notable exception to the medieval traditional sleeper is that found on the arch of the interior west wall of the north aisle of Rheims Cathedral, c. 1250-1260, where a small motif of the "Raising of Jairus' Daughter" shows a uniquely classical female sleeper, bare to the waist and reclining with her far arm draped back over her thrown-back head. See the illustration in Willibald Sauerländer, *Gothic Sculpture in France 1140-1270* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), fig. 235.

<sup>93</sup> It is almost always the upper arm that is thrown back over the head, and not the lower one. See the illustrations in McNally, "Ariadne and Others," for examples. For ancient Greek images of the sleeping Ariadne, see Dimitri Hazzikostas, "The Sleeping Figure in Greek Art," Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1990), esp. 206-249; 266-267.

Although Ariadne was not the only ancient figure to exhibit this quintessential pose of sleep (since maenads, Rhea Silvia, and Endymion match her in languorous lassitude, fig. 3.24, 25), the motif of unveiling originated with her, and the Renaissance development of the sleeping “nymph” or “nuda” was shaped in part by this Bacchic association; by borrowing this motif, the *nuda* reflected the idea of Bacchic epiphany.<sup>94</sup> In considering the significance of the sleeping nude figure during this period, we will arrive ultimately at Titian’s paintings for the Camerino d’Alabastro in Ferrara, and will question the displacement of the form of the “sleeping Ariadne” from his painting of her actual discovery by Bacchus to the adjacent *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, where she becomes a symbolic maenad or nymph—and the epitome of the glorious Renaissance nude.

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<sup>94</sup> See MacDougal, “The Sleeping Nymph”; Bober, “The *Coryciana*,” 223-239. As McNally states: “Most Hellenistic sleepers have some link with Dionysus”—perhaps because sleep was a quintessential transformative experience of the type sought and induced by Bacchic mystery worship (“Ariadne and Others,” 175). And it is these models of sleep that will inspire the Renaissance vision of sleep. For imagery of the sleeping Endymion, see Koortbojian, where he discusses how artists used the figure of the sleeping Ariadne as a prototype for that of Endymion, carrying over the eschatological and soteriological meanings of her sleep and awakening over to Endymion along with the pose (*Myth, Meaning, and Memory*, 97). The sleep of both figures represents the “eternal sleep” of death, while their divine marriages transform that sleep with the possibility of resurrection and apotheosis. For the representation of sleeping and dead figures in ancient Greek art, see Hazzikostas, “The Sleeping Figure.” For the generic entitling of such sleeping figures as simply “nuda” during the Renaissance, see Otto Kurz, “*Huius nymphe loci*: A Pseudo-Classical Instription and a Drawing by Dürer,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16 (1953),” 175; Charles Hope, “Problems of Interpretation in Titian’s Erotic Paintings,” in *Tiziano e Venezia* (1980), 117-120 (who argues that the images should not then be “elevated” as Venusus); David Rosand, “‘So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch,’” in *Titian 500*, ed. Manca, 101-119 (who argues that these nudes definitely were infused with the idea of Venus); and Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 77-79. Ruvoldt points out that mentions of works containing a nude woman used the terms “nuda,” “ninfā,” and “Venere” interchangeably. In a letter of 1574, Titian appears to refer to his own painting, the *Pardo Venus*, as “La nuda con il paese con el satiro” (Panofsky, *Problems in Titian*, 191, referring to a list by Titian of all the paintings he had sent to King Philip II in the previous twenty-five years, added to a letter to Antonio Perez). Inventories, such as that of Lorenzo de’ Medici, indicate that where cataloguing pieces of art was concerned, precise iconography was not the issue, but rather the bare minimum of identification. Value—dependent on quantity and material—was what mattered, not subject. So the “Triumph of Dionysus” gem in Lorenzo’s collection was described as showing “una figura gnuda.” See below, and Dacos, *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 46. Marcantonio Michiel, in his descriptions of works of art in various collections, used the term “nuda” most often, and “Venere” (for Giorgione’s Dresden *Venus*) and “ninfā” once each. See Ruvoldt, n. 47 to chap. 3, citing Michiel, *Notizia d’opere di disegno*, ed. Jacopo Morelli (Bassano, Italy: n.p., 1800); also *The Anonimo: Notes on Pictures and Works of Art in Italy Made by an Anonymous Writer in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. George C. Williamson, trans. Paolo Mussi (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969).

In addition to Bacchic sarcophagi showing the Discovery of Ariadne, a crucial model for the sleeping figure was the well-known Vatican “Ariadne” (fig. 3.23).<sup>95</sup> In 1512 she was installed in the Belvedere, framed in a grotto-like niche above a sarcophagus that served as a fountain (fig. 3.26).<sup>96</sup> The clothed woman with a snake armband, reclining with her right arm over her head, which rested on her other hand, was viewed at this time as Cleopatra on her deathbed, fatally poisoned by the asp.<sup>97</sup> That Cleopatra could be seen in this languorous figure would not have been unusual, given her reputation for debauchery and the accounts of her Bacchanalian revels with her lover Mark Antony.<sup>98</sup> The particular *mise en scène* in the Vatican caused her identity to become blurred with more generic ideas of a “Venus” or a “nymph of the spring.”<sup>99</sup> Even this recalled Plutarch’s description of Cleopatra’s first meeting with Antony, in

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<sup>95</sup> Museo Pio-Clementino, the Vatican. See Hans Henrik Brummer, “Chapter VI: The Cleopatra; Excursus,” in his *The Statue Court in the Vatican Belvedere* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970), 154-184; 254-264.

<sup>96</sup> See the drawing by Francesco de Hollanda, Escorial ms fol. 8, c.1538/9; Leonardo’s drawing in Codex Atlanticus, fol 283v-b, c. 1515; and descriptions, such as found in a letter by Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola (the more famous Pico’s nephew), in Gombrich, “Hypnerotomachia,” 106. She was known earlier, having been purchased in 1512 by Pope Julius II from Angelo Maffei. See Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, cat. 24, 184-187. The sarcophagus represented the deeds of the emperor Trajan. Brummer, “The Cleopatra,” 154.

<sup>97</sup> The snake around her arm served in Hellenistic art to identify the maiden as Ariadne or even a maenad, though the clothing would have been unusual for either subject (McNally, “Ariadne and Others,” 171-172). Baldassare Castiglione wrote a long Latin poem about the statue, comparing it to the effigy of the dead Cleopatra on a couch, which ancient sources told was carried into Rome in triumph after Octavian had achieved victory at Actium. She was identified as Cleopatra until the late eighteenth century, when Visconti’s interpretation of the figure as Ariadne became the more accepted identification (Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, 186-187).

<sup>98</sup> Plutarch, “Life of Antony,” in *Plutarch’s Lives*, trans. John Dryden, vol. 2, esp. 494-497, 518. See also Jasper Griffen, “Propertius and Antony,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 67 (1977): 17-26. Horace, *Odes* I.37, described her dissipation and death: “...[A] crazy queen was plotting, / with her polluted train / of evil debauchees, to demolish / the Capitol and topple the Empire— / a hopeful derangement drunk / with its luck. But the escape / from the flames of scarcely one ship / dampened her fury, ... / her mind swimming in Mareotic... / [...] [S]he, / seeking to die more nobly, showed / no womanish fear of the sword... / [...] Her face serene, she courageously viewed her fallen palace. With fortitude / she handled fierce snakes, her corporeal frame drank in their venom: / resolved for death, she was brave indeed...” (trans. Shepherd, 101). In *Elegy* III.11, Propertius wrote: “I saw your arms bitten by the holy serpent, / and sleep’s unseen path overcome your limbs. / ‘I wasn’t to be feared, Rome, with this great citizen on your side!’ / She spoke, her tongue buried in tons of pure” (trans. Katz, 277-279).

<sup>99</sup> A literary source for the “nymph of the spring” was Virgil’s *Aeneid* I, 167, where nymphs are said to haunt certain caves with fresh water within. Brummer, “The Cleopatra,” 165-168; Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*,



which she arrived by barge along the river Cydnus, “dressed as Venus in a picture,” reclining on a couch surrounded by young boys “like painted Cupids” and maids attired as sea nymphs and Graces, and word spread that “Venus was come to feast with Bacchus.”<sup>100</sup> The association of the Vatican figure with a fountain in turn spilled over to inflect the understanding of Cleopatra, who subsequently was visualized in early sixteenth-century engravings as a nymph or maenad lying by a river or spring (fig. 3.27).<sup>101</sup>

The connection of sleeping nymph with water had been fed by a famous forgery, a pseudo-classical inscription, popularized in the 1470s and supposed to have been attached to a sculpture and fountain along the Danube, reading:

Huius nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis,  
Dormio, dum blandae sentio murmur aquae.  
Parce meum, quisquis tangis cava marmora, somnum  
Rumpere. Sive bibas sive laver tace.<sup>102</sup>

The lines captivated the imagination of humanists, with their idyllic evocation of a mythical Arcadia where the beautiful nymph lay at the edge of the source (fig. 3.28). The spring

186; MacDougall, “The Sleeping Nymph.” In the late sixteenth century Giambattista dei Cavalieri called her a sleeping nymph. See Kurz, “*Huius nympha loci*,” 174.

<sup>100</sup> Plutarch, “Life of Antony,” 498.

<sup>101</sup> Brummer, “The Cleopatra,” 168; Kurz, “*Huius nympha loci*,” 175. See the two different engravings of Cleopatra—distinctly identified by the asp biting her nipple—by the Master of the Year 1515 (Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, B. XIII, 415; *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 25, 2522.012 [415], and .013). In both, Cleopatra is shown completely nude, unlike the Vatican statue, and is shown in a more characteristically medieval sleeper’s pose, with the face resting on the hand and without the more antique gesture of the arm draped up over the head. In both she is associated with water: in the first she reclines on an urn and in the second she lies upon a river bank. In the engraving inscribed “CLEOPATRA” there is a Bacchic herm shown on the left, with a satyr-type head with a horn and a nebris tied around the plinth, reiterating this association of Cleopatra not only with the naiad, or fountain nymph, but also with maenadic figures, exhausted from their Dionysian revels.

<sup>102</sup> Kurz, “*Huius nympha loci*,” 171. In Alexander Pope’s English translation: “Nymph of the grot, these sacred springs I keep, / And to the murmur of these waters sleep; / Ah, spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave! / And drink in silence, or in silence lave!” (as quoted in *ibid.*, 177). It is now thought that the inscription must actually have been composed c. 1464-1470 by Giovanni Antonio Campani, who was in the circle of the Roman humanist Pomponio Leto. Its almost immediate inclusion in contemporary compendia of ancient epigrams, however, caused it to be taken as authentically antique. MacDougall, “The Sleeping Nymph,” 357-358; Bober, “The *Coryciana*,”

represented more to them than just water; with this idolized nymph as its generatrix, the water became the source of knowledge, wisdom, and inspiration. The sleeping nymph, like the sleeping Ariadne awaiting the epiphany of Bacchus, embodied with pregnant anticipation the *vacatio* that allowed divine *furor* to descend upon prepared souls.<sup>103</sup> For humanists seeking to recreate an antique ideal of a poetry-infused community of learning and conviviality, this graceful nymph and her ever-flowing elemental sustenance became a proxy for the Muses and their abundant gift of inspiration.<sup>104</sup> This shows how the naiad, poetic inspiration, and Bacchus could all blur together, as in Horace's ode, "Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui":

Bacchus, where will you carry me  
full of you? My spirit renewed, what groves and grottoes  
am I driven into? In what ravine  
shall I now be heard planning to set among the stars

and in Jove's council  
peerless Caesar's immortal glory? [...]

O master of the Naiads  
and Bacchanalians strong to uproot the princely ash,

I shall utter nothing  
insignificant, lowly or not immortal. Sweet the risk,  
Lenaean, to follow the God,  
crowning one's brows with sprouting vine leaves.<sup>105</sup>

The villas and urban gardens where humanists gathered increasingly housed sleeping nymph and fountain complexes, so that the idea of inspirational fecundity might be beautifully present and the shade of the frenzied Bacchante would never be far off.<sup>106</sup>

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224. Michael Baxandall also notes that silence was a conceit of Byzantine ekphrastic literature: "Admire the art silently lest you disturb with noise the figures..." (as quoted in *Giotto and the Orators*, 92).

<sup>103</sup> Maria Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, chaps. 3-4.

<sup>104</sup> MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph," 363. Indeed, these humanists tended to conflate the idea of nymph and muse, converging their separate domains of Nymphaea and Musaea into one idyllic grotto.

The quintessential illustration of the motif of the sleeping fountain nymph discovered by satyrs is in a woodcut illustration to Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in 1499 (fig. 3.29).<sup>107</sup> Like an Ariadne encountered asleep on Naxos or an exhausted maenad collapsed after her revels, this nude nymph lies insensate at the foot of a tree. An older satyr stands nearby, with one hand pulling down some leafy branches and the other extending a shielding sheet that is tied to the tree. With him are two little *satyrisci*, one holding a vase and the other two snakes. The text and inscription indicate that she is to be understood as a *ninfa* and “the parent (or mother) of all” (as the Greek inscription ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΤΟΚΑΔΙ, “Panton Tokadi,” says), implying that she is a sort of Venus of generative forces, with hot and cold water spouting from her breasts.<sup>108</sup> Although she does not model the purely classical pose with tossed-back

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<sup>105</sup> Horace, *Ode* III.25, trans. Shepherd, 157-158. Regarding this Ode, see P. J. Connor, “Enthusiasm, Poetry, and Politics: A Consideration of Horace, *Odes*, III, 25,” *The American Journal of Philology* 92, no. 2 (1971): 266-274.

<sup>106</sup> Other “Huius nymphae loci” installations, like that in the Belvedere, were created in the gardens of fellow humanists Angelo Colucci and Hans Goritz, while even more came about later in the century, beyond Rome and even Italy. See Bober, “The *Coryciana*,” passim; MacDougall, “The Sleeping Nymph,” 357-359 and passim. It is not certain that any actual freestanding ancient examples of sleeping naiads were known until as late as the 1530s, when Van Heemskerck depicts one in the garden of Jacopo Galli in Rome (Heemskerck sketchbook I, f. 27a). This may explain why a true river nymph’s slightly different pose—with one arm brought up across the chest to place the hand under the cheek—does not appear in these first sixteenth-century fountain representations.

<sup>107</sup> The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, or *The Strife of Love in a Dream*, trans. Godwin, fol. e1, p. 73. The work was published in Venice by Aldus Manutius at the commission of Leonardo Crasso, Jurisconsult of Verona, though it is believed to have been composed decades earlier (suggesting the currency of this motif already in the 1470s). See the critical edition by Giovanni Pozzi and Lucia A. Ciapponi (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1964).

<sup>108</sup> Meiss, “Sleep in Venice,” 216; Madlyn Kahr, “Titian, the ‘Hypnerotomachia Poliphili’ Woodcuts and Antiquity,” *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 67, ser. 6 (1966): 119-127; MacDougall, “The Sleeping Nymph,” 357; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 111-115. Ruvoldt notes that the text reads “Panta Tokadi” (“all things to the mother”) while the image is inscribed “Panton Tokadi” (“to the mother of all”), whether intentionally or as a result of a typesetting error, leaving fluid the intended reading of the figure (112). Furthermore, “tokadi” may be understood more generically as referring to prolific parturition, and not specifically to mother or father. The artist does not depict water spouting from her breasts. The idea of Venus as a generative, nature goddess came out of reading Lucretius’ *De rerum natura*, rediscovered by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417. Lucretius calls her “genetrix omnium,” “mother of all.” See P. F. Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 218. There do not appear to be any antique images (say Meiss, Kahr, Blume, and others), however, of Venus with a satyr. Yet the very same epithalamium by Claudian that appears to have engendered the literary motif of a sleeping Venus also mentions her little accompanying putti as scattering off any approaching, licentious woodland creatures: “Others [of the Cupids] keep guard over the wood and drive off the wanton, curious Dryads, the country gods and the woodland deities,

arm, but rests her head instead on her hand, she evokes images of the discovered Ariadne where the satyrs do not menace her but rather gently observe and even protect her.<sup>109</sup>

Ariadne was not herself associated with a spring, but the connection of sleeping nymph to a spring has Bacchic connections. The maenads in the *Bacchae* scratched the ground with their thyrsi, causing milk to gush forth.<sup>110</sup> Philostratus described Bacchic revelers as being able “to take wine from springs and to draw milk from clods of earth or from a rock as from living breasts.”<sup>111</sup> Horace remarked upon the poet’s work, writing:

My holy task is to sing of the unremitting  
Bacchantes, rehearse the spring of wine,  
the brooks of rich milk and honey  
dropping from hollow trees....<sup>112</sup>

The affiliation of nymphs with grottoes also had a Bacchic correlation since the nymphs of Nysa, who were assigned to rear Dionysus after the death of his mother, hid him in their caves.<sup>113</sup>

Some nymphs such as Amymone or Byblis, also discovered by satyrs, were associated with a

discharging flaming darts at the amorous Fauns who try from a distance to catch a glimpse of Venus’ bower.” Claudian, *Carmina Minora* XXV, “Epithalamium of Palladius and Celerina,” 207.

<sup>109</sup> Fritz Saxl saw in the woodcut a version of the ancient image of the discovery of Ariadne; however, the inscription makes clear that she is not, in fact, intended to be Ariadne (“Titian and Pietro Aretino,” in idem, *Lectures* [London: Warburg Institute, 1957], 161-173).

<sup>110</sup> Euripides, *Bacchae*, 700-707: “Someone took a thyrsus and struck it against a cliff, and out leapt a dewy spring of water. Another sunk her fennel wand into the ground, and the god at that spot put forth a fountain of wine. All who desired a drink of milk dug with their fingertips in the ground and the white liquid bubbled up. From their ivy-covered thyrsi dripped streams of honey” (trans. David Kovacs [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002], 79).

<sup>111</sup> Philostratus, *Imagines*, I.14, trans. Fairbanks, 61; see also I.18, p. 73: “Here are also painted, my boy, scenes from Mount Cithaeron—choruses of Bacchantes, and rocks flowing with wine, and nectar dripping from clusters of grapes, and the earth enriching the broken soil with milk.”

<sup>112</sup> Horace, *Ode* II.19, “Bacchum in remotis,” trans. Green, 124.

<sup>113</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 3.298-323. The “Orphic Hymn” 51, “To the Nymphs,” also relates them to damp caves and to the care and worship of Bacchus: “Nymphs... you dwell inside the earth’s damp caves... nurses of Bacchos. You nourish fruits and haunt meadows.... Swift and light-footed, and clothed in dew, you frequent springs; visible and invisible, in ravines and among flowers, you shout and frisk with Pan upon mountain sides. [...] Dwellers of

flowing source or earthy grotto. The Corycian cave was inhabited by naiads and was sacred to Pan, another Bacchic associate. It was, moreover, a place of inspiration and grace, similar to the enchanted land of the Muses.<sup>114</sup>

The uncovering of a sleeping nymph or maenad could, of course, have prurient and lascivious implications (fig. 3.30).<sup>115</sup> The sexual implications of one early sixteenth-century engraving of a particularly ugly Pan approaching a sleeping nymph are emphasized by the ithyphallic herm behind him, aiming at the nude, and the crabs hanging from the line above (fig. 3.31). In ancient depictions, the maenad's wild celebrations and subsequent exhaustion explained her limpid state; the satyr's animal lust, ever rebuked by the wakeful maenad (sometimes upon the sharp point of her thyrsus), was aroused by her enervation (fig. 3.32). The languid eroticism of her pose, all care and decorum abandoned, exposed her to the satyr's lust. Having abandoned the social norms of womanly propriety, she brought herself into the wild and thus imperiled herself (not entirely unlike Ariadne, who naively trusted her lover's false intentions).<sup>116</sup> Her chastity was potentially compromised, and the satyr, always at the ready, threatened to take her sexually before she regained consciousness. Such an image offered a titillating moment of building sexual tension.<sup>117</sup> But in the literature satyrs rarely succeeded in satisfying their lust. Correspondingly, visual images of the suggested attacks conveyed more

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Nysa, frenzied and healing goddesses who joy in spring, together with Bacchos..." (trans. Athanassakis, *The Orphic Hymns*, 67-69).

<sup>114</sup> See W. R. Connor, "Seized by the Nymphs: Nympholepsy and Symbolic Expression in Classical Greece," *Classical Antiquity* 7, no. 2 (1988): 155-189. The Corycian cave was celebrated by the sixteenth-century friend to humanists Johann Goritz with his collection of verse called the *Coryciana*. See Bober, "The *Coryciana*"; Julia Haig Gaisser, "The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (1995): 41-57.

<sup>115</sup> Amymone is actually attacked by a satyr, so the image of her by Girolamo Mocetto is necessarily ominous.

<sup>116</sup> McNally, "Ariadne and Others," 157.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

than the conventional opposition of male versus female, or animal versus human, but were nuanced with an undertone of necessary and vital union, the joining of elemental forces.<sup>118</sup> To stress this idea of harmony as opposed to antagonism, most ancient images showed the satyr merely ogling the sleeping maenad, not daring to touch. His desire and her perfect beauty stood as complements, representing the sensual and the celestial sides of love (fig. 3.33). In terms of Dionysian ritual, the attainment of true ecstasy would have required the initiate to pass into the maenad's delirious state. The initiate's depleted body, like the maenad's, would be the mark of her complete participation in the ritual and of her union with the god. The satyr, then, acts as witness to this implied divine union.

In Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, another sleeping nymph is seen, here resting almost upright with her head in hand in the more old-fashioned pose (fig. 3.34).<sup>119</sup> Thought to represent Lotis from Ovid's *Fasti* I.393-440, the maiden is approached by Priapus, who begins to lift her skirt. Though not a satyr himself, the young, lusty god with his protuberant phallus shares a rabid libido with his semi-human brethren. But like the satyr who encounters Ariadne, Priapus gazes into the face of his beloved with an aura of stillness and awe. While Ovid made the thwarting of Priapus' attempted rape of Lotis a mocking joke (with Silenus' ass braying and awakening the soon-to-be victim who pushes away her attacker, arousing the laughter of the other gods), Bellini instilled a charming calm to the picnic *en plein air*. His donkey does not bray, his gods do not laugh, and Priapus' warm arousal is shared by other happy lovers at the feast. Priapus' "discovery" of the sleeping nymph, in other words, is like that of other satyrs and

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<sup>118</sup> McNally, "Ariadne and Others," 158.

<sup>119</sup> This painting will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six. Some of the main sources regarding this work include Edgar Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods: A Study in Venetian Humanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1948); Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*; Anderson, "The Provenance of Bellini's *Feast of the*

nymphs: the unveiling suggests the awakening of higher levels of enthusiasm. His lust is satisfied by vision alone, and is transformed into a more elevated love.<sup>120</sup>

Similarly, the decorous and calm manner in which the satyr in the *Hypnerotomachia* illustration performs his gesture of unveiling conveys not imminent rape but sacred awe and respectful admiration. Indeed, the satyr may be better understood as attempting to cover and shade the sleeping woman, with both the sheet and the tree branch, shielding her both from view and from the elements. The Bacchic aspect of revelation and epiphany inherent in the ancient imagery infuses the sleeping nymph imagery with its more elevated message. The satyr's act of revealing this "mother" figure, or Venus, like his counterpoint's unveiling of Ariadne, engenders a moment of self-transformation and discovery, for himself and for the viewer. Epiphany is a recurrent theme in Colonna's text, as Poliphilo is transformed throughout by his dream visions. The culminating revelation of the naked Venus, named the "Mother goddess," at her temple on Cytherea involves the tearing of the velvet curtain that shrouds her statue and fountain, whereupon Poliphilo and Polia are filled with a "novel pleasure... in an ecstasy of divine awe."<sup>121</sup> As Poliphilo exclaims:

I could not stare steadily at the divinity that radiated all around, nor could I understand by what gift of fate and faith, by what means and merit, I had been granted the clear perception of such mysteries with my own eyes, which were not made for such a sight. In my judgment, it could only have

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*Gods*, 265-287; Anthony Colantuono, "Dies Alcyoniae: The Invention of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*," *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991): 237-256.

<sup>120</sup> See Meiss, "Sleep in Venice," 224, regarding Correggio's *Venus and Satyr* (the so-called *Jupiter and Antiope*) (Louvre, Paris).

<sup>121</sup> *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, z1 v, trans. Godwin, 361. Note that while this fountain shows Venus standing and not asleep, she is shown with a satyr/Dionysus figure: "On the top step there lazed a lascivious creature in human form, a nocturnal god who presented himself insolently with the look of a petulant and spoiled girl. His chest was visible as far as the diaphragm, and he had horns on his head, which was wound with a twisted wreath of vine-leaves, ornamented by tendrils and bunches of juicy grapes; and he leaned on two speedy tigers" (z2, trans. Godwin, 363). Along with a figure presumably of Ceres beside him, the two pour out a frothy liquor into the fountain. See the discussion of the triad of Venus, Bacchus, and Ceres below.

come from the free-will and kindly consent of the immortal gods, and from the faithful prayers of Polia.<sup>122</sup>

Though feeling resolutely unworthy, he “praised in my soul the divine goodness that had allowed an earthly man to contemplate openly the divine works and the treasure of nature in ferment.”<sup>123</sup>

As the text makes clear, this later epiphany of the goddess is the culminating moment of the lovers’ initiation into her cult, the reward for their devotion, and the transformative turning point in their lives—a sort of death followed by rebirth. In the earlier scene too, the satyr similarly enacts a revelation of something glorious and valuable, and in so doing, brings gifts to his fellow mankind. His unveiling is an epiphany of a sort of Venus Genetrix, who embodies the generative forces in nature; the water from her breasts that combined with the seed, symbolized by the sexual satyr, lets flourish the bounty of her garden. The male and the female, the natural and the divine, are all brought together in a union that ensures the continuity of the world. Showing the sleeping Venus Genetrix in the form of an Ariadne discovered by satyrs merged ideas of love, fertility, and reproduction with sacred epiphany and divine inspiration.<sup>124</sup>

Venus was, of course, most obviously associated with love. The motif of a sleeping Venus, moreover, evoked classical epithalamia, wherein the goddess of love lay asleep, to be awakened by Cupid to come serve as patroness at a wedding.<sup>125</sup> Claudian portrayed her sleeping in a cave overgrown with grapevines, reminding readers of the Bacchic fuel to love. Her Cupids guard her from “the woodland deities, discharging flaming darts at the amorous Fauns who try

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<sup>122</sup> *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, z2 v, trans. Godwin, 364.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Meiss calls the conflation, “from the classical point of view, nonsense” (“Sleep in Venice,” 216).

<sup>125</sup> This connection was made by Jaynie Anderson, “Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus,” in *Tiziano e Venezia* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980), 337-342. Meiss did not note this literary source for the sleeping Venus, saying only that there had been no ancient precedent for the motif (“Sleep in Venice,” 213).



from a distance to catch a glimpse of Venus' bower."<sup>126</sup> Sidonius Apollinaris described his Venus as sleeping in a pose that harkened back to Ariadne when Bacchus found her.<sup>127</sup> And Ovid told of the Venus of Spring, naked and freshly bathed, "drying on the shore her oozy locks, when the satyrs, a wanton crew, espied the goddess."<sup>128</sup> In early Cinquecento painting of the Veneto, the figure of the sleeping or reclining Venus itself became a prominent motif, which could serve as an appropriate marriage picture.<sup>129</sup> Painted images of these Venuses represented more than mere erotica but rather honored and elevated the theme of married love, where sexuality and procreation were inherent necessities.<sup>130</sup> Other images of satyrs encountering

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<sup>126</sup> Claudian, "Epithalamium of Palladius and Celerina," cited in Anderson, "Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus," 338. See *Carmina Minora* XXV, 1-10: "It chanced that Venus had one day retired into the bosom of a cave overgrown with vine to woo sleep mid its alluring cool, and had laid her goddess limbs on the thick grass, her head upon a heap of flowers. The vine branches stir gently in the breeze and sway the full-veined grapes. Slumber befits the disorder of her brow, the midday heat will none of coverings, and the leaves show through them the gleam of her bare breast" ([Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922], 205-207). The imagery recalls Terence's dictum: "Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venere."

<sup>127</sup> In the epithalamium *Carmina* XI, 47-61, referred to in Anderson, "Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus," 339. "Venus had let her soft cheek rest upon her bended arm; the violets about her grew languid and her neck had begun to sink, ever heavier with slumber as the flowers pressed against her" (*Poems and Letters*, trans. W. B. Anderson, reprint [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965]).

<sup>128</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* IV.141-142: "litore siccabat rorantes nuda capillos: viderunt satyri, turba proterva, deam." Although Ovid does not say she is asleep, it seems likely that she would be stretched out with her eyes closed, enjoying the warmth of the sunshine. This passage has not been noted in relation to the Venus and satyr imagery.

<sup>129</sup> The sleeping nude Venus was first depicted in an easel painting in Giorgione's so-called Dresden *Venus*, c. 1507. Anderson postulates that Giorgione's painting was created to celebrate an actual marriage, the 1507 marriage between Girolamo Marcello and Morosina Pisani, in whose collection the painting was later recorded ("Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus," 341). Giorgione's painting was explicitly recognized and referred to as a Venus, but many sleeping nudes, however, were not explicitly identified as Venus, or were called simply "una nuda" in inventories. See note above, and Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 77-80, n. 46 to chap. 3, referring to inventories of works by Palma Vecchio. Titian would paint his *Pardo Venus* (Louvre, Paris) c. 1435-1440, and ultimately delivered to Philip II in 1567, which combined a close rendition of Giorgione's *Dresden Venus* as his nymph with the motif of the discovery of Ariadne or of a satyr and sleeping nymph. (Giorgione's, Titian's, and Bartolomeo di Giovanni's sleeping figures all have their lower arm draped up over their head, instead of the upper one, unlike the more typical ancient pose shared by both Ariadne and Endymion.) Panofsky, *Problems in Titian*, excursus 7, 190-193; Rosand, "Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision," in *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape*, ed. R. Cafritz, L. Gowing, and David Rosand (Washington, DC: The Phillips Collection, with Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1988), 74.

<sup>130</sup> Rosand, "'So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch,'" 101-119; Goffen, *Titian's Women*, "Epithalamium and the Goddess," 146-159; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 91-96. See also Rona Goffen,

sleeping nymphs emphasized the theme of fecundity by showing her with children (fig. 3.35).<sup>131</sup> The conjunction of maternal abundance and male potency allegorized the balance of female and male contributions to reproduction.

Like Bacchus standing before Ariadne, the viewer's experience before the sleeping figure was one of pleasure and arousal, but it was also an approach to the divine. With this vision, he (as the ideal viewer was certainly male) was presented with an opportunity to contemplate the true meaning of Beauty, and this contemplation would inherently improve him.<sup>132</sup> The figure of the sleeping woman perfectly captured and expressed ideas not only of sensuality but also of emotional, intellectual, and spiritual revelation. She embodied the pathos of love, with a rapture that could indicate passion, both virtuous and sensuous; she was equally admired and desired. This uninhibited beauty stood in stark contrast to the ideally chaste beloved, ubiquitous in Trecento and Quattrocento poetry and domestic art, whose body was shielded and unattainable, having forsaken all men and physical love for the divine love achieved through virtue. And yet these new nude Venuses and nymphs remained as unattainable as ever. This irony was epitomized by the leering satyr who approached the sleeping beauty, who while he may lift her coverings and ogle her body was never able to corrupt her (fig. 3.36). The sleeping nude was idealized by a purity that appeared as Beauty of a higher order, beyond the grasp of carnal consumption. Her beauty *becomes* virtue. Such nudes were no mere "pin-ups," intended to be

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"Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love: Individuality and Sexuality in a Renaissance Marriage Picture*," in *Titian 500*, ed. Manca, 121-144.

<sup>131</sup> There are two examples of a bronze medallion combining two scenes found separately elsewhere, showing a sleeping nymph with two infants encountered by two satyrs on the reverse, and, on the obverse, a satyr blowing a horn at a reclining nymph figure holding a cornucopia. This combination emphasizes the allegory of female and male contributions to abundance. The sleeping mother on the reverse reclines on a pillar inscribed "VIRTUS," assuring the viewer of her virtue. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and Victoria and Albert Museum, London; after 1506.

pretty at best, pornographic at worst.<sup>133</sup> They instead conveyed a much greater depth of meaning, which encompassed ideas of sacred love—*Venus celestialis*—and of the ascent of the soul of the observer blessed with a glimpse of heavenly Beauty.<sup>134</sup>

This elevated idea of Venus grew out of Neoplatonic musings, rooted in the work of Florentine humanists but which circulated among northern Italian humanists as well. Ficino's *De amore*, or *Commentary on the Symposium of Plato*, was the prime mover in the introduction of the idea of human love as a step in the ascent of the soul towards the full contemplation of divine Beauty, experienced as divine *Voluptas*.<sup>135</sup> Poliziano's *Stanze per la Giostra*, composed in the 1470s, delved into the Platonic notions of the descent of the divine into the human and material world, and conversely, the ascent of the soul back to union with the divine.<sup>136</sup> His translation of esoteric philosophy into the form of a vernacular poem with mythological *ekphraseis* made such ideas more accessible as something that could be visualized. His

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<sup>132</sup> As Ruvoldt says, these images were more about contemplation than about a suggestion of rape, “spiritual elevation rather than physical violation” (*The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 99).

<sup>133</sup> As Charles Hope calls them (“Problems of Interpretation in Titian’s Erotic Paintings,” in *Tiziano e Venezia* [Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1980], 117-120). See the counter-argument by Rosand, “‘So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch,’” 101-119.

<sup>134</sup> See Rosand, “‘So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch,’” 113-115; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, esp. chap. 4, “Sleeping Beauties.” Looking at these images had beneficial effects on female viewers, as well, since custom had it that such beautiful visions encouraged the production of beautiful offspring, and the images’ inspiration to lovemaking was a crucial factor toward that end.

<sup>135</sup> Ficino, *De amore* II.6-7, V.5. Cf. Plato, *Symposium* 210a-212a. Ficino’s translation of the *Symposium* and the rest of Plato’s dialogues from the Greek was completed under Medici patronage from 1462 to 1468 and his *Commentary* was written soon thereafter; he translated his work into Italian as *De amore* in 1474. See Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, chap. 13, “Will and Love,” 256-288; Jill Kraye, “The Transformation of Platonic Love in the Italian Renaissance,” in *Platonism and the English Imagination*, ed. A. Baldwin and S. Hutton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 76-85. See also Arnolfo B. Ferruolo, “Botticelli’s Mythologies, Ficino’s *De Amore*, Poliziano’s *Stanze per la giostra*: Their Circle of Love,” *Art Bulletin* 37 (1955): 17-25; Charles Dempsey, *The Portrayal of Love: Botticelli’s Primavera and Humanist Culture at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), esp. 160-162.

<sup>136</sup> Poliziano had spent time in the court of Mantua, and his work was familiar elsewhere in the north, especially Ferrara. Shearman, *Only Connect*, 256.

description of decorative sculptures on the imaginary doors to the temple of Venus included not only figures depicting the birth of Venus, but also the abandonment of Ariadne and her discovery by Bacchus, in a smooth amalgamation of both the Ovidian and Catullan sources:<sup>137</sup>

Dall'altra parte la bella Arianna  
colle sorde acque di Teseo si duole,  
e dell'aura e del sonno che la'nganna;  
di paura tremando, come suole  
per picciol ventolin palustre canna,  
pare in atto aver prese tai parole:  
'Ogni fera di te meno è crudele,  
ognun di te piú mi saria fedele.'

Vien sovra un carro, d'ellera e di pampino  
coverto Bacco, il qual duo tigr guidono,  
e con lui par che l'alta arena stampino  
Satiri e Bacche, e con voci alte gridono:  
quel si vede ondeggiar, quei par che 'nciampino,  
quel con un cembol bee, quelli altri ridono;  
qual fa d'un corno e qual delle man ciotola,  
quale ha preso una ninfa e qual si ruotola.<sup>138</sup>

The depictions of Ariadne's "death" and "resurrection," promised by her new life with the divine Bacchus, contributed to Poliziano's overarching story of the birth of Venus and the advent of Love. For "[t]he divine must enter the world in the form of Beauty so that men may, in turn, ascend to the divine source of beauty through contemplation."<sup>139</sup> The discovered Ariadne is just

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<sup>137</sup> That is, Ovid's *Ars amatoria* I.525-564, and Catullus' *Carmina* LXIV.50-76, 124-203, 251-264.

<sup>138</sup> Poliziano, *Stanze*, I.110-111; *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano*, trans. David Quint (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 57: "On the other side, beautiful Ariadne complains / to the deaf waters of Theseus and of the breeze / and sleep which deceived her; trembling with / fear, like swamp cane in a slight wind, she seems / by her gesture to have spoken these words: / 'Any beast is less cruel than you, anyone would / be more faithful to me.' // Bacchus, covered with ivy and vine leaves, ap- / proaches on a chariot drawn by two tigers and / beside him satyrs and bacchantes seem to im- / print the deep sand and shout with loud voices: / this one seems to waver, those to stumble, there / one drinks from a cymbal, those others laugh; / one uses a horn, another his own hands, as a / drinking bowl; one has captured a nymph, an- / other wallows."

<sup>139</sup> Quint, introduction to Poliziano's *Stanze*, xxi.

such a figure of “Neoplatonic contemplative rapture.”<sup>140</sup> The notion of sight as a stimulus and gateway for love is emphasized by having Ariadne’s body revealed to the eyes alone. In

*Phaedrus* 251a-b, Plato stated:

For sight is the keenest mode of perception vouchsafed us through the body.... [W]hen one who is fresh from the mystery, and saw much of the vision, beholds a godlike face or bodily form that truly expresses beauty, first there come upon him a shuddering and a measure of that awe which the vision inspired, and then reverence at the sight of a god.... [B]y reason of the stream of beauty entering in through his eyes there comes a warmth, whereby his soul’s plumage is fostered... aforesaid the whole soul was furnished with wings. Meanwhile she throbs with ferment in every part....<sup>141</sup>

The beauty of a woman’s body stimulates desire (and in those not awakened in the mysteries, animal lust), but for those seeking the restoration of their soul, the passion thus aroused is a love that is a desire for the sublime.

The depiction of divine lovers on ancient sarcophagi, moreover, brought home to Renaissance viewers the soteriological significance of the imagery, since the gravity of the medium precluded their being depicted purely for pleasure or titillation.<sup>142</sup> Many humanists grasped and articulated the ancient notion of a kind of death in true union with the divine that is experienced as rapture, calling it a *morte di bacio* or *mors osculi*, a “kiss of death.”<sup>143</sup> Pico della

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<sup>140</sup> Quint, introduction to Poliziano’s *Stanze*, xxi; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 154-156.

<sup>141</sup> *Phaedrus*, trans. R. Hackforth, in *Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 497.

<sup>142</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 154ff.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* Indeed, several very early ancient sources imply that Ariadne dies when Bacchus takes her, or that he goes to the Underworld to bring her to Mt. Olympus. The implication of converting her crown into a constellation is also that she has left her mortal body, and gone to heaven with him. In *Odyssey* XI.321, Homer says that Ariadne actually deserts Bacchus by going with Theseus, and that Artemis kills her on Dia (i.e., Naxos) as punishment. Hyginus (*Astronomica* II.5) says that Dionysus gave Ariadne a luminous, bejewelled crown, which she then lent to Theseus to find his way through the Labyrinth, and which “Father Liber” then changed to stars after Ariadne’s death. See Webster, “The Myth of Ariadne,” 23, 26.

Mirandola described this process of “death” as the severing of the soul from the physical, sensual body and its transcendence to an incorporeal ecstasy:

Through the first death, which is only a detachment of the soul from the body, ...the lover may see the beloved celestial Venus... and by reflecting on her divine image, nourish his purified eyes with joy; but if he would possess her more closely... he must die the second death by which he is completely severed from the body.... And observed that the most perfect and intimate union the lover can have with the celestial beloved is called the union of the kiss.<sup>144</sup>

Pico relates the process of rapture to the contemplation—through the sense of sight—of the beautiful Venus, and indicates that this vision can elevate the soul from human to divine love. Like Ariadne, who metaphorically and literally leaves her mortal body to ascend to heaven with Bacchus, the human lover will also experience his personal salvation as passionate “union and copulation with God Most High.”<sup>145</sup> In Neoplatonic circles, then, love and death were ever intertwined, as would be epitomized in the preferred tone of the *dolce-amaro*, or bittersweet, in Lorenzo de’ Medici’s poetry.<sup>146</sup>

With these associations layered over the figure of the sleeping nude, such ideas began to inflect the depiction of Bacchic figures too. This reinterpretation of the sleeping figure can be seen already as early as the 1460s, when two Bacchic cameos were transformed into large, sculpted marble reliefs in adjacent roundels in the courtyard of the Medici palace, traditionally

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<sup>144</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Commento* III, viii (ed. Garin IV, iv, pp. 557ff), as quoted by Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 155, n. 7.

<sup>145</sup> Leone Ebreo, *Dialoghi d’amore*: “[S]ome, that have achieved such conjunction in this life, could not continue in perpetual enjoyment thereof, because of the bonds of the flesh; ...only, as they reached the summit of life, the soul in the embrace of God would abandon the body altogether, remaining in supreme bliss, conjoined with the Godhead” (ed. Caramella, p. 46, trans. Friedeberg-Seeley and Barnes, pp. 49-51, as quoted by Wind, 155, n. 8).

<sup>146</sup> In his *Comento*, Lorenzo retells the story of Jove’s pouring a mixture of both fortune and misfortune upon even those he favors, which expresses for him the idea that there can be no perfect happiness in this life. See Cook, *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de’ Medici*, 11.

ascribed to Donatello (fig. 3.37, 38).<sup>147</sup> In the tondo on the right of the north wall, a nude woman reclines semi-seated, holding her stole behind her head, as she appears in a cameo showing the Discovery of Ariadne then in Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga's collection.<sup>148</sup> This scene is paired, to the left, with one that portrayed a triumph from a gem understood at the time to depict a Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, given the regular pairing of the two (fig. 3.39).<sup>149</sup> Although

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<sup>147</sup> The main source on these roundels is Wester and Simon, "Die Reliefmedallions im Hofe des Palazzo Medici zu Florenz," 15-91. Eight roundels encircle the courtyard entablature, two to each wall, with a motif of Medici *palle* in a tondo in between each pairing. All but one derive from gems then or soon to be in the Medici collection, with the eighth taken from a sarcophagus relief in the Florentine Baptistery. Vasari attributed the reliefs to Donatello; Wester and Simon follow this, assigning the work to c. 1460; others see the hand of Donatello's pupil Bertoldo di Giovanni. The main building of the palazzo was finished in 1457. Vasari writes: "In the first courtyard of the house of the Medici there are eight medallions of marble, wherein there are copies of ancient cameos and of the reverse sides of medals, with certain scenes, all made by him and very beautiful, which are built into the frieze between the windows and the architrave above the arches of the loggie" (trans. de Vere, 368). ("In casa Medici, nel primo cortile, sono otto tondi di marmo, dove sono ritratti cammei antichi e rovesci di medaglie, ed alcune storie fatte da lui molto belle; i quali sono murati nel fregio fra le finestre e l'architrave sopra gli archi delle loggie..." *Le Vite*, vol. II, pp. 406-407.) Donatello himself visited Pietro Barbo's collection of gems in Rome. Gennaro Pesce, "Gemme medicee del Museo Nazionale di Napoli," *Rivista del Reale Istituto d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte* 5 (1935-36): 53.

<sup>148</sup> The Discovery gem is a cameo of which there are two similar variants (in England and Naples) known to have been in Renaissance collections. The one in the Brocklesby Collection in Lincolnshire was owned by Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, thus called the "Mantuan cameo," and shows Bacchus standing on the left with a cloth over his head and hanging down his back. He holds his thyrsus and a torch, and is supported by a short, stout Silenus. They are accompanied by a male Bacchant who restrains an ithyphallic satyr, as they all approach the reclining, half-nude figure of Ariadne. Wester and Simon, "Die Reliefmedallions," fig. 13. Cardinal Gonzaga came through Florence en route to Rome in 1462 and viewed pieces from the collection of Piero de' Medici, despite the latter being bedridden with gout at the time. See C. M. Brown, "Lorenzo de' Medici and the Dispersal of the Antiquarian Collections of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga," *Estratto da Arte Lombardo*, 90-91, n. s. *Rivista di Storia dell'Arte* (1989): 87. Eneo Vico later engraved the gem with the caption: "Bacchanalia / Mores periere boni regnatque libido Improba" (published in *Ex gemmis et cameis antiquorum aliquot monumetia ab Aenea Vico Parren. incis par illustri er excellent<sup>mo</sup> D D Dominco Panarda Rom in pastio lyceo Medicine Professori Io Dominicus de Rubeis D. D., n.d., f.2; photo in Census of Antique Works of Art Known in the Renaissance, Warburg Institute). The "Mantuan cameo" was copied in a Florentine bronze plaquette and in a gold pendant now in the British Museum. Wester and Simon, "Die Reliefmedallions," 30, n. 28-29; another sardonyx cameo with similar imagery is in the Museo Archeologico of Florence (no. 14455) and is allotted to the Medici Collection according to the Census at the Warburg, though Wester and Simon suppose it to be a sixteenth-century copy. See A. Giuliano and M. L. Micheli, *I cammei della collezione Medicea nel Museo Archeologico di Firenze* (Rome: 1989), no. 59. The other, now broken (but possibly still complete in the fifteenth century) version of the Discovery cameo is an agate-onyx in the Museo Nazionale, Naples, that came from the collection of Lorenzo de' Medici; it lacks the satyr and has a winged, torch-bearing putto instead of the Bacchant, to light the view of Ariadne, whom Silenus is revealing. Dacos, *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, cat. 33, fig. 26. Yet another version, without the torch-bearing putto, is in the Museo Archeologico in Florence (no. 14458).*

<sup>149</sup> Sardonyx cameo, Museo Nazionale, Naples. A bronze plaquette after the gem is in the Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. See Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, no. 248, fig. 34. The illuminator Attavante and his workshop copied tiny scenes from glyptics, as well as coins, in the margins of his books, and included the "Mantuan cameo" scene of the Discovery of Ariadne in the

this second cameo had not yet entered the Medici collection (not acquired until 1471 along with a significant portion of Pope Paul II's trove), it would have been familiar through plaster or wax casts, bronze plaquette copies, or drawings.<sup>150</sup> These magnified tokens of antiquity served to give the new architectural style of the Medici palace, with its sense of order and harmony inspired by Alberti and Vitruvius, an *all'antica* authenticity.<sup>151</sup> But as Erika Simon has argued, there could have been a larger motive for the selection of these antiques, which she detects in the systematic modification of the images—not verbatim replicas of the originals—and in the choice of gems, including ones not even in the Medici collection.<sup>152</sup> In view of the changes made to Dionysus in the first roundel, giving him a Herculean lion headdress and a lance and whip instead of thyrsus and torch, Simon takes the pair of tondi as a representation of the Choice of

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frontispiece of both a classical text, the *Geografia* of Ptolemy (now in Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), and a religious one, the Missal of Thomas James (in Bibliothèque Municipale, Lyons). On each of these pages, the scene from the Discovery cameo was paired with the scenes from a cameo now in Naples, showing two figures borne in triumph upon a chariot, suggesting that this second image was understood to represent the sequentially appropriate scene of the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne. The pairing of the two gems in a variety of contexts suggests that the iconography of the cameos was in fact at least elementarily guessed at, contrary to the unspecific description of these pieces in their inventories (where the common generic descriptive “una figura gnuda,” as in Lorenzo’s inventory, fails even to indicate gender). In Cardinal Pietro Barbo’s inventory of 1457 the couple are described only as “vir et mulier.” The riders are now most commonly seen as a Dionysus and a satyr in a wagon drawn by Psyche-like maidens. See Dacos, *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 46; Pesce, “Gemme medicee,” n.19 and p. 85.

<sup>150</sup> Pesce, “Gemme medicee,” 50-97. Upon acquiring this, as with his other gems and glyptics, Lorenzo had his name carved into the piece as LAVR MED (Laurenti Medicei). Pietro Barbo, that is Paul II, had the largest collection, which in 1457 had over 800 cameos and gems, held at his Palazzo di San Marco. See Dacos, *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 134; Pesce, 50-53; and Toby Yuen, “Glyptic Sources of Renaissance Art,” in *Engraved Gems: Survivals and Revivals*, ed. Clifford Malcolm Brown (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1997), 137-157. Upon Barbo’s death in 1471, Lorenzo de’ Medici was able to acquire a great number of these before they were more widely dispersed, and also received some as gifts from the new pope, Sixtus IV. See also Clifford Malcolm Brown, Laurie Fusco, and Gino Corti, “Lorenzo de’ Medici and the Dispersal of the Antiquarian Collections of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga,” *Estratto da Arte Lombarda* 90-91, n. s. *Rivista di Storia dell’Arte* (1989): 86-103.

<sup>151</sup> A. D. Fraser Jenkins, “Cosimo De’ Medici’s Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 162-170. The application of small-scale motifs from gems into large-scale architectural reliefs mimics the fictive architecture in Jacopo Bellini’s drawing books and Mantegna’s paintings.

<sup>152</sup> Simon ascribes a program to the entire series of reliefs that encompasses a combination of Christianity, Neoplatonism, and Lucretianism, extolling the Cardinal Virtues and the origins and history of man, which proceeds from the Era “ante legem” with Prehistoric Man and Iron/Bronze Age Man, to the Era “sub lege” with Justice and Fortitude, to *Hercules am Scheidewege* with Hercules and *Voluptas*, and *Virtus* with *Amor caelestis*, ending in *Prudentia* and *Temperantia* with Art and Shipbuilding.



Hercules.<sup>153</sup> In the first relief, then, Hercules encounters *Voluptas*, in the figure of the nude woman, and the second relief shows a triumph of *Virtus*, with the fleshy Dionysus of the gem made female and “modestly” clothed.<sup>154</sup>

At some level, such iconographic modifications were standard practice for an artist like Donatello, who had abandoned *imitatio* for *translatio*; he sought not to copy antiques but to be inspired by them. Given that the images were understood as deriving from Bacchic originals, he may have been influenced by the growing awareness of the soteriological significance of these mythological motifs. Moreover, it was not necessary that *Voluptas*, or earthly Venus, be revealed by nudity while heavenly love be indicated by modest dress. Works like Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love* clearly show the reverse.<sup>155</sup> Likewise, the revelation of Ariadne’s nude flesh on Naxos was not intended to debase her, nor merely to arouse Bacchus’ love. Rather it was a sacred act of unveiling, by which the god became lover and the “initiate” became beloved, the epiphany that preceded divine union. In the courtyard tondo on the right, the hero (whether “Herculean” or not, as lions are linked with Bacchus too) who arrives to find a beautiful woman

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<sup>153</sup> However, besides the lion skin, there are no other Herculean attributes: no club, no beard; and none of these appear in the second roundel, where the nude male is decidedly youthful and un-Herculean. Dacos entirely rejects Erika Simon’s contention that there is a philosophical program in the courtyard reliefs at all. She insists the reliefs are merely “una esercitazione archeologica... e non rivela alcuna intenzione iconologica” (*Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 147 and n. 36).

<sup>154</sup> I believe it fair to argue that many of these alterations could as easily be accidental, stemming from the inherent challenge of reading originals barely more than an inch wide and in enlarging those motifs many-fold and maintaining them as something meaningful and readable. These transformations might have even occurred in the intermediary media by which the gems were known, if our artist did not see the originals himself. In the gem, Bacchus’ *thyrsus* does look like a spear and the ribbons of flame from his torch are difficult to interpret. Lion skins appear on other Bacchic gems, as in the cameo of a dancing satyr, also in the Medicean collection (Dacos, cat. 9, and called in the Laurentian inventory, “una figura bachante”), so that a lion skin does not necessarily identify a Hercules. See also John Boardman, “Classical Gems and Media Interaction,” in *Engraved Gem*, 18-20. Boardman sites a type of Triumph of Bacchus cameo, like that in Naples, specifically as one engendering confusion already in antiquity, when an artist in the eastern Parthian Empire borrowed the image in a gilt silver dish and by others in two Sassanian dishes, where they convert Dionysus into Hercules or into a half-naked woman.

signifies an approach to the divine that is encountered through contemplating the beautiful. The blatant arousal of the Pan embodies the lowest level of animal passion, which is held back by the higher powers of reason, embodied in the sober Bacchant who literally pulls the Pan back by the horn. In the second relief, Amor prods the heavenly Psyche to pull the chariot onwards. The couple onboard, too generic to be Bacchus and Ariadne themselves but filled with the echoes of their triumphal ride, suggest the climactic ascent of the soul as it rises to the complete realization of heavenly bliss.

As an alternative to reading the reliefs as a depiction of virtue versus vice, therefore, we may be encountering in the Medicean palazzo—the birthplace of Florentine Platonism—an early representation of the Ficinian concept of the ascent of the soul through Love and Beauty. The combination of the Discovery of Ariadne and the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne in the courtyard medallions creates this progression, as opposed to mere opposition or contrast. Just as Ariadne’s apotheosis is experienced as rapture and amorous bliss, so man’s journey from earth to heaven is enacted through *divino furore*. First he must contemplate Beauty, elevating human love to divine love, and from there his soul will be transported through ecstatic frenzy to the union with the divine. These ideas were percolating, with Ficino and other humanists sharing their thoughts in the Medicean circle already established in Florence around the figure of Ioannes Argyropylos, brought over in 1456, and flourishing under the auspices of Cosimo de’ Medici from 1462 on.<sup>156</sup> Ficino wrote his *De Voluptate* in 1458 based upon Leonardo Bruni’s partial

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<sup>155</sup> Goffen, “Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love*,” 121-144; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 132-133; Maria Louisa Ricciardi, “*L’amor sacro e profano*: Un ulterior tentativo di sciogliere l’enigma,” *Notizie di Palazzo Albini* 15 (1986): 38-43.

<sup>156</sup> See Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence*, 107-112. Cosimo de’ Medici was central in bringing the Greek philosopher and professor to Florence, who quickly dispersed a knowledge of Plato along with Aristotle. See James Hankins for the convincing argument that Cosimo did not establish a true school or institution called the “Platonic Academy,” per se, but rather supported an intellectual brotherhood who sought the communality

translation of the *Phaedrus* and *Symposium*, and began translating Plato in 1463, dedicating the complete edition to Piero de' Medici in 1468. Artists and their advisors were looking for mythological figures and tales with which to articulate these novel theories. Donatello explored the theme of putti at the vintage and of Bacchic ecstasy on the base of his *Judith and Holofernes*; may have converted the same Triumph gem into the putti triumph on Goliath's helmet in the bronze *David*; and experimented with the image of the Phaedrean charioteer in his *Portrait of a Youth*.<sup>157</sup> And so it is entirely plausible that here in the Medici courtyard he could grapple with discovery and triumph as metaphors for epiphany and the ascent of the soul.

We encounter the ultimate expression of the sensual nude woman in the sleeping Bacchante in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (fig. 3.21).<sup>158</sup> There amidst the Bacchic frenzy of antique and contemporary revelers lies a voluptuous nude woman, her pelvis tipped towards the viewer while her upper back arches over the ground and her head tilts back towards the sky. Her right arm is bent all the way behind her head, her elbow pointing upwards, and her left dangles listlessly against the earth, barely holding her empty drinking bowl. She exudes luxuriant lassitude. Titian is reacting to all those Ariadnes, maenads, and sleeping Venuses that came before, and specifically, the sleeping Lotis in Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* hanging adjacent to his. In contrast to Bellini's Lotis, who sleeps sitting up with head tipped in her palm, like a tired washerwoman taking a break from her chores, Titian's nude is no common woman, but truly an otherworldly Bacchante, her unsparing nudity setting her apart from the earthly

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of his villa. The story of the Academy was initiated by scholars interpreting mentions by Marsilio Ficino and must be understood in light of his own self-serving style of language as an over-exaggeration of the facts ("Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 53 [1990]: 144-162, and idem, "The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 [1991]: 429-475).

<sup>157</sup> For a Neoplatonic reading of the *David*, see Schneider, "Donatello's Bronze *David*," 213-216; Ames-Lewis, "Art History or Stilkritik?" 139-155.

<sup>158</sup> c. 1523-1525, Prado Museum, Madrid.

Venetian girls or *all'antica* dancers accompanying her. She has no need for earthly clothes and has slipped into oblivion because she has become mythical and immortal.

The subject of Titian's painting was derived from an *ekphrasis* in Philostratus the Elder's *Imagines* I.vi, likely known to the artist and his advisors through Demetrius Moscus' particular translation, which Alfonso had borrowed from Isabella and which read:<sup>159</sup>

The stream of wine which flows on the island of Andros and the Andrians made drunk by the river are the subject of this picture, for the land of the Andrians made rich in wine by Bacchus breaks open and sends (the wine) to them as a river....

[T]he Andrians, crowned with ivy and sage, sing to their women and children. Some of them dance on the one and some on the other shore, and others recline on the ground....

[...] Bacchus is sailing to the feast on Andros. His ship has already entered the port and he brings with him satyrs and, together with them, bacchantes and sileni, and he also brings along Laughter as well as Comus, both very cheerful gods and great experts at feasting, so that the river's harvest may be reaped in the sweetest way.<sup>160</sup>

If Titian had wanted to make a literal transcription of this text, this painting would not have been the result.<sup>161</sup> We do not see Bacchus here; a ship in the distance seems to sail away and not

<sup>159</sup> In December 1515, Isabella complained to Girolamo Ziliolo in Ferrara that her brother, Alfonso, had had for several years ("già più anni") her copy of Philostratus and she wanted it back. She wrote: "Mario [Equicolo] says he saw it in the Duke's *studio*, and in his own hands" (as quoted in Shearman, "Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 213). Moscus' edition is now Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS It.1091. See Maria Raina Fehl's transcription of Moscus' translation of the *Imagines* of the Andrians in an appendix to Michaela Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie: Antike Bildbeschreibungen im Werk Tizians und Leonardo* (Worms: Werner'sche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985), 123-137.

<sup>160</sup> Trans. Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," Appendix III, 90-92. Philostratus, *Imagines* I.vi, trans. Moscus: "Il corso del vino che e in Andro insula et li andrii inebriati da fiume sono ragion della pittura perche rompe il terreno delli Andrii vinoso da Baccho e manda a quelli un fiume. se tu pensi che'l sia di aqua non grande ma se tu pensi che sia di vino, grande, e per certo questo fiume e divino. [...] Tal cose cantono li andrij: quanto io comprendo a femine e putti coronati d'edera e di salvia et alcuni di quelli ballono in l'una e l'altra riva. Altri sono distesi. [...] [N]avica Baccho a la festa di andro et e intrata hormai in porto la nave et conduce satiri et insieme con quelli lupi cernovi sileni e mena seco et il riso et anchora il como quali sone Dei molto alegri et atti a praticar' in conviti accio che'l fiume se possa verdemar' Dolcissimamente" (transcribed by Maria Raina Fehl, in Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrscherallegorie*, Anhang II, 135-136). See Chapter Six for a further discussion of this painting.

<sup>161</sup> For a very literal rendition, see the engraving of "Les Andriens," in *Les images ou tableaux de platte peinture des deux Philostrates... mis en françois par Blaise de Vigenère...*, Paris, 1614, illustrated by David Rosand, "An Arc of Flame: On the transmission of pictorial knowledge," in Cavalli-Björkman, *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, 89, fig. 3. Cf. Cavalli-Björkman, in same, 95-96.

towards the island.<sup>162</sup> No sleeping Ariadne nor drunken maenad is mentioned in the text, yet the sleeping nude that lies upon the bank embodies all the listlessness that results from overindulgence. She has been identified as the Comus of the text—in Greek, Komos, the god of revel and merrymaking—apprehended through medieval misunderstanding as “drunken sleep”; the urinating putto at her side as Gelos or laughter.<sup>163</sup> But there is nothing in the imagery to suggest that these figures personify those ideas. The babe lifting his shirt to urinate into the stream of wine was a commonplace of antique imagery of putti at the vineyard or wine vessel, and could symbolize the tempering of pure wine with water (a custom that persisted in the Renaissance).<sup>164</sup> Urination (as with vomiting) served as a metaphor for the cleansing processes of purgation endured by initiates in their effort to experience the divine frenzy that led to union

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<sup>162</sup> Some identify the ivy-wreathed man in the dance as Bacchus (Fehl, “The Hidden Genre: A Study of the *Concert Champêtre* in the Louvre,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 16 [1957]: 164); some the old man lying on a bed of grapes in the distance (Cavalli-Björkman, *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, 97); others the nude man pouring out the wine as Bacchus (Rosand, “An Arc of Flame,” 85); but without the grape-leaf wreath, mantle, or long blond hair that the god has in the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, it is hard to prove such assertions. Other figures in the painting are serving up and holding wine vessels, so the man’s gesture of pouring does not seem more sacred or special, nor does he garner our attention as the actual Bacchus does in the other painting. Panofsky suggests that Titian left Bacchus out of this painting since he was already portrayed in the adjacent work (*Problems in Titian*, 100).

<sup>163</sup> Henry Murutes, “Personifications of Laughter and Drunken Sleep in Titian’s *Andrians*,” *The Burlington Magazine* 115 (1973): 518-525. Murutes argues that medieval lexicographers’ interpretation of the word as relating to *koma*, or deep sleep, and in particular to the sleep that is the consequence of too much alcohol, had filtered down into the program devised for Titian by his advisors. However, Comus is generally represented at this time as a male god. And the sleeping nude is such an integral part of Bacchic imagery already, there does not seem to be any need to go searching elsewhere for an explanation for her presence. Only to be explained is why Titian so emphasized her, which I attempt to do here. See Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, chap. 8, “‘Sweet Counterfeiting and Blandishments’: Courtiership, *urbanitas*, and Costa’s *Comus*,” 205-219. Made for Isabella d’Este’s Studiolo, Lorenzo Costa’s *Comus*, 1507-1515, is in the Louvre, Paris. In that painting, Comus appears as a torch-bearing seated god wearing a wreath; nearby, a sleeping Ariadne appears lying in the lap of Bacchus.

<sup>164</sup> Note that Moscus’ text refers to the river god releasing the wine as “neat,” when in practice wine was always mixed with water, which may be symbolized by the putto who “makes water” and alluded to also in the possible identification of the small figure in the middle distance who may be gathering water at a well. See Hanneke Wilson, *Wine and Words in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2003), chap. 4, “Wine, Water and Song.” Anacreon attested to the ancient habit of mixing wine with water. See Frag. 75: “Athenaeus *Doctors at Dinner* [on mixing wine, 11.782a]: It was formerly the custom to pour into the cup first the water and then the wine.... Compare Anacreon: *Bring water, lad, bring wine, bring me garlands of flowers; aya, bring them hither; for I would try a bout with Love.*” And Frag. 76: “The Same [11.427s]: In Anacreon it is one of wine to two of water: *Come bring me a jar, lad: I want my first-drink; ten ladles of water to five of wine, for I would e’en play the Bacchanal in decent wise*; and proceeding he calls the drinking of wine unmixed a Scythian practice: *Come let us give up this Scythian drinking with uproar and din over our cups, and drink moderately between pretty*

with the god.<sup>165</sup> Donatello borrowed the “putto pisciatore” for his *Judith* relief from the ubiquitous type and engravers of the popular vintaging theme included him as well, as did the illustrator of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.<sup>166</sup> Urinating *spiritelli* were shown on fountains, with their urine streams arching into the water that would itself be used for drinking.<sup>167</sup> And while adding an element of light-hearted humor, that is “laughter,” to the scene, his incontinence suggests more than just the natural consequence of drinking, but rather the transformative character of wine, which frees and liberates the soul.<sup>168</sup> The prevalence of the motif in contemporary art as a symbol of fertility also gives Titian’s putto associations with love, marriage, and Venus. In Lorenzo Lotto’s painting from c. 1530 of *Venus and Cupid*, for example, the infant Cupid aims his stream of urine through a laurel wreath into the lap of a nude, reclining (though awake) Venus.<sup>169</sup> Titian’s putto is not Cupid, but bestows the association of fertility and love upon the reclining nude, who bears within her the memory of that sleeping Venus of Claudian’s epithalamium who must awaken to guarantee the happiness and fecundity of a new marriage.<sup>170</sup>

Lying upon the riverbank against a large vessel, she appears also as the nymph of the source, who by this time was inseparable from the idea of the sleeping Venus. The themes were

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*songs of praise*” (in *Lyra Graeca*, vol. 2, 177).

<sup>165</sup> Shapiro, “Donatello’s *Genietto*,” 135. Servius speaks to this Bacchic purgation of the soul in his *Commentary on Virgil’s Georgics* I, 166; followed by Boccaccio, *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* V.xxv.21.

<sup>166</sup> *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, fol. LAr.

<sup>167</sup> The *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* also includes a woodcut of a fountain consisting of two maidens holding up a urinating boy by his feet.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Fehl, who sees the putto as Cupid in disguise, and a representation of the “most harmless effect of drunkenness” (“The Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 100).

<sup>169</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>170</sup> Cavalli-Björkman, *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, 98-99.

so intertwined that the two elided into one Venus-nymph, and in Titian's work became enmeshed also with the Ariadne-maenad. While laid out unconscious, her empty cup at her side, she exhibits at the most literal level "drunken sleep," but her evident beauty and the emphasis she is given mark her as something more significant. Her tossed-back head, in particular, was a vehicle of meaning. Like one of Warburg's "pathos formulae," the pose bears within itself the heightened emotion of its predecessors.<sup>171</sup> Since the "pitch" of feeling is conveyed by such a pose, not the particular emotion itself, the pose is able to translate intensity into other figures and contexts, even into different emotions. Titian's nude maenad is the ultimate image of sensual surfeit, with her upper arm tossed back over her head, designating the sensualist's as opposed to the sleeper's pose. She becomes one who is not so much asleep as "enraptured, her body tensed by an experience transcending consciousness."<sup>172</sup> There is a sense of a body so filled with sensation that the mind is taken elsewhere, transported via the body to an out-of-body experience of rapture—a literal *ekstasis*—as in Bernini's Baroque *St. Theresa* to come.<sup>173</sup> Her transport is not sexual but divine. Titian's figure is the consummate maenad, succumbing to the intense fulfillment of the drunken orgy carrying on around her: the wine has moved her beyond drunkenness to welcome the real inspiration of the god, an *enthousiasmos*—as the true meaning of the word conveys, "a breathing in"—of the god's presence within her. She embodies the joyous ecstasy wrought by Bacchic inspiration that is induced by literal inebriation but for which inebriation is also merely a metaphor. Bacchus has inspirited the island of Andros; his lifeblood is literally the wine flowing through the land. She represents the quintessential experience of the

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<sup>171</sup> Barasch, "The Tossed-Back Head," 152-160.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>173</sup> See Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 13-14, 24.

divine frenzy that is exhibited in various stages throughout the throng of revelers to the left.

Hers is the anesthesia of the maenad, and of the human initiate, who is filled up with the god and has experienced the rapturous communion with the divine.

## THE TRIUMPH OF BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

The sleeping Venus fountain of Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* demonstrates how an appreciation of beauty and love could be elevated above the sensual to the spiritual sphere. From that fountain sprang forth all the vegetation of the garden, symbolizing the power of generation, which was the driving energy of the universe cycling the human soul from the earthly to the heavenly realm and back again. Reproduction was life, and the only mortal access to immortality. It was a drive that originated with God, and in turn passed down through all living things (fig. 3.40).<sup>174</sup> The appreciation of sexual love as part of the necessary order of the cosmos was imprinted with Bacchic overtones; Bacchus and Ceres do not just keep Venus "warm," but maintain the whole cycle of nature through reproduction. Like the theme of the Discovery of Ariadne, which merged with Neoplatonic notions epitomizing the ascent of the human soul achieved through love, the triumphal procession of the amorous pair asserted the reward of eternal bliss. The portrayal of the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne captured this idea of *Voluptas*.

In the grand palazzo in Urbino, Federico da Montefeltro installed almost an exact replica of the British Museum Bacchic sarcophagus, then in Santa Maria Maggiore, as a long mantle-

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<sup>174</sup> Ferruolo, "Botticelli's Mythologies," 17-20. See the illustration in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1611) for "Sostanza": she appears as a woman with spraying breasts, holding wheat stalks and grapes on the vine. This carries on the idea of Bacchus and Ceres as fostering not just love, but the outcome of love, that is, fertility and reproduction.



piece relief created around 1460 (fig. 3.41).<sup>175</sup> The long, low proportions of this sarcophagus were suited to the dimensions of the fireplace. The sculptor of the so-called Camino della Iole gave the scene a rectangular recession in which the actors move, as if on a stage, and eliminated certain background figures and details and spread the performers out.<sup>176</sup> The main figures from the sarcophagus are all there, and in the same order, with the addition of a nude satyr viewed *a tergo* who plays a double *aulos* at the center and two lunging figures and a tree hung with shields on the far right, where the original sarcophagus was broken off and later restored.<sup>177</sup> The

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<sup>175</sup> The sarcophagus is now in the British Museum. See Rubinstein, “A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance,” 112-117; Clarence Kennedy, “Il Greco aus Fiesole,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Instituts in Florenz* 4 (1932-34): 25-40; B. Degenhart, “Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo,” 208-215. See also Pasquale Rotondi, *Il Palazzo Ducale di Urbino* (Urbino: Istituto statale d’arte per il libro, 1950-1951). The Appartamento della Iole was the first wing with the main state reception rooms of the new palace, with the Sala della Iole, bearing the Camino, being the reception hall from which one would pass to the Sala dei Guerrieri, the main audience chamber. These rooms are thought to have been created under the first architect, Maso di Bartolomeo, and his assistants Pasquino da Montepulciano and Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo (“Il Greco”). Luciano Laurana worked on the significant expansion and remodeling of the palazzo from 1465 to 1472. He was succeeded in turn by Francesco di Giorgio Martini in c. 1474. See Ludwig H. Heydenreich, rev. Paul Davies, *Architecture in Italy 1400-1500* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 74; Luciano Cheles, *The Studiolo of Urbino: An Iconographic Investigation* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), introduction.

<sup>176</sup> Like Balducci, this artist has eliminated certain, perhaps indecipherable features, and misunderstood others, turning snakes into ribbons and drapery into cornucopia, and even reversing genders (turning a nude satyr near Pan into a dancing maenad). Even someone as practiced studying the antique as Amico Aspertini, who in his drawings after the British Museum sarcophagus and other antique sources got many details correct, still gave the putto on the centaur’s back a banner, Bacchus breasts, and made the nude figure next to Pan (who is carrying a full wine bladder) into a woman (as a Venus *pubica* type). The Camino relief was earlier attributed to Francesco Laurana. The first to make the attribution to Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo, who had been to Rome prior to working in Urbino from 1454 on, was Clarence Kennedy, “Il Greco aus Fiesole,” who was followed by Degenhart, “Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo,” 211-213, and Ulrich Middeldorf, “Su alcuni bronzetti all’antica del Quattrocento (1958),” in *Raccolta di Scritti/Collected Writings II 1939-1973* (Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1980), 246, n. 9. Subsequently, however, the attribution has been made doubtful, due to Michele’s evidently limited artistic capabilities, and Pasquino, Francesco Laurana, or some other may be owed credit. See Scalabroni, who proposes Andrea dell’Aquila, who had been to Rome and then worked with Francesco Laurana in Naples on the portal of the Cappella Palatina and the Arch of Alfonso d’Aragona of the Castelnuovo from 1453 to 1458, which includes a small relief of dancing and piping fauns on the lower right frieze of the arch (“Il sarcofago bacchico di S. Maria Maggiore,” in *Da Pisanello*, ed. Cavallaro and Parlato, 166-167).

<sup>177</sup> The sarcophagus restorations are thought to have been made in the late 1580s, when Pope Sixtus V moved the relief from Santa Maria Maggiore to the garden of his Villa Montalfo next door. The added figures in the restoration—which include a forward-facing dancing satyr—may be based on figures on the Bacchic krater in Pisa or from another Bacchic sarcophagus in Pisa. See Rubinstein, “A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance,” 123-125. An anonymous mid-sixteenth-century drawing in Munich (Staatliche Graphische Sammlung 2536) provides the most accurate copy of the sarcophagus as it then stood, prior to any restorations. In the position of the central satyr in question, there is visible a hand holding aloft a single pipe or *aulos* (*ibid.*, fig. 162, cat. 23). The double-

Camino della Iole is unusual for displaying a narrative relief, especially one that is a one-to-one replica of an antique frieze.<sup>178</sup> The bases were sculpted with labeled atlas and caryatid figures, Hercules on the left and his beloved, Iole, on the right. The choice of this pair has been described as fitting for Federico, who like many a warrior-prince, was eulogized as a new Hercules.<sup>179</sup> Likewise, the figure of Iole would have been familiar from her inclusion in Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*.<sup>180</sup> But in Boccaccio's survey of famous women, Iole appeared as a negative figure, an example of women who emasculate men and destroy their power. Hers was a cautionary tale, a warning to men not to succumb as Hercules did to the domination of women nor to allow themselves to be feminized or subsumed within the female domestic world.<sup>181</sup> It was, moreover, a decrival of love's power to ensnare men and withdraw

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sided sheet of drawings in the Louvre (n. 5611 and 5611v) showing the side panels of the British Museum sarcophagus also includes on each side a rear-facing, aulos-playing satyr like that which appears at the center of the Camino relief, which may indicate that the drawings are in some way connected to the artist of the relief, although the piping satyr was a common enough motif to be found elsewhere, and the style of the drawings does not match that of the relief. Such a rear-facing satyr, along with similar other figures, can be seen on a sarcophagus in Palazzo Arcivescovile, formerly in the Cathedral, Lucca. Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 90.

<sup>178</sup> Chimneypieces were more typically decorated with armorials, swags, animals, or putti. This mantle-piece has a relief of garland-bearing putti above it. See Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1991). Elements from the Santa Maria Maggiore sarcophagus were also translated elsewhere into outdoor architectural reliefs, as above the entry portal to the Odeo Cornaro in Padua, which does not show the entire relief. Gunter Schweikhart, "Un rilievo all'antica sconosciuto nell'odeo Cornaro," *Padova e la sua Provincia* 21, no. 7-8 (1975): 8-11. Andrea del Sarto represented a fictive mantle-piece with a carved relief, which appears to depict a battle of sea monsters, within his painting of the *Birth of the Virgin* in SS. Annunziata, Florence, c. 1514.

<sup>179</sup> Gianmario Filelfo, the son of Francesco Filelfo, described Federico as such in a 1464 ingratiating eulogy, or *canzona morale*. See Rubinstein, "A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance," n. 27. See also C. H. Clough, "Federigo da Montefeltro's Patronage of the Arts, 1468-1482," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 134.

<sup>180</sup> Boccaccio, *Famous Women* (ca. 1360), chap. XXIII, ed. and trans. Virginia Brown (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 91-97; and in *Tutte le opere*, ed. Zaccaria, vol. 10. See Heydenreich, *Architecture in Italy 1400-1500*, n. 4 on p. 160.

<sup>181</sup> Margaret Franklin, *Boccaccio's Heroines: Power and Virtue in Renaissance Society* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006), 42, 47. *Famous Women* XXIII.2-4: "With resolute cunning she hid her real attitude under a false show of affection. Her caresses and a certain artful wantonness made Hercules so besotted with her that she felt he would not refuse her anything. [...] The sweet young thing was naturally given to trickery, and so thought there was more glory in weakening a strong man by seduction than in killing him by poison or the sword" (trans. Brown, 91-93). Boccaccio's typically misogynist assessments of women include criticism even of the likes of Ceres (chap. V),

them from useful and honorable achievement. On the Camino, however, Hercules is shown with his lion skin and club, ever the hero, and Iole appears as a beautiful nude, a sweet beloved. Her portrayal, as a bride of Hercules, along with the depiction of the Bacchic wedding triumph and the prancing putti above, may indicate that the Camino imagery was intended to celebrate the themes of love and marriage. Federico's second marriage to Battista Sforza in 1459 likely prompted the decoration (c. 1460-1465) of this first completed wing of the new palazzo and its conjugal theme.<sup>182</sup>

Boccaccio himself addressed the idea of married love as distinct from lust and passion:

...[S]ince marriage is an ancient and indissoluble bond of nature, ...there is no greater love than that of women who live in harmony with their husbands. For this fire of love, when ignited by reason, does not inflame to madness but warms to mutual accord; it joins hearts in such affection that husbands and wives share the same desires in equal measure.<sup>183</sup>

The numerous other putti in the room, including a frieze above the doorway with winged *spiritelli* engaged in battle upon the backs of boars and the relief of dancing putti on the Camino degli Angeli in the nearby Appartamento del Duca, served to invoke the joys of love.<sup>184</sup> To a ruler famed for his military exploits, regularly portrayed in his armor, these delicate figures and amorous couples were perhaps a reminder to soften a bellicose nature with companionship and

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despite her gift of agriculture: "If we do not deceive ourselves, we shall see that the new practices opened the door to vices still latent—vices once afraid to come out into the open, but now given safe conduct" —vices that include war, lust, disease, and death (trans. Brown, 33). In the *Genealogy of the Pagan Gods* Book XI.xxix, Ariadne is likewise charged with wantonness.

<sup>182</sup> The Sala della Iole seems to have been part of the couple's personal apartment. See Maria Grazia Pernis and Laurie Schneider Adams, *Federico da Montefeltro and Sigismondo Malatesta: The Eagle and the Elephant* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 51.

<sup>183</sup> Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, chap. XXXI.11, "The Wives of the Minyans," trans. Brown, 127.

<sup>184</sup> The Camino degli Angeli is attributed to Domenico Rosselli, working in the second phase of palace construction under Luciano Laurana, from 1465-1472.

pleasure.<sup>185</sup> Federico was himself a lover of the new antiquarian culture, avidly learning from humanists, collecting classical manuscripts, and absorbing antique principles of aesthetics and magnificence.<sup>186</sup> The architects working on the palace and its accoutrements succeeded in creating a noble and elegant style of decoration that epitomized the new *all'antica* architectural sensibility. As his contemporary biographer Vespasiano da Bisticci recounted, Federico also cared deeply about art: “As to sculpture he had great knowledge, and he took much thought as to the work which he had made for his palace, employing the first masters of the time. To hear him talk of sculpture you would deem it was his own art.”<sup>187</sup> Installing a copy of a famous antique relief perfectly suited the new mode of clarified, classical ornamentation used to accent the large proportions of the graceful, courtly space. Federico was likely aware that the Medici were simultaneously accenting their *all'antica* courtyard with carved roundels based on antique

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<sup>185</sup> Other decorations near the Sala della Iole suggest this contrast of feminine and masculine power. The door leading into the sala, for example, the later Porta della Guerra, has *intarsia* depicting a Fountain of Life and a Triumph of Chastity—alluding to childbearing and wifely virtue—while the frame around the door depicts Federico’s *imprese* and symbols of war. The two values—the ongoing survival of the family and the victorious rule of its leader—depend on each other to go on. See Pernis and Adams, *Federico da Montefeltro*, 82-83, 103.

<sup>186</sup> Clough, “Federigo da Montefeltro’s Patronage of the Arts,” *passim*. Also, A. D. Fraser Jenkins, “Cosimo de’ Medici’s Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 162-170. As a youth he was for a time in Venice and then in Mantua, where for two years he studied at Vittorino da Feltre’s school, the *Casa Gioiosa*, with the Gonzaga sons. Battista Sforza (1446-1472) was herself a highly intelligent and educated woman. She was the grandmother of Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547), indicating the durability of the tradition of female education in this family. She was educated in Milan and at home in Pesaro by a pupil of Vittorino da Feltre among others, and was instructed in Greek by a pupil of Guarino da Verona, Martino Filetico, and continued her education even after her marriage to Federico. See Clough, “Daughters and Wives of the Montefeltro: Outstanding Bluestockings of the Quattrocento,” *Renaissance Studies* 10, no. 1 (1996): 32, 40, and *passim*. See also Pernis and Adams, *Federico da Montefeltro*, 50-55. For Vittorino da Feltre’s school, see William Harrison Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* (1897) (New York: Teacher’s College, Columbia University, 1963), especially 30. Federico amassed an extensive library, with the help of Vespasiano, that included almost all of the known classics, and many humanists dedicated their works to him. See also Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, book one: “Then, at great cost, he collected a large number of the finest and rarest books, in Greek, Latin and Hebrew, all of which he adorned with gold and silver, believing that they were all the crowning glory of his great palace” (*The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull, rev. ed. [New York: Penguin Books, 1976], 41).

<sup>187</sup> Vespasiano da Bisticci, *The Vespasiano Memoirs: Lives of Illustrious Men of the XVth Century*, trans. William George and Emily Waters (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, in association with the Renaissance Society of America, 1997), 101.

cameos, gems, and reliefs.<sup>188</sup> Federico was bent on pursuing the contemporary movement in architectural patronage that sought to reflect moral virtue and superior largesse in magnificent building projects.<sup>189</sup>

Federico and Battista embraced triumphal imagery again in the double portrait diptych commissioned from Piero della Francesca, the outer panels of which showed the ruler and his wife upon parade wagons pulled across beautiful landscapes and accompanied by personifications of their virtues.<sup>190</sup> The inscription beneath Battista's triumph reads "QVE MODVM REBVS TENVIT SECVNDIS – CONIVGIS MAGNI DECORATA RERVVM – LAVDE GESTARVM VOLITAT PER ORA – CVNCTA VIRORVM," or approximately, "She that kept her modesty in favourable circumstances, flies on the mouths of all men, adorned with the praise of the acts of her great husband."<sup>191</sup> Likewise, Iole and Ariadne had been elevated and immortalized by the words of men because of their association with "great husbands." Had a purely militaristic or heroic triumph been intended for the Camino decoration, the artist might have shown Hercules alone and Bacchus solitary in his Indian triumph.<sup>192</sup> The inclusion of their

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<sup>188</sup> The various rulers kept tabs on each other's projects; Lorenzo de' Medici would request detailed plans of the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino in 1481, supplied by Baccio Pontelli. See Clough, "Federigo da Montefeltro's Patronage of the Arts," 143.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 140. Also Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture," 162-170; Rupert Shepherd, "Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti, Ercole I d'Este and the Decoration of the Italian Renaissance Court," *Renaissance Studies* 9 (1995): 18-57.

<sup>190</sup> Uffizi, Florence. It is likely that the portrait of Battista was made posthumously, as a memorial of their marriage, after her death in 1472, a mere six months after giving birth to the couple's only son, Guidobaldo (who followed eight sisters). See Pernis and Adams, *Federico da Montefeltro*, chap. 6, "The Iconography of the Triumph," 95-105. They suggest that together the two triumphs imply a Triumph over Death, with Federico's triumph of Fame and Battista's of Eternity. See also Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, "Father Time," 79.

<sup>191</sup> Carlo Bertelli, *Piero della Francesca*, trans. Edward Farrelly (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 220.

<sup>192</sup> Valturio's *De re militari*, "On the Military Arts," (Verona, 1472), written c.1446-1455/60, emerging from Federico's rival Sigismondo Malatesta's court in Rimini, had emphasized the militaristic character of Bacchus, and Federico owned a copy of the manuscript (as did Lorenzo de' Medici). An Italian edition was published in 1483. See Pernis and Adams, *Federico da Montefeltro*, 81 and n. 5: Urb. lat. 281, dated 1462 and inscribed F. C. (Federico

brides, however, shifts the imagery toward a triumph of love, an echo of Federico's focus on wife and children in the domestic sphere of his new palazzo. With its clarified lines and stilled energy, the Camino Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne reads like a "Triumph of Married Love." The intelligent Battista may herself have had a hand in selecting the *all'antica* decorations for the suite, having traveled personally to Rome in 1461 to visit Pope Pius II.<sup>193</sup> Perhaps she saw the Bacchic sarcophagus at Santa Maria Maggiore, ordering the Camino relief as a sort of souvenir. And perhaps Iole and Ariadne suggested to her the conjugal influence she herself had on her own warrior husband. Like Ariadne on her triumphal ride, supporting and tempering her husband, the role of a courtly wife was to uplift and nurture her spouse upon the shifting seas of fate. As with the *Coronation of Ariadne* portrayed in Cima da Conegion's fragmentary *cassone*, which shows Bacchus more like a victorious emperor than a god, the themes of love and triumph could combine, so that the bride fulfilled the role not just of trophy but of partner (fig. 3.42).<sup>194</sup> Bacchus' triumphant return from India as warrior and conqueror is combined with

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Conto). Cf. Horace, *Ode*, II.19.25-28: "Although men said you were more suited to dances, fun, and games, and were not really fit for fighting, yet you proved a central figure in war as in peace" (trans. Rudd, 137). Nonnos' *Dionysiaca* also emphasized the god's military exploits.

<sup>193</sup> Clough, "Daughters and Wives of the Montefeltro," 48.

<sup>194</sup> 1505-1510, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan. Peter Humfrey, "Two Fragments from a Theseus *Cassone* by Cima," *Burlington Magazine* 123 (1981): 478. Ovid's *Fasti* III.8 describes Bacchus' second encounter with Ariadne, in which he promises to turn her crown "which Vulcan gave to Venus and she to thee" into a constellation; but this is not a coronation. One account by Pherecydes (*frag.* 106) states that after Athena makes Theseus return to Athens, Aphrodite comes to comfort the weeping Ariadne and assure her that Bacchus will come and make her his bride. He arrives, beds her, and gives her a crown, which the gods eventually set among the stars. See Richardson, "The Story of Ariadne," 190-191. As Boccaccio transmits these events from the *Fasti*: "[Ariadne] was soothed by Bacchus with embraces and flatteries. He raised to heaven her crown, which earlier Vulcan had made and given to Venus and Venus had given to Ariadne, and adorned it with nine stars and after that it was called Ariadne from her name; he drew Ariadne equally with it into the sky and made a heavenly image" (*Genealogia deorum gentilium*, Book XI.xxix, trans. Hoover, 70). The gesture of crowning may have, in the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods, been a gesture of pledging troth, and the mutual crowning of lovers or the crowning of brides and nubile maidens was part of centuries of secular iconography regarding love, marriage, and procreation. There is an image of crowning in the Otto prints (Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, A. IV) and also on capital XIII of the Doge's Palace in Venice. It was commonly shown on domestic toiletries, such as combs and mirror cases. Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus," 348, n. 16.

Ariadne's miraculous recovery and divine elevation. She is the initiate who has been filled with the divine *afflatus*, the breath of god. She is the luckiest of women: she is now a divine wife.

The idea of the triumph, or *trionfo*, was already one of the favored literary and artistic motifs of the early Renaissance period, not only from its Christian and classical associations, but especially from Petrarch's influential *I Trionfi* of the 1370s which celebrated social, moral, and spiritual victories.<sup>195</sup> His *Trionfi* catapulted the theme to wider popularity, and the domestic art of the fifteenth century frequently showed the Triumphs of Love and of Chastity, the two somewhat more positive of the victories (and more suited for marriage furniture). Since Petrarch did not detail exactly how these triumphs looked, artists turned to the antique images of triumph that were available to them, namely the triumphs of Bacchus, which modeled the idea of the chariot or wagon pulled by animals that became the quintessential Petrarchan illustration.<sup>196</sup> Other topics of triumph came to be depicted in a similar manner, such as the triumph of the

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<sup>195</sup> See Giovanni Carandente for the transformation of the ancient and Christian model of triumph into the early Renaissance literary and artistic trope (*I Trionfi nel primo Rinascimento* [Torino: Edizioni Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1963]). For the motif of a triumphal chariot in Neoplatonism, see Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*; and the introduction to his edition and translation of Marsilio Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato: Vol. I. Phaedrus and Ion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). In the Middle Ages, triumphs were almost exclusively of religious themes, as in the Triumph of the Church or of various virtues. In ancient Rome the triumphal procession was the right of victorious emperors and generals or the reward for greatness. The triumph was also a sign of royalty. Dante seized on the idea of triumph as a literary device in his *Purgatorio*, in which Beatrice demonstrated how the Church became triumphant with a parallel of the triumph of chaste human love, a love that merges with divine love. See Aldo S. Bernardo, "Triumphal Poetry: Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio," and Barbara Dodge, "Petrarch and the Arts," in *Petrarch's Triumphs: Allegory and Spectacle*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler and Amilcare A. Iannucci (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Editions, Inc., 1990), 33, 177-182.

<sup>196</sup> A hallmark of this borrowing is in the bas-de-page image of a sea triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne in a manuscript of Petrarch's *Canzoniere e trionfi*, made for the Basadona family of Venice in 1472. Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, Inc. Petr. 2, fol. 140b. For imagery of the Triumph of Bacchus in the Renaissance, see Martin Gesing, *Triumph des Bacchus: Triumphidee und Bacchische Darstellungen in der Italienischen Renaissance im Spiegel der Antikenrezeption*, Ph.D. diss. (New York: Verlag Peter Lang, European University Studies, Westfalen Wilhelms University, Münster, 1988). In point of fact, many Renaissance illustrations of triumphs may not have depended upon any firsthand contact with Petrarch's text, or even upon its subsequent iconographic tradition, but may have derived more directly from contact with antique sarcophagi.

different Planets or of the Cardinal Virtues.<sup>197</sup> The triumph-as-tableau became a convenient and appealing mode by which to display antiquarian knowledge and to depict mythological and historical personages.<sup>198</sup> Contemporary rulers were naturally attracted to this forceful mode of self-presentation, both in artistic representations and in actual triumphs. Although Bacchus does not appear to be an obvious analogy for the triumphant *condottiere*, Renaissance humanists recognized Bacchus' association with the very origin of the military triumph, and of his influence on Alexander the Great and Mark Antony.<sup>199</sup> In his *De re militari* (Verona, 1472), Roberto Valturio discussed these Bacchic origins and ended with a long description of a triumph, including its trophies, ornaments of war, and triumphal arches.<sup>200</sup>

The Duke of Urbino's selection of a Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne to decorate his hall stemmed in part from contemporary trends. Increasingly over the course of the fifteenth century, holidays and festivities, both religious and civic, came to be celebrated with an array of reenacted triumphs, with parade floats, or *carri*, drawn through the streets. Designers and audiences of courtly weddings became particularly enamored of these quasi-theatrical displays. The floats were often accompanied by satyrs and pans and other antique creatures and demigods, harkening back to Bacchic triumphs. These triumphs were not necessarily Petrarchan in origin, but after Petrarch's articulation of the motif and the development of the iconography with which

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<sup>197</sup> The frescoes painted by Francesco del Cossa, Cosme Tura, and others c. 1460s in the *Salone dei Mesi* of the Palazzo Schifanoia show the Triumphs of various ancient dieties who are the patrons of the twelve months of the zodiacal calender. See Waburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara (1912)," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 563-591; Kristen Lippincott, "The Iconography of the *Salone dei Mesi* and the Study of Latin Grammar in Fifteenth-Century Ferrara," in *La Corte di Ferrara e il suo mecenatismo 1441-1598/the Court of Ferrara and Its Patronage*, ed. Marianne Pade, Lene Waage Petersen, and Daniela Quarta (Copenhagen: Forum for Renaissance-studier, Museum Tusculanums Forlag, 1990), 93-109.

<sup>198</sup> Dodge, "Petrarch and the Arts," 181.

<sup>199</sup> As recounted in Plutarch's *Lives*.



to illustrate it, it becomes difficult to tease apart origin and effect. The triumph simply became a standard, recognizable motif. In the second half of the fifteenth century, mythological fantasies and *all'antica* triumphs were becoming more and more popular, competing in visibility with the older *sacre rappresentazioni* and allegorical theatricals. Such masquerades included elaborate wagons and actors in costumes, such as the parade described in a letter by Piero Cennini to Pirrino Amerino during the Feast of San Giovanni in 1475, in which there were boys on stilts to represent giants and others dressed up as *spiritelli*, *ninfe*, fauns, and centaurs, all wandering through the city: "The fauns were hairy and had goats' feet, the centaurs seemed to be half horses, and painted paper [*charta picta*] completed what otherwise would be lacking in these animated effigies."<sup>201</sup> In 1466 Pope Paul II was fêted with a triumph that included classical and pagan *carri* and *maschere*, in which costumed performers portrayed *giganti*, Cupid and Diana, troupes of *ninfe*, Roman victors, Cleopatra, and the pagan gods, including Bacchus, with Mars in the lead.<sup>202</sup>

The portrayal of the triumph of mythical lovers offered a jolly contrast to the older tradition of courtly love with its unrequited love, epitomized by the image of a cold, unattainable

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<sup>200</sup> See Carandente, *I Trionfi nel primo Rinascimento*, 18 and n. 25. Valturio's text on military technology refers to the interior decoration of his patron Sigismundo Malatesta's Tempio in Rimini.

<sup>201</sup> Letter quoted by Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 196.

<sup>202</sup> Fabrizio Cruciani, "La mascherata 'classica' del 1466," in *Teatro nel Rinascimento: Roma 1450-1550* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1983), 126. (Only two years later Paul II would instigate a harsh crackdown on the group of antiquarian, "pagan" humanists centered around Pomponio Leto.) According to the account by Matteo Cannesio of Viterbo: "...In testa al corteo avanzavano maschere di giganti; dietro ad esse la maschera di Cupido con le ali e la faretra, poi quella di Diana a cavallo, scortata da una grande schiera di ninfe, poi centosessanta giovani in vesti bianche o anche di più, i quali avevano ricevuto dai prefetti dei giuochi una moneta a testa come se si fossero iscritti al servizio militare, secondo l'usanza antica; seguivano le maschere dei re e di altri generali vinti dai romani, quella di Cleopatra vinta da Cesare Augusto, infine le maschere di Marte, dei fauni, di Bacco e la schiera di alcuni, creduti Dei dagli antiche sia pure falsamente. Seguivano i prebisciti, le deliberazioni del senato scritte su tavole coperte di seta, gli stendardi e altre insegne militari romani; poi la classe dei consoli e dei senatori, circondati da tutti i magistrati della città; seguivano quattro carri altissimi, ornati di maschere svariate e di addobbi meravigliosi. Le persone sedute sui carri cantavano gli stessi carmi laudativi con tonalità di voce diverse, esaltando il vero padre della

beauty in a tower and a forlorn, love-sick courtier or knight below.<sup>203</sup> The loves of the gods provided a new language for the examination and expression of moral, emotional, material, and sensual concerns.<sup>204</sup> The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne showed a happy sexual union paraded through the wilderness up to the heavens, with loud and rambunctious fanfare. Imagery of satyrs and nymphs with sexual punning became commonplace, and sleeping Venuses, in all their sexual availability and latent fertility, were laid out before the viewers' eyes. In the courtly context, the appropriateness of the display of magnificence, as well as the political and material impact and importance of marriage and its production of heirs, were issues that were expounded and affirmed.<sup>205</sup>

The celebration of what seems like a more earthy side of love was not necessarily anathema to Renaissance morals. Fifteenth-century epithalamia, modeled upon the revived classical form, record the values sought and encouraged for a healthy and fruitful marriage.<sup>206</sup> In

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patria, l'eccellente instauratore della pace, il generoso donatore" (*Vita Pauli Secundi, RIS*, III, 2, 1018-19, trans. into Italian by Cruciani, 127-128).

<sup>203</sup> The interior painting of the Palazzo Davanzati in Florence depicts this sort of romantic imagery. The medieval genre of amorous literature or *courtoisie*, such as Andreas Capellanus's *The Art of Courtly Love* or the *Roman de la rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, explored themes of erotic love and even sexual satisfaction. But many of the popular tales and the poetry of the *dolce stil nuovo* and of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio often described the pain and heartbreak of unrequited love. In Petrarch's *Triumph of Love*, for example, the youthful male is ensnared by love only to be tortured by the unmoved girl. In his *Triumph of Chastity*, female resistance to sexual love is entirely victorious. Of course, this model of cruel love, or *amor crudel*, was a theme for ancient authors as well, such as Propertius, who was tormented by Cynthia. See Richard C. Monti, "Petrarch's Trionfi, Ovid and Vergil," in *Petrarch's Triumphs*, 18. For a more extensive discussion of the medieval tradition of love, or Courtly Love, see C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953); Nelson, *The Renaissance Theory of Love* (1958); Paul F. Watson, *The Garden of Love in Tuscan Art of the Early Renaissance* (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance, 1979). See also Andrea Bayer, ed., *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), esp. 88-92.

<sup>204</sup> See Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, conclusion, esp. 259

<sup>205</sup> See D'Elia, "Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides," 379-433.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 380-381, 393; idem, *The Renaissance of Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

antiquity, the orations served “as a prelude to the erotic pleasures of the wedding night.”<sup>207</sup> As

Huizinga explained:

The entire epithalamic apparatus with its shameless laughter and its phallic symbolism had once been a part of the sacred rites of the wedding festivity itself. The consummation of marriage and the wedding ceremony had once been inseparable: a great mystery that focused on copulation.... The double meanings, the indecencies, the lascivious dissimulations are at home in the epithalamic style because they originated there. They become understandable if seen against their ethnological background: as the weakened remnants of the phallic symbolism of primitive culture, as debased mysteries.<sup>208</sup>

Humanists picked up the form, and maintained its allusions to romance and even sexual passion, becoming popular in and around the courts of Ferrara, Naples, and Milan. The orations’ humanist authors managed to reincorporate classical ideals of physical beauty and sexual pleasure into the contemporary praise of marriage. The pieces were recited to an audience in conjunction with wedding celebrations, and their public nature implies the general acceptance among these courtly patrons of this *all’antica* idea of marriage.<sup>209</sup> In contrast to more traditional religious wedding sermons, which condemned fornication, the epithalamium condoned and even praised sexuality.<sup>210</sup> Indeed, physical beauty was often linked to moral virtue, as the orations asserted that nothing that was so beautiful could also be evil.<sup>211</sup> Moreover, the authors and their audiences saw marriage as a way to channel passion and lust into stable, legitimate sexuality.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> D’Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 401.

<sup>208</sup> Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 129-130.

<sup>209</sup> D’Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 381.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 388-389. See also Anderson, “Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus,” 338-339; Goffen, *Titian’s Women*, section on “Epithalamium and the Goddess,” 146-159.

<sup>211</sup> See Krayer, “The Transformation of Platonic Love,” 76-85.

<sup>212</sup> D’Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 409-410.

Francesco Barbaro, the Venetian humanist, harnessed classical sources in his *De re uxoria* (c. 1416) to argue in favor of elaborate wedding celebrations, as did Giovanni Pontano in his *De magnificentia*, who went so far as to argue that marriage was significant for the very welfare of cities and for maintaining morality.<sup>213</sup>

By the 1470s Bacchus and his consort Ariadne were often invoked in contemporary wedding celebrations, an epithalamial affiliation supported by classical literature. Catullus recorded the story of Bacchus and Ariadne in the context of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. In his *Ars amatoria*, Ovid described Bacchus' discovery of Ariadne and their triumph as relating to themes of marriage:

You shall be wife to Bacchus, take the sky as your dowry [...]  
No trouble for gods to do whatever they please. Loud cheers, a riotous wedding:  
Bacchus and his bride were soon bedded down.<sup>214</sup>

Renaissance audiences were coyly aware that their bride and groom would also soon “bed down,” indulging in prurient jokes and tricks playing on sexual anxieties.<sup>215</sup> Contemporary wedding celebrations shared an aura of Bacchic revelry with the god's own wedding parade, with trumpeters, pipes, kettledrums, and tambourines accompanying the groom through the city streets on his way to fetch his bride.<sup>216</sup> The processions full of dance and merrymaking, as represented on several fifteenth-century painted *cassoni*, evoked the raucous arrival of Bacchus

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<sup>213</sup> D'Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 382.

<sup>214</sup> Ovid, *The Art of Love*, I. 556-564, trans. Green, 183. See n. 77 above.

<sup>215</sup> See the tale told about the 1406 marriage of Ginevra Datini to Lionardo di Tommaso di Giunta in Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato: Francesco di Marco Datini* (New York: Penguin Books in association with Jonathan Cape, 1992), 194-197.

<sup>216</sup> In its effort to trim back on noise, a Sieneese law of 1343 reveals the extent of the wild party: it stated “that when a groom formally greeted his bride at a wedding ceremony he was to do so with no more than two trumpeters (*tubatores*) and one kettledrum (*naccherarium*), or with one tambourine (*tamburellem*) and one shawm (*ciaramellam*) or trumpet (*trombettam*)” (Casanova, *Donna senese del quattrocento nella vita privata* [Siena: 1901],

and his followers to the island of Naxos where the god discovered Ariadne and immediately took her as his bride.<sup>217</sup> With royal marriages joining courts across the peninsula, the transport of brides came to resemble the maneuvers of troops, but each stop along the way became the opportunity for more *feste*. The betrothal in 1465 of Ippolita Maria Sforza, daughter of Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan, to Alfonso of Aragon, duke of Calabria and son of King Ferdinand of Naples, involved a parade of 400 horses and 500 men accompanying the groom's proxy from Naples to Milan—including stops in Rome and Florence—and the return journey with the added bride and her 600 horse-borne entourage. This huge party stopped in Florence on the way to Naples in time for the festivities of the Feast of San Giovanni, and entered with the sound of trumpets “all along the way.”<sup>218</sup> Marco Parenti recorded the sights and events, describing a quintessentially Bacchic mingling of men and women, dancing, and lovemaking.<sup>219</sup>

The marriage of Eleanora d'Aragona to Ercole d'Este in 1473 became the occasion for some of the most elaborate celebrations as the *viaggio di corte* of the bride-to-be and her entourage, accompanied by a 500-strong cortège of the groom's relatives and courtiers, took a grand and extensive journey from her father's home in Naples through Rome, Siena, Florence, Romagna, and on to Ferrara: “Un corteo che era in se stesso spettacolo e che si muoveva di

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65-66, cited by Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy*, 68). A shawm was a woodwind instrument with a double reed (a predecessor of the oboe), which would have produced a buzzing tone similar in quality to the *aulos*.

<sup>217</sup> Consider the wedding dance portrayed on the so-called *Adimari cassone* by Giovanni di Ser Giovanni (Lo Scheggia), c. 1450, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence; illus. in Caroline Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence: The Courtauld Wedding Chests* (London: The Courtauld Gallery, in association with Paul Holberton Publishing, 2009), fig. 20. Also the betrothal scene at the left of a *cassone* depicting the Siege of Carthage and the Continenence of Scipio, by a follower of Lo Scheggia, Courtauld Gallery, London; illus. in *ibid.*, cat. 7. And the wedding procession at the left of the *Story of Trajan and the Widow cassone*, by Lo Scheggia, c. 1450, Collection of Alberto Bruschi, Grassina; illus. in Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, and Family*, fig. 2. See Emily Jayne, “*Cassoni* Dances and Marriage Ritual in Fifteenth-Century Italy,” in *Ceremony and Text in the Renaissance*, ed. Douglas F. Rutledge (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 139-154.

<sup>218</sup> Mark Phillips, *The Memoir of Marco Parenti: A Life in Medici Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 127.

spettacolo in spettacolo.”<sup>220</sup> The five days of festivities mounted in Rome were some of the most ornate, as the entourage was hosted by the antique-lover and patron Pietro Riario (1445-1474) and Giuliano della Rovere, the cardinal nephews of Pope Sixtus IV (r.1471-1484).<sup>221</sup> Besides the plays performed in the Piazza SS. Apostoli, which was transformed into a theatrical set adjoining the covered portico of Riario’s palazzo, the main spectacle was the initial seven-hour banquet, a consummate exhibition of mythological *rappresentazioni* or “*historie*,” with costumed servers, *buffoni*, dances, songs, and corresponding culinary (though often inedible) marvels.<sup>222</sup> One of the triumphal *intermezzi* between courses depicted the bridal pair of Bacchus and Ariadne, accompanied by “fauni” and “satiri.” Tito Vespasiano Strozzi later described the event in verse, including these lines:

Liber adest, sparsis nec abest Adriadna capillis,

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<sup>219</sup> Parenti, quoted in Phillips, *The Memoir of Marco Parenti*, 128.

<sup>220</sup> Cruciani, *Teatro nel Rinascimento*, 151. So many accessory servants and specialists were necessary to keep the nobles in a lifestyle to which there were accustomed. A long list of those in the entourage was made in the *Diario* of Ugo Caleffini (ms. Chigiano I.I.4). See C. Corvisieri, “Il trionfo romano di Eleanora d’Aragona nel giugno del 1473 (2 parts),” *Archivio della società romana di storia patria* 1 and 10 (1878 and 1887): 475-491 (Part I), 629-687 (Part II). Besides grooms, cooks, barbers, secretaries, musicians, etc., there was a *credenzieri* in charge of wine, one Marchobruno. The Ferrarese troupe included great poets like Tito Vespasiano Strozzi and Matteo Maria Boiardo, author of the *Orlando innamorato*. See Luigi Olivi, “Delle nozze di Ercole d’Este con Eleonora d’Aragona,” *Memorie della Reggia accademia di scienze, lettere ed arti in Modena*, v. 5, 2nd series (1887): 22-25; Clelia Falletti, “Le feste per Eleanora d’Aragona a Napoli e a Roma (1473),” in *La fête et l’écriture: theatre de cour, cour-theatre en Espagne et en Italie 1450-1530* (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1987), 257-258.

<sup>221</sup> Cardinal Riario’s cousin Raffaello was the builder of the Palazzo Cancelleria in the 1480s and the patron of Michelangelo. Cruciani, *Teatro nel Rinascimento*, 151-155; Falletti, “Le feste per Eleanora d’Aragona,” 258-259, and n. 5. The sources for the Roman *feste* include Eleanora’s letters home, particularly that of 10 June from Campagno to D. Carafa in Naples; a letter from the estense Bonfigli to Ercole; Stefano Infessura’s *Diario della città di Roma (Diario Rerum Romanarum)*; the celebratory poems written for performance at Riario’s palace by Porcellio Pandone and Emilio Boccabella; Bernardino Corio’s *Dell’Historie Milanese* (Venice, 1554) part IV, 417-418; Pigna’s *Historia de Principi d’Este* (Ferrara: Rossi, 1570), book VIII, 627-629; Domizio Calderini’s *Epigrammi conviviali* (see Alessandro Perosa, “Epigrammi conviviali di Domizio Calderini,” *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa* S. III, IV, 3 [1974], 791-804); and the *Aeolostichon* (I.3: Convivium factum Romae a Petro Cardinale) of Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, the Ferrarese poet who accompanied the groom’s proxy cortege. For transcriptions of the documents see Cruciani as well as Corvisieri, “Il trionfo romano di Eleanora,” and Olivi, “Delle nozze di Ercole d’Este.” See my Appendix One.

<sup>222</sup> Cruciani, *Teatro nel Rinascimento*, 152-155. Many of the dishes were elaborate sculptures in sugar and marzipan.

Auratas varia lynce trahente rotas.  
 Capripedes currum Fauni, Satyriq; Sequuntur,  
 Et madidas hederis implicuere comas.<sup>223</sup>

One can imagine the costumed lovers draped in each other's arms as they lounged, perhaps upon pillows, atop a wooden, gilt, and painted plaster wagon drawn by "panthers," bunches of grapes or cups held aloft, ivy and grape leaves crowning their heads.<sup>224</sup> Eleanora recorded the pantomime's verses in a letter home:

Et colli supradicti Herculi Baccho et Andriana, con versi infrascripti:  
 Letus odoratis properat nunc Bacchus ab Indis  
 Lustrat et Herculeas barbara pompa dapes.  
 Jamque iubet comites tantis discumbere mensis,  
 Hic celebrat thalamos pulcra Ariadna tuos.  
 Non cernis vitem, geminataque gaudia sentis?  
 Grata puer duplica pocula Bacchus adest.<sup>225</sup>

Bacchus also appeared on a chariot with Venus, and then with Ceres, confirming his association with the love and fecundity that symbolized the impending birth of Ercole's heirs.<sup>226</sup> In the midst of this lavish expression of wealth and plenty (which was followed with eight days of *feste* in Ferrara), Bacchus epitomized the unending flow of wine, exotic food, and riches. This was the essential purpose of the lavish, wasteful display: a declaration of security and beneficence

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<sup>223</sup> Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, "Convivum Romae factum à Petro Cardinale (*Aeolosticon* Libro I)," in *Strozii Poetae, Pater et filius* (Venice: 1513), 193v.

<sup>224</sup> In his *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* of 1860 Jacob Burckhardt first noted this event in the context of his consideration of festivals in the Renaissance period. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore, from the 15th ed. (London: George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1929), Part V, chap. 8, 409-410.

<sup>225</sup> Cruciani, *Teatro nel Rinascimento*, 159: Letter written from Campagnano, outside of Rome, 10 June 1473, to D. Carafa of Naples, ed. A. de Tummullis, *Notabilia temporum* (modern ed., 1890), 194-203 and in Corvisieri, "Il trionfo romano di Eleanora," 645-654 (with some differences). Compare the epigram of Domizio Calderini: "Laetus odoratis properat nunc Bacchus ab Indis, / lustrat et Herculeas barbara pompa dapes, / iamque iubet comites tantis discumbere mensis: / hic celebrat thalamos, pulcra Ariadna, tuos. / Non cernis vitam geminataque gaudia sentis? / Grata, puer, duplica pocula: Bacchus adest!" (recorded by Perosa, "Epigrammi conviviali di Domizio Calderini," and quoted in Emmerling-Skala, "Bacchus in der Renaissance," 877).

<sup>226</sup> The 1475 wedding of Costanzo Sforza and Cammilla d' Aragona included a fantastic "Vivande di Bacco," in which the verses stated that, "senza lui e Cerere che mandò di sopra, non bene si celebra nozze e conviti..." (ms.

granted by the union of these kingdoms, bringing about this “*paese di cuccagna*,” a country of plenty, expressed by this virtual banquet of the gods.<sup>227</sup> As “Silenus” told the audience at the wedding of Costanzo Sforza to Cammilla d’Aragona in May of 1475:

Sileno son; Bacco mi manda a voi,  
 O Sposi singular, con questa fiera,  
 E vuol che vostra sia come de’ suoi.  
 Vostra prudenza e vostra virtù intera  
 Non merita altra insegna, ch’ oltra monte  
 Discerne tutte cose e ha scienza vera.  
 Un soave licor dello suo fonte  
 Vi manda appresso, per ogni sua ancilla,  
 La terra in tutto intorno all’orizzonte.  
 E con Costanza sia la sua Camilla.<sup>228</sup>

That such a message could be expressed through pagan imagery indicates the degree to which mythology had been integrated and acclimated to the culture of the moment. Events like this set the standard for grand celebrations to come, establishing a new genre: the allegorical banquet.<sup>229</sup>

Perhaps as a consequence of this shift in thinking, Bacchus and Ariadne came later to appear on painted marriage furniture as well (where they had been absent in the *cassone*’s

Codice Riccardiano, no. 2256, quoted in M. Tabarrini, ed., *Descrizione del convito e delle feste fatte in Pesaro per le nozze di Costanzo Sforza e di Cammilla d’Aragona nel Maggio del 1475* [Florence: G. Barbèra, 1870], 32).

<sup>227</sup> Falletti, “La feste per Eleanora d’Aragona,” 288.

<sup>228</sup> Quoted in Tabarrini, *Descrizione del convito e delle feste*, 32-33. During the several days of festivities for this wedding many banquets, *balli*, jousts, and parades took place. Triumphs of Justice, Love, and Fame were portrayed as finales on different days, with grand floats and costumed figures. There were pantomimes with actors dressed up as a lion and *un uomo salvatico* and a *rappresentazione* of the Seven Planets; there were dancing youngsters, a day-long *giostra*, presentations of gifts, and elaborate concoctions made entirely of sugar, including a Mount Parnassus complete with Apollo and the Muses. See Tabarrini, 39-56.

<sup>229</sup> Alessandro d’Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Turin: E. Loescher, 1891); Pierre Francastel, “La fête mythologique au Quattrocento: expression littéraire et visualisation plastique,” in *Oeuvres II: La réalité figurative: Éléments structurels de sociologie et de l’art* (Paris: Éditions Denoël/Gonthier, 1965), 229-252; Jean Jacquot, ed. *Les fêtes de la Renaissance*, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1956, 1960, 1975); Charles M. Rosenberg, “The Use of Celebrations in Public and Semi-Public Affairs in Fifteenth-Century Ferrara,” in *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, ed. Maristella de Panizza Lorch (Milano: Edizioni di Comunità, 1980), 521-535; Roy Strong, *Feast: A History of Grand Eating* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), 186-187. As Burckhardt writes: “There is, in fact, at this time simply no end to the mythological and allegorical chariotting.... It is a wonder that funerals were not also treated in the same way” (*The Civilization of the*



heyday earlier in the century) as in, for example, Matteo Balducci's *cassone* in Gubbio and Bartolomeo di Giovanni's pair of *spalliere* in Marseilles (fig. 3.43).<sup>230</sup> Balducci's effort to copy the ancient sarcophagus relief now in Woburn Abbey as a painting suffered much in the translation, with the antique Bacchus becoming his Ariadne and the old Silenus becoming his Bacchus (fig. 3.44). Balducci's less-than-expert eye failed to see the ancient imagery with iconographical or mythological accuracy. And yet the resulting wedding piece evoked the jubilant, celebratory mood of the raucous bridal procession and the happy, *all'antica* marriage *fiesta*. Bartolomeo's example likewise has the stagy mish-mash of ancient and contemporary costuming and theatrical gestures, with the added fantasy and nudity possible for painted representations.

One of the most original interpretations of the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne is to be found in Baccio Baldini's large, double-folio engraving (fig. 3.45).<sup>231</sup> A unique impression, dated around 1475, it depicts Bacchus and Ariadne upon a fantastic cart made of grape vines drawn by two musicmaking centaurs and accompanied by a train of wild maenads, satyrs, and Pan.<sup>232</sup> Here is the bridal Ariadne as she so often appeared on ancient sarcophagi: alert and

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*Renaissance in Italy*, 418). But, of course, as we explored in Chapter Two, funereal grandstanding and lavish displays of grief were also part of the contemporary culture.

<sup>230</sup> Unlike other mythological loves of the gods, such as Apollo and Daphne or Jupiter and Callisto or Diana and Actaeon, the subject of Bacchus and Ariadne was in fact slow to appear on *cassoni*, perhaps due to that very appearance of voluptuousness and hedonistic indulgence that did not as easily convey allegories of virtue. Even a story like that of Apollo and Daphne, which would seem to point to the god's rampant lust, could be turned in the context of a wedding chest into a warning against female pride and frigidity.

<sup>231</sup> The print has been dated from the 1470s to late 1480s. Charles Dempsey argues that the Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478 and the following ten years in which *feste* were banned would suggest that the print was either made before 1478 or after 1488, with the most likely date being c. 1475 (*Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 194-196).

<sup>232</sup> *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 2403.126; Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, A.II.26. Warburg gave the print to a design by Botticelli, seeing the *Nymphae*-form of the maenads, with their "bellying draperies," as relating to that artist's oeuvre (*Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 398, n. 112). But others backed away from this attribution, such as H. P. Horne, who eventually attributed the work to Bartolomeo di Giovanni. Cf. Horne, *Sandro Botticelli, Painter of Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 84; and Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, 75, where he notes Horne's modified attribution from his earlier one to Botticelli or perhaps Baccio Baldini. Hind, in a trend to

sober, holding up her intoxicated, nodding husband.<sup>233</sup> As in the Naples cameo borrowed for the Medici courtyard roundel, Bacchus reclines upon a throne-like wagon with his left elbow for support and his right arm slung around the shoulder of his companion. In the engraving, Ariadne appears crowned and is nude but for a narrow stole, her breasts, belly, and thigh sensuously exposed. Unlike other representations of the pair, both ancient and contemporary, she lies between Bacchus' thighs, not behind him. And Bacchus drops his head upon her shoulder, almost upon her breast. She seems calm in her loyal espousal of her husband, reaching her arm across his belly in a gesture of faithful support. This Bacchus is also unusual, with a pinecone-patterned mantle and Pan-like horns and donkey ears poking out around his grape-leaf wreath.<sup>234</sup> Baldini's Bacchus has a lugubrious heaviness to him that is not shared by antique prototypes. He appears almost steeped with the magical odor of the grapes around him, and intoxicated with his own divine gift. In adding these unique features, not visible in antique examples, the artist demonstrated knowledge gleaned from literary sources, perhaps through humanist friends or

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deattribute work to the elusive Baldini, gives the work to an anonymous Fine Manner engraver, c. 1480-1490. Cf. Zucker, *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 24, part 1, 89-284, who attributes more than a hundred prints to Baldini. Also Jay A. Levenson, Konrad Oberhuber, and Jacquelyn L. Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings From the National Gallery of Art* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1973), 13-39. While little is known of Baldini, his oeuvre encompasses a large corpus of stylistically and iconographically coherent works, beginning c. 1464 and ending c. 1481, with which to compare this engraving. Zucker points out that the author of this oeuvre may in fact be some anonymous engraver and not a certain Baccio Baldini, of whom we know only from Vasari that he was a follower of Maso Finiguerra; consequently, the given artist might as easily have become known as the "Master of the Florentine Picture Chronicle," for the book of drawings which is clearly by the same artist as these Fine Manner prints.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. the Bacchic sarcophagus now in the British Museum. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 83, pp. 116-119; Rubinstein, "A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance," 103-156

<sup>234</sup> The pinecone pattern is found in other prints attributed to Baccio Baldini, and the grape clusters, vines, wooden supports, and metal vessels in the print are very similar to those in the *Drunkenness of Noah* drawing in the so-called *Florentine Picture Chronicle* (also in the British Museum), once attributed to Maso Finiguerra, but now also given to Baldini, his student. See Sidney Colvin ed., *A Florentine Picture Chronicle* (1898) (New York: Benjamin, Blom, Inc., 1970). Lucy Whitaker gives the drawing book to the workshop of Baldini but believes few of the drawings are actually by his hand ("Maso Finiguerra, Baccio Baldini and the *Florentine Picture Chronicle*," in *Florentine Drawing at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent: Papers from a Colloquium Held at the Villa Spelman, Florence, 1992*, ed. Elizabeth Cropper [Florence: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1992], 181-196). Although Bacchus is described as horned in much of the ancient literature and in Boccaccio's *Genealogia*, antique art does not tend to show him thus, and most fifteenth-century representations of the god do not either.

advisors; Bacchus was traditionally understood to have horns to indicate the powerful sway of wine over the mind and body, and its ability to prod passion.<sup>235</sup> Other features also suggest a careful study of antiquities. The winnowing basket evokes ritual practices, and was a Bacchic accessory often ignored by contemporary artists. The centaurs appear to be lifted directly from the sarcophagus then in Santa Maria Maggiore (though naturally reversed in the engraving)—with the near one playing a lyre and the far one a pipe. The left sheet also includes a piping satyr, his double-pipe aimed high, like that satyr now missing from the sarcophagus but thought to have been originally at its center. Others of Baldini's fantastical motifs, such as the contemporary hammered metal spouted vessel and bowls, used instead of the antique cymbals or tambourines; the bent-branch chariot; arm-band bells; and *all'antica* sandals and headdresses may reflect the appearance of contemporary parade carts and masquerades.<sup>236</sup>

The enframing device of the grape vine climbing up from the ground around the two elm trunks, and the appearance of it entwining continuously right up out of the chariot itself, means that the chariot could not actually be advancing. It is a strange contradiction not noticed at first: that the procession appears to move to the left but must actually stay in place since the wagon is

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<sup>235</sup> The large ears may result from an elision with the story of King Midas, who was rewarded by Apollo with a pair of ass's ears for his ignorant preference of Pan, who had prompted a musical contest with the god. I cannot find reference to Bacchus with such ears. Bacchus' horns are referred to in several ancient texts. In *Elegy* III.17, Propertius refers to Bacchus' "horns": "For whatever time remains, I'll live for you and your horns, and I'll be called, Bacchus, poet of your heart" ("quod superest uitae per te et tua cornua uiuam, uirtutisque tuae, Bacche, poeta ferar") (trans. G. P. Goold, 302-303). In Philostratus' *Imagines* I.15 we also read that "the ivy clusters forming a crown are the clear mark of Dionysus, ... and a horn just springing from the temples reveals Dionysus..." (trans. Fairbanks, 63). Lucian says Dionysus has horns: "...[H]e is quite beardless, without even the least bit of down on his cheeks, has horns, wears a garland of grape clusters, ties up his hair with a ribbon..." (*Dionysus*, 1-3, in the *Works of Lucian*, trans. A. M. Harmon [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913], I, 49-50). Ovid also alludes to Bacchus having horns when Ariadne says in *Fasti* III.499-500: "The horns of handsome bull won my mother's heart, thine won mine" ("ceperunt matrem formosi cornua tauri, / me tua...") (trans. Frazer, 156-167).

<sup>236</sup> Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, part V, chap. 8, "Festivals," esp. 409-425; Warburg, "Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and *Spring*," 120-125; "On *Imprese Amoroze*," 176; "Theatrical Costumes for the Intermedi of 1598," 379-383. Warburg cites a mention of Maddalena Gonzaga dressing up as a nymph that shows that even courtly daughters participated in this trend. See d'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, 1:225, 1:296.

attached to the stationary vine. On the other hand, this creates the illusion that the vines may have sprung instantly and magically from the very touch of the god upon the chariot, like those that sprang up to encase the ship of the Tyrrhenian sailors, where “ivy creeps and twines around the oars; its upward reach clings to the mast and, spiraling, impedes the sails with heavy clusters.”<sup>237</sup>

Baldini’s imagery evokes the explicit, sometimes crude, tone of the epithalamial tradition. His emphasis of the vine and supporting elm trees shows the influence on the artist of this humanist motif. The twinning of vine and elm had been a well-worn metaphor for marriage in antiquity, revitalized in the fifteenth century along with the humanist interest in epithalamia and neo-Latin poetry.<sup>238</sup> Catullus was the first classical poet to harness for poetic purposes what had likely been a commonplace technical and rustic term for the indigenous Italian viticultural practice of training grapevines upon the sturdier elm trees—that is, to “marry” (*maritare, nubere, adducere*) the vine to the elm.<sup>239</sup> The linguistic choice to describe an agricultural custom easily filtered into poetic metaphor and offered a host of apt allusions for epithalamic discourse. From Catullus this marital analogy spilled into Augustan poetry, in the works of Horace and Virgil,

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<sup>237</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III.640-669, trans. Mandelbaum, 103.

<sup>238</sup> Peter Demetz, “The Elm and the Vine: Notes toward the History of a Marriage Topos,” *Publication of the Modern Language Association* 73 (1958): 521-532.

<sup>239</sup> Catullus, *Carmen* LXII. 48-58: “Ut vidua in nudo vitis quae nascitur arvo / numquam se extollit, numquam mitem educat uvam, / sed tenerum prono deflectens pondere corpus / iam iam contingit summum radice flagellum; / hanc nulli agricolae, nulli coluere iuveni. / at si forte eademst ulmo coniuncta marita, / multi illam agricolae, multi coluere iuveni: / sic virgo dum intacta manet, dum inculta senescit; / cum par cunubium maturo tempore adeptast, / cara viro magis et minus est invisā parenti” (“As an unwedded vine which grows up in a bare field never raises itself aloft, never brings forth a mellow grape, but bending its tender form with downward weight, even now touches the root with topmost shoot; no farmers, no oxen tend it: but if it chance to be joined in marriage to the elm, many farmers, many oxen tend it: so a maiden, while she remains untouched, the while is she aging untended; but when in ripe season she is matched in equal wedlock, she is more dear to her husband and less distasteful to her father”) (trans. Cornish, 88-89).

and even into early Christian scripture.<sup>240</sup> The topos of the union of vine and elm represented the ideal marriage in which the harnessing of the supple, yielding, malleable, trainable wife to the sturdy, guiding support of a husband created a fertile and lasting bond for the purpose of fostering new generations. In Baldini's print, the steady elm, with its thick trunk and branches, is clearly emphasized, as is the exceedingly fertile, hardy vine, with its bursting clusters of grapes. The grapevine represented married love in particular, with its fecund productivity—as opposed, for example, to the ivy vine, which clings to and climbs trees only to strangle them, and was seen as a metaphor for empty, useless sexual passion and sex without reproduction.

But as we see in Baldini's vision, it is Ariadne who appears to uphold and support her husband. The idea of Ariadne as tamer of uncontrolled male passions meshed with the Renaissance perception that a wife could mellow a wild youth. In the marriage negotiations undertaken by a relative of Datini's named Niccolò with a middleman for the purpose of finding a husband for Datini's daughter, the former reported:

Niccolaiio Martini [the middleman] called me into his house and asked me if I would be glad for Lionardo di Ser Tommaso to take a wife, if she were a good one, and had a good dowry. I said I would be more than glad if he behaved himself better. And he agreed that he has bad habits and persists in them, but he said that if he [Lionardo] had a wife, this would restrain him.<sup>241</sup>

Such accounts reflect this idea of a wife as a restraining force and a good influence, something to rescue a man from his baser instincts and naughty ways. In this light, the Discovery and Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne could represent an allegory of conjugal bliss, where the beauty

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<sup>240</sup> Horace, *Ode* IV.v; Virgil, *Georgics* I.2; *Aeneid* VII.57. Hermas' *Book of the Shepherd* (second century A.D.), which until the fourth century was considered to be a part of the scripture.

<sup>241</sup> Letter of 14 February 1399 quoted in Origo, *The Merchant of Prato*, 191.

of Ariadne upon her discovery tames the wild beasts and sobers the love-struck suitor, winning her a faithful husband and triumphal wedding ride.

Consequently, it is possible that Baldini's print was a personal wedding gift from the artist to a humanist friend or princely patron, a *cognoscento* immersed in a literary culture grappling with the sensual gods of the past. Or, equally plausibly, the print could have been commissioned as a wedding gift by just such an astute outside patron. A print with a private destination could explore imagery that might not appear in monumental art, which might explain how Baldini's print could take a certain leeway with the antique representations of Bacchus and Ariadne, adding an erotic touch, for example, by making Ariadne nude and by tucking her between Bacchus' thighs. The print also functions in the same vein as the epithalamium, becoming a visual paean to marriage, and shares its allusive sensuality. The mixture of macabre maenadism, jubilant frenzy, and lugubrious drunken god with fantasy bower and carnival dancing and costumes points to contemporary wedding celebrations, with their *all'antica* Bacchuses and satyrs. While written epithalamia did not appear to have taken hold in Florence, Baldini may have found inspiration in the idea via artistic and literary contacts, perhaps the groom for whom the print was made. Printing only a few impressions, as mementos of the wedding, might account for there now being only a unique example of the engraving. The destination of a humanist audience could likewise account for the cultish accuracy of the theme: the truly mad maenads, the classical centaurs, and the hanging winnowing basket. Putting horns and the ears of an ass on his Bacchus may have been a way for Baldini to inject his print with a satirical and ribald content. The horns could be a facetious jest hinting at the new groom's being

cuckolded by his bride.<sup>242</sup> (In Italy “cornuto”—literally, horned—still of course means “cheated on,” and in the fifteenth century, a reference to a man growing horns indicated his cuckolded state.)<sup>243</sup> Baldini may have extrapolated the ass’s ears onto Bacchus from other sources because of their association with foolery and sexuality—again harkening back to the joking tone of epithalamia. Mocking the sacredness of the marriage vows in this safe, *all’antica* context may have created an erudite and playful gift for a groom.

The idea of marriage as a stabilizing force was conveyed contemporaneously in Poliziano’s *Stanze per la Giostra*. While love was often seen with bitterness in ancient and contemporary literature, it was nevertheless viewed as a precious gift and a necessary component to civilization. In calling Giuliano de’ Medici to the bonds of love, Poliziano was urging him to civic responsibility.<sup>244</sup> “Love is the catalyst,” as David Quint observes, “which transforms human potential into *humanitas*.”<sup>245</sup> And so, ironically, in Baldini’s engraving and Federico’s Camino della Iole, Bacchus and his troupe—who appear as the antithesis of things civilized—could represent an ideal of love, happiness, and respectable marriage when presented along with the beloved Ariadne. But there is a tinge of melancholy in this restraint. The opposition of freedom, youth, and joy to responsibility, sobriety, and adulthood is played out within the person

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<sup>242</sup> Cf. Baldini’s engraving, *The King of Goats or A Satire on Cuckolds* (Bartsch 2403.124; Hind A.II.23). The cuckolded males have long, curving, striated horns, not unlike those of Bacchus, and floppy goat’s ears, and (except for one) goat’s feet. The many inscriptions that appear in this engraving make clear the satirical content, playing on the long-used attribute of goat horns to indicate a cuckold and indicating that they are sorry fools abused by women and who should be pitied and pardoned.

<sup>243</sup> Zucker alludes to an anecdote relayed by Hind (*Early Italian Engravings*, 73-74) regarding Cosimo de’ Medici’s advice to a man who fears his wife is cheating on him, in which he reportedly said: “As to the horn which seems to be growing on your head, you had better swallow it. . . . Then halt at the first ditch you come to, and having brought up the horn, throw it into the ditch and bury it so that no one may see it,” by which the man understood that he should not air such things in public and should regard his wife as faithful, for the good of all concerned (*The Illustrated Bartsch: Vol. 24 Early Italian Masters*, at cat. 2403.124).

<sup>244</sup> Quint, introduction to *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano*, xv-xix.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

of Iulio, that is, Giuliano de' Medici. Poliziano's poem captured the something bittersweet to be felt in giving up youth and being chained to love; it expressed a recognition of the frailty in all humans. In discussing the effect of sending a dream vision to Iulio, Poliziano wrote:

...quando ciò ch'al bel Iulio el cel destina  
mostrano i Sogni, e sua dolce fortuna;  
dolce all'entrar, all'uscir troppo amara,  
però che sempre dolce al mondo è rara.<sup>246</sup>

The actual death in 1476 of Giuliano's ideal beloved, Simonetta Cattaneo, inflected the fictive love story with its tragedy:

Sotto cotali ambagi al giovinetto  
fu mostro de' suo' fati il leggier corso:  
troppo felice, se nel suo diletto  
non mettea morte acerba il crudel morso.<sup>247</sup>

Iulio awakened from this vision "con mente insieme lieta et egra," "with a mind both joyful and sad."<sup>248</sup> The tone of Baldini's engraving, with its frenzied, violent maenads and the melancholy heaviness of Bacchus, shares in this idea of the bittersweet quality of love, a reality that every groom must accept.

Like Baldini, Lorenzo de' Medici composed his "Canzona di Bacco" in the same Florentine, humanist atmosphere, in which Poliziano had been tutor to his sons and Ficino his own tutor. In the poem, the themes of love and generation and the passing of time are closely interlinked, and the figures of Bacchus and Ariadne stand for more than mere pleasure and hedonism. Lorenzo's poem is thought to be in the form of a *canzona di carro*, possibly to have

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<sup>246</sup> The *Stanze* are thought to have been written from 1475 to 1478 and left unfinished. Poliziano, *Stanza* II.27: "...[W]hen the / Dreams reveal what heaven destines for fair Julio / and his sweet fortune; sweet at the beginning, at / the end too bitter, for lasting sweetness in this / world is rare" (trans. Quint, 80-81).

<sup>247</sup> Poliziano, *Stanza* II.35: "In these confused signs the youth was shown / the changing course of his fate: too happy, if / early death were not placing its cruel bit on his / delight" (trans. Quint, 84-85).

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, II.39, trans. Quint, 86-87.



accompanied a parade wagon in the Carnevale of either 1489 or 1490, but conceived perhaps in the 1470s.<sup>249</sup> Lorenzo's lilting song reads in part:

Quant'è bella giovanezza,  
che si fugge tuttavia!  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.

Quest'è Bacco e Arianna,  
belli, e l'un dell'altro ardenti:  
perché'l tempo fugge e inganna,  
sempre insieme stan contenti.

Queste ninfe ed altri genti  
sono allegre tuttavia  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.

[...]

Donne e giovinetti amanti,  
viva Bacco e viva Amore!  
Ciascun suoni, balli e canti  
arda di dolcezza il core!  
Non fatica, non dolore!  
Ciò c'ha a esser, convien sia.  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.<sup>250</sup>

One hears in Lorenzo's "Canzona di Bacco" a passion for life, love, and pleasure, which rings in the poem's embrace of the physical experience of the world. But his call to delight is at the same

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<sup>249</sup> The former date is supported by two manuscripts, while the later date is suggested by another manuscript, the Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 2723. Walter H. Rubsamen adheres to 1489 ("The Music for 'Quant'è bella giovinezza' and other Carnival Songs by Lorenzo de' Medici," in *Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance*, ed. Charles S. Singleton [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967], 171). Charles Dempsey asserts the 1490 date ("Portraits and Masks in the Art of Lorenzo de' Medici, Botticelli, and Politian's *Stanze per la Giostra*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 [1999]: 5). See also Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 192.

<sup>250</sup> See Appendix Two for the complete poem. Lorenzo de' Medici, *Canti Carnascialeschi*, VII: *Canzona di Bacco*, in *Opere*, ed. Attilio Simioni, 2 vols. (Bari: 1939), vol. 2, 249-250 (as quoted in Emmerling-Skala, "Bacchus in der Renaissance," vol. 2, 978-979). "How lovely youth is that ever flies! Let him be glad who will be: there is no certainty in tomorrow. / This is Bacchus and Ariadne, fair, and each burning for the other: because time flies and deceives, they always stay together in happiness. These nymphs and other people are always merry. Let him be glad who will be: there is no certainty in tomorrow. / [...] / Women and young lovers, long live Bacchus and long live Love! Let each one play, and dance, and sing! Let the heart burn with sweetness! Neither labour, nor grief! What is to happen needs must be. Let him be glad who will be: there is no certainty in tomorrow" (trans. in *The Penguin Book of Italian Verse*, ed. George Kay [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968], 142-145).

time permeated with a touch of melancholy.<sup>251</sup> Instead of reducing the theme of Bacchus and Ariadne to a jolly parade, Lorenzo takes the subject and infuses it with his own spiritual and intellectual strife.<sup>252</sup> His repeating refrain creates a lingering, morbid echo: “Chi vuol esser lieto, sia / di doman non c’è certezza,” “He who would be glad, let him be, for of tomorrow there is no certainty.”<sup>253</sup> The melancholy mood, or “ombra di malinconia,” of the song may relate to Lorenzo’s presumed state of mind during the late 1480s or 1490, by which point his brother had been murdered, his political control challenged, his wife deceased, and his own health deteriorated.<sup>254</sup> If indeed written after his brother’s death, it would also reflect the bitterness of young life lost and of disabused innocence. But it is arguable that the song may have been written earlier, in the 1470s, before the Pazzi Conspiracy in 1478 brought the murder of his

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<sup>251</sup> See Georges Barthouil, “Reflexions à propos de deux sonnets de Laurent de Medicis,” in *Homo Sapiens Homo Humanus*, ed. Giovannangiola Tarugi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990), 3-24; Olga Zorzi Pugliese, “Ambiguità di Bacco nel ‘Trionfo’ laurenziano e nell’arte rinascimentale,” in *Letteratura italiana e arti figurative: Atti del XII convegno dell’associazione internazionale per gli studi di lingua e letteratura italiana*, ed. Antonio Franceschetti (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1988), vol. 1, 397-404. Also Maurice Bowra, “Songs of Dance and Carnival,” in *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. E. R. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 351.

<sup>252</sup> Bowra, 351.

<sup>253</sup> Cf. the lines from Anacreon: “L’oggi solo mi preme;/ e chi sa l’indomani?” (“Today alone concerns me; and who knows about tomorrow?”) (*Anacreonte*, ed. Luigi A. Michelangeli [Bologna: Zanichelli, 1882], pp. 129, 69, as quoted by Zorzi Pugliese, “Ambiguità di Bacco,” 399-400). In Euripides’ tragedy *Alcestis*, ll. 779-802, Hercules delivers a drunken speech in favor of chasing away cares with drink and love, which also gives precedent to Lorenzo’s defense of *voluptas*: “Come here so that you may be made wiser! Do you know the nature of our mortal life? I think not. How could you? But listen to me. Death is a debt all mortals must pay, and no man knows for certain whether he will still be living on the morrow. The outcome of our fortune is hid from our eyes, and it lies beyond the scope of any teaching or craft. So now that you have learned this from me, cheer your heart, drink, regard this day’s life as yours but all else as Fortune’s! Honor Aphrodite, too, sweetest of the gods to mortals, for she is a kindly goddess. Forget all else and take my advice, if you think what I say is correct, as I suppose you do. Lay aside your excessive grief and have some wine with me [overcoming these misfortunes, head crowned with garlands] I am quite sure that when the fit of drinking is upon you, it will bring you round from your clotted and gloomy state of mind. Being mortal we ought to think mortal thoughts. As for those who are solemn and knit their brows together, their life, in my judgment, is no life worthy of the name but merely a disaster” (Euripides, *Cyclops, Alcestis, Medea*, trans. David Kovacs [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994], 239-241).

<sup>254</sup> Rubsamen, “The Music for ‘Quant’è bella giovinezza’,” 163-164. See also Pugliese, “Ambiguità di Bacco,” 397.

brother Giuliano and stimulated a ten-year suspension of *feste*,<sup>255</sup> and before 1479 saw the expulsion of Poliziano from the Medici household when Lorenzo's wife, Clarice Orsini, sought a more religious education for their sons.<sup>256</sup> Lorenzo's embrace of antiquity in this paean to mythological *joie de vivre* may point to that more youthful and innocent moment. In the early 1470s, antiquity appeared to hold all of the answers, Ficino was at his height, and Neoplatonic tolerance of generative love was gaining philosophical ground. But though still a young man himself, Lorenzo's mood even then reflected his awareness of the tenuousness of golden ages, a consciousness that the political power, peace, and cultural florescence he currently enjoyed would not last.<sup>257</sup> Lorenzo was early on alert to the mutability of Fortune and the unknowability of Fate. For his jousting costume in 1469, when he was just 20, he included on his scarf a motif of fresh and wilting roses.<sup>258</sup> His motto, "Le Temps Revient," asserts a confidence in a return of a Golden Age under his aegis, but also belies an awareness of the cycles of time and fortune.<sup>259</sup> Fundamentally, the song, too, is about human frailty and our universally shared fate: to grow old and die.

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<sup>255</sup> Dempsey, "Portraits and Masks," 7, 9; idem, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 194.

<sup>256</sup> Quint, introduction, Poliziano's *Stanze*, vii.

<sup>257</sup> Lorenzo had already taken over his father Piero's role as *de facto* leader of Florence, and had experienced the deeply affecting consequences of this role, especially in the sack of Volterra (in which Federico da Montefelto was involved) in 1472. And from 1473 to 1478 he was already self-aware enough to begin compiling his literary work, the origin of his *Comento*, an autobiography of sorts through contemplation of his own poetry that Lorenzo worked on to the end of his life. See Cook's introduction to the *Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici*.

<sup>258</sup> Quint, introduction, Poliziano's *Stanze*, x

<sup>259</sup> Barthouil, "Reflexions à propos de deux sonnets de Laurent de Medicis," 9.

Lorenzo's exploration in his *canzona* of the difficult and contradictory relationship between love and happiness tapped into a recurrent theme that was not unique or new.<sup>260</sup> Petrarch and Boccaccio suffused their writings with it. Poliziano articulated the accursed grief caused by love in his *Stanze* and the *Fabula di Orfeo*. Lorenzo was particularly influenced by his tutor Ficino's Neoplatonic philosophy.<sup>261</sup> During the early 1470s, Lorenzo engaged Ficino in a series of epistolary exchanges in which they cast themselves in a platonic relationship to explore the idea of love between Socratic teacher and devoted pupil.<sup>262</sup> In these letters, Lorenzo employed conventional devices for articulating the ebb and flow of love and the intertwining of bliss and pain. He played on notions of erotic madness induced by the lover's total dependence on signs and gestures from the beloved. This desire to explore love and Lorenzo's consciousness of the unsatisfying incompleteness and impermanence of love is glimpsed in his "Canzona di Bacco." The Ficinian articulation of the concept of love as the single greatest engine that drives the soul towards the fruition of pleasure in perfect union with the divine infuses Lorenzo's thought. Baldini's vision of the chariot of the amorous pair of Bacchus and Ariadne barreling

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<sup>260</sup> James Hankins points out that Lorenzo was not a philosopher per se, and moreover, the use to which a poet may borrow themes and concepts from philosophy is different than originating an entirely individual philosophical standpoint of one's own ("Lorenzo de' Medici as a Patron of Philosophy," *Rinascimento* 34 [1994]: 19).

<sup>261</sup> See Jill Kraye, "Lorenzo and the Philosophers," in *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics in Medicean Florence*, ed. M. Mallet and N. Mann (London: Warburg Institute, 1996); Hankins, "Lorenzo de' Medici as a Patron of Philosophy," 15-35. Lorenzo was no mere dilettante, but was certainly a full-fledged player in the humanist circle in Florence in which he lived and worked, which included besides Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano, Cristoforo Landino, Luigi Pulci, and his former tutor Gentile Becchi. See also F. W. Kent, *Lorenzo de' Medici and the Art of Magnificence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

<sup>262</sup> Reginald Hyatte, "A Poetics of Ficino's 'Socratic Love': Medieval Discursive Models of *Amor* in Marsilio Ficino's and Lorenzo de' Medici's Amatory Epistles," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 20 (1993): 100-101. On this sort of interchange of thinkers, Cook writes in his introduction to Lorenzo's *Comento*: "[I]n the swirls and eddies of fifteenth-century-Florentine intellectual life, the ideas of Lorenzo and his circle were in constant interchange, and, indeed, the mutual exchange and development of ideas in writing was a characteristic mode for the expression of friendship" (Cook, *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici*, 2).

towards the heavens likewise materializes this ascent.<sup>263</sup> Love induces a *furor* that suspends reason and moves the soul to that blissful state of “unknowing”—the *docta ignorantia*, as Pico named it—which is the height of knowledge and the fulfillment of the soul’s quest.<sup>264</sup>

Like Baldini’s print and Poliziano’s poem, Lorenzo’s *canzona* exhibits a biting edge to what appears to be raucous celebration. Baldini did not hide the horror of true maenadic madness or the indecorous incapacity of the drunken lover Bacchus. Lorenzo portrayed the same frenzied procession and the same happy bride and groom, and yet tinged them with a sense of gloomy fleetingness; it is ultimately a triumph of death. The leaping satyrs and dancing nymphs of the song were suited to Carnival, which like other traditional *feste* such as Calendimaggio involved masking, crossdressing, fantastical costumes, singing, dancing, and noisemaking.<sup>265</sup> But the mood of Lorenzo’s poem unveils the reality that such celebrations were brief and ephemeral, like the decorations themselves. They stood as mere interruptions to the normal concerns and drudgeries of life. Carnival was only a last hurrah before the dreary, joyless weeks of Lent to come. This transition is echoed in the momentary pleasures of drinking itself, the

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<sup>263</sup> The idea of the *scala amoris*, or ladder of love, up which the lover gradually ascends as his love for his lady helps to shape and refine him, had a longer tradition in vernacular poetry, from Petrarch’s love of Laura or Dante’s of Beatrice to Lorenzo’s love of Lucrezia Donati. In this way, the already established amatory theory expressed in the *dolce stil novo* prefigured and complemented the Neoplatonic exposition of the lover’s long and difficult *itinerarium*, merging to create a poetic and artistic symbolism that then sought expression in ancient mythological characters. See Cook, *Autobiography of Lorenzo de’ Medici*, 6-10; Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, 52, 68, 78.

<sup>264</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 79. Lorenzo addresses these ideas more fully in his poem *L’altercazione*. See Emilio Bigi, ed., *Scritti scelti di Lorenzo de’ Medici* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1965), 47-88. There Lorenzo articulates the idea that desire strives not for things themselves, but for the good that is in them, which is a glimpse of the highest good, the “summo bono.”

<sup>265</sup> See Anton Francesco (detto Il Lasca) Grazzini, *Tutti i trionfi, carri, mascherate, o canti carnascialeschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo de’ Medici fino all’anno 1559*, 2nd ed. (Cosmopoli, 1750); Nicole Carew-Reid, *Les Fêtes florentines au temps de Lorenzo il Magnifico* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1995); Giovanni Ciappelli, *Carnevale e Quaresima: comportamenti sociali e cultura a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1997).

drinker quickly going from titillation, lust, light-headedness, silliness, laughter, and singing, to heaviness, debilitation, melancholy, and sadness.

Lorenzo exhibits a true and subtle understanding of the complex nature of the ancient god, especially Bacchus' expression of balance in opposition: *concordia discors*.<sup>266</sup> His Bacchus and Ariadne stand as much as a paradigm of the stabilizing role of marriage and the home as for the Neoplatonic conception of a cycle of life and spirit that draws the godly into man and man back into God.<sup>267</sup> Their followers—the horny satyrs, the enraptured maenads, the fat and drunken Silenus—embody the carefree life. Foolish Midas is included in turn to demonstrate that to be truly happy we must love what we have, and have what we need, but not expect more.<sup>268</sup> The final verse appears to be a call to make life a party, clearly not literal advice for Florentine merchants and wives.<sup>269</sup> However, at least in the context of the suspended moment of watching the *carro* process down the street, or of feasting and drinking in the celebration of Carnival, the serious advice to live in the present might sink in. As Lorenzo said: “Ciò c’ha a esser, convien sia”—“what will be, will be.” Lorenzo invests his mythological lovers with weight and seriousness, and provides a realistic motto for a more meaningful life. The hope for

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<sup>266</sup> Pico della Mirandola, who also made a deep impression on Lorenzo, emphasized in his own philosophy the idea of balance and harmony between opposing forces, a *concordia discors*. See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 78.

<sup>267</sup> Marion L. Kuntz, “Lorenzo de’ Medici e il tema di Bacco e Arianna: la natura della *imitatio* rinascimentale,” in *Homo Sapiens Homo Humanus*, ed. Giovannangiola Tarugi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1990), 120.

<sup>268</sup> The inclusion of Midas, famed for his golden touch but also cursed with ass’s ears for preferring Pan’s piping to Apollo’s lyre (in a parallel myth to that of Marsyas’ contest with the god), ties into the idea of contrasting levels of music. The ass’s ears on Baldini’s Bacchus may be an allusion to the figure of Midas as well. “Canzona di Bacco”: “Mida vien drieto a costoro: / ciò che tocca, oro diventa. / E che giova aver tesoro, / s’altri poi non si contenta? / Che dolcezza vuoi che senta / chi ha sete tuttavia?” (“Midas comes after these: whatever he touches turns to gold. What point is there in having treasure, if it does not make you happy? What sweet pleasure do you imagine a man has who is always thirsty?”).

<sup>269</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many critics wrote off Lorenzo’s *canzoni di ballo* as the bawdy, vulgar, sexual, and immoral product of a dilettante. See Jon Thiem’s introduction to *Lorenzo de’ Medici: Selected Poems and Prose* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 15-16.

pleasure was tempered by an awareness of its fleetingness. Lorenzo may have contemplated the theme of the fugacity of time with his mentor Ficino, who inscribed a wall in the villa of Careggi with the words: “fuge excessum: fuge negocia: laetus in presens.”<sup>270</sup> Poliziano’s *canzoni* shared the same juxtaposition of melancholy and voluptuousness.<sup>271</sup> One of his classical sources for the *Stanze*, Claudian’s *Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria*, also expressed this apparent contradiction:

Labuntur gemini fontes, his dulcis, amarus alter, et infusis corrumpunt  
mella venenis, unde Cupidineas armari fama sagittas.<sup>272</sup>

Lorenzo’s poetry was likewise suffused with a shared mood of *dulce amarum* or “bittersweet,” which saw that love and death were inseparable, just as the loves of the gods had been depicted on the sarcophagi of the dead in ancient art.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Quoted by Zorzi Pugliese, “Ambiguità di Bacco,” 400, from Bigi’s *Epistolae Marsilii Ficini florentini* (Nuremberg: 1497).

<sup>271</sup> Francastel, “La fête mythologique au Quattrocento,” 231.

<sup>272</sup> Claudian, *Epithalamium of Honorius and Maria* X.69-71: “Here spring two fountains, the one of sweet water, the other of bitter, honey is mingled with the first, poison with the second, and in these streams ’tis said that Cupid dips his arrows” (*Carmina Minora*, trans. Maurice Paltner [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922], 247-249; cited in Quint ed. of Poliziano’s *Stanze*, appendix 1, 94-95).

<sup>273</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 161, and chap. 10, “Amor as a God of Death.” Another of Lorenzo’s *canzone* articulates a similar philosophy of life, his “Canzona de’ sette pianeti”: “Il dolce tempo ancor tutti c’invita / lasciare i pensier tristi e van dolori. / Mentr che dura questa brieve vita, / ciascun s’allegri, ciascun s’innamori” (Rubsamen, “The Music for ‘Quant’è bella giovinezza,’” 164); “Now the sweet season bids us to refrain / From melancholy thoughts and vain laments. / And while some days of short-lived life remain, / Let’s give ourselves to love and merriments. / Find pleasure you who can, for wealth and fame / Are worthless things to those with joyless lives” (trans. Thiem, *Lorenzo de’ Medici: Selected Poems and Prose*, 162). Similarly, an anonymous *canto carnascialesco*, published in the nineteenth century, shares the mood, language, and metric rhythm of Lorenzo’s *canzona*, as does the “Canto di Giovani che insegnano amare” from the Codice Moücke, no. 27, in *Publica Biblioteca*, Lucca:

Bene vivere e letari  
Tutt’el resto è vanitate;  
Voi ch’afritti d’amor siate,  
Chi vuol viver lieto, impari.

E la regola sie questa:  
Non amate chi non v’ama,  
Chè si rompe alfin la testa,  
Chi sanz’ alia volar brama.

Expressing a similar appreciation of the Bacchic theme of love, with its bittersweet pleasure, is Tullio Lombardo's double portrait in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna (fig. 3.46).<sup>274</sup> The low relief, in the form of Roman grave stele, depicts a bare-chested pair of young lovers, the man with an abundance of thick curls and a thin diadem of ivy and berries, the woman with graceful waves and a hair cap and a thin cloth draped over her shoulders.<sup>275</sup> Their heads incline toward each other at the same time as they gaze upward and out toward the same viewpoint. Their lips part slightly and one imagines their cheeks flushed with youth and life;

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Rispondete a chi vi chiama,  
E chi vostr'amor tien car.

Correr dietro a chi si fugge,  
E pur cosa puerile,  
E la vita si distrugge;  
Oltre a questo è atti vile,  
Perch'un animo gentil  
Sempre vuol le 'mprese pari.

Nobilità, ricchezza e stato  
Non contenta el vostro core,  
Ma l'amare accompagnato.  
Altrimenti è vero amore,  
Quivi è l'utile e l'onore,  
Ma ta' doni oggi son rari.

(Canto VII in *Dieci Canti Carnascialeschi di diversi autori* [Lucca: Bartolommeo Canovetti, 1864], 32). Here, as in Lorenzo's poem, we find the call to love, the warning to embrace life and to not chase after illusions, wealth, or status because those things can never bring true happiness.

<sup>274</sup> See Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo's 'Double-Portrait' Reliefs," 67-86. The piece is dated anywhere from the 1490s to the 1520s. Wilk supports a dating relatively contemporaneous with the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Pope-Hennessy also dates it c. 1494-1500, based on comparison to contemporary dated works such as the Vendramin tomb (*Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, 2nd ed. [New York: Phaidon, 1971]). I find it far more likely that the work is c. 1505-1515, given the concordance of the hair fashion to Giovanni Bellini's *Woman with a Mirror* of 1515 in Vienna and of its mood to Giorgione's and Titian's work of this period. It also corresponds nicely with Palma Vecchio's double portrait in the Svépmlvészeti Muzéum, Budapest, c. 1510.

<sup>275</sup> Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo's 'Double-Portrait' Reliefs," 75, n. 38: the wreath has variously been identified as ivy or grape; Wilk consulted biologists and botanists who say the leaves are stylized beyond certain identification. To my eye they appear to be ivy leaves with berries, a vine also sacred to Bacchus: note Ovid, *Fasti* I.393: "A feast of ivy-berried Bacchus thou wast wont to hold" ("festa corymbiferi celebrabas... Bacchi"). See also Macrobius' *Saturnalia* I.18.2, where Bacchus is described with a crown of ivy. Brumble, *Classical Myths and Legends*, 52.



they appear to be in a “state of languorous reverie.”<sup>276</sup> Despite the *all’antica* framing of the figures and fragmentation of the arms, they are anything but classical.<sup>277</sup> In Tullio’s representation, the couple is the Venetian man and woman, groom and bride; as such they are also the Venetian fantasy of the perfect Bacchus and Ariadne.<sup>278</sup> The ivy on the man’s head connects him imaginatively with Bacchus, for whom ivy was sacred. The ivy also symbolized fidelity and undying affection as well as everlasting life and poetic gifts.<sup>279</sup> Together the couple appears as the Bacchus and Ariadne of Lorenzo’s *canzona*: the epitome of beauty, freshness, hope, and love, but also wistfulness. The format of ancient funerary art elicits a *memento mori*, recalling that even young lovers will one day grow old and die. The relief also evokes a particularly Venetian nostalgia or even mourning for a lost past, an ancient Golden Age, with its tone of romantic reminiscence of a longed-for antiquity shared by other Venetian products of this moment, such as the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Alison Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture in Renaissance Venice, 1490-1530* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 69.

<sup>277</sup> In the equivalent stele format, ancient Roman matrons would not have been shown bare-chested. But Jacopo Bellini drew a woman just so in an *all’antica* roundel in his drawing of an imaginary Roman funerary monument in his Paris drawing book, fol. 48. See Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, pl. 84. Wilk, “Tullio Lombardo’s ‘Double-Portrait’ Reliefs,” 72-73, 77.

<sup>278</sup> Luchs agrees with this identification of the couple, citing Goffen’s identification of the snood worn on the woman’s hair as a *reticella* worn by married women, which also supports the identification of her as a wife, and therefore Ariadne (*Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture*, 70 and n.11). Wilk postulates that the female is instead Ceres, referring to the connection between the goddess and Bacchus as noted in the Renaissance sources mentioned above (“Tullio Lombardo’s ‘Double-Portrait’ Reliefs,” 80-81). Bacchus and Ceres together, as the proverb had suggested, provide the fuel for the fire of love, not just life. And so coupled in such a relief, the pair could present a metaphor for married love. But no attribute attests to this identification of the woman; one would expect at least a sheaf of wheat to alert us to her being Ceres if that was intended.

<sup>279</sup> Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture*, n. 62, citing Mirella Levi d’Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting* (Florence: Olschki, 1977), 189-193.

<sup>280</sup> Wilk, “Tullio Lombardo’s ‘Double-Portrait’ Reliefs,” 82; Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture*, 73.

The look of wistful longing and unfathomable mood in Tullio's relief shares its sensibility with the roughly contemporary *Concert Champêtre*, in which Titian made visible to the senses feelings previously uttered only in words in poetry.<sup>281</sup> While words could articulate ideas and translate them into emotion, painting, Titian demonstrated, penetrated directly into the *pneuma* of the soul, without intermediary reason, where it could lift the mind to higher levels of contemplation. Tullio's work expresses this same appreciation of image-making as a rival to *poesia*, as having the imaginative grip of poetry.<sup>282</sup> In the new painted and sculpted *poesie*, reality and fantasy could appear together within beautiful landscapes, blending the outcomes of imagination and intellect. This double portrait, whether of an actual couple or an imaginary one, fulfilled a contemporary urge for this sort of visual poetry.<sup>283</sup> Like Lorenzo's "Canzona di Bacco" and Baldini's *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, with their mix of melancholy and happiness, Tullio's relief evokes a similar air of fantasy and imaginative contemplation.

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The emergence over the course of the fifteenth century of Bacchus and Ariadne as icons of love, happiness, and fidelity was one of the outcomes of a deeper literary and philosophical understanding of pagan mythology as well as of human nature. Neoplatonic ideas of Heavenly Love helped to elevate characters that at least superficially appeared only to relate to base sensuality. Because Bacchus enabled Ariadne's own spiritual ascent, their affair served as a

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<sup>281</sup> Sometimes given to Giorgione, most scholars now give the painting to Titian. See David Rosand, "Ut Pictor Poeta: Meaning in Titian's *Poesie*," *New Literary History* 3 (1971-72): 527-546; Jonathan Unglaub, "The Concert Champêtre: The Crises of History and the Limits of Pastoral," *Arion* 5, no. 1 (1997): 46-96; David Alan Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting* (Washington, DC, and Vienna: National Gallery of Art and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), cat. 31, by Jaynie Anderson, pp. 168-171.

<sup>282</sup> Irving Lavin, "On the Sources and Meaning of Renaissance Portrait Busts," *Art Quarterly* 33 (1970): 207-226; Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo's 'Double-Portrait' Reliefs," 82.

<sup>283</sup> Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Ideal Portrait Sculpture*, 72-73.

beacon for the higher purpose of love. Ariadne's discovery by the god came to be represented in the Renaissance period in a manner that revealed a careful attention to classical literary sources, especially in the depiction of her alert and frenzied appearance. The antique depiction of her languid, sleeping form, however, simultaneously spurred the emergence of one of the more popular motifs of the early sixteenth century, that of the sleeping nude nymph or Venus. Because of her connotations with the sleeping Ariadne, this new figure carried associations with ideas of epiphany, revelation, love, fertility, abundance, and inspiration. In Ariadne's triumphal ride with Bacchus, the bridal pair appeared in the visual arts, ephemeral celebrations, and literary creations as an epitome of moral, married love and of blissful youth. Their union served as an idyllic and yet nostalgic and melancholic memento of a lost antiquity. Bacchus was a god wholeheartedly connected to the forces of love, whether it was driven by the gifts of his wine or his divine madness. He was associated with Ceres and with Venus, and together with them with the forces of natural regeneration and procreation. As a sensual, sexual creature, he could bear the tinge of vice and voluptuousness, yet as the instigator of necessary and natural urges he was also deemed the noble god of love and life. The classical tradition of the epithalamium, with its explicit jesting, allowed more voluptuous subject matter to appear in condoned contexts surrounding marriage. In the following chapter we will see how Bacchus' more outright sexual and animalistic followers—the satyrs, Pans, and Sileni of his jubilant train—could also find their way into Renaissance imagery, and could be granted, moreover, similarly subtle, varied, and even exculpatory meanings.

## Chapter Four

**Ritual Purgation: The Satyr and Intoxication, Sexuality, and Fecundity**

*If Praxiteles or Phidias, both experts in their art, should choose for a statue the immodest subject of Priapus on his way to Iole by night, instead of Diana glorified in her chastity...shall we therefore condemn these arts? Downright stupidity, I should call it!*  
— Boccaccio, *Genealogia deorum gentilium*<sup>1</sup>

The Bacchic ethos was characterized by antipodal harmonies. As we have seen, the *dolce-amaro*, or bittersweet, quality of Bacchic love and sensuality inflected romantic encounters with an air of melancholy. This paradox was complemented by another, of *serio-ludere*, epitomized by the satyr with his vile but sometimes tragic persona and his ribald but often poignant exploits.<sup>2</sup> With such expressive potential, the satyr—a “noble savage”—became one of the most ubiquitous characters in Renaissance art. A reconceptualization of the ancient idea of Arcadia, with its simple rustic pleasures and benevolent peace, intersected with the contemporary Bacchic mythopoeia. A fascination with grottoes, nymphs, shepherds, and satyrs corresponded with the idea of an earthy, primitive state that preserved, as if in amber, a glimpse of a more pure and simple life. The medieval *uomo selvatico* was replaced by the *all'antica* satyr, savage brute by mythical sprite. Standing apart from the ceaseless warfare and competition of the current world, this vision of Arcadia offered the perfect escape.<sup>3</sup> Wealthy urban-dwellers sought out the country life, or at least a simulation of it. Villas sprang up in areas outlying cities, with *vigne*

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<sup>1</sup> Book XIV.vi, trans. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, 39 and n. 8. Osgood notes that there is not an actual story of Priapus and Iole, but perhaps this was confused with the Ovidian tale of Priapus and Lotis from *Fasti* I.415-450, a text Boccaccio owned.

<sup>2</sup> For the concept of *serio-ludere*, see especially Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 38 and passim.

and fields to provide for the family. Venetians inundated the *terra firma* like a high tide. And Pan, the goat-footed imp, regained his status as the all-encompassing deity of nature.

In the broadest interpretation of medieval allegory, the satyr had been simply a symbol of vice, ranging from lust to greed and gluttony.<sup>4</sup> His bestial appearance and lecherous appetites represented the uncivilized and sinful qualities in man. In Christian iconography, it is no coincidence that the evolution of the image of the Devil took on many of the antique features of satyrs: cloven feet, horns, and pointy ears and chins or goatees.<sup>5</sup> Yet the seemingly lascivious and vulgar satyr emerged in Renaissance art as something much more subtle, evocative, and indeed sympathetic. This can be immediately observed in the satyrs accompanying the chariots of Bacchus in Jacopo Bellini's London and Paris Drawing Books, where they are both young and old, bare-faced and bearded, drinking and celebrating, yet at the same time sober and serious (fig. 4.1). The almost glum expressions on Jacopo's satyrs are disarming; their goatish haunches and erect phalluses would lead us to expect more animalistic facial features. But Jacopo gives his satyrs complete humanity, just like that of his quiet Bacchus.

A vivid debate in the fifteenth century on the nature of pleasure and the value of natural urges was central to prompting a reevaluation of the passions and sentiments embodied in the

<sup>3</sup> Luba Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral in the Visual Arts* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius Pamphilus (*Preparation for the Gospel*, fourth century) characterized Pan as the Devil; St. Augustine likewise demonized Pan in his *Confessions*. For Eusebius, see Sharon Lynn Coggan, "Pandaemonia: A Study of Eusebius' Recasting of Plutarch's Story of the 'Death of Great Pan'," Ph.D. diss. (Syracuse University, 1992). On the satyr, see Lynn Frier Kaufmann, "The Noble Savage: Satyrs and Satyr Families in Renaissance Art," Ph.D. diss. (University of Pennsylvania, printed by University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI, 1979).

<sup>5</sup> Adolphe N. Didron, *Christian Iconography or the History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages*, trans. E. J. Millington (London: H. G. Bohn, 1851, reprinted by Kessinger Publishing, 2003), vol. 2, 134-135. See, for example, the devils in the woodcut illustration of a *Deathbed Scene* in Savonarola's *Predica dell' arte del bene morire* (Florence, 1496-1497) (Dempsey, *The Portrayal of Love*, fig. 1). Such negative connotations can be seen in other contexts, as in a mid-Quattrocento coin-sized relief depicting the reviled Attila the Hun (Hungarian National Museum, Budapest), which showed him exactly as a hideous Pan, with horns, pointed ears, hooked nose, scraggly beard, and fawn-skin tied around his shoulders (Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 146, fig. 157b).

figure of the satyr. Newly revised ideas of Epicureanism, along with attention to the writings of Aristotle, awakened the possibility for positive capacities of the satyr. The philosophy of Epicurus, known largely through the writings of Diogenes Laertius and the *De rerum natura* of his Roman adherent Lucretius, had been long misunderstood, even in antiquity. It was assumed that Epicurus' approach sought a sensual and earthly goal: a life aimed only at pleasure. St. Jerome had early on excoriated Lucretius as a "voluptuary satyr" who committed suicide, and St. Augustine had associated Epicureanism with Bacchic excess.<sup>6</sup> In medieval interpretations, Epicureanism was deemed to condone voluptuousness and hedonism, evils without redemption in a Christian world.<sup>7</sup> Epicurus' predecessor, Democritus, was known in Roman times as the "Laughing Philosopher," since in the face of the absurdities of the human condition and spectacle of life he did not sink into melancholy like Heraclitus but instead could not stop laughing.<sup>8</sup> This attitude of detached derision in the face of life's folly, in contrast to one of pity

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<sup>6</sup> Jerome wrote of Lucretius in his *Chronicle*, and borrowed from sources such as Suetonius. On Jerome, see Robert Bongiorno, "Fifteenth-Century Epicureanism and the Roman Academy," *Agora 2* (1973): 60-67; James S. Ruebel, "The Cup and the Lip," in *Classical Texts and Their Traditions: Studies in Honor of C. R. Trahman*, ed. David F. Bright and Edwin S. Ramage (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 213-216; Emmerling-Skala, "Bacchus in der Renaissance," 621. Augustine spoke of the madness of Lucretius in his *Confessions*. In *City of God* 15.23, Augustine wrote: "The story is well known, and corroborated by many people . . . , that Sylvens and Pans, who are commonly called *Incubi*, often misbehaved toward women and succeeded in their lustful desire to have intercourse with them" (Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 136-137). See also D. C. Allen, "The Rehabilitation of Epicurus," 3, for their condemnation of Epicurus, Augustine and Jerome followed Zeno, Plutarch, and Galen.

<sup>7</sup> Epicureanism was anathema to Christianity, moreover, for its atomist theory, which denied the agency of a god, a divine order to the universe, as well as the immortality of the soul. See Allen, "The Rehabilitation of Epicurus," 1-3; Bongiorno, "Fifteenth-Century Epicureanism," 60-67; Alison Brown, "Lucretius and the Epicureans in the Social and Political Context of Renaissance Florence," *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 9 (2001): 11-62; Clark Colahan, "Epicureanism vs. Stoic Debate and Lazarillo's Character," *Neophilologus* 85 (2001): 555-564; and Lorch, "Lorenzo Valla's Defense of *Voluptas* in the Preface to His *De Voluptate*," 214-228.

<sup>8</sup> Edgar Wind, "The Christian Democritus," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937): 180-182; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 48, n. 50. Cf. Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, 294. The story derived from Juvenal, *Satires* X.28-54 and was found also in Seneca, *De ira* II X.5 and *De tranquillitate animi* XV. 2, and in Lucian, *De sacrificiis* 15. Marsilio Ficino is said to have had a painting depicting the two philosophers' opposite reactions to the world in his study. Wind argues that the painting recalled Ficino's early attraction to Epicureanism (which he later disavowed) and asserts the traditional supremacy of Democritus over Heraclitus. Yet Kristeller makes the more appealing argument based on Ficino's own writings that Ficino's projection of the theme was intended to alert its viewers to the fallacy of all earthly things; that to laugh or cry over worldly concerns is in either

and empathy, was easily read in the early Christian and medieval periods as anti-Christian. But in the fifteenth century such a reaction was congenial to Renaissance Christian Neoplatonists, who deemed this attainment of peace of mind to be a noble *voluptas* and even the “greatest good,” the *summum bonum*.<sup>9</sup>

In truth, Epicurus had understood pleasure to be found in mental *ataraxia*, or freedom from care, which was itself deemed equivalent to the good. And instead of misunderstanding Epicureanism as mindless indulgence, the new Renaissance humanist could join in the faith’s bittersweet laughter in the face of life’s travails. Tinged with cynicism, the Renaissance Epicurean nevertheless appreciated joy in life. While few came to appreciate fully the subtleties of that ancient philosophy, this quality of bittersweet *serio-ludere* came to be expressed by the ubiquitous Renaissance satyr, a pleasure-seeking hedonist who nevertheless captured certain essential truths of the human condition.

#### THE SATYR’S REAPPEARANCE

Already in ancient times, satyrs, fauns, and Pans were conflated and bore an array of attributes, including horns, pointed ears, small tails, and hooved and furry goat legs.<sup>10</sup> Satyrs were male followers of Bacchus, who generally bore tails—at first horse-like (as on Greek vase

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case a waste of energy since the wise man must ultimately rise above such lowly things. Cf. Gilbert, “On Subject and Not-Subject,” 205, n. 12.

<sup>9</sup> Wind, “The Christian Democritus,” 180; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 69-71. See also Allen, “The Rehabilitation of Epicurus.” Epicurus said, according to Diogenes Laertius, X.132: “It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, and virtuously, and justly, nor is it possible to live prudently and virtuously and justly without living pleasantly. This is because the virtues are a natural, integral part of the pleasant life and the pleasant life is inseparable from them” (as quoted in David K. Glidden, “Epicurus and the Pleasure Principle,” in *The Greeks and the Good Life: Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Philosophy Symposium, California State University, Fullerton*, ed. David J. Depew [Fullerton: California State University, 1980], 186). Marsilio Ficino would come to ascertain a similar notion of the *summum bonum*, as in his *Epistola de felicitate*, addressed to Lorenzo de’ Medici (who would adapt its content in his poem *L’Altercazione* [or *De Summo bono*]). See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 50-51, 79.

<sup>10</sup> See Preface, n. 5; Kaufmann, “The Noble Savage,” 122.

painting) and then short and goatish—and pointed ears, but might retain human appendages. In Hellenistic and Roman imagery, satyrs frequently became young men with goat-like legs, but also might appear mostly human with just a small tail that would be noticed only from the back; both types often appeared together in Bacchus' cortège.<sup>11</sup> The actual, unique god Pan—the son of Hermes, deity of ancient herdsman and pastoral poetry, and inventor of the panpipes—was deemed to have certain goatish appetites, which early on shaped his physical appearance to share the animalistic features of the satyrs.<sup>12</sup> He was both rascally satyr, instigator of “panic,” as well as rustic shepherd of Arcadia. By the Renaissance, both “pans” and satyrs became unindividuated goat-legged creatures that inhabited woods and accompanied Bacchus, and Pan himself was often barely distinguishable except by narrative context, his superior age, or the inclusion of his syrinx.<sup>13</sup>

In antiquity, satyrs were, like maenads, part of the orgiastic dance that swirled about Bacchus and were inspired by his delirium-inducing enthusiasm, embodied within his drink. But they were also more primeval and savage than the maenad, who, in myth, might be a nymph or, in ritualized cult practice, a real woman.<sup>14</sup> Satyrs were truly mythological, supernatural

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<sup>11</sup> For examples of the changing figure of the satyr through classical art, see Caroline Houser, *Dionysos and His Circle: Ancient Through Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard College and the Fogg Art Museum, 1979). See also Van de Grift, “Dionysiaca: Bacchic Imagery in Roman Luxury Art.”

<sup>12</sup> See John Boardman, *The Great God Pan: The Survival of an Image* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997); Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral in the Visual Arts*, 73. In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid codified the image of Pan as a satyr, while Vergil's *Eclogues* describes his role as god of Arcadia (Freedman, 81). In his *Genealogia deorum gentilium* I.iv, Boccaccio described Pan just like a satyr: “...[P]oets and other famous men described his remarkable shape. For, as Rabanus said in his *On the Nature of Things*, / ‘Most remarkable were the upwardly curving horns implanted into his forehead, his long beard reaching all the way down to his chest, and in place of a cloak a pelt marked with spots which the ancients called a *nebris*, as well as the wand in his hand and his pipe of seven reeds.’ / In addition he said that his lower legs were hairy and shaggy and that he had goat like feet...” (*Genealogy of the Pagan Gods*, 57).

<sup>13</sup> Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral in the Visual Arts*, 81.

<sup>14</sup> See Henri Jeanmaire, “Le satyre et la ménade: remarques sur quelques textes relatifs aux danses ‘orgiaques’,” in *Mélanges Charles Picard* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949), 463-473.



creatures, whose physical appetites and persuasions superseded their spiritual devotions.<sup>15</sup> They danced too wildly; made rude noises with unrefined instruments; chased hapless nymphs and maenads; and manifested their irrepressible lust with their ever-erect phalluses.

The satyrs, Sileni, and Pans in Bacchus' train began to appear in the visual culture of early fifteenth-century Italy and only increased in popularity over the course of the century. Unlike the early appearances of maenads, transformed into frenzied Christian characters or bowdlerized into pretty nymphs, the satyrs maintained their antique appearance, with animalistic features and ithyphallic members intact. One must ask how and why such debauched characters could become so popular in Renaissance art. Satyrs included in the discovery of Ariadne were elevated by such proximity, since Ariadne added a bit of respectability to the Bacchic revel, with allusions to love, marriage, redemption, epiphany, and resurrection. But alone, what did these exclusively wild and animalistic followers of Bacchus offer?

Some of the earliest drawings after antiquities of the 1420s record the ends of the Bacchic sarcophagus now in the British Museum with their depiction of nude male Bacchants and ridiculous Pans (fig. 1.19 and 20).<sup>16</sup> Along with the graceful lines of the dancing maenad, the figure of the satyr was a fruitful gift to the fifteenth-century artist searching for something new and yet decidedly antique. The idea of a hybrid beast was, of course, not unprecedented; the medieval bestiary of griffins, gargoyles, and hippogriffs was familiar. The concept, moreover, of a rustic, humanoid species close to nature was shared by the furry creature known as the

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<sup>15</sup> As Kaufmann writes, satyrs “were indeed uninhibited and self-indulgent libertines whose sexual excesses matched their capacity for intoxication, leading a hedonistic existence in which the social constraints of human society were suspended” (“The Noble Savage,” 158).

<sup>16</sup> Louvre 5611r and v. Rubinstein, “A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance,” figs. 182-183.

“wildman” or “wodehouse.”<sup>17</sup> Popular already in the Middle Ages, this *uomo selvatico* struck a chord in the fifteenth-century Italian imagination, and until usurped by the more fashionably *all’antica* satyr, served to represent many of the same primitive and wild connotations that the classical creature would subsume.<sup>18</sup> The two even coexisted for a while, with the wildman frequently portrayed at wedding banquets and other theatrical *feste* alongside satyrs.<sup>19</sup> But there was something about the mischievous, sub-human creature—perhaps the very fact that the satyr was almost man-like and not purely a monster—that made him freshly relevant for the

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<sup>17</sup> Holberton, “Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione,” 296-300.

<sup>18</sup> See Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni*, 146-149. The blurring of the wildman with the satyr in the later part of the fifteenth century can be seen in the bronze shield-bearer figures attributed to Bertoldo, one in the Frick and another in Fürstliche Sammlung Liechtenstein, Vaduz, where the ivy-girt, nude youth in the Frick Collection, New York, actually has a little tail and horns, making him much more a satyr than a true wildman. Both figures bear clubs, which further blurs their identities with Hercules. See also Samuel Kinser, “Why Is Carnival So Wild?” in *Carnival and the Carnavalesque: The Fool, the Reformer, the Wildman, and Others in Early Modern Theatre*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler and Wim Hüsken (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999), 43-87.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 149. Wildmen were included in the productions accompanying the marriages of Costanza Sforza and Camillo of Aragon in Pesaro in 1475, of Lucrezia d’Este and Orazio Bentivoglio in Bologna in 1487, and of Anna Sforza and Alfonso d’Este in Ferrara in 1491, the latter with wildmen dancing with nymphs after a performance of Terence’s *Lady of Andros*. See Bernardino Zambotti, *Diario Ferrarese dell’anno 1476 sino al 1504*, in *Rerum Italicum Scriptores*, ed. L. A. Muratori, vol. 24, part 7 (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1928-1937), 221. Riario’s elaborate, highly classical banquets held in Eleanora d’Aragona’s honor in 1473 included, for example, a “dish of wild men” (Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni*, 149, citing Corio [1855-1857] 3: 274). The similarity to Hercules in the wildman’s brute strength and natural precocities may have inspired Ercole (Hercules) d’Este to order a silver service in 1472 to be designed by Cosmò Tura and cast by Allegretto da Ragusa that included three flasks supported by two wildmen each (*ibid.*, citing Venturi [1888], 22, n. 3). There was also a tradition in Padua, as well as Ferrara, of Carnival entertainments centered on *uomini selvatici*. As early as 1208, all the people of Padua “fuit factus magnus ludus de quodam homine Salvatico in Prato Vallis, et quasi omnes Paduani per contratas novis vestibus sunt vestiti” (Antonio Bonaventura Sberti, *Degli spettacoli e delle feste che si facevano in Padova* [Padua: 1818], 44). Eisler mistakenly cites Sberti as attesting to Dionysian festivities in Padua, in which participants dressed up in animal skins, impersonated satyrs, and acted out Bacchus riding in a triumphal chariot (*The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 201). However, Sberti merely states that the Paduan *feste* remind him of such ancient orgies: “Queste feste per altro mi pajano quasi simili alle feste Orgie, or Dionisie, che i Greci avevano prese dagli Egizj, e si celebravano in onore di Bacco, le quali da principio erano semplici; poscia le persone comparivano coperte di pelle d’irco, di daino, di tigri, o di altri animali sia domestici, sia selvaggi; finalmente tutto si convertì in mascherate, in balli ed in allegria. Quindi ognuno invece di portare una pelle d’irco o di capra, si vestiva da capra, da tigre ec. per imitare a gara la figura rappresentante; e quegli che faceva da Bacco si collocava sopra un carro ch’era tirato dalle finte tigri, mentre gl’irchi e le capre saltavano all’intorno in forma di satiri e fauni” (44-45). The *Diario ferrarese* records that in 1500 there were *feste d’uomini salvatici*, and “Il Duco di Ferrara in la sua sala grande, apparata fece ballare e fare feste molto dilettevoli, come di moresche e d’uomini salvatici” (45-46).

Renaissance.<sup>20</sup> It is often remarked that the fifteenth century, with its wars and plagues, hardly seemed a time for unfettered celebrations, but celebrations nevertheless proliferated. Age-old cyclical festivals such as Carnival and Calendimaggio persisted, joined by weddings, royal entries, military victories, and even funerals, which were marked increasingly by elaborate banquets, balls, parades, and *all'antica* triumphs. As attention and inclination shifted more and more to antique precedent, both literary and artistic, the models for revelry represented by Bacchus and his entourage were appropriate for those seeking a new vision of pleasure.

Of course, the satyrs' obvious vices made them useful as moral devices. In Perugino's *Battle of Love and Chastity*, the written program provided by Paride da Ceresara prescribed that a "lascivious troupe of fauns, satyrs, and thousands of little Loves" should be depicted on the side of Venus and Cupid.<sup>21</sup> These creatures would convey "wantonly aggressive sexuality."<sup>22</sup> Mantegna created fantastical satyr-like beasts to personify various vices in his *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* painted for the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este (fig. 4.2). In his two-page engraving on the theme of *Virtus Combusta* and *Deserta*, another satyr-like creature—with goat hind legs, bird feet, rooster tail, bat wings, and pointed ears—played a bagpipe; the fiend embodied the Vices of Incontinence and Intemperance, with their connotations of sexual lust (fig. 4.3).<sup>23</sup> And in the cover for his portrait of Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi, Lorenzo Lotto installed a drunken satyr in a classic *paysage moralisé*, contrasting his intoxicated state before a

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<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the more human Bacchant (or faun, with human legs) did not usually appear in Renaissance art, perhaps because it lacked the reassuring distancing that made the goat-legged satyr less like a man.

<sup>21</sup> "una turba lascivia di fauni, satiri, et mille varii amori" (quoted in Egon Verheyen, *The Paintings in the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* [New York: New York University Press for the College Art Association of America, 1971], 26).

<sup>22</sup> Kaufmann, "The Noble Savage," 127.

<sup>23</sup> Eugene Dwyer, "A Note on the Sources of Mantegna's *Virtus combusta*," *Marsyas* 15 (1971): 58-62.

stormy sea and shipwreck on the right with an industrious putto and resprouting tree on the left, highlighted in the distance by a seraph ascending to an illuminated heaven (fig. 4.38).<sup>24</sup>

But as satyrs appeared more frequently in the fifteenth century, they became more than signs of evil and vice. They came to occupy a place in between religion and myth, becoming icons of a lost and distant past, a metaphor for antiquity. Their evocation of a bucolic, pastoral realm corresponded with a revived awareness of the idea of Arcadia, and in the later fifteenth and especially in the sixteenth century, the satyr became an important element in this new sylvan idyll. In art, poetry, and theater the pastoral would be a repeating theme in which the free, natural satyr and his family lived in peaceful commune with the non-urban world. In its ahistoricity, the pastoral mode achieved a vision that could evoke a distant past and simultaneously make it seem proximate—a contiguous reality just beyond the city walls, ever accessible through the imagination.<sup>25</sup> The satyr invoked a renewed Vitruvian model of the cycle of man by conveying an era before the dawn of civilization.<sup>26</sup> Lucretius too had described a sort of evolution, in which human culture emerged from a prehistoric bestiality.<sup>27</sup> The depiction of

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<sup>24</sup> Lorenzo Lotto, *Allegory of Virtue and Vice*, 1505, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, Washington, DC. The portrait of de' Rossi is in the Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples. For a discussion of the paintings, see David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco, *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance* (Washington, DC, and New Haven: National Gallery of Art and Yale University Press, 1997), cat. 2, 73-75, and cat. 3, 76-80; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 44-59. De' Rossi became bishop of Treviso, north of Venice, in 1499, and was Lotto's official patron at this time. A combative and divisive figure (there was an assassination attempt against him in 1503 and he had to flee Treviso in 1510), his portrait and its cover must have been commissioned to enhance his authority and assert his virtue.

<sup>25</sup> P. F. Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 204-206; William J. Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983).

<sup>26</sup> See Panofsky, "The Early History of Man in Two Cycles of Paintings by Piero di Cosimo," in *Studies in Iconology*, 33-67. In the *Genealogia deorum gentilium* XII.70, Boccaccio quoted the passage from Vitruvius' *De Architectura Libri decem*, II.1, in which he wrote: "In the olden days men were born like wild beasts in woods and caves and groves, and kept alive by eating raw food."

<sup>27</sup> *De rerum natura* V.

satyrs fit into a Renaissance vision of itself as reawakening civilization by conquering a primitive past, while at the same time, looking wistfully at that long-ago era as a lost Golden Age.

The satyr also embodied the elemental forces of generation and fecundity without which nature would cease to function. In his interactions with nymphs or in his state of inebriated abandonment, this essential germinative urge was given narrative form, and was layered with meanings that suggested the higher creative impulses of invention and imagination. The satyr stood at the nexus of a new triumph of rational man—a triumph over the senses—on one side; and on the other, the necessary and irrational forces of nature, emotion, creativity, sex, and reproduction, without which there was no survival or self-perpetuation, or for that matter, anything wondrous and new. This mythical creature existed apart from history and narrative, able to populate a land of fantasy and imagination. For fifteenth-century antiquarians, eager to flesh out a beloved yet distant and fragmentary past, these man-beasts signified an Arcadian dreamland in which antiquity came once again to life.<sup>28</sup> Until the psychological setbacks produced by imperial invasions and the heightened moral strictures of the Counter-Reformation changed the tone of the Renaissance's love affair with antiquity, there was a moment in which the pagan satyrs appeared in their full capacity.

#### JACOPO BELLINI AND THE ANTIQUARIAN CULTURE OF NORTHERN ITALY

After the early drawings from Bacchic sarcophagi by Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello and their followers, the first Renaissance artist to redeploy the antique satyr within new compositions was the Venetian Jacopo Bellini. His explorations proved critical in the resurgence of the ancient rogue, given Bellini's prominent place in northern Italian art and his influence on

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<sup>28</sup> See Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, part V, esp. 193-206.

his son-in-law Mantegna and on Paduan artists. Among his drawings are numerous Bacchic compositions that evoke an ancient distant land populated by mythical creatures. As we saw in Chapter One, his Triumph of Bacchus in the London Book is teeming with satyrs (fig. 1.46 and 47). No Bacchic sarcophagi are similarly crowded with so many hooved creatures. In their physical appearance too his satyrs have no comparison, appearing almost as if derived from a verbal description rather than a visual model. Each has a single, bifid curving horn and long ass's ears; their legs are spindly, more like a deer's than a goat's. Some are bearded and some are clean-shaven, a juxtaposition found in classical imagery. And they are accurately depicted as ithyphallic. Yet while we do find echoes of specific antiquities in the pair of satyrs holding their drunken mate and in the back-to-back twosome of *aulos*-playing and prancing satyrs on the left page, the figures and arrangement in Jacopo's drawing are truly unprecedented (fig. 4.4).<sup>29</sup> The very free and imaginative way in which the antique subject is handled, as well as the setting within an early Quattrocento-style landscape, shows that whether he had seen a Bacchic antiquity or not, Bellini did not feel the need to copy one.

In a second, single-paged drawing in the Paris Book, the Triumph of Bacchus was visited again (fig. 4.1).<sup>30</sup> These satyrs are built more like the Pans on antiquities, with shorter, thicker

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<sup>29</sup> The motif of carrying a satyr recalls the left end of the British Museum sarcophagus. The playing pair recall the Bacchic sarcophagus, Arbury Hall, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, United Kingdom; Matz, *ASR*, part 2, no. 77, pl. 92. Note that the gesture of the satyr shading his eyes on the left page of the London drawing also recalls the position of Bacchus' arm up over his head on this and other sarcophagi. That Jacopo may have known, or known drawings of, the British Museum sarcophagus may be indicated by the figure holding a nude infant on his shoulders in the drawing on fol. 33v of the London Book, which recalls the similar figure on the left of the sarcophagus. Such a figure may also derive, however, from common images of St. Christopher holding the Christ child (cf. London fols. 40 and 29 depicting St. Christopher).

<sup>30</sup> Louvre fol. 40. The reductions, clarifications, and borrowings that relate this drawing to the one in London lead me to believe that it follows the sketchier study in the British Museum, with a date in the 1450s or 1460s. In technique, the London drawing is much looser, with modifications and *pentimenti* still visible on the paper, and faint, barely visible figures only roughly noted down. The Paris drawing, on the other hand, no longer has the appearance of experimentation and trial-and-error, but has used the fine parchment medium to record a final and permanent composition, whose outlines have been gone over again in pen and ink. While the Paris drawing shows a greater clarification of its figures, there is at the same time a somewhat naïve compression of space in this image,

legs and hooves, shaggier fur, and squatter torsos. The horns are now double, though conjoined at the center of the forehead, and the ears more petite. But one impression given by all of Jacopo's satyrs is significant: despite their animalistic legs, horns, and ears, his satyrs are not grotesque. They do not have the slanted eyes, broad nostrils, and sneering mouths so common on antique Pans, and which artists would come to reinstate. Jacopo instead gave his satyrs human and humane countenances. The satyr on horseback in the London Book even has the bald and bearded head of an elder prophet or saint in Quattrocento painting. Jacopo's Bacchic revelers may drink and play pipes, but they appear to have, despite this, a grave elegance, a seriousness shared by the god himself. Other drawings show an aged Silenus, not with mockery but with empathy for his dissipation, or the kidnapping of a *satyriscus* by Cupid, leaving the satyr's dismayed father gesturing imploringly (fig. 4.5, 6).<sup>31</sup> Instead of despicable lasciviousness, Jacopo imaginatively portrays satyrs' despair and vulnerability. These satyrs have the recognizable faces of men and boys, and are not distanced by deformity.

Curiously, Jacopo's Bacchic imagination is a gender-segregated one, in which only male followers of Bacchus are portrayed (in spite of the poetic, literary, and visual evidence of the female predominance in the Bacchic cult).<sup>32</sup> In his vision of this ancient landscape, the satyrs represent a masculine prehistory, a primitive state from which women are excluded.<sup>33</sup> Whether

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where there was great depth in the London drawing. This lack of sophistication and spatial integrity may indicate that the drawing is not, after all, as late as we think, or that in simplifying his compositions for production as "quadros designatos" ("drawn paintings," as they were called by Jacopo's widow) there may have been a corresponding simplification of his initial invention. Cf. Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 222, and 104, where Eisler posits that the Paris Drawing Book was begun in the 1440s, like the London Book, but has drawings made through the 1460s.

<sup>31</sup> London fol. 97v; Paris fol. 43.

<sup>32</sup> Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 204.

<sup>33</sup> Women do appear, however, in other compositions as in the London drawing of nude women and girls emerging from a tent (fol. 31) and another showing them in combat (fol. 32).

this reflects some moral scruple or just Jacopo's particular fancy, what the artist captures is an imaginative fantasy of an ancient pastoral world. Jacopo's sensitivity to a wide variation and subtlety in representing satyrs indicates his distancing of this figure from the medieval stereotype of vice and evil. Yet he does not show any of those human-legged Bacchantes (except Silenus) that inhabited ancient imagery alongside their more goatish brethren. Perhaps in his effort to specify a mythical and ahistorical netherworld, Jacopo (like most of his contemporaries) avoided the too-human male follower of the god of wine. He manages to humanize the satyr at the same time as he separates him from humanity. As Patricia Fortini Brown has noted, "Jacopo's ambivalence toward the seductive attractions of pious antiquity set him apart from artists of only a generation earlier. The [ancient relics]... have become artifacts of history and objects of aesthetic delight, demanding interest, if not respect."<sup>34</sup> The wisp of melancholy that passes over the satyr images imbues a sense of wistful longing in his reimagining of the ancient past. For Bellini, the satyr is not some raunchy beast but rather an evocation of something simpler and more natural that is lost to the world of civilized man and yet accessible through the imagination.

Jacopo's sympathy for the satyr and the popularity this creature soon gained stemmed naturally from the antiquarian curiosity flowing out of Padua.<sup>35</sup> Not only was Padua a long-established intellectual center with its famous university, founded in 1222, but smaller schools like that of Gasparino Barzizza's *gymnasium* (where Alberti studied) and those of Guarino da Verona in nearby Ferrara or of Vittorino da Feltre in Mantua helped the revival of antiquity in northern Italy to flourish.<sup>36</sup> This fervent interest in the languages and letters of antiquity fostered

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<sup>34</sup> Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 135.

<sup>35</sup> Jacopo had connections to Padua dating back to c. 1430. See Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 46.

<sup>36</sup> Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators*; Baxandall, "Guarino, Pisanello, and Manuel Chrysoloras," 188, n. 5. Barzizza (c. 1360-1431).



an interest in its artistic relics as well. Despite not having the super-abundance of ancient artifacts found in Rome, northern artists had ready access to antiquities closer to home. An archaeological curiosity was fed by and expressed in catalogues of inscriptions, travel writings, and other records of antiquities, as well as budding collections.

Within this intellectual environment, the idea of the mischievous satyr captured the humanist imagination as the epitome of irrational, base man contrasted with the effects of elevating knowledge. As if to honor and celebrate this ironic sensibility, the students and professors of the University appear to have had a recurring holiday of wild play, which they called the Bacchanaliorum.<sup>37</sup> Guarino actually complained of the debauched behavior of Padua's students, claiming their tutelary deity was Bacchus.<sup>38</sup> It is conceivable that this male world of reenacted satyric fun contributed to Jacopo's envisioning of his Bacchic scenarios.

The presence of an established academic institution, especially one open to the Bacchic side of the classical world, inclined the general culture's sensibility to an interest in learning and antiquity. Proximity to this thriving hub of scholarship contributed to the revival of ancient texts and subject matter that so intrigued contemporary artists and their patrons. One such revival was that of ancient theater and rustic drama. This phenomenon contributed to the vibrant reemergence of the satyr among the circles that orbited Padua, including the courtly centers of Ferrara and Mantua, where these plays found receptive audiences. Original classical plays were

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<sup>37</sup> Records suggest payments toward such antics. In 1447: "Vetuit Senatus ne bacchanaliorum vacationes ultra dies denos producerentur, neve Professores ad ludos celebrandos plus conferrent argenteis vicenis," and again in 1534: "Decrevit Universitas et Professores ad celebranda bacchanalia florenos quotannis centenos darent, collata pro stipendiorum ratione symbola" (Sberti, *Degli spettacoli e delle feste che si facevano in Padova*, 105, citing Facciolati, *Fasti Gymn. Patavani*, part II, p. 11).

<sup>38</sup> A letter of 1414 states: "They celebrate his feast, not annually, but daily, and indeed more than once a day. How different from the School of Socrates or the Academy of Plato!" ("In illis namque disputari solitum aiunt, in his vero nostris dispotari, immo trispotari quaterque potari frequens patriae mos est. Academici de uno, de vero, de motu disserunt, hi nostri de vino, de mero, de potu dispotant" (as quoted in Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre*, 9).

restaged and performed, one of the first being a Plautus comedy, staged in Florence in 1476.<sup>39</sup>

Plautus' *Menaechmi* was performed in Ferrara in 1486.<sup>40</sup> Plautus' works were rough and ribald comedies, more farce than satire. Their popularity in Roman times was in their mockery of a distant Greek culture seen as dissolute and unstable. By means of this displacement, Plautus could refer to contemporary ills, such as then-current scandals surrounding the Bacchanalia.<sup>41</sup>

But how these plays might sit with courtly Renaissance audiences was another question—yet appeal they did. We know from the handful of Ferrarese chroniclers and diarists, including Ugo

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<sup>39</sup> R. J. Hale, ed., *A Concise Encyclopaedia of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 257. Several of the plays of Plautus (one of the more earthy ancient playwrights) were known early, with Petrarch and others in possession of the first eight in the fourteenth century, and the other twelve were brought back to Italy in a manuscript from Cologne, Germany, in 1429. The first eight plays known in the Middle Ages were *Amphitruo*, *Asinaria*, *Aulularia*, *Captivi*, *Curculio*, *Casina*, *Cistellaria*, and *Epidicus*. The the four first and the other twelve (*Bacchides*, *Menaechmi*, *Mercator*, *Miles gloriosa*, *Mostellaria*, *Persa*, *Poenulus*, *Pseudolus*, *Rudens*, *Stichus*, *Trinummus*, and *Truculentus*) are in Cod. Vat. 3870. The manuscript from Germany was brought to Italy by Niccolò da Cusa, known as Cusanus (1401-1464), who consigned them to Cardinal Giovanni Orsini in Rome. Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci*, 112, and n. 25. There are angry letters by Poggio Bracciolini complaining of the Cardinal's secretive hoarding of the manuscript. See *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, 13. That the first eight were well-known in the Paduan circle is indicated by the fact that Gasparino Barzizza collected sentences (*sententiae*) from them (Codex Ambrosiana Z55 sup., with Terence and other sources as well, cited by Sabbadini, vol. 1, 37, n. 75).

<sup>40</sup> Letters from Battista Guarino (son of Guarino da Verona) to Ercole d'Este indicate that he was already in the process of translating several Plautus plays in 1479. See A. Luzio and R. Renier, "Commedie classiche in Ferrara nel 1499," *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 11 (1888): 177-178. In his letter regarding the translation of Plautus' *Aulularia*, Guarino points out to Ercole that, contrary to his desire, a word-for-word translation would not be very pleasing, but it would be better to maintain instead the sense of Plautus while blending it to the sound of modern usage. He writes: "Ad che io rispondo che non credo essere per niente lontano dal sentimento di Plauto nè anchora da li vocabuli. [...] Ma parevami molto migliore translatione nominare li ditti odori et ridure la cosa ad la moderna, che colendo esprimere de parolla in parolla fare una translatione obscura et puocho saporita" (18 Feb. 1479, cod. 834, Bibl. Estense, a quoted in Luzio and Renier, n. 2, p. 177). A letter of a few days later refers to a translation of the *Curculio* (Luzio and Renier, n. 2, p. 128). The Ferrarese production of 1486 was performed in translation in the *cortile grande* of the main place, and was reported to have cost between 700 and 1000 ducats for five hours of entertainment presented to an audience of thousands, including the "one thousand women seated on the tribunali, under the loggie and in the windows" (Rosenberg, "The Use of Celebrations in Public and Semi-Public Affairs," 532, citing Ugo Caleffini, *Croniche facte per... Ugo Caleffino notaio ferrarexe*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Chigiana I, 1, 4).

<sup>41</sup> Walter R. Chalmers, "Plautus and his Audience," in *Roman Drama*, ed. T. A. Dorey and Donald R. Dudley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 24. By making something "Greek" in style, subject, or setting, the Romans could also themselves to enjoy safely themes that would otherwise not be deemed acceptable. Joyce makes similar observations regarding the wild popularity of the figure of the maenad in Roman art, made acceptable by dressing these figures in Greek dress and style ("Maenads and Bacchantes," x, 15, 178).

Caleffini and Zambotti, that Ercole d'Este was avidly interested in encouraging theatrical productions at court, where receptive audiences clamored for the ancient comedies.<sup>42</sup>

Contemporary playwrights, often in residence at court, such as Pier Candido Decembrio (whose plays were popular in Ferrara), Porcellio Pandone, and Basinio da Parma, were trained in Greek and Latin and wrote new plays in the classical manner, which owed a debt to the ancient rustic comedies known in Roman times as *fabulae pallitiae*.<sup>43</sup> Giovanni Marrasio found a warm reception at Niccolo d'Este's court, for example, where he composed an elaborate mythological Carnival spectacle in 1433 that included Apollo and Priapus. The poet himself dressed up as a horned Bacchus, and Cupid recited an elegy praising ancient theater for its associations with *procacitas*, *lascivia*, and *licentia* and its giving an experience of *voluptas*.<sup>44</sup> Jacopo Bellini's

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<sup>42</sup> Rosenberg cites from the unpublished chronicle of Caleffini. See also Zambotti, *Diario Ferrarese*. At first the duke's emphasis was entirely on religious plays, with a 1476 *sacra rappresentazione* and a 1481 enactment of the Passion, a dramatization that was repeated at least in 1489, 1490, and 1503. See Lewis Lockwood, "Music and Popular Religious Spectacle at Ferrara under Ercole I d'Este," in *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, 575-577. In 1503, we know five plays of Plautus were put on, followed by three sacred dramas (578). Of course not all theatergoers professed to be amused by such productions. Isabella d'Este makes sure to note that the plays put on to celebrate her brother Alfonso's marriage to Lucrezia Borgia (already deemed morally tainted by her illegitimate birth and previous marriages) in 1502 were not to her liking. *La Cassina* she called "lascivious and immoral." See Sarah Bradford, *Lucrezia Borgia: Life, Love and Death in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Viking, 2004), 160-163. The young poet Ludovico Ariosto was highly involved in the theatrical culture of the Este court, both acting in and translating Plautus and Terence for performance. He then in turn composed his own neo-Plautine plays, the first being his comedy *Cassaria* of 1508. Machiavelli was also significantly impacted by the harsher, baser language and spirit of Plautus. His *Mandragola* of 1518 is a comedy of fools (*beffe*) and his *Clizia* of 1525 is a free adaptation of Plautus' *Casina*. See Hale, *Encyclopaedia*, 257.

<sup>43</sup> Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 197. *The Concise Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 430-431. These early Roman authors were themselves deriving their comedies from the model of the Greek New Comedy of Menander, lost until the nineteenth-century discovery of papyrus scrolls. See Chalmers, "Plautus and his Audience," 21-50.

<sup>44</sup> See Campbell, "*Sic in amore furens*," 160-166; Remigio Sabbadini, *Biografia documentata di Giovanni Aurispa* (Noto, Sicily: Off. Tip. di Fr. Zammit, 1890), 181-183. Marrasio's theatrics were witnessed by Cyriaco d'Ancona and were described by Niccolò Loschi, a pupil of Guarino at Ferrara.

satyrs evoke the spirit of these comedies, and perhaps literally the staging of them, in which artists commonly took part.<sup>45</sup>

Given a courtly audience whose preferences often tended toward the crudely debased and debasing, one can see why Plautus' comedies (as well as Terence's somewhat tamer versions) struck a chord.<sup>46</sup> There was already in place a traditional, native culture of *facetiae* and burlesque, which did not limit itself to the rustic classes.<sup>47</sup> *La buffoniera* was a typical courtly entertainment enjoyed by most. The nobles in Mantua and Ferrara were particularly fond of their dwarfs (*nani*) and buffoons (*beffe*), whom they made to play jokes and even perform disgusting acts.<sup>48</sup> Their purpose was for "piacere et recreatione," although these jesters could also be objects of respect and admiration, as much for their ability to withstand abuse as for their wit.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 197: "Basinio's satires of the 1440s and Jacopo's satyrs belong in the same genre..." Eisler postulates that if Jacopo participated in staging such plays, it might explain some of his more bizarre compositions. See also Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, "Jacopo Bellini and the Theatre of His Time," *Paragone* 28, no. 325 (1977): 70-80.

<sup>46</sup> There may have been a limit to what audiences would tolerate, or at least claim to. The Venetian diarist Marino Sanuto tells us of the reaction to some comedies sponsored by a Compagnia della Calza during Carnival, 1525: "...Then the Paduans Ruzante [popular in the 1520s were rustic comedies by the Paduan playwright Ruzzante] and Menato, as rustics, did a comedy about peasant life, totally lascivious and full of filthy words, so that everyone disapproved of it and cried 'Shame!' There were almost sixty ladies present in the upper seats, wearing long gowns, the young ladies wearing coifs, who were horrified at things being called by their names. The whole conclusion was about fornicating and cuckolding husbands..." (from *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. R. Fulin et al., 58 vols, [Venice, 1879-1903], xxxvii, cols 559-60, as quoted in David Chambers, Brian Pullan, and with Jennifer Fletcher, eds., *Venice, A Documentary History, 1450-1630* [Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992], 380).

<sup>47</sup> This taste for lowly and mocking humor can be seen in the many romantic farces and scatological events in Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

<sup>48</sup> Isabella and Lucrezia were both fond of one "matta," or crazy, named Caterina who, when "eccitata da poco vino" would lift up her skirts and urinate on the floor. Giulio Bertoni, "Buffoni alla corte di Ferrara," *Rivista d'Italia* 6, no. fasc. 3-4 (1903): 504.

<sup>49</sup> Joanna Woods-Marsden, *The Gonzaga of Mantua and Pisanello's Arthurian Frescoes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 130. See Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., Ltd., 1961), 319; John J. O'Connor, "Physical Deformity and Chivalric Laughter in Renaissance England," in *Comedy: New Perspectives*, ed. Maurice Charney (New York: New York Literary Forum Series, v. 1, 1978), 60; and A. Luzio and R. Renier, "Buffoni, nani, e schiavi dei Gonzaga ai tempi d'Isabella d'Este," *Nuova antologia di scienze, lettere, ed arti* 34, series 3 (1891): 619-650; vol. 635 (1891): 1113-1146. On one occasion, Lucrezia Borgia had two dwarfs served on a platter with the fruit at a banquet, indicating the willingness to use and debase these persons for entertainment. Welsford, 134.

Contemporary audiences unabashedly enjoyed laughing at pain, misfortune, embarrassment, or affliction. Literature and plays accordingly took up such misbegotten creatures for the inception of laughter. Chivalric romances abounded with the deformed, made amusing with “the kind of scornful tickling that depended heavily upon the ugly and misshapen.”<sup>50</sup> The newly inspired *all’antica* literature and theater maintained the age-old reliance on sadistic abuse or ridicule of the unfortunate for humor.<sup>51</sup> One must view the satyr in this context; with his slanted eyes, hooked nose, pointed ears, scraggly beard, and hairy, goatish haunches, he fit right in with a culture poised to guffaw at the grotesque. His death throes and drunken wallows, lascivious urges and bellicose attacks, were part and parcel of a mocking, often cruel sense of humor. That satyrs had the heightened patina granted by antiquity, in a culture also primed to value *all’antica* style, enhanced their widespread appeal. They were bizarre, gross, horny, and laughable, but they were also—by virtue of being classical—admirable, worthy, ancient, and even wise.

There existed, furthermore, one class of antique theater that teemed with satyrs, that of the Greek play known as the “satyr drama,” of which only Euripides’ *Cyclops* had survived. It was probably known early in the fifteenth century when Filelfo brought back to Florence from Constantinople in 1427 a manuscript that included many of the playwright’s texts.<sup>52</sup> The satyr drama was not a comedy or satire, but a play distinguished by its chorus of satyrs and their lewd antics, performed at the end of a trilogy of tragedies during the ancient Greek festival of Dionysus. Fragments of other plays, including one by Sophocles, and comments about these, such as those made by Horace in his *Ars poetica*, may have been known to Quattrocento

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<sup>50</sup> O’Connor, “Physical Deformity and Chivalric Laughter,” 60.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-70. Classical authors were themselves not above such humor, with Homer, Aristophanes, and Plautus commonly dipping into such baser sources.

humanists.<sup>53</sup> Alberti had early on noticed that Vitruvius, in his *De architectura*, claimed for Bacchus the invention of theater by means of the god's satyr play, the *satyricon*.<sup>54</sup> The tragicomedy of these plays was appreciated in the fifteenth century for its crude, raw, and often scatological humor, more than for any appreciation of irony or satire.<sup>55</sup> Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century writers explored the possibilities of satire; yet the Italian word for "satire," *satira*, was used interchangeably to mean "satyr play," which caused some blurring of themes.<sup>56</sup> "The pseudo-etymology of the term 'satire' as a derivation from the Greek 'satyros' was still popular at the time and many humanists thought therefore that coarse expressions, obscenity, and lewdness were obligatory ingredients of satirical writing."<sup>57</sup>

Satyr plays were characterized by their rural setting, as opposed to the architectural scenery of drama and tragedy.<sup>58</sup> The fantasy of a wooded bosk inhabited by sub-human creatures captured the imagination of fifteenth-century poets and artists, and became a key factor

<sup>52</sup> Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage*, 497. Cod. Laur. XXXI, I, contains among other texts the *Bacchae* and *Cyclops*, and is marked as owned by Filelfo (who died in 1481).

<sup>53</sup> See Walter L. Bullock, "Tragical-Satirical-Comical: A Note on the History of the Cinquecento Drama *Satiresco*," *Italica* 15 (1938): 163-174.

<sup>54</sup> Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 205. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria* VIII.7: "Dionysus is said to have been the first to have introduced dancing and games. [...] In Greece Lenaeon Dionysius [sic], who was the first to introduce the chorus in a tragedy, is also credited with establishing seats in a show ground" (*On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor [Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988], 269).

<sup>55</sup> Indeed, early humanists like Boccaccio or Poggio Bracciolini looked at all ancient literature as a repository of Latin style, and did not really judge the works to be low or high. Ingrid A. R. de Smet, "Innocence Lost, or the Implications of Reading and Writing (Neo-Latin) Prose Fiction," in *Eros et Priapus: Erotisme et obscénité dans la littérature néo-latine*, ed. Ingrid de Smet and Philip Ford (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1997), 87-88.

<sup>56</sup> Although we know "satyric" and "satiric" are completely different words, and modern Italian uses *satira* to refer to satire, and *dramma satiresco* to refer to satyr play, "Latin and the sixteenth-century Italian made no such distinction, using *satira* both for satire and for satyr play." The *satire atte alle scene* were not satires but a revival of the classical satyr play. Bullock, "Tragical-Satirical-Comical," 163-164, n.4.

<sup>57</sup> Smet, "Innocence Lost," 100.

<sup>58</sup> Vitruvius, *De architectura* V.8.

in their articulation of an idea of the pastoral. A familiarity with pastoral writing emerged first from Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* and later, with the introduction of Greek texts, from their forebear, Theocritus' *Idylls*.<sup>59</sup> So-called *ecloghe rappresentative*, or shepherd's plays, from the fifteenth century embraced a similar form to the classical eclogue, which were themselves often in dialogic form.<sup>60</sup> Pastoral characters soon migrated into the quasi-theatrical entertainments accompanying banquets and parades, and *festi* were inundated with prancing satyrs with papier mâché haunches. By around 1500, a more self-conscious revival of pastoral poetry and a corollary exploration of rustic landscape and themes in the visual arts took hold and stimulated audiences to perceive meaning in the depiction of rural settings.<sup>61</sup> Authors like Matteo Maria Boiardo, Ludovico Ariosto, Battista Fiera, and Pietro Bembo wrote texts with pastoral themes.<sup>62</sup> Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*, a combination of prose and verse, fully articulated the new literary trope, characterizing a primitive, yet artificial, parallel universe inhabited by lovesick

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<sup>59</sup> Some Latin translations of Theocritus appeared in the 1480s; an Aldine Greek edition was published in 1495. See Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of the Pastoral*, 29-30.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Loewenstein, "Guarini and the Presence of Genre," in *Renaissance Tragicomedy: Explorations in Genre and Politics*, ed. Nancy Klein Maguire (New York: AMS Press, 1987), 41.

<sup>61</sup> David Rosand, "Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision," in *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape*, ed. R. Cafritz, L. Gowing, and David Rosand (Washington, DC: The Phillips Collection, with Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1988), 24; idem, "Pastoral Topoi: On the Construction of Meaning in a Landscape," in *The Pastoral Landscape*, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1992), 161-178; Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral in the Visual Arts*; W. Leonard Grant, "New Forms of Neo-Latin Pastoral," *Studies in the Renaissance* 4 (1957): 71-100. "Pastoral" writing could be so transformed as to lose virtually all semblance of its rustic setting, as in the work of Giovanni Pontano of Naples, set indoors.

<sup>62</sup> Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch dappled with the form of the eclogue, but Boccaccio's *L'Ameto* (or *Comedia delle ninfe fiorentine*, 1342) is considered the first modern pastoral romance. The *Ninfale fiesolano* (before 1345) was also a pastoral poem and love story, with Ovidian metamorphoses and mythology. See the introduction by Judith Serafini-Sauli to her translation of *L'Ameto* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985); Loewenstein, "Guarini and the Presence of Genre," 40-41. Poliziano's *Orfeo* is also seminal to the tradition. Boiardo's panegyric *Syringa* has Pan deserting Arcadia, which has been overtaken by war, to go to the peaceful lands of Northern Italy (that is, of the Este). See Grant, "New Forms of Neo-Latin Pastoral," 82.

shepherds.<sup>63</sup> A reimagining of the satyr play as pastoral theater was dubbed “satire atte alle scene,” as in works like Giambattista Giraldi’s 1545 play *Egle*.<sup>64</sup> The pastoral mood shared the spirit of contrast and counterbalance that characterized the Bacchic and satyric sensibility, with its combination of humor and tragedy, love and loss. The pastoral served an in-between space between the high and low, the urban and the rustic, contrasted in the tragic lyre and the comic aulos.<sup>65</sup>

### THE SATYR IN BOOK ILLUMINATIONS

It is in the Paduan milieu that the appearance of satyrs in the illumination of manuscripts and incunabula proliferated, spreading the Bacchic tragicomic sensibility through the mobile medium of the book.<sup>66</sup> These illustrations shared with the satyr play and pastoral the portrayal of a distant, ancient landscape in which animals frolicked and satyrs and putti acted out various coarse or heartbreaking tableaux. The plethora of dallying satyrs on title pages, historiated initials, and bas-de-page ornamentations spread in popularity to Venice with the advent of

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<sup>63</sup> Jacopo Sannazaro, of Naples, 1458-1530. The *Arcadia* is made up of twelve chapters of paired sections of prose and poetry. Already circulating in manuscript form in the 1480s, a pirated edition of this unfinished version (up through chapter 10) was published in Venice in 1502. The final two chapters were composed around 1490-1491. The *Arcadia* was officially published in 1504, in a Tuscan language version. See Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of the Pastoral*; Carol Kidwell, *Sannazaro and Arcadia* (London: Duckworth, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> Bullock, “Tragical-Satirical-Comical,” 163, 166-167. In this play, the woodland deities are called by him fauns and satyrs, and they fall in love with sylvan nymphs, from whom they attempt to keep the Olympian gods away by taking possession of the nymphs themselves, but of course they are thwarted in this too, as the nymphs are all taken away via metamorphosis, including the beloved of Pan, “Siringa.”

<sup>65</sup> Patricia Egan, “*Poesia* and the *Fête Champêtre*,” *Art Bulletin* 41 (1959): 306. As William Kennedy writes: “[P]astoral topoi supply a poetic correlative for emotions reflecting sadness and tranquility, permanence and displacement, nostalgia and withdrawal. They correspond to the intellectual tensions and skepticism of the age” (*Jacopo Sannazaro*, 28). See also Rosand, “The Pastoral Vision,” 38.

<sup>66</sup> Kaufmann, “The Noble Savage,” 122. See also Jonathan J. G. Alexander, “Patrons, Libraries and Illuminators in the Italian Renaissance,” in Jonathan J. G. Alexander, ed., *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illumination 1450-1550* (New York: Prestel Verlag for the Pierpont Morgan Library and the Royal Academy of Arts, London,



printing and flourished there until around 1490.<sup>67</sup> Free of narrative strictures or the formal obligations of large-scale wall-painting, illuminated satyrs could be made to prance around margins and frontispieces with seeming abandon.<sup>68</sup> They might loll about in a landscape, play musical instruments, or embrace epigraphic capitals (fig. 4.7, 8).<sup>69</sup> Imaginary terrains appear as visions behind illusionistic parchment pages bearing text.<sup>70</sup> These sheets appear to hang by cords, ruffled and torn, upon the surface of the page, only barely concealing a fantasy idyll portrayed beyond. The layering of time and illusion is characteristic of this genre of illumination, grappling with conflicting perceptions of the past as distant and lost or as alive and present. Not only did these miniatures appeal to a scholarly set who desired to personalize their printed books with fashionably *all'antica* imagery, but the illuminations in turn helped to disperse and form the taste for the new *all'antica* style.<sup>71</sup> But these antique creatures were more than “merely decorative” embellishments or the requisite attributes for an *all'antica* mode.<sup>72</sup>

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1995), 16; Lilian Armstrong, *Renaissance Miniature Painters and Classical Imagery: The Master of the Putti and his Venetian Workshop* (London: H. Miller, 1981); Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 192-204.

<sup>67</sup> Printing was introduced in Venice in 1469. See Lilian Armstrong, *Studies of Renaissance Miniaturists in Venice* (London: The Pindar Press, 2003), vol. 1, introduction. Several of the great illuminators of this age are the so-called Putti Master, Girolamo da Cremona, and Master of the London Pliny, who while producing work in Padua and Venice also had experience and patronage in other cities of Italy, typical of the peripatetic Renaissance artist. Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 192.

<sup>68</sup> Kaufmann, “The Noble Savage,” 120.

<sup>69</sup> See Alexander, ed., *The Painted Page*, fig. 28: Pliny *Historia naturalis*, frontispiece fol. 3 (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS Lat. VI, 245 [=2976]), illustrated in 1481 by the Pico Master for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; cat. 7: *Epistolary*, vol. 1, fol. 7r (New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, Spencer Coll., MS 7), illumination attributed to Antonio Maria da Villafora, early sixteenth century; and cat. 43: Virgil, *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*, fol. 17r (the British Library, London, Kings MS 24), illumination tentatively attributed to Bartolomeo Sanvito of Padua, c. 1490.

<sup>70</sup> Noted by Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 189-192, 204.

<sup>71</sup> Armstrong, *Renaissance Miniature Painters*, 2-3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. See also the review of Armstrong’s book by Wendy Steadman Sheard in the *Art Bulletin* 66 (1984): 159. Compare this assessment to that of Charles Hope, who asserts that the Venetian circles did not require or impose erudite allegories on antique characters, but allowed them to evoke merely a poetic sensibility. See his “‘Poesie’

The frontispiece to Domizio Calderini's commentary on Juvenal's *Satires* exemplifies the trend to include satyrs in the decoration of texts (fig. 4.9a-d). This manuscript, composed by Bartolomeo Sanvito and presented to Giuliano de' Medici in 1474, is now thought to have been illustrated by a Paduan artist active in Rome, Gaspare da Padova.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps borrowing some inspiration from the punning similarity of "satire" and "satyr" (though satyrs illustrated a wide-range of texts, both ancient and modern), the illuminator created a festive and tumultuous three-tiered landscape filled with shaggy-haunched creatures.<sup>74</sup> Two pairs of satyrs play rustic instruments; several fight with weapons as diverse as wine jugs and ram's heads; a pederastic satyr seduces a young one; and at the bottom, a pair of satyrs carries their drunken companion and another trio carries an unconscious Silenus. The red balls of the Medici *palle* are tossed throughout. The artist embraced Jacopo Bellini's physically robust satyr of the Paris Book, but gave him drooping goat's ears and the slanted eyes and broad, high nose of the classic satyr type that by then dominated the form. As in Jacopo's drawings, this artist appears to have represented every quality and behavior for which the satyr was famous and infamous: his licentiousness, belligerence, intemperance, bestiality, and rustic musicality are all represented. But together the

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and Painted Allegories," in *The Genius of Venice 1500-1600*, ed. Jane Martineau and Charles Hope (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1983), 35-37.

<sup>73</sup> Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence, MS. Plut 53, 2, fol. 1. See Kaufmann, "The Noble Savage," 123; other attributions include Bernardo Parenzano or, formerly, "Master of the Vatican Homer"; cf. a frontispiece by the same hand, Martial's *Epigrams*, Biblioteca Durazzo-Giustiniani, Genova, ms. 22 (A.III.3). See Giordana Mariani Canova, in Alexander, ed, *The Painted Page*, 29-30, and the catalogue entry by Lilian Armstrong in the same, cat. 101, pp. 204-205. See also Gregori, ed., *In the Light of Apollo*, cat. III.31, p. 269; and Rubinstein, "A Drawing of a Bacchic Sarcophagus in the British Museum," 71-73.

<sup>74</sup> For the intersecting Renaissance concept of the satyr play, pastoral, and the satiric and the satyric, see Bullock, "Tragical-Satirical-Comical," 163-174. The title of Juvenal's work would evoke visions of satyrs in the mind of the author and illustrator. Mantegna himself evidently borrowed a book of drawings devoted almost entirely to satyrs that is listed in the Gonzaga inventory of 1476 and is likely the one mentioned in the same year in a letter to Ludovico as that "book of pictures of certain antique sculpture, of which most are battles of centaurs, fauns and satyrs and also men and women on horseback and on foot" (Suzanne Boorsch, "Mantegna and His Printmakers," in *Andrea Mantegna*, ed. Jane Martineau, 274). She cites a letter of October 1476 from the Gonzaga agent in Florence, Angelo Tovaglia, to Ludovico Gonzaga requesting the book, to which Ludovico replies that it was currently being borrowed by Mantegna. See also Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 205.

satyrs serve to invest this rocky, primeval landscape with an otherworldly, ancient charm, like the two who hold up the perfectly-formed “S” of the title, dangling from a pole, their stoles billowing up in arcs above their heads as if they were maenads. Despite the less than admirable behaviors of many of the satyrs, their visual appeal and spirited animation make the viewer want to keep looking. This fearless embrace of sensuousness is indicative of a larger trend. These illuminators were artists seeking a way to visualize a new capacity for understanding and appreciating all aspects of antiquity, beyond its heroes, rulers, and gods. This was an antiquity that did not survive in the architectural remains of ancient Rome, but was rather an “antiquity in the mind.”<sup>75</sup> The satyr offered a metaphor for the passion and delirium recouped from that imagined past.

This satyric vision was enhanced by the discovery of a pair of monumental satyrs from the second century A.D., first recorded in the della Valle collection in Rome in 1490 (fig. 4.10).<sup>76</sup> These ancient telamon sculptures, one with slanted eyes and the other with a more human visage, bore signs of great dignity and nobility, with idealized, muscular torsos, proportionally elongated and straight goat legs, and stoic countenances.<sup>77</sup> Their massive size lent a sensation of bursting

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<sup>75</sup> Charles Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy,” in *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 479; also cited by Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 189.

<sup>76</sup> Now in the Capitoline Museum, Rome. Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini*, 74-75, figs. 95 and 98; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 75, “Pair of Pan Statues,” 121-123; Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, no. 75, “Della Valle Satyrs,” 301-302. They might have been known as early as c. 1432, as evidenced by a drawing in a letter by Bartolomeo Fazio after a lost study by Cyriaco d’Ancona (Biblioteca Laurenziana, Cod. Ashburnham, 1174, ff.136v-137) (Bober and Rubinstein, fig. 75a). While commonly identified as Pans in the literature, most Renaissance references to them are as “fauni” or satyrs.

<sup>77</sup> The arms were missing in the fifteenth century and were later restored based on the positioning suggested by the remnants and the surviving hands holding the baskets. Martin van Heemskerck’s drawing of the statues in situ in the della Valle courtyard show the figures with their broken arms (Berlin Sketchbook II, f. 20, in Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, fig. 75b).

power to their bodies; their god-like heads added emotional intensity to the physical.<sup>78</sup> Echoes of these characters appear in the work of illuminators like Gaspare da Padova, as in the satyr balancing a jug behind his head at the top right of his Juvenal frontispiece (fig. 4.9d). A similar satyr appears at the far left of the frontispiece to Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* printed in Venice in 1478 and the far right of the first volume of Aristotle's translated *Works* printed in Venice in 1483, both illustrated by the Venetian Girolamo da Cremona (fig. 4.11, 12).<sup>79</sup>

In the Aristotle frontispiece, Girolamo's satyrs share the same sense of tragic gravitas as Gaspare's. One suffers from an arrow hit; another faints away aboard a small cart pulled by putti. Their faces are imploring; the fellow satyrs' love endearing. In the companion frontispiece to the second volume of Aristotle's works, a deer-legged satyr sits and plays to the becalmed menagerie about him, like a piping, horned Orpheus (fig. 4.13).<sup>80</sup> The mood is shared by Benedetto "Padovano" Bordon's frontispiece for Justinianus' *Digestum novum*, 1477, in which satyrs, putti, and tamed animals gather in a green meadow and attempt to thwart a satyr from hunting, beckoning with alarm at another satyr poised to slay their pet cheetah with an

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<sup>78</sup> These statues captured the imagination of many in the sixteenth century. They appear not only in miniatures, but in *intarsie*, *grotteschi*, small bronzes, and tapestries. They were also the only privately owned Roman statues to be copied for Francis I, with bronze casts made by Primaticcio for Fontainebleau. Renaissance descriptions "praise their pagan vitality almost as though they were living creatures straight from Antiquity" (Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, p. 121). In the Raphael School Sketchbook, Holkham Hall, fol. 34, they are noted as "fantacciatissimi" (Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini*, 74).

<sup>79</sup> Alexander, *The Painted Page*, cat. 94: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Vélins 700, vol. 1, fol. 1r; cat. 101a: Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, PML 21194, fol. 2r. See also Alexander, *Italian Renaissance Illuminations* (New York: George Braziller, 1977), 72-73, pl. 17. The della Valle satyrs would continue to influence artists, such as Baldassare Peruzzi, who painted the façade of the Villa Farnesina with similar basket-bearing figures in the spaces between the windows and pilasters. See Marcia B. Hall, *After Raphael: Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24, fig. 12, drawing after Peruzzi, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

<sup>80</sup> Alexander, *The Painted Page*, cat. 101b.

arrow (fig. 4.14).<sup>81</sup> While such melodrama might be read as mock tragedy, it is nevertheless true that it was satyrs that were chosen to portray the sensual sufferings and passions of an idealized, Arcadian world.<sup>82</sup> These satyrs are not libidinous demons. Even on books that had nothing to do with satyrs or the pastoral, satyrs served simply to signify antiquity, even on religious texts.<sup>83</sup> Their appearance indicates an intersection in the Renaissance vision of pagan and Christian antiquity. Those overlapping histories meant artists had to imagine classical imagery as part of a shared past. The presence of satyrs and their ilk (such as centaurs and sea monsters) broadcast the contemporary ease with which these artists intermixed the pagan and Christian.<sup>84</sup> This was truly a different attitude from that of the Middle Ages, in which pagan figures had to be rendered harmless through allegorization. The new mind-set was characterized by a tolerance for syncretism, allowing ancient heroes and demons to mingle freely with saints and prophets. Just as the new philosophies incorporated teachings of Plato within fully Christian worldviews, the visual arts could depict satyrs and centaurs without explaining away their paganism.<sup>85</sup>

The revived vision of antiquity was at the same time tinged with a certain melancholy regret. Satyrs were derived from that lost past, one sought and longed for, but irretrievable behind the barrier of Christianity and the corroding distance of time.<sup>86</sup> There was an inherent

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<sup>81</sup> Alexander, *The Painted Page*, cat. 97; Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, fig. 228. Published by Nicolaus Jenson in Venice; now Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Gotha, Mon. Typ. 1477, 2° 13, Bl. A2a, fol. 2r. This was a *de luxe* copy printed on vellum for the Germant merchant and patron of this Venetian printing firm, Peter Ugelheimer.

<sup>82</sup> Lilian Armstrong's entry on cat. 101 in Alexander, *The Painted Page*, 204, labels the episodes "mock-tragic."

<sup>83</sup> Kaufmann, "The Noble Savage," 123.

<sup>84</sup> Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 159.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 187-188. The Sassetti tomb in Sta. Trinita, with its frieze of centaurs, is typical of the educated patron's openness to pagan imagery, even on his personal monument.

<sup>86</sup> Martin Henig, "Et in Arcadia Ego: Satyrs and Maenads in the Ancient World and Beyond," in *Engraved Gems: Survivals and Revivals*, ed. Clifford Malcolm Brown (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1997), 28-29.

contradiction in longing for the pagan past while heralding the triumph of Christianity.<sup>87</sup> One had to question whether the ruin of antiquity had been a justified punishment for its voluptuousness and heresy—a necessary step toward the ascent of Christianity—or whether it was a tragic loss of intellectual, artistic, and cultural greatness—a Golden Age that could now be visited only in the imagination.<sup>88</sup> But as this antiquity was increasingly allowed to stand on its own terms, without bowdlerization, the satyrs could serve unabashedly as nostalgic symbols of an imagined realm “distant enough to provide escape and close enough to be always accessible.”<sup>89</sup> As this past aligned with the current sense of identity and escapist fantasies, satyrs could be harnessed to function in the contemporary world and to comment on its academic, cultural, and social practices.

#### UNDERSTANDING THE SATYR

An elegant testament to this positive outlook is expressed by the imagery in the bronze relief of the Martelli Mirror (fig. 4.15).<sup>90</sup> Here an aging satyr and a young maenad face each

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<sup>87</sup> See Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 133, 139-140, 222. Think of a painting like Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, in which the decaying antique architecture and sarcophagus surrounding the Christ child herald the end of paganism and the birth of Christian hope out of the ruins; it is a celebration of the end of antiquity, and yet it displays in rich jewel-like tones and imaginative detail the beautiful, fragmentary remains.

<sup>88</sup> See Charles Stinger for a discussion of this nostalgic longing for that lost Golden Age and melancholy regret for the degradation, and even contemporary destruction, of the ancient physical remains (*The Renaissance in Rome* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998], 59-61).

<sup>89</sup> Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 207.

<sup>90</sup> The Martelli Mirror is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The mirror is thought to be of the North Italian milieu, perhaps by the Milanese Cristoforo Foppa, known as Caradosso (c. 1452-1526/7), or the Mantuan Antico, and has been dated from as early as the 1470s to the early sixteenth century. The satyr and maenad borrow from gems then in the Medici collection, with which both proposed artists had contact (Laurie Fusco and Gino Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 144). Dieter Blume suggests Foppa, c. 1470-1480 (“Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle,” in *Natur und Antike in der Renaissance*, ed. Herbert Beck and Dieter Blume [Frankfurt am Main: Liebieghaus Museum alter Plastik, 1985], 182). The iconographic abundance, innovation, and sophistication, as well as the pronounced weightiness of the bodies, lead me to place the Mirror to c. 1500. A pair of plaques copying the satyr and maenad separately is in the National

other, both with a goat skin slung around their back and their thyrsi nearby; he with his wine cup in one hand and making a gesture of “la corna” with the other and she with a horn vessel or rhyton into which she expresses breast milk. The male figure lacks horns but has pointed ears and a snub nose, giving him more the traditional appearance of the aged satyr Silenus.<sup>91</sup> The figures are reclining upon a marble wall or bench amidst a sacred grove of espaliered grapevines dedicated to the god Priapus, whose term stands atop a column in the background. Adapting and merging bits of iconography from surviving antiquities (including the explicit imagery on a sarcophagus now in Naples, fig. 4.16, 17, 18, 19), the artist fashioned the image of the statue with a youthful, beardless face and a flower-chain streamer (humorously hung from the term’s erect phallus itself).<sup>92</sup> An assortment of Bacchic cult objects are stacked at the center, such as the panpipes, a *pedum*, and flutes, around which the scene is framed with grapevines (fig. 4.20).

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Gallery of Art, Washington. Regarding the plaquettes, see Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, cats. 115-116. He attributes them to a Mantuan artist, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

<sup>91</sup> The pose of the maenad appears to echo that on a cameo or intaglio that was in the collection of Lorenzo de’ Medici in 1491, which his agent called “quello chameo che prieme la tetta in quello chorno di Dovizio” (“that cameo that squeezes her breast into the horn of plenty”) (in a letter of Nofri Tornabuoni, Rome, to Lorenzo, 7 June 1491, MAP 42, 89, as quoted in Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de’ Medici*, 318, trans. on p. 96). The cameo was purchased from Filippo dei Canonici, and appears in the 1492 inventory as: “#62 Uno anello d’oro, entrovi legato uno chammeo, in che è intagliato di rilievo una donna insino a cintola, chon uno panno [a] armachollo, et prieme el latte in s’uno chono [*sic* = corno] — f.20” (“a cameo mounted in a gold ring, on which is carved in relief a woman shown to her waist, with a cloth slung over her shoulder, and she squeezes her milk into a horn — 20 florins”) (ibid., doc. 293, pp. 382, 97). An indication of what this gem looked like is given in an engraving after another similar gem published in Anton Francesco Gori’s 1731 *Gemmae antiquae*, there called the *Nymph Hippa*. Pope-Hennessy says the satyr may derive from an antique gem (citing Furtwangler, i, 1900, pl. XLI, no. 34; ii, 1900, p. 197), but Fusco and Corti think this gem is actually a Renaissance creation, made after the Martelli Mirror itself or plaquettes thereof (n. 79, p. 255). The maenad’s profile, tossed hair, and ivy wreath, as well as the nebris over one shoulder evoke the same features in another gem in Lorenzo’s collection showing the bust of a maenad (see Dacos, *Il Tesoro di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, cat. 17). The postures of both the satyr and maenad also recall figures from the famous Tazza Farnese (then in the Medici collection): that of the seated god on the left, with his large nose, full beard, and heavy pectorals, and of the female on the lower right, seated with back bared to the viewer, holding a cup. Further suggesting that the Farnese cup may have been a visual source is the similarity of the Medusa head at the top of the mirror frame to that on the under side of the cup. The Tazza Farnese was acquired by Lorenzo in 1471 from the Barbo collection via a gift from Pope Sixtus IV (Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de’ Medici*, 144).

<sup>92</sup> Museo Archeologico, Gabinetto segreto, Naples. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 70; Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 176. In the late Quattrocento it appears to have been in the garden of San Marco (the Palazzo Venezia) in Rome, since in a drawing of the right end of the sarcophagus in the Wolfegg Codex,

The inscription on the illusionistic exergue plaque below the bust of a grotesque woman reads “Natura fovet, quae necessitas urget”: “Nature gives what necessity demands.” The notion of some things being natural or necessary had roots in Aristotelian philosophy, and was firmly entrenched in medieval Scholasticism from the thirteenth century on, especially in university circles of northern Italy.<sup>93</sup> From its start the university of Padua had been a seat of Aristotelianism, but a focus on Greek studies was reinvigorated by the presence from 1435 on of Palla Strozzi and his classical library. The bequest of Cardinal Bessarion’s vast library of eastern manuscripts to the Republic of Venice in 1468 further incited scholars and humanists to examine the Greek inheritance.<sup>94</sup> Aristotle had posited a prime mover as the generating force in the cosmos, with primal urges, including sexuality, as essential driving energies.<sup>95</sup> The Hermetic tradition, revived in the fifteenth century, reinforced the notion of *Necessitas*, asserting that: “the power which holds the entire Kosmos in its grasp is Providence, but that holding it all together

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fol. 47v, Amico Aspertini inscribes it as “in logardino de santo marco.” The sarcophagus exhibits signs that it was used there as a fountain. The Priapus herm appears to combine features from the two herms in this Bacchic sarcophagus.

<sup>93</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Paduan Averroism and Alexandrism in the Light of Recent Studies,” reprinted in his *Renaissance Thought and the Arts: Collected Essays*, expanded ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 111-118; John Herman Randall, “The Development of Scientific Method in the School of Padua,” in *Renaissance Essays*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller and Philip P. Wiener (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1968, reprint 1992), 217-251. For a discussion of Aristotelianism in relation to the Mirror, see Blume, “Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle,” 182-185.

<sup>94</sup> For Bessarion, see Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 145. The University was a seat of scholastic Aristoteleanism, but had experienced an influx of new humanist Latin translations of Aristotle in the second half of the fifteenth century, such as the translation by a protégé of Bessarion, Theodore Gaza, of the pseudo-Aristotelean *Problems* (published Rome 1475), as well as the publication of Greek editions of Aristotle’s complete works by Manutius in Venice (1495-1498). Aristotle’s ideas were further clarified by a renewed interest in reading the original Greek. A chair of Greek philosophy was established at the University of Padua in 1497, filled first by Niccolò Leonico Thomeo. See Blume, “Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle,” 184; Jill Kraye, *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 144-146. In general universities had maintained their dedication to Aristotelianism, the mainstay of late medieval education, but in northern Italy, especially Padua, Bologna, Pavia, Ferrara, as well as Siena and Pisa, a secular “Aristotelianism was still a living and growing body of ideas. What Paris had been in the thirteenth century, what Oxford and Paris together had been in the fourteenth, Padua became in the fifteenth: the center in which ideas from all Europe were combined into an organized and cumulative body of knowledge” (Randall, “The Development of the Scientific Method,” 222).

<sup>95</sup> Blume, “Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle,” 179.



and constraining [it] is Necessity.”<sup>96</sup> The idea of *Necessitas* connoted the cosmic idea of elemental functions that work together to create balance, integrity, and authenticity in the world and in the relationships between its creatures. As Aristotle had explained in his *Generation of Animals*, there is a generative force that assures the perpetuation of animals and by which humans approximate the perpetuity of the divine through reproduction.<sup>97</sup> In his conception, endorsed by St. Thomas Aquinas, the “natural is either what results of necessity from the principles of nature... or what nature inclines to but which is perfected through the mediation of the will.”<sup>98</sup> Reproduction, and therefore coitus, is necessary; marriage, on the other hand, is *ad officium naturae*—“in the service of nature.”<sup>99</sup> There are essential dualisms in nature: both the basic necessity of the pairing of male and female, but also the inherent joining of sexuality and nurturing for the regeneration and perpetuation of nature and humankind.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Excerpt XIV from Strobaceus I.5.16, Hermes Trismegistos addressing Ammon, quoted in Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 236.

<sup>97</sup> Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 25, citing *Generation of Animals* II.1, 731b31-5.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 67. In his *Imagines*, Philostratus the Younger alludes to this concept: “Nature is sufficient for all she desires, and has no need of art” (*Imagines* III, trans. Fairbanks, 297).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>100</sup> Blume, “Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle,” 179ff. As McNally notes, “the aim is not destruction but union” (“Ariadne and Others,” 158). Such logic could even be proffered as a defense for the creation and enjoyment of erotic imagery, as in Pietro Aretino’s polemic (c. 1527 or later) decrying Marcantonio’s arrest for the *I modi* engravings of sexual positions and defending his own accompanying *Sonetti lussuriosi*: “It would seem to me that such a thing, given to us by nature to preserve the species, should be worn around the neck as a pendant and as a brooch on berets, since it is the conduit from which gushes the stream of life and the nectar that the world drinks on feast days” (“A me parebbe che il cotale, datoci da la natura per conservazion di se stessa, si dovesse portare al collo come pendent e ne la beretta per medaglia, però che egli è la vena che scaturisce i fiumi de le genti e l’ambrosia che beve il mondo nei dì solenni”) (as trans. in Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999], 85, from Pietro Aretino, *Lettere*, vol. 1, ed. Francesco Erspamer, 654-656).

The Martelli Mirror demonstrates that such esoteric thoughts were circulating among a wider culture of *cognoscenti*. Pietro Bembo, for example, attested to this view of necessary sexuality in his *Gli Asolani*, writing:

We are incomplete and lack part of ourselves if we are only male and female; ...you ladies cannot do without us nor we without you ladies. The truth of this is immediately evident if we consider that one sex by itself could hardly bring us into existence; and even were one sex sufficient for reproduction, when born we could not continue to live without the other. [...] For unless love joined two separate bodies formed to generate their like, nothing would ever be conceived or born.<sup>101</sup>

The mirror's inscription thus tells us that the figures illustrate the integral place of insemination and nourishment in the order of the universe; they are anthropomorphizations of these cosmic forces. In this schema, the satyr is more than an allusion to a primitive prehistory, a lost antiquity, or a pastoral Arcadia. Rather, his link to nature and embodiment of primeval, essential urges connect him to the very driving energy of the cosmos.<sup>102</sup> The satyr's phallic gesture and the Priapus herm reiterate the active, masculine sexual drive; the maenad, in turn, represents the nourishing abundance that is the feminine outcome of sexuality. The satyr is the seed or semen, while the nymph is the sustenance, the milk. Nature is seen to provide—and at the same time require—semen and milk in order to carry on.

Neoplatonic philosophy likewise accommodated its more esoteric theories to the realities of reproduction. In his *De amore* Ficino delved into the question of the merit of procreative urges, determining that the love of Earthly Venus experienced during procreation is ennobled by that procreative drive, which seeks the recreation of the image of the divine in matter. There is “a certain mysterious urge to procreate offspring. This love too is eternal.... In reality [this love

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<sup>101</sup> *Gli Asolani* II, trans. Rudolf B. Gottfried (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), 93-94, 110.

<sup>102</sup> Blume, “Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle,” 184. We see this theme governing the meaning of the Pantan Tokadi illustration in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. See Chapter Three, p. 220ff and fig. 3.29.

is] good, since the procreation of offspring is considered to be as necessary and virtuous as the pursuit of truth.”<sup>103</sup> It is only the excess of this passion that leads the soul astray from the contemplation of divine Beauty. Nevertheless, physical love is natural and simply a part of the soul’s ascent back to Beauty. As Ficino explained in his *Commentary on the Phaedrus*:

The Nymphs are divinities presiding over generation; accordingly, they are said to dwell in streams and woods, since generation is accomplished through wetness and descends to the wood, that is, to prime matter. Dionysus is their leader; for he is the god who presides over both generation and regeneration. Thus perhaps he is supposed twice born. The hymns proper to him are dithyrambs, for they are inspired, obscure, and complex. But since both the soul on the one hand and desire on the other are also inspired by one or other of these divinities, Socrates is enraptured by Dionysus and the Nymphs....<sup>104</sup>

The interrelatedness of desire and true rapture is made clear; the one precedes the other but both are inspired by the same demons. Man first responds to physical lust, stimulated by the Nymphs, but can ascend by means of Dionysian inspiration and the intervention of the Muses to higher contemplations “of regeneration, rebirth, and spiritual renewal, the domain of Dionysus, who presides over our ability to transcend both sensibles and intelligibles” (that is, through poetry and priestly prayer).<sup>105</sup>

The mirror’s emphasis of Priapus is thus integral to its meaning. The memory of the Cult of Priapus had been sustained into the Renaissance, as shown by the unabashed illustration of the worship of the god of gardens and fertility in Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachi Poliphili* (fig. 4.21).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ficino, *De amore*, VI.8, trans. Sears Jayne, 119.

<sup>104</sup> Ficino, *Summae*, chapter 7, in Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 134.

<sup>105</sup> Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 32-33.

<sup>106</sup> The contemporaneously published and illustrated *Ovidio volgarizzato* of the fourteenth-century author Giovanni de’ Bonsignori (Venice, 1497) included a woodcut of the story of Lotis and Priapus. See Fehl, “The Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 46-51. The popularity of Priapus would contribute ultimately to such innovations as the codpiece in sixteenth-century male costume and the large-nosed masks worn at Carnival in Venice. See Raymond B. Waddington, *Aretino’s Satyr: Sexuality, Satire, and Self-Projection in Sixteenth-Century Literature and Art*

Comedic priapic texts or *facetiae* were popular in humanist circles, new plays filled with lusty puns and more outright sexuality were circulated and performed, and classical *Carmina Priapea* (ancient Latin epigrams in praise of the god, mistakenly attributed to Virgil) were read and enjoyed.<sup>107</sup> Often said to be a son of Dionysus and Aphrodite, Priapus combined the Bacchic and the venereal qualities.<sup>108</sup> But Priapus was not recognized only for being humorously well-endowed. There was also an awareness of the apotropeic, and very serious cult function, that this figure served. He was the god that ensured all fertility, vegetal and animal, blessing and protecting the flocks of sheep and goats (even bees) and the vine and all agriculture. Jacopo de' Barberi's small and large *Sacrifice to Priapus* engravings disguise the phallus altogether, emphasizing instead the rather sober god as a herm sculpture and the grave acts of the women's offerings, which seem to relate to the well-being and future fecundity of their infant son (fig. 4.22).<sup>109</sup> Depicted as a herm (as in the Martelli Mirror garden background), the god is shown in

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(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 14; Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1994), 187.

<sup>107</sup> Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr*, 11-12. Also *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance*, trans. and ed. Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 152-155; Richard Aste, "Giulio Romano as Designer of Erotica: *I Modi*, 1525-25," in Janet Cox-Rearick, ed., *Giulio Romano, Master Designer: An Exhibition of Drawings in Celebration of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth* (New York: The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College of City of New York, 1999), 47; Jean-Louis Charlet, "Éros et érotisme dans la *Cynthia* d'Enea Silvio Piccolomini," in *Éros et Priapus: érotisme et obscénité dans la littérature néo-latine*, ed. Ingrid de Smet and Philip Ford (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1997), 1-23. For the *Priapea*, see W. H. Parker, ed., *Priapea: Poems for a Phallic God* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988). The first critical edition of the *Priapea* came out of the Aldine press in 1514. Lodovico Dolce wrote in his *Dialogue on Painting* that it is not "unsuitable for a painter sometimes to make similar things for recreation; just as some ancient poets, thanks to Maecenas, composed lascivious rhymes around the figure of Priapus to honor his gardens" (as quoted in Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, 87).

<sup>108</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* IV.6.1.

<sup>109</sup> Small *Sacrifice*, c. 1501-1503, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; large *Sacrifice*, c. 1499-1501, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cat. 136 and fig. 17-6. Indeed the larger *Sacrifice* recalls the Presentation at the Temple iconography. See also Saxl, "Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance," 361-363. Saxl writes about this attention to Priapus: "For the worship of the creative power of nature and man, the artists revives symbols and ritual, which had been dead and forgotten for centuries. [...] The revival of pagan erotic symbolism and ritual became a psychological necessity to the humanists, in order to help them to find the balance between their instincts and the laws that bound them in reality" (363).

his ancient cult form; he is reduced to the phallic symbol, which represents, and is, the power of the god. The sexual prowess of Priapus symbolized manliness, and Renaissance epigrams composed in his honor continued the classical tradition of bawdy humor that valorized male dominance and virility. An intimate of the Este court of Ferrara, Celio Calcagnini, wrote an “Exhortation of Priapus in Bembo’s Garden” in the first decade of the sixteenth century, with the statue speaking directly to passersby:

You, whoever you are who comes as a suppliant to worship at my shrine, must first learn what words are permitted to be spoken. For those which are habitually employed in common usage among us, we have deemed to be worthy of a Priapic stamp. When I say melon, I mean the buttocks; the gourd is the sodomite; the vagina will be the mallow; and the penis will be the red lily. Let these be the words marked by familiar objects, but also no less fitting for the god of the garden.<sup>110</sup>

The Martelli Mirror suggests the expanse of meaning conveyed by the popular Renaissance image of the satyr, since “the figure of the satyr restores the synecdoche to wholeness, gives legs to the herm, translates concept to action.”<sup>111</sup> The related imagery depicting a satyr encountering a sleeping nymph reflected these contemporary philosophical attitudes. Renaissance artists often chose not to depict a mood of rape or antagonism in such images, but to focus instead on the perception of the natural place of sexuality in the grand scheme of nature. The “nymph” in the “Panton Tokadi” woodcut, for example, becomes Venus Genetrix; her breasts spray one warm and one cold stream of water, which mingle together in an

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<sup>110</sup> Celio Calcagnini, *Carminum libri tres*, “Priapi admonito in horto Bembi,” ed. Giovan Battista Pigna (Venice: Vincentio Valgrisi, 1553), 221: “Tu quicumque meum supplex venerare sacellum, / Disce prius liceat qua sibi voce loqui. / Nanque ea quae crebro nobis versantur in usu / Digna priapea duximus esse nota. / Esto pepon culus, mihi sit colocyntha cinedus, / Cunnus erit malacae, mentula crinos erit. / Haec sint assuetis signata vocabula rebus / Sed tum hortensi non minus apta Deo” (as quoted in Giancarlo Fiorenza, “Dosso Dossi and Celio Calcagnini at the Este Court of Ferrara,” in *Artists at Court: Image Making and Identity 1300-1550*, ed. Stephen J. Campbell [Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004], 184).

<sup>111</sup> Waddington, *Aretino’s Satyr*, 14.

urn and then pour out to nourish a lush garden.<sup>112</sup> Like the nymph on the Mirror, her body feeds the earth, just as a mother nourishes her child. By becoming a fountain, she represents the cool element of water, which must combine for procreation with the element of heat—the satyrs. In a Neoplatonic sense, the satyr who espies her embodies the initial lust stimulated by a beautiful body (as well as the natural role of that sexual desire), but also the elevating effect of epiphany available to the observer: revelation can transform earthly passions into heavenly *voluptas*. The message reveals that sexuality is necessary, but that lust also enslaves, as the satyr is bound in servitude to Venus.<sup>113</sup>

In Ovid's accounting of the attribution of April, the month of spring, to Venus (*Fasti* IV.85-132), love itself was understood as necessary:

What but bland pleasure brings into being the whole brood of birds?  
Cattle, too, would not come together, were loose love wanting. [...] The  
same force preserves all living things under the broad bosom of the deep,  
and fills the waters with unnumbered fish. [...] And no season was more  
fitting for Venus than spring. In spring the landscape glistens; soft is the  
soil in spring; now the corn pushes its blades through the cleft ground;  
now the vineshoot protrudes its buds in the swelling bark. Lovely Venus  
deserves the lovely season and is attached, as usual, to her dear Mars....<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> The idea of Venus as a nature goddess came out of reading Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. There are no antique images (says Blume, "Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle"), however, of Venus with a satyr. See Chapter Three, n. 108.

<sup>113</sup> Blume, "Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle," 180. It is, of course, in Botticelli's painting of *Mars and Venus* that the link between satyrs and Venus is so charmingly displayed. All her usual putti have been replaced with little *satyrisci* instead, making all the more explicit the sexual allusions in the composition. See Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 112-154; Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 37-44.

<sup>114</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* IV.98-100, 105-106, 125-130: "quid genus omne creat volucrum, nici blanda voluptas? / nec coeant pecudes, si levis absit amor. [...] / vis eadem, lato quodcumque sub aequore vivit, / servat et innumeris piscibus implet aquas. [...] / nec Veneri tempus quam ver erat aptius ullum: / vere nitent terrae, vere remissus ager, / nunc herbae rupta tellure cacumina tollunt, / nunc tumido gemmas cortice palmes agit. / et formosa Venus formoso tempore digna est, / utque solet, Marti continuata suo est...."

The union of Mars and Venus was a metaphor of harmony and of the fecundity of nature, as suggested in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*.<sup>115</sup> Venus, that is Love, was also a civilizing drive: "That force first stripped man of his savage garb; from it he learned decent attire and personal cleanliness. [...] This goddess has been the mother of a thousand arts; the wish to please has given birth to many inventions that were unknown before."<sup>116</sup> Botticelli captured this feeling in his painting of *Mars and Venus*, in which the god reclines in a post-coital nap, subdued, even emasculated, with little panisks around him frolicking with his armor.<sup>117</sup> By converting a putto into a little *satyriscus*, as he becomes also in Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the merging of Cupid with satyr materializes the intertwining of *amor caelestis* and *amor vulgaris*—the love of mind and body, of Beauty and generation. In the unveiling of a nymph too, the satyr functions as symbol of the desire that is aroused first by physical beauty and is then transformed by a nude, heavenly Venus into love of a higher sort.

#### PAN, *DEUS ARCADIAE*

The character of Pan was a complement to this naturalistic theory of sexuality and fecundity. While Pan had survived through the Middle Ages as a libidinous demon, he had been simultaneously preserved in the medieval encyclopedic tradition in his etymological sense of "All," as a symbol of universal nature.<sup>118</sup> As a herdsman himself and deity of shepherds, Pan

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<sup>115</sup> Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 38. On the significance of the rediscovery of this ancient poem, see Brown, *The Return of Lucretius to Renaissance Florence*; Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

<sup>116</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* IV.107-108, 113-114: "prima feros habitus homini detraxit: ab illa / venerunt cultus mundaque cura sui. [...] / mille per hanc artes motae; studioque placendi, / quae latuere prius, multa reperta ferunt."

<sup>117</sup> National Gallery, London.

<sup>118</sup> Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 234-235. Pan as a symbol of All would have been known from Macrobius' *Saturnalia* II.22, where the author makes him the ruler of all matter, the very stuff of all bodies, both celestial and

had even been deemed Christ's pagan forerunner, as a typological figure of the Good Shepherd.<sup>119</sup> Like Bacchus, Pan was a god of contradiction and antithesis, both horny satyr and pastoral deity, a bringer of madness and terror but also the cultivator and guardian of nature. Pan was closely affiliated with the nymphs, who manifested in female form the natural phenomena of his kingdom. They danced to his music; they ran from his sexual advances. Arcadia functioned on this balance of life, on the ebb and flow of wind, water, and procreative heat. As the Orphic Hymn to Pan read, in part:

I call upon Pan, the pastoral god, and upon the universe,  
that is, upon sky and sea and land, queen of all  
and upon the immortal fire; all these are Pan's realm.  
Come, O blessed, frolicsome and restless companion of the seasons!  
Goat-limbed, reveling, lover of frenzy, star-haunting,  
you weave your playful song into cosmic harmony,  
and you induce phantasies of dread into the minds of mortals.  
Your delight is at Springs, among goatherds and oxherds,  
and you dance with the nymphs, ....  
Present in growth, begetter of all, ...  
lord of the cosmos, light-bringing and fructifying Paian,  
cave-loving and wrathful, a veritable Zeus with horns.  
[...]  
Your providence alters the natures of all,  
and on the boundless earth you offer nourishment to mankind.  
Come, frenzy-loving and gamboling god; come to these sacred  
libations, bring my life to a good conclusion,  
and send Pan's madness to the ends of the earth.<sup>120</sup>

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terrestrial, and Servius' *Commentary on Virgil's Eclogues* (*In bucolica* II.31). Servius' text reads: "Pan is a rustic god formed in the likeness of Nature, which is why he is called Pan, which means 'All.' His horns are like the rays of the sun and the horns of the moon; his face is ruddy like morning air; his mule-skin breast-plate is covered with stars; his lower parts bristle with hair like thickets and foliage and the fur of animals; his goat's feet reflect the solidity of the earth. He carries a flute with seven reeds for the seven harmonious voices of the heavens, and a shepherd's crook, which revolves back upon itself like the seasons of the year. Because he is the god of all Nature, the poets say he fought with Love and lost, because Love conquers All" (as quoted by Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 82, from translation of Servius in S. and R. Bernen, *Myth and Religion in European Painting 1270-1700: The Stories as the Artists Knew Them* [London: G. Braziller, 1973], 203). In Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, Pan is a kindly old shepherd who comforts Psyche. See Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 1-16; Wendy Stedman Sheard, "The Widener Orpheus: Attribution, Type, Invention," in *Collaboration in Italian Renaissance Art*, eds. Wendy Stedman Sheard and John T. Paoletti (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), appendix 4, "Pan in the Renaissance."

<sup>119</sup> Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 73, 83.

<sup>120</sup> Orphic Hymn to Pan, XI, trans. Athanassakis, 19-21.



Pan was nourishment and abundance, a vital life-force. He was a metaphor for the cosmos, and within him were embodied all the forces of nature.

The revival of the pastoral mode reawakened the idea of Golden Ages. And this in turn led to a need to affirm fecundity to ensure the rebirth of a Golden Age. Like Donatello's *Dovizia*, maenadic figures with cornucopiae overflowing with the produce of the land (including the grape) symbolized the effect of peace, prosperity, and a strong ruler. Ceres, Bonus Eventus, Fortuna, Abundantia, and the Seasons joined their sisters in ripe, nubile fertility. The figures of Bacchus, Pan, and satyrs—with their bowls of wine, milk, and honey, and surrounded by grapes and vines, evergreen ivy, and youthful female attendants—partook of this spirit celebrating the richness of the earth that thrives during peace and security, the message being that only with a powerful ruler can the people dance and make merry and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Pan stood as the ruler of this land of ease and plenty, where shepherds relaxed and animals played.<sup>121</sup> Not coincidentally, many contemporary rulers were attracted to this image of peaceful glory, heralding themselves (or having their humanist courtiers do so) as ushering in this new Golden Age. Cosimo de' Medici, for example, enjoyed an affiliation with Pan and Arcadia, punning on his name as “Cosmos,” linking him to the universal deity. Lorenzo in turn enthusiastically supported his father's pastoral vision at their villas at Poggio a Caiano and Careggi, the latter of which had been given to Ficino in 1462 and where the Platonic “academy” met for convivial gatherings and philosophical conversation.<sup>122</sup> Lorenzo saw Pan as a cosmic

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<sup>121</sup> Virgil, *Eclogues* IV, ll. 57-58: “I pray that the twilight of a long life may then be vouchsafed me, and inspiration enough to hymn your deeds! Then shall neither Thracian Orpheus nor Linus vanquish me in song.... Even were Pan to compete with me and Arcady be judge, then even Pan, with Arcady for judge, would own himself defeated” (“...Pan etiam, Arcadia mecum si iudice certet, / Pan etiam Arcadia dicat se iudice uictum”) (trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999], 52-53).

<sup>122</sup> Hans Henrick Brummer, “Pan Platonius,” *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 33 (1964): 60.

deity, looking over all that is generated and then perishes in an unending cycle.<sup>123</sup> Ficino, in translating the Orphic Hymns, sought to grasp the dual nature of Pan, both the bestial and the universal aspects of his persona.<sup>124</sup> The Orphic Hymns were special to the humanists, as they sought to understand and describe the place of man in the order of the universe, somewhere between animal and god, capable of primal urges and yet also of rational, even divine, contemplation.

The perception of Pan as center of the universal and natural cycles of nature infiltrated the almost indistinguishable figure of the satyr, whose base sexual urges stood at the genesis of birth and life. Pan and the satyrs embodied the idea of *Necessitas* and the laws ordering the act of becoming, the fruition of potentiality.<sup>125</sup> In the 1460s and after, as Pan came to be viewed as a guiding spirit of pastoral poetry and of Arcadian existence, he attained a certain nobility. The Platonic quest by which men's souls strive to elevate themselves through the spheres of the cosmos back to the godly Beauty from which they descended at birth was analogized in the figure of the sensual satyr/Pan who, nevertheless, suppressed his bestiality and responded to the urge to be something greater, to achieve the *summum bonum*, or pure *Voluptas*. Together, Pan

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<sup>123</sup> In his poem *L'altercazione* IV, Lorenzo wrote: "Pan quale ogni pastore onora e venera, / il cui nome in Arcadia si celebra, / Che impera a quel che si corrompe o genera" ("Pan, to whom every shepherd pays devout homage, whose name is famous in Arcadia, the lord of death and of birth...") (as quoted in Chastel, "Melancholia in Sonnets of Lorenzo," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 [1945], 66). See Jon Thiem, trans. as *The Supreme Good*, in *Lorenzo de' Medici: Selected Poems and Prose* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 78.

<sup>124</sup> Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 82-83. The Orphic Hymns were brought from Constantinople in 1424. Ficino made his translation in 1462 but it does not survive, save for some excerpts in his *Theologia platonica*. See Angela Voss, "Orpheus Redivivus: The Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino," in *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, ed. Michael J. B. Allen, Valery Rees, with Martin Davies (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2002), 229.

<sup>125</sup> See Arthur Hyman, "Aristotle, Algazali and Avicenna on Necessity, Potentiality and Possibility," in *Florilegium Columbianum: Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, eds. Karl-Ludwig Selig and Robert Somerville (New York: Ithaca Press, 1987), 73-77.

and the satyr bore that poetic melancholia, which infiltrated the poignant longing permeating the pastoral theme.<sup>126</sup>

Luca Signorelli's painting of the *Court* or *Kingdom of Pan* (variously titled *Pan Deus Arcadiae*, *The School of Pan*, or *The Education of Pan*), made between 1484 and 1492 for Lorenzo de' Medici, stands as the epitome of this saturnine interpretation (fig. 4.23).<sup>127</sup> In a mode totally different from that of the countless naughty satyrs harassing hapless nymphs, this satyr *cum* god is at once dignified and omniscient. In order to distinguish the new figurehead of pastoral plenty from the drunken lout of older views, Signorelli manifests Servius' description of Pan as pastoral deity. He places his handsome-faced, youthful Pan (with his head of angelic curly locks) upon an elevated dais. A star-spangled cloak is draped around his shoulders. In one hand he holds a staff made of a twig or hardy vine and in the other, resting upon his knee, his pipes. His furry calves and skinny goat hooves are crossed at the ankles; his genitalia decorously covered with hair. Upon his head, a luminous crescent rests—the moon of Servius' description—instead of animalistic horns. Signorelli has made the god wholeheartedly humane, far from the bestial or concupiscible representation he so often received. This is not the

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<sup>126</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici's poem "Apollo e Pan" encapsulates this Saturnian interpretation of the arcadian god. Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 84. As David Rosand has written, the pastoral landscape has "a poetry of nostalgia for the unrecoverable" (Rosand, "Pastoral Topoi," 161).

<sup>127</sup> The painting was destroyed in WWII; formerly Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin. The literature on the painting is nonetheless extensive, with most authors attempting to interpret the picture by means of labeling each figure. See Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, n. 64, for a review of previous opinion. Among these, Robert Eisler, "Luca Signorelli's *School of Pan*," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 33 (1948): 77-92; Warman Welliver, "Signorelli's *Court of Pan*," *Art Quarterly* 24 (1961): 334-345; and Brummer, "Pan platonicus," 55-67. Vasari says that Signorelli made the painting for Lorenzo de' Medici, although some have speculated that he meant Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, the patron of Botticelli's mythologies, since no painting of Pan is listed in the main branch's 1492 inventory. Welliver insists on the significance of Lorenzo de' Medici's patronage to the meaning of the painting. Many scholars have attempted to identify each of the characters in the painting along mythic, metaphorical, and individual levels. Freedman identifies the shepherds, for example, as allegorical portraits of various historical persons from Cosimo de' Medici's Platonic Academy. She identifies the nude woman on the left as Syrinx and the nude flutist on the left as Olympos; Welliver names her Simonetta Vespucci and him Giuliano de' Medici. R. Eisler names the woman Echo, and the reclining youth as Satyr.

crapulous Pan who cannot keep his footing, or the woodland god that inspired “panic terrors” in flocks (though an inkling of his belligerent power may perhaps still be grasped in the triumphal gate in the background and the ominous clouds forming into horsemen in the sky above).<sup>128</sup>

The work is suffused with a poetic mood, a melancholy sensibility that supersedes iconographic significations. The painting forms a web of alternating gazes, dominated by that of Pan, hovering somewhere between the old shepherd near his shoulder and the beautiful nude woman on the left.<sup>129</sup> Like a young prince burdened with the responsibilities and distractions of rule, he looks like he would rather focus on love. It appears as if he cannot attend to the wise counsel of the elders, nor the pleasures offered by his happy peers (represented in the two piping nude youths). Words and music roll off of him as he sighs hopelessly at his ladylove, read as Syrinx. She stands in perfectly balanced counterpoise, like Pygmalion’s statue, so lifelike yet so cold, unmoved by Pan’s lonely yearning. Her pipe is just pulled from her lips, as if she pauses one last time to consider his offer. Such sad longing was captured in Poliziano’s contemporaneous poem “Pan and Echo”:

Che fai tu Eccho mentre chio ti chiamo? amo.  
 Ami tu duo/ o pur un solo? un solo.  
 E io te sol e non altri amo: altri amo  
 Dunque non ami tu un solo? un solo  
 Questo è un dirmi inon tamo: inon tamo  
 Quel che tu ami: amil tu solo? solo  
 Chi tha levato dal mio Amore? Amore  
 Che fa quello achi porti Amore? Ah more.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Boardman, *The Great God Pan*, 35; Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, 115-120, 126.

<sup>129</sup> Barolsky argues Syrinx is present only in her namesake in Pan’s pipes (see Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 97). Brummer argues that she could not be Syrinx, since that nymph runs from Pan, who is cursed with an unrequited love by a vengeful Cupid. But I think in a metaphorical piece such as this, both nymph and symbol (the panpipes themselves) might be legitimately depicted.

<sup>130</sup> “What do you do, Echo, whilst I call you? I love / Do you love two people, or one alone? One alone / And I love you alone and no others: But I love others / So then you do not love just one alone? One alone / Will you say to me then, I do not love you? I do not love you / The person you love, do you love them alone? Alone / Who has carried you from my love? Love. / What should he do to whom you take your love? Ah, may he die” (as quoted in Jeremy

In *Metamorphoses* I, Ovid explained the story of Pan's hopeless love for Syrinx, who was converted into the marsh reeds from which he made his pipes.<sup>131</sup> Chapter X of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* likewise reiterated the genesis of the poet-shepherd's artistic instrument in Pan's lovesick past. The grief of the god was uttered in sweet sighs, then made articulate in the conjoined pieces of reed making the panpipe, or *sampogna*.<sup>132</sup> These poetic strains reverberate in the sounds and sighs that infuse the air of Signorelli's painting.<sup>133</sup> In this respect Signorelli's image is the same age-old tale of unrequited love told so many times before. It may be posed in classical garb, but the story is still that of the *Roman de la Rose* or other medieval amorous literature: of the cold, chaste beloved who refuses to relent to love. But it is precisely this type of story that was so easily transmuted into the Virgilian form of the pastoral eclogue. The pastoral was readily adapted to new settings—such as manicured gardens, vineyards, seas, and even homes—and subjects—from the classic lover's complaint, musical or poetical competition, or fishing and hunting bouts to dream visions, wedding epithalamia, panegyrics, and funerary dirges.<sup>134</sup> And its idyllic veneer was often tainted with strife and despair.<sup>135</sup>

Like Lorenzo de' Medici's melancholic "Canzona di Bacco," Signorelli invested his painting with a sense of passing loveliness, fleeting youth, and somber melodies. "For Lorenzo

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Warren, *Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: The Fortnum Collection* [Oxford: Daniel Katz, 1999], 84, n.1).

<sup>131</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.695-712.

<sup>132</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 132.

<sup>133</sup> Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 96.

<sup>134</sup> Grant, "New Forms of Neo-Latin Pastoral," 74; Rosand, "Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision," *passim*.

<sup>135</sup> Panofsky describes Arcady as "an ideal realm of perfect bliss and beauty, a dream incarnate of ineffable happiness, surrounded nevertheless with a halo of 'sweetly sad' melancholy" ("*Et in Arcadia Ego*: Poussin and the Elegiac Tradition," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982]), 297).

and Signorelli the pastoral realm of love, the *vita amorosa*, is filled with something like oxymora, ‘sweet tears,’ ‘hard thoughts,’ ‘bitter sighs,’ and ‘laments’: *dolci lacrime, duri pensieri, amari sospiri*, and *pianti*.... If this rustic realm is *dolce* or sweet, it is also *doloroso*, filled with sorrow.”<sup>136</sup> Ficino linked Pan with this aspect of melancholia in his *Theologia Platonica* by naming him the planetary demon for Saturn, who instilled the sadness in those born under this sign.<sup>137</sup> Sannazaro’s shepherds are similarly inundated with regrets, tensions, and threats; theirs is not an idyllic *locus amoenus* but a pastoral analogy for the ferment of the world.<sup>138</sup> As in Lorenzo’s *canzona*, this somber mood sinks in after all the superficial joy is past, after the Bacchic notes played on the pipes have paused and the dancing ceased. Equally evocative of the spirit of the pastoral is the air of stillness and inaction in Signorelli’s scene; although there is a sense of pending determination or change, the figures are captured at rest, in a moment of *otium*, apart from purposeful activity.<sup>139</sup>

The tensions and discontents of the age were expressed in the poetic mode, which highlighted the emotions of the shepherd against the simplified backdrop of a rural landscape, bringing out the inarticulate feelings of nostalgia and longing, sadness and hope, progress and rupture.<sup>140</sup> But Pan’s governance of Arcadia also proffered dreams of a Golden Age, and

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<sup>136</sup> Paul Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden: Michelangelo and the Poetic Origins of Italian Renaissance Art* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 96.

<sup>137</sup> Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 83. See Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology* vol. IV, trans. Michael J. B. Allen, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), xiv.x.5, pp. 307-309.

<sup>138</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 28, 96, 101-102.

<sup>139</sup> See Rosand, “Pastoral Topoi,” 162.

<sup>140</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 28. In fifteenth-century Florence the eclogue became a mode not just to express longing for a ancient lost world, or hopes for a peaceful rural retreat, but more potently an allegory for contemporary political woes. The traumatizing events of the Pazzi Conspiracy in 1478 inspired much melancholic soul-searching by the likes of Bernardo Pulci, Poliziano, Bartolommeo Scala, and Girolamo Benivieni, as well as Lorenzo. Pulci was a poet in Lorenzo’s circle who published a translation of Virgil’s *Eclogues* in 1481. See Welliver, “Signorelli’s *Court of Pan*,” 336.

consequently one might see amidst the doleful shadows in Signorelli's painting a glimpse of a happier dawn.<sup>141</sup> The suggestion of a restored Golden Age would have especially suited the more optimistic mood of Lorenzo de' Medici at the time of the painting, as he embarked on a renewed hope for the authority of Florence after the death of Sixtus IV in 1484 and after the trauma of the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478. Lorenzo's eclogue "Corinto," written around this time, elicits a sense of optimism, despite its overarching theme of lamentation over unrequited love. In fact, the poem ends with the vision of sunrise and with it, a dawning of renewed hope.<sup>142</sup>

One might glimpse in the Signorelli's treatment of the theme, as well, something of the poet's self-conscious process. Written pastoral poetry almost always cloaked an "inner self-reflexive meditation on the artistic process, the composition of poetry, and the endeavors of art" in its outward themes of politics, history, or love affairs.<sup>143</sup> As a painter attempting to rival the poets, Signorelli had to rely on color, light, expression, and composition to convey innermost feelings instead of words. Nevertheless Signorelli managed to endow his work with the same sorrowful sense of passing time, echoes of plaintive sighs and breathy notes, and air of an unhurried waiting game so favored by the pastoral poets. And there in the foreground, lying nude and girl in grape leaves, piping languidly on his aulos as if it were a hookah, is a figure that reinforces the Bacchic element of a scene of seemingly Apollonian tranquility.<sup>144</sup> It was not forgotten that Bacchus inspired the poet as well as Apollo; that his nymphs were virtually

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<sup>141</sup> Welliver, "Signorelli's *Court of Pan*," 340-341. An *alba*, or dawn-poem, was one form of pastoral eclogue used in the fifteenth century as a parallel to the new Golden Age (Grant, "New Forms of Neo-Latin Pastoral," 81). Consider, for example, the panegyric eclogue of Basinio de' Basini of Parma (1425-57), in honor of Pope Nicholas V, in which the first rays of morning sun harken the dawn of a new Golden Age under the aegis of a new shepherd.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>143</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 35.

<sup>144</sup> Brummer, "Pan Platonius," 56. His pose on the ground recalls that of drunken Bacchantes too weary and intoxicated to stand. The nude woman to the left is also crowned with ivy, another plant sacred to Bacchus.

interchangeable with the Muses.<sup>145</sup> Pan’s notably Apollonian features invoke this blurring between Bacchus and Apollo—the idea that the two poles were not, in fact, so very far apart (fig. 4.24).<sup>146</sup> Here the music of Pan is not damned and rejected as inferior by Apollo as it was in myth, but rather fills the air with the very melancholy and pastoral strains that the contemporary audience craved (fig. 4.25).<sup>147</sup> This is the union that Ficino so longed for, when he wrote: “Happy humanity—if the flute of Saturnian Pan accords with the zither of Phoebus who rules in these cities; it will be good if these deities will be united for us.”<sup>148</sup>

This attraction to the idea of union of disparate parts—*discordia concors*—flourished in the thought and poetry of the age. An Orphic conception, it suggested that the forces of such figures as Pan, Bacchus, and Orpheus combine, bringing about a harmony in the universe, becoming the One in the Many.<sup>149</sup> Each had the gift to transform nature and lift the beasts—and the bestial part of humanity—to higher realms of peace, creativity, and fecundity. Pan’s *syrix* (with its seven different pipes tied together), Orpheus’ lyre, and Bacchus’ wine could mollify and

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<sup>145</sup> Giovanni Pontano, Sannazaro’s teacher, wrote in his elegy *Parthenopeus: Amorum libri* II.18 of how an Umbrian nymph summoned him to his career as a poet, and how Bacchus encouraged his composition of love poetry. Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 73.

<sup>146</sup> A seated Apollo playing his viol in a drawing by Signorelli in the Uffizi (n. 130 F verso) is remarkably similar to the Pan in the painting. See Bernard Berenson, *Disegni di maestri fiorentini del rinascimento in Firenze* (Edizioni Radio Italiana, 1954), pl. 31.

<sup>147</sup> See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XI.142-189, and Cima da Conegliano’s depiction of the contest in his *Apollo, Midas, and Pan* (Galleria Nazionale, Parma). In Ovid’s telling, Pan challenges Apollo to a musical contest with the mountain of Tmolus as judge. Midas’ dissenting preference for Pan’s piping is rewarded by Apollo with a pair of ass’s ears.

<sup>148</sup> Letter quoted in Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 84. See *Opera*, 843.4, letter about Careggi.

<sup>149</sup> See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 78, regarding “harmony in discord” and “the One united by disunion.” Wendy Stedman Sheard discusses this concept in relation to the *Orpheus*, in the Widener Collection of the National Gallery of Art and attributed to Giovanni Bellini with Giorgione, c. 1515 (“The Widener *Orpheus*,” 196-197). There, a satyr appears, not as a lecherous imp, but as Pan the All, and with him is a nude nymph, as Venus *physioza*, the life-giver, “vitem exprimens” (219). Together they represent the union of the male and female generative forces, as on the Martelli Mirror: the *concordia discors*. As in the union of Mars and Venus, love is born in strife but gives birth to Harmony (Wind, 86ff).



improve the world. But this was inseparable from the contradictory aspects of their natures: Orpheus' doubt led to Eurydice's death and his scorn caused him to be torn apart by maenads; Pan could incite panic; and Bacchus often induced madness. But it is this "self-contrariety," as Wind called it, that points up their inherent benefit: the balance and union of all these parts is what allows the One to emerge.<sup>150</sup> Lorenzo himself was a man seen as combining contrasting elements. As Machiavelli wrote of him: "You saw in him two wholly different persons, united in an almost impossible union," combining both the serious and the frivolous, the Apollonian and the Dionysian.<sup>151</sup> And Lorenzo indeed looked to Pan as a source of poetic inspiration, writing in his youthful work *L'altercazione* (or *De summo bono*):

With dulcet pipe I've set my verse to music,  
 without the help of any other god  
 than Pan, whose favor has sustained this song—  
 that Pan whom every shepherd venerates,  
 whose name is feted through Arcadia,  
 whose rule is over all that's born and dies.

Apollo, too, was guide:

If you Apollo, still do love the chaste  
 locks of your much-desired Daphne, help  
 then him in whom her lovely name endures,  
 and grant to me from your own sacred furor  
 not the amount that I myself may need

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<sup>150</sup> Pico della Mirandola examined the Orphic mysteries in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (*De hominis dignitate*) and the *Orphic Conclusions* (*Conclusiones... de modo intelligendi hymnos Orphei*) and saw in all the gods in the Orphic pantheon a significant degree of self-contradiction. As Wind summarizes it: "[T]he mad Dionysus not only rages, but through his rage he purifies and consoles; Apollo inspires by his music poetic frenzy as well as poetic measure" (Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 196).

<sup>151</sup> Quoted and translated in Jon Thiem's introduction to his translation of Lorenzo's poetry, *Lorenzo de' Medici Selected Poems and Prose*, 5, from Machiavelli, *Istorie Fiorentine* (1520-25), in *Opere* (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1963), 979. Cf. a portrait of Alberto Pio, the prince of Capri, (1475-1531) that shows in the background the Muses divided between Apollo and Bacchus between their two temples on the two peaks of Parnassus. National Gallery, London, attributed there to Bernardino Loschi, c. 1512; Wind attributes the work to Giacomo Francia (*Pagan Mysteries*, n. 21, p. 196). Pio's choice to represent the Orphic balance of Bacchus and Apollo as his device may reflect his friendship with the iconologist Achille Bocchi (also taken with the idea of *discordia concors*) and his being a nephew of and literary executor for Pico della Mirandola. See also Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, n. 68, p. 72.

but what the subject of my song demands.<sup>152</sup>

With his painting, Signorelli created a pastoral that combined the creativity of the Bacchic Pan with the inspiration of Apollo, offered to the poet-prince Lorenzo.

## SATYR STATUETTES

This literary and philosophical context fostered the emerging popularity of the small bronze statuette of the satyr or Pan towards the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>153</sup> The patrons who sought to read the new pastoral poetry alongside their editions of Virgil illuminated with satyrs and surrounded by antique cameos and reliefs purchased in turn little figurines, oil lamps, salt cellars, ink wells, pen holders, and candelabra depicting this now favorite *all'antica* character. Riccio in Padua, Antico in Mantua, and artists like the master of the Martelli Mirror contributed greatly to this cultivated taste.<sup>154</sup> The satyr or Pan (melded together as they were) bore a far

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<sup>152</sup> Translated as “The Supreme Good” (from the alternate title, “De summo bono”) by Thiem, in *Lorenzo de’ Medici Selected Poems*, 65-92; chap. IV, ll.1-6, 37-42, pp. 78-79. Composed 1473-74, the poem begins with Lorenzo’s dispute, or *altercazione*, between himself, Lauro, and a shepherd, Alfeo, about whether the city or country life is better suited for happiness, a debate which in turn influenced Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*. The next portions of the poem are based upon didactic letters received from Marsilio Ficino, one on happiness (*De felicitate*) and the other a paean to God (*Oratio ad Deum theologica*). “Sanza esser suto da altro Nume scorto, / Modulato ho con la zampogna tenera / Il verso, col favor che Pan ne ha porto. / Pan, quale ogni pastore onora e venera, / Il cui nome in Arcadia si celebra, / Che impera a quel, che si corrompe e genera. / [...] / Apollo, se ami ancor le caste chiome / Della tua tanto disiata Danne, / Soccorri a chi ritiene il suo bel nome; / E tanto del tuo sacro furor danne, / Non quanto a me conviensi, ma al soggetto / Di che debbo cantar, bisogno fanne” (*Opere di Lorenzo de’ Medici detto il Magnifico*, ed. Leopold II, Grand-Duke of Tuscany [Florence: G. Molini, 1825], vol. 2: Poesie varie, pp. 180-181).

<sup>153</sup> Kaufmann, “The Noble Savage,” 124. See Wilhelm von Bode, *The Italian Bronze Statuettes of the Renaissance*, trans. William Grétor, rev. ed. James D. Draper (New York: M. A. S. de Reinis, 1980); Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*; Carolyn C. Wilson, *Renaissance Small Bronze Sculpture and Associated Decorative Arts at the National Gallery of Art* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1983); and Beck and Blume, *Natur und Antike in der Renaissance*.

<sup>154</sup> Riccio (Andrea Briosco) (b. c. 1470-75; d. 1532); Antico (Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi) (b. c. 1460; d. 1528). Other sculptors in this vein are Severo da Ravenna and Desiderio da Settignano. Pope-Hennessy identifies a certain Camelio, an established medalist by 1484 (d. Venice 1537), as comparable to the likes of Riccio in Padua. He attributes to him a *Faun playing a Double-Flute* (in the Frick Collection, New York, and another version in the Louvre, Paris), c. 1508; a *Satyr* (formerly Lederer Collection, now Victoria and Albert Museum, London); and a *Seated Pan* (Donà dalle Rose Collection) (See “Italian Bronze Statuettes — I,” *The Burlington Magazine* 105 [1963]: 21). The seminal study of Riccio’s oeuvre is Leo Planiscig, *Andrea Riccio* (Vienna: A. Schroll & Co, 1927).

more nuanced meaning than that of a moralistic figure of vice.<sup>155</sup> Collectors and scholars alike saw in these little statues features that not only mimicked antique statuettes but also embodied nostalgic visions of Arcadia and their admiration for classical culture in general.

A drinking satyr statuette attributed to Riccio (now in Vienna) shows the creature sitting with legs splayed upon the ground (fig. 4.26).<sup>156</sup> He holds a simple bowl of wine up to his lips, and drinks with a focused drive. The creature exudes a poetic air of easy satisfaction. It is this sensibility—not of scorn or mockery—that gives the work its Arcadian charm. It would have transported a Renaissance collector out of his own surroundings to a place of ease and pleasure, where hedonism was not a sin but a natural, primitive way of life, worthy of attention and even respect. Yet the grotesque features and hairy haunches of the satyr would at the same time have kept him at a safe distance; he is only a faint echo of man, but human enough to relate to man's inner desires and passions. The haggard face and yearning eyes convey an interior life and complexity of conflicting emotions that lift this figure beyond the simplistic lecher of antiquity.<sup>157</sup>

A standing satyr statuette in the Metropolitan Museum of Art attributed to Riccio, c. 1507, depicts the creature carrying a large vase in one hand and a shell on his shoulder slung

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. Andrew Butterfield, who sees the satyrs “as creatures of instinct, enslaved by their passions. Lost in thirst of lust, they are grotesque, subhuman, but sympathetic nonetheless” (“‘Bronze Beauties’: Review of *Donatello e il suo tempo* [Milan: Skira, 2001],” *New York Review* [July 19, 2001], 12). Panofsky refers to the satyric flute of the Paduan statuettes as personifying the sensuality preludeing the “attributes of Disgrace” (*Hercules am Scheidewege*, 125). But this interpretation invokes the later representations of Ripa and Carracci, which reflect sixteenth-century codifications and moralizing, and do not recognize the much greater flexibility of the earlier explorations of the theme.

<sup>156</sup> Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; Martineau and Hope, *The Genius of Venice 1500-1600*, cat. S21, p. 376; there are two replicas, one in the Museo Civico, Padua, and the other in the Louvre, Paris.

<sup>157</sup> Denise Allen, with Peta Motture, eds., *Andrea Riccio: Renaissance Master of Bronze* (New York: The Frick Collection, 2008), cat. 10, by Claudia Kryza-Gersch, 163: “[T]hey embody nature in all its vitality and in the same instant the tragedy of not being able to restrain desire.”

with a ram's skin (fig. 4.27, 28).<sup>158</sup> The vessel would have served as an inkwell, while the shell provided an oil lamp. His striding pose (recalling the della Valle telamons) demonstrates bravura casting, balancing atop the two small hoof-points. His face and physique represent the by-then-established Renaissance satyr/Pan type: two curved horns; a broad, flattened nose; wrinkled face; scraggly beard; compact, muscular torso; and shaggy, short goat legs. This satyr also has the longing eyes and weathered countenance that had come to connote the melancholy so often seen in fifteenth-century satyrs. In other statuettes, as in one of a kneeling satyr attributed to Riccio (also in the Metropolitan Museum of Art), the shell was a vessel for ink (fig. 4.29).<sup>159</sup> The use of a seashell as a container for ink or oil evoked contemporary notions about the element of water, moisture being necessary for germination. In figurines that also contained oil lamps or served as candleholders, the element of fire would likewise have been conveyed (compounding the natural heat of the satyr himself), symbolizing the heat and light that fostered generation (fig. 4.30).<sup>160</sup> The combination of the qualities of hot and wet, with the correct balance of fire and water, were believed to make the optimum odds for human conception in the Spring.<sup>161</sup> (No doubt too there would be a sexual pun as the presumably male writer "dipped his

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<sup>158</sup> Blume, "Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle," 184-185; James David Draper, "European Sculpture and Decorative Arts," *Notable Acquisitions (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) (1981-1982)*: 28-29; Allen, *Andrea Riccio*, cat. 8, 145-151, dating it tentatively to c. 1520. These sorts of sculptures, and the individual accoutrements of them such as the vases and shells, were cast with a reproductive method, resulting in multiples and duplicated details, making dating challenging. A seated satyr in the Bargello, for example, is posed like the drinking satyr above and has the shell and vase of the standing satyr. Allen, *Andrea Riccio*, fig. 8.1.

<sup>159</sup> James Rorimer, "The European Decorative Arts," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 26, no. 3, part 2: The Theodore M. Davis Bequest (1931): 28, fig. 4.

<sup>160</sup> A statuette in the Metropolitan includes a vase for ink, a candlestick support shaped like a tulip, and a pen holder. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See Blume, "Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle," 184-185; also Heike Frosien-Leinz, in the same volume, on Riccio's oil lamps.

<sup>161</sup> Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, Part One, and chart of the libidinal cycle, fig. O.1, p. 31. Blume also notes that statuettes of water-bearers were also popular in the Veneto at this time, suggesting an intentional pairing of signs for fire and water as a metaphor for fueling creative energies (Blume, "Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle," 184). In *On the Generation of Animals* II.2, Aristotle states: "Semen, then, is a

nib” in the ink held by this horny satyr.) Ficino further suggested an intellectual effect to this balance: “[T]he illuminating power of Apollo possesses the related inciting [or producing] and, as it were, heating power of Bacchus. The power for prophecy and poetry flourishes in the illuminating power, the power for love and [priestly] prayer in the inciting. For light and heat refer to both Apollo and Bacchus.”<sup>162</sup> Metaphorically, this ideal balance of moisture and heat connoted optimum *regeneration*, in the sense of rebirth and renewal. One seated Pan rests his syrinx off his knee while he reaches his small oil lamp high; he looks upwards, as if awaiting the fresh light of inspiration (fig. 4.31). As an *in*-spiring god, the Pan’s parted lips suggest his breathing out “the animating energy that inspires creation.”<sup>163</sup> The presence of such a statuette in a patron’s studio or upon a scholar’s desk would provide the necessary elements of heat and water—essential to Nature—as well as the light and ink—essential to his work. These elemental qualities as manifested in the satyr statuette were necessary for the processes of intellectual generation, providing the spark of inspiration, the light of creativity, and the material for productivity.

Enhancing this inspiring quality, the satyr was associated with ancient sacrifice; as Ficino noted in his description of the four divine madnesses, telestic or priestly madness was attributed

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compound of spirit (*pneuma*) and water, and the former is hot air (*aerh*); hence semen is liquid in its nature because it is made of water” (trans. Arthur Platt, <<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/generation/>>).

<sup>162</sup> Ficino, *Summae*, chapter 14, in Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 142-144.

<sup>163</sup> Allen, *Andrea Riccio*, 150. She cites Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* (1602), Book X, as being familiar with Pan as a god of the breath of air and life; and Poliziano’s *Silvae* (Florence, 1480s) as conveying Pan as an oracular god, whose terror-inducing cries “foreshadowed the poetic arts that fostered civilization.” This idea of intellectual fertility was articulated by Pico della Mirandola in his *Oration*, when he wrote: “For if a tiller of the soil hates sterility in his field, and a husband in his wife, surely the Divine mind joined to and associated with an infertile soul will hate it the more in that far nobler offspring is desired” (Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 28, 244-245).

to Bacchus.<sup>164</sup> In other words, Bacchus and his minions were in charge of the mysteries. The satyr was a sort of *magus* of the *prisca theologia*, or universal divine mystery, and was often depicted in ancient art tending the sacred flame. As a tabletop lamp, the satyr is imbued with this priestly potency, having a sacrificial aura of fueling the fire and dispensing its warmth and light while feeding the offering to the gods. A belief in Hermetic natural magic pervaded Ficino's Neoplatonism, and appealed even to the medically- and scientifically-inclined scholars of the Paduan set.<sup>165</sup> As Pico described it, "the *magus* is the servant of nature and not a contriver"; true natural philosophy,

abounding in the loftiest mysteries, embraces the deepest contemplation of the most secret things, and at last the knowledge of all nature. [...] [I]n calling forth into the light as if from their hiding-places the powers scattered and sown in the world by the loving-kindness of God, [it] does not so much work wonders as diligently serve a wonder-working nature. [...] [It] brings forth into the open the miracles concealed in the recesses of the world, in the depths of nature, and in the storehouses and mysteries of God...; and, as the farmer weds his elms to his vines, even so does the *magus* wed earth to heaven, that is he weds lower things to the endowments and powers of higher things.<sup>166</sup>

The melding of viticultural metaphors and the notion of wedding lower and higher things is evoked by the lowly, rustic satyr holding up the inspiring light. Hermeticism was a crucial element in the philosophical understanding of the origins of divine frenzy. The satyr's association with occult rituals gave an aura of natural magic to the ink and light emanating from the statuette, enhancing their genius-dispensing powers for the writer who used them.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> See Chapter One. Ficino, *Commentary on the Phaedrus*, Chapter 2 and 4 (on *Phaedrus* 245A-C, 265B), and *De Amore*, Speech 7, chapter 14, in Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 74-76, 82-84, 220-222.

<sup>165</sup> For the Hermetic tradition, see Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, chaps. 1-9.

<sup>166</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 33, 248-249.

<sup>167</sup> See Noel L. Brann, *The Debate Over the Origin of Genius During the Italian Renaissance: The Theories of Supernatural Frenzy and Natural Melancholy in Accord and in Conflict on the Threshold of the Scientific Revolution* (Boston; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 382-383.

The delicate inkwell of a youthful Pan with his syrinx in the Ashmolean Museum, recently attributed to Desiderio da Firenze, is another example of how the imagery of Pan could be infused with subtle meaning (fig. 4.32).<sup>168</sup> Here the bestial attributes of Pan have been virtually erased, leaving a beautiful boy with the merest hint of horns and tail. He holds an urn in which ink would be kept, and gazes off wistfully, his lips slipping away from the syrinx, as if listening for the lingering echo of his last notes. It has been suggested that he represents Pan “listening to Echo,” a poetic trope popularized in the verse by Poliziano in which Pan futilely calls out to the nymph Echo only to hear his last words repeated back to him.<sup>169</sup> As in Signorelli’s painting for Lorenzo of around the same time, Poliziano captured the heartfelt yearning and melancholy sorrow of the benighted lover. The wistful glance and juvenile beauty of this little bronze Pan likewise elicit the plaintive airs of a sad love song and the longing of a broken heart. A maiolica plate made for Pandolfo Petrucci of Siena c. 1510 shows a similar Pan—youthful, beardless, human-footed, and unobtrusively horned—sitting on a tree stump, playing his syrinx, and adored by two deferential shepherds (fig. 4.33).<sup>170</sup> These sweet Pans look more like Daphnis than Pan, yet this very inversion of the characters serves to enhance the sympathetic and emotive feeling of the more typically bawdy and animalistic god.<sup>171</sup> Daphnis

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<sup>168</sup> Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Warren, *Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Ashmolean Museum*, cat. 26, 84-87. Attributed by Warren to Desiderio da Settignano, ca. 1520-30, Padua or Venice, though formerly given to Riccio. See also Beck and Blume, *Natur und Antike*, cat. 190, pp. 484-485.

<sup>169</sup> See above, and Warren, “‘The Faun Who Plays on the Pipes’: A New Attribution to Desiderio da Firenze,” in *Small Bronzes in the Renaissance*, ed. Debra Pincus (New Haven: Yale University Press, for the National Gallery of Art, 2001), 83-103. Written around 1479 while in Venice, Poliziano published the poem to Pan, alongside the *Stanze per la giostra* and *Orfeo*, in 1494 as *Cose vulgari del politiano* (Bologna), British Library, IA.28919.

<sup>170</sup> British Museum, London. See Warren, “‘The Faun Who Plays the Pipes,’” 88, fig. 8. Also Luke Syson and Dora Thornton, *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2001), 78-80, fig. 55.

<sup>171</sup> See the antique statue of Daphnis (sometimes called Olympus) seated, playing the panpipes, in the Uffizi, Florence. The classical statue shows the boy leaning back, just as the bronze figure does. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 74, pp. 120-121. See also Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by*

was himself thought to be the inventor of bucolic poetry, a shepherd of Arcadia whose love for a nymph was similarly frustrated and thwarted, rewarded ultimately with blindness and death.<sup>172</sup> His sad pastoral songs, ringing out in the wooded glens and shadowy caverns like those inhabited by Pan, became the prototype for the eclogue. And as in Signorelli's painting, this Daphnis/Pan reminds the observer that even amidst the fantasy of pastoral bliss, there is heartache, loss, aging, and death.

Other statuettes captured the satyr/Pan in a more grotesque state: drunk, tottering, or bound (fig. 4.34). Many antique images depicted satyrs as imbibing and cavorting, or wavering drunkenly. Philostratus described a picture of Pan with Nymphs, who have punished him while he was asleep for his disregard and harassment of them:

Pan, the nymphs say, dances badly and goes beyond bounds in his leaping, leaping up and jumping aloft after the manner of sportive goats; and they say that they would teach him a different kind of dancing, of a more delightful character; when he, however, pays no heed to them but, his garment extended, tries to make love to them they set upon him at noon, when Pan is said to abandon the hunt and go to sleep. [...] [T]oday he is very angry; for the Nymphs have fallen upon him, and already Pan's

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*Amico Aspertini*, and Amico Aspertini's London drawing book I, fol. 2v, where the ancient statue appears (c. 1530s). Another version shows Daphnis being instructed in the pipes by Pan. Museo Nazionale Romano (Museo delle Terme), Rome. See Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, cat. 70, fig. 151, p. 286, called "Pan and Apollo." A bronze statuette of a piping Daphnis-type shepherd figure, attributed to Riccio, in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, is very like the piping Pan here discussed, but has lost the tail, pointed ears, and horns, and in posture, is more slouched forward. See Warren, "'The Faun Who Plays on the Pipes,'" fig. 5, and Beck and Blume, *Natur und Antike*, cat. 189, p. 483. It is also clear that there existed one or more antique sculptures, larger than the statuettes, of a seated satyr playing pipes in private collections in Venice. Such antique pieces would have provided admirable prototypes for contemporary derivations. Marcantonio Michiel recorded: "In the House of Messer Francesco Zio, 1512: The God Pan or Faun, in marble, two feet high, seated upon the stump of a tree and playing the pipes, is antique"; "In the House of Messer Michel Contarini at the Misericordia, August 1543: There is an entire marble figure of a Faun, or a Shepherd, nude, two feet high, sitting upon a rock, with his back leaning against it, and playing a pastoral flute—a remarkable antique work" (*The Anonimo: Notes on Pictures and Works of Art in Italy Made by an Anonymous Writer in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. George C. Williamson, trans. Paolo Mussi [New York: Benjamin Blom, 1969], 126, 109-110).

<sup>172</sup> The Daphnis story is summed up in Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* IV.84. Note also that the name Daphnis comes from laurel (like Daphne), and thus relates to Apollo. Lorenzo de' Medici himself was fond of puns and associations that related his name to *lauro* or laurel, liking both the associations to Apollo and antiquity, but also to the Arcadian fantasy of melancholy inspiration found in nature. The laurel was a decorative theme at Careggi and Poggio a Caiano.



hands have been tied behind his back, and he fears for his legs since the Nymphs wish to seize them.<sup>173</sup>

It is obvious to posit that the image of an intoxicated figure overcome by his consumption of alcohol—and moreover, being whipped or fettered—conveys a condemnation of the vice of intemperance, licentiousness, gluttony, and sloth. The representation of satyrs with their arms tied behind their backs, as on the *Paschal Candelabrum* Riccio made for San Antonio in Padua and copied in statuettes, suggests the idea of paganism conquered by Christianity, and of base desires fettered by higher virtues (fig. 4.35, 36).<sup>174</sup> But the place of wine drinking in the Bacchic cult had been more complex, and this carried over into Renaissance understanding. The depiction of inebriation on ancient sarcophagi alluded to its soteriological meanings, apprehensible even by uninitiated Renaissance artists.<sup>175</sup> The ends of the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne sarcophagus in the British Museum demonstrate this aspect of the iconography, showing the Chastisement of Pan. On the right end a beardless Pan is spanked by a youthful, man-like faun while another bearded companion carries the Pan upon his back; on the left, a passed-out older Pan is being carried by a faun and two winged putti.<sup>176</sup> As part of the cult of

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<sup>173</sup> Philostratus, *Imagines* II.11, trans. Fairbanks, 177-179. Poliziano mimics the story in his *Silvae*.

<sup>174</sup> Riccio's masterpiece was begun in 1507 and installed in 1516. The program for the piece was devised by Giambattista de Leone, a professor at the University of Padua, which justifies a complex reading of its iconography. See Butterfield, "Bronze Beauties," 12. On Riccio, Anthony Radcliffe, "Ricciiana," *The Burlington Magazine*, 124 (1982): 421-424; idem, "Bronze Oil Lamps by Riccio," *Victoria and Albert Museum Yearbook*, 3 (1972): 29-58; Allen, *Andrea Riccio*.

<sup>175</sup> For wine and rites of purification in Dionysian cult, see Nilsson, *Dionysiac Mysteries*, 95, 131. Nilsson discusses how the imagery on sarcophagi intentionally transferred the rites of the cult onto the "mythical plane," where satyrs appear instead of men, and showed "an idealized and mythological image of the Bacchic revelry which the mystae expected in the Other Life," which was probably played out in their cult gatherings as well.

<sup>176</sup> The ends are drawn by Pisanello or a follower on either side of sheet in the Louvre (5611) and by a north Italian artist c. 1460 in drawings now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (1407v and 214 inf. no. 2). We saw that Jacopo Bellini picked up the latter motif when he included a drunken satyr being carried by two satyrs in his London Drawing Book. Jacopo also drew the more unusual figure of a sleeping satyr lying on the ground in both this and the Paris version of his Triumph of Bacchus. See Rubinstein, "A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance," 103-156.

Dionysus, this imagery symbolized the purging and cleansing of the soul experienced by the god's initiates as they consume the divine spirit through the means of his drink and transition to a state of *vacatio* and ecstasy.<sup>177</sup> Whether they sleep or become frenzied, the initiate has been induced into a state of *furor* by means of divine *enthousiasmos*. The drunken satyr is not limited to his superficial attributes, therefore, but can convey the vital telestic stage of purgation by which one hopes to be initiated into the cult and to attain divine union with the god. As Boccaccio had understood the role of such purgation, so Ficino also recommended wine for the release of disquiet caused by love: "A clear wine is to be used, sometimes even with intoxication, in order that when the old blood has been evacuated, new blood may approach and new spirit."<sup>178</sup> With such literary and philosophical sanction, Bacchic revels could signify bliss instead of intemperance. On Riccio's *Candelabrum*, Bacchic themes appear throughout, reflecting a syncretic union of Christian and pagan wisdom.<sup>179</sup> A Bacchanal of putti appears near the top, signalling the divine *furor* that elevates the soul to God and leads to salvation (fig. 4.37).<sup>180</sup> These putti help to harrass and frighten a satyr at their feet, suggesting that the Bacchic *spiritelli* have moved past the phantasms and error of the body. The bound satyrs below could signify the

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<sup>177</sup> The images on these end reliefs may also allude to Lupercalian rites, a long-lived ancient Roman annual festival of fertility and purification in which Pan (or the Roman Faunus), figs and fig trees, and flagellation were involved. Rubinstein, "A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance," 112. These rites existed through Roman times and were not suppressed until 494 A.D. Faunus was a rustic hunter and agricultural god with oracular powers, who similarly incurred panic with his spooky woodland sounds and appearances, causing him to be conflated later with the goat-footed monster that then resembled Pan.

<sup>178</sup> *De amore*, VII.11, trans. Jayne, 168.

<sup>179</sup> Davide Banzato, "Riccio's Humanist Circle and the *Paschal Candelabrum*," in Allen, *Andrea Riccio*, 57-58, and n. 48. The initials "I I" appear on an escutcheon at the top of the candelabrum, which have been interpreted as "Iupiter Iesus," that is, "Jupiter Jesus." It is hard to imagine a more syncretic conclusion for the meaning of the work. In the relief depicting the personification of Temperance farther down, the *all'antica* female figure grasps one piece of fruit from the bowl she is offered, while seeming to prod a dissipated satyr lying at her feet with a stick. While one reading may be that Temperance overcomes excess, the Bacchic, Neoplatonic, and syncretic emphasis of the whole candelabrum suggests that another is possible. As part of the Bacchic procession understood as the path toward knowledge, the satyr may be a reference to intellectual pride, which the temperate must overcome.

suppression of the physical self by means of the ascending spirit. This punishment of the body, then, is not strictly a castigation of vice, but an allegory for the cleansing and purging of the soul by means of moving oneself out of the body; it is a metaphor for every man's journey to God, in which he must conquer the animal within himself.

On a fifteenth-century desk, the drunken satyr evoked the ecstasy of inspiration and the intoxicating spirit consuming a scholar as he delved into his reacquaintance with the antique world. Contemporaries were well-versed in the aphorisms of Horace, whose *Odes* sang the praises of the inspiring powers of wine:

Where are you hurrying me, Bacchus, full as I am of you? Into what woods, what caves, am I being driven at such speed in a strange state of mind? In what grotto shall I be heard as I practice setting the eternal glory of peerless Caesar among the stars and in the council of Jove? I shall sing on a momentous theme, that is modern and has never yet been sung by another's lips. Just as the Maenad, unsleeping on the mountaintops, stares in wonder as she looks out on the Hebrus and Thrace white with snow, and Rhodope recently traversed by barbarian feet, so I in this lonely place delight in marveling at the rocks and deserted woods.

O Lord of the Naiads and of the Bacchanals who have the strength to uproot tall ash trees with their bare hands, nothing small or in a low style, nothing mortal, shall I sing. It is an intoxicating danger, o God of the wine press, to follow your divinity, wreathing my temples with green vine leaves.<sup>181</sup>

Without the inspiration induced by Bacchus, genius might never flourish, as Plato had Socrates say in his dialogue *Ion*:

...[T]he epic poets, all the good ones, have their excellence, not from art, but are inspired, possessed, and thus they utter all these admirable poems.

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<sup>180</sup> Blume, "Beseelte Natur und ländlich Idylle," 111-112; Banzato, "Riccio's Humanist Circle," 57-58.

<sup>181</sup> Horace, *Odes* III.25: "Quo me, Bacche, rapis tui / plenum? quae nemora aut quos agor in specus / velox mente nova? quibus / antris egregii Caesaris audiar / aeternum meditans decus / stellis inserere et consilio Iovis? / dicam insigne recens adhuc / indictum ore alio. non secus in iugis / exsomnia stupet Euhias / Hebrum prospiciens et nive candidam / Thracen et pede barbaro / lustratam Rhodopen, ac mihi devio / rupes et vacuum nemus / mirari libet. o Naiadum potens / Baccharumque valentium / proceras manibus vertere fraxinos, / nil parvum aut humili modo, / nil mortale loquar. dulce periculum est, / o Lenaeae, sequi deum / cingentem viridi tempora pampino" (trans. Rudd, 200-203).

[...] [A]s the worshipping Corybantes are not in their senses when they dance, so the lyric poets are not in their senses when they make these lovely lyric poems. No, when once they launch into harmony and rhythm, they are seized with the Bacchic transport, and are possessed—as the bacchantes, when possessed, draw milk and honey from the rivers, but not when in their senses. So the spirit of the lyric poet works....<sup>182</sup>

Ficino's efforts to formulate a Neoplatonic philosophy helped disseminate this notion of a Bacchic inspiration, granting intoxication the status of one of the four forms of madness that lead to spiritual contemplation. Literal drunkenness of the body was transposed to the inebriation of the mind induced by Love. Wine, love, and sleep all became vehicles—but also metaphors—for conveyance to the Other World.<sup>183</sup> As a god of the One in the Many, of the Cosmos, Pan inflected the satyr with his numinous power, granting a creative, generative drive to the satyr's intemperance. And for the scholar or writer who sat with his small bronze satyr in his study or on his desk, the charged air of a pagan past, teeming with wild creatures, would fill his imagination, feed his pen, light the dim quarters of his "grotto," and channel the ancient frenzy of the Bacchanal into the present.<sup>184</sup> Dipping his pen into the shell or cup, wine becomes ink, and inspiration became words on paper. The very base physicality of the satyr—his undisguised lust and animalistic features—make raw and wild his state of frenzy; yet this serves as an apt metaphor for the intoxicating rush of the poet's imagination as his *furor* surges into realized genius. Even the fettered satyr, with his anguished expression and helpless grief, captures that air of pastoral melancholy that so resonated with his audience. The

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<sup>182</sup> Plato, *Ion* 533e-534a, trans. Lane Cooper, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 220.

<sup>183</sup> Rubinstein, "A Drawing of a Bacchic Sarcophagus in the British Museum," 70.

<sup>184</sup> Recall that Isabella d'Este named her private studies with their collections of art, wonders, and antiquities her Studiolo and Grotta, the latter evoking that idea of a pastoral cave filled with treasures. See Clifford Malcolm Brown, "The Grotta of Isabella d'Este," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 91 (1978): 72-82; Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*.

viewer's heart is torn, because it is not just an animal that suffers, but part of what is human in all of us that is punished and cries out. As Poliziano confessed: "[V]eggio 'l meglio, ed al peggior m'appiglio"—"I see what is best, and incline to what is worst."<sup>185</sup>

The bound satyr could allude specifically to Marsyas, punished for his hubristic challenge of Apollo; some statuettes include attributes such as Apollo's instrument to indicate the narrative identification.<sup>186</sup> Marsyas was a proud satyr and player of the *aulos* who suggested Apollo compete with him on his lyre, only to fail in divine judgment. Apollo's vengeful punishment was to have the creature flayed alive, his blood forming a river with the tears of his rustic supporters. While ancient depictions more often showed the satyr in almost purely human form, Renaissance artists—as in their avoidance of the Bacchant-type faun in general—gave Marsyas a more animalistic, even savage countenance and appendages. Yet the pure visceral disgust the viewer feels at his torture and the sympathy he feels for the victim in the face of such brutality shift the onus of Marsyas' guilt and wrecklessness off of him. As a statuette of a fettered figure, the faulty genius of the creature's gifts still shine through.

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<sup>185</sup> *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, trans. and ed. by Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), poem 264, l. 136, pp. 432-433, as quoted in Holberton, "Of Antique and Other Figures," 44. See also Giuseppe Mazzotta, *The Worlds of Petrarch* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 58.

<sup>186</sup> An example is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, tentatively attributed to Desiderio da Settignano. See Manfred Leithe-Jasper, *Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna* (New York: Scala Books, 1986), cat. 22. The bound satyr type may have originally derived from classical grotesques in the Domus Aurea of Nero, discovered in the 1480s, and disseminated in engravings by Nicoletto da Modena. The transformation of Marsyas into this goat-legged satyr would have been a Paduan invention of the late fifteenth/early sixteenth century, since in antique examples and previous depictions he was generally depicted in the more human form of a faun or Silene, with pointed ears (but no horns) and a tail. Thus transformed, Marsyas becomes almost indistinguishable from Pan, even to the point of holding panpipes instead of the *aulos* of myth, thus confusing in contemporaries' minds the two stories of Apollo's musical contests. See Edith Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas in the Art of the Italian Renaissance: An Inquiry into the Meaning of Images* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1996).

The drunken satyr in Lotto's cover for his portrait of Bishop de' Rossi may also have been inflected by related contemplations (fig. 4.38, 39). If intoxication was not viewed solely as a physical experience exhibiting vice, but as a spiritual phenomenon symbolizing divine *furor*, the satyr's state became a metaphor for the sort of inspiration that must precede and underlie intellectual and moral achievement.<sup>187</sup> Plato had stressed in the *Phaedrus* the idea of reason as being nurtured by enthusiasm and love, and Ficino had understood this to mean that even intelligence is an appetite, one kindled by Love and thus moved to turn to God.<sup>188</sup> As Pico della Mirandola explained: *virtù cognoscente* and *virtù appetitiva* were both necessary, but the first could only come to fruition in the second, the appetitive act being "an act of will [*voluntas*] without which the cognitive act would be incomplete."<sup>189</sup> What he described was a sort of "mystical hedonism."<sup>190</sup> The satyr, therefore, embodies that irrational *voluptas*; the putto, rational productivity, which brings inspiration to fruition.<sup>191</sup>

Andrea Alciati would later make an emblem showing Pallas Athena and Bacchus together as a symbol for *Prudentia* (Knowledge), stating "Vino prudentiam auferi," "Prudence

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<sup>187</sup> In contrast to David Alan Brown's reading of the painting as a typical "Hercules at the Crossroads"-type choice between virtue and vice (*Lorenzo Lotto*, p. 79), see Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 44-59; and Alexander Nagel, "Review: *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, by David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco et al.; *Lorenzo Lotto*, by Peter Humfrey; *Lorenzo Lotto*, by Jacques Bonnet; *Lorenzo Lotto e l'Immaginario Alchemico: Le 'imprese' nelle tarsie del coro della basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo*, by Mauro Zanchi," *Art Bulletin* 80 (1998): 742-747.

<sup>188</sup> *Phaedrus*, 237C, 254a-c, 256b-e, 279b. Banzato, "Riccio's Humanist Circle," 54, n. 50.

<sup>189</sup> *Commento sopra una canzone de amore composta da Girolamo Benivieni*, II, iii (Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 51, and n. 60, citing Garin ed., II, v, p. 491). Also *De ente et uno* V: "cognitio... imperfecta est, quia cognitio tantum est et non est appetitio" (Wind, n. 61, citing Garin ed., p. 408).

<sup>190</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 51.

<sup>191</sup> Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 57-59, 117.

enhanced by wine.”<sup>192</sup> Just as Apollo and Dionysus could be seen to complement and not just oppose each other, the qualities of the intoxicating god could be deemed to enhance that of wisdom as well. As Propertius said: “When poets are in their cups, the Muse quickens their genius: Bacchus, you always inspire your brother Phoebus.”<sup>193</sup> Lotto shows Athena’s aulos (or flute) and Pan’s pipes and a rustic horn beside the putto.<sup>194</sup> All three instruments were associated with uncivilized, pastoral music, and yet lay on the side of the productive putto, lending credence to the idea that his creativity and work may be enhanced and fed even by sylvan and irrational forces. While it is true that a satyr’s drunkenness is far more animalistic and debased than the tipping of a courtier or scholar—and while Lotto does seem to emphasize the dangers of intemperance in the foundering ship in the distance—the satyr, drunk with wine, may still represent one level of inspiration: the mind taken to realms of divine madness inaccessible through rational thought. Consequently, instead of an allegory of a choice between stark opposites, the image expresses the continuity, interdependence, and hierarchical progression through different states of inspiration, productivity, and knowledge.<sup>195</sup> The winged putto ascending to inspired heights to the left evokes Plato’s image: “[A] poet is a light and winged

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<sup>192</sup> First published in Latin, Augsburg, 1531. Alciati, *Emblemata cum commentariis* (Padua, 1621), facsimile (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), Emblem XXIII, p. 129: “Haec Bacchus pater, & Pallas communiter ambo / Templa tenent, soboles utraque vera Iovis. / Haec caput, ille femur solvit: huic usus olivi / Debitus, invenit primus at ille merum. / Iunguntur meritò: quòd si qui abstemius odit / Vina, Dea nullum sentiet auxilium”; (“This temple Father Bacchus and Pallas both possess in common, each of them the true off-spring of Jove: she split Jove’s head, he his thigh. To her we owe the use of the olive; but he first discovered wine. They are rightly joined together, because if anyone in abstinence hates wine, he will know no help from the goddess” [trans. <[www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A21a023](http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A21a023)>]). In Lotto’s painting, Athena may be invoked by the central tree, which may show her sacred olive. See Brown, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 79. Lotto also depicted landscapes that correspond to Virgil’s descriptions of the cultivation of the olive and the vine: the “churlish kind [of soil] / On grudging hills—lean clay, pebbles and scrub,” which “welcomes the long-lived olive-trees of Pallas,” on the left; “the soil that’s rich, / Blessed with sweet moisture, . . . lush / with herbage, teeming with fertility / . . . Such land one day will yield you vines most potent, / With Bacchus overflowing, rich in grapes, / Rich in the liquid poured from golden vessels. . .,” on the right (*Georgics* II.179-181, 183-195; also I.1-18; II.2-8).

<sup>193</sup> Propertius, *Elegies* IV.6.75-76, trans. G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

<sup>194</sup> Brown says that these have been “abandoned [by the satyr] in his pursuit of vice” (*Lorenzo Lotto*, 79).

thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is beside himself, and reason is no longer in him.”<sup>196</sup>

#### THE SATYR AND NYMPH, REVISITED: THE SATYR FAMILY

Just as intoxication offered one road to enthusiasm, love contributed another. So the unveiling of the nymph by a satyr symbolized the awakening of physical desire only so that it may be transformed by a higher passion. Lust would be subsumed by true Love and be transformed into a desire to contemplate divine Beauty, of which the material specimen was merely a reflection. A painting of an *Allegory* attributed to Pietro degli Ingannati recasts almost the identical iconography of Lotto’s cover, but with the insertion of a satyr discovering a sleeping nymph in the right half of the panel alongside a crouching satyr holding a wine jug (fig. 4.40).<sup>197</sup> It is presumed that now “lechery as well as drunkenness” have been included on the side of vice.<sup>198</sup> But as we saw in Lotto’s panel, this iconography did not entail such a narrowly moralistic reading. On the right, the tripartite combination of wine, love, and sleep embody one mode of accessing Neoplatonic transcendence, while the putto on the left demonstrates the complementary path, that of diligence and rational thought employed in the *studia humanitatis*. It becomes a contrast of *ars* or learned skills with *ingegno*. With the insertion of the by-then-

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<sup>195</sup> Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 50-52.

<sup>196</sup> Plato, *Ion* 534b, trans. Cooper, 220.

<sup>197</sup> The work is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. A date of c. 1505 to 1530 seems reasonable for this work, since the *Allegory* is clearly derivative and thus subsequent to Lotto’s 1505 panel. It appears that this panel also served as a cover for a portrait, perhaps a *Portrait of a Lady* in Berlin or another in the Kress Collection in the Portland Art Museum. See Brown, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 80. The arms on the shield lying at the foot of the tree have been identified as those belonging to the Contarini family. Ruvoldt postulates that the panel served as a cover for a male portrait, perhaps of Gasparo Contarini (1483-1542), a Venetian humanist who became a cardinal and church reformer (*The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 117 and n. 82).

<sup>198</sup> Brown, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 80.



stereotypical motif of the satyr discovering a sleeping nymph, the artist has incorporated into his image another level of meaning for the satyr: he evokes the concept of *Necessitas* and of the place of procreation in the necessary cycles of regeneration in the earthly realm.<sup>199</sup> The nude woman becomes like the Venus Genetrix from which all life flows, sleeping in the Arcadian garden of a lost shared past. There is an innocence to this satyr's actions; despite a reputation for lust, he seems actually to be weak, old, and cautious. Both satyrs appear more curious about the industrious putto to the left than the beautiful nude between them. The glimpse of beauty may likewise arouse the viewer, but also stimulates him to ascend to the heights of more elevated contemplations. The act of unveiling performed by the satyr, as he did for Bacchus when he first laid eyes on Ariadne, inspires Love, not lust, because it is the unveiling of Beauty. It is not an act of mere titillation and voyeurism, but an epiphany.

Other satyr imagery was invented to harness and articulate an idea of pastoral nostalgia and sexual innocence. A statuette of a satyr and satyress in amorous embrace attributed to Riccio epitomizes the trend to infuse these supposedly base creatures with melancholy humanity (fig. 4.41).<sup>200</sup> The combination of male and female as satyr and nymph is modulated by the transformation of the woman into a hybrid she-goat, a satyress. Together, they harken back to a mythical, prehuman world. They are nature at its simplest, but are also human-like, and thus unite the emotive and expressive forces at work in man: the wild and the rational that characterizes the inner action of human experience. Their sexuality is not groping or lewd, but

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<sup>199</sup> The image may also reflect contemporary imagery of the Ovidian myth of Priapus discovering the sleeping Lotis, as in the woodcut illustrating Giovanni de' Bonsignori's *Ovidio metamorphoses vulgare* (Venice, 1497 and 1501) or Gentile Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, 1514, for Alfonso d'Este.

<sup>200</sup> Riccio, *Satyr and Satyress*, c. 1510-1520, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Martineau, *The Genius of Venice*, cat. S23, pp. 377-378, dated c.1507-1516; Beck and Blume, *Natur und Antike in der Renaissance*, cat. 166, pp. 463-465. The intertwined composition of two figures may owe a debt to the antique configuration of Pan and Daphnis in the Uffizi, discussed above.

touching and gentle, her thigh draped intimately over his (although at the same time this reveals a glimpse of her genitalia).<sup>201</sup> The satyr attempts to draw her lips to his. She is cool yet receptive; unlike an ill-tempered maenad, she does not attempt to thwart his advances. Her arm is around his shoulder, drawing him closer even as she keeps his kiss at bay. His longing look and the tension in his neck as he stretches toward her convey earnestness. They seem truly to depict a couple in love, and this harmony complicates any condescending view of their vice or bestiality. Rather, it aptly expresses the ambivalence of man in relation to nature and his complicated relationship to love and sexuality. The Bacchic paradox—the union of opposing forces—is embodied in this provocative yet endearing image. The ecstasies of sexuality, when manifested by these otherworldly persons, suppress any perverted eroticism or squeamish prudery by taking their passions into the mystical realm. The couple demonstrate the Bacchic ecstasy that transcends the physical and infuses them with the divine *furor* of the god.<sup>202</sup>

Around the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the iconography of the satyr family flourished, sometimes depicting the wife as a satyress, other times as a nymph.<sup>203</sup> The motif of

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<sup>201</sup> The “slung leg motif” was a conventional sign of copulation. See Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, 129, developing the insight of Leo Steinberg, in “The Metaphors of Love and Birth in Michelangelo’s *Pietàs*,” in *Studies in Erotic Art*, eds. Theodore Bowie and Cornelia V. Christenson (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 231-335.

<sup>202</sup> Waddington also observes: “Confirmation of the suspicion that natural sexuality should be joyous, life-enhancing, free of shame, comes not in the Garden of Eden but the Garden of Priapus, the rites of Bacchus, the pastimes of Pan” (*Aretino’s Satyr*, 11). Had Giulio Romano’s *I Modi* drawings shown satyrs and nymphs instead of human lovers, they might not have received such a vituperative backlash. For these works, see Talvacchia, esp. 31-35 and chap. 7: “The Retreat of Sexual Representation into Mythology.”

<sup>203</sup> It is interesting that the female partner varies from fully human to satyress, while the male is always partially animal. This suggests that the typical perception of female sexuality as indistinguishable from her flesh and body did not necessitate any conversion to bestiality in order to convey her closeness to nature and reproduction. A man, on the other hand, needed some transference onto the sub-human self to reach that same level of sensual earthiness. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Renaissance artists almost never depicted that virtually human male Bacchant ubiquitous in antique Bacchic iconography, who might be depicted like a maenad: with head thrown back, arms outstretched, one leg kicked back, thyrsus and *pardalis* at hand, as on the cameo attributed to Sostratus in the possession of Lorenzo de’ Medici (Dacos, *Il Tesoro de Lorenzo il Magnifico*, cat. 9). Another ancient example is on a Bacchic sarcophagus in the Museo delle Terme (Saxl, “Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance,” pl. 59-c).

the satyr's family was a contemporary invention that responded to several impulses, including a classical source in Lucian, who described a painting by Zeuxis that showed a family of centaurs (fig. 4.42).<sup>204</sup> Since a centaur and satyr were often interchangeable in the Renaissance (and even Lucian calls the centaress "satyr-like"), a preference for depicting the more humanoid satyress emerged (being more easily depicted sitting and nursing than a centaur).<sup>205</sup> Any bestial menace

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Instead, this ecstatic, erotic figure is ignored, subsumed by the far more approachable—by being distanced—goat-footed satyr.

<sup>204</sup> Lucian, *Zeuxis and Antiochus*, 3-6. See Holberton, "Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione," 296-297; Rosand, "Ekphrasis and the Generation of Images," 70. The reference is misstated in the Mantegna catalogue regarding a drawing after Mantegna of *Putti Playing with Masks*, following a common misconception that the Zeuxis painting was of a family of satyrs (Martineau, *Andrea Mantegna*, no. 149). The satyr family, however, appears to be truly a Renaissance invention. Philostratus describes a similar painting of female centaurs in *Imagines* II.3, but does not attribute it to Zeuxis, and one can find the subject depicted on ancient sarcophagi (Matz, *ASR*, III, no. 177). Lucian's *ekphrasis* reads, in part: "One of these daring pieces of his [Zeuxis] represented a female Centaur, nursing a pair of infant Centaur twins. [...] On fresh green-sward appears the mother Centaur, the whole equine part of her stretched on the ground, her hoofs extended backwards; the human part is slightly raised on the elbows; the fore feet are not extended like the others, for she is only partially on her side; one of them is bent as in the act of kneeling, with the hoof tucked in, while the other is beginning to straighten and take a hold on the ground—the action of a horse rising. Of the cubs she is holding one in her arms suckling it in the human fashion, while the other is drawing at the mare's dug like a foal. In the upper part of the picture, as on higher ground, is a Centaur who is clearly the husband of the nursing mother; he leans over laughing, visible only down to the middle of his horse body; he holds a lion whelp aloft in his right hand, terrifying the youngsters with it in sport. [...] You have in the husband a truly terrible savage creature; his locks toss about, he is almost covered with hair, human part as well as equine; the shoulders high to monstrosity; the look, even in his merry mood, brutal, uncivilized, wild. In contrast with him, the animal half of the female is lovely; a Thessalian filly, yet unbroken and unbacked, might come nearest; and the human upper half is also most beautiful, with the one exception of the ears, which are pointed as in a satyr. At the point of junction which blends the two natures, there is no sharp line of division, but the most gradual of transitions; a touch here, a trait there, and you are surprised to find the change complete. It was perfectly wonderful, again, to see the combination of wildness and infancy, of terrible and tender, in the young ones, looking up in baby curiosity at the lion-cub, while they held on to breast and dug, and cuddled close to their dam" (in *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, trans. H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler, vol. 2 [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1905], 95-96). That this text was known may be deduced from Botticelli's inclusion of a fictive architectural relief of a centaur family at the lower right on the throne of the judge in his *Calumny of Apelles*, c. 1497 (Uffizi, Florence). Botticelli depicts the infants, however, as satyrs, even though the parents are centaurs.

<sup>205</sup> Holberton, "Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione," 299. An indication of the interchangeability of the two species appears in Botticelli's *Calumny*, where the centaress nurses little satyrs, and in his *Pallas (or Camilla) and the Centaur* (Uffizi), where the centaur was described in an inventory of 1499 as a satyr. See Holberton, "Botticelli's 'Primavera': che volea d'intendesse," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 45 (1982): 203; Shearman, "The Collections of the Younger Branch of the Medici," *Burlington Magazine* 117 (1975): 12-27; Webster Smith, "On the Original Location of the *Primavera*," *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975): 31-40. When Dürer, inspired by his experiences in Italy, chose to engage the theme, he at first explored drawing a centaur family, perhaps in an effort to be more classically correct, then drew a nursing nymph accompanied by a centaur, and yet ultimately chose to engrave a satyr husband with a nursing nymph instead, surely in response to his Italian models. *Satyr's Family*, 1505, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Dürer's techniques and style, in turn, shaped many of his contemporaries in Italy. See Holberton, "Poetry and Painting," 299; Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cat. 140, fig. 17-21, p. 366.

or lewdness in images of a satyr approaching a sleeping nymph is absent in these placid, harmonious, and indeed “domestic” vignettes.<sup>206</sup> The satyr “husband” may play soothing music to his “wife,” while she sits near him contentedly, perhaps with their infant son. This rustic vision of conjugal love and fidelity *au naturel* grew out of the contemporary appreciation for the idyllic pastoral world, its nostalgia for a sweet and innocent time (including its sexuality), and a philosophy that saw profundity in the simple abundance spurred by innate, essential procreation. The concept that love and communality could bloom among satyrs and nymphs, in contrast to their perpetual chasing and raping, shared with certain myths, such as the Rape of the Sabine women or the Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs, the idea that harmony could arise from discord. Like Romulus and Remus, suckled by the she-wolf, savage nature could nurse into manhood heroes and leaders. Pietro Bembo similarly observed that all humans emerged from similar origins, naked, homeless, like wild beasts, before love lifted them up:

Perciò che ancora errarebbono gli uomini, sì come ci disse Perottino che essi da prima facevano, per li monti e per le selve ignudi e pilosi e salvaticchi a guisa di fiere, senza tetto, senza conversazione d’uomo, senza dimestichevole costume alcuno, se Amore non gli avesse, insieme raunando, di comune vita posti in pensiero.<sup>207</sup>

The popular image of the satyr family suggested that, in Arcadia, even the satyr experienced the elevating influence of Love and Beauty.

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<sup>206</sup> A glimpse of the interchangeability of this iconography with that of the Holy Family can be glimpsed in Jacopo de’ Barbari’s engraving of the meeting of the infants John and Jesus with Elizabeth, Mary, and Joseph, c. 1499-1501, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. See Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cat. 137. The women rest with the nude infants upon the earth and beneath a grape arbor while Joseph, with a gloomy countenance and ragged beard, stands apart at the bottom left, leaning against a rail. The natural setting, climbing grape vine, central female, and morose male all harken to the satyr family type. The Master of 1515’s *Satyr’s Family*, discussed below, also poses his family group in a fashion usually used to represent the Holy Family resting on the Flight to Egypt. See *ibid.*, cat. 164, p. 458.

<sup>207</sup> Bembo, *Gli Asolani* (1505), II, xix, quoted in Hoberton, “Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione,” 320. “For men, as Perottino said they did at first, would still be wandering up and down the mountains and the woods, as naked, wild, and hairy as the beasts, without roofs or human converse or domestic customs, had love not persuaded them to meet together in a common life” (trans. Rudolf B. Gottfried [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954], 112).

The Venetian printmaker Jacopo de' Barbari composed his *Satyr Family* in around 1503-1504 (fig. 4.43).<sup>208</sup> In a very simple setting, a noble, older-looking satyr stands leaning against a tall tree trunk, playing a viol to his satyress wife below. She lies as if in a cleft in the ground, nursing her infant satyr whose little horns look just like tufts of hair. The fur on her haunches is just visible as she slips into this fold in the earth.<sup>209</sup> The bright open setting and the empty sky make the satyrs appear accessible. Yet their closeness to the earth, so literally expressed in her being enfolded within it, at the same time transports them to a more primitive, earthy place and time. In an engraving of a *Satyr Family* by the Master of 1515, a contented scene is presented, in which a nude nymph sits upon a rock nursing her human infant and relaxes with her arm slung over the shoulder of the father of her children, a long-horned satyr (fig. 4.44).<sup>210</sup> He plays his panpipes gently to her and the baby, soothing and comforting them with his closeness and tenderness. Another infant sleeps upon the ground, his arms draped over the lip of a low vessel, forming a pillow for his head, recalling those Bacchanalian putti anesthetized by too much wine (fig. 4.44a). His sleep and the closed eyes of his parents contribute to a dreamy, soporific mood. A little brook babbles nearby, combining its song with the rustling reeds along the bank and the

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<sup>208</sup> Jacopo de' Barbari was born in Venice, c. 1460/70, and died in Northern Europe by 1516. His works are signed with a caduceus. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1943.3.939; Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, 5, p. 154, no. 19; Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, cat. 140.

<sup>209</sup> In his slightly earlier engraving of *Two Fauns* in the British Museum, Jacopo depicts a similar setting with one such human-legged faun seemingly buried up to his chest in this cleft. Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, fig. 17-20, p. 366; dated to c. 1501-1503. In that print, one faun guzzles wine from a bloated animal skin bag, while the other tucked in the earth plays the bagpipe.

<sup>210</sup> Master of 1515, probably Agostino Busti, known as "il Bambaia," 1483-1548, Milanese. *Satyr's Family*, c. 1510-1515, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1950.1.110; Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, 5, p. 289, no. 41; Levenson, Oberhuber, Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, cat. 164. The repeated appearance of nursing mothers in such family groupings, or in works like Giorgione's *Tempesta* as well, may reflect a Venetian tendency to urge maternal breastfeeding as opposed to the typical Florentine recourse to the wetnurse. Francesco Barbaro's *De re uxoria* ("On Marriage") early on urged the Venetian noblewoman to nurse her own children, if possible, since her milk will fashion "the properties of body and mind to the character of the seed" (trans. B. G. Kohl, "On Wifely Duties," in *The Earthly Republic*, ed. Kohl and R. Witt, 223, as quoted in Margaret L. King, *Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986], 97).

trained reeds of the satyr's pipe. Like the infant lulled to sleep by his mother's milk, and the other from his wine, the viewer is transported to this drowsy, dreamlike space that matches the idea of a pastoral fantasyland.<sup>211</sup> It is less a scene suggesting animal passion than one conveying an allegory of the pacifying effect of conjugal love.<sup>212</sup>

Giovanni Battista Palumba's *Faun Family* poses the amorous couple in the same configuration of the antique Daphnis and Pan that Riccio used for his *Satyr Couple* statuette (fig. 4.45).<sup>213</sup> The husband now has only the slightest indications of his satyr self, with leaf-like ears and hairy calves on human legs.<sup>214</sup> His old face and tired eyes appear to draw his nymph-wife's sympathy, as she places her hand gently on his chest and drapes her leg over his lap. Their clinging, whining son and growling dog hint at jealous resentment of their lovemaking, while the notoriously fecund rabbits nearby allude to their sexual union. There are glimpses of civilization in the distance, with buildings across the inlet and boats in the far waters.<sup>215</sup> The satyr has almost been elevated to a state of recognizable humanity. But the poignancy in his countenance suggests the impenetrable distance that still lies between him and his beloved, and even his son, who inherited his mother's human form and not his father's bestiality. For the patron admiring

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<sup>211</sup> So entranced is the viewer by the image that we do not at first notice the stunted right arm of the nymph or the missing left leg of the satyr, as Konrad Oberhuber points out. Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, 485.

<sup>212</sup> Sharon Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo: Fiction, Invention, and Fantasia* (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), 59.

<sup>213</sup> Giovanni Battista Palumba, known as the Master I.B. with the Bird from his mode of signature, active first quarter of the sixteenth century in Lombardy and Rome. *Faun Family*, c. 1507, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, 5, p. 256, no. 6; Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, cat. 161.

<sup>214</sup> The artist shows the influence of Mantegna with the leafy headdress and pointed ears of his satyr and in the bones in the right foreground.

<sup>215</sup> Palumba, like the other northern Italian engravers engaging this theme, shows a debt to Dürer in his depiction of the surrounding landscape and architecture. See Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, 448.

the print, this conflict played upon his own sense of superiority with a reminder of his unavoidable baseness, man being ever bound to nature.<sup>216</sup>

Certainly, the mood was not always one of unalloyed bliss. Benedetto Montagna engraved an image of a satyr family c. 1512-1520 in which a rather aged and pinched satyr stands at the edge of a wood playing his rustic recorder, while to the right the mother of his small satyr child prepares to whip their infant with a twig (fig. 4.46).<sup>217</sup> She is fully human and dressed, no less, in a contemporary gown, sandals, and headscarf. A pet cheetah with collar laps at a bowl of milk at the bottom right corner. The scraggly setting and open horizon beyond suggest the convergence of two worlds: the wild, rustic wood and the cultivated plain. This woman of the latter has crossed over to the natural realm, where she rears, and attempts to tame, her wild offspring. The image captures the idea of the proximity, yet difference, of the primitive, pastoral world, one that could for real men be accessed only in the imagination and in images. But there is a tone too of civilization's struggle to tame and control the natural world. The satyr father may have spread his seed, but the mother will not let her offspring succumb to primitivism.

#### LORENZO LOTTO'S *ALLEGORY OF CHASTITY*

The idea of a world where satyrs fall in love, and attain a harmony perhaps even superior to man's, is affirmed in works that explored the expansive emotional register of this imagery. In

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<sup>216</sup> See Douglas Lewis, in Leithe-Jasper, *Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*, 20-21.

<sup>217</sup> National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, inv. 1943.3.6242; Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, 5, p. 184, no. 35; Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, cat. 130.

a wide panel, perhaps a *spalliera*, Piero di Cosimo painted his *Death of a Nymph* (fig. 4.47).<sup>218</sup> The story may have derived from a play based upon the Ovidian tale of Cephalus and Procris by Niccolò da Correggio, in which he added satyrs and nymphs, including a faun who was in love with Procris.<sup>219</sup> The play was performed at the court of Ercole d'Este in celebration of the marriage of two Ferrarese nobles in 1487.<sup>220</sup> In the painting, however, Piero did not adhere to any text, but created his own unique invention. A youthful satyr, just sprouting his first whiskers, kneels at the head of a young woman, who has been fatally injured. His girl loins avoid any sign of lewdness, and the gentle touch of his hand on her shoulder and soft stroke of her hair from her face convey a deeply felt empathy for the beautiful victim. His sad brows and tear-filled red eyes exude the human, empathetic grief that has overtaken him at the sudden onset of tragedy. There is no sense that his emotions are anything less than profound; his power of touch takes him above the mute, ineffectual feeling of the accompanying dog. Piero's depiction manifests the full pathos of the story. The play had similarly described the lament of nymphs over Procris' body, including a call to all "woodland creatures" to join in their mourning:

Weep, mountain glades, rivers and streams,  
Mourn for her, you gods of the woods and hills:  
she who here lies dead, is now in the heavens,  
Nereids, Dryads, and nymphs of the springs  
all weep, and you, sacred semi-gods, of green oak divest your brows!  
Come and lament the death of she who, living,

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<sup>218</sup> Piero di Cosimo, c. 1495-1500, National Gallery, London. See Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo*, 49-54, dating the picture to c. 1500-1510; Dennis Geronimus, *Piero di Cosimo: Visions Beautiful and Strange* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 83-87.

<sup>219</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII.681-865 and *Ars amatoria* III.680-746. Niccolò da Correggio, *Cefalo*, published Venice 1507, commissioned by Ercole d'Este.

<sup>220</sup> Irving Lavin cites contemporary diarists' records of the performance on January 21, 1487, for the marriage of Cavaliere Giulio Tassoni and Ippolita, daughter of Niccolò Contrari ("Cephalus and Procris: Transformation of an Ovidian Myth," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 17 [1954]: 267). Geronimus asserts an earlier first performance, in 1475 for the wedding of Conte Guido Pepoli in Bologna, and then in 1477, for the wedding in Ferrara of Lucrezia d'Este and Annibale Bentivoglio of Bologna (*Piero di Cosimo*, 86 and n. 74). See Niccolò da Correggio, *Opere*, ed. Antonia Tissoni Benvenuti (Bari: G. Laterza, 1969).



enflamed a thousand hearts among you  
 with her purity and charm.  
 Leave your herds, and shepherds come  
 join in the sad and melancholy song  
 and make your tears a sacred wine.<sup>221</sup>

Not only do the dog and satyr share our deep feelings in response to her death, but, perhaps, Piero is pointing out that we are not, after all, so different from them—reminding the viewer of an elemental dilemma in understanding humanity’s nature, the “imperfect distinction” of man and beast.<sup>222</sup>

This ennobling tone is shared by a panel by Lorenzo Lotto: his so-called *Allegory of Chastity*, which likely served as a cover for a woman’s portrait (fig. 4.48, 49, 50).<sup>223</sup> In this image, a woman dressed chastely in yellow and white sits against a tree stump from which a few branches of laurel spring anew. From above, a winged putto scatters white blossoms into her lap. In the foreground a satyr bathes in a little pool, leaning against the rocky edge in a pose that nearly mimics the maiden’s, and urges one last drop of wine to spill from his pitcher onto his tongue. From behind a tree at the left, a satyress spies him and coyly smiles (fig. 4.51, 52, 53). Most modern scholars read the satyrs as symbolizing vile, bestial lust, which the maiden is

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<sup>221</sup> Translated in Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo*, 50, from the Italian edition by Tissoni Benvenuti, 39-40. *Cefalo*, Act IV, ll. 222-233, Galatea speaking: “Pianzete, silve, alpestri fiumi e rive, / pianziti, dei de’ boschi e dei di’ monti: / questa ch’è morta qui, su nel ciel vive. / Nereide, Driade, e voi, ninfe de’ fonti, / piangeti tuti, o sacri semidei, / de verdi querce denudati i fronti! / Veniti a pianger qui morta costei / che viva accese tra voi mille cori, / tanta vaga onestà se vide in lei. / Lassati ` vostri armenti, o voi, pastori, / veniti al mesto e obtenebrato canto: / le lacrime seran sacri liquori.”

<sup>222</sup> Douglas Lewis, in Leithe-Jasper, *Renaissance Master Bronzes from the Collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna*, 21. A contemporary fascination with the Aesopic fable as well as Leonardo da Vinci’s own *Bestiarioi* attest to this inclination to compare human and animal emotions. Leonardo’s text “consists of 100 short prose paragraphs encapsulating the ‘moral’ dimension of animals” (David Marsh, “Aesop and the Humanist Apologue,” *Renaissance Studies* 17 [2003]: 17). Piero di Cosimo also makes this point in his version of the *Battle of Lapiths and Centaurs* (c. 1505-1507, National Gallery, London), in which he places at the center the poignant embrace by the centaur Hylonome of her mortally wounded lover, Cyllarus. Here, too, the truest and most “human” emotion is expressed by “sub”-human creatures. See Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo*, 59.

understood to have overcome in elevating herself to an ideal of virtue and chastity.<sup>224</sup> The painting was at one time given the title “Sacred and Profane Love.”<sup>225</sup> Yet such a reading would imply that the satyrs embody the woman’s inner sexual fantasies—the part of herself she has overcome—an allusion surely insulting and embarrassing for its intended recipient. A contemporary viewer would have had in his imagination far more varied and subtle cues from which to draw his interpretation.

The erotic suggestions of the satyrs and the lush, verdant grove of their setting provide a metaphor for procreation and married sexual desire, a different kind of “chastity”—not celibacy but *pudicizia*: the purity, modesty, and fidelity (and condoned sexuality) of the virtuous wife.<sup>226</sup> As in the prints depicting satyr families, conjugal love is understood to have the power to tame physical passions. And in the Paradise of the poet-artist’s imagination, the passions of animals have a certain prelapsarian innocence. An allusion to female sexuality may be gathered from the satyress’s eager glance at her compatriot. Her flirty gaze and smile create a lighthearted erotic tone. She may imply that the maiden too should seek and enjoy sexual union with her husband.<sup>227</sup> Indeed, the shower of blossoms falling into the maiden’s lap suggests fertility and

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<sup>223</sup> Sometimes called the “Maiden’s Dream,” c. 1506, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. For this painting, see Brown, *Lorenzo Lotto*, cat. 5, 84-87. It is proposed that the panel may have served as a cover for the *Portrait of a Lady* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Dijon (*ibid.*, cat. 4).

<sup>224</sup> Brown affirms the standard interpretation, saying “the allegory signifies the overcoming of bestial desires, a sublimation achieved... through the lady’s ‘Quies’ or repose” (*Lorenzo Lotto*, 87).

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>226</sup> Callmann, *Beyond Nobility*, xxii; Baskins, “*Il Trionfo della Pudizia*: Menacing Virgins, 117-119.

<sup>227</sup> Rona Goffen asserts that women’s sexuality was intended to be satisfied within the confines of marriage (“Renaissance Dreams,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 40 [1987]: 699-701). Indeed, virginity or frigidity in marriage was itself a sin, as much as sex without marriage would be. Botticelli’s *spalliere* illustrating Boccaccio’s story of Nastagio degli Onesti illustrate the brutal fate faced by a woman who proudly rejects legitimate marriage. A woman could not “remain willfully barren and sterile” (Christina Olsen, “Gross expenditure: Botticelli’s Nastagio degli Onesti panels,” *Art History* 15, no. 2 [1992]: 160). See also Ellen Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 44.

love. As Poliziano wrote of Venus and Mars in a post-coital embrace: “[A] cloud of roses showered down upon them to renew them for their amorous pursuits.”<sup>228</sup> The motif recalls Botticelli’s representation in the *Primavera* of Flora, her dress bursting with flowers that spew from the mouth of her former self. The purity of this maiden, indicated by her white garments, implies that the floral rain may even be understood as a divine intervention.<sup>229</sup> Lotto’s picture may have been commissioned for or by a new bride, or young wife, who would have hoped within the chaste confines of her marriage to ensure the birth of new generations of heirs.<sup>230</sup> It would have hung (with the portrait) in the couple’s bedroom, and thus it is possible that the image may, in fact, have served an apotropeic function to guarantee her fertility.<sup>231</sup> This was not an unusual function for private art. On the contrary, among elite patrons (for whom the production of offspring was a crucial aspect of maintaining property, matrimonially incurred political ties, and succession), there were “profound anxieties” about procreative fecundity.<sup>232</sup> Anything that served to assist or augment the odds of success was esteemed. Some sixteenth-century medical theory regarding conception actually encouraged female orgasm as contributing

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<sup>228</sup> *Stanze per la Giostra* I.122: “di rose sopra a lor pioveva un nembo per rinnovarli all’amorosa traccia” (trans. Quint, 62-63).

<sup>229</sup> Götz Pochat, “Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto and Petrarchism in Venice Around 1500,” *Word and Image* 1 (1985): 11-12.

<sup>230</sup> Indeed, this was a wife’s primary purpose. In his *De re uxoria*, Barbaro articulated the common conception of marriage as “a perpetual joining of man and wife, legitimately instituted for the purpose of procreating children and the avoidance of fornication” (“Est igitur conjugium viri et uxoris perpetua conjunctio procreandae sobolis vel vitandae fornicationis causa legitime instituta”) (as quoted in King, *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance*, 93 and n. 5).

<sup>231</sup> Regarding the potential apotropeic function of imagery in the bedroom, see Goffen, “Renaissance Dreams,” 701, 704-705; Gombrich, “Apollonio di Giovanni,” 21.

<sup>232</sup> Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 231 and passim. Lorenzo Lotto himself was not averse to depicting these themes; his painting of *Venus and Cupid* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), showing Cupid urinating through a ring alludes to a commonly held belief in such an act as a cure for impotency. “Lotto’s imagery reads as an amuletic sign, which... was probably intended to protect the procreative

an essential emission. Such an idea served to justify female sexuality as a necessary component of reproduction.<sup>233</sup> Physicians also agreed that if a woman wished to conceive a boy that she should lie on her right side after intercourse, which may explain why this maiden (and so many sleeping nymphs and Venuses) rests on her right.<sup>234</sup>

The woman, who reclines with head in hand in a traditional pose of sleep, is actually awake. Her opened eyes recall the ancient epithalamia that called the goddess Venus to end her slumber and attend to the wedding celebrations.<sup>235</sup> Though shown dressed (perhaps out of modesty if it is a portrait of the actual bride), the maiden is positioned in a pose very similar to the Venus Genetrix in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, with her head in the right hand and the left hand resting on her thigh.<sup>236</sup> The putto then becomes Cupid, who initiates love, without which there cannot be birth. The flowers represent blossoming life, and become a metaphor for the seeds, or semen, entering her.<sup>237</sup> Lotto's maiden conjures the idea of spring, and consequently the fertility and lushness of a renewed earth and body. In neo-Aristotelian medical

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potency of the painting's married owners/beholders from pernicious spells" (ibid., 224, referring to Joanne Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Renaissance Venice* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 76-78).

<sup>233</sup> Goffen, "Renaissance Dreams," 698-699; idem, *Titian's Women*, 152-153; Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 94, n. 9, in reference to the self-stimulating gesture of Giorgione's Dresden *Venus* and Titian's *Venus of Urbino*. See also Rosand, "'So-and-so Reclining on Her Couch,'" 109-110.

<sup>234</sup> Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 153.

<sup>235</sup> Anderson, "Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus," 338. Several epithalamia describe Venus sleeping or resting in her sacred grove, where spring reigns eternal. Statius, Claudian, Sidonius Apollinaris, and Ennodius all visit this theme. See especially Statius' *Silvae* I.ii.101-102. Claudian, "Epithalamium dictum Palladio V.C. tribuno et notario et Celerinae," *Carmina minora* XXV.1-10: "Forte Venus blando quaesitum frigore somnum / vitibus intexti gremio successerat antri / densaque sidereos per gramina fuderat artus / adclinis florum cumulo; crispatur opaca / pampinus et musto sudantem ventilat uvam. / ora decet neglecta sopor; fastidis amictum / aestua et exuto translucent pectore frondes."

<sup>236</sup> Anderson, "Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus," 337, fig. 202. The pose recalls that of Venus on an ancient gem in the Staatliche Museum.

<sup>237</sup> Liber Pater was literally understood as the patron of seminal emissions (with Libera correspondingly in charge of female seed), and was therefore worshipped with the image of the phallus, and was associated with trees (like pine,

theory, spring was the optimal season for the conception of children.<sup>238</sup> Spring was likewise associated with satyrs and Pan, who appear in affiliation with the Liberalia of March in ancient illustrations and also in later sixteenth-century engravings of the season (fig. 4.54).<sup>239</sup> The bird (perhaps a woodpecker) in the tree above the satyress (and the increasingly verdant grass and trees around the maiden and satyrs) suggests the influx of spring weather and the renewal it brings, but could itself be a synonym for “phallus” (fig. 4.55).<sup>240</sup> The flowing stream descending towards the foreground and the warmly lit sky blushing the few remaining clouds with golden and rose hues suggests the recent passing of a shower, mimicked in the cascade of flowers from the amor above. The sprouting laurel behind the girl further typifies the revived landscape, and embodies her hopes for offspring.

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fig. and myrtle) and flowers. See Augustine, *City of God* VI.9, VII.2, VII.21. Also Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 157-159, 164-165.

<sup>238</sup> Colantuono attests to Spring as the prime libidinal season for the procreation of children (*Titian, Colonna, and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 29-32 and passim, fig. 0.1).

<sup>239</sup> The illustration for March in the Chronograph of 354 A.D. shows a satyr with a leaping he-goat, as well as three baskets, two birds, and a larger handled vessel. The bird on the left actually looks very similar to the black and white bird depicted by Lotto in the tree of this painting (Otto J. Brendel, “The Hora of Spring,” in *The Visible Idea*, 83-89, fig. 4). See also Dempsey, *The Portrayal of Love*, showing later northern European prints and drawings that nonetheless derive in great part from Florentine pageant imagery from the age of Lorenzo de’ Medici (40-41, figs. 3-5). The engraving by the master Monogrammist AP of *Spring* (British Museum, London) shows the three months of spring (March, April, and May) and on the left, near the banner of “Mars,” decorated with a goat, are labeled figures of Orpheus and Pan, among others, and in the distance “Dionysius,” attending the pruning of the grapevines. The trees are still barren, and there are ships foundering in the storm-tossed sea. Holding two and wearing another wreath of ivy or grape, Liber Pater stands at the fore of Flora’s chariot under the banner of “Aprilis.” Brummer notes that the figure in the left background of Signorelli’s *Court of Pan* who is seated similarly to the maiden in Lotto’s painting may not represent Melancholia, as André Chastel (“Melancholia in Sonnets of Lorenzo,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 [1945]: 61-67) believes, but rather may herself be a personification of spring (“The Cleopatra,” 177, n. 47).

<sup>240</sup> The Italian word for bird, “uccello,” is and was slang for “dick,” and appeared in Renaissance plays. See Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero, eds., *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). To the right, on the rolling hill beyond them, the grass is still brown and the trees more golden. The bird could be an erotic reference to fertility, commonly invoked in epithalamia and in Renaissance *facetiae* and imagery. Anderson, “Giorgione, Titian, and the Sleeping Venus,” 340.

Spring was itself synonymous with love in the poetry of the *dolce stil nuovo*.<sup>241</sup> This maiden embodies a vision of love echoing the style and imagery of Petrarch, who had a lasting impact on the literary and visual arts of Venice and the Veneto. Her portrayal recalls much of his description of his beloved Laura in his *Canzone* 126:<sup>242</sup>

Chiare fresche et dolci acque  
ove le belle membra  
pose colei che sola a me par donna,  
gentil ramo ove piacque  
(con sospir mi rimembra)  
a lei di fare al bel fianco colonna,  
erba et fior che la gonna  
leggiadra ricoverse  
co l'angelico seno,

Da' be' rami scendea  
(dolce ne la memoria)  
una pioggia di fior sopra 'l suo grembo,  
et ella si sedea  
umile in tanta gloria,  
coverta già de l'amoroso nembo;  
qual fior cadea sul lembo,  
qual su le trecchie bionde  
ch' oro forbito et perle  
eran quel dì a vederle,  
qual si posava in terra e qual su l'onde,  
qual con un vago errore  
girando pareva dir: "Qui regna Amore."<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Holberton, "Botticelli's 'Primavera,'" 204-206. Spring "quickens" love in Petrarch's *Rime*, Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, Lorenzo de' Medici's sonnets, and Petrarch's *Stanze*, but was also a common trope.

<sup>242</sup> Pochat, "Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto," 7-10; Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo, "*Laura tra Polia e Berenice* di Lorenzo Lotto," *Artibus et Historiae* 13, no. 25 (1992): 109.

<sup>243</sup> Petrarch, *Canzone* 126, ll. 1-8, 40-52, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems: The Rime Sparse and Other Lyrics*, trans. and ed. Robert M. Durling (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 245-247. "Clear waters, fresh and sweet, / where she who is my lady, / my only one, would rest her lovely body; / gentle branch that pleased her / (with sighing, I remember) / to make a column she could lean against; / grass and flowers which her gown, / graceful and rich, concealed, / and her angelic breast, / ... / From lovely branches fell / (how sweet to recollect this) / a rain of flowers on her precious bosom, / and she sat humbly there / in such a cloud of glory, / a loving nimbus that surrounded her; / some flowers on her skirt / and some in her blond hair— / like pearls set on gold / they seemed to me that day; / while one was landing gently on the earth, / another twirled around, / as if to say, 'Now here is where Love reigns'" (in *The Poetry of Petrarch*, trans. David Young [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004], 101).

Lotto's maiden also sits beneath a "rain of flowers" and appears as if part of a vision, in a long line of visions from Petrarch's and Boccaccio's to Poliphilo's.<sup>244</sup> As an object of love in the tradition of the *dolce stil nuovo*, she seems an imperturbable, incorruptible, and unattainable figure. Lotto's "Bride as Venus/Flora/Laura" is set within an Arcadian garden of love, inhabited by fresh streams, cool ponds, verdant woods, and amorous satyrs.<sup>245</sup> The laurel signified the chastity of married love—that is, condoned sexuality.<sup>246</sup> Like the Venus at the center of Botticelli's *Primavera*, the maiden evokes the look of a netherworldly goddess, not ancient or contemporary, but the epitome of virtuous, perfect, sublime Beauty.<sup>247</sup> The satyrs, though not crudely libidinous, allude to the sensual passions that the "goddess"—and the viewer, by virtue of his contemplation of her purity—has transcended. As Boccaccio described this transformation in *Ameto*: by sublimating passion and learning about love from the nymph, "d'animale bruto, uomo divenuto essere li pare."<sup>248</sup>

In Lotto's painting we see that the satyrs do not threaten the maiden or engage in explicit fornication. Rather, in this lush setting, their sensuality equates to fertility; their proximity to nature ensures the natural cycles of generation.<sup>249</sup> As in antiquity itself, which began its own

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<sup>244</sup> Pochat, "Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto," 10.

<sup>245</sup> The difficulty of precisely identifying the meaning of women in Venetian portraits of this time is articulated by Anne Christine Junkerman, "The Lady and the Laurel: Gender and Meaning in Giorgione's *Laura*," *Oxford Art Journal* 16, no. 1 (1993): 49-58. Titian's *Venus of Urbino* might be a pin-up prostitute or the ideal chaste wife. For the former, see Hope, "Problems of Interpretation in Titian's Erotic Paintings," 117-120; for the latter, Rosand, "'So-and-So Reclining on Her Couch,'" 101-119.

<sup>246</sup> Junkerman, "The Lady and the Laurel," 51.

<sup>247</sup> Holberton, "Botticelli's 'Primavera,'" 203.

<sup>248</sup> *Comedia delle Ninfe Fiorentine* xlvi: "from brute animal, it seemed to him he became a man."

<sup>249</sup> As Platina writes in his cookbook-cum-guide to life and love, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*, IX.38, "On Truffles": "This food is nourishing, as pleases Galen, and indeed very much so, and arouses passion. Hence it is that the aphrodisiac tables of voluptuaries and nobles often use it that they may be more ready for passion. If that is done for fertility, it is praiseworthy, but if it is really done for libidinous behavior, as many idle and immoderate people

euemeristic and allegorical traditions, the sixteenth-century artist has continued the idea of exhibiting the phenomena of nature in the metaphors of animating creatures. The idyllic, oneiric setting—this *locus amoenus*—and the maiden’s trance-like appearance create the impression that she is just waking to a vision, in which she sees that Nature and Love will bring forth new life in her womb.

This positive interpretation of sensual love can be found in the writing of Lotto’s near contemporary Pietro Bembo, a Venetian patrician humanist and famous lover.<sup>250</sup> A main character in some of Bembo’s early *carmina* was in fact Faunus, a Pan-satyr figure that embodied for the author the voice of passion, instinct, and love—the stirrings created in man by the sight of a beautiful woman. Faunus embodied not just base physicality, but was also the patron of the poet’s craft and “the witty, self-mocking, but also earnest, lover” all rolled into one.<sup>251</sup> Lotto’s romantic Arcadian vision is shared by Bembo’s dialogue *Gli Asolani* about life at the court of Caterina Cornaro. There, one lovesick character looks with envious comparison at the easy relationship of two woodland creatures while his human beloved is cruelly diffident:

Qualor due fere in solitaria spiaggia  
girsen pascendo simplicette et snell  
per l’erba verde scorgodi lontano,  
piangendo a lor comincio: o lieta e saggia

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are accustomed to do, it is entirely detestable” (“Alit hic cibus, ut Galeno placet, et quidem multum ac venerem ciet. Hinc est quod hoc crebro utantur venereae delicatorem ac lautorum mensae quo in venerem promptiores sint. Ad genituram si id fit laudibile, sin vero ad libidinandum, ut plerique otiosi et intemperantes solent, detestandum omnino est”) (*Platina On Right Pleasure and Good Health: A Critical Edition and Translation of De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine*, trans. and ed. Mary Ella Milham [Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998], 411). Passion for the sake of fertility, in other words, is perfectly good.

<sup>250</sup> For Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), see Hugh Shankland, trans. and ed., *The Prettiest Love Letters in the World: Letters between Lucrezia Borgia and Pietro Bembo 1503 to 1519* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1987); Bembo, *Lyrical Poetry, Etna*, trans. Mary P. Chatfield (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, I Tatti Renaissance Library, 2005). Lucrezia Borgia was the focus of his third love “affair.” After stints in Urbino and Rome, and entry into the priesthood, Bembo ultimately settled in Padua, where he had three children with a former courtesan (and still became a cardinal).

<sup>251</sup> Mary Chatfield, introduction to Bembo, *Lyrical Poetry*, xiii.



vita d'amanti, a voi nemiche stell  
 non fan vostro sperar fallace e vano:  
 un bosco, un monte, un piano,  
 un piacer, un desio sempre vi tene;  
 io da la donna mia quanto son lunge?<sup>252</sup>

The sincerity and artlessness of primeval love appeals to the tortured courtier. Similarly, in Titian's *Concert Champêtre*, the urban youth seems to long for instruction from the rustic peasant; to hear the earthy music of reeds and dribbling water; and to feel the pneuma of nymphs.<sup>253</sup> The overly stylized, self-controlled courtier is contrasted with a dreamy embrace of a presumed purity, innocence, and authenticity. Satyrs may embody a lower form of love and sexuality, what Ficino called *amor ferinus* or *bestiale*, but such desire was nevertheless part of the natural order. A certain level of earthly *voluptas* was seen as enhancing the spiritual realm instead of the two being mutually exclusive.<sup>254</sup> As Lorenzo de' Medici would write: "A me pare si possa poco biasimare quello che è naturale: nessuna cosa è più naturale che l'appetito d'unirsi

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<sup>252</sup> *Gli Asolani* I, as quoted by Pochat, "Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto," 11; "When I perceive two simple creatures, wild / And nimble things, who feeding stray afar / Through grassy vacancies of green terrain, / With tears I say to them, 'O wise and mild / Your lovers' life, for whom no hostile star / Can make your hopes delusory and vain. / One grove, one hill, one plain, / One wish, one pleasure ever holds you both. / But from my lady dear how wide am I!...'" (trans. Rudolf B. Gottfried [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954], 64).

<sup>253</sup> There is an extensive literature on this painting, including a long debate regarding its authorship. For a summary, see Jaynie Anderson's catalogue entry in *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting*, ed. David Alan Brown and Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (Washington, DC, and Vienna: National Gallery of Art and the Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2006), cat. 31, pp. 168-171.

<sup>254</sup> See Pochat, "Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto," 3, 10-11. This defense of sensual love has a long history, and could be found in the work of Lorenzo de' Medici, as in his *Commentary on my Sonnets*. See Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, 44-52: "The theory of love and beauty which furnished the doctrinal basis for his sonnets is strongly influenced by Ficino and Platonism; but the ascetic tendency of Christian Neoplatonism is replaced by an unworried acceptance of sensual love" (44); "Lorenzo's language is frequently as Platonic as that of the *trattati d'amore*, but his real attitude toward love is frankly sensual. [...] Lorenzo almost reverses the traditional Platonic ladder of humanist love treatises in which the senses occupied the lowest rung on the ladder" (52). In *Il libro del cortegiano* (1528) (and in which Bembo is cast as one of the main characters), Castiglione has his characters raise objections to the idealized notion of platonic love, asserting that to love beauty so abstractly but not to possess that beloved physically is an unviable fantasy. See Krayer, "The Transformations of Platonic Love," 85

colla cosa bella, e questo appetito è stato ordinator dalla natural negli uomini per la propagazione umana, cosa molto necessaria alla conservazione dell'umana spezie."<sup>255</sup>

#### SILENUS: PIERO DI COSIMO'S *BACCHANALS*

The suitability of satyrs and their ilk for marriage pictures is further attested to by a pair of *spalliere* painted by Piero di Cosimo for a Florentine patron around 1500 (fig. 4.56, 57).<sup>256</sup> As in his *Death of Procris*, Piero explores the pastoral theme for all its pathos. But in these scenes Piero adds the element of the *serio-ludere* by taking up the theme of the mockery and misfortunes of Silenus as told in Ovid's *Fasti*. The idea of Silenus as a sophomoric figure of fun made a clear impression on Renaissance audiences, being well-suited to the sophisticated but also biting humor of the court.<sup>257</sup> In antiquity Silenus had a wide and varied career, from wise tutor of the infant Bacchus, who along with the nymphs of Nysa helped to rear the young foundling god, to aged satyr, bloated with wine and laughably effete. The old man on a donkey, drooped, flaccid, and supported by fellow satyrs, was an instantly recognizable motif. The over-

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<sup>255</sup> Quoted in Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, 46: "It seems to me that one may scarcely blame what is natural. Nothing is more natural than the appetite of uniting with a beautiful object, and this appetite has been ordained in men by nature for human propagation, a very necessary thing for the conservation of the human species." For an analysis of Lorenzo's complete text, see Angelo Lipari, *The Dolce stil novo according to Lorenzo de' Medici: A Study of his poetic principio as an interpretation of the Italian literature of the pre-Renaissance period, based on his Comento* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936); and *The Autobiography of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent*, trans. Cook. Similarly, Mario Equicola (c. 1470-1525), who studied with Ficino in Florence before entering the service of Isabella d'Este in Mantua, wrote in his *Libro di natura d'amore* (written 1494-1496, published Venice 1525): love is "quella cupidità per la quale semo tirati a generare et parturire nel bello" ("that desire by which we are drawn to procreate and give birth in beauty") (as quoted in Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, 114).

<sup>256</sup> *The Discovery of Honey*, oil on panel, 31.25 x 50.25 in., Art Museum, Worcester, MA. *The Misfortunes of Silenus*, same dimensions, oil on panel, The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA. Both variously dated c. 1500-10. Schubring gave the pictures to Bartolomeo di Giovanni (*Cassoni*, nos. 391-392). Panofsky dates the pictures to c. 1498 (*Studies in Iconology*, n. 69). The paintings were commissioned by a member of the Vespucci family, possibly Guidantonio di Giovanni Vespucci on behalf of his son, Giovanni di Guidantonio and his bride, Namicana di Benedetto Nerli, who were wed in 1500. See Geronimus, *Piero di Cosimo*, 100; Barriault, *Spalliera Paintings*, 152, no. 11.

the-hill satyr's oversexed impulses and gluttonous desires were long the stuff of humor. But fifteenth-century Florentines were also aware of Plato's description of Socrates as looking like Silenus; Leonardo Bruni had early on translated this text in a letter to Cosimo de' Medici.<sup>258</sup> Ficino understood that this comparison served to suggest that wisdom and intelligence could hide under even the ugliest surfaces. Despite this elevating strand of interpretation, the laughable, sorry old Silenus was the more fashionable figure to portray.

Piero's works were described by Vasari:

For Giovanni Vespucci, ...he executed some bacchanalian scenes [*alcune storie bacchanarie*], which are arrayed around a room. In these he made such strange fauns, satyrs, sylvan gods [*silvani*], putti, and bacchantes, that it is a marvel to see the diversity of the rucksacks and garments, and the variety of goatlike features, and all with great grace and most vivid truth to nature [*imitazione verissima*]. In one scene is Silenus riding on an ass, with many children, who support him and who give him a drink; and one sees a feeling of the joy of life [*letizia al vivo*], produced with great ingenuity [*ingegno*].<sup>259</sup>

The panels formed a typical pair of decorative furniture pieces, according to Vasari's own conventional language for describing the genre of *spalliera*-painting.<sup>260</sup> With their "molte figure piccole" set in a landscape, with "capriccio" and "fantasia," we have not just Piero's

<sup>257</sup> See Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, passim, and 46-48.

<sup>258</sup> Plato, *Symposium*, 215a-b, Alcibiades' speech. Leonardo Bruni, *Leonardi Arretini Epistolarum Libri VIII ad fidem codd. mss. suppleti, et castigati...*, ed. Laurentius Mehus (Florence: Bernardo Paperini, 1741), Vol. 2 (Pars secunda), pp. 70-76, liber septimus, epist. 1: "In Symposio Platonis amoenissimo omnium libro Socratis philosophi laudes festive simul, periteque enarrat Alcibiades. Ejus verba tibi mittere constitui in latinum sermonem traducta. Dico igitur, inquit Alcibiades, Socratem esse persimilem Silenis istis, qui ab Sculptoribus inter imagines figurantur, quos faciunt artifices fistulas aut tibias tenere. Qui si bifariam divisi, atque aperti sint, reperiuntur intus imagines habere Deorum. Rursusque eum dico persimilem esse Satyro Marsiae, & quod aspectu quidem persimilis eis es, ne tu quidem, o Socrates, negabis. [...]" See Chapter Five.

<sup>259</sup> Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, Panofsky's translation, *Studies in Iconology*, p. 59. "Lavorò per Giovan Vespucci, che stava dirimpetto a S. Michele della via de' Servi, oggi di Pier Salviati, alcune storie bacchanarie che sono intorno a una camera; nelle quali fece sì strani fauni, satiri, silvani, e putti, e baccanti, che è una maraviglia a vedere la diversità de' zaini e delle vesti, e la varietà della cere caprine, con una grazia e imitazione verissima. Evvi in una storia Sileno a cavallo su uno asino con molti fanciulli che lo regge e chi gli dà bere; e si vede una letizia al vivo, fatta con grande ingegno" (*Le Vite*, ed. Milanese, vol. iv, 141).

supposedly “bizarre” personality at play, but features in keeping with contemporary expectations of complexity, copiousness, and ingenuity.<sup>261</sup> The variety of figures and Piero’s ability to bring even the creatures of his imagination into a believable and realistic physicality are qualities Vasari praised in the artist’s work. His use of the term *stranezza* to describe Piero’s paintings indicated the “poetic faculty of imagination,” not mere “strangeness.”<sup>262</sup> *Fantasia* and *bizzarria* were not pejorative qualities, but features of a disciplined and effective artistic rendering.<sup>263</sup>

Compositionally, the paintings mirror each other: the central dip in the horizon line is at the same level in both paintings, and each forms—with the complementary arch of the figural composition below—a horizontal hourglass shape through the middle of the compositions. At the center of each is a tree, which stands at the crux of the “X” formed by the intersecting bands of landscape and characters.<sup>264</sup> In the *Discovery of Honey*, Piero di Cosimo took his cue perhaps from Mantegna’s *Bacchanal* engravings, depicting Silenus as a bald, overweight, flaccid man.<sup>265</sup> But without Mantegna’s portrait-like naturalism, Piero’s Silenus looks more like an overgrown baby: his head is overly large in proportion to his body while his arms and legs are short, and his facial expression is infantile. He rides his trademark donkey, but instead of slumping into the

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<sup>260</sup> Barriault, *Spalliera Paintings*, 52-55

<sup>261</sup> Cf. Panofsky, who reads the panels as largely a reflection and embodiment of Piero’s seemingly bizarre character and primitive lifestyle (*Studies in Iconology*, 65-67). This assessment derives from Vasari’s famous description of the artist’s personal habits and disposition. However, as Paul Barolsky and others convincingly demonstrate, Vasari’s biographical strategy was poetical in itself and inextricably entwined with his project of persona- and legend-building. As Barolsky says, Vasari “expresses Piero’s biography out of his paintings and siphons it off.... [He] metamorphosed Piero’s painted pastoral poetry into the rustic poetry of biography” (Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden*, 93).

<sup>262</sup> Barolsky, *Faun in the Garden*, 93.

<sup>263</sup> Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo*, 112-116.

<sup>264</sup> This corollation between landscape and figures is characteristic of Piero’s large-scale religious works as well, as in his *Innocenti Altarpiece* for the Ospedale degli Innocenti, Florence, which has a similar “X”-shaped configuration. c.1495-1500, Galleria dello Spedale degli Innocenti, Florence.

arms of his companions, he laughs merrily, even deliriously, and, exceptionally, waves out of the picture at the viewer. In his happy oblivion, his “friends” take advantage of him, one slipping the strap of his little keg from his arm, another grabbing at his foot, and a third banging a frying pan behind his head, of which he appears to take no notice. As in Mantegna’s engraving, this Silenus is about to be crowned, as a little satyr perched on the donkey’s rump holds up a wreath of grape leaves above his head.

The story represented here and continued in the next panel derives from a text that was popular in Piero’s Florence: Ovid’s *Fasti*.<sup>266</sup> In *Fasti* III.16 Ovid described the celebration of the Liberalia in honor of Bacchus, held on March 17. In order to explain the origin of the honey cakes (*liba*) offered to the god during these ceremonies, Ovid recounted Bacchus’ (that is, Liber’s) discovery of honey on his journey back from the East through Thrace. On that occasion, the clashing cymbals of the Bacchic retinue attracted a swarm of bees, which Bacchus promptly trapped into a hollow in a tree, whereupon honey was born. Subsequently, the tale includes a “pleasant jest,” as Ovid called it, a typical example of *Schadenfreude*:<sup>267</sup>

Once the satyrs and the bald-pated ancient had tasted it, they sought for the yellow combs in every grove. In a hollow elm the old fellow heard the humming of a swarm; he spied the combs and kept his counsel. And sitting lazily on the back of an ass, that bent beneath his weight, he rode the beast up to the elm, where the bark was hollow. Then he stood on the ass, and leaning upon a branching stump he greedily reached at the honey stored in the bole. Thousands of hornets gathered, and thrust their stings into his bald pate, and left their mark on his snub-nosed face. Headlong he fell and the ass kicked him, while he called to his comrades and implored their help. The satyrs ran to the spot and laughed at their parent’s swollen face: he limped on his hurt knee. Bacchus himself laughed and taught him to smear mud on his wounds; Silenus took the hint and smudged his face

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<sup>265</sup> See Chapter Five for further discussion of Mantegna’s *Bacchanals*.

<sup>266</sup> Panofsky notes that Angelo Poliziano gave public lectures on the *Fasti* and produced a commentary in Latin verse on the poem (*Studies in Iconology*, 61, n. 73).

<sup>267</sup> l. 738: “(non habet ingratos fabula nostra iocos).”

with mire. The father god enjoys honey, and it is right that we should give to its discoverer golden honey infused in hot cakes.<sup>268</sup>

In the *Discovery of Honey*, Bacchus is shown at the lower right with loose, curly locks, twin horns, and a wreath.<sup>269</sup> He bears a pleased smile and the red, shiny, bulbous nose of a drunk. His arm, wrapped around the shoulder of Ariadne, lightly fingers the curled handle of his silver drinking cup. With his other hand, he holds his ivy-entwined thyrsus like a club upon the ground. His hip-cocked pose and angled neck recall the Bacchus of Mantegna's *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*, but the latter's toned abdomen and restrained *contrapposto* have been replaced by a white, effeminate torso and youthful swagger.<sup>270</sup> His retinue of maenads and satyrs arrive from the left, beating kettles, pairs of tongs, and wine vessels. A satyr family lies on a blanket at the lower left, the satyress suckling her infant and appearing to be surprised by the noisy procession. They may represent the native denizens of this rustic area, who are not (yet) part of Bacchus' train. The panel appears to show the purposeful herding of bees away from the honeycomb. A little panisk perched in the central tree is poised with his stoppered jug, ready to drain the honey when the threat has passed.<sup>271</sup>

The second panel depicts the *Misfortunes of Silenus* as they are described in Ovid's text.<sup>272</sup> While the first panel appears as a single scene, the second shows Silenus three times, in

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<sup>268</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* III.16.745-762, trans. Frazer, 175-177.

<sup>269</sup> This looks to me to be of pine, but is nonetheless identified by Fermor as the ivy mentioned in the text.

<sup>270</sup> Cf. Perugino's renditions of St. Sebastian (his version in the Louvre, for example), who share this Bacchus' nipped-in waist and smooth, white skin.

<sup>271</sup> At the far right, along with a lion, a boar, and a monkey, appear other satyrs in the woods, some fighting, others climbing trees, in an effort to reach another beehive.

<sup>272</sup> It is in a more deteriorated state, stripped from over-cleaning (and expurgation of the priapic details); it has an overall orangey tone, with a lack of articulation in the groundcover and in the faces and bodies of the figures. Though the setting is similar to that of the first painting, it is not identical; the city on the left is now a town much further away, and the winding road and craggy cliff on the right are now a more gradually ascending hillside with a

non-sequential order, from the different episodes of Ovid's tale. At the center Silenus is tumbling from his ass, after reaching for a protruding branch high up on the old, gnarled tree that snaps under his weight. On the right, Piero depicts the comical effort to heave Silenus back to his feet, with two satyrs pulling, two pushing, and one using a lever. The rest fall over themselves laughing at the ridiculous sight. On the left, the satyrs, panisks, and maenads gather up mud in bowls, which they daub over Silenus' face and eyes, as he sits naked on the ground, in a posture of mock maenadic repose. Bacchus and Ariadne appear again on the very far left of the panel. Ariadne is one of the most finished figures in the painting, and wears the same clothes she wore in the first. Bacchus stands in a similarly sway-backed pose, but is severely thinned or unfinished, with numerous *pentimenti* in the legs visible to the naked eye. His right hand leans upon his *pedum* as if it were a cane, and Ariadne stands close behind him, her arm around his shoulder.<sup>273</sup>

The type of Silenus readily visible on antiquities—with his rotund belly, aged, snub-nosed satyr's face, and long beard—was altered dramatically over the course of the fifteenth century, so that he evolved from an elderly shepherd (fig. 4.58) to become more typically like Piero's depiction of an overgrown baby: round-bellied, short-limbed, and often with a more youthful pie-face (fig. 4.59).<sup>274</sup> This new version of the character is typified in Francesco Francia's drawing of a sacrifice, showing a youthful, beardless Silenus on an ass, with human

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little village below. The river and spring of the first painting are now missing. The tree too has changed, no longer with its gaping hole or standing in the midst of a valley clearing, but clinging to a barren mound as a stunted, bulbous aberration. Its zoomorphic appearance recalls the look of a taxidermic mounted buck.

<sup>273</sup> Panofsky interprets the *Discovery of Honey* in line with his reading of the Lucretian Early History of Man panels as part of an evolutionary progress of civilization. He reads the landscape consequently as a *paysage moralisé*, with the city on the left representing the rise of culture (*Studies in Iconology*, 63). How honey can be seen as a civilizing force, however, is unclear, and this interpretation does not tie in the second, clearly paired, panel.

Bacchants and a Pan in attendance (fig. 4.60).<sup>275</sup> This round, chubby-cheeked and flabby-chinned Silenus wears a wreath of grape leaves upon his head and holds a bunch of grapes in his hand, instead of a pitcher or bowl; indeed, these attributes may indicate that he is meant to be Bacchus instead. Francia's scene evokes the Bacchic retinue on its victorious return from India and of ancient sacrificial practices. The humor is evident in the bumbling servants, who exude their evident anxiety to appease their lord, who is merely an overgrown baby. By the time Peruzzi created his own Silenus grouping around 1518 in a frieze of the Sala delle Prospettive in Agostino Chigi's Villa Farnesina, this type of round, overgrown baby was codified (fig. 4.61).<sup>276</sup> Gradually, this youthful Silenus type coalesced with Bacchus, leading to representations of the god that were indistinguishable from the portrayal of his old companion. An artist in the school of Marcantonio Raimondi, for example, engraved a "baby Bacchus" being carried by satyrs in 1528, which derived its composition not from how Bacchus was shown on antiquities, but rather how Pan and Silenus were there portrayed in incapacitated, inebriated states (fig. 4.62, 63).<sup>277</sup>

This novel type of Silenus appears in several works that engaged the ludic theme of his misfortunes. A plaquette in the National Gallery of Art in Washington attributed to Caradossa (Cristoforo Foppa) shows Silenus attacked by maenads (fig. 4.64).<sup>278</sup> Here Silenus is made to

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<sup>274</sup> The former type can be seen in Jacopo Bellini's London drawing book, fol. 97v, or in Cima da Conegliano's panel in the Johnson Collection, Philadelphia, c. 1509, which originally was part of the Coronation of Ariadne now in Milan, and in Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, 1514, in which Silenus still appears like an elderly peasant.

<sup>275</sup> c. 1500, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.

<sup>276</sup> Rubinstein, "A Bacchic Sarcophagus in the Renaissance," fig. 170; Hall, *After Raphael*, 23-31.

<sup>277</sup> The engraving is in the British Museum, London. *The Illustrated Bartsch, vol. 26: The Works of Marcantonio Raimondi and of his School*, no. 215 (176). Compare to the ends of the sarcophagus in Subiaco (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 78), which shows Pan being carried by a Bacchant and two putti (who are recalled in the engraving) and Silenus being transported on a sheet.

<sup>278</sup> Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, cat. 49, fig. 78, attributed to Cristoforo Foppa, known as Caradossa (c. 1452-1526/7) of Milan, later Mantua and Rome.



suffer hideously. With at least seven women thrashing him with branches and battering him with clubs, his donkey has succumbed and Silenus—a round-faced, overgrown child—is about to be pulled from his mount. Within an atypical architectural as opposed to rustic setting, the artist depicts the beardless, overgrown baby type of Silenus tumbling to the ground along with his ass.<sup>279</sup> The subject might relate to Ovid’s recounting of the Bacchic retinue in his *Ars amatori* I.

There he described that the:

... wild-tressed Bacchanals, wanton  
 Satyrs, the god’s forerunners, appeared,  
 With drunken old Silenus, scarce fit to ride his swaybacked  
 Ass, hands clutching its mane,  
 As he chased the Maenads—the Maenads would flee and rally—  
 A dizzy rider whipping his steed ahead  
 Till he pitched off the long-eared ass on his head, and the satyrs  
 All shouted: ‘Up with you, Dad!  
 Come on up there!’ ....<sup>280</sup>

The words recount the uncoordinated creature tumbling with his ass to the ground, fallen upon by his younger companions who mock his drunkenness and incorrigible lechery. In the plaquette, the artist adopted the novel visual vocabulary of Silenus as a babyish, pancake-faced simpleton.

A bronze relief by Bertoldo di Giovanni, the so-called *Triumph of Silenus*, also conveys Silenus’ travails (fig. 4.65).<sup>281</sup> Here a rotund Silenus lies supine on a low wagon surrounded by eighteen putti and three panisks, one of whom he holds aloft. The wagon is tethered to two putti

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<sup>279</sup> A saggy-breasted woman—not unlike the figure of Envy in Mantegna’s engraving of the *Battle of Sea Monsters*—seizes the poor donkey by the ears, yanking his head back. This figure type will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

<sup>280</sup> Ovid, *The Art of Love* I.541-549, trans. Green, 183.

<sup>281</sup> c. 1460s, Bargello Museum, Florence. Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni*, 107-111, cat. 7. The piece is thought to have been commissioned by Piero de’ Medici. Giuliano di Piero de’ Medici appears to have had an object with a “bacchanal of satyrs sounding cymbals and rattles and playing various games with Medici palle.” The relief might have served as a decorative insert on a piece of furniture or a little casket or box for a table top.

who pull at their harnesses and bridles. A little panisk holds the reins, driving the wagon forward, while a putto brings up the rear, pushing with all his might at the back of the cart.<sup>282</sup> A little pan sits or stands at the back of the wagon, holding Silenus' head while Silenus tussles with the panisk above him at the same time as a putto appears to prod him in the face with some sort of staff or club. The scene is usually interpreted as a triumph of Silenus (though the depiction of such an episode is rarely seen on antiquities), with the little putto understood to be "tickling" Silenus' chin.<sup>283</sup> But on closer scrutiny, it appears that this rascally putto may in fact be opening Silenus' mouth so that the panisk above can stuff his face with grapes. This is not a "triumph" of Silenus after all, but rather is another depiction of the "misfortunes of Silenus"—here an attack by drunken putti and pans—perhaps related to Virgil's account of the punishment of Silenus in

*Eclogue VI:*

The lads Chromis and Mnasyllus saw Silenus lying asleep in a cave, his veins swollen, as ever, with the wine of yesterday. Hard by lay the garlands, just fallen from his head, and his heavy tankard was hanging by its well-worn handle. Falling on him—for oft the aged one had cheated both of a promised song—they cast him into fetters made from his own garlands. Aegle joins their company and seconds the timid pair—Aegle, fairest of the Naiads—and, as now his eyes open, paints his face and brows with crimson mulberries. Smiling at the trick, he cries: 'Why fetter me? Loose me, lads; enough that you have shown your power. Hear the songs you crave; you shall have your songs, she another kind of reward.' Therewith the sage begins. Then indeed you might see Fauns and fierce beasts sporting in measured dance, and unbending oaks nodding their crests. Not so does the rock of Parnassus rejoice in Phoebus; not so do Rhodope and Ismarus marvel at their Orpheus.<sup>284</sup>

In Bertoldo's relief, Silenus has been "kidnapped," perhaps while sleeping off a bender, and he is being carried away against his will by these little demons: one pan holds his head still while

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<sup>282</sup> This recalls the famous Medici gem, now in Naples, with "Bacchus" in triumph on a chariot pulled by psychi, where a little putto also pushes/pulls at the wheel.

<sup>283</sup> Draper, *Bertoldo di Giovanni*, 110.

another forcibly opens his mouth. Silenus attempts to keep the little pan above from him by pushing him away, but it is clear that the panisk will succeed in smearing his grapes in Silenus' face. This scene of playful "torture" is amusing in its mock-seriousness and jubilant tone. The simple moral may be to demonstrate the febleness and vulnerability induced by overindulgence; yet the superficial pleasure of the piece also hints at the pure joy of innocence, youth, and a little wine. It hints too at the gifts of "the aged one" described by Virgil: Silenus' timeless ballads may soon fill the air, granting music, spirit, and wisdom to his little disciples. "For he sang now, through the vast void, the seeds of earth, and air, and sea, and liquid fire withal were gathered together; how from these elements all nascent things, yes all, and even the young globe of the new world grew together...."<sup>285</sup>

While the mockery inherent in the pictures may seem jarring to us, it is evident that the humor these artists and Piero explored was inherent in the ancient texts themselves, and was not necessarily intended as ironic parody or satire.<sup>286</sup> Ovid, along with Horace and Lucian, had not been afraid to tamper playfully with mythology. In Lucian's *Dialogi deorum*, a lecherous Pan brags that he has slept with all of the maenads and many a nymph.<sup>287</sup> Virgil described the origin of Bacchic rites with a look and tone like Piero's raucous revel:

For no other crime is it [than nibbling the vines] that a goat is slain to Bacchus at every altar, and the olden plays enter on the stage; for this the sons of Theseus set up prizes for wit in their villages and at the crossways, and gaily danced in the soft meadows on oiled goatskins. Even so Ausonia's swains... disport with rude verses and laughter unrestrained,

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<sup>284</sup> Virgil, *Eclogue* VI, ll. 13-30, trans. Fairclough, 63.

<sup>285</sup> Virgil, *Eclogue* VI, ll. 31-34.

<sup>286</sup> Fermor, *Piero di Cosimo*, 46-48, 84-85. Panofsky preferred to see the picture as a "deliberate parody" (*Studies in Iconology*, 63).

<sup>287</sup> Lucian, *Dialogi deorum*, XXII.4, cited in Thomas F. Mathews, "Piero di Cosimo's *Discovery of Honey*," *Art Bulletin* 45 (1963): 359.

and put on hideous masks of hollow cork, and call on you, Bacchus, in joyous songs, and to you hang waving amulets from the tall pine. Hence every vineyard ripens in generous increase; fullness comes to hollow valleys and deep glades, and every spot towards which the god has turned his comely face. Duly, then, in our country's songs we will chant for Bacchus the praise he claims, bringing him cakes and dishes; the doomed he-goat, led by the horn, shall stand at the altar, and the rich flesh we will roast on spits of hazel.<sup>288</sup>

This type of rough sport had soteriological meanings as well. Like the putti frightening each other with the mask of Pan or Silenus, or Riccio's *spiritelli* tormenting a satyr with a similar mask in the depiction of the Bacchanal on his *Paschal Candelabrum*, images of farcical punishment evoked the spiritual notion of the purgation and chastisement of the body for the purpose of cleansing the soul (fig. 4.66, 67).<sup>289</sup> Like vomiting from intoxication, such physical discomfort pushed the spirit beyond the sensations of the earthly self. The childishness of such fears and torments emphasized the emptiness of these earthly terrors; material fears (of death, for example) would be replaced by the salvation of the soul promised by initiation.

This sort of excited, happy revel, with its notes of sensuality on the one hand and cruelty and melancholy on the other, was moreover an extant feature of Renaissance culture. Piero di Cosimo elicited the same sort of farce and bawdy humor—*buffa*—that was popular with both

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<sup>288</sup> Virgil, *Georgics* II, ll. 380-396, trans. Fairclough, 163-165. Augustine reports with disgust on these same sort of events as described by Varro, including “that the private parts of a man were worshipped in his honour. Nor was this abomination transacted in secret, that some regard at least might be paid to modesty, but was wantonly and openly displayed. For during the festival of Liber, this obscene member, placed on a car, was carried with great honour, first over the cross-roads in the country, and then into the city” (*The City of God*, VII.21, trans. Dods, 226).

<sup>289</sup> The image of putti frightening each other with a mask was a frequently occurring subject on bronze plaquettes intended to be installed on inkwells or sandboxes. An example is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. See Pope-Hennessy, *Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, cat. 361, fig. 303. See M. L. Evans, “Bartolommeo Sanvito and an Antique Motif,” *British Library Journal* 11 (1985): 123-130; Waldemar Deonna, “Éros jouant avec un masque de Silène,” *Revue archéologique* 3, 5th series (1916): 74-97. More sobering were depictions of the flaying of Marsyas, but these also conveyed the same idea of the peeling away of the earthly, material shell in order to arrive at higher things. See Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas*, 62.

common and courtly audiences.<sup>290</sup> The populist tradition of celebrating Carnival in fifteenth-century Italy exhibited and released the pent-up stress and energy and the suppressed sexuality and wildness of a people plagued by disease, poverty, and suffering.<sup>291</sup> Costumed parades, noisy trumpeting and banging of cymbals and homemade instruments, dancing, singing, and feasting—as well as public drinking—lasted for weeks from Christmastime to Fat Tuesday.<sup>292</sup> Carnival songs themselves, especially the *ballate*, were filled with “lubricious jocosity.”<sup>293</sup> Dancing or battling satyrs at wedding banquets served to thrill, delight, or startle. In other words, satyrs did not necessarily connote to Renaissance audiences mockery or scorn for human virtue or a manifestation of inner vice and human foibles, but could serve as figures of fun and pleasure. Indeed, the depiction of coarse humor and vulgarity had its root in antiquity, and was, therefore, quintessentially an *invenzione all’antica*.

Poking fun at Silenus, the prototype of the wise fool, was of a piece with a culture inclined to mock and jest, albeit with a sharp prick or slap. As Johann Huizinga writes: “The figure of Folly, of gigantic size, looms large in the period of the Renaissance.... People laughed loudly and with unconcern at all that was foolish.”<sup>294</sup> In his *Praise of Folly*, written in 1509, Erasmus had Folly declare: “Without me, the world cannot exist for a moment”; that is, people could not stand life or each other without “now and then... smearing themselves with some

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<sup>290</sup> See Maria Teresa Muraro, “La feste a Venezia e le sue manifestazioni rappresentative: le Compagnie della Calza e le *Momarie*,” in *Storia della cultura Veneta*, ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1981-3), 315-341. Also, Eric A. Nicholson, “‘That’s How It Is’: Comic Travesties of Sex and Gender in Early Sixteenth-Century Venice,” in *Look Who’s Laughing: Gender and Comedy*, ed. Gail Finney (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994), esp. 19-22.

<sup>291</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1994), 185-186.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-183.

<sup>293</sup> Bowra, “Songs of Dance and Carnival,” 341-342.

<sup>294</sup> Johann Huizinga, *Erasmus of Rotterdam*, trans. F. Hopman (London: Phaidon Press, 1952), 69.

honey of folly.”<sup>295</sup> The bumbling inebriate was of course an easy target of ridicule. Lorenzo de’ Medici himself had written a long poem describing and mocking his drunken friends and acquaintances entitled *I Beoni: ovvero il Simposio*.<sup>296</sup> Lorenzo examines the dissipated, degraded throngs, some with bodies spent by gluttony and excessive alcohol, who jostled about in a greedy surge to drink, without regard for personal space or decency:

I saw one group of twenty or fifteen  
together, bump and crash into each other  
like goblets floating in a wine tureen.  
These men I knew, and they were now so near  
that they’d be grape juice, had I joined the press.<sup>297</sup>

Lorenzo tells of their ridiculous, foolish behavior, which includes tales of flatulence, incontinence, obesity, and incoherence. He wonders at the intemperance and gluttony of his fellow men, like the mocking that Silenus receives, in which the sting of truth and disapprobation breaks through. In spite of the moralistic message of Lorenzo’s poem, the indulgence with which he elaborates upon the debauched behaviors he is supposedly lampooning suggests that there is a certain degree of humor and licentious pleasure that is inherent in the retelling. Even the most scholarly humanists were apt to gather for *cenacoli* and to vary discussions of Ideal Beauty with bawdy tales and ribald jokes.<sup>298</sup> That Silenus’ folly contrasted with his reputation

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<sup>295</sup> *Moriae Encomium* (Paris, 1511), as quoted in *ibid.*, 70.

<sup>296</sup> Lorenzo de’ Medici, *Simposio*, in *Lorenzo de’ Medici Opere*, ed. Mario Martelli (Turin: Dr. Giacomo A. Caula Editore, 1965), 37-63; critical ed. Martelli (Florence: Olschki Editore, 1966). Translated selections in *Lorenzo de’ Medici: Selected Poems and Prose*, trans. Thiem, 43-54. The poem may have been initially composed in 1466-1467, with revisions occurring in the 1470s. See introduction to Martelli’s 1966 ed., 10-11.

<sup>297</sup> *Simposio* “VII”.13-17, in trans. Thiem, 48. IX.13-17: “Talor se ne vedea quindici o venti / come bicchieri entro l’infrescatoï, / con loro insieme urtar di quelle genti. / Questi tai conosch’io già presso a noi, / quai se pigiassi, ancor farien del mosto...” (ed. Martelli, in *Opere*, 63).

<sup>298</sup> David O. Frantz, *Festum Voluptatis: A Study of Renaissance Erotica* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 10. Poggio Bracciolini collected his *Facetiae* from c. 1438 to 1452, and had the unique manuscript of Petronius’s “Trimalchio’s Feast” from the *Satyricon* copied in 1423. Boccaccio had copied the oldest surviving manuscript of the *Carmina Priapea*, and found a copy of Apuleius’ *Golden Ass* at Monte Cassino in 1355. See Frantz, 15, n. 21; Smet, “Innocence Lost,” 88.

for wisdom and faithful counsel did not undermine his status but rather solidified it. Silenus accorded perfectly with the humanists' interest in the motif of the fool, whose irrational jollity disguised linguistic gifts, uninhibited truth telling, and profound reason.<sup>299</sup>

The inclusion of Bacchus and Ariadne in Piero's pieces invests the pictures with an amorous, and not just jocular, tone. Although she is absent from the Ovidian text about honey, Ariadne's presence here guarantees the marital function of the pictures. Moreover, Bacchus is not presented in his terrible aspect, capable of inducing violence and madness. Rather he embodies the jovial *pater familias* of the happy troupe, with the mild expression of a friendly tippler.<sup>300</sup> In Ovid's *Fasti*, it is just one week before, March 8, that the Cnossian crown enters the Heavens, for which Ovid recounts the tale of Bacchus' return to his beloved after his adventures in India:

Long time had Liber heard her plaint, for as it chanced he followed close behind. He put his arms about her, with kisses dried her tears, and 'Let us fare together,' quoth he, 'to heaven's height. As thou hast shared my bed, so shalt thou share my name, for in they changed state thy shall be Libera...' <sup>301</sup>

Piero depicts the true meaning of Liber and Libera. The pleasant smiles and silly escapades of the rustic figures create a lighthearted atmosphere of celebration and enjoyment. The original phallic emphasis, with Bacchus' club and thyrsus painted to resemble erect genitalia and all the satyrs ithyphallic, served to relate the imagery to the tradition of epithalamia and to the Liberalia,

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<sup>299</sup> Welsford, *The Fool*; William Willeford, *The Fool and His Sceptre: A Study in Clowns and Jesters and Their Audience* (London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1969); Paromita Chakravarti, "Natural Fools and the Historiography of Renaissance Folly," *Renaissance Studies* 25 (2011): 208-227.

<sup>300</sup> Note that in antiquity too Bacchus is usually shown aloof from the antics and sexual escapades of his followers. He is granted the noble divinity that shows that he is the god bringing forth the gifts that infuse his followers with such frenzy. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 165.

<sup>301</sup> *Fasti*, III.VIII.507-512, trans. Frazer, 157-159.

which were celebrated with phallic and vulvic cakes and models in baskets.<sup>302</sup> The various amorous interactions, glances, and gestures occurring between individuals express the origins of love within the budding Dionysian civilization that Piero has depicted. The paintings' explicit eroticism (now thinned or scraped away) and aphrodisiacal punning served as totems for the future productivity of the married couple.<sup>303</sup> The nursing satyress in the first painting, along with the womb-like tree (complete with emerging infant satyr), the flowing spring in the central foreground, and Pan's proffered onions all wink at the couple's fertility, and the means by which they will produce that offspring.<sup>304</sup> The flowing honey and wine suggest the coming sweetness of life.<sup>305</sup> And the ridiculous apparati of the Bacchic troupe, consisting not of cymbals or tambourines but of kitchen pots and pans, graters, fireplace shovels and tongs, affirm the domestic reality of the new couple.

The depiction of poor Silenus' humorous travails partakes of that spirit of *dolce-amaro*, the taint of the bitter that must come with the sweet. As we have seen with Baldini's *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* or in images of the satyr's family or Signorelli's *Court of Pan*, this

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<sup>302</sup> In her lecture "Humor and Morality in Piero di Cosimo's Vespucci Bacchanals," Fern Luskin referred to an unpublished restoration report at the Fogg Museum that attested to underlayers which indicate that the phalluses were removed (lecture given at the Annual Meeting of the College Art Association in San Francisco, 2006). The *cista mystica* or secret implements of ancient cult practice were readily visible on sarcophagi, where one can observe large phallus models under cloths, carried in a *liknon*, or winnowing basket. Dionysus merged with Liber Pater, a Roman fertility god worshipped with phallic cult imagery employed to ensure the propagation of crops. Liber and Libera, who become identified with Bacchus and Ariadne, formed a pair and were associated with seeds, and thus both agricultural and human fertility. See Nilsson, *The Dionysiac Mysteries*, 33. Also Burgo Partridge, *A History of Orgies* (London: Anthony Blond, 1958), 50-55.

<sup>303</sup> See Mathews, "Piero di Cosimo's *Discovery of Honey*," 359-360.

<sup>304</sup> Luskin explored the numerous visual puns and references made within the paintings to sex and genitalia, the onions being a symbol for testicles as well as an aphrodisiac ("Humor and Morality in Piero di Cosimo's Vespucci Bacchanals"); and Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 63, n. 78, citing Celsus, *De medecina*, II.32: "sensus excitant... cepa..." See also Mathews, "Piero di Cosimo's *Discovery of Honey*," 357-360. Bacchus was a god of moisture—both that extruded from the grape as wine, but also of semen/seed—so the representation of water, honey, milk, wine, and tree sap are all part of his cult and stand as metaphors for the reproductive fluids (both animal and vegetal) (Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult*, 164-164). See Augustine, *City of God* VII.21.



melancholic mood seems almost to have been an inseparable complement to all themes jovial and seemingly lighthearted. Not only was the awareness of a lost pastoral idyll filled with bitter regret and nostalgia, but the very nature of that rustic world could also be cruel and difficult, despite its Arcadian appearance. As in Piero's *Death of Procris*, the notion of pastoral bliss interrupted by strife or sorrow embodies the classic memento mori: *Et in Arcadia ego*.<sup>306</sup> As a marital metaphor, it surely reminded young lovers that life's challenges must be faced, but that humor and love can guide one through the stings.

The mixture of rousing enthusiasm with deep pathos characterized much of the pastoral verse of the time, including Poliziano's *Orfeo*, which culminates in that spectacular call to drink and be merry made by maenadic followers of Bacchus, who just moments before were murdering Orpheus.<sup>307</sup> As the finale of the play, the chorus of "Baccante" sings out:

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!

Chi vuol bere, chi vuol bere,  
venga a bere, venga qui.

[...]

Ognun segua, Bacco, te!  
Bacco, Bacco, euoè!<sup>308</sup>

The call to drink fits perfectly with the vein of wedding entertainments, ending in wild dancing or routs of satyrs.<sup>309</sup> Despite the gruesome and somber penultimate moment of the play, the last

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<sup>305</sup> Mathews, "Piero di Cosimo's *Discovery of Honey*," 360.

<sup>306</sup> The words first framed thus by Guercino and Poussin in the early seventeenth century. Virgil, *Eclogue* V.42-44, speaks of the tomb that should be made for Daphnis upon his death in Arcadia: "And build a tomb, and on the tomb place, too, this verse: 'Daphnis was I amid the woods, known from here even to the stars. Fair was my flock, but fairer I, their shepherd'" (trans. Fairclough, 57). See Panofsky, "*Et in Arcadia Ego*," 295-320.

<sup>307</sup> Bober proposes the play was performed for Carnival ("Appropriation Contexts," 237); Pyle, as an intermezzo ("Politian's 'Orfeo' and Other 'Favole Mitologiche'").

<sup>308</sup> Poliziano, *Orfeo* ll.309-341, ed. Tissoni Benvenuti, 165-167. See Chapter Two.

words ringing in the ears of the audience are a call to be merry, in spite of the inevitable brevity of life, like Lorenzo's call to be *lieto* in his "Canzona di Bacco."

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The figure of the satyr was a flexible and subtle thing, capable of expressing the simplest form of vice—bestial, sexual, and drunken—or the truest depths of human nature—empathetic, loving, and creative. As the epitome of antiquity and the denizen of idyllic Arcadia, he captured something of the Renaissance dream of wandering back into the world of their fantasies, teeming with untamed and natural wonders, touched by the greatness of a lost Golden Age. As a sexual being, the satyr was not impossibly lewd, but participated in a continuum of sensual imagery that was an important part of marriage rites and traditions.

In the final chapters we will discover how the collective imagery of satyrs, maenads, Ariadne, Pan, Silenus, and nymphs affected how Bacchus himself was understood in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. We will see that whether the god stood alone, or in the company of his raucous cohort, he came to truly manifest all of his many gifts. As a god of divine inspiration, especially, he could stand for the artistic process in a way that the poetic source, Apollo, could not quite match. The Arcadian "philosophy" acted as a dominant force for shaping interpretations of Bacchus in the early sixteenth century and how he was portrayed in gardens, palaces, and villas. The pastoral movement in the visual and literary arts was a brief one, though one that saw the invention of some of the most original creations of the Renaissance. We shall examine how the figure of Bacchus attained his quintessence in this context, but then

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<sup>309</sup> Many an actual contemporary wedding feast was celebrated with costumed *spettacoli* that included prancing satyrs in papier mâché haunches, like the *festa nuziale* of Gian Galeazzo Sforza and Isabella d' Aragona in 1489, with its grand finale of "Bacco scortato da vari cori di Satiri, Sileni ed Egipani diè compimento con una danza animata e grottesca ad uno dei più magnifici e sorprendenti spettacoli, che abbia mai veduto l'Italia" (Stefano Arteaga, *Le rivoluzioni del teatro musicale italiano dalla sua origine fino al presente*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. [Venezia:

ultimately succumbed to a decline into more vapid imagery due to limiting pressures from antiquarian codification on one side and Counter-Reformationist prudery on the other.

## Chapter Five

**Inspiration: *divino furor* and Bacchic Genius**

*The eye was gleaming with fire, in appearance the eye of a man in frenzy; for the bronze exhibited the Bacchic madness and seemed to be divinely inspired, just as, I think, Praxiteles had the power to infuse into the statue also the Bacchic ecstasy.*

— Callistratus, *Descriptions*<sup>1</sup>

The fifteenth century uncovered a multifaceted Bacchic essence, possessed of the madness and frenzy of the maenad; ideas of epiphany and rebirth, love and sensuality embodied in Ariadne; the drunkenness, sexuality, and inspiration of satyrs; the foolishness, humor, and wisdom of Silenus; and the pastoral and cosmic oneness conveyed by Pan. But it was not just through his followers or in his interactions with them that the powers of Bacchus were materialized. In this chapter we will see how these endowments could be contained within the god himself, and how he could be made to exhibit and even instill his powers of inspiration and transcendence through Renaissance works of art. We will consider the intellectual and cultural climates that allowed the image of Bacchus himself to appear in his full complexity for this brief moment before the iconography of the god was codified and effectively frozen as the bibulous, joyful god of wine and revelry or as a nature god of vegetation and fertility (appearing fat and foolish or pretty and sleek). Until then, Bacchus could be allowed to inhabit his own gift of ecstasy, which proved him to be a model for artistic genius. While the negative effects of drink could be transferred onto Silenus and the satyrs, the noble and elevating effects of Bacchus' genius generated melancholy profundity, intellectual insight, and artistic originality.

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<sup>1</sup> Callistratus, *Descriptions* 8: "On the Statue of Dionysus," trans. Fairbanks, 407.

*CONVIVIUM AND SYMPOSIUM: THE ROMAN GARDENS*

Perhaps it was a rainstorm, a tree root, or a shovel; whatever it was, something caused an opening in the earth to appear. Weeds and soil gave way through cracked concrete and dissolving brick, leaving a cleft through which one could squeeze and descend literally through the centuries into an unbelievably preserved past, the hermetically sealed rooms of Nero's Golden House, the Domus Aurea (fig. 5.1, 2).<sup>2</sup> The fact that ancient Rome existed physically, 20 to 50 feet below modern Rome, was difficult to grasp, and so these frescoed rooms were conceptualized as having been made in caves, or *grotti*, lending the name to their characteristic decorations: *groteschi*.<sup>3</sup> One can imagine the elation as these explorers and antique-loving *cognoscenti* illuminated the caverns with their torches, coming face-to-face with something they had thought irretrievably lost: ancient painting (fig. 5.3). And there on the walls and ceilings were the gods and goddesses of their imaginations, in full color and form, with so many satyrs, lounging, prancing, or bound, reaffirming their own fascination with the creatures as a beloved symbol of ancient Rome (fig. 5.4).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For the concept of antiquity and the primitive archaeology of the fifteenth century, see Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, especially chap. 1, "Discoveries." For the Domus Aurea, see Nicole Dacos, *La découverte de la Domus Aurea et la formation des grotesques à la Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> The first recorded use of the term is in the 1502 contract for Pinturicchio to paint the Piccolomini Library in Siena, in which he was instructed to include "grotesche": "[H]e is obliged to render the ceiling of the Library with fantasies and colours and small panels as lovely, beautiful and sumptuous as he judges best; all in good, fine, fast colours in the manner of design known today as *grotesche*, with different backgrounds as will be reckoned most lovely and beautiful" (quoted in David S. Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance* [Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1971], 26).

<sup>4</sup> As Dacos writes: "La découverte des grotesques ne fit donc que favoriser une préoccupation déjà existante, dont il était utile de dégager les éléments essentiels" (preface, viii). "What these *groteschi* provided was a whole vocabulary and syntax of ornament" (Hall, *After Raphael: Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century*, 1). Pinturicchio, Jacopo Ripanda, and Baldassare Peruzzi perpetuated this style into the early sixteenth century, even as the more refined classicism of Raphael and Michelangelo came into prominence (Hall, 15-31). Of course, Raphael continued the antiquarian fascination with the grotesque style in the design of the *stufetta* (bathroom) of Cardinal Bibbiena in the Vatican and of the *stucchi* decorating the Vatican Logge, 1518-1519. See Nicole Dacos, *Le logge di*

This almost magical discovery arrived at a moment in which the artists and humanists of Italy were in a frenzy of love for the antique. Many well-regarded painters were in Rome during the 1480s: Mantegna, Pinturicchio, Filippino Lippi, Signorelli, Botticelli, Perugino, Ghirlandaio, and Rosselli, many to work in the new Sistine Chapel, commissioned by Pope Sixtus IV.<sup>5</sup> Faced with the opportunity to look and study, these artists were immersed in visions of antiquity, not just in their mind's eye, but in the tangible reality of the remnants of architecture and sculpture, such as the Trajan Arch, the Coliseum, and the Pantheon, and even subterranean treasures, like the early Christian catacombs.<sup>6</sup> These last held a special mystery for the humanists in Rome. The dark, smelly, gloomy places transported the explorers to the locus of ancient rites and ceremonies, the actual bones of those who lived then still physically present. The *cognoscenti* left traces of their wanderings in graffiti scratched into the walls, leaving a palimpsest of their existence over that of their long lost ancestors (fig. 5.5).<sup>7</sup> The line between Christian and pagan

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*Raffaello: maestro e bottega di fronte all'antico*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1986); Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, 131.

<sup>5</sup> Some artists even left behind graffiti attesting to their explorations: Domenico Ghirlandaio scratched his name on the walls during his Roman sojourn in 1481-1482, as did Bernardo Pinturicchio. Filippino Lippi was in Rome 1488 to 1493, and made studies of Domus Aurea grotesques. See Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist*, 128-130. A description of an excursion through the cavernous ruin c. 1500 makes the remark: "They go through the earth with... bread and ham, fruit and wine, so as to be more bizarre when they are with the grotesques..." (quoted in Creighton Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500: Sources and Documents* [Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1992], 101-103).

<sup>6</sup> Ghirlandaio's studies are possibly recorded in the Codex Escorialensis, believed by some to be the work of one of the master's disciples and to derive from a lost original. The drawings include *grotteschi* from the Domus Aurea. See Nicole Dacos, "Ghirlandaio et l'antique," *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 34 (1962): 419-420, 430. The Codex is in El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de San Lorenzo, Spain, number 18-II-12. Other scholars have argued that the drawings come out of the workshop of Giuliano da Sangallo, consisting of three originally different units, dated c. 1490-1506/7. See Albert Jan Elen, *Italian Late-Medieval and Renaissance Drawing-Books from Giovannino de' Grassi to Palma Giovane: A Codicological Approach* (Leiden: Proefschrift, 1995), cat. 36, pp. 256-259. Also John Shearman, "Raphael, Rome, and the Codex Escorialensis," *Master Drawings* 15 (1977): 107-146; Arnold Nesselrath, "I libri di disegni di antichità. Tentativo di una tipologia," in Salvatore Settis, ed., *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, vol. 1 (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1986), 129-134. A facsimile of the Codex is by Hermann Egger, *Codex Escorialensis: Ein Skizzenbuch aus der Werkstatt Domenico Ghirlandaios*. 2 vols, Sonderschriften des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts in Wien, 4 (Vienna: A. Hölder, 1906).

<sup>7</sup> See Egmont Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1978), 7; Giovanni Battisti De Rossi, "L'Accademia di Pomponio Leto e le sue memorie scritte sulle pareti delle catacombe," *Bullettino di*

antiquity blurred before these time-travelers, who felt transported to the age of emperors and pagan poets.<sup>8</sup>

Fifteenth-century explorers “wandered... among the graves of the *spiriti gentili* of the ancient world...; finding an image of their ‘true selves’—the longings, ecstasies and anguish of love and death—in the memorials of ‘sacrosanct’ pagan antiquity.”<sup>9</sup> To be sure, discoverers could get carried away by their enthusiasm. Graves opened inevitably housed the body of Virgil or Livy, not some anonymous ancient.<sup>10</sup> Sculptures uncovered were the long-lost masterpieces of Polydorus or Praxiteles, not generic artists or later copies. As Felice Feliciano wrote of the day spent exploring Lake Garda with Mantegna and friends, “we found the lodging of Diana the quiver-bearer, which for many reasons we knew could be no other.”<sup>11</sup> To be surrounded by

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*Archeologia Cristiana*, ser. V, I (1891): 81-94; Richard J. Palermino, “The Roman Academy, the Catacombs and the Conspiracy of 1468,” *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 18 (1980): 117-155; Vincenzo Fiocchi Nicolai, Fabrizio Bisconti, and Danilo Mazzoleni, *The Christian Catacombs of Rome: History, Decoration, Inscriptions*, trans. Cristina Carlo Stella and Lori-Ann Touchette (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 1999), 10; Irina Taïssa Oryshkevich, “The History of the Roman Catacombs from the Age of Constantine to the Renaissance,” Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 2003), chap. 3, “Neo-Pagans, Supreme Pontiffs and the Delights of Roman Girls: The Roman Academy in the Catacombs,” 217-333.

<sup>8</sup> The catacombs were strictly funerary, the first dating from the end of the second century. They were laid out almost like dormitories, with rooms and connecting tunnels, since the early Christians considered death to be a temporary “sleep” on the journey to the great banquet of heaven. By the third and fourth centuries a tendency for decoration and self-aggrandizement superseded the earlier ethic of simplicity and equality. Some *cubicula* even had Dionysian iconography. See Nicolai, Bisconti, and Mazzoleni, *The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, 13-20, and part II, esp. 80-94.

<sup>9</sup> Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance,” 482.

<sup>10</sup> In 1413 in Padua, discoverers of a tomb insisted it belonged to Livy despite an inscription referring to a freedman. See Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 32, 98.

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500*, 180. Feliciano’s *Iubilatio*, Sep. 23, 1464: “Non pretermittam memorie dignum ut nos invenisse diversorium diane pharetrigere et ceterar. nymphar. quod multis rationibus novimus aliter esse non posse” (Paul Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna*, trans. S. Arthur Strong [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901], doc. 15, citing codex *Vita Ciriaca Anconitani [a Scalamonte] da Felice Feliciano copiato*, Bibl. Capitolare di Treviso, fol. 205r). The excursion took place in 1464, with the group setting out on the lake in a skiff and disembarking to examine bits of ruins. See Charles Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy,” in *Italian Renaissance Studies: A Tribute to the Late Cecilia M. Ady*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 455-483.

rediscovered greatness inspired a certain intoxicating exhilaration. There was a faith in the power of man to access and recover this past—and to let it live again, even better than before.

The element of wonderment and fantasy that accompanied this era of discovery fueled the contemporary evolution of the *all'antica* garden, filled with antique sculptures or architectural fragments, that charmed the humanists of this generation. The pastoral vision of a *locus amoenus*—a retreat apart from the bustle of the city and the onerous duties of political life—contributed to its design. The antiquarian imagining of an ancient, inspirited landscape, inhabited by the shades of satyrs and nymphs, fostered the urge to gather in lush outdoor escapes to share poetry and music as well as food and wine, following a spirit of conviviality gleaned from Plato's dialogues and the painted *triclinia* of the catacombs (fig. 5.6, 7).<sup>12</sup> The place of Bacchus in this earthly imitation of the heavenly banquet was ever-present, as the god's drink flowed and the lips and minds of his devotees grew warm and loose.

The location of Michelangelo's *Bacchus* in Jacopo Galli's sculpture garden made it a part of the antiquarian enthusiasm flourishing in Rome at the time. This was an intellectual and social world in which the abstract ideas of Bacchic inspiration were played out in real contexts. Just as the Romantic poets of the nineteenth century would seek to return to a world of pagan gods, nature, and passion, so the many fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century humanists longed to live in a reality that imitated the *idea* of the antiquity of which they were so enamored. With a melancholy sense of being too late, many of these *cognoscenti* dreamed of bringing the past to life again, hoping their practices and beliefs could be close enough to the original to entice the

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<sup>12</sup> Nicolai, Bisconti, and Mazzoleni argue that these scenes do not allude to the Eucharist or Last Supper, but rather reflect actual rituals involving meals to honor the dead and the faith that the *coena celestis* or "celestial banquet" awaited the deceased in the Elysian Fields (*The Christian Catacombs of Rome*, 109-111). A typical scene would show amphorae, beverage heaters, plates of food, and gesturing banqueters reclining on couches, as in the Catacomb of SS. Pietro e Marcellino (where the banquet is set *en plein-air*) or in the arcosolium of Sabina.



long-buried gods to awaken. Amidst the ruins of the ancient city, these dreamers who believed in the possibility of a resurrection had the liberty to move, or seclude themselves, among the buildings and sculptures that their idols had made so long before.<sup>13</sup>

Marten van Heemskerck's drawings of Galli's sculpture garden reveals that, in addition to the *Bacchus* of Michelangelo, there was a reclining figure of a water nymph, or naiad (fig. 5.8, 9). The consortium of nymphs and Bacchus evoked Socrates' gathering on the bank of the Ilissos, as told in the *Phaedrus*, with its blurring and blending of amorous and poetic frenzies.<sup>14</sup> As Ficino described the gifts there bestowed upon the inspired Socrates, the demons of the land and water in the Edenic setting shared in stoking his frenzy: "Dionysus, the Muses, Pan, and the Nymphs have all inspired Socrates: Dionysus gave him the gift of escaping from his intelligence, the Muses gave him poetry, Pan, eloquence, and the Nymphs, variety."<sup>15</sup>

This vision of a Bacchic source of inspiration took hold of a group, or sodality, that formed in Rome in the 1450s or early 1460s around the engaging figure of Giulio Pomponio Leto (or Pomponius Laetus, as he was known among them). The Accademia Romana, or Pomponiana, met regularly (in multiple incarnations through the mid 1520s) to declaim poetry, lounge nostalgically, and generally mimic the ancient model of conviviality.<sup>16</sup> One famous

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<sup>13</sup> Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters*, 202.

<sup>14</sup> Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," 237; Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 3-7.

<sup>15</sup> Ficino, *Summae*, chapter 39 [referring to *Phaedrus* 262D], in Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 200.

<sup>16</sup> See Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 229-243. The Academy was also sometimes referred to as the Accademia Quirinale, after the location of Leto's house where they met. Born in Calabria in 1425, Leto went to Rome in 1450 and studied at the University of Rome under Lorenzo Valla. His travels included Venice, Germany, Poland, and Russia, before his death in Rome in 1498. See Palermino, "The Roman Academy," 121. Also see the online forum for information on the Accademia Romana, [www.repertoriumpomponianum.it](http://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it). Leto's academy must have been different enough to draw negative attention and concern, to the point that he and almost 20 other members were charged in 1468 with conspiracy and heresy by Pope Paul II, who had fallen out with most of the humanists who had previously enjoyed the patronage and admiration of his predecessor, Pius II. The amorphous fear of this group's "paganizing" behavior left the Pope at a loss for precise terms of critique. But the main cause for their arrests was

member, Platina (Bartolommeo Sacchi), wrote that Leto often invited him to share food and conversation on the banks of the Tiber, surely in emulation of Socrates and Phaedrus.<sup>17</sup> The ideals of antiquarianism became for them as much a lifestyle as an academic discipline.<sup>18</sup> In Florence, a certain “Academy” had simultaneously formed around the figures of Cosimo and Lorenzo de’ Medici, with Marsilio Ficino as its intellectual center.<sup>19</sup> With informal gatherings at the Medici villa at Careggi, poets and philosophers could converse and perfect their work. Ficino, in fact, wrote a letter to Bernardo Bembo (father of Pietro Bembo and then Venetian ambassador to Florence), detailing the appropriate characteristics of the *convivium*:

...[I]t is not possible for anyone ever to live content in the human condition unless, even but briefly, all... parts of a man have been satisfied.

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the Pope’s notion that they were conspiring to overthrow him. Imprisoned in the Castel Sant’Angelo for a year, even tortured, none were ultimately tried or convicted, and were allowed by Paul’s successor Sixtus IV to reestablish a second academy in 1478, which became almost as vibrant as it had been before. Palermino, “The Roman Academy,” 138-140. Our primary account of these events was made by a core member of Leto’s circle, Bartolomeo Sacchi, known as Platina, in his *Liber de vita Christi et omnium pontificum*, or *Lives of the Popes*, 1.iii-xxxiv, written 1472-1474 and published in 1479. See *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. Giacinto Gaida and Ludovico Muratori, vol. 3.1 (Città di Castelli, 1913-32). Later, Paolo Giovio, or Paulus Jovius (a member of the Roman Academy after 1516 until its demise with the Sack), wrote of these events in his brief biographical sketch of Leto: “[H]is fame was greatly increased by the injustice of Paul II, who had put to torture on the charge of impiety and mischievousness certain scholars, among them Platina and Callimachus. For when Pomponio was dragged back from Venice to plead his cause, secure in the unblemished purity of his life he could not be frightened into any confession unbecoming a spotless and steadfast soul. The fact is that these scholars, when they gathered crowned with laurel to do homage to the Muses, had taken the names of famous ancient writers, and the Pope, who was unversed in the refinements of letters and naturally suspicious, took great offense at the strangeness of these names, fearing that they might be the secret passwords of men conspiring to commit some great crime” (Giovio, *An Italian Portrait Gallery*, trans. Florence Alden Gragg of the *Elogia Doctorum Virorum* [Venice, 1546] [Boston: Chapman & Grimes, 1935], part 3, p.70).

<sup>17</sup> Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 238. She cites that Leto left marginal notes in a Vatican manuscript of Cicero’s *De senectute*, where Cicero defines the true import of the *convivium* as a “communion of life,” and more than just an eating together or drinking together. Platina’s *vigna* abutted Leto’s property on the Quirinal Hill (or Monte Cavallo as it was known at the time). See David R. Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 182.

<sup>18</sup> Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance,” 478. Niccolò Niccoli is another example of a humanist who truly sought to *live* a lifestyle that was *all’antica*. Bober also describes how Leto sought to cultivate his land according to ancient prescriptions in Columella (whose writings he edited); that he wore a *pallium*; began his days before dawn; and walked to the university where he would lecture all day (“Appropriation Contexts,” 238). Also Coffin, *The Villa*, 182-183.

<sup>19</sup> Hankins, “Cosimo de’ Medici and the ‘Platonic Academy,’” 144-162; idem, “The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence,” 429-475.

[...] [T]he convivium alone... embraces them all because... it rebuilds limbs, revives humours, restores spirit, delights senses, fosters and awakens reason. The convivium is rest from labours, release from cares and nourishment of genius; it is the demonstration of love and splendour, the food of good will, the seasoning of friendship, the leavening of grace and the solace of life. [...] Bitter and deeply melancholic men should... be excluded unless they... like coarse beans moistened with water, became sweet when moistened with wine. [...] Certainly they should mix sweetness with sharpness, humour with gravity, profit with pleasure, let their wit be fine, both pointed and salty, but not offensive or bitter. [...] *The necessary victuals for the convivium are the fruits of Bacchus and of Ceres.* As to the victuals for the convivium, in our view misery is the poison of life, and gloom is poison at the table. Now, the antidote to misery and gloom is a smooth clear wine, whose potency Aesculapius equalled to that of the gods. According to our Plato, natural capacity and vigour are marvellously enlivened by the tempering warmth of wine. But now, lest like Homer I be criticized for my praise of wine, away with Bacchus!<sup>20</sup>

Still, despite the great passion of these Florentines for the antique, and their adherence to reviving an ideal of the past, this was not undertaken with quite the same imaginative verve as found around Leto in Rome.<sup>21</sup> The Roman humanists' approach to the antique remained highly cerebral, with the close examination of ancient texts serving as the foundation for all their work.<sup>22</sup> But at times this intellectual process was allowed to veer into the emotional, visceral, and worldly realm of sense and matter. In a scrawled inscription on a catacomb wall, one of them described themselves as "Unanimes antiquitatis amatores": "united in our love of

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<sup>20</sup> *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, vol. 2, trans. members of the Language Dept. of the School of Economic Science, London, being a translation of Liber III (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1978), letter 42, pp. 51-55.

<sup>21</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 8, n. 26. The Pope's reaction against the Accademia Pomponiana indicates the degree to which this sodality was truly unique.

<sup>22</sup> Leto was especially interested in the writings of Sallust, Varro, Columella, Festus, Virgil, Martial, and Lucan (Palermينو, "The Roman Academy," 122).

antiquity.”<sup>23</sup> The Roman group took up the vision of the heavenly banquet, and dreamed of matching its convivial pleasures.

In the various palaces and villas of its members, the Accademia Romana reenacted a certain interpretation of antique conviviality. Gathering together in gardens newly furnished with sculpture (both antique and contemporary), burbling fountains, and verdant shrubbery, the exuberant intellectuals discussed the philosophy and poetry of their forefathers and recited their own contributions. Food and wine would have naturally accompanied such gatherings, just as at the most famous Symposium of Socrates and his companions. Being a student of Lorenzo Valla, Leto understood such Dionysian pleasures not as vulgar *voluptas* (Leto himself was known to be abstemious) but as far more elevated joys, in the true Epicurean sense of “tranquility of the soul.”<sup>24</sup> His compatriot Platina composed a cookbook and guide to healthful living entitled *De honesta voluptate ac valetudine* (*On Right Pleasure and Good Health*), which continued in the tradition of the rehabilitation of *voluptas*.<sup>25</sup> Michelangelo’s patrons Jacopo Galli and Cardinal Raffaello Riario were associates of these convivialists, and Galli’s garden in Rome became a part of this new aesthetic lifestyle. Until his death in 1505, Galli would also host convivial gatherings at his *vigna* across the Tiber.<sup>26</sup> In this same circle, other (and often overlapping) sodalities formed around the likes of Angelo Colucci and Johann Goritz (fondly called Corycius), whose

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<sup>23</sup> Lee, *Sixtus IV and Men of Letters*, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Leto wrote his own *De voluptate*. Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 240.

<sup>25</sup> See Platina *On Right Pleasure and Good Health: A Critical Edition and Translation of De Honestae Voluptate et Valetudine*, trans. and ed. Mary Ella Milham (Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998). Platina studied at the influential Casa Giocosa in Mantua, then run by a disciple of Vittorino da Feltre, and remained intimate with the Gonzaga family, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga becoming one of his primary Roman patrons. *De honesta voluptate* was composed largely 1464-1465, and cribbed heavily from a cookbook by Martino, chef to Cardinal Trevisan.

<sup>26</sup> Bober, “The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia,” 230.

villas, *vigne*, and gardens were often the gatherings for symposia, in the company of their sleeping nymph statues.<sup>27</sup> Colucci inherited Leto's house and took over his place at the head of the Academy, perpetuating Leto's interest in poetry and antiquities.<sup>28</sup>

In such gatherings, an awareness of the closeness and indeed interconnectedness of Bacchus and Apollo could flourish. This close association in Renaissance Rome was itself a product of antique artistic and literary sources. The two beautiful, youthful gods stood naked and swaying in innumerable examples of ancient statuary, long locks lying gracefully upon their shoulders, wreathes gently perched upon their heads, ivy and laurel often wound together (fig. 5.10, 11, 12, 13, 14).<sup>29</sup> From the likes of Plutarch and Macrobius, the convivialists learned that

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<sup>27</sup> Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," 226-227. The title of an ode by Pierio Valeriano on Colucci's gatherings read *Sodalium convictus Die Baccanaliūm*; see Vittorio Fanelli, "Aspetti della Roma Cinquecentesca: Le case e le raccolte archaeologiche del Colocci," *Studi Romani* 10 (1962): 391; Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," n. 69. The *Coryciana* (published in 1524) is a collection of selected poems that had been written in a competition sponsored by Johann Goritz and presented annually at the altar of St. Anne at San Agostino in Rome and banquet accompanying the saint's feast day. See Julia Haid Gaisser, "The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48 (1995): 44-48.

<sup>28</sup> Gaisser, "The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts," 44; Fanelli, "Aspetti della Roma Cinquecentesca," 391-402.

<sup>29</sup> See J. B. Trapp, "The Owl's Ivy and the Poet's Bays: An Enquiry into Poetic Garlands," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21 (1958): 227-255. Just how similar they could be is demonstrated by the pose of Apollo on the famous Marsyas intaglio, described by Lorenzo Ghiberti and owned by Lorenzo de' Medici. On a sarcophagus depicting the Flaying of Marsyas, Bacchus appears toward the left of the scene in an identical, but reversed, serpentine *contrapposto*. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cats. 29 and 31; the sarcophagus is formerly Hever Castle, Kent; Carl Robert, *ASR*, III. *Einzelmythen* (Berlin: Deutsches Archäologisches Inst., 1904), part 2. *Hippolytos-Meleagros*, cat. 201; the carnelian gem is in the Museo Archeologico, Naples, inv. 26051. Consider also Andrea Alciati's emblem depicting "In Iuventam" (Youth), inscribed: "Natus uterque Iovis tener, atque imberbis uterque, / Quem Latona tulit, quem tulit & Semele, / Salvete, aeterna simul & florete iuventa, / Numine sit vestro quae diuturna mihi. / Tu vino curas, tu victu dilue morbos, / Ut lento accedat sera senecta pede" ("Sons of Jove, each of you, each of you tender and beardless, one born of Latona, one of Semele, hail! Be glorious together in your everlasting youth, and may youth by your divine assent last long for me. You wash away my cares with wine, and you dissolve my bodily ills with [disciplined] living, that old age may approach late and with slow footsteps") (*Emblemata cum commentariis* [Padua, 1621] [New York: Garland Publishing facsimile, 1976], 418; trans. <<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/emblem.php?id=A46a002>>). Note that in an earlier illustration, in the edition published in Venice in 1546, the gods appear quite similar as they stand upon an pilaster base. In the Paduan edition of 1621, however, Bacchus has been subsumed by the "fat baby" form that had by then become popularized to represent the god of wine.

the gods were considered by many ancient authors and peoples to be one and the same.<sup>30</sup> The nymphs who raised Dionysus on Nysa were considered the same as the Muses.<sup>31</sup> The two were said to have shared a shrine at Delphi. Apollo's sacred spring of Castaly on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus, which was the source of inspiration, was connected with Bacchus as well.<sup>32</sup>

Nemesianus described the frenzy induced by this spring:

Already my heart is tide-swept by the frenzy the Muses send: Helicon bids me fare through widespread lands, and the God of Castaly presses on me, his foster-child, fresh draughts from the fount of inspiration: and, after far roaming in the open plains, sets his yoke upon the bard, holding him entangled with ivy-cluster, and guides him o'er wilds remote....<sup>33</sup>

Sophocles in turn declared that the spring, like the Corycian Cave sacred to the nymphs who reared and follow Bacchus, was affiliated with the god of the vine as well:

*Chorus*  
You of many names, glory of the Cadmeian  
bride, breed of loud thundering Zeus;

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<sup>30</sup> E.g. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.18.1: "Aristotle... advances many proofs to support his claim that Apollo and father Liber are one and the same" (trans. Robert A. Kaster [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011], 245). Similarly, Plutarch, *On the E at Delphi* IX in *Moralia* vol. V, 223: "Dionysus, who has no less to do with Delphi than has Apollo" (trans. A. O. Prickard [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1918], <<http://penelope.uchicago.edu/misctracts/plutarchE.html#20>>); also, *Table-Talk* VII.10 in *Moralia* vol.IX, 103. In *Metamorphoses* III.421, Ovid says of Narcissus: "his locks, worthy of Bacchus, worthy of Apollo" (trans. Miller, 155). In IV.18-20, Ovid describes Bacchus: "For thine is unending youth, eternal boyhood; thou are the most lovely in the lofty sky; thy face is virgin-seeming, if without horns thou stand before us" (trans. Miller, 181). See also *Heroides* I.14.31.

<sup>31</sup> Virgil speaks of the Muses as *sorores Naiades* in *Culex* 18-19. See Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," 225; MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph," 363. Ovid invokes Bacchus' bond with the Muses when he expresses in *Ars amatoria* III.347-348: "So grant it, O Phoebus! so grant it ye blessed sould of poets, and thou, O horned Bacchus, and ye goddesses nine!" (trans. Mozley, 143).

<sup>32</sup> Pausanias speaks of the Corycian Cave on Mt. Parnassus, sacred to the Corycian nymphs and especially to Pan, and how in the steeps above, at the heights of Parnassus, "the Thyiad women rave there in honor of Dionysus and Apollo" (*Description of Greece* X.32.7, trans. W. H. S. Jones [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918]).

<sup>33</sup> Nemesianus, *Cynegetica* (*The Chase*), in *Minor Latin Poets*, vol. II, trans. J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff, rev'd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 485. In *Saturnalia* I.18.3, Macrobius said: "[T]hough the Boeotians say that Mount Parnassus is sacred to Apollo, they maintain the cult of the Delphic oracle and the caves of Bacchus in the same place at the same time, as consecrated to a single god, so that sacrifice is offered both to Apollo and Liber on the same mountain," and he said (at I.18.6) that Aeschylus also wrote: "'Apollo the ivy-crowned, the Bacchic seer'" (trans. Kaster, 247).

[...]  
 You are he on whom the murky gleam of torches glares,  
 above the twin peaks of the crag  
 where come the Corycean nymphs  
 to worship you, the Bacchanals;  
 and the stream of Castalia has seen you, too;  
 and you are he that the ivy-clad  
 slopes of Nisaeen hills,  
 and the green shore ivy-clustered,  
 sent to watch over the roads of Thebes,  
 where the immortal Evoe chant rings out.  
 [...]  
 [C]ome with healing foot, over the slopes of Parnassus....  
 You lead the dance of the fire-breathing stars,  
 you are master of the voices of the night.<sup>34</sup>

Bacchus' followers may shout "Evoe!" and run through the night, but those whom Apollo has inspired are no less frenzied. Bacchus, as well as Apollo, was deemed to foster the arts—all arts, both the learned and the inspirational.<sup>35</sup> The concept of *furor divino* encompassed such sensations as poetic inspiration and divine epiphany or *enthousiasmos*, as well as intoxication.

Petrarch early on affirmed an interrelation of Bacchus, Apollo, and nature. At his rural retreat in Vacluse, he owned a small "villetta" with two gardens, one dedicated to Apollo and the other to Bacchus, and a grotto with a spring, which he called his "transalpine Helicon" in allusion to the location of the Castalian fountain of the Muses.<sup>36</sup> Ficino called Dionysus the leader of the Nymphs, and said Socrates was enraptured by them both: "Socrates started out inspired by the more peaceful divinities, the Muses, but he ended in the frenzies of Dionysus.

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<sup>34</sup> Sophocles, *Antigone* ll.1193-1211, 1217-1221, in *Sophocles I*, trans. David Grene, rev'd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 204-205.

<sup>35</sup> Emison, *Creating the "Divine" Artist*, 67.

<sup>36</sup> Coffin, *The Villa*, 9, citing Petrarch's *Lettere familiari* XIII.8.

For contemplations pass on into frenzies.”<sup>37</sup> Ficino went on to interpret Plato’s linking of the gods in the origination of divine madness:

Socrates has been inspired by Bacchus mainly to dithyrambs, by the Nymphs to songs. Through the Nymphs he censures the intemperate lover, through Bacchus he approves of the temperate.... Finally, since he has become ecstatic through Bacchus, perhaps the Apollonian demon immediately enraptures him (for Apollo is closest to Bacchus) with the result that he even exceeds the bounds of human behavior and thereafter treats of the divine love that excites us through some frenzy.<sup>38</sup>

In this view, the Nymphs, Muses, Bacchus, and Apollo all contribute to the spurring of *furor*. As a sign of their very learnedness and astuteness, the *literati* modeled the idea of Bacchus as partnered with Apollo in leading the Muses.<sup>39</sup> They avidly revived ancient theater, with its Dionysian origin and link with the Muses, including the plays of Plautus and Terence. Leto may even have chosen his Latinized name from an ancient writer L. Pomponius who introduced farces based on satyr plays into Rome.<sup>40</sup>

For Leto’s group and its heirs, Bacchic madness and poetic *furor* were indissolubly linked. There was, therefore, a symbolic road to spiritual illumination in drunken frenzy.<sup>41</sup> In Florence, Marsilio Ficino’s examination of Plato’s *Laws* II revealed a concept of Bacchus that allowed for favorable as well as adverse effects; he could “inspire raging madness in inebriated devotees, but harmony and rhythm sprang from him as well.”<sup>42</sup> In the Neoplatonic view, poetic rapture—the divinely inspired spark—required the intervention of both Apollo and Bacchus,

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<sup>37</sup> Ficino, *Summae*, chapter 7 [238C], in Allen, *Marsilio Ficino and the Phaedran Charioteer*, 134-136.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 10 [241D], p. 138.

<sup>39</sup> Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 232.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>41</sup> Linda A. Koch, “Michelangelo’s Bacchus and the Art of Self-Formation,” *Art History* 29 (2006): 370.



who were in Ficino's view "as indivisible companions and almost the same."<sup>43</sup> Bacchus was also known as the inventor of the *dithyramb*, the poetical form of tragic playwriting. *Furor Bacchicus* was understood as a divine possession that was a conveyance for the "impassioned revelation of truth in poesy."<sup>44</sup> In his pastoral composition *Parthenopeus: Amorum Libri*, the Academy member Giovanni Pontano wrote several elegies regarding his own origins as a poet, including one telling how a nymph once summoned him to his career, and "how Bacchus... encouraged his composition of love poetry."<sup>45</sup> In fact, Pontano stands as one of the most outspoken celebrators of Bacchic inspiration, for whom the abundance stemming from Bacchus' fertility was an ideal analogy for poetic profusion. The Muse plays her lyre with the music of Bacchus' wine in her veins:

Nam mea Parnasi rediens e collibus audet  
Ludere Romanis Calliopea modis  
Inque chor juvenum molli saltante puella  
Sopitos longo tempore ferre sales  
Aoniumque movet circum tua pocula plectrum

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<sup>42</sup> Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 232.

<sup>43</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life* III.24, trans. in Erwin Panofsky, *A Mythological Painting by Poussin in the Nationalmuseum Stockholm* (Stockholm: Nationalmusei Skriftserie, 1960), 36. Ficino also wrote a letter uniting Saturnian Pan and Apollo: "Happy humanity—if the flute of Saturnian Pan accords with the zither of Phoebus who rules in these cities; it will be good if these deities will be united for us" (*Opera* 843.4; quoted by Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral*, 84). Poussin's painting *Liber Pater, Qui et Apollo Est* of c. 1625-1630 reveals the longevity of such thinking uniting Bacchus and Apollo at least in some schools, especially in France; Rabelais and Ronsard were other Frenchmen interested in Bacchic inspiration in the middle of the sixteenth century. See Terence C. Cave, "The Triumph of Bacchus and Its Interpretation in the French Renaissance: Ronsard's *Hinne de Bacus*," in *Humanism in France at the End of the Middle Ages and In the Early Renaissance*, ed. A. H. T. Levi (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1970), 249-270; Alice Fiola Berry, "Apollo versus Bacchus: The Dynamics of Inspiration (Rabelais's Prologues to *Gargantua* and the *Tiers livre*)," *PMLA* 90 (1975): 88-95; M. A. Screech, "The Winged Bacchus (Pausanias, Rabelais and Later Emblematisers)," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 259-262.

<sup>44</sup> Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 232.

<sup>45</sup> *Parthenopeus* II.18, as quoted in Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 73. John Nassichuk, "Bacchus dans l'oeuvre élégiaque de Giovanni Pontano," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 17 (2010): 1-21.

‘Euhoe, Bacche,’ canens, ‘ad tua festa veni.’<sup>46</sup>

For Pontano, as for Ovid, Bacchic inspiration is messy and disorderly, but it is the sudden burst, a “coup d’élán,” that characterizes true inspiration.

The confluence of Bacchic and Apollonian inspiration could be felt in the very figure of the sleeping naiad of which the Roman humanists were so enamored.<sup>47</sup> The mythological trappings of these nymphs, such as Amymone and Ariadne, linked them within the ideas of discovery, enlightenment, and epiphany. Their transformation into life-giving springs or the revelation of their form by a lifted drapery fit them into ideologies of regeneration, creativity, and inspiration.<sup>48</sup> So whether the nymph was sought out by a Bacchic satyr; lay incapacitated under the influence of divine drink and exhausted by Bacchic frenzy; or was sought by Apollo and surrendered to a calmer *furor*, she stood for the form of transport, or *vacatio*, that brought beings into contact with the divine. Convivialists, such as Cardinal Egidius of Viterbo, shared the Neoplatonic perception of divine mysteries, which saw in the experience of the soul’s ascent by means of love something analogous to Bacchic frenzy.<sup>49</sup> Such thinking invested the Renaissance cult of the nymph with Dionysian overtones. Apollo’s *furor poeticus* was linked to Bacchus’ stranger and wilder *furor*, which bore creative and inventive power too.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Pontano, *Parthenopeus* l.xvii, “Ad Bacchum,” 5-10: “Car, en effet, ma Calliope, revenant des collines du Parnass / Ose s’émouvoir sur le mode des Romains / Et, gambadant au milieu du tendre choral de la jeunesse / Ramener les plaisanteries spirituelles depuis longtemps endormies. / Elle fait danser le plectre d’Aonie autour de tes coupes / En chantant ‘Euhoe, Bacchus, viens donc à tes fêtes’” (quoted in Nassichuk, “Bacchus dans l’oeuvre élégiaque de Giovanni Pontano,” 5-6). In 1461 Pontano married a woman named Adriana, and in reflection of their long marriage composed a collection of elegies entitled *De amore conjugali*, in which Bacchus and Ariadne appear frequently.

<sup>47</sup> Bober, “The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia,” 232.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 234. See also J. W. O’Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on the Church and Reform* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 51ff.

<sup>50</sup> Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 231.

In the landscape and adornment of their gardens, these humanists sought visual cues that would complement their novel ideals, and this was often found in the statues of sleeping nymphs and prancing satyrs, as well as the noble figures of Bacchus and Apollo.<sup>51</sup> One Archbishop of Cyprus, Cardinal Ludocivo Podocataro, hired Perino del Vaga (a specialist in grotesques who had worked on Raphael's Loggia project) to paint the walls of his garden in Rome with "poetical fancies" of "Bacchantes, Satyrs, Fauns, and other wild things, in reference to an ancient statue of Bacchus, seated beside a tiger, which the Archbishop had there."<sup>52</sup> Others installed fountains and had grottoes constructed, as at Agostini Chigi's Farnesina palace.<sup>53</sup> These artificial caves conjured up the Arcadian abode of the Nymphs, the guardians of Bacchus, and combined a vision of artfully constructed natural wonders with the divine nursery of the infant god.<sup>54</sup> The cave of the nymph Corycia on Parnassus was another remembered locale, described in Nonnos' *Dionysiaca* as the birthplace of the oldest ritual dances in honor of Bacchus.<sup>55</sup> The intersection of nymphs, Parnassus, and Bacchus united the inspiring qualities of Apollo and the Muses with the Bacchic sensibility. (It is not surprising to learn then that the pastoral writer Jacopo

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<sup>51</sup> Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 239. The revived, or Second, Roman Academy continued into the early sixteenth century and included members such as Angelo Colucci, whose villa grounds held a famous sleeping nymph statue. See Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," 224-225.

<sup>52</sup> Vasari, "Life of Perino del Vaga," trans. de Vere, vol. 2, 159-160. This request, like a garden of Cardinal Andrea della Valle, indicates the compatibility of Christian with Bacchic themes. Della Valle's *giardino pensile* included a lower level for outdoor dining and a bath decorated with "erotic Bacchic subjects." Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 240.

<sup>53</sup> Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 239. She notes that underneath Chigi's new construction site were the remnants of an Augustan villa, excavated in the nineteenth century to reveal Bacchic stuccoes and frescoes. Bober postulates that Peruzzi and Raphael must have climbed into the subterranean ruins, and were inspired to emulate what they saw there (n. 43).

<sup>54</sup> Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," 235. A former pupil of Leto, and then fellow member of the Academy after achieving a professorship in Rome by 1480, Paolo Marso (Paulus Marsus) published a commentary on Ovid's *Fasti* (Venice, 1482) that attests to the familiarity in their circle of the understanding of Pan as related to the Roman Faunus, and of the history of rites of the Lupercalia and of primitive Arcadian beliefs (Bober, "Appropriation Contexts," 236).

Sannazaro was one of Leto's students at the University of Rome.<sup>56</sup>) The place of artists and architects in the construction of these mini-Arcadias allowed for their immersion in the humanist principles of inspiration and genius, a circumstance that no doubt stimulated the process of pondering the origins of their own artistic creativity and frenzy.

#### BACCHIC INSPIRATION AND THE CONCEPT OF *INGENIUM*

Through many centuries of artmaking, the artist stood out merely as a craftsman, a manual laborer, whose physical talents did not compare to the intellectual gifts of the poet or philosopher. The fifteenth century, however, saw the birth of a new sense of the artist, a sense that would be embraced in the next century by such men as Titian and Michelangelo: that the artist was himself a poet and, given that, deserving of the poet's reputation and equal to him in his genius. A revived interest in an age-old *paragone* comparing the relative merits of painting and poetry fascinated certain elite and antiquity-focused thinkers. The ancient phrase "*ut pictura poesis*" ("like painting, so is poetry") coined by Horace stimulated the discussion, and was widely debated.<sup>57</sup> While the original context for this assertion was the classical analysis of rhetoric, the hint that the visual arts might aspire to and achieve some of the same authorial status gradually took hold. In turn, a renewed assertion that the painter himself was like the poet—"ut

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<sup>55</sup> Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," 235.

<sup>56</sup> Palermino, "The Roman Academy," 122. Other students included Pontano, Platina, Sabellico, and Alexander Farnese (the future Pope Paul III).

<sup>57</sup> In his *De gloria Atheniensium* III, Plutarch had repeated a similar aphorism from Simonides: that painting was mute poetry, and poetry a speaking picture. See Lee, "*Ut Pictura Poesis*," 197-200 and n. 1. Already in 1449, a charter in Naples read: "What is proper to historians and poets is also not foreign to painters, for there is evidence in many classical writings that poetry is nothing other than spoken painting" (as quoted in Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist: On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist*, trans. David McLintock [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 56).

pictor poeta,” one might say—began to gain ground in the sixteenth century.<sup>58</sup> This new poetic painter, who fashioned a world from pigment and gesture instead of words or song, embarked on an historic campaign for independence, authenticity, and authority.

Part of what defined the genius of the poet was his intellectual gift of reason. For the artist to achieve the same status as the poet, he too had to assert his use of reason, or “ratio.”<sup>59</sup> If his rules were not grammar and meter, they were the equally rational design, perspective, geometry, and proportion, since “ars sine scientia nihil est.”<sup>60</sup> But the other side of poetic greatness was manifested in the notion of divine inspiration, something that stood apart from reason.<sup>61</sup> The notion of a frenzied poet composing in a state of ecstasy went back to the fifth century B.C. and Democritus.<sup>62</sup> Many ancient authors thereafter perpetuated and elaborated on this idea of the poet’s *furor divinus*. The idea of *furor* derived from many different sources

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<sup>58</sup> From Rosand’s title, “*Ut Pictor Poeta*.” See, for example, Holberton, “Of Antique and Other Figures,” 58: “Suppose... that Renaissance pictures could be like poems. It would follow that an artist need not follow another’s text, but could compose his own. It could also follow that he need not compose his poem as text, but as picture”—a pictorial poem that is not meant to be translated into words. See also Rosand, “Inventing Mythologies: The Painter’s Poetry,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Titian*, ed. Patricia Meilman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 35-57; and Goffen, *Titian’s Women*, 107.

<sup>59</sup> Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 360.

<sup>60</sup> Quoting a statement made by certain imported northern architects working in Milan against those they encountered locally, c. 1390 (quoted in Warnke, *The Court Artist*, 37). Leonardo, for example, stressed the importance of mathematics to painting, and thus claimed for his art the status of a liberal art. He claimed, moreover, that painting was superior to poetry, because it could show three dimensions on a two-dimensional surface, depict a battle in a single instant, and show all of a beautiful face at once (*Trattato della pittura*, 1, 2, 14-28, 46; Lee, “*Ut pictura poesis*,” 200). A century earlier, Jacopo della Quercia had argued to the Siense that at the Ferrarese court he had been attributed greater status, and that architecture should be included among the *artes liberales* and not the *artes mechanicae*. An “art” (*ars*) was “free” (*liberalis*) if it involved no physical labor and was not practiced for gain, just for pleasure; such an art was the product of *virtus* and found expression in “talent” (*ingenium*) conferred by God or Nature; and its practice was “invention” (*inventio*), guided by judgment (*iudicium*), rules, and techniques, the “science” (*scientia*) (Warnke, 34). Alberti stressed the painter’s use of *disegno* and *inventio* and their dependence on geometry and perspective to assert his status as a liberal artist (Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 73).

<sup>61</sup> See Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, passim, for the role of Saturn and the melancholic humor, black bile, in realizing genius. Marsilio Ficino’s *De vita triplici* was the first comprehensive reevaluation of melancholy, linking it with genius.

<sup>62</sup> Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 82.

besides Plato, including Ovid, Horace and Cicero.<sup>63</sup> Ovid wrote that poets are “the Muses’ darlings, contain a divine spark. God is in us, we have dealings with heaven: / Our inspiration descends / from celestial realms.”<sup>64</sup> Cicero gleaned from Plato “that no man can be a good poet who is not on fire (*inflammatione*) and inspired by something like frenzy (*afflatu quasi furoris*).”<sup>65</sup> Seneca said: “There never has been any great *ingenium* without some touch of madness.”<sup>66</sup> And Horace asserted: “From the moment Liber enlisted brain-sick poets among his Satyrs and Fauns, the sweet Muses, as a rule, have had the scent of wine about them....”<sup>67</sup> When the soul was filled with this frenzy, the poet experienced both *ekstasis*, being outside himself, and *enthousiasmos*, being filled with the god within himself.<sup>68</sup> Divine frenzy was deemed indispensable to human forms of invention, yet the attribute of *divinum ingenium* was applied by ancient authors only to poets and philosophers.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Seneca, *De tranquillitate animi* XVII.10-12; Ovid, *Ars amatoria* III.548-550; Horace, *Ars poetica* 296; and Cicero, *Pro archia* VIII.18. Plato alludes to *furor poeticus* in *Phaedrus* 245C, *Apology* 22C, *Ion* 533D-E, and *Laws* II.719C.

<sup>64</sup> *Ars amatoria* III.548-550, trans. Green, 230.

<sup>65</sup> *De oratore* II.46.194 (quoted in Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ to ‘Fantasia’,” 384). In *De divinatione* I.37.80, Cicero defined *afflatus* as “divine power within the soul” (quoted *ibid.*).

<sup>66</sup> *De tranquillitate animi* XVII.10-12 (as quoted in *ibid.*, 384-385).

<sup>67</sup> Horace, *Epistles* I.xix.3-5: “ut male sanos adscripsit Liber Satyris Faunisque poetas, vina fere dulces oluerunt mane Camenae” (trans. Fairclough, 381).

<sup>68</sup> McGinty, *Interpretation and Dionysos*, 56.

<sup>69</sup> Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 19. Michael Baxandall notes that we should not necessarily translate the Quattrocento usage of the term *ingegno* or *ingenium* as “genius” in our modern sense, but rather to understand its meaning as connoting “innate talent.” *Ars* was understood as “learned skill” or “workmanship” (*Giotto and the Orators*, 15-17). As Penelope Murray explains, our notion of genius is an eighteenth-century invention, and that prior to this, the word *ingenium* connoted the classical meaning of “innate ability.” It is the idea of divine inspiration, already present in Greek antiquity, that truly conveyed our meaning of genius, of a person blessed with true individuality and brilliance that surpasses any mode of instruction or reason (introduction to *Genius: The History of an Idea* [New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989], 2-4).

Such tropes of poetic inspiration became commonplace in the Renaissance, yet in his theory of genius, Ficino, like the ancients, did not consider the visual artist.<sup>70</sup> Alberti praised painting that showed the emotions through outward movements, but still insisted that painting was rational, dependent on *disciplina* and learned *arte*.<sup>71</sup> But humanists picked up on the idea of emotional intensity being required of the artist himself; that in order for the painter to depict the movements of the soul, he had to have experienced these emotions himself. As Horace had said: “[S]i vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi” (“if you wish me to weep, you have to suffer first”).<sup>72</sup> And Quintilian likewise had urged: “Sometimes... we must follow the stream of the emotions, since their warmth will give us more than any diligence can secure.”<sup>73</sup> A deep capacity for human empathy and relinquishing the self to passion was like that of the initiate to the Bacchic mysteries, whose soul was shaken by out-of-body experiences. An effective painter, then, shared something of the vivid emotionality of Bacchic transcendence. Even the etymology of “Liber Pater” invoked the notion of freedom and liberality, making Bacchus the god of the expressiveness that made the painter a liberal artist. Genius came to be considered the opposite of technique: one being *furor*, the other *ratio*.

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<sup>70</sup> Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 346. The notion that God’s truth and wisdom are fed through the poet into the written word is expressed by Boccaccio in his defense of classical texts at the end of his *Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*. “Poets were really men of wisdom,” he writes; “one can never escape the conviction that great men, nursed with the milk of the Muses, brought up in the very home of philosophy, and disciplined in sacred studies, have laid away the very deepest meaning in their poems...” (XV.i, XIV.x, trans. Osgood, *Boccaccio on Poetry*, xv, 54). Indeed, he defends the mythology with which they cloak or veil their wisdom as being not mere imaginative play but tools for describing “the operations of the Celestial Hierarchy.” His very definition of poetry entails this concept of frenzied invention: poetry is a sort of “fervor quidam exquisite inveniendi, atque dicendi, seu scribendi quod inveneris,” that is “fervid and exquisite invention, with fervid expression, in speech or writing, of that which the mind has invented” (XIV.vii, trans. Osgood, 39).

<sup>71</sup> *On Painting*, Book III.53, 55: “artis vero perficiendae ratio diligentia, studio et assiduitate comparetur” (“the means of perfecting our art will be found in diligence, study and application”) (Grayson, 97); III.61: “Siquidem non paucis in rebus ipsa diligentia grata non minus est quam omne ingenium” (“Indeed diligence is no less welcome than native ability in many things”) (Grayson, 105). See Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 31-32, 38.

<sup>72</sup> Horace, *Ars poetica* 102-103, as quoted in Lee, “*Ut pictura poesis*,” 218.

Until this new view, mimesis had been the quintessence of the visual arts. A painter or sculptor did not “create”; that was an act of God alone.<sup>74</sup> Alberti urged his advisees not to express their own personality or to seek individuality, but to follow the rules amassed through knowledge and example in order to attain the truest rendering of reality possible.<sup>75</sup> Classical art was itself so worthy because it was thought to demonstrate the closest art had previously come toward this ideal of mimesis.<sup>76</sup> In an age of elaborate verbal or written instructions, moreover, the artist’s contribution to a piece could still seem to be solely mechanical. Consequently, as the fifteenth century came to a close, the notion of an artist somehow expressing his independence from precedent and exercising free will remained provocative. But gradually the hand of the artist and his innovative imagination began to be recognized and valued. Patrons sought to enhance their own reputations by obtaining the works of now famous painters and sculptors. And artists began to be associated with having *ingegno*, which was considered unteachable, beyond reason, an inborn talent.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Quintilian, *Institutiones oratoriae* X.3.18, as quoted in Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 54.

<sup>74</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, “‘Creativity’ and ‘Tradition’,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44 (1983):106.

<sup>75</sup> Alberti calls *ingenium* “skill” or the “application of learned rules.” He praises *disciplina* and *arte* as the height of the artist’s ability. Alberti still adhered to *ratio* and imitation as being the keys to good art. He was determined to gain respect for the painter, not by stressing freedom of expression, but rather by demonstrating painting’s high demand for discipline and skill (for example, *On Painting* II.46).

<sup>76</sup> Ludovico Dolce advocated the imitation of antique art since it was itself already an ideal imitation of nature, containing “all the perfection of art” (as quoted in Lee, “*Ut pictura poesis*,” 205).

<sup>77</sup> Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, passim. Although Michelangelo comes to be named a *divine* genius, earlier artists had likewise been accorded similar accolades. Even before Alberti and Ghiberti spoke of invention (*inventio*), innate genius (*ingenium*, or talent, brilliance), and the role of the artist, Cennino Cennini associated nature’s gift of imagination with the development of personal style, and asserted that an artist must have *fantasia* “to discover things not seen, hiding themselves under the shadow of natural objects, and to fix them with the hand, presenting to plain sight that which does not actually exist” (*The Craftsman’s Handbook “Il Libro dell’Arte*,” trans. Daniel V. Thompson, Jr. [New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960], chap. 27, p. 15; chap. 1, p. 1). Further, Cennini said that those are “to be extolled... who enter the profession through a sense of enthusiasm and exaltation” (chap. 2, p. 3). Duccio had referred to his own “divine inspiration” as did another Sienese artist, following suit, in 1421 (Warnke, *The Court Artist*, 36). Carlo Marsuppini’s 1446 epitaph to Brunelleschi praised his “divino ingenio” (Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ to ‘Fantasia’,” 394; Warnke, 36). Emison notes Brunelleschi was the first artist to be



As painting came more and more to be understood as a form of poetry in and of itself (and not merely a vehicle for the written word), the painter became more conscious of his own experience of creating, including the *furor* he felt when inventing and making his work.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, there was an ancient precedent for applying a notion of “delirium” to art as well, when increasingly *furor poeticus* came to be equated with *furor Bacchicus*, just as Propertius had said: “When poets are in their cups, the Muse quickens their genius: Bacchus, you always inspire your brother Phoebus.”<sup>79</sup> Callistratus’ *Description of a statue of a Bacchante* by Scopas expressed this confluence:

It is not the art of poets and writers of prose alone that is inspired when divine power from the gods falls on their tongues, nay, the hands of sculptors also, when they are seized by the gift of a more divine inspiration, give utterance to creations that are possessed and full of madness. So Scopas, moved as it were by some inspiration, imparted to the production of this statue the divine frenzy within him.<sup>80</sup>

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associated publically with having *ingegno* (*Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 7, 73). In the dedication of his *Della pittura*, Alberti accorded Brunelleschi an “*ingegno maraviglioso*.” And Brunelleschi referred to his own *ingegno* as early as 1427-30 (Kemp, 388). Around the same time, Leonardo Giustiniani (d. 1446), a Venetian student of Guarino, wrote a letter to the “Queen of Cyprus” in which he praised the art of painting as being cherished for having “force of mind and a truly divine talent (*ingenium*)” and, in a *paragone* of painting and poetry, he argued both “are like each other in being aroused and directed by a keenness of the mind and a certain divine inspiration” (as quoted in Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 97-98; Kemp, 394, says the letter was addressed to Chrysoloras). Gentile da Fabriano, Pisanello, and Mantegna were also noted for their *ingegno* by Bartolomeo Fazio, in a chapter entitled “De Pictoribus” of his *Lives of Illustrious Men (De Viris Illustribus)*, written 1453-1457, where he praised Gentile, who “was endowed with a talent apt and suited for every kind of painting,” and Pisanello, more boldly, “as being endowed with an almost poetic genius” (*ingegno prope poetico*). Among sculptors, Fazio praised Ghiberti and Donatello (*A Documentary History of Art*, 198-202; Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 103-109). Mantegna was praised for his *ingenium* in 1484, and by Jacopo Sannazaro in his *Arcadia* of 1504 (Kemp, 392; Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna*, trans. S. Arthur Strong [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901], doc. 40).

<sup>78</sup> In the *Vita nuova*, Dante had adduced this imaginative vector in regards to his own experience of writing; it is highly emotional, he argued, and gives emotion sway over the mind like a delirium or hallucination. Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ to ‘Fantasia,’” 362-363.

<sup>79</sup> Propertius, *Elegy IV.6.75-76*: “*ingenium positis irritet Musa poetis: / Bacche, soles Phoebos fertilis esse tuo*” (as quoted in Arthur Patch McKinlay, “Bacchus as Inspirer of Literary Art,” *The Classical Journal* 49 [1953]: 103). See Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 231.

<sup>80</sup> Callistratus, *Descriptions 2*, “On the Statue of a Bacchante,” trans. Fairbanks, 381; quoted in Koch, “Michelangelo’s Bacchus and the Art of Self-Formation,” 369. Quoted and discussed also in Moffitt, *Inspiration*, 72-73.

Renaissance artists could draw on and extend this concept of *furor divino* to embrace the frenzy experienced by the visual artist and not just the poetic one.<sup>81</sup> That the sculpture Scopas created under such inspiration was itself a Bacchic representation also conveyed the idea that this inspiring *furor* was itself Bacchic. Part of the very “miracle” (as Callistratus called it) of the artist’s work was that the inanimate stone was transformed so as to quiver with the divine madness of the possessed maenad:

[I]t... would respond to the god when he entered into its inner being. [...] [S]o clear an intimation was given of a Bacchante’s divine possession stirring Bacchic frenzy though no such possession aroused it; and so strikingly there shone from it, fashioned by art in a manner not to be described, all the signs of passion which a soul goaded by madness displays.<sup>82</sup>

There is a double frenzy: the madness that moves the artist and the madness of the Bacchante, the latter only manifested because of the divine inspiration of the artist. The *furor divino* of the artist is a Bacchic *furor*. Bacchus could thus be understood as the particular inspiring force of the *visual* artist.

This nascent view of Bacchic inspiration in ancient sources was taken up and developed by artists in the Renaissance. As the irrational was given greater force and power over the artist, so the perception of the role of mere training, practice, and disciplined skill ebbed. Genius became a feature that was beyond the grasp of learning. Since artistic genius was different from poetic genius—exhibited in a different intellectual and physical world than the poet’s—the artist’s muse, his inspirational spirit or *genius*, should naturally be different than Apollo. Apollo

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<sup>81</sup> Vasari is the first writer to articulate fully the concept of divine genius, although as a writer of his moment, he often expressed ideas inspired by the artists themselves. Michelangelo was called “divino” from 1532 on. See Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 37-38, 61. Vasari would also write: “Many painters... achieve in the first sketch of their work, as though guided by a sort of fire of inspiration, something of the good and a certain measure of boldness; but afterwards, in finishing it, the boldness vanishes” (*Le Vite*, ed. Milanesi, vol. v, p. 260, quoted in Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600*, 96).

belonged to the poet; he was clean, bright, straight, and narrow. Bacchus, on the other hand, was both Apollo's opposite and his complement: noble yet sometimes bloated, wise yet sometimes confused, powerful yet sometimes swaggering. The visceral, material sensations of manipulating matter into visions was closer to the sensual mood of Bacchus than his brother. The gifts of Bacchus drove the passions of the flesh with lust and excess, and fueled the fires of the irrational mind with emotions, fury, and madness. For some Renaissance artists, the gifts of Bacchus could be viewed as what stirs the artist to create.

For the artist, Bacchus could be the god of a potent—but also overwhelming, chaotic, and uncontrollable—passion and inspiration. The road to inspiration could be painful, involving both the bitter and the sweet, the *dulce* and *amarum*.<sup>83</sup> As Pico della Mirandola explained in the *Oration*, the inspiration of Apollo required first the dismemberment of Osiris (Bacchus) or the flaying of Marsyas.<sup>84</sup> The madness of inspiration, in other words, was not always a beautiful or comfortable experience. The conjunction of the two inspirations—the controlled illumination of Apollo with the frenzied madness of Bacchus—was what fulfilled artistic vision. Isolated Bacchic *enthousiasmos* might be unproductive, but harnessed by reason to be articulated and manifested, it was elevated by an act of creation.<sup>85</sup> One cannot wallow in drunkenness, but must translate such a state of *vacatio* into productive invention.

The novel picture that pastoral poets—and soon, visual artists—were attempting to create of their own artistic and inventive process incorporated the painful and melancholy workings of

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<sup>82</sup> Callistratus, *Descriptions 2*, trans. Fairbanks, 381-383.

<sup>83</sup> See Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 159.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 174-175. See *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 11, 230.

their *divino furore*.<sup>86</sup> Ficino first connected melancholy with innate greatness, seeing it as both a sign and mechanism for the divine inspiration that comes to the spiritually and intellectually superior man in the moment of *vacatio* in which all sense of the material self is suspended.<sup>87</sup> The Neoplatonic conception of supernatural frenzies was thus conjoined with the Aristotelian notion of naturalistic, earth-bound humoral temperaments. Melancholy, in turn, was inherently like the varied characteristics and effects of drunkenness. The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* XXX, 1, contained an exegesis in which the effects of a melancholic humor were likened to those from consuming too much wine. A predisposition to melancholy, caused by an excess of black bile, came to be seen as more common in persons of genius, who were born under the sign of Saturn. Melancholy was a bodily consequence of transcendent thoughts, just as it was of too much drinking. In this way, the melancholy drunk could be a metaphor for the melancholy artist.<sup>88</sup>

An engraving by Girolamo Mocetto of c. 1510 suggests this new, complex, and uneasy picture of artistic genius (fig. 5.15). He depicts a nude Bacchus sitting against a vine, disgorging

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<sup>85</sup> It was possible, even, to see Bacchus as assisting reason, as Plutarch wrote that Dionysus is “Intelligence and Reason, the Ruler and Lord of all that is good” (*Isis and Osiris*, 49 [371A], as quoted in Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” 94). See also Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, 44-55.

<sup>86</sup> See Ruvoldt on Michelangelo’s *The Dream*, drawing c. 1533, Courtauld Institute Gallery, Somerset House, London (*The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, chap. 6). Pastoral poetry had also included much of this despair and sadness at the loss of antiquity, but also from contemporary and fully modern ills. There was also an element of self-reflection about the artistic process itself embedded in their writing. “The lesson of all of them is that the topics of their outer world—Church history, secular politics, private friendships, sexual love, family affairs—all engage with inner self-reflexive meditation on the artistic process, the composition of poetry, and the endeavors of art” (Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 35).

<sup>87</sup> Brann, *The Debate over the Origin of Genius*, 3-12, 445.

<sup>88</sup> See Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn: The Character and Conduct of Artists: A Documented History from Antiquity to the French Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969); Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*.

a vessel of wine into a dry spring bed.<sup>89</sup> The figure leans back awkwardly, his belly wrinkling across the middle and his legs splaying. He props his left elbow upon his knee, and holds his sagging head in his hand. Grape leaves, seemingly continuous with the growing vine behind him, entwine his brow. With his face in shadow, his eyes lowered, his lips thin and tight, and his fingers gripping his forehead, his appearance evokes the quiet agony of a hangover. But is it a result of drink alone, or perhaps something more? Certainly this is not an elegant, noble figure, but neither is this Bacchus a funny or mocking image of a corpulent drinker, as in Piero di Cosimo's image of a drunk (fig. 5.16).<sup>90</sup> Piero's hideous tippler holds up his glass, rolls back his eyes, and reveals a sloppy grin. The face of Mocetto's Bacchus is still young and chiseled, and his body is not of someone age-worn and dissipated. His position, reclining beside a riverbed, recalls the antique figure of a river god, and lends to this Bacchus some of the consequent associations of being a source.<sup>91</sup> He appears as if he is the origin of a river of wine, like that which blesses an Arcadian land of plenty or the Isle of Andros.

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<sup>89</sup> First State, Christ Church, Oxford; early state, British Museum, London; final state, *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 2505.009, in Louvre, Rothschild collection, Paris. See David Landau, "Early Italians — Notes from Oxford," *Print Collector (il conoscitore di stampe)* 3, no. 42 (1979): 2-9.

<sup>90</sup> *Drinker and a Woman*, attributed to Piero di Cosimo, private collection, Amsterdam. Raimond Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1931), v. 13: Third Generation Florentine Painters (Circle of Domenico Ghirlandaio), fig. 247, p. 363.

<sup>91</sup> Mocetto's Bacchus has also been noted to be almost identical, in reverse, to a nude, sleeping soldier in Giovanni Bellini's *Resurrection* in Berlin, of 1475-1479, for the church of S. Michele in Isola at Murano. Mocetto's figure may derive not from the painting but from a mutual common source, possibly a drawing by Bellini or Mantegna after an antique figure, perhaps of a Bacchus. See Joseph Guibert, "Note sur une 'Résurrection' du Musée Royal de Berlin: Giovanni Bellini et le graveur Mocetto," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 34 (1905): 380-383. The angle of the torso to the legs and folding of the abdomen are, in fact, quite close to that of the *Torso Belvedere*, which might itself have been understood to represent a Bacchic figure (since it sits on a panther skin) or a Hercules. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Painters and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 132; the sculpture was known as early as the 1420s and was held by the Colonna family in Rome until its appropriation by Clement VII after the Sack.

The gesture of head in hand, moreover, mimics the traditional imagery of melancholy.<sup>92</sup> This allusion enhances the pathos of the figure, and takes him beyond the first impression of intemperance. The melancholic pose of the seated nude male had long been associated with the inspired philosopher or poet.<sup>93</sup> And where melancholy had earlier been linked with vices such as sloth, a more elevated interpretation linking the humor with genius, creativity, and inspiration was taking hold. The old, conventional pose, in turn, came to carry within itself not the stigma of laziness or misery but the aura of *ingenium* and divine *furor*. Mocetto's figure has all these associations, old and new. He is at once the hungover man, wallowing in the aftermath of futile endeavors and ephemeral pleasures, and at the same time, the melancholic genius, in the throes of creative forces. Moreover, inherent in his melancholy is the fact that wine itself induces madness—the purview of genius—and offers a mechanism of *vacatio*, by which the person may open himself to the influence of the divine.<sup>94</sup> The ties of drunkenness with other forms of *vacatio*, such as melancholy and sleep, suggests to the viewer that Mocetto's figure is divinely inspired.<sup>95</sup> Mocetto also borrows a conventional setting for the melancholic figure: an isolated wilderness beside a river.<sup>96</sup> This hard, rocky landscape evokes the ideal contemplative locales

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<sup>92</sup> See I. Fliedl and C. Geissmar, eds., *Die Beredsamkeit des Leibes: Zur Körpersprache in der Kunst* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1992), 66-67. For the iconography associated with melancholy, see Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, esp. 286-289; Chastel, "Melancholia in the Sonnets of Lorenzo," 61-67. The gesture evokes the unhappy lover, as in a poem of Lorenzo de' Medici's in which he recalls being jilted by his beloved, for which he hangs his cheek on his hand, "col braccio alla guancia" (quoted in Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden*, 96). Lorenzo's *canzona* entitled "Lontano degli occhi de Lei, ricorda tristament il suo cammino amoroso" reads: "Io mi sto spesso sopra un duro sasso / E fo col braccio alla guancia sostegno" ("Often I seat myself on a hard rock and rest my cheek on my hand") (Chastel, "Melancholia in the Sonnets of Lorenzo," 61 and n. 2).

<sup>93</sup> Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, chap. 1, "The Sleep of Reason."

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>95</sup> See Ruvoldt on the engraving of *Diogenes* by Agostino Vespasiano, c. 1515, British Museum, London, in which the ascetic, ancient philosopher is posed like Michelangelo's drunken Noah from the Sistine Chapel ceiling, 1508-1512 (*ibid.*, fig. 5, p. 23).

<sup>96</sup> Ursula Hoff, "Meditation in Solitude," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1 (1937): 292-294.

for aspiring to the *vita solitaria*, the solitude conducive to spiritual and intellectual inspiration. The *figura sedens* at the same time discloses the poet's agonized struggles of composition.<sup>97</sup> As Petrarch wrote of sitting in a isolated wild spot, dwelling on the beauty of his beloved: "Me freddo, pietra morta in pietra viva, / In guisa d'uom che pensi e pianga e scriva."<sup>98</sup>

In composing an image around this figure, Mocetto took the classical idea of Bacchus and deployed it unclassically, in a contemporary setting with an Italian town in the distance. By giving Bacchus the features of the melancholic intellectual, Mocetto complicated the meaning of the figure, taking him beyond mere connotations of drunkenness. The onset of drunken melancholy could become a metaphor for the dark shadow that sinks down over the mind of the genius at the height of his inspiration. Mocetto's image is a visual poem describing the turbulence of the passions, the bodily humors, and the melancholy emotions. In the hands of an artist, the figure of Bacchus becomes a metaphor, moreover, for the challenging *furor* of the artist's own inspiration and creative genius. Process and image converge into one visual idea.

#### MICHELANGELO'S BACCHIC FORAY

With the perception that genius was natural and inborn came an increasingly popular notion of brilliant artists having idyllic, bucolic origins from which they emerged like rare

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<sup>97</sup> Chastel, "Melancholia in the Sonnets of Lorenzo," 63. Contemporary poets and philosophers took to having allegorical portraits made of themselves in which they were depicted nude and asleep, or at least in the conventional pose of melancholy. See, for example, the portrait medal of Tito Vespasiano Strozzi by Sperandio of Mantua, c. 1476, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Ruvoldt, *The Italian Renaissance Imagery of Inspiration*, fig. 1, p. 7. Shakespeare will express this idea when he has Theseus state in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i.7: "The lunatick, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact" (as quoted in Brann, *The Debate Over the Origins of Genius*, 452).

<sup>98</sup> "I yet remain sitting there, quite cold, a dead stone on a living stone, as one who meditates and weeps and writes" (as quoted in Hoff, "Meditation in Solitude," 294).

flowers or precious gems.<sup>99</sup> The emergence of the idea of the rustic, untrained artist paralleled the rise of the pastoral mode, with its imagined Arcadian landscape, in both the visual arts and literature.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, the paradigm of an artist born with genius (having literally suckled his gift from the earth, as in the mythical tale of Michelangelo's own origins<sup>101</sup>) aligned with the idea and aesthetic of a simple, pure, and authentic pastoral world. An ideal of natural wisdom overlapped with that of the pastoral idyll, and the Neo-Latin and vernacular poets had their shepherds sing of the origins of their poetic gifts.<sup>102</sup> Many poets and artists made an effort to hide or disguise learning and effort. While fifteenth-century artists (and their humanist advisors) often strove for opacity in concocting the most elaborate or subtle allegories and metaphors, the early sixteenth-century taste began to reveal an almost anti-intellectual, anti-elite inclination.<sup>103</sup> Castiglione would codify the seemingly artless quality of *sprezzatura*. Artists sought to

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<sup>99</sup> Vasari tells the story, passed on by Ghiberti, that Giotto was a mere shepherd discovered by Cimabue in pastoral landscape drawing perfect sheep in the sand. Ghiberti's *Second Commentary* details the virtual fable that Cimabue found Giotto out in nature drawing a sheep from life on a rock (Holt, *A Documentary History of Art*, 153). *I commentarii* II.ii.1: "In una villa... nacque uno fanciullo di mirabile ingegno, il quale si ritraeva del naturale una pecora. [...] Cimabue... vide el fanciullo sedente in terra, e disegnava in su una lastra una pecora" (ed. Bartoli, 83).

<sup>100</sup> Emison, *Creating the "Divine" Artist*, 67. Note that Boccaccio claims for the poet the very same sort of inspirational environment, a need for peace and quiet found only in the pastoral countryside: "Poets prefer lonely haunts as favorable to contemplation. [...] There the beeches stretch themselves, with other trees, toward heaven; there they spread a thick shade with their fresh green foliage...; there, too, are clear fountains and argent brooks that fall with a gentle murmur from the mountain's breast. There are the gay song-birds, and the boughs stirred to a soft sound by the wind, and playful little animals; and there the flocks and herds..., and all is filled with peace and quiet. Then, as these pleasures possess both eye and ear, they soothe the soul; then they collect the scattered energies of the mind, and renew the power of the poet's genius, if it be weary, prompting it, as it were, to long contemplation of high themes, and yearn for expression—impulses wonderfully reinforced by the gentle society of books, and the melodious bands of the Muses moving in stately dance. In the light of all this what studious man would not prefer remote places to the city?" (*Genealogia deorum gentilium* XIV.xi, trans. Osgood, 56-57).

<sup>101</sup> Emison, *Creating the "Divine" Artist*, 67. Michelangelo claimed to have learned his knowledge of stone from the milk of his wetnurse, the wife of a stonemason.

<sup>102</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, passim, esp. 35.

<sup>103</sup> See Emison, *Creating the "Divine" Artist*, 67-77.



underplay or deny the input of advisors, asserting not only their own powers of invention but also their purportedly guileless and simple imaginations.

Perhaps it is natural, then, that Michelangelo's first known attempt to copy an antique sculpture was made in a garden sponsored by Lorenzo de' Medici, and that it was of a satyr's head.<sup>104</sup> The tale is recounted by Condivi and Vasari, driven by their own desires to create the origin story for the beloved genius.<sup>105</sup> The narrative includes the detail that the young artist

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<sup>104</sup> The Medici Garden has in the past been considered a myth, but more recent research has demonstrated that there was indeed a sculpture garden on the Piazza di San Marco owned by Lorenzo de' Medici (c. 1472-1475 ff), and it seems likely that Bertoldo, who was living with the Medici, was the custodian of the collection and informal mentor of several young students, including Michelangelo, who was at the time a student of Domenico Ghirlandaio. See Caroline Elam, "Lorenzo de' Medici's Sculpture Garden," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institutes in Florenz* 36 (1992): 41-84; Patricia Lee Rubin, "Vasari, Lorenzo and the Myth of Magnificence," in *Lorenzo il Magnifico e il suo mondo: convegno internazionale di studi*, ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1994), 428-442; Paul Joannides, "Michelangelo and the Medici Garden," in *La Toscana al tempo di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, vol. 1: *Arte* (Pisa: Pacini, 1996), 23-36. Vasari discusses the informal school at the garden in his *Lives* of Michelangelo, Torrigiano, Albertinelli, and Granacci.

<sup>105</sup> Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo* (1553): "[O]ne day he was taken by [Francesco] Granacci to the Medici Garden at S. Marco, which Lorenzo the Magnificent... had adorned with figures and various ancient statues. When Michelangelo saw these works and had savored their beauty, he never again went to Domenico [Ghirlandaio]'s workshop or anywhere else, but there he would stay all day, always doing something, as in the best school for such studies. One day, he was examining among these works the *Head of a Faun*, already old in appearance, with a long beard and laughing countenance, though the mouth, on account of its antiquity, could hardly be distinguished or recognized for what it was; and, as he liked it inordinately, he decided to copy it in marble. And since Lorenzo the Magnificent was having the marble, or rather the cut stonework, done there to ornament that very noble library which he and his forebears had collected from all over the world... these marbles were being worked, and Michelangelo got the workmen to give him a block and to provide him with tools. He set about copying the *Faun* with such care and study that in a few days he perfected it, supplying from his imagination all that was lacking in the ancient work, that is, the open mouth as of a man laughing, so that the hollow of the mouth and all the teeth could be seen. In the midst of this, the Magnificent, coming to see what point his works had reached, found the boy engaged in polishing the head and, approaching quite near, he was much amazed, considering first the excellence of the work and then the boy's age; and, although he did praise the work, nonetheless he joked with him as with a child and said, 'Oh, you have made this *Faun* old and left him all his teeth. Don't you know that old men of that age are always missing a few?' To Michelangelo it seemed a thousand years before the Magnificent went away so that he could correct the mistake; and, when he was alone, he removed an upper tooth from his old man, drilling the gum as if it had come out with the root, and the following day he awaited the Magnificent with eager longing. When he had come and noted the boy's goodness and simplicity, he laughed at him very much; but then, when he weighed in his mind the perfection of the thing and the age of the boy, he, who was the father of all *virtù*, resolved to help and encourage such great genius and to take him into his household..." (ed. H. Wohl, trans. A. S. Wohl [Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976], 11-12). The story takes place in 1489/90, when Michelangelo was sent to Bertoldo di Giovanni's and Lorenzo's school in the garden on the Piazza di S. Marco. Michelangelo fashioned the story, which Vasari added in his second edition of the *Lives* in 1568. According to Condivi, Michelangelo was about fifteen or sixteen years old, and went on to live in Lorenzo's household for the next few years, where Lorenzo "would send for him many times a day and would show him his jewels, carnelians, medals, and similar things of great value, as he knew the boy had high intelligence and judgement" (Condivi, 13).

deemed the antique visage wanting in expression, which he improved upon in his copy by giving the aged creature a tongue-and-teeth-bearing grin.<sup>106</sup> On Lorenzo's examination of the youth's effort, the patron laughingly noted that such an old man would not have all his teeth, at which Michelangelo promptly knocked one out (drilling a socket hole, for realistic effect). In Vasari's words:

And he, ...after some days set himself to counterfeit from a piece of marble an antique head of a Faun that was there, old and wrinkled, which had the nose injured and the mouth laughing. Michelagnolo [sic], who had never yet touched marble or chisels, succeeded so well in counterfeiting it, that the Magnificent Lorenzo was astonished; and then, perceiving that, departing from the form of the antique head, he had opened out the mouth after his own fancy and had made a tongue, with all the teeth showing, that lord, jesting pleasantly, as was his wont, said to him, 'Surely you should have known that old folks never have all their teeth, and that some are always wanting.' It appeared to Michelagnolo, in his simplicity, both fearing and loving that lord, that he had spoken the truth; and no sooner had Lorenzo departed than he straightaway broke one of the teeth and hollowed out the gum, in such a manner, that it seemed as if the tooth had dropped out. And then he awaited with eagerness the return of the Magnificent Lorenzo, who, when he had come and had seen the simplicity and excellence of Michelagnolo, laughed at it more than once, relating it as a miracle to his friends.<sup>107</sup>

In this early confrontation with antiquity, it is interesting that the satyr is the figure Michelangelo first selected to imitate. And that he immediately sought to improve upon it, deciding that the face of the creature should fully manifest its nature and mood, to a degree that even the ancient artist had not achieved.<sup>108</sup> Not only does the story present the genius's first virtuoso creation in sculpture, but the subject itself, a pastoral demon, conveys the sense that Michelangelo's genius

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<sup>106</sup> Luba Freedman, "The Faces of Bacchus and Apollo in Italian and Renaissance Art," *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 22 (1996): 83-84. See also Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden*, 80-85. It is interesting that the young artist was not cowed into thinking ancient art presented an already perfect model to be copied, but saw that it was possible already to improve upon the antique.

<sup>107</sup> Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, "Life of Michelangelo," trans. de Vere, vol. 2, 647.

<sup>108</sup> Freedman, "The Faces of Bacchus and Apollo," 84; Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden*, 83.

was itself natural, inborn, and of the earth—“a miracle.” This suggests something wild, untamed, and raw in his nature—a “simplicità” as Vasari called it. Lorenzo laughs at the boy, jests with him, which is in keeping with the lightheartedness of the satyric subject. The fable simultaneously perpetuates Michelangelo’s own *mythos* of seeing the sculpture within the stone; the satyr who emerges “directly from nature” correlates with this idea of artistic creation via scraping away material to reveal essence.<sup>109</sup> Cicero referred to the fable of a head of Pan (which would of course look just like Michelangelo’s aged satyr) emerging from a block of marble in a quarry, comparing it to the legend of Praxiteles carving his sculptures out of stone:

You also mentioned that myth from Carneades about the head of Pan—as if the likeness could not have been the result of chance! and as if every block of marble did not necessarily have within it heads worthy of Praxiteles! For his masterpieces were made by chipping away the marble, not by adding anything to it; and when, after much chipping, the lineaments of a face were reached, one then realized that the work now polished and complete had always been inside the block. Therefore, it is possible that some such figure as Carneades described did spontaneously appear in the Chian quarries. On the other hand, the story may be untrue. Again, you have often noticed clouds take the form of a lion or a hippocentaur. Therefore it is possible for chance to imitate reality....<sup>110</sup>

Surely Vasari was aware of the analogy to Praxiteles. At the same time, the “discovery” of the satyr parallels the idealized vision, fashioned by Michelangelo himself in his old age, of Lorenzo’s discovery of the roughhewn, natural artist.<sup>111</sup> The story would not have worked if

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<sup>109</sup> Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden*, 82. The author points to two stories in classical literature in which similar creatures emerge from stone: Pliny, *Natural History* XXXVI.4 tells of a Silenus; Cicero tells of a Pan, both revealed within a cracked stone. Pliny: “As for the quarries of Paros, there is an extraordinary tradition that once, when the stone-breakers split a single block with their wedges, a likeness of Silenus was found inside” (trans. D. E. Eichholz [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962], 13).

<sup>110</sup> Cicero, *De divinatione* II.21.48-49, in vol. 20, trans. W. A. Falconer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 425.

<sup>111</sup> Barolsky, *The Faun in the Garden*, 82, 84, 99-104. Michelangelo (through Condivi) and Vasari collude, in a way, to create the fiction that the artist was a child prodigy, an untrained, natural genius, ignoring that he must have had some training—perhaps with Benedetto da Maiano or Giuliano da Sangallo—as well as initial efforts with stone back in the quarries of his hometown (104).

Michelangelo had copied the head of an emperor. The role of the satyr in this tale is evident: the satyr's humor and rustic origins emphasize Michelangelo's raw talent, pastoral origins, and naïveté.

The revelation of his “genius” now complete, Lorenzo invited the youth to live in the Medici palace, where he remained for four years, roughly 1489-1492. Michelangelo was there stimulated by access to thinkers like Pico della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, and Poliziano, as well as Lorenzo himself.<sup>112</sup> Freshly primed from the patronage of the Medici but newly adrift with their fall to the French in 1494, Michelangelo made his way to Rome in 1496, where he found an eager and receptive audience. The antiquarian and *all'antica* enthusiasts in the ancient city were anxious to find the modern artist to fulfill their dream of installing their great vision of antiquity within their worn walls. Michelangelo soon encountered the intellectuals in the circle of Cardinal Raffaele Riario of San Giorgio in Velabro, including those in the Roman Academy.<sup>113</sup> Surrounded by the remnants of ancient Rome and those whose love of the past inspired their every aesthetic and intellectual passion, Michelangelo created one of his first large-scale works in marble, his *Bacchus*—indeed, the first large-scale marble sculpture of Bacchus since antiquity (fig. 5.17, 18).<sup>114</sup> For a young artist grappling with his own identity and self-

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<sup>112</sup> Pico was living in Fiesole on Medici sponsorship during exactly these years. Poliziano was also then the chair of poetry and rhetoric at the University of Florence, and was back in the Medici fold after the death of Lorenzo's wife in 1488. See Maria Grazia Pernis, “The Young Michelangelo and Lorenzo de' Medici's Circle,” in *Lorenzo de' Medici: New Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Conference held at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center CUNY, 1992*, ed. Bernard Toscani (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 143-167.

<sup>113</sup> See Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” 14-15, 22, 32-38.

<sup>114</sup> Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence. It was not Michelangelo's first colossus: in 1493, he had made an eight-foot statue of Hercules on spec, which was bought by the Strozzi family and ultimately ended up in Fontainebleau (but is now lost). See Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 30-31. Two earlier, smaller independent sculptures of Bacchus had been made before: by Francesco di Giorgio, c. 1475 (Vienna), and Antonio Federighi, c. 1470 (Monte dei Paschi, Siena). See Moffit, *Inspiration*, n. 44, p. 54; Daniela Gallo, ed., *Jacopo Sansovino: Il Bacco e la sua Fortuna* (Florence: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1986), fig. b.

formation and with notions of genius, invention, and inspiration, a monumental figure of a Bacchus could synthesize his musings on what it meant to be an emerging artistic genius. In his *Bacchus*, Michelangelo managed to capture the idea of *furor* as a Bacchic transport hovering tenuously between the heights of inspiration and the depths of earthly desires.

Condivi and Vasari described an episode just before this Roman sojourn in which Michelangelo had sculpted a sleeping Cupid in almost exact replication of extant antique versions.<sup>115</sup> The artist treated the stone in such a way as to make it look older, and it was subsequently buried in a vineyard near Rome by the dealer Baldassare del Milanese and then offered, unbeknownst to the artist, as an antique to the intended victim, Cardinal Raffaele Riario.<sup>116</sup> After buying it in 1496, the Cardinal learned of the duplicity and demanded a refund.<sup>117</sup> We might at first guess that a similar desire for deception may have motivated the later creation of the *all'antica* statue of Bacchus.<sup>118</sup> But the motivation was not about counterfeit

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<sup>115</sup> Condivi, *Life of Michelangelo*, 19. Vasari relates that Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici supposedly suggested to Michelangelo that if he "were to bury it under ground and then sent it to Rome treated in such a manner as to make it look old, I am certain that it would pass for an antique, and you would thus obtain much more for it than by selling it here" ("Life of Michelangelo," trans. de Vere, vol. 2, 650). See also Paul F. Norton, "The Lost *Sleeping Cupid* of Michelangelo," *Art Bulletin* 39 (1957): 251-257. The antique Cupid may have been one in the sculpture garden of Lorenzo de' Medici, brought up from Naples in 1488 by Giuliano da Sangallo as a gift from King Ferdinand I.

<sup>116</sup> Vasari tells of other acts of "counterfeiting," as when the young artist copied old master drawings and treated them to look old with smoke and other materials, doing this so that he may "obtain the originals from the hands of their owners by giving them the copies" ("Life of Michelangelo," trans. de Vere, vol. 2, 646).

<sup>117</sup> The Cardinal apparently became aware of the counterfeit and demanded a refund. The incident, however, enhanced the prestige of the piece, prompting Isabella d'Este to seek it out from Cesare Borgia (the brother of Lucrezia Borgia, her sister-in-law) after his taking of Urbino in 1502, where the sculpture then resided, having been earlier presented to Guidobaldo da Montefelto by Cesare. She already had an antique version in her collection, and desired the *paragone* that comparison with the modern version would instigate. See Vasari, "Life of Michelangelo," vol. 2, 651; and Norton, "The Lost *Sleeping Cupid*," 251-252.

<sup>118</sup> Early drawings (including one in the Codice Cantabrigense, fol. 14, Trinity College, Cambridge) of the sculpture show the work with the right hand broken off; this led to anecdotes suggesting that this was done on purpose to enhance its appearance of antiquity. The inscription on the Cambridge drawing, in fact, reads: "Scoltur de Michelangeli the which was buried in the grownd and fond for antick" (quoted in Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 204). The drawing is pictured in Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella, eds., *Michelangelo e l'arte classica* (Florence: Cantini Edizioni d'Arte, 1987), VI: Lo statuto del Bacco, 49, fig. 14. One J. J. Boisard, *Romanae Urbis*

but about competition with the ancients.<sup>119</sup> As Vasari said of the Cardinal, “some censure” attached to him for his rejection of the Cupid piece, “in that he did not recognize the value of the work, which consisted in its perfection; for modern works, if only they be excellent, are as good as the ancient.”<sup>120</sup> It was in this spirit—of rivalry and, indeed, of surpassing antique art—that Michelangelo began to fashion his *Bacchus*.

Arriving in Rome in late June of 1496 to the hospitality of the chastened Cardinal, Michelangelo appears to have begun work almost immediately on the new sculpture. There were a great many antiquities to be seen in Rome, surely an exciting stimulus for an artist already intrigued by the idea of rivaling the ancient masters. In his first letter from Rome on 2 July 1496, Michelangelo wrote to his patron back in Florence, Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco, that Riario showed him his own collection of antiquities and then “asked me whether I had courage enough to attempt some work of art of my own. I replied that I could not do anything as fine, but that he should see what I could do. We have bought a piece of marble for a life-sized figure and on Monday I shall begin work.”<sup>121</sup> The question of whether this refers to the *Bacchus*, and whether

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*Topographiae*, I (Frankfurt, 1597), ed. cons. (Frankfurt 1627), 18, asserted that Raphael was the subject of a dupe by Michelangelo, who broke off the arm on purpose, buried it on a lot where a house was to be built so that it would be “discovered,” and allowed his rival to believe it to be antique only to reveal that the broken hand fit his *Bacchus* perfectly, proving that it was his work and not an antiquity (cited in Agosti and Farinella, 48). Condivi says the statue has a hand with a cup, which does accord with drawings of the statue by Girolamo da Carpi from 1549-1554. This appears to have been the original hand and cup, which must have been reattached by 1550. See Ralph Lieberman, “Regarding Michelangelo’s *Bacchus*,” *Artibus et historiae* 22, no. 43 (2001): n. 13. The penis was likewise excised at an early point, but was never restored.

<sup>119</sup> Galli places the work within his garden amidst his many antiquities, either to have it stand out as modern or to blend in as pseudo-antique. See Paola Barocchi, *Il Bacco di Michelangelo/Michelangelo’s Bacchus* (Florence: Museo Nazionale del Bargello, 1982), 5-6. Barkan writes: “This is a work that seems to have been both imagined and received as a faux antiquity, attempting not simply to pass as an ancient statue but rather to tease the viewer with uncertainty as to whether it was ancient or modern” (*Unearthing the Past*, 201). See Rona Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 25-30 on “agon,” and 97-102 on the *Bacchus*.

<sup>120</sup> Vasari, “Life of Michelangelo,” trans. de Vere, 651.

<sup>121</sup> Meaning July 4. Quoted in Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 38, from *Letters of Michelangelo*, trans. E. H. Ramsden. “Dipoi domenicha el Chardinale venne nella chasa nuova e ffece mi domandare: andai da llui e me domandò quello

it was in fact commissioned by Riario, has been obscured, however, since Vasari and Condivi claim Riario failed to obtain any work from the young master.<sup>122</sup> There is also the fact that the *Bacchus* itself ended up in the sculpture garden of Jacopo Galli,<sup>123</sup> as evidenced by Marten van Heemskerck's drawing of thirty years or so later, which shows the *Bacchus* in the lower section of the garden of the Casa Galli near Riario's Cancelleria.<sup>124</sup> The sculpture can be seen from its

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mi pareva delle cose che avea viste. Intorno a questo li dissi quello mi pareva e certo mi pare ci sia molte belle cose. Di poi el Chardinale mi domandò se mi bastava l'animo di far qualchosa di bello. Risposi ch'io non farei sì gran cose, ma che e' vedrebe quello che farei. Abbiamo chonperato uno pezo di marmo d'una figura del natural e llunedì chomincerò a llavorare" (as quoted in Barocchi, *Il Bacco di Michelangelo*, 3-4).

<sup>122</sup> Hibbard supports the notion that the *Bacchus* was a commission from Riario, but because he simply was not that interested in this idea of a "modern antiquity," no further commissions were forthcoming and the *Bacchus* easily passed from his hands (*Michelangelo*, 38-43). See also Johannes Wilde, *Michelangelo: Six Lectures by Johannes Wilde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 33. Michael Hirst clarifies that the *Bacchus* was commissioned and paid for by Riario, but may have been carved in Galli's garden, and simply remained there when it was rejected by him ("Michelangelo in Rome: An Altar-Piece and the 'Bacchus,'" *Burlington Magazine* 123 [1981]: 581-593). See also Hirst's chapter on the *Bacchus*, in *The Young Michelangelo: The Artist in Rome 1496-1501* (London: National Gallery, 1994), 29-35.

<sup>123</sup> Galli, a banker and an intimate of the humanistic circle in Rome that included Riario and others, was clearly taken with the young sculptor's talent. But at least in this first year in Rome, Riario's dominance over the young artist (eventually to both of their chagrin) is clear. Records preserved in the Balducci banking accounts provide proof that Riario had, in truth, paid for the marble and for Michelangelo's carving it into a *Bacchus*. Riario may have sought out a work depicting *Bacchus* not for his typical role as garden deity, as he ends up in Galli's garden, but perhaps as inventor and patron of the theater, a role of particular import for Riario and the Pomponiana circle given their focused revival of ancient theater. Once placed in Galli's garden, such distinctions and meanings may have faded; standing amidst other antiquities, the sculpture may have stood simply as an *all'antica* *Bacchus*, god of wine and fertility, guardian of nature and gardens. It appears that Michelangelo began living in quarters provided by Galli, even though Riario was supporting the artist financially and paying for his work. In fact, a record from a few months into his stay in Rome indicates that Riario sent two barrels of wine over to Galli's house for Michelangelo (an appropriate gift, surely, for an artist carving a *Bacchus*). By the summer of 1497 Michelangelo appears to have been having some trouble with Riario and was still awaiting the last payment for the *Bacchus*, as indicated in another letter home. That Riario did relinquish the sculpture over to his friend Galli, even after he finally finished paying for it, may indicate the increasing acrimony of his relationship with the artist as well as the fact that the work may have simply been too different or unclassical to meet Riario's expectations. It is likely that Condivi did not simply forget the origin of the commission, but rather that Michelangelo, in constructing the narrative of his artistic genesis, sought to degrade, or excise, a patron he deemed to have failed to recognize his genius. See Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 41-42; Hirst, "Michelangelo in Rome," Appendix C, 590-593; and idem, *The Young Michelangelo*, chap. 2, 29-35. Christoph Luitpold Frommel, "Raffaele Riario, la Cancelleria, il teatro e il *Bacco* di Michelangelo," in *Giovinezza di Michelangelo*, ed. Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt et al. (Florence: Artificio Skira, 1999), 143-146; Barocchi, *Il Bacco di Michelangelo*, 4; Lieberman, "Regarding Michelangelo's *Bacchus*," 65-66.

<sup>124</sup> Heemskerck, Berlin Sketchbook I, f.72, c. 1532-1536, Staatliche Museen, Berlin; f.27a shows the upper section with its sleeping naiad balanced atop a short column. See Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, appendix II, 500-501. See also Mandowsky and Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, 12. A text of 1506 by Maffei is the earliest reference to the presence of the *Bacchus* in Galli's garden: Maffei, Volterrano, 1506, fol CCCv: "Item quamque profanum attemen operosum Bacchi signum in atrio domus Iacobi Galli" (Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, 29, n. 4.). Cf. Constance Gibbons Lee's argument that Galli commissioned the *Bacchus* as the centerpiece and spearhead of an entirely *Bacchic*-themed garden ("Gardens and Gods," 198, and *passim*). She

left side, accentuating its sinuous curve and revealing the simpering *satyresco* behind his leg, fondling and mouthing an abundant bunch of grapes held by the god. Around the statue lay numerous pieces of presumably antique sculpture: several torsos, a reclining river god, a sarcophagus with festoons, a relief of a sphinx, and, affixed to a decaying wall to the right, a sarcophagus relief of the Rape of Persephone. The drawing shows that the right hand of Michelangelo's statue was broken off below the wrist (which would later be restored with perhaps the original hand holding up an *all'antica* wine bowl) and that the penis has been chiseled away, as it remains.

Condivi described Michelangelo's sculpture as a work

whose form and appearance correspond in every particular to the intention of writers of antiquity: the mirthful face and sidelong, lascivious eyes of those too much possessed by the love of wine. He holds a cup in his right hand, as if about to drink, and gazes at it as if taking pleasure in that liquor which he invented; for this reason Michelangelo encircled the head with a garland of vine leaves. Over the left arm he has the skin of a tiger, which animal is dedicated to him because of its great delight in the grape; and Michelangelo made the skin instead of the animal to signify that he who lets himself be lured to that extent by the senses and by the craving for that fruit and its liquor ends by giving up his life to it. In the hand of this arm he holds a bunch of grapes which a merry and nimble little satyr at his feet is furtively eating; he appears to be about seven years old, and the *Bacchus* looks eighteen.<sup>125</sup>

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depends entirely, however, on presuming the veracity and accuracy of the two Heemskerck drawings (though made at least 25 years after Galli's death) in order to determine a "floor plan" for the sculptures. She asserts *Bacchus* to be a nature divinity at the center of complementary figures, such as Venus, Persephone, Pan, and a naiad. But to assume a whole sculptural program around the *Bacchus* neglects the simple fact that collectors of ancient sculptures would have, first, taken whatever they could get their hands on, and second, that these would naturally have been whatever subjects were most abundant in antiquity. The accompanying figures in Galli's garden are among these: Venus, Mars, water nymphs, sarcophagus fronts, etc. I find it hard to attribute so much significance to there being these subjects represented in particular, because they could have been similarly acquired randomly and not programmatically. Surely, once acquired, Galli would place those figures appropriate to a garden (and perhaps also too big or too decayed for an indoor room) outdoors. But Lee ascribes to Galli a teleological project, with the Bacchus as either the culmination or guiding focus of the collection (and presumably of the collecting itself).

<sup>125</sup> Condivi, *Life of Michelangelo*, 24.



In composing his description Condivi likely had in mind the literary precedent of Callistratus' *ekphrasis* of a *Statue of Dionysus*, and yet he cannot disguise the contemporary attitudes of the 1550s, by which time the liberal and exuberant spirit of the previous age had been suppressed.<sup>126</sup> Condivi's description suggests a shift: "madness has become merriment; the eye that gleamed with fire now squints in drunken lust."<sup>127</sup> His moralistic assessment that Michelangelo's *Bacchus* represents the vice of dissipation and intemperance is overly simplistic and derogatory, and belies the fact that a far more subtle and multivalent understanding of Bacchic drunkenness was current in the young Michelangelo's circle fifty years earlier, when Ficino could write that "la ebrietà di Dionysio, gl'antichi Teologi la diffinirono essere uno eccesso di mète [mente] segregata da le cose mortalii, e che penetra i segreti misterij de la divinità."<sup>128</sup> Among the Medici in Florence, and in Rome under Riario's and Galli's aegis, the young artist would have been steeped in such Neoplatonic concepts, even if they would become harder to appreciate later.<sup>129</sup>

The impression given by Michelangelo's sculpture is closer to Callistratus' *ekphrasis* of Praxiteles' bronze *Dionysus*:

Praxiteles wrought works of art that were altogether alive. There... stood Dionysus in the form of a young man, so delicate that the bronze was transformed into flesh.... [I]t was so softened into flesh by art that it

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<sup>126</sup> *Descriptions* VIII, trans. Fairbanks, 403-407. Condivi is writing at the time of the Counter-Reformation; the accession of Paul IV (1555-1559) brings an enthusiastic embrace of the Inquisition to the papacy.

<sup>127</sup> Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods*, 228.

<sup>128</sup> 1481 letter of Marsilio Ficino: "The drunkenness of Dionysus, the ancient theologians defined it to be an excess of mind separated from mortal things, and that penetrates the secret mysteries of the divine" (quoted by Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, 34, n. 26, from *Tomo secondo de le lettere di Marsilio Ficino tradotte in lingua Toscana...* [Venice, 1548], 166-167v).

<sup>129</sup> Ficino, in fact, corresponded with Riario himself. One member of Galli's circle, Jacopo Sadoletto, set his dialogue *Phaedrus* in Galli's suburban villa, supporting the idea that the Neoplatonic themes of inspired madness, including Bacchic inspiration, were familiar to this milieu. Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, 34, n. 26; Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 41-42.

shrank from the contact of the hand. It had the bloom of youth, it was full of daintiness, it melted with desire.... A wreath of ivy encircled the head—since the bronze was in truth ivy, bent as it was into sprays and holding up the curly locks which fell in profusion from his forehead. And it was full of laughter, nay, it wholly passed the bounds of wonder in that the material gave out evidence of joy and the bronze feigned to represent the emotions. A fawn-skin clothed the statue...; and he stood resting his left hand on a thyrsus, and the thyrsus deceived the beholder's vision; for while it was wrought of bronze it seemed to glisten with the greenness of young growth, as though it were actually transformed into the plant itself. The eye was gleaming with fire, in appearance the eye of a man in a frenzy; for the bronze exhibited the Bacchic madness and seemed to be divinely inspired just as, I think, Praxiteles had the power to infuse into the statue also the Bacchic ecstasy.<sup>130</sup>

Pliny also recorded a Praxiteles bronze sculpture of “a Father Freedom or Noble Drunkenness,” perhaps the same one, whose title ascribing “nobility” to intoxication captures much that is true about Liber Pater.<sup>131</sup> Despite Condivi's assertion to the contrary, Michelangelo's *Bacchus* truly possessed this gleaming eye of frenzy in a way no other contemporary work had yet managed to do. Michelangelo's technique gives the marble a sense of flesh, and infuses his material with the numinous presence of the divine. As we will see, his work fully manifests Ficino's assertion that drunkenness is not wholly of or in the body, but can take one out of oneself—in the literal sense of *ekstasis*.

Even though Bacchus was associated with the physical consumption of wine and its physiological repercussions, he could also transcend the body and surpass material limits, just as the mind filled with the enthusiasm of Bacchus is taken to the heights of spiritual bliss and is

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<sup>130</sup> *Descriptions VIII*, trans. Fairbanks, 405-407.

<sup>131</sup> Pliny, *Natural History* XXXIV.xiv.69: “Praxiteles although more successful and therefore more celebrated in marble, nevertheless also made some very beautiful works in bronze: ... a Father Liber or Dionysus, with a figure of Drunkenness and also the famous Satyr, known by the Greek title Periboëtes meaning ‘Celebrated’...” (*Natural History: Books XXXIII-XXXV*, trans. H. Rackham [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952], 179). But the Latin reads: “Liberum patrem, Ebrietatem nobilemque una Satyrum, quem Graeci periboëton cognominant,” the last seeming to describe a statue of a satyr alone. Pausanias likewise mentions a Satyr by Praxiteles, which was beloved by the artist, in his *Description of Greece* I.20.1-2. So it is not clear that the Liber Pater and satyr were part of a single sculpture. See Moffitt, *Inspiration*, 67.

“raptus est,” “taken away.”<sup>132</sup> As Ficino explained, Bacchic drunkenness elucidates the divine mysteries, since no amount of reason alone can illuminate God without the element of rapture.<sup>133</sup>

In the preface to his translation of Dionysius the Areopagite’s *Mystical Theology*, Ficino related the ascent of the soul and the *voluptas* of its cosmic union with God to the frenzied Bacchic anesthesia:

The spirit of the god Dionysus... was believed by the ancient theologians and Platonists to be the ecstasy and abandon of disencumbered minds, when partly by innate love, partly at the instigation of the god, they transgress the natural limits of the intelligence and are miraculously transformed into the beloved god himself: where, inebriated by a certain new draft of nectar and by an immeasurable joy, they rage, as it were, in a bacchic frenzy.<sup>134</sup>

In the *Enneads*, Plotinus had compared this divine pleasure, this supreme *Voluptas*, to drunkenness.<sup>135</sup> He wrote: “...[T]he mind has two powers.... The one is the vision of the sober mind, the other is the mind in a state of love: for when it loses its reason by becoming drunk with nectar, then it enters into a state of love, diffusing itself wholly into delight: and it is better for it thus to rage than to remain aloof from that drunkenness.”<sup>136</sup> Plato too had mentioned such a “nectar” in *Phaedrus* 244D, and the Neoplatonists and their Renaissance followers took the fury

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<sup>132</sup> See Moffitt, *Inspiration*, 44.

<sup>133</sup> Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, 34. For Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, a pupil and later critic of Ficino, the mechanism for the ascent of the soul was philosophy, or dialectic, as opposed to Love. He replaced *Amor*, in the triad of the Three Graces, with *Intellectus*. Yet he still saw within this ascent something like a mystical experience. He compared the process of ascending to divine contemplation to that very same Dionysian *enthousiasmos* that took the initiate outside of himself toward a mystic, frenzied union with the divine, which was experienced as if he was “made drunk by the nectar of eternity.” Pico della Mirandola, *Oration*, 234. See also Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 67.

<sup>134</sup> Ficino, *Opera* (1561), 1013, as quoted and translated in Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 62.

<sup>135</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 60.

<sup>136</sup> *Enneads* VI.vii.35, quoted in *ibid.*

it induced to be equivalent to the “divine madness” that Plato invoked.<sup>137</sup> Ficino used the metaphor to explain the writings of the homonymous Dionysius the Areopagite, saying the sage placed a veil of enigma over the mysteries with the aid of the otherworldly influence of “the drunkenness of this Dionysiac wine. [...] To penetrate the profundity of his meanings... we too require the divine fury.”<sup>138</sup> The analogy thus established, the Bacchic rites could be understood not as mere excuses for hedonistic indulgence, but mechanisms for inducing the frenzy that enabled contact with the divine. *Voluptas* was elevated from the mire of material passion and sensual pleasure to the heights of perfection and virtue.<sup>139</sup>

Michelangelo took up the odd and contradictory character of Bacchus and fashioned an apt body for a god. The body is young and supple, still a little soft, hairless—almost a teenager more than an adult (fig. 5.19).<sup>140</sup> Vasari described it as having “la sveltezza della gioventù del maschio e la carnosità e tondezza della femina.”<sup>141</sup> The soft belly recalls the juvenile contours of Donatello’s bronze *David*, from which Michelangelo may have absorbed the idea of a multi-sided statue that begs to be seen in the round.<sup>142</sup> The little *satyresco* at his side seems to reiterate the youthful and unformed quality found in the adolescent male, exhibiting the childish, wild lust

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<sup>137</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 60-61.

<sup>138</sup> Ficino, quoted *ibid.*, 62.

<sup>139</sup> See Ficino, *Epistola de felicitate, Opera*, 663; *De voluptate, Opera*, 987, cited in Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 68-69. See also Allen, “The Rehabilitation of Epicurus,” 1-15.

<sup>140</sup> Indeed Condivi remarks that Bacchus looks to be about eighteen.

<sup>141</sup> Vasari, *Vite* (1550 edition), quoted in Barocchi, *Il Bacco di Michelangelo*, 7. Cf. the 1568 ed: “[H]e gave it both the youthful slenderness of the male and the fullness and roundness of the female...” (trans. de Vere, vol. 2, 651).

<sup>142</sup> Wilde, *Michelangelo: Six Lectures*, 33. If the sculpture was commissioned for a courtyard or garden, this would suggest that Michelangelo did anticipate that the work would be accessible from all sides (though for centuries afterward it was displayed against a wall). See Barocchi, *Il Bacco di Michelangelo*, 8-14. While most scholars point out the appropriateness of a Bacchus to a garden setting (see Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” for example), Frommel has noted the particular fascination amongst Riario and the Pomponiana circle in antique theater, whereby Bacchus

of not just the stereotypical satyr but also of the teenaged boy.<sup>143</sup> He crouches upon a stump, back-to-back with the god, whose lightly held *pardalis* drapes down behind him and between the satyr's legs, the flayed face laid out flat on the earth like a mask.

As Pietro Aretino said of Giulio Romano, Michelangelo had, in the *Bacchus*, “made the ancient seem modern and the modern seem ancient.”<sup>144</sup> But is the *Bacchus* truly classicizing? The soft, androgynous appearance of the statue, noted by Vasari, does relate him to Bacchus' antique descriptions, where he was often noted as a god of ambiguous sex.<sup>145</sup> In ancient reliefs, Bacchus often reclines in a feminine manner, and exhibits the fleshiness that would lead later eyes to mistake him for a woman (fig. 5.20).<sup>146</sup> Michelangelo's soft, swaying figure is comparable to that of Bacchus in the relief visible since at least the early 1430s and later placed in the wall of the Belvedere in the Vatican.<sup>147</sup> Nor is it unprecedented for the god to appear inebriated in ancient art; he is commonly shown leaning on a young companion for support. But

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may have been chosen for his role in the origins of the drama and its poetical meter, the dithyramb (“Raffaele Riario, la Cancelleria, il teatro e il *Bacco* di Michelangelo,” 146).

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 52, who sees the satyr as satirizing the drunkenness of the god.

<sup>144</sup> Aretino's assessment alluded to in Jaffé, *Titian*, 102.

<sup>145</sup> Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” 77: see *Orphic Hymns* XLII.4; Euripides, *Bacchae* 353, 453f; and Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* XVII.185f. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* III. 605-609, the young Bacchus is described in his encounter with the Lydian sailors: “a boy whose form could match the loveliness of a young girl. That boy, like one who's stunned by wine and sleep, can hardly follow him along the beach: he sways and staggers” (cited by Giorgio Spini, “Politicità di Michelangelo,” in *Atti del Convegno di Studi Michelangioleschi* [Florence-Rome: 1964; Rome: 1966], 133-134, n. 43). See Eugenio Battisti, “Michelangelo o dell'ambiguità iconografica,” in *Festschrift Luitpold Dussler* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972), n. 16.

<sup>146</sup> As in Matteo Balducci's *cassone* (fig. 3.43) or in the Naples gem copied in the Medici courtyard (fig. 3.38). In attempting to analyze Michelangelo's use of antique sources for the *Bacchus*, most scholars determine that the *Bacchus* is wholly unantique in form and content, or at least is unlike antique Bacchuses in particular. See Karolina Lanckorońska, “Antike Elemente im Bacchus Michelangelos und in seinen Darstellungen des David,” *Dawna Sztuka* 1 (1938): 183-192; Gerhard Kleiner, *Die Begegnungen Michelangelos mit der Antike* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1950), 16-18, who compares Michelangelo's statue to ancient figures of Antinous. Antique examples of Bacchus statues known in the Renaissance include one in the Villa Albani and another in the Museo delle Terme, both then missing their heads. Another in the Museo Archeologico in Naples was in Lorenzo de' Medici's collection.

<sup>147</sup> *Da Pisanello alla nascita dei Musei Capitolini*, ed. Cavallaro and Parlato, 97, cat. 25a. It was drawn by an artist in the circle of Pisanello in 1431-1432, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F. 214 inf. 15v.

the most severe drunkenness was always reserved for Silenus or Pan; Bacchus' swagger was of a far more elevated sort, not the dissipated, intemperate variety. In Michelangelo's version, however, he takes Bacchus to far bolder and more innovative extremes than ever found in antiquity.

In 1548, Francisco de Hollanda said that the *Bacchus* did not appear antique because the positions of the arms and hands were “di fuori delle regole dell'antichità” and the attitudes of the legs were “nel contempo fiacchi e privi della stabilità antica.”<sup>148</sup> The statue's relatively tiny head, with round face, weak chin, curling lips, and furrowed brow, looks more like a Botticellian youth than a classical god. The heavily laden grape clusters hang from his head as from a bathing cap, and he lacks the graceful locks Callistratus described as falling languorously about the god's shoulders. It has been noted that the facial expression, with its intensely focused eyes and consternated brow, is *sui generis* (fig. 5.21).<sup>149</sup> But a certain out-of-body, ethereal cast to the eyes suggests something more than mere intoxication: rather *mania* itself.<sup>150</sup> There is the look of a “délire prophétique,” the divine madness of which Plato speaks in the *Phaedrus* (fig. 5.22).<sup>151</sup> The artist's attention to the face is exceptional and not antique (except that it actually accords better with the ancient *ekphrasis*, if not the actual appearance of that “lost” work).<sup>152</sup> The fact

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<sup>148</sup> Quoted by Agosti and Farinella, *Michelangelo e l'arte classica*, 48.

<sup>149</sup> Freedman, “The Faces of Bacchus and Apollo,” 83.

<sup>150</sup> Freedman likewise says that the face “actually evokes the multifaceted notion of *mania*, wherein inebriation is but one aspect” (ibid., 89). See also Charles H. Carman, “Michelangelo's *Bacchus* and Divine Frenzy,” *Source 2*, no. 4 (1983): 6-13; Barkan, *Gods made Flesh*, 38 and 298 n. 23.

<sup>151</sup> Freedman, “The Faces of Bacchus and Apollo,” 90, quoting Bertraux via Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 194.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 83-84. Classical examples of Bacchus tend to have idealized and homogenized faces, which override actual facial expressions. As we can see in Michelangelo's next large-scale sculpture of a standing male, the *David* of 1504, his interest in facial expression only intensified. The story of Michelangelo's copy of the head of the faun likewise suggests that he found the classical examples lacking in expression, since he sought to enhance the expressively grinning face. (The face of the smaller *Bacchus* attributed to Federighi is, in fact, so like

that Michelangelo does not give *Bacchus*, in other words, a nobly generic face, with heroic bone structure and enlightened gaze, is part of what makes the work so mesmerizing. The eyes, which are said to linger over the cup of wine, do not actually focus there. Michelangelo made the pupils exceptionally clear by deep drilling; these are glazed, unfocused eyes that do not look in a material sense, but show the mind to be taken elsewhere. This is the look of one transferred from contemplations of the physical to the spiritual realm; wine has induced a metamorphosis of self-alienation.<sup>153</sup> The face, moreover, does not show tipsy titillation or delight, but reveals a greater seriousness than one would expect from a sot. There is no smile, no wink, no joy. Rather, this is a look that reveals the gravity of his divine *enthousiasmos* (cf. fig. 5.23).<sup>154</sup> While Bacchus is usually considered “a transforming rather than a transformed deity,” Michelangelo has turned the tables and created a god moved by his own effects.<sup>155</sup>

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Michelangelo’s *David* with its heavy, furrowed brow, that it should be considered possible that this is actually a later piece made by another artist—one inspired by Michelangelo’s works.)

<sup>153</sup> Leonard Barkan, *Gods made Flesh*, 298 n. 24.

<sup>154</sup> Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, 33, n. 25, cites E. R. Dodds, Introduction to Euripides’ *Bacchae*, as reminding the reader that “to celebrate the mysteries of Bacchus... is not to ‘revel’ but to have a particular kind of religious experience—the experience of communion with God.” Compare Michelangelo’s work to that of Jacopo Sansovino of a few years later (Museo del Bargello, Florence) (fig. 5.23). Sansovino’s freestanding version of *Bacchus*, c. 1510-1515, was commissioned by Giovanni Bartolini for the garden at his villa della Gualfonda in Florence. Clearly inspired by Michelangelo’s precedent, which the artist would have known after his long sojourn in Rome, Sansovino creates a youthful, ebullient god, a wreath of vine leaves on his head, the cup of wine held aloft, and a little satyr as his knees. A conventionally handsome youth, with a blandly pleasant, smiling expression, he lacks the tension and complexity of Michelangelo’s god. He does not display the languid instability of Michelangelo’s *Bacchus*, but has more the look of a dancing Bacchant. The *satyriscus* sitting on the *nebris*-lined stump at the Bacchus’ feet idly reaches up to fondle a grape, but without the ferocity and frenzy of Michelangelo’s version. This is Bacchus truly as pleasant garden feature; a god of the vine and wine, a god of lush vegetation, even a god of natural order, but not Michelangelo’s inspired and inspiring deity. See Gallo, *Jacopo Sansovino*; Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” 169-170; Freedman, “The Faces of Bacchus and Apollo,” 92. Hirst expresses a similar assessment, calling Michelangelo’s work “completely at odds with the smiling anodyne *Bacchus* created by Jacopo Sansovino” (*The Young Michelangelo*, 33, n. 25). Other artists would attempt their own versions of free-standing Bacchus statues later in the sixteenth century: Baccio Bandinelli created one (Palazzo Pitti, Florence) with the head of a Roman caesar attached to an awkward body with the overgrown, arched torso of a toddler; Giambologna’s *Bacco* (Borgo San Jacopo, Florence) recalls antique sculptures of dancing fauns, this one nonchalantly pouring wine from his cup and watching it fall before him.

<sup>155</sup> The former being how Barkan describes the god (*The Gods made Flesh*, 40).

Scholars usually note the figure's presumably bloated abdomen as a sign of intemperance. But the muscular arms and defined pectorals and ribs defy, at the same time, a reading of soft dissipation. In fact, if one compares the abdomen to that given by Michelangelo's teacher Ghirlandaio to Christ in the *Baptism* fresco in Santa Maria Novella, one sees the same softly distended curve of the abdomen, as well as a similar *contrapposto* with tilted pelvis, serpentine torso, and angled shoulders (fig. 5.24, 25, 26).<sup>156</sup> One sees this supple figure in Signorelli's piping nude in the *Court of Pan*, or even in Michelangelo's own later *David* (fig. 5.27). It is also notable that if one stands in the pose Bacchus holds—with the left shoulder tipped back behind the point of the left hip—the lower belly naturally and inevitably protrudes, while creating a similar groove at the base of the ribcage. The pose is not found in antique sculptures, but is clearly modeled after nature.<sup>157</sup> Moreover, the sinuous pose and profusion of grapes at his brow suggest that the god himself *is* his vine, weaving upwards, prolific, and vibrant. Michelangelo's solution for the figure was utterly novel and inventive, qualities that perhaps made the work difficult to appreciate in its time.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> There are also similarities between the *Bacchus* seen from behind and the neophyte awaiting baptism in the fresco (fig. 5.26).

<sup>157</sup> Note, however, that the *Bacchus* appears to be almost perfectly upright and stable when viewed from the left (looking at his right side), where the hand and cup obscure his face. See Lieberman, "Regarding Michelangelo's *Bacchus*," 67, fig. 3. There is a drawing in the Louvre which shows a study for Michelangelo's lost bronze *David*, in a pose very similar to that of the *Bacchus*: chin tucked in, upper back slouched back, left arm bent behind the hip, and right knee bent ahead of the main axis (Wilde, *Michelangelo: Six Lectures*, fig. 25, p. 37). If we look at Michelangelo's marble *David* from the back, we will actually note a pronounced similarity to the pose of the *Bacchus* also viewed from behind: they are in roughly mirror opposite *contrapposto*, with the head turned toward the higher shoulder, one arm bent up, the other hanging down, with its hand bent in toward the body at the wrist. Given the disproportionately small head of the *Bacchus*, as well, I find it interesting to note the relatively large head of the *David* (even considering its intended elevated destination), as if Michelangelo had been criticized for his earlier proportions and tried to rectify them.

<sup>158</sup> Lieberman, "Regarding Michelangelo's *Bacchus*," 66.



Many have commented on the ability of the sculpture to draw its viewers around it; indeed, that it virtually compels them to do so.<sup>159</sup> The ideal viewpoint appears to be off to the right, from where the satyr, the lion or *pardalis* skin, and the cup-holding gesture of the god can all be clearly discerned.<sup>160</sup> This is the angle captured in Marten van Heemskerck's drawing of the sculpture in Galli's garden. This is also the angle at which the swaying back, slung hip, and cocked head appear most pronounced. But as the viewer moves around to the side of the statue, the full recognition of the *pardalis* skin, hanging down loosely from Bacchus' hand, and the grinning satyr, crouched behind his leg, is introduced (fig. 5.28). The flayed skin, common in antique representations of Bacchus and satyrs, reminds the observer of the savage might of the god. Just as the Indians were shocked by the fierceness of the Bacchic retinue after being lulled by their appearance of being drunk and soft, so the viewer of Michelangelo's *Bacchus* is reminded by the remnant of this vanquished beast of the power hidden within this sweet-faced adolescent.<sup>161</sup> The satyr too disguises within his lustful greed for the grapes the true frenzy induced by the god and which motivates his faithful support of him (fig. 5.29, 30). This satyr is not here to molest some unseen nymph, but is devoted solely to the vinous gift of his master.

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<sup>159</sup> Among recent scholars, Koch, "Michelangelo's Bacchus and the Art of Self-Formation." Koch mentions only Charles de Tolnay as having previously noted the explicit downward spiral of the sculpture that she here addresses, but Howard Hibbard also notes how the torsion of the satyr mirrors the way in which the statue encourages the viewer to twist around the sculpture itself (*Michelangelo*, 41). Wilde says that Michelangelo "arranged the forms in such a way that they do not allow the viewer's eye to rest on any one predominant view: indeed, he feels compelled to circulate around the statue" (*Michelangelo: Six Lectures*, 33). See Lieberman for his analysis and many photographs of the different views of the statue ("Regarding Michelangelo's *Bacchus*"). A recognition of the multiplicity of viewpoints is expressed early on, as in the description of the work after it entered the Uffizi collection by Anton Francesco Bocchi in 1591, who said it had "tanta bellezza in ogni veduta" (*Le bellezze della città di Firenze*, 1677, p. 47 ff) and as in the inclusion of three engravings of the work (front, side, and rear views) by Anton Francesco Gori in his *Museum Florentinum* (1734, III: *Statuaria*, pp. XVI f, pls. LI-LIII), after drawings by Giovan Domenico Campiglia. See Barocchi, *Il Bacco di Michelangelo*, 10-11, figs. 4-5; and Agosti and Farinella, *Michelangelo e l'arte classica*, cat. 15, pp. 52-53.

<sup>160</sup> This is also the front of the original block from which the sculpture was created, according to Hirst, *The Young Michelangelo*, 32; Michelangelo situated his figural pair at a diagonal within the block, from the front left to the rear right—a highly exceptional treatment.

The viewer gains even more by continuing around to the rear of the sculpture and rotating back again to the front. It is only at the rear of the statue that one finally sees the face of the flayed lion, poking out between the hooves of the satyr (fig. 5.31). The three heads—Bacchus, satyr, and lion—stair-step down in a counterclockwise spiral.<sup>162</sup> This could be read as a descending hierarchy from the elevated god to the lowly beast, with the satyr—half human, half animal—poised midway between. At the greatest peak is wine; at the lowest point is a tree stump, the flayed lion skin, and finally rock.<sup>163</sup> The concomitant upward ascent, in turn, parallels the Neoplatonic ascent of the soul, from material prison to highest rapture, from animalistic baseness to spiritual enlightenment. Pico della Mirandola described just this sequence of possibilities for protean man's soul in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*:

[I]t is not the bark that makes the plant but its senseless and insentient nature; neither is it the hide that makes the beast of burden but its irrational, sensitive soul; ... nor is it the sundering from body but his spiritual intelligence that makes the angel. For if you see one abandoned to his appetites crawling on the ground, it is a plant and not a man you see; if you see one blinded by the vain illusions of imagery..., and, softened by their gnawing allurements, delivered over to his senses, it is a beast and not a man you see. [...] If you see a pure contemplator, one unaware of the body and confined to the inner reaches of the mind, he is neither an earthly nor a heavenly being; he is a more reverend divinity vested with human flesh.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> This observation of the Indian Triumph of Bacchus is the theme of Nonnos' *Dionysiaca*.

<sup>162</sup> Koch, "Michelangelo's Bacchus and the Art of Self-Formation," 356-357.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 358-360. This sequential interpretation synchs with de Tolnay's, who argues that the work is "a human incarnation of the life cycle of nature" (Charles de Tolnay, *The Youth of Michelangelo*, vol. 1 [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943], 89). As Lorenzo Valla states it: "men are superior to all other animals on two counts: we can express what we feel, and we can drink wine, sending out the one and ushering in the other. And though speaking is not always pleasant even when the occasion calls for it, drinking always is, unless either the wine or the palate is defective" (*On Pleasure* I.xxxiv.2, trans. Panizza Lorch, 104).

<sup>164</sup> Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 5, 226.

The sculpture enlists the participation of the viewer in creating its meaning by eliciting this movement around the statue. The spiraling movement he or she makes induces the same dizziness in this mobile observer as exhibited by the god.<sup>165</sup> The tipsy wobble of Bacchus not only induces an empathic instability in the viewer, but also urges it literally by pushing him or her back and forth, from front to back and front again, as the viewer tries to take in the entire figure (fig. 5.32, 33, 34). As the viewer moves, engendering wooziness, the posture of Bacchus himself seems to wave, as the swagger of his torso appears to lean and straighten again as the viewer moves around him.<sup>166</sup> These changing postures also correspond to the different stages of drunkenness, from stable stature and sober admiration of the wine to incapacitated swagger and greedy indulgence. Michelangelo has managed to combine all of these states within one figure. In creating this physio-emotional effect in the viewer, Michelangelo's *Bacchus* actually embodies the power of the god, for it is the god who induces in man the sensation of swaggering intoxication. In this way, the young artist manifested a completely novel approach to the ultimate oxymoron of a drunken god. This is by no means a simplistic representation of drunkenness. Rather, the tipsy instability has actually become the literal action of the divine *enthousiasmos*; the work of art is itself the dispenser of Bacchic *furor*.

Michelangelo's *Bacchus* manifests *furor Bacchicus* in two ways: Bacchus has ignited the genius of the artist, and, by making the work of art itself become another dispenser of *furor*,

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<sup>165</sup> This line of thinking was inspired by David Freedberg and Vittorio Gallese's paper, "Motion, Emotion, and Empathy in Aesthetic Experience," which addresses the "role of sensory-motor activity in both empathy and emotion" (presented at Reed College, Portland, Oregon, and published in *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11, 5 [2007]: 197-203). Their work demonstrates that there is a neural basis for the embodiment of empathy in response to visual images. James Hall writes that "the viewer of *Bacchus*, by having to circumnavigate it, would be encouraged to feel a suitable state of inebriation," (*The World as Sculpture: The Changing Status of Sculpture from the Renaissance to the Present Day* [London, 1999], 65, quoted in Lieberman, "Regarding Michelangelo's *Bacchus*," n. 17).

<sup>166</sup> Lieberman has also observed this variation, noting that "from different viewpoints Bacchus appears to be in quite different states... losing his balance momentarily and then regaining it. As we move around him we see him sway, as anyone fuddled with too much drink would do" ("Regarding Michelangelo's *Bacchus*," 69-72).

the artist shares this frenzy with the viewer. Michelangelo's portrayal of Bacchic inspiration—and its effect on the viewer—conveys a faith in human imagination and creativity. This was quite different from the medieval and Aristotelian idea that human creations could only be imitations of nature, the ultimate Creation of God.<sup>167</sup> But to imitate just what was seen was to be a lowly ape.<sup>168</sup> True creativity, on the other hand, allowed man to invent without seeing, but instead through knowing (the intellect) or even feeling (the ecstatic experience of divine inspiration).<sup>169</sup> As Ficino said:

Plato was right in his view that poetry springs not from technique but from a kind of frenzy. [...] [N]o one, however diligent and learned in all the arts, has ever excelled in poetry unless to these other qualities has been added a fiery quickening of the soul. We experience this when we are inflamed by God's presence working in us. Such force carries the seed of the divine mind.<sup>170</sup>

Pico in turn asked: “Who would not wish to be so inflamed with those Socratic frenzies sung by Plato in the *Phaedrus*...? Let us be driven, Fathers, let us be driven by the frenzies of Socrates that they may so throw us into ecstasy as to put our mind and ourselves in God.”<sup>171</sup> It is possible to see in Michelangelo's *Bacchus* a similar expression of these Neoplatonic ideas about the progress of man's soul, the “fiery quickening” that inflames the spirit and inspires the mind.

For Michelangelo, the gestures of a figure were “traces of the encounter between the human body and forces larger than itself[,] ... both a symptom of possession and a means of

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<sup>167</sup> Bouwsma, “The Renaissance Discovery of Human Creativity,” 19.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>170</sup> Ficino, letter to Antonio Pelotti and Baccio Ugolini, in *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*, vol. 1 (1978), book I, letter 53, pp. 98-99, musing on Plato's *Ion* 533e-534b (which Ficino translated, giving it the subtitle “De furore poetico”).

<sup>171</sup> *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, section 16, 234.

release.”<sup>172</sup> The movements and gestures of the body of *Bacchus* represent and perform the god’s ecstasy. Michelangelo captures the notion of Bacchic possession, the spiritual inebriation that is dispensed by the god’s divine inspiration.<sup>173</sup> As Ficino argued, it is through divine madness that “God draws the soul slipping down to the lower world back to the higher.”<sup>174</sup> In other words, the physical perception of what the senses experience is subsumed by the experience of the non-sensual inner mind.<sup>175</sup> To make a statue that seems literally to be unstable and off-balance suggests the apparently ungodly nature of a tipsy god, but also allows him to embody the very power he instills in men.<sup>176</sup> The appearance of instability in stability is significant, epitomizing the irony of Bacchic frenzy, the destabilizing madness that at the same time strengthens, bringing life and focus.<sup>177</sup> Such a statue exhibits the power of the artist as well. Only a free-standing sculpture could have conveyed this paradox of the god, because of the inherent challenges of staying upright. Antique statues showed Bacchus in stable *contrapposto*, a tree stump by one leg serving as the necessary buttress, or with an arm slung over an only

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<sup>172</sup> An idea articulated by Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, 86.

<sup>173</sup> Cf. Barolsky, who sees the *Bacchus* as quite simply a humorously blunt portrayal of a literally drunken god—a satirical mockery (*Infinite Jest*, 52).

<sup>174</sup> Trans. in Koch, “Michelangelo’s Bacchus and the Art of Self-Formation,” 361. See also *Commentary on Plato’s Symposium on Love VII.13*, trans. Jayne, 168.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. Charles Carman: “Precisely because the statue of *Bacchus* insists on an illusion of drunkenness, the viewer first reacts to what the Renaissance Neoplatonists understood as the illusion of sense experience—‘the visible things of nature.’ Avoiding the tragedy of Narcissus, however, the viewer creates new meaning in his mind through the understanding afforded by nonliteral, inner sight. Perceiving, then, the ‘invisible things of God,’ he willfully embraces the elevating impact of drunkenness properly understood” (“Michelangelo’s *Bacchus* and Divine Frenzy,” 9).

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Lanckorońska, who notices that it was not typical in antique art to show Bacchus drunk so as not to humiliate or degrade the deity (“Antike Elemente im Bacchus Michelangelos,” 184-186).

<sup>177</sup> See Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, 91-92.

slightly smaller companion (as he was often also depicted in reliefs).<sup>178</sup> But Michelangelo used the little satyr, not as a figurative means of support for the Bacchus (who appears to be holding his own), but as a literal means of counterweight to ensure the balance of the statue itself.<sup>179</sup> It is an ingenious solution that proves the cocky brilliance of its creator.

This Praxitelian act of divine incarnation—that is, the placement of the divine power within the material confines of stone—refutes the argument that the sculpture merely represents the baseness of intemperance.<sup>180</sup> To the contrary, this sculpture has become a deity itself, with power to spread *enthousiasmos*. Unlike the antique statues of Bacchus, whose swagger is artificial and expression serene, Michelangelo actually manifests the Bacchic ecstasy within the body of the god himself. He shows that Bacchus was a god who not only spread his frenzy, but experienced it as well. It is this channeling of irrational, invisible forces into a work of art that manifests the *ingegno* of the artist. The young man who inhabits Bacchus' form in Michelangelo' sculpture may even be a referent for the artist himself, twenty-one years old at the time, and in the midst of the *furor* of becoming a great, and divine, artist.<sup>181</sup> Michelangelo's *Bacchus* stands at the nexus of an emerging sense of the divine artist, with a genius that is innate

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<sup>178</sup> See the *Bacchus and Satyr*, Uffizi (inv. 246), or the *Bacchus* statue in Copenhagen (Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat.71a), after which Baldassare Peruzzi made a drawing (private collection).

<sup>179</sup> Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, 92.

<sup>180</sup> See Bull on Condivi's moralistic interpretation of the work (*The Mirror of the Gods*, chap. 6 on Bacchus, 230). See also Battisti: "La statua del Buonarroti non è dunque un ammonimento contro l'ubriachezza, ma un'esaltazione della forza misteriosa del nume, trionfante sui tentativi d'imprigionarla compiuti da uomini sacrileghi" ("Michelangelo o dell'ambiguità iconografica," 216). Cf. Wilde, who states that Michelangelo's *Bacchus* "is not the image of a god" (*Michelangelo: Six Lectures*, 33, [my emphasis]).

<sup>181</sup> When Caravaggio portrays himself as Bacchus a century later, this is perhaps the retained memory of Bacchus as he was for Michelangelo.

and ineffable, descends from God, and cannot be learned or acquired.<sup>182</sup> And this inspiration is manifestly similar and regularly compared to the Bacchic madness.

As we have mentioned earlier, this association of *furore* and inspiration—even the poetic and creative inspiration associated with the Muses—comes under the aegis of Bacchus himself.<sup>183</sup> Marsilio Ficino explained in his *Platonic Theology* that “in Orpheus’ scheme a particular Bacchus rules over the individual Muses, and the power of the Muses, drunken by the nectar of knowledge divine, are signified by his name.”<sup>184</sup> As Pico della Mirandola wrote:

Thereupon Bacchus, the leader of the Muses, by showing in his mysteries, that is, in the visible signs of nature, the invisible things of God to us who study philosophy, will intoxicate us with the fullness of God’s house, in which... hallowed theology shall come and inspire us with a doubled frenzy. [...] And at last, roused by ineffable love as by a sting, like burning Seraphim rapt from ourselves, full of divine power we shall no longer be ourselves but shall become He Himself Who made us.<sup>185</sup>

The inspirational madness that moves the poet to write, to record acts of genius, in other words, is not solely or specifically a gift derived from Apollo—the traditional leader of the Muses—but

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<sup>182</sup> Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ to ‘Fantasia’,” 347-397; Emison, *Creating the “Divine Artist”*; Moffitt, *Inspiration*, esp. part 1. Moffitt’s study of the origins of the modern idea of artistic inspiration focuses on Michelangelo’s *Bacchus* as the progenitor. But his justifications for this inception are not based on an analysis of the sculpture or the nature of Bacchic imagery in the Renaissance but on textual allusions. Moffitt does not question fully why Michelangelo would choose this subject, does not mention *paragone* or the idea of *ut pictura poesis* as motivating forces, or the idea of Michelangelo’s fashioning his own identification as inspired genius. Nor does he consider Bacchus’ associations with fecundity as relating to the idea of creativity.

<sup>183</sup> See above, pp. 383-385.

<sup>184</sup> Ficino continues: “Thus the nine Muses along with the nine Bacchuses together celebrate their ecstatic rites around the single figure of Apollo, that is, around the splendor of the invisible Sun.” *Platonic Theology* vol. 1, trans. Allen (2001), iv.i.28, p. 295.

<sup>185</sup> Pico, *Oration*, 234. The idea of Bacchus as the leader of the Muses was probably derived in part from the assertion gleaned from Plutarch, Macrobius, and Athenaeus that Nysean Nymphs and the Muses were one and the same. See Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, n. 74, and Bober, “Appropriation Contexts,” 232. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.18.3: says Apollo and Liber were worshipped as one god on Parnassus. See Bober, “The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia,” n. 69.

has much in common with the Bacchic madness as well.<sup>186</sup> Michelangelo demonstrates that this Bacchic *furor* inspired the visual artist as well; perhaps even better, since the painter and sculptor work with their hands and bodies in a far more visceral, physical, and Bacchic way than the poet, isolated with pen and paper. But the Bacchic madness was not just sensual either. As Pico understood from Plato, philosophy was itself a mechanism of mystical initiation, involving the same “cleansing of the soul, welcoming of death, the power to enter into communion with the Beyond, and the ability to ‘rage correctly’” as in mystery cults.<sup>187</sup> In other words, participating in the frenzied inebriation of the Bacchic mysteries was not a plunge into hedonistic pleasure, but on the contrary, demanded a prior rejection of all that was base and earthly.

In choosing to grapple with the figure of an inspired and inspiring god, the young Michelangelo took up the idea of expressing and shaping the image of his own genius, his *ingegno divino*. He claimed for himself this divine madness—a Bacchic one—and manifested how this ineffable gift could be harnessed by his mind and hand and fashioned into material beauty. He showed that the truly artistic mind, if open to enthusiasm and divine frenzy, could create and invent in novel and inspired ways.

#### THE *INGENIUM* OF BACCHUS: MANTEGNA’S *BACCHANALS*

In 1506, Mantegna wrote in response to inquiries into the progress of his painting of *Comos* for Isabella d’Este’s Studiolo: “seguitando quanto la fantasia me adiutera.”<sup>188</sup> The work would come only when he was truly inspired. Mantegna was an artist dedicated to the process of

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<sup>186</sup> Indeed, already in the twelfth century, Dionysus had been called a god of poetic inspiration, because of his ancient association with the origin of the *dithyramb*, the meter of theatrical tragedy. Lee, “Gardens and Gods,” 125 and n. 139.

<sup>187</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 3, referring to Plato’s *Phaedrus*.



*fantasia* and self-conscious about his artistic process. It is via the medium of engraving, without patron or program, that Mantegna alluded to this idea through the mythological subject of the Bacchanal. These amorphous, “subject-less” compositions threw off the ornate *invenzioni* of humanists, and claimed for the painter his own unique, inspired powers of invention, or true *ingegno*.<sup>189</sup> Like Michelangelo’s *Head of a Faun/Pan* and *Bacchus*, the idea of natural genius issuing forth from an ancient, imagined Arcadia emerges from Mantegna’s Bacchanalian prints.

Mantegna can be fairly characterized as a lover of antiquity. As mentioned earlier, Felice Feliciano took Mantegna and his Mantuan patron Samuel da Tradate on a now-famous boat trip in 1464 to admire ruins at Lake Garda.<sup>190</sup> The humanist’s description of the event, written for Tradate’s benefit, opens a window on the artist’s approach to the recovery and appreciation of things antique. With almost childlike pleasure, they embarked on their day of “treasure” hunting, seeking out antique inscriptions as their predecessor Cyriaco d’Ancona had done on his travels East. They crowned their “leader,” Tradate, with ivy, laurel, myrtle, periwinkle and other leaves, and they “circled lake Garda, the field of Neptune, in a skiff properly packed with carpets and all kinds of comforts, which we strewed with laurels and other noble leaves, while our ruler Samuel played the zither, and celebrated all the while.”<sup>191</sup> In this era of discovery, ruins were like ghosts from the past, arousing awe, curiosity, and even fear. And their incompleteness or

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<sup>188</sup> Letter of 13 January 1506, quoted in Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ to ‘Fantasia’,” 375.

<sup>189</sup> Kemp, “From ‘Mimesis’ to ‘Fantasia’,” 358-359.

<sup>190</sup> See Myriam Billanovich, “Intorno alla ‘Iubilatio’ di Felice Feliciano,” *Italia Medioevale e umanistica* 32 (1989): 351-358; Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance.”

<sup>191</sup> Feliciano, quoted in Gilbert, *Italian Art 1400-1500*, 180. The original text was transcribed in Paul Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna*, trans. S. Arthur Strong (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), doc. 15: “[H]is omnibus visis benacum liquidum neptuni campum circumquaque pervolavimus in cymba quadam tapetibus et omnigenere ornamentorum falcita quam conscenderamus Lauris et aliis frondibus nobiles ornatam semper ipso imperatore Samuelle citarizante et iubilante” (from *Codex Vita Ciriaca Anconitani [a Scalamonte] da Felice Feliciano copiato*, Bibl. Capitolare di Treviso, p. 201r).

strangeness made them ciphers begging for interpretation. Like Cyriaco, with his impassioned explorations of Greek art and inscriptions, these explorers sought to “wake the dead”; hoped with their “potent and divine art to revive the glorious things which were alive to the living in antiquity but had become buried and defunct...; to bring them from the dark tomb to light, to live once more among living men.”<sup>192</sup>

It is against this background that we should see Mantegna’s chosen subjects: the *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat* (fig. 5.35) and the *Bacchanal with Silenus* (fig. 5.36).<sup>193</sup> Together they merge into a long horizontal scene, with Bacchus standing on the left, evoking the format of

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<sup>192</sup> Mitchell, “Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy,” 470, quoting from L. Mehus, *Kyraici Anconitani Itinerarium* (Florence, 1742). See also Marina Belozerskaya, *To Wake the Dead: A Renaissance Merchant and the Birth of Archaeology* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

<sup>193</sup> *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*, Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, vol. V, E.III.4; *Bacchanal with Silenus*, Hind E.III.3. The prints exist in several impressions and copies, and are soundly dated to the mid-1470s, by virtue of comparison to more securely dated works, watermarks, and later dated derivations. See Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cats. 73-74, pp.182-187; Keith Christiansen, “The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker,” *The Burlington Magazine* 135 (1993): 606; and David Landau in *Mantegna*, ed. Martineau, cats. 74-75, pp. 279-281. I viewed the three impressions of the former (BM inv. 1856-8-9-141, V.1-64, and 1845-8-25-614) and two impressions of the latter (BM inv. 1845-8-25-612 and Sloane V. 1-60) in the British Museum, and the two impressions in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, illustrated here. See Michael Anthony Jacobsen (“The Engravings of Mantegna,” Ph.D. diss. [Columbia University, 1976], 168-169) for a list of holdings in American collections, as well as the Print Council of America’s *Census of 15th-Century Prints in Public Collections of the US and Canada*, ed. Richard S. Field (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). There is no consensus on whether the two prints were intended to be read together as a single frieze or as pendant compositions. The pool at the right of the first and the left of the second, however, match up exactly, and if the two prints are aligned together, the water level and even the background shading made up of diagonal hatchmarks are unified. Emmerling-Skala sees no direct connection between the two prints, and deems the *Silenus* to have been made several years subsequently to the *Wine Vat* (“Bacchus in der Renaissance,” 339-340). Landau asserts, following Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, that the *Wine Vat* was prior to the *Silenus* by some time and, thus, that they were not conceived as a frieze, but dates both to the 1470s. Oberhuber dates the *Wine Vat* to 1475 and the *Silenus* to 1475-80. Hind suggests that the prints were made on either side of the same plate, and considers them to be pendants (with the *Bacchanal with Silenus* on the left) but not continuous (*Early Italian Engraving* V, 12). That the same plate was used is endorsed in *Mantegna*, ed. Martineau, appendix I, 469. This was further confirmed by a discovery in 1996 of Mantegna’s son Ludovico’s post-mortem inventory, in which are recorded several plates and their subjects, including the *Bacchanals*, noted as on either side of a single plate (Shelley Fletcher, “A Closer Look at Mantegna’s Prints,” *Print Quarterly* 18, 1 [2001]:4, n. 10). Those arguing for a contiguous reading as a pair include Michael Jacobsen (“The Engravings of Mantegna,” 125) and Michael Vickers (“The Intended Setting of Mantegna’s ‘Triumph of Caesar,’ ‘Battle of the Sea Gods’ and ‘Bacchanals,’” *Burlington Magazine* 120 [1978]: 367-368).

ancient sarcophagi without copying any figure directly from them (fig. 5.37).<sup>194</sup> At the far left stands a tall male with his back toward the viewer, revealing his chiseled, aquiline profile. He has a lion skin tied across his back and carries another man upon one shoulder.<sup>195</sup> This second man holds a wreath of leaves and grapes that he prepares to lower onto the head of the young man below: Bacchus—his youthful face and physique clearly aligning him to his antique representation (fig. 5.38, 39).<sup>196</sup> Bacchus reaches up to guide the wreath to his head, and with his

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<sup>194</sup> Vickers cites lost Bacchic reliefs that were at one time in the Palazzo Santacroce in Rome, as recorded in an engraving by Michel-François Demasso in Jacob Spon's *Miscellanea Eruditae Antiquitatis* (Lyons, 1685), p. 310, as a source for some of the figures in the *Bacchanals* as well as the *Triumphs* ("The 'Palazzo Santacroce Sketchbook': A New Source for Andrea Mantegna's 'Triumph of Caesar', 'Bacchanals' and 'Battle of the Sea Gods,'" *Burlington Magazine* 118 [1976]: 824-834). The combination of horn-playing satyrs, fat Silenus supported under the arms (though on a donkey), and grape-bearing figures of Damasso's print do indeed relate to Mantegna's composition, but to make a connection to some antiquity through a seventeenth-century engraving (whose style may itself reflect revised tastes in figural motifs) is tentative at best. It is clear, moreover, that these are recurring antique figural types, and even if Mantegna was familiar with their brethren (as he surely did study antiquities), he was no slavish copier of any one antique. Vickers postulates a so-called "Palazzo Santacroce Sketchbook" as the lost intermediary for these motifs. But there is also a reference, discovered by Clifford Malcolm Brown to a sketchbook being acquired by Mantegna in 1476, "un libro del ritratto de certe sculture antiche, le quale la piu parte sono bataglie di centauri, di fauni et di satiri, cosi ancora d'uomini et di femine accavallo et appié, et altre cose simili" ("Gleanings from the Gonzaga Documents in Mantua: Gian Cristoforo Romana and Andrea Mantegna," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 17 [1973]: 153-159).

<sup>195</sup> The man with the lion skin is sometimes called Hercules (not illogically, since Hercules did often appear on Bacchic sarcophagi, as on the Woburn Abbey Indian Triumph: Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 100, pl. 128; or the Blenheim sarcophagus, drawn in the Codex Coburgensis: IV, 1, cat. 45, pl. 46). He does have the determined face and large stature of a Hercules, but lacks his tell-tale club, without which it is impossible to say he is not just a satyr, who often carry lion, panther, or fawn skins. Vickers postulates that this pair may emulate the satyr carrying an infant on his shoulders in the British Museum sarcophagus ("The 'Palazzo Santacroce Sketchbook'," 832). The pose of this standing satyr also recalls that of the statue of a *Satyr Resting* (an example of which called the *Praxitelean Faun* is in the Capitoline Museum, Rome), which shares the hip-shot pose, arm akimbo, and pelt garment. A sixteenth-century drawing of the statue from the rear further reveals those similarities, since it shows the buttocks (private collection, London). Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 72, 72a; Haskill and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, fig. 108, 209-210. The skin here is clearly a *pardalis* (or lynx skin) and not a goat, as Bober and Rubinstein state.

<sup>196</sup> Most scholars tentatively agree that this is indeed Bacchus. Other proposals include Erika Tietze-Conrat, identifying the youth with the cornucopia as Comus, as described by Philostratus in *Imagines* I.2 (*Mantegna* [London:Phaidon, 1955], 243). Emison identifies him as Apollo, for which, see below ("The Raucousness of Mantegna's Mythological Engravings," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 124 [1994]: 159-176). Campbell mixes up the figures in the image, writing: "Mantegna shows a heroic Bacchus who crowns an unconscious (or possessed, or 'nympholeptic') devotee in whose ear a grotesque figure (a satyr or spirit of Satire?) whispers" (*Cabinet of Eros*, 163). Bacchus is shown with a cornucopia and a grape-leaf crown in the illustration of Autumn in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (fol. m5), although this Bacchus is rather chubby. Jacobsen argues that the figure may derive from an antique sarcophagus depicting the Seasons, which Mantegna may in turn have understood to show Bacchus, but he also shares his lithe physique and graceful posture with other antique figures of Bacchus ("The Engravings of Mantegna," 58, n.116). For the sarcophagus, see Donald Strong, *Roman Imperial Sculpture* (London:

right hand, he holds steady a fantastical cornucopia, filled with yet more grapes.<sup>197</sup> With his toned abdomen and torso and classic *contrapposto*, his weight on the right leg and looking off to his left, he has been considered by some too elegant to be Bacchus and must instead be Apollo. But noble Bacchus figures could be seen on ancient gems and reliefs, and contemporary images also showed Bacchus this way, as in the reproduction of a cameo in the border of Gherardo di Giovanni's *incipit* page to the *Odyssey* (fig. 5.40, 41).<sup>198</sup> That Mantegna's figure is intended to represent Bacchus is reinforced by the existence of an impastoed *cassone*, which depicts Silenus on an ass, two maenads, three satyrs, and, at the right, an exact copy of the Bacchus figure from Mantegna's engraving, complete with cornucopia and fluttering drapery (fig. 5.42).<sup>199</sup> Given this

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A. Tiranti, 1961), fig. 115, and George M. A. Hanfmann, *The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951), vol. 2, 123, n. 109. The pose of this figure is almost identical to that of a Bacchus from a sarcophagus end in the British Museum. See Susan Walker, *Catalogue of Roman Sarcophagi in the British Museum* (London: British Museum Publications, 1990), pl. 8, fig. 20. Another similar standing Bacchus figure can be seen in the Marsyas sarcophagus formerly in Hever Castle, Kent (fig. 5.13). Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 29. The Bacchus there has a slim, youthful torso, looks over his left shoulder, and stands with his weight shifted, though in a slightly more hip-cocked pose. (His pose on the sarcophagus is repeated almost exactly in reverse in the figure of Apollo in the famous cornelian intaglio of *Apollo and Marsyas* owned by Lorenzo de' Medici.) (See fig. 5.12) The pose also recalls that of Aesculapius on an antique gem, and copied in a fifteenth-century Florentine plaquette and in manuscript illuminations. See Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de' Medici: Collector and Antiquarian*, figs. 114-117, p. 105.

<sup>197</sup> The leaves of all of the grape vines in these prints look more like the serrated leaves of raspberry vines than actual grape leaves.

<sup>198</sup> The figure is reproduced in an ovoid on the left frame of the page, fol. 244r, of Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples, SQ XXIII K22, made in Florence, 1488. A self-portrait of Baccio Bandinelli (Uffizi, Florence) shows a small statuette on the windowsill behind him of a male figure standing in the same pose as Mantegna's engraved Bacchus, but the existence and subject of Bandinelli's figurine is uncertain. See David Franklin, ed., *Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and the Renaissance in Florence* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, in association with Yale University Press, 2005), cat. 98.

<sup>199</sup> Museo Stefano Bardini, Florence. Schubring, *Cassoni*, cat. 71, pl. X. Schubring dates the panel to c. 1470. However, the drapery of the maenads shows the influence of Ghirlandaio and Botticelli, and moreover, this technique of raised stucco, called *pastiglia*, is a later trend, so I would date it to the 1480s at least. The exact repetition of the figure from Mantegna's print, moreover, suggests that the *cassone* artist had seen the print, and not that there is some unknown antique source shared by the two, since Mantegna never copied an antique so literally that another artist's rendition of that antique would be likewise exact. In other words, the *cassone* artist has simply lifted the figure of Bacchus from the engraving. Concomitantly, this serves as evidence for the dispersal and ready availability of these prints, and for their potential comprehensibility. (The figure is repeated identically again on a *Judgment of Paris cassone* made in the same technique, and surely by the same artist, though here the figure, isolated on the left between a garland and an ornate candelabrum, lacks definitive identification.)

straightforward Bacchic content, there can be no doubt that Mantegna's figure was understood to be Bacchus as well (cf. fig. 5.43).<sup>200</sup>

To the right of Bacchus, a savage-looking pan flicks his tongue and holds up his wine pitcher toward the blank tablet hung from the tree, or toward the abundant grapes, full to bursting, as if begging them for their juice.<sup>201</sup> On the wine vat to the right, a lecherous satyr gathers a drunken ephebe in his arms, perhaps saving him from tumbling into the barrel, and gazes lasciviously into the youth's insensible face.<sup>202</sup> A putto meanwhile attempts to climb up into the vessel, while two of his compatriots lie passed out on the ground and a fourth gestures out of the frame at the left. Behind them a grape vine is trained up an espaliered fruit tree.<sup>203</sup> Finally, two more satyrs appear at the right, one perched on the edge of the vat, blowing a horn (or perhaps drinking wine through it), and the other splashing in the pool of wine and tipping from a bowl. With bells at their wrist, elbow, and ankles, these satyrs recall the attire of dancers of Calendimaggio and Carnevale.<sup>204</sup> Their fantastical and grotesque accoutrements have the look of costumes, as if they had leafy fronds tied to shins and thighs and leaves tucked into their hair,

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<sup>200</sup> One might compare these figures to those reproduced by Jacopo Francia, c. 1506, from an ancient sarcophagus showing the Discovery of Ariadne, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (fig. 3.8). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, fig. 80a. He shows Bacchus as already crowned and supported by two satyrs, one young, one older, the latter with distinctly a lionskin draped over his shoulder. Since Hercules is shown elsewhere on the sarcophagus, this satyr is clearly not meant to be that hero. This Bacchus also holds up his arm, here grasping a tendril of grapevine, in a similar pose to Mantegna's.

<sup>201</sup> Vickers has argued that the plaque is actually a mirror. Vickers, "The Intended Setting," 368. Emmerling-Skala, "Bacchus in der Renaissance," 341.

<sup>202</sup> It is sometimes thought that this youth is Bacchus himself (Emison, "The Raucousness of Mantegna's Mythological Engravings"); however, there are no identifying characteristics to associate him with Bacchus, and although Bacchus is sometimes shown drunkenly resting in the arms of a satyr, he is never shown this unaware or vulnerable.

<sup>203</sup> The tree is very similar to that in a drawing attributed to Mantegna's later period of an orange tree potted in a vase in the Louvre, Rothschild Coll., inv. 776 DR. See Martineau, ed., *Mantegna*, fig. 114 on p. 459.

but these figures are unrivaled by any antique or contemporary figure for their complete novelty and imaginative freedom. Leaf-like ears, cauliflower heads, crenated buttocks and legs, and fractured noses all combine to make a troupe of fearsome and uniquely barbarous creatures (fig. 5.44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49).

In the *Bacchanal with Silenus*, the right-hand print, an enormous naked woman looks out at the viewer as she is being lifted, precariously, from her perch on a stump in the midst of this lake of wine. Her hero grasps her wrist and opposite thigh as he attempts to shift her extreme weight onto his back. Her hideous face stares at the viewer imploringly, though the viewer is more drawn to ogle her rippled torso and grotesque breast smashed against the man's back. To the right, another man-like satyr is carried piggyback style by a compatriot, while to their left three satyrs struggle to keep Silenus aloft, grasping his thigh and clinging to a cloth slung under his naked buttocks.<sup>205</sup> A ram skin dangles from one satyr's arm, a lion skin from another's. Mantegna combines the antique portrayal of Silenus as he usually appears on his donkey, braced under the arm by a Bacchant, with the common motif of carrying a drunkenly incapacitated satyr. Silenus seems to gaze wistfully into the next print to the left at Bacchus, while the goat-footed satyr on the right holds a wreath above Silenus' head, in imitation of the coronation of Bacchus taking place to the left. At the far right of this print, as in the *Bacchanal with a wine vat*, are two happy and self-preoccupied satyrs, one playing a double *aulos* and another a panpipes, who appear to be prancing off to the right (fig. 5.50, 51, 52, 53).

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<sup>204</sup> Compare, for example, these to the figures dancing in the Florentine engraving of c. 1475-1490 depicting a Carnival dance, in which squat, crude peasants prance about the "Sausage Woman" while wearing bells and leaves tied around their ankles and wrists. Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, B.III.12.

<sup>205</sup> The efforts at carrying each other recall the reliefs on the ends of the British Museum sarcophagus, where on the right end a young pan is carried on the back of a satyr, and an old inebriated pan is supported by a satyr and two putti on the left. Recall also that Mantegna's father-in-law, Jacopo Bellini, had previously explored the motif of bearing a figure upon a throne of linked arms. London Book, British Museum, fol. 93v.

The bluntly naturalistic Silenus is a triumph of grotesque realism. His exposed crotch and multiple thigh creases are bared at the center of the print. The three satyrs attempting to support his weight grunt and scream with their effort, the strain visible in every muscle and in the lines of their faces. Silenus, on the other hand, lets his limbs hang in drunken lassitude, carelessly spilling his wine pitcher. This Silenus does not have the overgrown baby's body and face (which soon becomes the preferred Renaissance type for Silenus) but neither does he show the appearance of the antique bearded, snub-nosed old man. His closely-shorn head and shaven, jowly face distinguish him from any traditional representation. It may be that Mantegna was playfully mocking a friend with this portrait-like figure. The contrast between Bacchus and Silenus, moreover, forms a comical yet essential morality play. The quest for the divine is mocked in Silenus' feeble and vain attempt to imitate him. Yet the glory of Bacchus is still prized and emphasized. The method for attaining that glory, however, is unclear. Wine and merriment may bring pleasure, but with true Epicurean understanding, that pleasure must be guided by prudence. It is as an exploration of this essential paradox that Mantegna composed his engravings.

Mantegna fashioned in these prints an odd mix of nobility with the ridiculous. Play and pleasure, mockery and lechery, stand side-by-side with grace and gravity. Later, from 1497 to 1502, Mantegna would use novel satyr-type figures as explicit symbols of Vice in his *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, painted for Isabella d'Este's Studiolo (fig. 5.54).<sup>206</sup> In that commission, Mantegna was likely following a complex philosophical program by the humanist Paride da Ceresara that would have laid out the iconography of the warrior

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<sup>206</sup> Louvre, Paris. Egon Verheyen, *The Paintings in the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New York: New York University Press for the College Art Association of America, 1971), 12-14. See also Sylvia Béguin, et al., *Le Studiolo d'Isabelle d'Este: catalogue* (Paris: Éditions des Musées nationaux, 1975), 22-23; Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, chap. 5, "Mantegna's Mythic Signatures: *Pallas and the Vices*."

virgin goddess enforcing a retreat of all that is evil and vile, including *Otium* (idleness), *Inertia* (sloth), *Iniorancia* (Ignorance), and even the beautiful Venus.<sup>207</sup> Mantegna filled in the “plot” of the morality play with figures according to his own peculiar idiom. But how are we to understand the meaning of the unlabelled, unusual figures portrayed in the earlier engravings? Ronald Lightbown saw the *Bacchanals* as a satire on intemperance; David Landau, similarly, a denunciation of inebriation; still others, anachronistically, a shocking image lacking taste or decorum.<sup>208</sup> But Mantegna’s unusual iconography suggests more than a simple condemnation of Vice.<sup>209</sup> These are not just comic revels, but a true Triumph of Bacchus. Bacchus is crowned for a reason. As we have suggested above, this reason relates to the artist’s own personal exploration of his means of inspiration.

The prints do not show any chariot or animals, no signs of India recently conquered; they lack a clear or vigorously directional procession.<sup>210</sup> Yet Bacchus’ heroic physique, his noble stance, and his imminent coronation imply mastery and victory—indeed triumph.<sup>211</sup> His pose is, in fact, more heroic than the typical, swayed, effeminate pose of Bacchus usually found on

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<sup>207</sup> Ronald Lightbown, *Mantegna* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 190-191.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 239, 490; the *Battle of the Sea Gods*, he argues, is a satire on human folly. Lightbown interprets the fat lady as representing Idleness, a vice that follows from excess. See also Landau in *Mantegna*, ed. Martinuea, 279-281; Emison, “The Raucousness of Mantegna’s Mythological Engravings,” 160-161, for a summary of nineteenth-century (often pejorative) opinion.

<sup>209</sup> Emison asks a similar question, but this leads her to a very different conclusion (“The Raucousness of Mantegna’s Mythological Engravings,” 165-166). See below.

<sup>210</sup> As Vickers says, “if there is any progress at all in the *Bacchanals* it is towards the right...”, but “it is a sluggish affair in which the second contingent [on the left] has not yet even got under way” (“The Intended Setting,” 368).

<sup>211</sup> Martin Gesing also thinks that the engravings pertain to the theme of Triumph, and he hypothesizes that Mantegna used Nonnos’ *Dionysiaca* as the source for much of his iconography (Martin Gesing, *Triumph des Bacchus: Triumphidee und bacchische Darstellungen in der italienischen Renaissance im Spiegel der Antikenrezeption* [New York: Verlag Peter Lang, European University Studies 1988; Ph.D. diss., Westfalen Wilhelms University, Münster], 69-89).



antiquities.<sup>212</sup> Mantegna's Bacchus is to be crowned with a wreath of grapes and leaves; his elegant *contrapposto* gives him the appearance of deified grandeur, despite his small stature.<sup>213</sup> His calm expression contrasts with the grimacing faces of the satyrs to the right and the grotesque obesity of the nude woman and Silenus. The impression is that Bacchus has been granted his true, divine role as a god, the message being that the divine blessings of inebriation are to be distinguished from its more bestial aspects.<sup>214</sup>

Patricia Emison argues that this god is, thereby, Apollo, deity of poetic inspiration, with the act of crowning mocked in the adjoining print's crowning of the fool Silenus.<sup>215</sup> Yet the very closeness and similarity of Apollo and Bacchus that Emison claims makes this figure Apollo suggests that it is, in fact, Bacchus. For it is not just Apollo who can be a figure of grace and elegant bearing and inspire mankind with noble thoughts and ideas. It is exactly the Bacchic sort of inspiration, and its connection to invention and creation, that is revealed here. The standing figure is the Bacchus who, in all his multivalency, inspires and ennobles those blessed with his frenzy but befuddles and destroys those who abuse or deny his gift (fig. 5.55).<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> As in the Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus known to have been on view in Genoa for the tomb of Francesco Spinola in the early fifteenth century. Formerly S. Agostino, now Palazzo Bianco, Galleria Comunale, Genoa; Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 116.

<sup>213</sup> His nudity and pose relate him to the figure of naked Truth as in Botticelli's *Calumny of Apelles*. Jacobsen, "The Engravings of Mantegna," 132, n. 265.

<sup>214</sup> Martin Gesing also interprets the engravings as asserting a similar concept, in light of Neoplatonic thinking on spiritual drunkenness and *furor divino* (*Triumph des Bacchus*, 69-89).

<sup>215</sup> Emison, "The Raucousness of Mantegna's Mythological Engravings," 166. She identifies a statue in Palazzo Pitti, Florence, as a potential source for Mantegna's pose of "Apollo," since Mantegna went to Florence in 1466 (n. 35). While it does have drapery over an upraised arm and a similar *contrapposto*, the balance of the pose is quite different from Mantegna's, who stands completely on his right foot without sharing weight with the left at all and has a greater degree of twist in the upper body and head.

<sup>216</sup> One note of comparison to Mantegna's coronation of Bacchus may be found in Raphael's depiction of *Apollo and Marsyas* in the Stanza della Segnatura. In this fresco, Marsyas is about to be flayed as Apollo is simultaneously about to be crowned, acts carried out by two ivy-wreathed men: the one wielding the knife has a cowering expression, as he hunches his shoulders and looks back to Apollo for the command to commence; seen from the

As we have seen, Apollo and Bacchus are like shades of each other, overlapping and melding into one form at times, contrasting but complementary. They become like two sides of the same coin, as in Ficino's characterization of the Sun as "Phoebus" in the spring and "Bacchus" in the Fall.<sup>217</sup> The confluence of the two divinities, so often considered opposed to each other (in large part a nineteenth-century, and Nietzschean, characterization), had its source in Plato's writings. Socrates laid out the "pastoral myth of Apollo and Bacchus reconciled" in the *Phaedrus*, which was so affecting for Renaissance convivialists.<sup>218</sup> As Ficino understood him, Bacchus is the god of generation, and of regeneration, in both the physical sense of procreative love and the spiritual sense of renewal and rebirth. The mind, taken up by contemplations of fertile love, will come to be infused with the Bacchic frenzy, far wilder than the "relatively tranquil" (*pacatioribus*) influence of the Muses.<sup>219</sup> Ficino saw that "the 'illuminating power' of Phoebus is yoked in the intelligible world to the related 'inciting or

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rear, the companion figure stands tall with a sinuously curving spine, and holds the diadem of laurel, perched above Apollo's head. Apollo sits on a tuft of earth and rock, his left hand steadying his lyre against his hip, and his right hand held out with finger up, ready to fall, which will order the torture to begin. The lithe yet muscular youth holding the laurel wreath is almost an exact reversal of the figure of Bacchus in Mantegna's *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*. Raphael's figure transplants the same *contrapposto* and balance of Mantegna's figure, showing him from behind, with the weight still on his right foot, the left leg bent, the head turned over the left shoulder, the right arm close to the torso and the left arm extended out from the body. Mantegna's Bacchus reaches up to move his own crown down upon his head, however, while Raphael's figure reaches out to put a crown on someone else's. Is this a sly rebuke to Mantegna's Bacchic triumph? Are we to understand here Raphael's endeavoring to have Bacchus relinquish superiority back to Apollo after Mantegna's "misguided" challenge? Marsyas represents all the satyrs and other woodland creatures, those followers of Bacchus and cohort of Pan. His musical challenge, contrasting his flute (an instrument made by Minerva) with Apollo's lyre, is "concerned with the relative powers of Dionysian darkness and Apollonian clarity" (Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 173). Edgar Wind interpreted the scene to demonstrate one level of the ascent of the soul to Apollonian inspiration—that is, the symbolic destruction of the body through rites of initiation, which recall the dismemberment suffered by Orpheus or Osiris-Bacchus and the elevation of the mind out of the senses into the divine realm of spiritual enlightenment (ibid., 174-175). This is a transition that can be attained, we have argued, through the *ekstasis* of inebriation as well.

<sup>217</sup> Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 31, n. 72, regarding Ficino's *De Vita* 2.20; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 171-176, 196.

<sup>218</sup> Richard Cody, *Landscape of the Mind: Pastoralism and Platonic Theory in Tasso's Aminta and Shakespeare's Early Comedies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 12, as quoted in Allen, 31.

<sup>219</sup> Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 33.

producing and, as it were, heating power of Bacchus, ” that the one depends on the other for fruition.<sup>220</sup> Socrates himself possessed something of this satyric and Dionysian element. Ficino “understood Socrates as succumbing to a variety of inspirations that eventually led him to the heights of divine ‘alienation’.”<sup>221</sup>

Mantegna’s engravings illustrate these concepts by playing on the interrelatedness of Bacchus and Apollo. That Bacchus is depicted in such a regal manner asserts his difference from the throngs of satyrs. The typical Bacchic iconography of the *spiritelli* asleep below the vat alludes to the innocent spirit of the wine, but also the childishness and simplicity of those around him. Bacchus may elevate with wine, but this “alienation” can also induce false dreams in the putti, and among the others, lechery, gluttony, incapacity, excessive merriment, and even despair. It is a gathering inspired by and enabled by the god, but a gathering, nonetheless, in a lowly marsh—a traditional symbol of vice and sterile pleasures.<sup>222</sup> The fat woman vainly trying to escape this marsh has the appearance shared by all of Mantegna’s representations of Ignorance (fig. 5.56, 57, 58).<sup>223</sup> She is no nymph or maenad, but instead a hideous creature, presented as a fool. The array of imagery shows that wine is capable of unleashing animalistic and grotesque

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<sup>220</sup> Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*, 33, quoting Ficino, *Commentary on Plato’s Phaedrus*, summa 14.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>222</sup> Jacobsen, “The Engravings of Mantegna,” 120-121. Mantua itself was notoriously located in a marsh, with its unsalubrious environment, and Mantegna could be making a side comment about the nature of the behavior that is fostered there.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Pallas Expelling the Vices*, where the fat woman is labelled “Iniorancia” on her crown and is being carried by a figure labelled “Ingratitudo” and by “Avaricia”—an older woman with sagging teats like that of Envy in Mantegna’s *Battle* engraving. Cf. the engraving *Virtus Combusta*, where a similar fat, crowned woman sits atop a stony sphere supported by sphinxes and with her hand resting on a rudder. This motif is seen as an allegory for the rule of Ignorance over mankind, ignorance being the source of all evils (as Lucian says in his telling of the *Calumny of Apelles*, and as does the inscription on the block of stone in the lower engraving, reading “Virtuti S.[emper] A.[dversatur] I.[gnorantia]”). Ignorance and Fortune can only be countered by Right Reason or *ratio*. See Martineau, ed., *Mantegna*, cat. 148, pp. 453-456; Eugene Dwyer, “A Note on the Sources of Mantegna’s *Virtus combusta*,” *Marsyas* 15 (1971): 58-62. Cf. also the *Calumny of Apelles*, where obese Ignorance is dressed but has

passions. The pair of engravings serve almost as a catalogue of every level of drunkenness and its effects, from the divine to the vulgar, as in the rules set out for *symposia* by Dionysus in the play *Semele* (or *Dionysus*) by Eubulus:

Three kraters only do I propose for sensible men, one for health, the second for love and pleasure, and the third for sleep; when this has been drunk up, wise guests make for home. The fourth krater is mine no longer, but belongs to hybris, the fifth to shouting; the sixth to revel; the seventh to black eyes; the eighth to summonses; the ninth to bile and the tenth to madness and people tossing the furniture about.<sup>224</sup>

Yet even in the appearance and gestures of the lowly, there is reserved a certain gravity. Note Silenus' soulful, longing gaze; his face is fat, but is *not* a caricature. None but the ephebe-loving satyr actually smile or appear lighthearted. There is the familiar note of bittersweet, *serio-ludere* that appears in Piero di Cosimo's *Bacchanals*. Despite Silenus' raw, unflattering appearance, he was renowned for his wisdom. In Virgil's sixth *Eclogue*, old Silenus is humiliated by some youths and is forced to sing—the song, however, of a sage, which makes the beasts dance and the trees bow: “Not so does the rock of Parnassus rejoice in Phoebus.”<sup>225</sup> A similar story is told in Nemesianus' third *Eclogue*, attributed in the fifteenth century to Calpurnius Siculus.<sup>226</sup> Several young shepherds seize upon Pan's pipes while the god is dozing,

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the same double-chinned face. For the *Calumny*, see Jack M. Greenstein, *Mantegna and Painting as Historical Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 60-64

<sup>224</sup> Eubulus fr. 94 in R. Kassel and C. Austin, eds., *Poetae Comici Graeci* (Berlin: Novi Eboraci; New York: W. de Gruyter, 1983-), quoted in James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 47-48.

<sup>225</sup> Virgil, *Eclogue* VI.29, trans. Fairclough, 63. In Servius' *Commentary on Virgil's Eclogues*, he calls the youths “fauni.”

<sup>226</sup> Nemesianus, *Eclogues*, in *Minor Latin Poets*, vol.II, trans. J. Wight Duff and Arnold M. Duff, rev'd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), 473-477. The text was known already to Boccaccio and Petrarch, and after Poggio Bracciolini's discovery around 1420 of a manuscript in London containing the texts, it became quite familiar in humanist circles and was published in 1471. Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici*, v. 2, 205-206. See Eugenio Battisti, “Il Mantegna e la letteratura classica,” in *Arte, pensiero e cultura a Mantova nel primo Rinascimento in rapporto con la Toscana e con il Veneto. Atti del VI convegno internazionale di studi sul*

and utterly fail in attempting to play them, waking the god with the screeching sound. Pan then sings instead, in honor of Bacchus: “Thee I sing who plaitest vine-wreaths with berried clusters hanging heavy on thine ivy-circled brow....”<sup>227</sup> Pan tells of Bacchus’ introduction of the vine, and how his satyrs and Silenus glory in the new drink:

Meanwhile the boy’s youth blooms with the coming of manhood.... Then first the tendril outspreads the gladsome grapes. Satyrs are amazed at the leaves and fruitage of the Lyaeus. Then said the god, ‘Pluck the ripe produce, ye Satyrs, be first to tread the bunches whose full power ye know not.’

Scarce had he uttered these words, when they snatched the grapes from the vines, carried them in baskets and hastened to crush them on hollowed stones with nimble foot. [...] Then the wanton troop of Satyrs snatched the goblets, each that which comes his way. What chance offers, their need seizes. One keeps hold of a tankard; another drinks from a curved horn; one hollows his hands and makes a cup of his palms; another, stooping forward, drinks of the wine-various and with smacking lips drains the new wine; another dips therein his sonorous cymbals, and yet another, lying on his back, catches the juice from the squeezed grapes, but when drunk (as the welling liquid leaps back from his mouth) he vomits it out, and the liquor flows over shoulders and breasts. Everywhere sport reigns, and song and wanton dances. [...] Then first did old Silenus greedily quaff bowls full of rosy must, his seems to have not equal to the carousal. And ever since that time he arouses mirth, his veins swollen with the sweet nectar and himself heavy with yesterday’s Iacchus.<sup>228</sup>

Old Silenus, who Pan reports rocked and cuddled the infant god, was dissipated by the god’s influence. Yet he was still the *morosoph* whom the god would forever love and cherish. The god’s ugly, jovial tutor was frequently considered the “Socratic Silene,” by whom the fifteenth-century humanists were intrigued. Alcibiades had compared Socrates to the hideous Silenus

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*Rinascimento* (1961) (Florence: G. C. Sansoni Editore, 1965), 27; Emmerling-Skala, “Bacchus in der Renaissance,” 346-350. Battisti, and Emmerling-Skala following him, see the prints as actually illustrating this passage.

<sup>227</sup> Nemesianus, *Eclogue* III, p. 473.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 475-477.

boxes, which opened to reveal figurines of the gods, as a reminder that wisdom can exist beneath even the most unprepossessing surfaces:

What he reminds me of more than anything is one of those little sileni that you see on the statuaries' stalls; you know the ones I mean—they're modeled with pipes or flutes in their hands, and when you open them down the middle there are little figures of the gods inside. And then again, he reminds me of Marsyas the satyr.

Now I don't think even you, Socrates, will have the face to deny that you *look* like them, but the resemblance goes deeper than that.... You're quite as impudent as a satyr.... And aren't you a piper as well? [...] [A]nd a far more wonderful piper than Marsyas, who had only to put his flute to his lips to bewitch mankind....

Now the only difference, Socrates, between you and Marsyas is that you can get just the same effect without any instrument at all—with nothing but a few simple words, not even poetry. [...] For the moment I hear him speak I am smitten with a kind of sacred rage, worse than any Corybant, and my heart jumps into my mouth and the tears start into my eyes....

Well, that's what this satyr does for me, and plenty like me, with his pipings.<sup>229</sup>

Since the hubristic satyr was flayed alive, the analogy to Marsyas conveyed a metaphor for the peeling away of earthly layers to reveal truth underneath. As Alcibiades continued: “[H]e loves to appear utterly uninformed and ignorant—isn't that like Silenus? [...] Don't you see that it's just his outer casing, like those little figures I was telling you about?”<sup>230</sup>

Pico della Mirandola alluded to the Alcibiades passage in a letter to the Venetian humanist Ermolao Barbaro in 1485, responding to the latter's critique of Pico's inelegant

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<sup>229</sup> Alcibiades makes this simile several times: Plato, *Symposium* 215a-e, 216c, trans. Joyce, 566-567; also 216d, 221d-e. See Edith Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas in the Art of the Italian Renaissance: An Inquiry into the Meaning of Images* (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 62. In *Athenaeus* V, Critobulus calls Socrates “more deformed than Silenus.” See Xenophon, *Symposium* IV.19: Critobulus claims to be more handsome than Socrates, because if not, “I should be uglier than all the Silenuses in the Satyric drama” (trans. H. G. Dakyns [New York: Macmillan and Co, 1890-97]).

<sup>230</sup> *Symposium* 216d, p. 568.

rhetorical style: “What if, as you say, we are commonly held to be dull, rude, uncultured? To us this is a glory, and is no cause for contempt. [...] I shall indicate the form of our discourse. It is the same as that of the Sileni of our Alcibiades. Among them were likenesses of a shaggy face, loathsome and disgusting; but within full of gems, a rare and precious thing, if you looked within you perceived something divine.”<sup>231</sup> We are to understand, in other words, that some things which at first appear repulsive or ridiculous, reveal themselves upon closer examination to be the opposite. The actual Silenus, like the philosopher Socrates, may appear disheveled and ugly and sound vulgar or simple, but underneath it all, he is the wise guide and gentle sage who is unwaveringly devoted to his god (fig. 5.59). Though Socrates was noted for his sobriety, in 1540 a handbook for a popular soothsaying parlor game entitled *Le sorti* was published, illustrated with 50 portraits of classical philosophers, which included one of Socrates drinking. Socrates sits sipping wine from a wide shallow bowl in the shade of a tree; nearby is the little Silene statue, as described by Alcibiades, and a lyre, which Socrates was supposed to have learned to play late in life (fig. 5.60).<sup>232</sup> The slouched, drunken appearance of Socrates does not eradicate his genius. Rather it is an illustration of the Bacchic paradox: the contrast between outer appearances of dissipation and inner dignity—just as Pliny called Praxiteles’ statue “*Ebrietas nobile*” and Michelangelo gave grace to drunkenness.

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<sup>231</sup> Trans. by Quirinus Breen, “Giovanni Pico della Mirandola on the Conflict of Philosophy and Rhetoric,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13 (1952): 397-398; cited in Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas*, 63. Erasmus would also analyze this simile in his *Adage* III.3.1 (1515 ed.) of “Sileni Alcibiadis”: “About what appears ridiculous from outside and at first glance... but admirable when contemplated from inside. For sileni were those little images that were so fashioned that they could be opened. Closed they had a ridiculous and deformed look, but opened they displayed a god. To these Alcibiades compared Socrates in Plato’s *Banquet*, because he was much different inside than he appeared from outside” (trans. quoted in Wyss, 130). See Margaret Mann Phillips, *The “Adages” of Erasmus: A Study with Translations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 269-196.

<sup>232</sup> Published by Francesco Marcolini. Wyss, *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas*, 139, fig. 110.

In Mantegna's print, the parable of "intus non extra" is played out in the array of Bacchic players. He reminds the viewer that an artist could be idealized as springing fully formed from a rustic Arcadia, appearing simple and without courtly charms, yet with a genius straight from God. Bacchus, the height of beauty and grace, is crowned at the left; his gifts of divine wine and its insinuating enthusiasm spread through his cortège. Silenus, bulbous and awkward at the left, looks toward his pupil-turned-guru and is crowned in turn, perhaps tongue-in-cheek (since his moment of grace has certainly passed) but also for a job well done nonetheless. Mantegna does not balk at showing antiquity's underbelly; his willingness to engage the sensual and passionate urges of humankind with laughter and honesty demonstrates his deep appreciation for true antique style and authenticity. As an *all'antica* artist, conscious of his own inspirational drive and experimenting with the novel medium of engraving, Mantegna creates an image that demonstrates the complex and inexplicable forces that fuel divine genius. With mythological figures presented in a non-narrative composition, the intent had to be conveyed not by a text or program, but by the evocations in the figures of emotions and imagination. As Alberti had urged a new generation of artists to portray such inventiveness, Mantegna shows Bacchus as a beacon of creative expression.

#### MANTEGNA'S *BATTLE OF THE SEA GODS*: GENIUS BEGETS ENVY

The way the *Bacchanals* illuminate the new idea of artistic inspiration is deepened by their connection with an adjoining pair of prints showing the *Battle of the Sea Gods*, which allude not to the pleasures of genius but the potential for animosity and jealousy (fig. 5.61,



62).<sup>233</sup> A rabid, scrawny figure of Envy appears, her depleted breasts sagging, her open mouth screaming.<sup>234</sup> She is the only figure in the four prints that is given a label, pointing to her significance. The emphasis on Envy seems suggests a personal significance for the artist. In a world in which artists scrambled for precious patronage and courtly appointments, Mantegna was at the top. A *familiaris* of the Gonzaga court in Mantua, he was assured a steady stream of commissions. Yet even he struggled with stingy compensation and overcontrolling patrons. And when in 1475 he discovered that several artistic rivals might have taken his designs, or plates thereof, he responded with justifiable rage.<sup>235</sup> The battling Tritons of these engravings conjure up this bitter competition, and the vile Envy evokes the intense and despicable jealousy of his fellow artists ever in pursuit.

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<sup>233</sup> Jacobsen, “The Engravings of Mantegna,” 1; idem, “The Meaning of Mantegna’s Battle of Sea Monsters,” *Art Bulletin* 64 (1982): 627-628. The *Battle* engravings are of approximately the same dimensions: c. 340 x 445 mm vs. c. 335 x 454 mm for the plate with the *Bacchanals*. In the *Mantegna* catalogue, ed. Martineau, cat. 79, David Landau notes that the earliest impressions of both the *Bacchanals* and the *Battle* engravings are printed on the same paper with its watermark of a basilisk. He thus dates them all to the 1470s, with the *Battle* being made shortly after the *Bacchanals*. Several scholars have thought that the prints must relate to some lost or unrealized series of wall-paintings or frescoes. Battisti (“Il Mantegna e la Letteratura Classica”) thought they related to frescoes described by Fieri in the Palazzo Revere on the Po. Kristeller (*Andrea Mantegna*), followed by Tietze-Conrat (*Mantegna*), also believed both sets of engravings to represent designs for paintings, the latter imagining that they modeled wall paintings intended for either side of a door or window, with the *Bacchanal with Silenus* on the left. A rather strained hypothesis uniting the imagery of the two sets of prints with a plan for a larger cycle of paintings with the *Triumphs of Caesar* is put forth by Vickers (“The Intended Setting,” 365-370). There is no indication, however, that these prints did not stand as complete works of art in and of themselves but were intended instead as studies or proofs for paintings. It is also counterintuitive to imagine a print—with all of its labor and cost—as opposed to a drawing to serve as a preparatory design for a painting (unless the prints are made after lost drawings). See the letter critiquing Vickers’ hypothesis by Charles Hope and Elizabeth McGrath, “A Setting for Mantegna,” *The Burlington Magazine* 120, no. 906 (1978): 603-604. Cf. Christiansen, who argues that Mantegna’s oeuvre of prints served almost as a model book for other artists, by which he could spread his fame, ideas, range of subjects, and style (“The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker”).

<sup>234</sup> Traditionally, the figure of Envy appeared as a woman with enlarged ears and a snake coming out of her mouth and holding a bag full of evils. See the depiction by Giotto, Arena Chapel, c. 1305.

<sup>235</sup> A letter suggests that Zoan Andrea and Simone di Ardizoni da Reggio had conspired in 1475 to work together to produce prints from plates, and, as they either competed with Mantegna or directly stole from him, they managed to incite the rage of the more famous artist (whom Simone describes to Ludovico Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, as being “inemoniato” or “possessed”). The letter appears in English translation in Creighton Gilbert, *Italian Art: 1400-1500*, “An Engraver in Dispute with Mantegna,” 10-11. See Jacobsen, “The Engravings of Mantegna,” 118-119; Jacobsen, “The Meaning of Mantegna’s Battle of Sea Monsters,” 627; Landau in *Mantegna*, ed. Martineau, cat. 79,

In the left print, two leaf-haired sea-men on hippocampi engage in heated battle, one winding up to thrash his opponent with a stringer of fish and the other threatening him with a rod. To the left, a youthful man straddles a bridled sea-monster, a pardalocampus (or leopard-fish), and holds a staff, as he gives a ride to the nude, emaciated old woman we understand to be Envy, who stands behind him on the monster's back. She looks out over the melee, screaming and holding out a plaque, dangling from a cord, reading "INVID," an abbreviation of "invidia" or envy (with illegible scratches below).<sup>236</sup> In the distance is seen a landscape with a hilltop city and, closer by, a statue of Neptune turned away upon a pedestal, trident in one hand, dolphin in another (fig. 5.63, 64, 65). Next to him is a blank shield or mirror, suspended mysteriously from the water grasses. This has been identified as the *clipeum virtutis*, or "shield of virtue," as visible on the Column of Trajan in Rome and drawn in the Codex Escorialensis, where it is labeled "victory."<sup>237</sup>

The right-hand engraving depicts two Tritons, or ichthycentaurs, each with a Nereid upon his back, clashing with bone weapons and a skull shield, although the Triton on the right possesses a bow and quiver, hanging idly at his side. Behind them, standing in the shallows, a fern-legged man (similar in appearance to those found in the *Bacchanals*) blows a curved horn, while his similar opponent prepares to beat him with a fish. A thicket of reeds forms the backdrop, and a dolphin pokes its head up from the waves.

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286-287, and "Mantegna as Printmaker," 48-51, 58; and Suzanne Boorsch, "Mantegna and His Printmakers," in *Mantegna*, ed. Martineau, 56-66; and Christiansen, "The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker," 604-612.

<sup>236</sup> See Jacobsen, "The Meaning of Mantegna's Battle of Sea Monsters," n. 3, and Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engraving*, p. 188, n. 3, regarding the attempts to decipher these marks. Some have read it as a date, either 1461, 1481, or 1493 (Hind sees "XC III"). Others determine that it must repeat Invidia in pseudo-Greek or shows "mere scribbles" (E. Tietze-Conrat, *Mantegna* [London: Phaidon, 1955]). See also Battisti ("Il Mantegna e la letteratura classica"), who reads it as the Furies (*Erinyes*) in illegible Greek. It appears like KCHI or (kappa sigma eta iota) to me.

<sup>237</sup> Jacobsen, "The Meaning of Mantegna's Battle of Sea Monsters," 624.

The left and right halves of the *Battle* were explicitly intended to form a continuous frieze, with the tail of one merman and the scarf of a Nereid extending across the two engravings at the seam (fig. 5.66). Mantegna may have seen several Nereid as well as Bacchic sarcophagi on his trip to Pisa in 1466 (fig. 5.67).<sup>238</sup> Indeed, as early as the 1420s and 1430s, artists like Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello were drawing similar antique works, which “share[d] honors with Bacchic sarcophagi and reliefs as the most cherished source material for the Renaissance.”<sup>239</sup> The iconography of mermen and hippocampi with their frilly, fin-like forelimbs and of men with fern-like ruffles on thighs and shins became codified and appeared in frescoes, miniatures, reliefs, and engravings in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (fig. 5.68).<sup>240</sup> Mantegna had himself already included a fictive relief medallion portraying a

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<sup>238</sup> Bober, “An Antique Sea-Thiasos in the Renaissance,” 48; Kenneth Clark, “Transformations of Nereids in the Renaissance,” *Burlington Magazine* 97 (1955): 217. A miniature in a manuscript of Pliny’s *Natural History* (Biblioteca Nazionale, Turin, Membr. sec. XV [I, 22-23], fol. 5r), illustrating Chap. V, “De Tritonum et Nereidum... figura,” Bk. IX, may relate in some way to Mantegna’s engraving, either as influence, copy, or derivation from a similar source. The manuscript came from the Gonzaga library, and the illuminated roundel in question shows two Tritons fighting, one with a curved stick (similar to Mantegna’s bone) and the other with a trident, with which he strikes the face of his opponent. A hippocamp appears below them. See Mario Salmi, “Aspetti della Cultura figurativa di Padova e di Ferrara nella Miniatura del Primo Rinascimento,” *Arte Veneta* 8 (1954): 134-155; also Anna Bovero, “Ferrarese Miniatures at Turin,” *Burlington Magazine* 99 (1957): 259-265. Bovero gives the miniatures to a Ferrarese artist, c. 1460-1470, thereby seeing them as an influence upon Mantegna. Cf. Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cat. 75-76, p. 188, n. 3. There is evidence that there were up to five Nereid sarcophagi in the Camposanto in Pisa (Giovanni Paolo Lasinio, *Raccolta di sarcofagi, urne e altri monumenti di scultura del Campo Santo di Pisa intagliati da Paolo Lasinio figlio* [Pisa: Co Caratteri di Didot, 1814]: LXIV, LXXII), and that Mantegna was honored with a banquet there; he may even have made his own studies of these, from which to draw future designs (Clarke, “Transformations of Nereids,” 217, says he drew Sarcophagus IV and XXVII of Lasinio’s catalogue, pls. CXXXI and LXXII). Mantegna likely saw the remnant of a sarcophagus depicting a sea *thiasos* (later inserted into the wall of the garden façade of the Villa Medici) while in Rome in 1488. He may have known the drawing attributed to Gentile da Fabriano, which copies Nereids from that sarcophagus in the Villa Medici: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, J. 523 verso, in Degenhart and Schmitt, “Gentile da Fabriano in Rom und die Anfänge des Antikenstudiums,” part 1, fig. 57, p. 100.

<sup>239</sup> Bober, “An Antique Sea-Thiasos in the Renaissance,” 46.

<sup>240</sup> The very same incunabulum frontispiece for the Missal for Thomas James, the Bishop of Dol, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lyons, illuminated by the Florentine workshop of Attavante de’ Attavantibus in the 1480s with the gems of the Discovery of Ariadne and the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne (discussed in Chapter Three), depicts an altar bearing a Triumph of Neptune sea *thiasos* relief. Giuliano da Sangallo derived his mantlepiece frieze (1489) for a fireplace in the Palazzo Gondi, Florence, from just such a sarcophagus. Giovanni Bellini made a drawing in which the middle portion of the Nereid relief (with Neptune) is copied in reverse (probably from an engraving): Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, no. 190. Falconetto made a fresco with a Triumph of Neptune to depict the sign of Aquarius in

Nereid riding a Triton on a column in the background of the San Zeno Altarpiece, painted 1456-1459.

Scholars have argued that Mantegna's idea of showing sea monsters battling was unprecedented, asserting that ancient reliefs of sea *thiasoi* never show them at war.<sup>241</sup> Usually they are shown happily swimming through the waves, amorously embraced by beautiful Nereids.<sup>242</sup> But such belligerent depictions did exist, as on an ancient sarcophagus showing the curling snake-like legs of the Tritons as they battle each other with improvised weapons, such as rocks, branches or coral, and billets (fig. 5.69).<sup>243</sup> Some are youthful, some bearded, and their heads are tossed back in vociferous agony, while the dead and dying are scattered about. The theme quickly spread in Renaissance art. A late fifteenth-century plaquette, likely Paduan, depicts ichthyocentaurs fighting over Nereids, while Poseidon, trident in hand, rides his hippocampi, and another nymph in a bathing Venus pose carries a trident in one hand and appears to ward off a blow from an oar-wielding putto with the other (fig. 5.70, 71, 72).<sup>244</sup> There

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the Salone del Zodiaco, Palazzo di Bagno, Mantua. A follower of Marcantonio Raimondi engraved an image of Neptune drawn in his sea-chariot by two hippocamps and two fern-fauns in an engraving. See Bober, "An Antique Sea-Thiasos in the Renaissance," fig. 8; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 100. Ghirlandaio's painting of *Judith* also includes the image of Pan carried by satyrs and a Triton and Nereid as fictive reliefs in the architectural background.

<sup>241</sup> Jacobsen, "The Meaning of Mantegna's Battle of Sea Monsters," 624. See Steven Lattimore, *The Marine Thiasos in Greek Sculpture* (Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, 1976). Cf. Bober, "The Census of antique Works of Art Known to Renaissance Artists," in *Studies in Western Art: The Renaissance and Mannerism, v. II. 20th International Congress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pl. 43, fig. 15.

<sup>242</sup> Aelian, *On the Characteristics of Animals* XIV.28: "When Poseidon drove his chariot over the waves, altogether great fishes as well as dolphins and Tritones too, sprang up from their deep haunts and gambolled and danced around the chariot..." (trans. A. F. Scholfield [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958-1959]).

<sup>243</sup> The Vatican Ariadne/Cleopatra was placed above just such a sarcophagus relief in an installation made in the Museo Pio-Clementino in the eighteenth century and as it stands today. Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, cat. 24, p. 184, fig. 96.

<sup>244</sup> Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, no. 112v, fig. 139. The plaquette has been deemed Paduan, circle of Moderno; Pope-Hennessy sees commonalities in the work of the artist signing himself IO.F.F. Other imagery showed battles of satyrs and centaurs, as in the collection of drawings after antiquities owned by Lodovico Gonzaga, "the greater part [of which] are battles of centaurs, fauns and satyrs"

were also ancient literary sources that recounted the belligerence of Tritons. Virgil in the *Aeneid* described Triton attacking and drowning a man for his audacious attempt to play a conch shell:

By chance, as he blew notes on a hollow shell,  
 Making the sea sing back, in his wild folly  
 He dared the gods to rival him. Then Triton,  
 Envious, if this can be believed,  
 Caught him and put him under in the surf  
 Amid the rocks off shore.<sup>245</sup>

The motif of earthly competition with the gods and the deadly consequence of such hubris recalls the competition of Marsyas and Apollo (and the similar one of Pan and Apollo, with Midas as judge). Mantegna proved himself to be deeply entranced with the passions of envy and folly. These themes recur in his other work, including the *Calumny of Apelles*. In the *Battle*, a hint of Virgil's tale is recalled in the hornblower on the right side, who like the young soldier incites warriors with his "brazen trumpet." Given Virgil's pride of place in Mantua, it would have been natural for Mantegna to explore this source for his engravings.

The late antique *Dionysiaca* by Nonnos also recounts the aggression of sea gods, but, moreover, connects the stories of Neptune and Bacchus. Nonnos also evoked the emotions of envy and folly that materialize in Mantegna's engravings.<sup>246</sup> Nonnos' profuse epic includes the

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(Syson, *Objects of Virtue*, 95). Piero di Cosimo followed suit with two long, low panels depicting battling Tritons with Nereids, which apparently hung along with the Bacchanals in the Vespucci palace. See Geronimus, *Piero di Cosimo*, 106-108, figs. 74 and 75.

<sup>245</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid* VI.171-174, trans. Fitzgerald, 165-166. Ed. Fairclough: "sed tum, forte cava dum personat aequora concha, / demens, et cantu vocat in certamina divos, / aemulus exceptum Triton, si credere dignum est, / inter saxa virum spumosa immerserat unda" (p. 544).

<sup>246</sup> The *Dionysiaca*, while being very late antique and not reflective of actual ancient worship, was useful to Renaissance humanists for its dredging up numerous lost texts, making it an excellent sourcebook for ancient mythology, and stylistically, its Greek was strictly rulebound, assisting in the later grammarian studies. See introduction by H. J. Rose to the translation by W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940). Filelfo acquired a thirteenth-century manuscript of the text in Constantinople in the 1420s. See Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries*; Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia." Poliziano had himself studied the text thoroughly, and we know he spent time in Mantua, where he may have shared his knowledge of this quintessential Bacchanalian text with Mantegna and the Gonzaga court. Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 117.

story of a passionate war waged between Poseidon and Dionysus, piqued by Aphrodite into becoming rivals for the love of the same woman.<sup>247</sup> Cupid's arrows strike them both and send them into their rages:

He maddened Dionysos to offer his treasures to the bride, life's merry heart and the ruddy vintage of the grape; he goaded to love the lord of the trident, that he might bring the sea-neighbouring maid a double lovegift, seafaring battle on the water and varied dishes for the table. He set Bacchos more in a flame, since wine excited the mind for desire, and wine finds unbridled youth much more obedient to the rein when it is charmed with the prick of unreason; [...] Thus he maddened them both....<sup>248</sup>

Sensing himself destined to lose, Dionysus rallies one last "battle for love," with Nereids and nymphs, Pans and Tritons all mixed together. "Poseidon's house, the water of the sea, was flogged with long bunches of leaves.... The tribes of Nereids sounded for their sire the cry of battle-triumph: unshod, half hidden in the brine, the company rushed raging to combat over the sea... then the Nereids drove their fishes like swift-moving horses about the watery goal of their contest."<sup>249</sup> Pointedly, Dionysus is said to feel "fear and jealousy" at Poseidon for winning the girl, but is consoled by Eros who assures him that a bride awaits him as well: sweet Ariadne, and a wedding wreath will soon crown him with his own victory. It is at a later marriage feast that "Seilenoi chanted, Bacchants danced, drunken Satyrs wove a hymn of love and sang the alliance which came of this victorious match. Companies of Nereids under the foothills of the neighbouring isthmus encircled Dionysus with wedding dances and warbled their lay."<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> See *Dionysiaca*, trans. Rouse, XLI.420-427, p. 227; XLII.1-35, .110-111, .498-501, pp. 235, 229-231, 263; XLIII.20-110, .149-177, .256-310, .372-384, .422-436, pp. 269-275, 279, 285-289, 293, 297.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, XLII.1-35, vol. 3, 229-231.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, XLIII.37-38, .258-261, pp. 271, 285.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, XLVIII.188-200, p. 439. In this episode, Dionysus is said to marry Pallene, who was a princess whose father ordered that she wrestle each suitor who came to seek her hand in marriage. All were defeated and slain, until Dionysus arrived and won. Nonnos was very liberal with Dionysus' love life, adding many damsels that appear nowhere else in Bacchic lore. Often these loves are metamorphosed into various plants for viticulture.

Compare this to Lorenzo Costa's painting of *Comus*, painted for Isabella d'Este after Mantegna's death—and likely incorporating the master's ideas for the original commission—which included the crowned god of revel at the left, Bacchus and Ariadne in the center foreground, sea creatures in the distance, and Envy being beaten away at the right.<sup>251</sup> The amalgamation of figures suggests that Mantegna's juxtapositioning of these characters in his engravings established a precedent for uniting these themes.

Mantegna's imagery elicits the mood of Nonnos' writing, if not imitating the story in every detail (which was, regardless, not the artist's typical practice). The tale intertwines Bacchic tropes and sea *thiasoi*, revealing a precedent for Mantegna's joining the two themes.<sup>252</sup> Ancient literature, in fact, abounds with this connection. Symposial literature often contained marine metaphors regarding the nature of drunkenness, and the god's mythology cites Dionysus' association with the sea and dolphins.<sup>253</sup> Philostratus' description of the Bacchanal of the Andrians notes the presence of Tritons reveling in the water, connecting the theme of the

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<sup>251</sup> See Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 218.

<sup>252</sup> In 1494 Dürer copied the right-hand print of each of these pairs, further implying that the *Battle* and *Bacchanals* were meant as pendants or a cycle—to be read together. His copies of the right half of the *Battle* and the *Bacchanal with Silenus* are in the Albertina, Vienna. See Erika Simon, "Dürer und Mantegna 1494," *Anzeiger der Germanischen Nationalmuseums* 1971/72 (1972): 21-40. Another indication that the prints were kept together may be the bronze reliefs for the Fugger Tomb by Peter Vischer the Younger, who is known to have visited Venice and who depicts a continuous frieze progressing from a Battle of Sea Monsters on the left to a Bacchanal with satyrs on the right. See Jacobsen, "The Engravings of Mantegna," 135, n. 273.

<sup>253</sup> For example, the transformation of the Tyrrhenian pirates into dolphins. See Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 45. A fragmentary text recounts a party gone bad when the men in attendance became intoxicated and came under the illusion that they were in a storm at sea and must jettison ballast, and so threw all the furniture out the window. "When the authorities were dumbstruck at their folly, one of the young men, who seemed to be the oldest, said 'Ye Tritons, I was so scared I threw myself in the women's quarters and stayed there.' The authorities, as a result, forgave their delirium, but sentenced them never to drink again excessively, and let them go. And readily agreeing they were grateful. 'If', he said, 'we ever get to port in this dreadful storm, we shall erect altars to you in our country, as visible Saviors, alongside the sea gods, because you appeared to us at such an opportune time. And so the house was called the 'trireme'" (Timaeus of Taormina, preserved in Athenaios, *Deipnosophistai* 2.5.37B-D, in *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* 566 F 149, ed. F. Jacoby [1923-], online at Brill's New Jacoby: <[http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/timaios-566-a566?s.num=9&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-jacoby&s.q=timaeus#BNJTEXT566\\_F\\_149](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/entries/brill-s-new-jacoby/timaios-566-a566?s.num=9&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.brill-s-new-jacoby&s.q=timaeus#BNJTEXT566_F_149)>; text cited by Davidson, 44).

Bacchanal with sea gods:<sup>254</sup>

The river lies on a couch of grape-clusters, pouring out its steam, a river undiluted and of agitated appearance; thyrsi grow about it like reeds about bodies of water, and if one goes along past the land and these drinking groups on it, he comes at length on Tritons at the river's mouth, who are dipping up the wine in sea-shells. Some of it they drink, some they blow out in streams, and of the Tritons some are drunken and dancing. Dionysus also sails to the revels of Andros and, his ship now moored in the harbour, he leads a mixed throng of Satyrs and Bacchantes and all the Seileni. He leads Laughter and Revel, two spirits most gay and most fond of the drinking-bout, that with the greatest delight he may reap the river's harvest.<sup>255</sup>

The retinue of Bacchus is connected to that of Tritons in another text by Hyginus, in which Pan scares off the Tritons with a barrage of purple fish.<sup>256</sup> Pausanias recorded that Tritons were represented on the Temple of Dionysus at Tanagra.<sup>257</sup> Nonnos also spoke of a monumental flood spawned by Zeus (after having first scorched the earth in grief at the death of his son Dionysus Zagreus at the hands of the Titans) caused all the fish and beasts, maenads and Nereids, Pans and Tritons to change places (until the water was put back by Poseidon).<sup>258</sup> Neptune, in turn, was

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<sup>254</sup> Philostratus is mentioned as a possible source for the *Bacchanals* (Tietze-Conrat, *Mantegna*, 243ff). Jacobsen is more skeptical: "This passage, if known in Mantua at the time [which Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, 56, doubts], could have been suggestive, but it hardly explains the artist's intentions in the engravings." The passage does connect the Bacchic train with the water and Tritons, he notes, but not with fighting ones (Jacobsen, "The Meaning of Mantegna's Battle of the Sea Monsters," 628).

<sup>255</sup> *Imagines*, I.25, trans. Fairbanks, 99.

<sup>256</sup> Hyginus, *Poeticon astronomicum* II, 28, cited by Jacobsen, "The Engravings of Mantegna," 109, n. 221. The Bacchic and Marine *thiasoi* are combined visually on the fantastic antique bronze dish of the lately-discovered Mildenhall Treasure: satyrs and maenads dance in the outer border while Nereids and Tritons surround the large central image of Poseidon/Neptune, with his leaf-like beard and dolphins in his hair. Though this particular piece was not found until the twentieth century, its closeness to Mantegna's imagery makes one ponder whether another antiquity with similar iconography was available in the fifteenth century.

<sup>257</sup> *Description of Greece* IX.20.5.

<sup>258</sup> *Dionysiaca* VI.257-276, .292-295, .374-378, trans. Rouse, vol. 1, pp. 233-241.



linked with the turbulence of the passions, and the sea with the forces of the appetites.<sup>259</sup> Such associations easily affiliated these sea deities with their Bacchic counterparts. Indeed, sea creatures like ichthy centaurs in their hybrid appearance were often considered simply the marine equivalent of the earth-bound satyrs, their pursuit of sea nymphs analogous to the satyrs’.

Mantegna could observe a wide range of precedents for combining the themes of Bacchus and Neptune. Nor was Mantegna alone in drawing out this connection. A drawing after antiquities tentatively attributed to Eneo Vico depicts a Nereid sarcophagus with Triumph of Neptune below and an Indian Triumph of Bacchus above, demonstrating that such reliefs may have been displayed together in the fifteenth century, or that their two subject matters and iconography were deemed to correspond to each other.<sup>260</sup> The *Neptune Fountain* print, attributed to Zoan Andrea (perhaps after a design by Mantegna), shows a Neptune similar to that in the *Battle*—with trident and dolphin—atop a large fountain bowl, around which there is a frieze that appears to depict a sea battle on the left and a Bacchic procession and seated ruler on the right (fig. 5.73).<sup>261</sup> Another image, a miniature in the printed edition of Petrarch’s *Sonetti, Canzoni e Trionfi* published by Bartolomeo de Valdezocco in 1472, depicts an unusual sea *thiasos* of Bacchus and Ariadne, which borrows from Nereid sarcophagi showing the Triumph of Neptune (fig. 5.74).<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> See Cristoforo Landino’s gloss and allegorization of Virgil’s *Aeneid* I.124f: “Neptune was invented by the poets as the supreme god of the sea. I say supreme, because there are also other powers of the sea present and indeed most of its forces have charge of appetite. For appetite is moved by the judgment of the sense, of the lower brain, but the supreme rule is withheld for the higher brain” (quoted in Holberton, “Of Antique and Other Figures,” 52).

<sup>260</sup> British Museum, London. Illustrated in Bober, “An Antique Sea-Thiasos,” fig. 3.

<sup>261</sup> Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cat. 100. National Gallery of Art, Washington, c. 1480-85.

<sup>262</sup> M. Bonicatti, “Aspetti dell’illustrazione del libro nell’ambiente padano del secondo ‘400,” *Rivista d’Arte* 32 (1957): 107-149. See also Bober, “An Antique Sea-Thiasos,” 48. In antiquity, Bacchus was often depicted on drinking cups as riding in a boat at sea. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes*, 45. For the relation of sea metaphors

The wild antics of land-bound Bacchants and the rampaging frenzy of watery creatures seem of a piece. The anguished expressions Mantegna gives the Nereids, who hold on for dear life and seem to cringe to avoid wayward blows, capture the emotional turmoil of the battle. The “folly” and “envy” that characterize Nonnos’ and Virgil’s tales come to life in Mantegna’s prints. The saggy-breasted hag bearing the tablet inscribed *Invid* (Envy) appears to spur this clash of aquatic creatures.<sup>263</sup> The *topos* of Envy’s ability to instigate evil and strife suggests that the *Battle* prints intertwine with the *Bacchanals* through the figure of the fat lady (i.e., Ignorance) who is so often Envy’s companion in Mantegna’s other works. Together, Ignorance and Envy create war and vice, cruelty and hedonistic pleasure.<sup>264</sup> The connection of the two

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to Bacchus and drinking, see W. J. Slater, “Symposium at Sea,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976): 161-170. A Paduan bronze wine cooler from the first quarter of the sixteenth century also demonstrates the connection between land and sea: the snake handles are capped with a scallop shell and a satyr face, while the frieze running around the rim is of ichthy centaurs and nereids. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, inv. PS. 5501, ca. 1520. See Fusco and Corti, *Lorenzo de’ Medici: Collector and Antiquarian*, fig. 69, p. 81. Just such a vessel, made of silver, was known to have been in the collection of Cardinal Guillaume d’Estouteville and was offered for sale to Lorenzo de’ Medici in 1487 after the cardinal’s death (Fusco and Corti, 80). Another piece, a bronze plaquette that likely served as decoration on a dagger handle, depicted two centaurs with nymphs on their backs at the top and two tritons fighting below. Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes*, cat. 114, fig. 141. In an engraving of an *Ornamental Panel*, c. 1507 (National Gallery of Art, Washington) scenes of the Judgment of Paris and of Orpheus taming the Wild Beasts are bordered with standing figures of Neptune, Mars, Apollo and Bacchus. Neptune holds up his trident and stands atop a dolphin in a reedy marsh, and Bacchus stands in almost identical *contrapposto* to that of the comparable figure in the *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*, reaching to a cornucopia at his right and to a cluster of grapes up above at his left. (This type of figure of Bacchus, with cornucopia, would in fact become a typical emblem-book type for the god.) The Orpheus roundel, moreover, is topped with a frieze of sea monsters while a frieze of satyrs bringing animals for sacrifice is below. The elaborate iconography of this panel, which was paired with another depicting the Dioscuri, has been thought to illustrate the notion that love was the underlying root of war. See Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, cat. 172, p. 478.

<sup>263</sup> Other artists copied this figure from Mantegna: Dürer used it as a Fury in his *Hercules and Cacus* B 127 (in Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege*, fig. 112); Lorenzo Leonbruno adds the figure of the hag to his painting of *Amymone* (or *Allegory of Mantua*), affiliated with Mocetto’s *Myth of Amymone* engraving, c. 1505, in the British Museum (Meiss, “Sleep in Venice,” 220-221, fig. 242). In the Leonbruno painting, the old lady appears to represent a warning figure, threatening the satyrs who attempt to ogle the sleeping nymph, who symbolized the immaculate purity of Mantua. See Fiorenza, “Dosso Dossi and Celio Calcagnini,” 186-187.

<sup>264</sup> Cf. Bartolomeo Scala’s *100 Apologues*, which also inspired the twelve decorative reliefs made by Bertoldo di Giovanni for Scala’s new palazzo in Florence c. 1480. The moralizing theme of the program was a sort of psychomachia, showing the negative effects of envy and the unleashing of bestial passions, contrasted with virtue, which mitigates vice through intelligence and ability. The relief illustrating “IURGIUM” (Strife) depicts Bacchic characters, including a maenad grabbing the horns of Pan and satyrs playing pipes, and the figure of Strife, who sticks out his tongue. The relief entitled “EBRIETAS” (Drunkenness, which alone of the twelve does not appear in the *Apologues*) shows centaurs holding animal carcasses on either side of a vessel over a fire in which a pig and goat

friezes may also imply that the influence of wine is what induces these monsters to fight, as it can exacerbate both Ignorance and Envy. Neptune and Bacchus, however, stand apart from the fray: Neptune with his back turned atop a pedestal, with dolphin and trident; Bacchus—in almost the exact same stance but turned toward the front—awaiting his coronation. Neptune seems to turn his back on vice, his dolphin acting as sign of salvation and symbol of virtue while his elevation on a pedestal is a way of lifting him above the lowly sea of vituperation.<sup>265</sup> Likewise, Bacchus presents a face of Virtue; his essential nobility cannot be denied.

Mantegna takes this world of strife and jealousy into the artistic realm by engaging in a *paragone* of painting and sculpture, demonstrated by showing the same perfectly posed antique body from both the rear and the front in the figures of these two gods. Mantegna inserts himself in this intellectual contest by demonstrating that, in superior fashion to sculptors, two-dimensional artists can show all three dimensions (that is, multiple viewpoints) simultaneously. In particular, Mantegna may be responding directly to Pollaiuolo, who had made a similar

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boil. Envy appears in the relief of “VICTORIA” with saggy breasts and arm extended, thrown-back head and stringy hair, not exactly like Mantegna’s, but similar. Like the theme of Mantegna’s engravings, Scala seems to show the inward battle between the rational self and the more irascible, lowly parts of our natures. See Alessandro Parronchi, “The Language of Humanism and the Language of Sculpture: Bertoldo as Illustrator of the *Apologi* of Bartolomeo Scala,” trans. Alison Brown, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964): 108-136; André Chastel, *Art et Humanisme a Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1959), 154ff, 277ff. Envy was also a theme in Alberti’s own collection of apologues. See David Marsh, “Aesop and the Humanist Apologue,” *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003): 9-26.

<sup>265</sup> Jacobsen, “The Engravings of Mantegna,” 121-122; Emison, “The Raucousness of Mantegna’s Mythological Engravings,” 163. The figure of Neptune in the background, with his back turned to the viewer, prompted Erika Simon to read the *Battle* as representing the *Quos Ego* scene from the *Aeneid* (“Dürer und Mantegna 1494,” *Anzeiger der Germanischen Nationalmuseums* 1971/72 [1972]: 21-40). See also L. Nees, “Le ‘Quos Ego’ de Marc-Antoine Raimondi: L’adaption d’une source antique par Raphael,” *Nouvelles de l’estampe* 40-41 (1978): 18-29. In that episode, Neptune orders the raging winds to calm down. “Thus he speaks, and swifter than his word he calms the swollen seas. . . . And as, when oftentimes in a great nation tumult has risen the base rabble rage angrily, and now brands and stones fly, madness lending arms; then, if perchance they set eyes on a man honoured for noble character and service, they are silent and stand by with attentive ears; with speech he sways their passion and soothes their breasts. . . .” (Virgil, *Aeneid* I.142-153, trans. Fairclough, 273). This text does not specify Tritons fighting, however, and Mantegna’s imagery does not show Neptune looking out over the sea or riding his chariot as he does in the text.

statement using this “pivotal” presentation of figures in his *Battle of Naked Men*.<sup>266</sup> Mantegna meets Pollaiuolo and “raises” him, so to speak, by depicting not just one type of figure—the toned, young, male nude—in multiple poses, but by adding female bodies, fat and thin, young and old, human and monstrous, whole and hybrid.

His depiction of Envy may be even more personal, if she alludes to the strife aroused by the competitive jealousy of his rivals.<sup>267</sup> The idea of strife (*eris*) had long been part of poetic theory, with its concept of the competition inherent in the imitation and emulation of previous authors.<sup>268</sup> But professional envy was increasingly a feature of a new art market, in which local guilds and workshops no longer controlled production, and independent, itinerant artists could seek out the best commissions and compete for permanent places at court.<sup>269</sup> Perhaps the very reason that Alberti repeated the full *ekphrasis* of the Calumny of Apelles was because it touched

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<sup>266</sup> Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, 79; Emison, “The Raucousness of Mantegna’s Mythological Engravings,” 162; Landau, “Printmaking in the Age of Lorenzo,” in *Florentine Drawing at the Time of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, ed. Elizabeth Cropper (Florence: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1992), 177-179. See Summers, “*Figure come fratelli*,” 62-63, 72: “The identity of figures repeated in a single painting is comparable to the three-dimensionality of sculpture prismatically conceived...”. Mantegna’s *Battle* does appear to be subsequent to Pollaiuolo’s, since Mantegna brings out a much more complex interior modeling with less dependence on contour, which creates an enhanced luminosity. See also Chapter Two, p. 142.

<sup>267</sup> Stephen J. Campbell, “Mantegna’s Triumph: The Cultural Politics of Imitation ‘all’antica’ at the Court of Mantua 1490-1530,” in *Artists at Court: Image-Making and Identity 1300-1550*, ed. Campbell (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, distributed by University of Chicago Press, 2004), 96, and n. 16-17. Campbell cites letters (quoted in Kristeller [Berlin, 1902], doc. 17 and 51) by Mantegna in which he calls out the envy (*invidia*) of his rivals. In 1474 Mantegna wrote to Ludovico Gonzaga regarding his dispute with the “bastardo” Francesco Aliprandi and others, who “Hanno invidia che la vostra Extia mi abia fato questo bene...”; and in 1491, he writes to Francesco Gonzaga “che sempre la invidia Regna negli omini da pocho....” Envy, Campbell asserts, was one of Mantegna’s “signature themes, amounting to something of an obsession.”

<sup>268</sup> Pigman, “Versions of Imitation,” 16. Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*: “And the potter bears ill will towards the potter and the carpenter to the carpenter, and the beggar envies [φθονέει] the beggar and the singer, the singer” (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, ed. M. L. West [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978], 147). Competition, or agon, was also an essential attribute of Greek culture. Philosophically, Plato was opposed to it for stressing the individual over the welfare of society at large; Aristotle, however, understood it, saying that all those emotions (envy, indignation, anger) were wrapped up in the part of our soul that had to do with honor and pride. See introduction to David Konstan and Keith Rutter, ed., *Envy, Spite and Jealousy: The Rivalrous Emotions in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 1-5.

<sup>269</sup> Warnke, *The Court Artist*, 27-33, 90-91. Such tensions went back to the fourteenth century, but intensified with the rising status of the artist himself.

the nerve of professional jealousy and the crucial honor of the painter.<sup>270</sup> If this was in fact Mantegna's intent, it could be, as Michael Jacobsen has argued, that the sea gods in the *Battle* print derive from the Telchines, a race of sea monster-metalsmiths, who, according to Strabo, "were 'maligned' by rival workmen and thus received their bad reputation."<sup>271</sup> Diodorus Siculus said they "were jealous of teaching their arts to others."<sup>272</sup> Nonnos described the Telchines as being belligerent supporters of Dionysus' Indian campaign.<sup>273</sup> While a representation of the

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<sup>270</sup> Rosand, "Ekphrasis and the Generation of Images," 68. As Warnke also writes: "The growing number of allegorical depictions of envy and calumny reflects the fierce competition among the artists clamouring at the gates of the courts. [...] Professional envy, always a fact of life, became a permanent feature of the struggle for court privileges and sinecures" (*The Court Artist*, 91).

<sup>271</sup> Strabo, *Geography* XIV.2.7 and X.3.7, cited in Jacobsen, "The Engravings of Mantegna," 116-117. Strabo was translated for Nicholas V by Guarino da Verona and Francesco Filelfo, and an illuminated Strabo manuscript was produced in Mantegna workshop (now at Bibliothèque Rochemadeville, Albi) (Jacobsen, n. 235). The Telchines were described in Nonnos' *Dionysiaca*, where they are compared to the character of Envy. *Dionysiaca*, VIII.104-108, translated by Jacobsen as: "Swift leapt up Envy moving through the lower air... with a mind armed for deceit and mischief as the Telchines." Pindar, *Olympia* VII.57f, described the Telchines as sculptors. Strabo, X.3.7, described the Curetes, those ministers of gods, as being like kinsmen to the Corybantes and Telchines: "[T]hey represent them, one and all, as a kind of inspired people and as subject to Bacchic frenzy, and, in the guise of ministers, as inspiring terror at the celebration of the sacred rites by means of war-dances, accompanied by uproar and noise and cymbals and drums and arms, and also by flute and outcry." And XIV.2.7: "In earlier times Rhodes was called... Telchinis, after the Telchines, who took up their abode in the island. Some say that the Telchines are 'maligners' and 'sorcerers,' who pour the water of the Styx mixed with sulphur upon animals and plants in order to destroy them. But others, on the contrary, say that since they excelled in workmanship they were 'maligned' by rival workmen and thus received their bad reputation; and that they first came from Crete to Cyprus and then to Rhodes; and that they were the first to work iron and brass, and in fact fabricated the scythe for Cronus" (trans. H. L. Jones [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924]). The Telchines were sea demons and, besides the sickle, they are also said to have made a magical trident for Poseidon.

<sup>272</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* V.55.5: "And we are told that they [the Telchines] were the discoverers of certain arts and that they introduced other things which are useful for the life of mankind. They were also the first, men say, to fashion statues of the gods, and some of the ancient images of gods have been named after them...; and they could also change their natural shapes and were jealous of teaching their arts to others. Poseidon, the myth continues, when he had grown to manhood, became enamoured of Halia (Brine), the sister of the Telchines, and lying with her he begat six male children and one daughter, called Rhodos, after whom the island was named..." (trans. C. H. Oldfather [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933ff]).

<sup>273</sup> Nonnos also says the Telchines came to help Dionysos in the Indian war. *Dionysiaca* XIV.36ff; XXIV.110-116: "[When the Indian River Hydaspes tried to drown the army of Dionysos:] [Dionysos] was in front, cutting the stream in his highland car and never wetting the axle. The Satyrs attended his passage, and with them Bacchant women and Pans passed through the water; but far quicker than the rest came the Telchines behind their seabred horses, driving their father's car, firmly based on the sea, and they kept close to Dionysos as he sped along"; XXX.226-230: "The spiteful Telchines also joined the battle [with Dionysos in his war against the Indians]. One held a tall fir-tree; one had a cornel, trunk and roots and all; one broke off the peak of a cliff and rushed against the Indians, whirling his darting rock with furious arms and crushing the foe" (trans. Rouse, vol. 2, 233, 413).

Telchines would be obscure and remains uncertain, Jacobsen's general argument that Mantegna is making a personal assertion of artistic integrity and inspiration is alluring.<sup>274</sup> The figure of Envy, with her depleted breasts, suggests an emptiness of talent; she goads the sea creatures to battle because they lack the wisdom to see past her effete, petty jealousies. (If they are the Telchines, that is, sculptors, Mantegna could be claiming his superiority over their art.) Bacchus, on the other hand, stands amidst another fray, one of drunken delirium, not violent aggression and competition. He is crowned for genius and in thanks for his inspired and inspiring gift. His *ingenium* makes him the victor. In Mantegna's own competition with antiquity, as well, he has surpassed his predecessors, since, as Erasmus would say: "Imitation aims at similarity; emulation, at victory."<sup>275</sup> By combining both Virtue and Vice in his four-print depiction, Mantegna elevates his form of inspiration above that of his common imitators; showing that he can stand like Neptune and Bacchus, above Envy and Ignorance, apart from monsters and satyrs; that he is touched by the divine and powerful inspiration of the gods yet capable of using it wisely and nobly.

The mixing of myths and sources in Mantegna's prints is similar to what we will find in Alfonso d'Este's Camerino d'Alabastro in Chapter Six. There, the story of Bacchus and Ariadne and of the Worship of Venus could make sense hanging together, since it was in the mind of the

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<sup>274</sup> There is, of course, the whole debate as to whether Mantegna was personally involved in the engraving of his plates or whether he hired professional craftsmen to render his drawings in print. Some scholars, like Tietze-Conrat and Suzanne Boorsch, argue that a painter untrained in goldsmithing would never have taken the time to learn a new and difficult technique alien to his skills. Given that the overall design, the *invenzione*, of these engravings is clearly owing to Mantegna, Patricia Emison ("The Raucousness of Mantegna's Mythological Engravings," 160) has gone further to argue that the question itself may be irrelevant to the question of their intent, import, and influence. Others, upon observing subtle distinctions between the seven engravings commonly regarded as autograph and the many others in his style, maintain that Mantegna himself was fully capable of achieving proficiency in this new art. See Fletcher, "A Closer Look at Mantegna's Prints," passim; Christiansen, "The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker," 607-608.

<sup>275</sup> Erasmus, *Dialogus cui titulus Ciceronianus sive de optimo dicenti genere (Ciceroniano)*, 116, quoted in Pigman, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," 24.

observer that the connections would be made. As Randolph Starn notes, “the iconographers’ concern today, would once have been a good courtiers’ game, an occasion for knowing play rather than sober iconographical exercises. For the courtiers there would have been no need for easy answers...; it was the game itself that mattered, ...the hermeneutical pleasures of indeterminacy.”<sup>276</sup> A further indication of the interconnection of Mantegna’s *Bacchanals* and *Sea Battle* engravings is demonstrated by a drawing in the Louvre, showing a pastiche of classical motifs taken from one or more antique sarcophagi depicting the Indian Triumph of Bacchus (fig. 5.75, 76, 77).<sup>277</sup> It has been attributed to Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439-1502), the Sienese sculptor, painter, architect, and engineer, or his peer Neroccio.<sup>278</sup> At the top, a clothed, youthful Bacchus stands atop his chariot drawn by two fierce panthers; elsewhere, giraffes and elephants appear, as on Indian Triumph sarcophagi. A winged Victory alights upon the lip of the chariot to lay a victory wreath on his head, which recalls the crowning in Mantegna’s *Bacchanal*. To the left a maenad with billowing veil stands in an elegant *contrapposto* holding a staff topped with trophies of the battle.<sup>279</sup> And then there, to the right, is Envy—Mantegna’s Envy (fig. 5.78). Here in a Bacchic triumph is the screaming old hag with

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<sup>276</sup> Randolph Starn and Loren Partridge, *Arts of Power: Three Halls of State in Italy, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 114-115.

<sup>277</sup> The drawing was discussed by Bernhard Degenhart, where it is held up as an example of a work by Neroccio, instead of the usually given Francesco di Giorgio (“Unbekannte Zeichnungen Francescos di Giorgio,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 8 [1939]: 117-150, pl. 59); and appears in Matz, *ASR*, part 2, no. 100, beilage 49, also as Neroccio. As far as I can determine, it has not been recently published or discussed in the literature regarding the Camerino. The artist imitates some figures from the Indian Triumph sarcophagus in Woburn Abbey. Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini*, pl. XXXIII, fig. 79. There are also features from a second sarcophagus, in the Casino Rospigliosi in Rome, which has been put forth in comparison to Raphael’s *modello* for the Indian Triumph he was to have painted for Alfonso. Matz, *ASR*, IV: 2, pp. 233-236; Antal, “Observations on Girolamo da Carpi,” 88, n. 43.

<sup>278</sup> From 1477, on and off, he was in the service of Duke Federigo da Montefeltro in Urbino, where according to Giovanni Santi (the father of Raphael), he continued to satisfy his immense interest in studying and conserving antiquities, but he was also active in cities as widespread as Milan and Naples.

pendulous teats as she appears in Mantegna's engraving of the *Battle of the Sea Gods*, but not on any known Bacchic relief.<sup>280</sup> And Martini was not alone: the Bolognese artist Amico Aspertini made a drawing that appears to be after the Rospigliosi Indian Triumph, and he also depicts a similar figure to the Envy atop an elephant (fig. 5.79).<sup>281</sup> The appearance of this figure in Bacchic triumphs suggests that there could have been some other, unknown sarcophagus, known (in person or in drawing) to Martini, Aspertini, and Mantegna. Conversely, Francesco di Giorgio or Amico could have seen Mantegna's prints and, deeming them a continuous series having to do with Bacchus, saw Envy as part of the Bacchic story—which we have shown would not have been inappropriate. Indeed Bacchus was very proud of his honor, lashing out violently against those who failed to respect his divinity. As in Nonnos' story, Bacchus is a god capable of intense jealousy and envy as he strove for precedence in the Olympian pantheon.<sup>282</sup> The presence of the figure of Envy in a Triumph of Bacchus reveals that Mantegna's engravings, taken all together, make a statement about victory, specifically a triumph of Bacchic inspiration.

The idea that Mantegna used these four mythological engravings to assert his genius and denounce the envy of his competitors would suggest that Mantegna made these prints as almost a

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<sup>279</sup> The maenad recalls Botticelli's figure of Truth in the *Calumny of Apelles*, and her staff, the trophy-bearers in Mantegna's *Triumph of Caesar* canvases. She also recalls Mantegna's Bacchus in reverse, with her one arm bent up over her head.

<sup>280</sup> A similar woman is drawn in Amico Aspertini's album in the British Museum, London, fol. 1, but there is no context to indicate the source (Bober, *Drawings after the Antique by Amico Aspertini*, fig. 5). A very similar figure also appears in the woodcut illustration of the *Story of Erisichthon*, in the 1497 edition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, told in book VIII, where the figure of Famine appears twice as a naked, emaciated, saggy-breasted woman. See Joannides, *Titian to 1518*, 79, fig. 64 (but with incorrect title). Titian paints the story, c. 1509, now in the Museo Civico, Padua (ibid., 78, fig. 62, with incorrect title). In the bottom right quadrant of Martini's drawing is a last, very faint figure, who appears to be stretching his arms and leaning over to his left, and below him appear to be the haunches and tail of a horse—a detail which does not appear on the sarcophagi either. Yet this figure appears very like Titian's wine-pouring Bacchant in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*.

<sup>281</sup> Wolfegg Codex, fols. 36v-37, made during a visit to Rome c.1500-1503, Schloss Wolfegg, Baden-Württemberg; Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 96, beilage 43.



demonstration piece, not only to pronounce his skill and stylistic innovations, but also to attest to his achievements and lay claim to novelty and invention.<sup>283</sup> Given the essential and profound impact of ancient reliefs bearing Bacchic subjects and sea *thiasoi*, and their fundamental role in the development of this new figural style in the fifteenth century, Mantegna's engravings make a statement about his relationship to and competition with antiquity, as well as with contemporary artists. He makes two *all'antica* horizontal sarcophagus-like scenes with a black-and-white illusion of relief, yet uses the newest technological advance—the medium of engraving—to fashion utterly fresh scenes. The very size of the prints and the fact that some of the extant impressions were pasted onto canvas in order to be displayed like paintings and not hidden away in drawers further evince the larger aspirations of their creator.<sup>284</sup> It is as if Mantegna were creating new “antiquities,” his own versions of the famous antique models beloved and mined by his contemporaries. His inventions harken back to their antique forebears, but in media, presentation, function, and content they have become new and fully “modern,” and seek to rival, if not replace, the grandeur and worth of the originals.<sup>285</sup> In truth, the manner in which these prints—in their light, portable, and reproducible format—spread throughout Europe, inspiring imitations and derivations, ensured that Mantegna would succeed in making his “reliefs” the new

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<sup>282</sup> It is worth noting, as well, that in Italian, the expression for being beside oneself with jealousy is “ubriaco di gelosia,” or “drunk” with envy.

<sup>283</sup> Christiansen, “The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker,” 611.

<sup>284</sup> That these impressions were well regarded and highly valued at the time is indicated by Este inventories, which list even the plates themselves as being kept in the Guardaroba. See David Landau and Peter Marshall, *The Renaissance Print: 1470-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 83-87, 101.

<sup>285</sup> A drawing in Oxford attributed to the school of Mantegna has an inscription claiming it copies an antique relief for which no example can be found. It is possible that the artist merely sought to create the impression that his work was like an antique, while clearly representing a new composition. See E. Tietze-Conrat, “Notes on ‘Hercules at the Cross-Roads’,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 (1951): 305-309. Campbell also notes this quality of Mantegna's prints, in which he “appears to single-handedly constitute a surrogate antiquity, a modern canon of *all'antica* design, always visibly his invention even when imitated by others” (“Mantegna's Triumph,” 93-94).

models for artists to study.<sup>286</sup> Engraving awakened the freedom to invent. Potentially made without patron or program, engravings liberated the artist to his own wild imagination, combining his learning, experience, and visual sense with fantasy. The artist became capable of setting his own terms, designing his own morality, and enacting his own philosophy. Bacchus need not be tied to vice alone, but could be reborn as a glorious, inspirited, and inspirational deity. A group of *cognoscenti* could share wine and elevated discourse, as well as knowing laughter, in the presence of such clever imagery.<sup>287</sup> Mantegna exemplifies how, when loosed from the guidance and control of Apollonian reason, Bacchic madness could allow an artist transcendence—but always with the risk of decadence and degradation.

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The works of Michelangelo and Mantegna reveal how an artist could manipulate his chosen subject to express not only his unique inventiveness but also to relate this ingenuity to his

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<sup>286</sup> Consider, for example, an engraving by Nicoletto da Modena, *Vulcan Forging Cupid's Wings* in the British Museum, in which the artist has borrowed for the figures of Vulcan and Cupid the horn-playing satyr and standing, wingless putto from Mantegna's *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*. See Michael A. Jacobsen, "Vulcan Forging Cupid's Wing," *The Art Bulletin* 54 (1972): 418-429, fig. 1. Nicoletto also engraves a figure of *Neptune*, using that of Bacchus from the *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*—a borrowing that suggests, moreover, the connection between the *Bacchanals* and the *Battle*. See Hind, *Early Italian Engravings*, in notes to E.III.4. Other artists would find inspiration in Mantegna's engravings. A plaquette depicting two battling Tritons, with a Nereid, derived from the right half of the *Battle of Sea Gods* was produced in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century in the Venetian workshop of Alessandro Leopardi. See Pope-Hennessy, *Renaissance Bronzes*, no. 76, fig. 145, with versions in the Kress Collection in the National Gallery of Art, in Berlin, in the Morgenroth collection at the University of Santa Barbara, and in the Louvre. Another plaquette attributed to Moderno shows *Orpheus Descending into Hades*, in which he is seen from behind, with a forcefully-delineated right leg and buttock, similar to the standing satyr at the left of the *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat* (*ibid.*, no. 171, fig. 195). Titian borrows the two sleeping putti for his *Three Ages of Man* (Edinburgh). See Fletcher, "Mantegna and Venice," 25. Clearly engravings functioned as the new model books, providing readily disseminated designs for the production of popular objects made by craftsmen such as goldsmiths, medalists, gem carvers, maiolica painters, book illuminators, playing card and Tarocchi designers, ceramic relief designers, and sculptors. Motifs from Mantegna's prints appear already by c.1480 in manuscript illuminations, paintings, terracotta friezes, and bronze statuettes, and by artists as diverse as unknown northern Italians to celebrated geniuses like Raphael and Michelangelo. See Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings*, xvi; Christiansen, "The Case for Mantegna as Printmaker," 606.

<sup>287</sup> Martindale discussed the pleasure the "intellectual riddles" in Mantegna's *Triumph* paintings must have brought to *cognoscenti*. See Andrew Martindale, *The Triumphs of Caesar by Andrea Mantegna in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1979), 73; and Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 98-100.

own aspirations for status and genius. The Bacchic subject in particular facilitated the expression of artistic creativity because of the deep associations of wine and its accompanying frenzy with the *divino furor* that was so frequently affirmed as the source of inspiration. The ambitious use of this imagery, moreover, was not limited to works of personal artistic expression, but could also be used on a much grander and more public scale to project the magnificence and brilliance of a patron, while affirming the artists' *ingegno*. The masterpieces that Titian created for the duke of Ferrara mark the zenith of the Renaissance idea of a potent and inspiring Bacchus. At the close of this first Renaissance phase, on the cusp of a new era, Titian, with help from his patron and advisors, invented a painted escape—a Bacchic Arcadia—in which gods, humans, and satyrs frolicked, sang, drank, and loved. This was not just another “Schifanoia,” however, but a demonstration of the true import of the god of wine and revelry, in all his aspects as a god of sensuality, fecundity, frenzy, and inspiration. Like the ancient Roman cycle in the Villa of the Mysteries, the mystical cult of Bacchus was reimagined and reborn in a privileged, elite room and enjoyed for a brief shining moment before it too would be erased by fate.

## Chapter Six

**Lifting the Veil: The Bacchic Mysteries in the Camerino d'Alabastro**

*Hear, O blessed son of Zeus and of two mothers, Bacchos of the vintage, unforgettable seed, many-named and redeeming demon holy offspring of the gods born in secrecy, reveling Bacchos, plump giver of the many joys of fruits which grow well. Mighty and many-shaped god, from the earth you burst forth to reach the wine-press and there become a remedy for man's pain, O sacred blossom! A sorrow-hating joy to mortals, O lovely-haired Epaphian, you are a redeemer and a reveler whose thyrsus drives to frenzy and who is kind-hearted to all, gods and mortals, who see his light. I call upon you now to come, a sweet bringer of fruit.*

— Orphic Hymn<sup>1</sup>

The many diverse offerings of Bacchic imagery were brought together in the painted canvases that once lined the walls of Alfonso d'Este's celebrated Camerino d'Alabastro in Ferrara.<sup>2</sup> In this room one finds at once the birth of a holistic Bacchic imagination and the culmination of it. There are no clichés here yet; only ideas that later become so: the drunken revelers, the sleeping nude, the hoards of putti, the oversexed satyr. Instead, this was the first time that large canvases and an entire room were dedicated to depicting Bacchus and his cohort. With this novelty came original artistic vision, combining antique themes and modern fantasy in a way that had never appeared before. Completed from 1514 to 1525, the canvases included

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<sup>1</sup> Orphic Hymn 50: "To Lysios – Lenaios," in *The Orphic Hymns*, trans. Athanassakis, 67.

<sup>2</sup> The literature on this subject is extensive. Many of the pertinent documents were published by G. Campori, "Tiziano e gli Estensi," *Nuova Antologia di scienze, lettere ed arti* 27 (1874): 581-620, and A. Venturi, *Storia dell'Arte Italiana* (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1928), vol. IX, parts 2 and 3; more recent archival discoveries have been published by Charles Hope, John Shearman, and Dana Goodgal (see below), and Alessandro Ballarin, *Il camerino delle pitture di Alfonso I*, 6 vols. (Cittadella: Bertonecello Artigrafiche, 2002), vol. 3, "Documento per la storia dei camerini di Alfonso (1471-1634)," by Maria Lucia Memegatti.

Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*; Titian's *Worship of Venus, Bacchus and Ariadne*, and *Bacchanal of the Andrians*; and Dosso Dossi's lost "*Bacchanal of Men*" (fig. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4). The series may have included a rendition of *Bacchus Returning from India* by Pellegrino da San Daniele based upon Raphael's drawing of the episode, and all were topped by a running frieze of ten scenes from Virgil's *Aeneid* painted by Dossi (fig. 6.5).<sup>3</sup> Displayed together, this "little room" manifested the quintessence of Bacchic conviviality and associations with love, fecundity, and inspiration.

As a presumed reflection of its ruler-patron, the installation has most often been read according to assumptions about Alfonso's personality, and vice versa (fig. 6.6). The presentation

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<sup>3</sup> The lost painting by Pellegrino and drawing by Raphael of the Indian Triumph might best be imagined by Benvenuto Garofalo's version, commissioned by Ercole II about 1540, and now in Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, which Vasari states was over a chimney-piece in the Palazzo Ducale. Garofalo's painting, in turn, seems to have been the source for Girolamo da Carpi's still extant fresco of the Indian Triumph in the *ante-loggia* to the *giardino pensile* of the Castello in Ferrara, called the Salotta dei Bacchanali. Two other frescoes there included a *Triumph of Ariadne* and a vintage scene. See Frederick Antal, "Observations on Girolamo da Carpi," *Art Bulletin* 30 (1948): 81-103; Eugenio Battisti, "Disegni inediti di Tiziano e lo studio d'Alfonso d'Este," *Commentari* 5 (1954): 191-216; Vasari, "Life of Garofalo and other Lombards," *Le vite*, ed. Milanesi, vol. VI, 467. The drawing may have been preserved in a copy by Raphael's secretary G. F. Penni, and from there in a facsimile engraving by C. M. Metz (1789) in the British Museum. See Charles Hope, "The 'Camerini d'Alabastro' of Alfonso d'Este," *The Burlington Magazine* 113 (1971): part 2, 712-714, and fig. 19. Most scholars have denied that a painting of this subject ended up being included in the final scheme at all, asserting that Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* replaced this scene entirely, although John Shearman insists on the original six subjects thought to have been included, stressing that Titian's painting would not have been redundant to the Indian Triumph ("Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 217-219). Only five paintings, however, were recorded as taken from the Camerino in 1598, when Cardinal Aldobrandini usurped the contents of the room upon the papal takeover of Ferrara, and these were the three Titians, Bellini's *Feast*, and a "pittura con figure d'huomeni et di donne di mano delli dossi" (Bayer, "Dosso's Public," cat. 24, n. 1 and 6). On the Aeneid frieze, see Keith Christiansen, "Dosso Dossi's Aeneas Frieze for Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," *Apollo* 151 (2000): 36-45. Of the ten original oblong canvases, five have been identified (and renamed by Christiansen): *The Sicilian Games* (Private Coll., New York), *The Plague at Pergamea* (Private Coll., New York), *Aeneas in the Elysian Fields* (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa), "*Trojans on the Libyan Coast*" (Trustees of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, the University of Birmingham, England; usually identified as "The Sicilian Games"), and the fragmentary "*Trojans Building or Repairing their Fleet*" (National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection). Dosso's frieze is dated c. 1520-1521; the style of the extant pieces is comparable to that of his *Three Ages of Man*, c. 1515 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), with its bright colors and blurred contours. The Este account books record payments to Dosso and his assistants from 1514 on, but the exact works are not detailed, nor was he a salaried member of the court, although he was later referred to as *familiaris* (Giancarlo Fiorenza, *Dosso Dossi: Paintings of Myth, Magic, and the Antique* [University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008], 14). See also Peter Humfrey's catalogue entry on the Aeneas Frieze in *Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara*, ed. Humfrey and Mauro Lucco (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), cats. 24a, 24b, and 19. For a concise accounting of the extant Camerino paintings, see Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian, vol. 3: The Mythological and Historical Paintings* (London: Phaidon, 1975), 29-41, and cats. 12-15, pp. 143-153.

of Arcadian landscapes, with their mix of Dionysian and Venereal pleasures, are construed as a hedonistic luxury for a hedonistic prince. But this shallow reading unnecessarily limits the meaning of the pictures, which were created within a matrix of advisors, patron, and artists and functioned together with their space and audience to manifest an elaborate poetic texture. Armed with the knowledge of all that Bacchus and his retinue could signify in the Renaissance, it is possible to see the paintings in their full, multivalent complexity. Like the Bacchic mysteries themselves, these were pictures that were intentionally shrouded in veils, their meaning meant to be drawn out slowly and deciphered through conversation stimulated by the convivial atmosphere of the elite chamber. As part of a long tradition of princely studios, this was a space for the “academy of words,” where as one sixteenth-century authoress stated, “the judgment which leads us from first principles to further conclusions renders us singular contentment.”<sup>4</sup>

## THE MAKING OF THE CAMERINO

The room in question was located among a group of “camerini d'alabastro” along the Via Coperta and ravelin (a tower across the moat from the castle): an upper level suite of rooms—a railroad-car-style apartment—connecting the Castello Estense at the north to the Palazzo Ducale at the south, intersecting the main marketing piazzas on either side (fig. 6.7, 8).<sup>5</sup> These isolated

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<sup>4</sup> Louise Labé, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Enzo Guidici (Geneva, 1981), 19 (trans. by Jeremy Warren and Ann Thornton, as quoted in Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*, 92). See also Bullard, “Possessing Antiquity,” 85-111.

<sup>5</sup> The fish market was on one side and the vegetable market was on the other. According to biographer Agostino Mosti: “Il Duca Alfonso lor Padre in quel tempo liberato dalla nimistà, per non dire persecuzione di Giulio 2° [i.e. after death of Pope Julius II in 1513], se ne viveva alquanto più quieto, e perchè abitava certe stanzette piccole sopra la piazza, si dette a fabbricare, aggiungendo a quello alloggiamento altrettanta e più larga fabbrica così bella e ricca, come quello che aveva ingegno e giudicio, e vi spese di gran migliaia di Scudi come si vede oggi aggiungendovi il mazzello, il foro piscatorio, e l'olitorio (perdonimi se use queste parole romane) a tale che negoziando alle finestre voleva quello spasso di vedere gente assai, comperare e vendere...” (as quoted in Angelo Solerti, “La vita ferrarese nella prima metà del secolo decimosesto descritta da Agostino Mosti,” *Atti e memorie della R. deputazione di storia patria per le provincie di Romagna* 10, 3rd ser. [1892]: 168). See also Hope, “The ‘Camerini d'Alabastro’ of Alfonso d'Este,” part I, 646, n. 39. There is no definitive consensus as to which room was precisely the *camerino*

chambers functioned as locales of privileged visitation and erudite conversation, all for the enhancement of Alfonso's prestige. These were spaces where a "grasp of the beauty and grace of objects, both natural and artificial" was prized, "things it is proper for men of distinction to be able to discuss with each other and appreciate."<sup>6</sup> Records of the Munizione (the department for military spending as well as major building projects) show that Alfonso began a remodeling campaign "nella fabbrica sopra la via coperta" ("in the building over the covered street") as soon as he became duke in 1505.<sup>7</sup> This included the construction across the drawbridge from the ravelin to the castle of a long fenestrated gallery, likely intended to house large sculptures, as it did in prototypes seen already in France. In the ravelin itself, a studio, "camerin," and a small chapel were constructed.<sup>8</sup> In 1507 the pilasters and vaults of the Via Coperta (built originally by Ercole I from 1471 to 1477) were enlarged in order to support the weight of the newly planned and expanded rooms above. These rooms were to be paved in marble, or *preda viva* (literally

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holding the Bacchanals, nor how many paintings or on how many walls paintings were hung. Hope hypothesized (slightly revised in his 1987 study in *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*) that the room in question was located adjacent to the duke's bedroom in the Via Coperta itself. Goodgal's contrasting theory puts forth the notion that the room was in the ravelin, on the opposite side (towards the Castello) of the Studio di Marmo ("The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," *Art History* 1, no. 2 [1978]:172), although many have contested this idea on the basis of the smaller dimensions available there, which would have forced some of the paintings to have been above doors or windows (see Bayer, "Dosso's Public"). See also Jadranka Bentini, "From Ercole I to Alfonso I: New Discoveries About the *Camerini* in the Castello Estense of Ferrara," in *Dosso's Fate: Painting and Court Culture in Renaissance Italy*, ed. L. Ciammitti, S. F. Ostrow, and S. Settis (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1998), 359-365.

<sup>6</sup> Pier Paolo Vergerio's *De ingenuis moribus* (1404), as quoted in Baxandall, "Guarino, Pisanello, and Manuel Chrysoloras," 184.

<sup>7</sup> Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 164. A recent reassessment of the building is given by Bentini, "From Ercole I to Alfonso I: New Discoveries about the *Camerini*," 359-365, but she does not posit a location for the *camerino* housing the paintings.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 164-165. This 'camerin,' running east-west through the width of the ravelin, is the room that Goodgal identifies as *the Camerino* containing the Bacchanals. Bentini, in contrast, asserts that these rooms were called merely "anditi" (vestibules) ("From Ercole I to Alfonso I: New Discoveries about the *Camerini*," 362).

“living rock”).<sup>9</sup> Antonio Lombardo evidently completed an extensive cycle of carved marble reliefs based on extant antiquities and ancient *ekphraseis* for one of these rooms, Alfonso’s “Studio di Marmo,” in 1508 (fig. 6.9, 10).<sup>10</sup> The patron’s idealistic aims were explicitly carved into these reliefs, one reading: “In 1508 Alfonso, the third duke of Ferrara, established this for his leisure and tranquility.”<sup>11</sup> Another was inscribed with a quote from Cicero’s *De officiis*: “A ruler is never less idle than when idle, never less alone than when alone.”<sup>12</sup> A third, with words from Seneca, expressed: “He who is indolent should work, while he who works should rest.”<sup>13</sup> Such sentiments attest to the intended use of these spaces—that is, for the chasing away of cares, a family legacy epitomized in the Palazzo Schifanoia and other Estense retreats.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Bentini’s analysis of the evidence revealed by the modern restoration of the building itself determined that Alfonso’s “studio,” that is the Studio di Marmo, was the third, or middle, *camerino* (with the balcony), which had previously been Ercole’s study as well (see fig. 6.8). She records the payment for this room from the Archivio di Stato di Modena, Munizioni e Fabbriche, R.48, 31 December 1507, c. 141f: “Spexa del studio di preda viva che fa fare el Duchia nostro sopra la via coperta” (“Expenses for the marble study that our Duke wishes to build over the covered street”) (“From Ercole I to Alfonso I: New Discoveries about the *Camerini*,” n. 7). Marbles were also brought in from the house of Antonio Lombardo for the walls and floors of the new rooms of the ravelin and *galaria* from July of 1515 through 1516 (Allyson Burgess Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori’: Artistic Patronage at the Court of Alfonso I d’Este, Duke of Ferrara,” Ph.D. diss. [University of California, 2005], 208-209).

<sup>10</sup> The lintel over one of the doorways in this room records the inscription “ALFONSUS III DUX” (Alfonso, the third Duke), meaning Alfonso I. Despite the interruptions of the War of Cambrai from 1509-1510, the “studio di marmo,” as it was called, appears to have been completed during 1511 (Bentini, “From Ercole I to Alfonso I: New Discoveries about the *Camerini*,” 362). Alfonso required Lombardo to establish a workshop in Ferrara, and he commissioned multiple pieces with which to decorate the palace.

<sup>11</sup> Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 29.

<sup>12</sup> *De officiis* III.1: “nunquam se minus otiosum esse, quam cum otiosus, nec minus solum, quam cum solus esset” (Goodgal, “The Camerino of Alfonso I d’Este,” 165 and n. 13).

<sup>13</sup> Seneca, *Moral Epistles*: “et quiescenti agendum est et agenti qui e scendum” (as quoted in Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 29; Wendy Steadman Sheard, “Antonio Lombardo’s Reliefs for Alfonso d’Este’s Studio di Marmi: Their Significance and Impact on Titian,” in *Titian 500*, ed. Manca, 326). In another translation: “He who rests should take action and he who acts should take rest” (see Jaffé, *Titian*, 102).

<sup>14</sup> Nor was Alfonso the first in his family to commission vast decorative schemes: Leonello had a cycle of Muses in his *studiolo* at Belfiore in the early 1440s; Borso decorated the grand hall of the Palazzo Schifanoia with the frescoes of the months in the 1460s; and Ercole had his villa of Belriguardo frescoed by Ercole de’ Roberti with a cycle completed by 1497 that included the story of Cupid and Psyche and a feast of the gods. Ercole also had a studio in the Castello Estense decorated with female nudes by Cosmè Tura, 1477-1481. See Werner Gundersheimer, *Art and Life at the Court of Ercole I d’Este: The ‘De triumphis religionis’ of Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti* (Geneva:



The Via Coperta appears to have been further heightened and widened from 1518 through 1519,<sup>15</sup> making a suite of wider, grander rooms above it that came to be called the Fabbrica dei Camerini, which included the duke's bedroom and, adjacent to this, one of the "camerini d'alabastro."<sup>16</sup> Dosso Dossi would be continuously engaged painting the ceilings of these rooms from 1520 to 1529, including nine *mandorle* with allegories of the senses and a frieze of landscapes for Alfonso's bedroom.<sup>17</sup> These rooms evidently were also paved in marble, which must account for the rooms' nomenclature. Although we do not have a complete inventory of Alfonso's collections,<sup>18</sup> we know that Alfonso had an extensive assortment of coins and medals and, from correspondence, that the "camerini" also contained "vassetti et figurine antiqua et moderne i di marmor i di mettal"<sup>19</sup> and "varie teste antiche e moderne de scolptori, e

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Librairie Droz, 1972); Joseph Manca, "What is Ferrarese about Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*?" in *Titian 500*, ed. Manca, 301-302. Belriguardo, about eight miles southeast of Ferrara, was Lucrezia Borgia's favorite spot.

<sup>15</sup> Hope, "The 'Camerini d'Alabastro' of Alfonso d'Este," part I, 649. In letters recording the lodging of Federico Gonzaga, son of Isabella d'Este, in Ferrara in 1517, he was given rooms in the Via Coperta: "le Camere dorate cum li Camerini supra la Via Coperta" (though at this time *supra*, that is *sopra*, could mean 'beside' or 'nearby' and not 'above'—Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," n. 7).

<sup>16</sup> Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 167. This is the room, running north-south, that Charles Hope identifies as *the* Camerino containing the Bacchanals.

<sup>17</sup> The oval paintings have been cut down into rhomboids. Five are in Galleria Estense, Modena, including an allegory of Drunkenness; another is in Palazzo Cini, Venice, and a last extant panel is in Eger, Hungary. Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 167; Bayer, "Dosso's Public," 41, and cat. 26. This gradually evolving architectural renovation might explain why Titian writes to ask about the lighting in the room for which his painting is destined, even though he had been to Ferrara as a guest of Alfonso in February and March of 1516 and surely seen for himself the room in question. In other words, the room was now built anew, and Titian sought to confirm the window alignment. See Paul Joannides, *Titian to 1518: the Assumption of Genius* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 193.

<sup>18</sup> Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 175, and n. 57; Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," 40 and n. 11. An inventory of Alfonso's gold coins and medals can be found in *Documenti inediti per servire alla storia dei musei d'Italia* (Florence-Rome: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1879), II, 100-155.

<sup>19</sup> Letter of Stazio Gadio in Ferrara to Isabella d'Este, 1 June 1517 (as quoted in Hope, "The 'Camerini d'Alabastro' of Alfonso d'Este," part I, 649).

lo giudizio ornatissimo e col suo bello pavimento. . . .”<sup>20</sup> As in Isabella’s Studiolo, it is likely that the lower portions of the walls were covered by cabinets and that there were tables and boxes for housing portions of Alfonso’s collection, as well as books and musical instruments.<sup>21</sup>

In creating these spaces for his paintings and collectables as a personal retreat, Alfonso was inspired by and even stimulated by competition with his sister Isabella d’Este, the marchioness of Mantua.<sup>22</sup> She had been the first to realize the exceptional idea of installing her collection of antiquities and paintings in a pair of rooms, her Studiolo and Grotta, which were located one atop the other in the Castello in Mantua.<sup>23</sup> She fashioned the Grotta into almost a literal cavern of treasures, like a nymph’s grotto or Etruscan tomb, with a barrel vault and dark, intarsia paneling. In the Studiolo, the walls were dominated by the large canvas paintings she commissioned especially for the space. Alfonso appears to have sought, in his remodeling campaigns, to create a similar, yet even grander, pairing of treasure vault and painting gallery. The Studio di Marmo was radical in its employment of decorative and narrative marbles in the place of the more traditional intarsias, and in “il nostro camerino” he created one of the most ambitious painting commissions of his time.

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<sup>20</sup> Letter of Bernardino de’ Prosperi in Ferrara to Isabella d’Este, 4 October 1518 (as quoted in Hope, “The ‘Camerini d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este,” part I, 650, appendix VI).

<sup>21</sup> Fehl, “The Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 40. Vasari tells us that Titian’s small panel of the *Tribute Money*, 1516 (in Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden), was “nella porta d’un armario” in the Camerino; perhaps this was the cabinet of coins and medals. *Le vite*, ed. Milanesi, vol. VII, 434.

<sup>22</sup> Their father, Ercole d’Este, had also been an avid collector of antiquities and patron of theater, music, painting, and architecture. Their mother, Eleanora d’Aragona, had a series of *camerini* of her own, decorated with paintings by Alfonso’s admired Ercole de’ Roberti, finished only in 1495 after her death. See Liebenwein, *Studiolo*, 81; Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*, 91, n. 88. Eleanora offered a profound model to her children, given her highly educated, independent, and powerful persona. See Werner L. Gundersheimer, “Women, Learning, and Power: Eleonora of Aragon and the Court of Ferrara,” in *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, ed. Patricia H. Lebalme (New York: New York University Press, 1980), 51; Brown, “A Ferrarese Lady,” 63.

<sup>23</sup> Later, her quarters were relocated in the new palace addition, and the rooms were recreated side by side.

Despite a contemporary reputation for brutishness and simplicity, Alfonso had always exerted an independent interest in the arts and crafts.<sup>24</sup> He pursued “lowly” friends in artists, especially Ercole de’ Roberti, and sought to acquire for himself the hands-on skills of preparing pigments, making ceramics, wood turning, and smithing, especially casting cannons.<sup>25</sup> One Renaissance biographer, Paolo Giovio, tells us that Alfonso even had a room set aside as his own workshop, where he made “wooden flutes, tables, and chess pieces, beautiful and ingenious boxes, and many other similar objects.”<sup>26</sup> These practical interests have still been interpreted (as then) as being in opposition to pursuits of refinement and intellectualism; in relation to the visual arts, the cerebral practices of connoisseurship and patronage are deemed the more proper pursuits of the elite classes.<sup>27</sup> Yet Alfonso’s interest in the active side of the arts is a true testament to his

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<sup>24</sup> Nor was he uneducated, but received a typical princely humanist education under Battista Guarino, the son of Guarino Guarini (Firenze, *Dosso Dossi*, 16). One biographer, Bonaventura Pistofilo, describes Alfonso as having an aspect “più tosto maninconico e severo, che lieto e giocondo” (Antonio Cappelli, ed., “Vita di Alfonso I d’Este, duca di Ferrara, Modena e Reggio, scritta da Bonaventura Pistofilo da Pontremoli, segretario di esso duca,” *Atti e memorie delle RR. deputazioni di storia patria per le provincie modenesi e parmensi* 3 [1865]: 491). As a youth in 1494 Alfonso is reported to have run about with the artist Ercole de’ Roberti, carrying out nighttime pranks (for which he was evidently “grounded” by his father, who confined him temporarily to the castle); in 1497 a contemporary diarist, Marin Sanudo, related rumors, which had reached all the way to Venice, that Alfonso had gone wandering the streets nude in broad daylight: “Item, che pochi zorni fa, che don Alfonso fece in Ferar cossa assa’ liziera, che andoe nudo per nudo per Ferara, con alcuni zoveni in compagnia, di mezzo zorno, adeo per Ferara era reputa pocho savio” (“Item: a few days ago don Alfonso did a licentious thing, going stark naked through Ferrara at mid-day in the company of other youths; in Ferrara he is not reputed to be very wise” (Manca, “What is Ferrarese about Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods?*” 305 and n. 24, quoting *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin, et al., 58 vols [Venice, 1879-1903], vol. 1 [1879], col. 706, notice for 6 August 1497; trans. Williams, “Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,” 3, n. 4). That he may have been sexually promiscuous is implied by the reference to him having been plagued by the “mal francese,” that is, syphilis (Manca, 305, n. 25, citing passing references in “Diario ferrarese dall’anno 1409 sino al 1502 di autori incerti,” and in Zambotti’s “Diario ferrarese dall’anno 1476 sino al 1504”, both in Muratori, *RIS*, ed. Giuseppi Pardi [Bologna, 1928], vol. 24, pt. 7, nos. 1, 2).

<sup>25</sup> Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 28.

<sup>26</sup> Giovio, *La vita di Alfonso da Este, duca di Ferrara, scritta da il vescovo Iovio. Tr. in lingua toscana, da Giovanbatista Gelli fiorentino* (Venice: 1553), 16 (quoted in *ibid.*, 28).

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hope’s assessment of Alfonso’s Camerino: “The history of the project does not suggest that Alfonso had any very elaborate iconographic program in mind. This is as one would expect, since, unlike his sister Isabella, he was in no sense an intellectual; the subject-matter of his pictures was certainly less obviously erudite than was the case with the decoration of her Camerino, although this room was no doubt an important prototype for Alfonso’s” (“The ‘Camerini d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este,” part II, 718). Alfonso’s room has even been seen as *anti-studiolo*—as a place of pure recreation (that is, in our modern sense, where recreation means no use of the mind). Stimulated by brief references to Alfonso’s youthful jaunts (likely mere teenage indiscretions), critics have read into the paintings a

love of things visual and his educated eye as well as his curiosity and artistic sensibility, which would in turn shape his pursuit of new commissions.<sup>28</sup> The sophisticated quotations in his Studio di Marmo further attest to his classical learning and his interaction with court humanists such as Celio Calcagnini and Bonaventura Pistofilo, his secretary.<sup>29</sup> Alfonso was far from being the unsophisticated lover of craftsmen that many commentators deem him to be. He clearly had an appreciation for the *vita contemplativa* as a necessary and appropriate complement to the *vita activa* of the ruler—that *otium*, in other words, was vital for effective work.<sup>30</sup>

Alfonso had in his sister an exemplar and spur, not only with her passion for collecting but also as a competitive mirror in which to shape and improve his own techniques and taste.<sup>31</sup> He sought antiquities wherever he could; having traveled to Rome in 1492 and to France, England, and the Netherlands in 1504, he was aware of the treasures to be had. A letter to Isabella from the humanist Mario Equicola remarked that Alfonso “cared only for

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wild, indiscreet, pleasure-loving personality for the ruler. Goodgal, for example, calls Alfonso “no courtier” (“The Camerino of Alfonso I d’Este,” 179). In contrast, Stephen Campbell and Allyson Williams criticize previous scholars for presuming the worst of Alfonso’s motivations (*The Cabinet of Eros*, 254; “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,’” 3, n. 5, and p. 4).

<sup>28</sup> In Rome from July 4 through July 19 in the summer of 1512, hosted by his nephew Federico Gonzaga, Alfonso climbed the scaffolding below the almost-finished Sistine ceiling and was overcome with admiration for Michelangelo. According to one observer: “Et il Signor Ducha ando in sula volta con più persone tandem ogni uno apocho apocho sene vene giu dela vollta et il Signor Ducha resto su con Michel Angello che non si poteva satiare di guardare quelle figure et assai careze li fece di sorte che Sua Ex.cia desiderava chel gie facesse uno quadro: et li fece parlare e proferire dinarij et li ha in promesso de fargiello” (“The Lord Duke remained up there with Michelangelo, for he could not see enough of those figures, he flattered him copiously, and in the end His Lordship requested that he should make him a painting; and he made him discuss it, he offered money, and extracted a promise to do it”) (letter from the Mantuan agent Grossino to Isabella, July 1512 [AG, series E, busta 860, fol. 369], as quoted by Shearman, “Alfonso d’Este’s Camerino,” 213, and n. 37). Instruction in the “practical arts” was increasingly considered a part of the courtly education (Warnke, *The Court Artist*, 39).

<sup>29</sup> Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 28.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>31</sup> Alfonso obviously cared deeply about the comparison with his sister, as he decided to send Dosso and Titian to Mantua in 1519 to look at the paintings she had commissioned for her Studiolo (Firenze, *Dosso Dossi*, 19, citing letter from Girolamo da Sestola to Isabella d’Este, published by Alessandro Luzio, *La galleria dei Gonzaga venduta all’Inghilterra nel 1627-28: Documenti degli archivi de Mantova e Condra* [1913; reprint, Rome: Bardi, 1974], 218).

commissioning pictures and seeing antiquities.”<sup>32</sup> But unlike his sister, Alfonso did not appear to collect exclusively to create a *studiolo*: that is, a chamber of curiosities, defined by its splendid array of diverse objects, from antique gems, coins, and statuettes, to modern artworks and natural wonders.<sup>33</sup> Though interested in collecting in general (as any good prince was), Alfonso restricted his focus in the Camerino to creating a picture gallery, more akin to the installation of Isabella’s large canvases in her Studiolo.<sup>34</sup> But unlike Perugino’s and Mantegna’s overtly didactic and moralistic mythological paintings created for Isabella in the later 1490s and early 1500s, the paintings commissioned for Alfonso’s Camerino d’Alabastro explored a more diverting image of the antique gods. Isabella’s paintings, including the *Battle of Love and Chastity*, the *Expulsion of the Vices*, and the *Coronation of the Lady*, were a panegyric to her eminent virtue; they articulated the courtly ideals of *cortesía* and gentility, of cultivated behavior and controlled presentation.<sup>35</sup> Even in the painting of *Comus* by Lorenzo Costa, depicting the

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<sup>32</sup> Equicola, from his letter from Rome to Isabella d’Este, 16 April 1513: “Al presente non attende [Alfonso] ad altro che ad far fare picture et vedere antichità” (as quoted in Shearman, “Alfonso d’Este’s Camerino,” 213 and n. 38). See also Jaffé, *Titian*, 101.

<sup>33</sup> Isabella always had an eye to the “completion” of her Studiolo and Grotta, that is, to satisfying her requirements for a collection which suitably represented all appropriate categories. The notion of finishing a *studiolo* is revealed in a letter from Isabella’s agent Ludovico Canossa in 1505, in which he wrote that she should come to Rome, where “there are now excellent opportunities for acquiring antiques, since modern objects are now fetching a higher price. Your Excellency must not let this opportunity slip through your fingers if you desire, in one fell swoop, to complete the Grotta and the Studiolo” (as quoted and translated in Clifford M. Brown, “The Grotta of Isabella d’Este,” Part II, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 91 [Feb. 1978]: 75).

<sup>34</sup> The walls of Alfonso’s Camerino would have been filled by the canvases, their frames, the ten oblong canvases of Dossi, and presumably carved, white marbles—giving the name of *alabastro* to the room. There may have been room at the bottom of the walls or below the windows for cabinets, tables, chests, or other containers for precious objects. Likely the room had a few chairs, for honored guests, while the rest of visitors would stand, as in a museum, *facendo la bella figura*, admiring the paintings and enjoying the conversation and music and, perhaps, a nice glass of wine. Inventories of movable goods in the rooms of the Ravelin and Via Coperta made in 1543 and 1559 include a “primo camerino adorato” with coins, antiquities, and curiosities, and a “chamerino minor” with bronze statuettes above a cornice, but do not mention the Bacchanals (Beverly Louise Brown, “On the Camerino,” in *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, 45).

<sup>35</sup> The paintings in Isabella’s Studiolo were as follows: Mantegna, *Parnassus*, 1492-1497, and *Minerva Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, 1497; Lorenzo Costa, *Coronation of a Lady* (or *Garden of Peaceful Arts*), 1505, and *Comus*, 1507-1515; and Perugino, *Battle of Love and Chastity*, 1497-1505. Isabella had been in

pleasures supervised by the god of revelry, love is a civilizing force. Comus is “identified with *comitas*, the refined sociability of the courtier, refined because the courtier has made himself the subject of Amor.”<sup>36</sup> These were necessary messages to convey for any woman, but especially so perhaps for Isabella to balance the audacious nature of her collecting passion and her corollary sense of pride. As Equicola had warned in the last book of his *Libro de natura de amore* (1525), “women... have to be careful of the delicate nature of their honour.”<sup>37</sup>

While his powerful, ambitious sister was compelled to reiterate womanly virtues of chastity, loyalty, and beauty, Alfonso was less bound by discretion and more at liberty to assert

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negotiations with Bellini for an allegorical painting since 1496, yet had to settle finally for a small religious scene. Later, c. 1528ff, two works by Correggio were added, traditionally called *Allegory of Vice* and *Allegory of Virtue*, Louvre, Paris. Stephen Campbell renames them *Allegory of the Passions* and *Allegory of Philosophy*. See Egon Verheyen, *The Paintings in the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New York: New York University Press, 1971); Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*. Like Alfonso, Isabella did try to hire the best painters of the day, seeking out works (and failing) from Raphael, Fra Bartolomeo, Leonardo, and Michelangelo, as well as (successfully) from Mantegna (court artist to the Gonzaga), Lorenzo Costa (his replacement), Perugino, and Giovanni Bellini. And she also employed her court humanist, Paride da Ceresara, to compose some of the detailed programs for the paintings, instructions which some of the artists found inhibitive at best. Paride's instructions for the *Battle of Love and Chastity* were recorded in a notarial contract of 19 January 1503. See Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*, doc. 76, pp. 135-138. Perugino she rebuked for making Venus nude, since changing just one figure from the program, she said, would change the meaning of the whole (ibid., doc. 81). This reaction was not necessarily one of prudishness, as is generally assumed, but strictly one of allegorical interpretation, since as we see in Titian's *Sacred and Profane Venus*, it is the nude Venus who is the heavenly one—the point being in Perugino's painting, in contrast, to show the earthly Venus in all her vengery. And Isabella was not averse to having other nude, or even sensual works of art in her collection (though perhaps not to the same extent as her brother). She owned a relief of two dancing Fauns, asked for a sculpture of a child John the Baptist from Antico to be nude or with revealing drapery, and possessed another sculpture of a satyr fondling a nymph. Her painting of *Comus*, moreover, included figures identified as Bacchus and Ariadne, showing that Alfonso was not the only one interested in the theme. As Campbell writes: “Scholars are generally not disposed to thinking of Isabella as being interested in the myths of Bacchus with their connotations of ecstasy and excess; such imagery is typically seen as the preserve of her ‘libertine’ brother Alfonso. Hence, ...most scholars have been slow to recognize that the *Comus* is a painting concerned with the myth of Bacchus and Ariadne.” Bacchus appears there as a voluptuous contrast to heavenly love (*The Cabinet of Eros*, 208). Her commissions from Correggio, moreover, have a decidedly sensual appearance. See J. M. Fletcher, “Isabella d'Este, Patron and Collector,” in *Splendours of the Gonzaga*, ed. David Chambers and Jane Martineau (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1981), 52, 56.

<sup>36</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 219.

<sup>37</sup> Stephen Kolsky, “‘The Good Servant’: Mario Equicola. Court and Courtier in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy,” *The Italianist* 6 (1986): 54.

his virility and authority in addition to his magnanimous rule and righteous nobility.<sup>38</sup> His relative freedom within a moral code only parallel to but not equal to a woman's allowed him to display the unique access a man had to pleasure. In his *camerini*—spaces of retreat from the masculine *vita activa*—Alfonso played up a spirit of robust enthusiasm, where power, beauty, and pleasure could all be unleashed. But as the ruling duke, he had also to be more conscious of his own mythical self-creation. Establishing such lavishly decorated and appointed rooms was an acknowledged way to enhance his prestige and authority. This was a specific sort of virtuous display, which in 1498 Giovanni Pontano legitimized as *splendore*: an interiorized, domesticated complement to external, public *magnificentia*.<sup>39</sup> The chosen subjects of the paintings, in other words, must have been understood as vehicles for the positive self-projection of the ruler.

While Isabella tied herself to the complex moralizing allegories of her humanist courtiers, Alfonso rivaled his sister with more “authentic” programs, not from “mere” humanist interpolators, but from the original antique authors themselves: Philostratus, Ovid, and Catullus. Of course, Alfonso was as conditioned as Isabella to kowtow to the eminent intellect of courtier-humanists, and went so far as to borrow Equicola for the task of composing his program.<sup>40</sup> It

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<sup>38</sup> Unlike other aristocratic collectors of the early sixteenth century, Alfonso never let himself be depicted in quiet contemplation, fondling a shard of antique sculpture as in Lotto's portrait of Andrea Odoni. His portraits were instead of a regal, proud ruler and warrior, his glinting armor or sword and expansive body overwhelming the viewer with his magnificence.

<sup>39</sup> Pontano, *De splendore*, cited by Evelyn Welch, *Art and Society in Italy 1350-1500* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 297.

<sup>40</sup> See below, and Sherman, “Alfonso d'Este's Camerino,” 213. Isabella's programs appear to have been inflexibly restrictive, however; she told Perugia not to add anything “of his own invention” and Giovanni Bellini balked at the narrow instructions. Pietro Bembo reported the artist's qualms in a letter to Isabella d'Este, 1 January 1505: “It will be necessary that the invention that Your Excellency writes to me... be accommodated to the fantasy of him who has to paint it: ...very precise terms do not suit his style, accustomed as he says always to roam at will in his paintings” (“La invenzione che mi scrive V. S. che io truovi al disegno, bisognerà che l'accomodi alla fantasia di lui chel ha a fare: il quale ha piacere che molto signati termini non si diano al suo stile, uso come dice di sempre vagare a sua voglia nelle pitture”) (as quoted in Rona Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987], 268, doc. 49). Isabella was so eager that she eventually relented to Bellini that “we will leave the poetic invention [*inventiva poetica*] for you to make up if you do not want us to give it to you” (letter of Isabella to Bellini of 19 October 1505, as quoted in Chambers, *Patrons and Artists in the Italian Renaissance*, 130, doc. 71).

was a classic myth of magnificence that the patron was responsible for the invention; humanists remained in the background, behind a fictive screen, partaking in this aura of reputed grandeur.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, it is apparent that Alfonso felt the desire to go further than Isabella toward reenacting something antique, less encumbered by contemporary mores; in other words, to find something more authentic by recreating antique paintings themselves. Even more, there may have been an impulse to emulate the very image of the ancient gallery described by Philostratus, the suburban villa “resplendent with all the marbles favoured by luxury, ... particularly splendid by reason of the panel-paintings set in the walls, paintings which I thought had been collected with real judgment, for they exhibited the skill of very many painters.”<sup>42</sup> In a culture that cultivated competitive magnificence, what could be more noble and admirable than to attempt to recreate Philostratus’ ancient picture gallery or bring to life Ovid’s texts? As we shall see, the very choice of the Bacchic subject matter for this cycle may have been motivated by this interest in origins and in finding something authentically antique.

In Alfonso’s embellishment of his *studiolo-cum-painting-gallery*, the sensuality that first meets the eye may not represent the whole story. The abundance of flesh and luxurious tactility in the paintings easily elicit the judgment that Alfonso’s Camerino was all about pleasure of a vapid sort.<sup>43</sup> But the paintings must be seen within an evolution of the chamber painting, in general, and of mythological and Bacchic painting in particular. Alfonso may have managed his

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<sup>41</sup> Charles Hope, “Artists, Patrons, and Advisors in the Italian Renaissance,” in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, ed. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 293-343; also Warnke, *The Court Artist*.

<sup>42</sup> Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* I, trans. Fairbanks, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Often it is supposed that Alfonso indulged his intemperate urges in the safety of a Bacchic retreat, with the dalliances of the gods depicted on the walls. Catherine King has written that “[t]he powerful man could flout the moral conventions of his day in the safety of *all’antica* style, and in the licensed area of a collector’s piece. A woman, no matter how high her status, could not” (“Medieval and Renaissance Matrons, Italian-Style,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 55, no. 3 [1992]: 391).



own project with a lighter touch than his sister's, but the final result is not due to him alone. The intervention of humanists added to the obscure allusions and complex overlapping of themes observed in the paintings.<sup>44</sup> The paintings are neither strict illustrations of ancient *ekphraseis* nor traditional *psychomachie*; they resist allegorical dissection, unlike the flat, labeled paintings common earlier. In the intervening decades, artists had gradually moved away from depicting a static, sarcophagus-like space with its frieze of action. Unlike Perugino's stick-like figures and literal allegories, or Mantegna's labeled personifications (or even, Botticelli's complex, Neoplatonic mythographies, or Piero di Cosimo's jumbled, awkward transliterations), Titian creates from an entirely new imagination. He closes his eyes to tired metaphors and overused motifs. He fills the canvas instead with bursting color and a novel use of space and directionality. He improvises on ancient texts (and the programs made from them) rather than clings to them, and in so doing allows his vision to reflect contemporary Venetian and Ferrarese literary culture. Especially by the time he paints his last piece for the Camerino, the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, the emerging pastoral voice of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Sannazaro rings through his landscapes filled with rustic, urban, and mythological denizens.

### *THE FEAST OF THE GODS*

In 1511, Mario Equicola, Isabella's favored court humanist, wrote his mistress from Ferrara explaining that: "The Lord Duke [Alfonso] wants me to stay eight days: the reason is the

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<sup>44</sup> Influence can be detected not only from Equicola but also from Battista Guarino (who edited and wrote a commentary on Catullus' *Carmina*, published in 1521 and dedicated to Alfonso) and Ludovico Ariosto (whose *Orlando Furioso* Alfonso read in draft form in 1509 before it was published in 1516). See Bayer, "Dosso's Public," 36-37; Fiorenza, *Dosso Dossi*, 18. Not only was Alfonso a sophisticated and educated patron, but also, regardless of his intellect, the courtly tradition and very understanding of pictorial invention at this time would have behooved the participation of a literary advisor. The involvement of this third person was elemental and not a sign of weakness or meddling on the part of the patron. Alfonso surrounded himself with such thinkers and writers, including Celio Calcagnini, Antonio Musa Brasavola, Nicolò Leonicensi, Bonaventura Pistofilo, and Matteo Maria Boiardo, among others.

painting of a room in which will go six fables or histories; I have already found them and written them down.”<sup>45</sup> Given Alfonso’s tenuous political situation prior to the death of Julius II in February of 1513, it is clear that the commissions did not materialize until after this point. By 1514, with the delivery of Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*, things were under way, so that in 1515, Isabella complained to her agent in Ferrara that she wanted her copy of Philostratus (translated by Demetrio Mosco, or Demetrius Moscus) back, lent these many years to her brother; “Mario [Equicolo] says he saw it in the Duke’s *studio*, and in his own hands,” she wrote to Girolamo Ziliolo.<sup>46</sup> Clearly, besides her obvious annoyance, she felt that Alfonso should no longer have need of the text itself, his program evidently having already been devised and sufficiently outlined.

The first painting completed for “il nostro camerino” was Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*, signed and dated by the aging artist in 1514.<sup>47</sup> The subject matter stemmed from Ovid’s *Fasti*, which, in the context of explaining the derivation of the name of the Agonal festival held on January 9 with its traditional sacrifice of sheep, tells of the origin of the sacrifice of the sow to Ceres, the he-goat to Bacchus, and the ass to Priapus, “the stiff guardian of the countryside.”<sup>48</sup> It

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<sup>45</sup> “Al S.r. Duca [Alfonso] piace che reste gui octo di: la causa è la pictura di una camera nella quale vanno sei fabule overo historie. Già le ho trovate et datele in scritto” (as quoted in Shearman, “Alfonso d’Este’s Camerino,” 213, and n. 35). Knowledge of this document refutes Wind’s theory that Alfonso somehow garnered Isabella’s original commission to Bellini (*Bellini’s Feast of the Gods*, 25-26, 54-55).

<sup>46</sup> December 12, 1515: “[...] [G]ià più anni, prestassimo al Sig. Duca una certa operetta de Philostrato che tracta de pictura, quale noi havevamo facta tradurre dal greco per Mes. Demetrio [Mosco] abitante qua; et acadendone ora bisogno di vedere alcune cose che gli sono scritte dentro, pregamovi vogliati vedere di farla ritrovare et mandarcela similmente col consentimento del predicto Sig. Duca. Mario [Equicola] nostro dice haverla vista nel studio di S. Ex. et in sue proprie mani” (as quoted in Shearman, “Alfonso d’Este’s Camerino,” 213 and n. 34). See also Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, 40, n. 56. Isabella had to repeat her request March 9, 1516. Mosco’s translation is preserved in a manuscript (Ms. Italien 1091) in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

<sup>47</sup> The artist was paid for the painting on 14 November 1514. See Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,’” 207, n. 23.

<sup>48</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* I.349-360: “The first to joy in blood of greedy sow was Ceres, who avenged her crops by the just slaughter of the guilty beast; for she learned that in early spring the grain, milky with sweet juices, had been rooted up by the snout of bristly swine. The swine was punished: terrified by her example, billy-goat, you should have

was during the Greek “feast of ivy-berried Bacchus,” held every third *bruma* (mid-winter), Ovid explains, that Priapus became enamored of a sleeping nymph, Lotis, only to have his awkward attempt at rape disrupted by the braying of Silenus’ ass. Ovid writes:<sup>49</sup>

Thither came [to the feast] ...the gods who wait upon Lyaeus and all the jocund crew, Pans and young amorous Satyrs, and goddesses that haunt rivers and lonely wilds. Thither, too, came old Silenus on an ass with hollow back, and the Crimson One [Priapus] who by his lewd image scares the timid birds. They lit upon a dingle meet for joyous wassails, and there they laid them down on grassy beds. Liber bestowed the wine: each had brought his garland: a stream supplied water in plenty to dilute the wine. Naiads were there, some with flowing locks uncombed, others with tresses neatly bound... another through her ripped robe reveals her breast; another bears her shoulder.... So some in Satyrs kindle amorous fires, and some in thee, whose brows are wreathed with pine [Pan]. Thou too, Silenus, burnest for the nymphs, insatiate lecher! ’Tis wantonness alone forbids thee to grow old. But crimson Priapus, glory and guard of gardens, lost his heart to Lotis.... ’Twas night, and wine makes drowsy, so here and there they lay overcome with sleep. Weary with frolic, Lotis, the farthest of them all, sank to her rest on the grassy ground under the maple boughs. [...] When [Priapus] reached the lonely pallet of the snow-white nymph, he drew his breath so warily that not a sound escaped. [...] He joyed, and drawing from off her feet the quilt, he set him, happy lover! to snatch the wished-for hour. But lo, Silenus saddle-ass, with raucous weasand braying, gave out an ill-timed roar! The nymph in terror started up, pushed off Priapus, and flying gave the alarm to the whole grove.... The author of the hubbub paid for it with his life, and he is now the victim dear to the Hellespontine god.<sup>50</sup>

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spared the vine-shoot. Watching a he-goat nibbling at a vine somebody vented his ill-humour in these words: ‘Pray gnaw the vine, thou he-goat; yet when thou standest at the altar, the vine will yield something that can be sprinkled on thy horns.’ The words came true. Thy foe, Bacchus, is given up to thee for punishment, and wine out-poured is sprinkled on his horns” (trans. Frazer, 27). A rival story, *Fasti* VI.319-348, recounts a similar tale of Priapus’ love for Vesta, and the same sad end for Silenus’ inopportune donkey. This latter account is of a gathering in honor of Cybele, “whose brow is crowned with a coronet of towers,” and since this goddess is absent from Bellini’s painting, the earlier tale is more likely to be that depicted.

<sup>49</sup> Earlier, in *Fasti* I.163-164, Ovid asks the god of January (Janus, guardian of thresholds) why the new year begins in the cold, dark winter, and not in the midst of the warm rebirth of Spring. Janus explains, giving the meaning of *bruma*: “‘Midwinter is the beginning of the new sun and the end of the old one. Phoebus and the year take their start from the same point’” (trans. Frazer, 13). On January 10, *Fasti* I.459-460, Ovid writes: “The morrow marks midwinter; what remains of winter will be equal to what has gone before” (trans. Frazer, 35). Therefore, mid-winter (the solstice) fell on January 11 in their calendar.

<sup>50</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* I.391-440, trans. Frazer, 29-33. A very brief mention of this encounter appears in *Metamorphoses* IX.347-348, in which Lotis is changed into a water-lotus tree. A blending of these tales appears in the illustrated *Metamorphoses* published in Venice in 1509.

Giovanni Bellini took up this prescribed subject (despite having previously demonstrated reluctance to make a piece for Isabella's Studiolo), and created a monumental vision of a gathering of rather mundane-looking deities (fig. 6. 11).<sup>51</sup>

Bellini may have claimed to have been uncomfortable with detailed instructions, or of competing with his son-in-law Mantegna in things mythological, but in this work the elderly master proved himself capable of exploring a sensuous and pagan theme (fig. 6.12, 13).<sup>52</sup> As we saw in Chapter Three, his blatantly aroused Priapus approaching the sleeping Lotis on the right of the canvas participates in the tradition of ithyphallic satyrs encountering sleeping nymphs.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This mundanity led scholars to postulate that the literary source was actually Giovanni de' Bonsignori's fourteenth-century Italian translation of the *Metamorphoses*, his *Ovidio volgarizzato*, published in 1497, in which the events described by Ovid are interpreted as metaphors for godly acts played out in actuality by human beings and not by gods at all. See Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, followed by Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, and then Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," 46ff. In addition, early radiographs of the painting showed alterations to the figures and their costumes, which led scholars to guess that Bellini's originally more "prudish" ladies were changed into nude goddesses by a later hand. However, modern x-rays and analysis have indicated that such superficial changes were compatible with Bellini's normal practice, and that he likely "undressed" his divine characters himself (David Bull and Joyce Plesters, "'The Feast of the Gods': Conservation, Examination, and Interpretation," in *Studies in the History of Art*, 40 [Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1990]). For Isabella's long struggle to attain a work from Bellini, see Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 62, 74, 102, 284; Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals*, 11-19.

<sup>52</sup> Bellini, of course, painted other secular works, such as the *Woman at her Toilet* and the panels of the *restello*, an elaborate, carved mirror and vanity stand, from the late 1480s or early 1490s. One of those panels (Accademia, Venice) depicts a nude Bacchus riding upon a small chariot drawn by three putti. See Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, 224-237, fig. 171. Edgar Wind interpreted that scene and the four others believed to have accompanied it as allegories for the benefits of good fortune over ill fame. The Bacchus scene would thereby show "Bonus eventus" (*comes virtutis*), meaning "Bacchus in triumph refers to the success of men who follow moral excellence." Wind cites Alciati's *Emblemata* (1542), which include a depiction of *Bonus eventus*, shown as a male figure with a sheath of wheat, a cup, and a vine and grape wreath on his head and around his waist; he represents the good fortune of man, as characterized in Pliny's *Natural History* XXXVI, 23. See Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, 48, n. 14. Cf. Rona Goffen's reading of this Bacchus as a representation of sloth and the temptations of the flesh contrasted with the virtue of the soldier depicted in front of him. She cites the *De virtutibus* of the Venetian humanist Giovanni Caldiera, who describes *Accidia*, or Sloth, as being indolent and useless, and encourages instead "ascetic self-denial" represented in the figure of the soldier as "Perseverance" (*Giovanni Bellini*, 235, citing Margaret L. King, "Personal, Domestic, and Republican Values in the Moral Philosophy of Gionanni Caldiera," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28 [1975]: 546).

<sup>53</sup> See also Williams, "Le donne, i cavalieri, l'arme, gli amori," 231-232. Wind postulates the influence of Pietro Bembo on the *Feast*, having participated in Isabella's earlier negotiations with Bellini, perhaps having even composed an *invenzione* for that hoped-for painting (*Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, 32). Bembo was involved with the Aldine press, which published the *Priapea* in 1514.

While the mythological characters are not nude or as abandoned as they often are in contemporary works, Bellini's figures still participate fully in the erotic and humorous exchange, including having Apollo stand up his *lira da braccio* behind and in between Priapus' legs so that its neck points to the latter's similarly erect phallus.<sup>54</sup> The nymph rests in a rather old-fashioned sleeping pose, sitting up with her head in her hand, yet her snowy gown slips from her shoulders to provide just enough flesh to make her "antique." The amorous couple sitting at the center act out another erotic vignette in the midst of the party: his hand slips between her thighs while she has been nibbling a quince, a symbol of matrimony and a celebrated aphrodisiac and fertility enhancer (fig. 6.14).<sup>55</sup> Platina wrote in his *De honesta voluptate* that when eaten at the start of a meal, quinces "induce appetite and, ... defend the head from drunkenness."<sup>56</sup> Ovid did not

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<sup>54</sup> The *lira da braccio* had come to be the identifying instrument for Apollo (and Orpheus) by 1500. Emmanuel Winternitz, "A *Lira da Braccio* in Giovanni Bellini's *The Feast of the Gods*," *Art Bulletin* 28 (1946): 114-115.

<sup>55</sup> The fondling gesture repeats that found in the fresco of April in the Este's Palazzo Schifanoia, and would have been immediately recognizable. The identification of this amorous couple as Pluto and Persephone was made by Jaynie Anderson, "The Provenance of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* and a New/Old Interpretation," in *Titian 500*, ed. Manca, 273-274; followed by Virginia Woods Callahan, "Alciati's Quince-Eating Bride, and the Figure at the Center of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*," *Artibus et historiae* 18, no. 35 (1997): 73-79; Williams, "'Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,'" 230; Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 55. Pluto was a rustic god, whose pitchfork can be seen lying on the ground in front of him; he has been called Neptune, the agricultural tool interpreted as a trident. His female partner has been harder to identify, some calling her Cybele (Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, relating to *Fasti* VI.319-348, Feast of Cybele), Amphitrite (with Neptune; David Alan Brown, "The *Pentimenti* in the *Feast of the Gods*"), Pomona (with Neptune; Holberton, "The *Pastorale* or *Fête champêtre* in the Early Sixteenth Century," in *Titian 500*, a pairing for which he admits there is no mythological basis), or Terra (with Neptune; Colantuono, "*Dies Alcyoniae*"). With her identification of the god as Pluto, Anderson asserts the goddess must be his half-yearly consort, Proserpina (Persephone). Colantuono recognized the quince and its significance ("*Dies Alcyoniae*"). A woodcut in Alciati's *Emblematum liber* (composed in 1520-1521, published 1531) illustrating *The Quince Tree* (Cotonea) attests to its epithalamic character. Members of the court were not averse to sexual innuendo or jesting, having enjoyed the bawdy productions of Plautus as well as the writing of Antonio Cornazano, who had been a member of Ercole's household before his death in 1500 and whose *Proverbii in facetie* was published in 1503, detailing the origins of certain idioms in bizarre forms of intercourse (Smet, "Innocence Lost, or The Implications of Reading and Writing [Neo-Latin] Prose Fiction," 98, n. 31).

<sup>56</sup> Platina (Bartolomeo Sacchi), *De honesta voluptate et valetudine*, section II.6, "On Quinces": "...sumpta caput ab ebretate defendunt" (*Platina On Right Pleasure and Good Health: A Critical Edition and Translation of De Honestae Voluptate et Valetudine*, ed. and trans. Mary Ella Milham [Tempe, AZ: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998], 145). Platina (1421-1481) studied at the Casa Giocosa in Mantua, and then became close with the Gonzaga family. He followed Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga to Rome in 1461, where he mixed with the Accademia Pomponiana. His *De honesta voluptate* was written 1464-1465, and first printed in 1470.

specify the names of the gods attending the feast, so the painter and his advisor playfully disposed attributes to identify their selective pantheon. I propose that this pair represent Vertumnus and his wife Pomona: he, a rustic god of the seasons to whom first fruits are dedicated, including grapes and pears seen in the bowl before him, and she, a nymph of fruit-bearing trees and gardens.<sup>57</sup> He attempted to woo her in many forms, including that of a rustic reaper, explaining the inclusion of his pitchfork; Vertumnus could also be the god of fowling, recalled by the pheasant in the tree.<sup>58</sup> Pomona attempted to avoid the advances of peasants and sylvan creatures, including satyrs, Pan, Silvanus, and Priapus, “whose scythes and penis are a sight that terrifies all thieves.”<sup>59</sup> A pertinent bit of evidence for this identification is found in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, where the pair appear born upon an “aged carriage drawn by four horned fauns” that proceeds to the altar of Priapus, with its reliefs “Sacred to Flowering Spring,” “Yellow Harvest,” “Autumn Vintage,” and “Winter Winds” (fig. 6.15, 16, 17).<sup>60</sup> This triumph occurs, appropriately enough, in between the stories of Semele (and the birth of Bacchus) and Priapus; in the *Feast of the Gods*, the couple likewise appear in between an infant Bacchus and Priapus. In the woodcut, Vertumnus appears dusky and bearded, in simple garb, and Pomona holds a cornucopia and wand of fruits. The text says that the inscription on the sign-board carried by one of the accompanying nymphs reads: “I offer to my worshippers wholeness of

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<sup>57</sup> Propertius, *Elegies* IV.2.

<sup>58</sup> Propertius also tells us that Vertumnus could drink with the best of them: “[W]hen the drinking crown’s put on, / you’ll shout that the wine has gone to my head. / Put a miter on my head, I’ll steal the look of Iacchus...” (*Elegies* IV.2.29-31, trans. Katz, 351).

<sup>59</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XIV.640, trans. Mandelbaum, 500: “quique deus fures vel falce vel inguine terret, ut poterentur ea.” Cf. trans. Miller, 345: “that god who warns off evil-doers with his sickle and ugly shape.”

<sup>60</sup> *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* fols. m4-m6, pp. 190-195. This is one of six triumphs that Polifilo and Polia witness, each celebrating carnal love: Europa and the bull, Leda and the swan, Danaë and the shower of gold, Semele and the thunderbolt, Vertumnus and Pomona, and then, after passing the altar and sacrifice of the ass to Priapus and also the temple of Venus and a sacrifice in her honor, finally the triumph of Cupid.

body, health and lasting strength, the chaste delights of the table and blessed security of soul”—a message that aptly captures the spirit of Bellini’s painting and Alfonso’s aims.<sup>61</sup> It is noteworthy, also, that Colonna described the god of Autumn, though not named, as “a nude infant crowned with clusters of grapes, laughing lasciviously.” While Bellini does not show his Bacchus nude, he does indeed show him as an otherwise inexplicably infantile god (fig. 6.18).

Bellini’s large-scale canvas was the first to tackle such a blatantly erotic, and yet classical, Bacchic subject matter in a monumental easel painting.<sup>62</sup> A novel, secular pictorial genre had been emerging all around Bellini at this time. His younger rivals (and pupils) Giorgione and Titian had been exploring the capacity of painting to depict the invisible and to bring life to a dream of Arcadian existence.<sup>63</sup> In his Dresden *Venus*, Giorgione had brought the sleeping nude into the local landscape; in his *Tempesta* he incongruously placed a semi-nude nursing woman near a soldier against a storm-struck *terra firma* backdrop. Titian’s *Concert Champêtre* had located urban youths of the Veneto in an idyllic countryside visited by nymphs, the new muses of a pastoral vision. For the first time in his career, Giovanni Bellini dabbled in the large-scale pastoral vision of this next generation, placing a race of mythical denizens amidst a recognizable landscape, like a gathering of earthly peasants celebrating a picnic. An eclogue by Pomponius Guaricus, published in a pastoral anthology in Florence in 1504, evoked a similar atmosphere.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *Hyperotomachia Poliphili*, fol. m4, trans. Godwin, 191.

<sup>62</sup> See Manca regarding the contemporary rarity of large-scale mythological painting then in Venice (“What is Ferrarese about Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*?” 305).

<sup>63</sup> See Rosand, “Giorgione, Venice, and the Pastoral Vision,” 20-81.

<sup>64</sup> An earlier collection of vernacular eclogues, printed with an Italian translation of Virgil’s *Eclogues* by Bernardino Pulci, had been published in Florence in 1482, and claimed precedence in the revival of the classical pastoral mode. Sannazaro’s *Arcadia*, written in the 1480s and published in 1504 was, of course, central in this genre. See Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 98.

Then equally the nymphs of the mountains, streams, and woods came all, all with ears pricked up. Phoebus the father of the Eonides was there, Bacchus was there, and old man Silenus carried on his trotting ass, and woodland satyrs and the fauns, the country gods. All were spread all around, there was no protocol of position. Each one made a seat for himself on the grass.<sup>65</sup>

This Arcadia was an “other” world, “highly pleasing, and full of mountains, meadows, and flowing streams,” whether it was understood as an historic or an imaginary place.<sup>66</sup> Just as such poems were intended to be read for all their layers of nuance and allusion (with their recreation and reuse of past poetry), so too were painted pastorals to be viewed through multiple levels of meaning.<sup>67</sup> The painted pastoral, with its lack of narrative and emphasis on mood and sensibility, lent itself to subjective interpretation, further elevating this art to the status of *poesia*.<sup>68</sup>

### THE WORSHIP OF VENUS

The subsequent evolution of Alfonso’s Camerino took several truncated turns. While Bellini’s contribution was being finished, Alfonso commissioned two other great artists for paintings, in an effort to have a diverse representation of the most prominent artists of the

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<sup>65</sup> “Tum pariter montis, fluvii, nemorisque puellae / advenere omnes, arrectis auribus omnes. / Adfuit Aeonidum Phoebus pater, adfuit Euan, / Silenusque senex celeri provectus asello / et satyri silvani et agrestia numina fauni. / Interfusi omnes passim, locus ordine nulli. / Graminea sibi quisque torum componit in herba” (as quoted by Williams, “Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,” 232; Holberton, “The *Pastorale* or *Fête champêtre* in the Early Sixteenth Century, 247).

<sup>66</sup> Francesco Sansovino’s *Discorso sopra le Rime di Sannazaro* (Venice, 1561), quoted in Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 115.

<sup>67</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 116: “The proper audience of the *Arcadia* . . . must bring to the text a double perspective allowing the pastoral tradition and the pastoral landscape to merge into one.”

<sup>68</sup> See Rosand, “*Ut Pictor Poeta*,” 527-546.



moment.<sup>69</sup> From Fra Bartolomeo in Florence he solicited a *Worship of Venus*, based on an antique painting described by Philostratus the Elder.<sup>70</sup> From Raphael in Rome he ordered an *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, a subject derived from Ovid's *Fasti* III and Lucian's *Dialogues of the Gods*.<sup>71</sup> When Raphael learned that the study he sent to Ferrara was mocked up by a court artist named Pellegrino da San Daniele, he quickly let Alfonso know that he no longer had any intention of producing the piece and demanded a new theme.<sup>72</sup> Replacement instructions, for a

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<sup>69</sup> The artists themselves appear to have been conscious of having their work be placed “in comparison” with others. See Goodgal, “Titian repairs Bellini,” in *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, 17. Alfonso had also attempted in 1512 to commit Michelangelo to create a work for him. This lifelong effort, which appears to have elicited the artist's painting of *Leda and the Swan* (lost), was ultimately unsuccessful, since the tempestuous Michelangelo chose not to relinquish his work to the duke.

<sup>70</sup> *Imagines*, I.vi. The particular fascination with *ekphraseis* (from which at least three of the paintings derived) was not itself unusual. A classical education relied on the *ekphrasis* as an important pedagogical tool for training in rhetoric. In Ferrara, this interest may have been particularly fueled by the long line of scholars interested in the form, revived in Italy under the guidance Manuel Chrylosoras. Guarino da Verona studied under Chrylosoras and then taught his ideas at the University of Ferrara as well as to Leonello d'Este; his son Battista Guarino was a tutor of Alfonso, and likely passed on this interest to the duke. Angelo Decembrio and Ulisse degli Aleotti of Ferrara also practiced composing their own *ekphraseis*. See Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 78-96; Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,’” 221. That Fra Bartolomeo should have been chosen—and willing—to fulfill this commission is surprising, given his reputation for strictly religious painting. An adherent of the views of Savonarola, Fra Bartolomeo had burned all of his non-religious work in the famous “Bruciamenti delle Vanità” in Florence in 1496. See Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, 41.

<sup>71</sup> The first recorded payment to Raphael is 23 May 1514 (Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,’” 207, n. 23). The sources include *Fasti*, III.465-470: “Meantime Liber had conquered the straight-haired Indians and returned, loaded with treasure, from the eastern world. Amongst the fair captive girls there was one, the daughter of a king, who pleased Bacchus all too well” (trans. Frazer, 155). This may be the girl shown upon Bacchus' chariot in Raphael's study for the work (Shearman, “Alfonso d'Este's Camerino,” 214). The double crowning of this girl and Bacchus by the winged Victory flying above them, however, suggests that it could be Ariadne, as she is said by Ovid, *Fasti* III.514, and Hyginus, *Astronomica* II.5, to have received a crown as a wedding gift from Venus and the Horae, and in *Dionysiaca* XLVII.465-467, Nonnos wrote: “Fiery Eros made a round flowergarland with red roses and plaited a wreath coloured like the stars, as prophet and herald of the heavenly Crown” (trans. Rouse, vol. 3, 405). The other source for the Indian Triumph is Lucian's *Dialogues of the Gods* XX: “Hera and Zeus.” This text accounts for the presence, in the *modello*, of Juno and Jupiter up in the clouds, discussing the son, Bacchus, and his antics down below. Lucian also mentions Bacchus bringing back elephants from his Indian campaign. As Shearman has pointed out, the emphasis on exotic animals in Raphael's design may, in turn, have been intended to reflect Alfonso's own interest in such creatures, having a zoo of wild animals at one of his villas, and as indicated in his 1514 letter to his brother, Cardinal Ippolito, requesting a sketch of the elephant (that is, Hanno) offered to Leo X by the King of Portugal. It may indeed be Hanno's portrait that dominates Raphael's *modello* (“Alfonso d'Este's Camerino,” 214).

<sup>72</sup> This painting and Raphael's original model drawing are lost. Some have argued that no such painting was ever made by Pellegrino; according to Anchise Tempestini, Pellegrino left Ferrara as early as 1511-12 and in the autumn of 1517 was occupied with commissions in Udine (*Martino da Udine detto Pellegrino da San Daniele* [Udine: Arti grafiche friulane, 1979], 98).

*Hunt of Meleager* as told by Philostratus the Younger, were forthcoming; however, the moment seems to have been lost, and Raphael appears to have produced nothing further than a *schizo* for this commission.<sup>73</sup> With the death of both artists (Fra Bartolomeo in 1517, leaving only a rough *modello* for the *Worship of Venus*, and Raphael in 1520) Alfonso had to look elsewhere to complete his envisioned project (fig. 6. 19, 20, 21, 22).<sup>74</sup>

In early 1516 Titian was invited by Alfonso to sojourn with him at the court in Ferrara, the only record of which are registered entries for food and wine.<sup>75</sup> With the death of Bellini that November, Titian was elevated to Venice's official painter, perhaps garnering him the commission from Alfonso for the *Worship of Venus* after Fra Bartolomeo's death the next fall.<sup>76</sup> In 1518 Titian received the stretcher and canvas for his first work as well as elaborate written instructions and even a sketch (likely Fra Bartolomeo's) outlining the program for the piece.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> The story derived from Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines* XV. For the *Hunt of Meleager* sketch, see Gould, *The Studio of Alfonso d'Este*, 7. In opposition to Gould, Wetthey conjectures that the *Hunt of Meleager* was never approved as a topic for Alfonso's Camerino, and that whatever Raphael was planning to make when he suddenly died, it was not a *Meleager* piece (*The Paintings of Titian*, 150). What happened to Pellegrino's painting is uncertain. Shearman postulates that this copy of Raphael's *modello* was displayed in the Camerino d'Alabastro through the sixteenth century, though removed sometime before 1598. In this year the Modenese chronicler, Giovanni Battista Spacini, writes that "the Cardinal Pietro Legate in Ferrara, wrote to our Duke [Cesare d'Este] to enquire if it was desired that he should leave the *quadri* which are in the *Camerini* over the portico of the fish-market, where there used to be excellent paintings, by various painters, above all Raphael and Titian..." (as quoted in "Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 217). It is clear that Cesare was subsequently robbed of the paintings by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Aldobrandini, but he took only five paintings to Rome, where they appear later in his inventory of 1603, and included no work by Raphael.

<sup>74</sup> Fra Bartolomeo's drawing is preserved in the Uffizi (Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, fig. 21). Unlike all of the other lateral compositions, the Florentine's was alone in being centrally and hierarchically composed. With Alfonso's effort to acquire a Michelangelo also failing, it seems that the ambitious patron turned to his fellow northern artists for future commissions (perhaps, in part, because they were a bit closer and easier to check up on).

<sup>75</sup> Joannides, *Titian to 1518*, 237-238; Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 166. See Venturi, *Storia dell'Arte Italiana*, IX, part III, 103.

<sup>76</sup> Joannides, *Titian to 1518*, 238.

<sup>77</sup> It is most likely that Titian received instructions for the subsequent commissions also. For the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, Tebaldi wrote to inform Alfonso that "gli dedi la carta ove era bozata la figurina et annotato quelle parole per la sua istuzione" (Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus and Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne'," 349, n. 12; Wetthey, *The Paintings of Titian*, vol. 3, cat. 15).

Through Alfonso's liaison in Venice, Jacopo Tebaldi, Titian inquired in April 1518 about the lighting of the room, which would determine the directionality of the light source for this painting, and to ask for which spot or wall his painting was destined, since he recalled three spaces/walls (having seen the room previously), one closer to the chapel, one in between, and one closer to the Castello.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps to accommodate such uncertainty, the unfinished piece was delivered to Ferrara in October of 1519, and completed by the artist *in situ* sometime between then and early 1520.

Clearly this was an elaborately planned (perhaps even micromanaged) invention for a pre-determined decorative scheme (which puts in doubt the presumption that somehow Alfonso was a less involved patron than Isabella). Titian wrote to Alfonso rather obsequiously:

The other day... I received your letters together with the canvas and stretcher that you sent me; and having read the letters and the included information, it has seemed so beautiful and ingenious to me... and truly the more I have thought about it, the more I am confirmed in my opinion that the greatness of the art of ancient painters was in large part, indeed, in its entirety, aided by those great Princes who most ingeniously guided them, for which they [the painters] then won so much fame and praise. Therefore, if God grant me that I can in some part satisfy the expectation of Your Lordship, who does not know that I shall be praised? And in this I shall nonetheless have given only the body and Your Excellency the soul, which is the most worthy part of the picture....<sup>79</sup>

The patron was attracted to the themes of Venus and Bacchus; an advisor found the texts and wrote out a plan; Titian flattered their genius. But it was Titian who was moved, nonetheless, by these themes to unmatched invention. Alberti had insisted that an *invenzione* was just as

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<sup>78</sup> Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 168. "Gli dedi la carta ove era bozata quella figurina... esso mi ha dicto che'l si raccorda che in fazata del studio dell'Ex<sup>tia</sup>. V<sup>ra</sup>. erano tri quadri, et che quella scrive che questo chellui farà ha ad andare in fazata. Voria sapere per più sua satisfactione, et per fare meglio, se questo suo si ponerà verso la capella on in mezo, ovvero verso il Castello della Ex<sup>tia</sup>. V<sup>ra</sup>." (letter quoted in Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, 32, n. 44, from Campori, "Tiziano e gli estens," 587).

<sup>79</sup> Letter of 1 April 1518, quoted by Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 111, from Giuseppe Campori, "Tiziano e gli estensi," *Nuova antologia di scienze, lettere ed arti* 27 (1874): 586-587.

beautiful without the painting, but Titian proved that Alberti was wrong. By resisting conventional frontality (as in Fra Bartolomeo's drawing), static figures, and direct imitation of antiquities, Titian manifested an entirely new vision of mythological painting, where the "body" and the "soul" were united.

The ancient text on which Titian's work was based was Philostratus' *ekphrasis* of a painting of Cupids harvesting apples in *Imagines* I.6:

See, Cupids are gathering apples; and if there are many of them, do not be surprised. For they are children of the Nymphs and govern all mortal kind, and they are many because of the many things men love; and they say that it is heavenly love which manages the affairs of the gods in heaven. [...] [T]he Cupids need no ladders wrought by him [Hephaestus] to reach the trees, for aloft they fly even to where the apples hang.... It is a beautiful riddle.... This is friendship... and yearning of one for the other. For the Cupids who play ball with the apple are beginning to fall in love... but the pair of archers are confirming a love that is already present. [...] [T]hey are trying to catch [a hare] alive as an offering most pleasing to Aphrodite. For you know, I imagine, what is said of the hare, that it possesses the gift of Aphrodite to an unusual degree.... Do you see the overarching rock from beneath which springs water of the deepest blue, fresh and good to drink, which is distributed in channels to irrigate the apple trees? Be sure that Aphrodite is there, where the Nymphs, I doubt not, have established a shrine to her, because she has made them mothers of Cupids and therefore blest in their children. The silver mirror, that gilded sandal, the golden brooches, all these objects have been hung there not without a purpose. They proclaim that they belong to Aphrodite, and her name is inscribed on them, and they are said to be gifts of the Nymphs. And the Cupids bring first-fruits of the apples, and gathering around they pray to her that their orchard may prosper.<sup>80</sup>

Titian rendered the text into painting quite literally. Though provided with Fra Bartolomeo's sketch, Titian "replaced Florentine symmetry with Venetian asymmetry."<sup>81</sup> He maintained the goddess's pose but placed the shrine to Aphrodite off to the right, where we see the fountain gush out its water from the source. Titian's one lapse from the text appears to have followed

<sup>80</sup> Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* I.6, trans. Fairbanks, 21-29.

<sup>81</sup> Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 113.

from Fra Bartolomeo's lead: the inclusion of the "mothers of Cupids," alluded to in the text but not shown in the ancient painting.<sup>82</sup> These "nymphs" rushing toward the shrine have all the eagerness and enthusiasm of truly inspired disciples, not unlike Bacchus' own frenzied maenads. Yet here Titian plays with our expectations, for these are not *ninfe all'antica* but contemporary Venetian women. Dana Goodgal supposes that these are the same women we see lounging in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, two earthly devotees of Bacchus and Venus, who here rush to make their offerings in the hope that they may, like their mortal counterpart Ariadne, achieve the pinnacle of love (fig. 6.23).<sup>83</sup> Their presence recalls Ovid's account in the *Fasti* of a feast of Venus that took place April 1: "Duly do ye worship the goddess, ye Latin mothers and brides, and ye too, [courtesans] who wear not the fillets and long robe. [...] [T]he [marble] goddess must be washed from top to toe. [...] Propitiate her with supplications; beauty and virtue and good fame are in her keeping."<sup>84</sup> Titian shows *Venetian* mothers and brides perpetuating this duty. Still, around them are the firmly mythical putti, their alternately blue or pink wings sprouting from their chubby backs. The intersection of the real and the fantastic, of visible and invisible, that one finds in Titian's painting aligns with the mode of the pastoral, where gods and humans and past and present intermingle.<sup>85</sup>

In this first piece for Alfonso, Titian managed to follow the prescribed text and detailed instructions and, at the same time, create a work of imaginative originality and subtlety that would sustain prolonged and repeated viewing. As Michaela Marek has explained, Titian

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<sup>82</sup> Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 114. Titian's maiden holding the mirror does appear to borrow directly from the pose of the nude female with similar pose and attribute in Fra Bartolomeo's drawing.

<sup>83</sup> Goodgal, "The Camerino of Alfonso I d'Este," 180.

<sup>84</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* IV.133-156, trans. Frazer, 199.

<sup>85</sup> Williams, "Le donne, i cavalieri, l'arme, gli amori," 240.

harnessed the contemporary meditative mode of viewing, appealing to both “the sensual-emotional and the intellectual-conclusive perception of the observer,” which enabled an audience to deduce multiple levels of meaning from the image.<sup>86</sup> In Titian’s evocative image, the rustic work of harvesting, as described in Virgil’s second *Georgic*, is rendered charming with the magic of flight and cherubic workers. The typical pastoral topoi of lovemaking and heartbreak play out in a landscape where ancient springs are surmounted by marble statues, relics of long-ago devotions.<sup>87</sup>

### BACCHUS AND ARIADNE

As Titian passed his summer sojourn in Ferrara to finish the *Worship of Venus* in 1520, he was likely then commissioned to paint a further work for the Camerino: the *Bacchus and Ariadne*.<sup>88</sup> Why he was not given the unrealized *Hunt of Meleager*, or even the *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, to complete is not clear. The *Triumph* may have been satisfactorily painted by Pellegrino; the *Hunt* may have been recognized as an ill-fit for the increasingly Bacchanalian theme, having been assigned on the fly merely to appease Raphael.<sup>89</sup> Alfonso’s own court artist,

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<sup>86</sup> Michaela J. Marek, “Trying to Look at Paintings with Contemporary Eyes: Titian’s Feast of Venus and Andrians Reconsidered,” in *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, 69.

<sup>87</sup> Rosand, “Pastoral Topoi: On the Construction of Meaning in Landscape,” 161-178.

<sup>88</sup> This painting was delivered unfinished to Ferrara in 1523. Until Gould’s 1969 study (*The Studio of Alfonso d’Este*), the conventional thinking was that the *Bacchus and Ariadne* was actually the last painting, coming after the *Andrians*. A more recent scholar to insist on the prior chronology based on stylistic arguments is Humfrey, “Titian’s *Bacchanals* for Duke Alfonso’s *Camerino*,” 179-186. See below.

<sup>89</sup> If Alfonso was so willing to alter the original *istorie*, this may be an indication that he was not wedded to the original six that were planned in 1511. As the project progressed, the program may have evolved as well. See Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 36. But Isabella’s willingness to compromise with Giovanni Bellini indicates that when it came to negotiating commissions from stubborn but desirable artists, patrons could deviate from their original idea just in an effort to clinch the deal. Once having a work from Raphael was no longer a possibility, in other words, Alfonso may have returned to his original plan.

Dosso Dossi, also received a commission to make a contribution to the series.<sup>90</sup> Vasari tells us that Dosso made “una Bacchanaria d’uomini tanto buona...,” but as it is lost, it is impossible to know its precise subject (fig. 6.24, 25, 26).<sup>91</sup> It has been proposed that the theme of the hunt may have been retained in Dosso’s piece if it depicted the *ekphrasis* of Philostratus the Younger of a painting of *Hunters*, which described young men lounging about and drinking wine after the

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<sup>90</sup> Dosso’s painting is lost, and there is no documentary evidence to date precisely its production; it is therefore difficult to determine when the work was painted, but it may have been commissioned as early as 1514-1516, or c. 1519, along with the others. Some (Wind, Walker, Gould, Battisti) have tentatively postulated that a painting of a *Bacchanal* in London’s National Gallery may be identified with the Camerino painting, but most now reject an attribution to Dosso. Ballarin proposes that a *Triumph of Bacchus* in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, might be identified with Dosso’s painting, understood to be the “Arrival of Bacchus on Naxos” (*Il camerino delle pitture di Alfonso*, vol. 1, 15-49); however, this work seems rather to be a reprise of Titian’s *Bacchus and Ariadne*, and not an original part of the Camerino. See Humfrey and Lucco, *Dosso Dossi*, n. 1 and 6 to cat. 24; Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 253, n. 9. A third painting, called *the Bath*, in Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant’Angelo, Rome, used to be proposed as a possible match for the Camerino painting, but it has been soundly disattributed and, being a pastiche of works by Titian, Michelangelo, and Marcantonio Raimondi, dates to an anonymous Veneto-Ferrarese artist c. 1530 (Mauro Lucco’s entry in Bayer, ed., *Dosso Dossi*, cat. 55, pp. 264-267). And lastly, an *Allegory of Music* in the Museo della Fondazione Horne in Florence has been put forth, but this, too, seems an unlikely match for the painting described in the Aldobrandini inventory (see Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 36, and cat. 25). See following note.

<sup>91</sup> *Le Vite*, ed. Milanese, vol. VI, “Life of Benvenuto Garofolo and Girolamo da Carpi,” 474. Vasari actually mentions Dosso’s contribution with varying detail, meaning he may have conflated two or more paintings. (Note that in the “Life of Titian” Vasari says that Giovanni Bellini’s painting “on another wall” included “a nude and very beautiful Silenus,” which are definitely not the words one would associate with the actual appearance of Silenus. Vasari also fails to mention the *Bacchus and Ariadne* altogether, and mis-remembers the urinating putto as being in the *Worship of Venus* painting and not the *Andrians*.) According to Vasari’s multiple readings of what Dosso painted, figures included Vulcan at the forge, Mars, and Venus, perhaps based on an *ekphrasis* of *Vulcan’s return to Olympus* by Pausanias (Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 253, n. 9). Vasari, “Life of Tiziano da Cadore [Titian Vecelli]”: “Alfonso... had caused a little chamber to be decorated, and had commissioned Dosso, the painter of Ferrara, to execute in certain compartments stories of Aeneas, Mars, and Venus, and in a grotto Vulcan with two smiths at the forge...” (“istorie du Enea, di Marte e Venere, et in una grotta Vulcano con due fabbrì alla fucina”) (trans. de Vere, vol. 2, 784). This would seem to be a reference to the *Aeneas* frieze up above the main paintings and not the “Bacchanal of Men” Vasari had mentioned previously. Hope suggests that this painting should be understood as a lost segment of the frieze showing Vulcan making armor for Aeneas at the request of his mother, Venus (“The ‘Camerini d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este,” part 1, 644, citing Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII.370ff). In his letter of 1598 to Alfonso II’s appointed heir Cesare d’Este, the secretary Annibale Roncaglia, who remained behind in Ferrara after the loss of the palace to the Pope, noted the works that had been taken by Aldobrandini, including a “pittura con figure d’huomeni et di donne di mano delli dossi.” In the Aldobrandini inventory of 1603 it is described as being square and “un quadro grande di più Dei con un montone, un camaleonte, et un armatura, del Dosso.” A later inventory of 1665 records it as “un quadro in tela grande con diverse donne, e Vulcano da una banda, e vi è un montone, et una figura dorme.” The mention of the “chameleon,” “ram,” and “Vulcan” have led Colantuono to identify this described piece as being Dosso’s main painting, i.e., the “Bacchanal of Men” (*Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 165-168). While the subject cannot truly be known, Bayer has put forth the tentative subject as a description of a picture in the Temple of Dionysus described by Pausanias in which Bacchus makes Vulcan drunk and then leads him to Olympus in order to free Juno from a magical chair he had fashioned with which to trap her (“Dosso’s Public,” 36).

vigors and triumphs of a successful chase.<sup>92</sup> Regardless, Titian appears to have been assigned the remainder of Equicola's original program of six *fabule*, completing the final painting, the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, in 1525.<sup>93</sup>

The subject of the *Bacchus and Ariadne* is thought to have been taken from both Ovid's description of their encounter in the *Ars Amatoria* and Catullus' *Carmina* 64.<sup>94</sup> The selection of

<sup>92</sup> Carlo del Bravo, "L'Equicola e il Dosso," *Artibus et historiae* 15 (1994): 73. Philostratus notes wild vines and ivy in the natural setting, and the "band of hunters, charming sturdy youths, are resting themselves. [...] [T]he man next to the central figure, a cup half full in one hand and swinging his right hand above his head... while his neighbor... is bidding him hurry the cup along. [...] [T]his wine-skin has been thrown down here at random for anyone that wishes to draw drink from it..." (trans. Fairbanks, 297-301).

<sup>93</sup> Nicholas Penny and Peter Humfrey argue on stylistic grounds that the *Bacchus and Ariadne* was the last painting produced; in this case the *Andrians* would have been painted between the delivery of the *Worship of Venus*, documented in October of 1519 and as installed in January 1520, and the delivery of the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, documented from 1522 to 1523 (Penny's dissenting opinion in *Titian*, ed. Jaffé, cat. 13, p. 104; Jaffé maintains that the *Andrians* should date c. 1523-1524, cat. 14, p. 106). There are many compelling reasons to see the *Andrians* as following more closely upon the heels of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, with its direct *paragone* of reclining nudes, for example. However, the relevant correspondence appears to insist that Alfonso could not get Titian to produce anything in the two years following the delivery of *Worship of Venus* and thus that the *Andrians* was painted last (since it would be unlikely that Titian could have made two large paintings by 1523). For a critique of Penny, see the review of the London exhibition catalogue by Beverly Louis Brown, in *Renaissance Studies* 18 (2004): 117-118. Shearman argues, furthermore, that the stylistic appearance of the *Andrians* may indicate that it was last if Alfonso had finally given up on receiving a painting from Michelangelo ("Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 219). As has been pointed out by several observers, Titian makes his most Michelangelesque borrowings in this work, including adapting a figure from Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina* cartoon, a portion of which was in the home of Uberto Strozzi in Mantua, to which Titian made visits in 1519 (with Dosso) and 1523 (Humfrey, "Titian's *Bacchanals* for Duke Alfonso's *Camerino*," 180). I would also note that several figures in Garofolo's Dresden *Indian Triumph of Bacchus* appear to be derived from the *Cascina* cartoon. See Bastiano da Sangallo's painted grisaille copy of the cartoon made in c. 1542, Holkham Hall, Norfolk, in David Franklin, ed., *Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and the Renaissance in Florence* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2005), cat. 13.

<sup>94</sup> See the discussion of this painting in Chapter Three. Angus Easson proposes that Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII.169-182 accounts for the ship, crown, and leap, and that the painting shows the first encounter of the two ("The Source of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 [1969]: 196-397). (The crown and leap are recounted in *Ars amatoria* too.) As Shearman explains, Titian's picture was not a replacement for Raphael's subject of Bacchus' return from India (with his second, reencounter of Ariadne), but rather a depiction of Bacchus' first encounter of Ariadne, freshly abandoned by Theseus ("Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 214). Wind, followed by Panofsky, however, held to the former interpretation for Titian's painting, citing Ovid's description of this occasion in his *Fasti* III.viii.459-516 (Wind, "A Note on Bacchus and Ariadne," *Burlington Magazine* 92 [1950]: 82-85; Panofsky, *Problems in Titian, Mostly Iconographic: The Wrightsman Lectures* [New York: New York University Press, 1969], 141-144). However, as we have seen, the typical antique imagery included in Bacchus' day-to-day retinue included animals such as panthers and lions as well as the pans, satyrs, Silenus, and tamborine- and cymbals-wielding maenads, all of which Titian includes in his painting. And many ancient texts leave the impression that Bacchus had already been to India when he came upon Ariadne on Naxos. In Nonnos, Dionysus has already had adventures in India when he comes to Naxos and meets Ariadne for the first time. It is only the *Fasti* III.viii that relates the story of Bacchus abandoning Ariadne to go to India. Antique sarcophagi that represent in particular the Indian Triumph of Bacchus (as in the relief preserved in the Casino Rospiglioso, Rome, Matz, *ASR*, IV: 2, p. 233-236) usually show more exotic animals, such as elephants, and



this *fabula*, more properly the *Discovery of Ariadne*, may have been stimulated by the recent completion of Battista Guarino's edition of and commentary on Catullus, dedicated to Alfonso himself, in the summer of 1520 and published in 1521.<sup>95</sup> As the initial meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne was narrated by Ovid, Ariadne is described frantically wandering the shore of Naxos, "crazed out of her mind, fresh-roused from sleep, in an ungirt robe, blonde hair streaming loose, barefoot, calling 'Ah cruel Theseus!' to the deaf waves...." Thereupon "the whole shore echoed with frenzied drumming, the clash of cymbals...." at the sight of which Ariadne faints in terror.

And then came the god, his chariot grape-clustered, paired tigers padding on as he shook the golden reins.... Down he sprang [*desilit*] from his chariot lest the girl take fright at the tigers; set his foot on the shore, then gathered her up in his arms—no resistance—and bore her away. [...] Loud cheers, a riotous wedding: Bacchus and his bride were soon bedded down.<sup>96</sup>

Most of the iconographic features of Titian's painting, including the presence of the crown of stars and Bacchus's stunning leap, can be accounted for by this text. Catullus provided an *ekphrasis* of the imagery on the embroidered coverlet on the marriage bed of Pelius and Thetis,

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typically show Bacchus alone or with a male or female Bacchante standing upon his chariot (see Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," fig. 14; Antal, "Observations on Girolamo da Carpi"). Raphael's *modello* for his composition shows exactly these features, including two very large panthers and Silenus on a lion (as in the Rospiglioso relief). See Warren Tressider, "The Cheetahs in Titian's 'Bacchus and Ariadne,'" *Burlington Magazine* 123 (1981): 481-485. Greek did not have a word to distinguish between leopard and cheetah, and given the emphasis in Philostratus (a book much admired in Alfonso's court) associating "leopards" (*leopardo* or *pardo* in Moscus's translation) with Bacchus instead of Ovid's tigers or panthers, it is logical that Alfonso would request that "leopards" be depicted. *Imagines* I.15: "a leopard... is the symbol of the god" (trans. Fairbanks, 63). And at this time, "leopards" were familiar to courtiers as the cheetahs kept in royal zoos, since these animals could be trained to hunt. Thus, it is the cheetah that is shown pulling Bacchus' chariot.

<sup>95</sup> Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus," 347; Shearman, "Alfonso d'Este's Camerino," 218. Bayer suggests further that the particular conjunction of those two classical sources may have been prompted in turn by their use in Poliziano's *Stanze* I.110-112, which may have been emulated in competition with the Medici "court" ("Dosso's Public," 37, following Shearman, *Only Connect*, 255-257). Titian had a personal copy of this edition of Catullus, inscribed "Liber mihi Titiani et amicorum caeterorumque" (Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, 42, n. 60).

<sup>96</sup> Ovid, *The Art of Love*, I.525-564, trans. Green, 183. "Iam deus in curru, quem summum texerat uvis, / Tigribus adiunctis aurea lora dabat: / [...] / Dixit, et e curru, ne tigres illa timeret, / Desilit; inposito cessit harena pede: / Implicitamque sinu (neque enim pugnare valebat) / Abstulit; in facili est omnia posse deo. / Pars 'Hymenaeae' canunt, pars clamant 'Euhion, euhoe!' / Sic coeunt sacro nupta deusque toro" (ll. 549 ff, ed. Mozley, 50).

which includes the sad scene of Ariadne's abandonment, her lament, and subsequent discovery by Bacchus:

In another part of the tapestry youthful Bacchus was wandering [*volitabat*] with the rout of Satyrs and the Nysa-born Sileni, seeking thee, Ariadna, and fired with thy love; ... who then busy here and there, were raging with frenzied mind, while 'Evoe!' they cried tumultuously....

Some of them were waving thyrsi with shrouded points, some tossing about the limbs of a mangled steer, some girding themselves with writhing serpents.... Others beat timbrels with uplifted hands, or raised clear clashing with cymbals of rounded bronze: many blew horns with harsh-sounding drone, and the barbarian pipe shrilled with dreadful din.<sup>97</sup>

The additional detail in this text provided other features of the painting, such as the *Laocoön*-esque, snake-entwined satyr, the deer shank held up by another, and the severed head in the foreground.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Carmina*, LXIV, trans. Francis Warre Cornish, revised G. P. Goold, 2nd corrected ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 101-103, 115-117. Catullus was particularly popular in the Ferrarese school of Guarino and amongst his pupils as a Veronese native. See Campbell, "*Sic in amore furens*," 148; Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, "Humanism and the School of Guarino: A Problem of Evaluation," *Past and Present* 96 (1982): 51-80.

<sup>98</sup> Guarino's edition of Catullus may specifically have influenced Titian's introduction of the male Bacchant girl with snakes, since this sort of figure was more typically portrayed as a maenad; Guarino employs the male gender for his translation, following the Aldine edition of 1502 (Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus," 348; Bayer, "Dosso's Public," 38). Alfonso's sister also had two miniature copies of the *Laocoön*, which may have inspired the imitation here. Her son Federico ordered a full-scale reproduction of his own in 1525 (Campbell, "Mantegna's Triumph," 104). Given that the paintings are evocations of *ekphrasis*, it is possible that the advisors for this commission had other examples of descriptions of images of the meeting of Bacchus and Ariadne in mind. One may have been Pausanias' mention of paintings about Dionysus in the sanctuary of Dionysus in Attica, which included "Ariadne asleep, Theseus putting out to sea, and Dionysus on his arrival to carry off Ariadne" (*Description of Greece* I.20.3, trans. W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Omerod [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918]). This same passage also mentions in this location a painting of a drunken Vulcan brought back to Olympia by Bacchus, a story that has been postulated for Dosso's lost canvas. Pliny (*Natural History* XXXV.99) mentions a painting by Aristides, "the Dionysus and the Ariadne once on view in the Temple of Ceres at Rome," but without a detailed description to help visualize the picture, it is hard to believe this would be much of an inspiration to a humanist advisor, despite Shearman's and Ruth W. Kennedy's claims otherwise (Shearman, *Only Connect*, 255; Kennedy, "Apelles Redivivus," in *Essays in Memory of Karl Lehmann*, ed. Lucy Freeman Sandler [New York: Institute of Fine Art, New York University, 1964], 160-171). More texts have been adduced as sources: Persius' *Satires*, Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*, and Boccaccio. See Graves H. Thompson, "The Literary Sources of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*," *Classical Journal* 51 (1956): 259-264; Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus." It has been proposed that the figure of the maenad with cymbals may have been inspired by Jacopo Sansovino's recent *Bacchus* statue, which was then nearby at the Villa Gualfonda (Gould, *The Studio of Alfonso d'Este*, 18). The head of a bullock, pulled by the little *satiretto* may derive from Persius I.100: "vitulo raptum caput ablatura superbo" ("carrying off the ripped head of a proud bullock"), a passage well-known in the Renaissance and often used as a gloss to Catullus, asserting that maenads tore up live bullocks (Holberton, "Battista Guarino's Catullus," 349). The way Persius was understood at this time may also underlie the interpolation of the infant satyr, as in Botticelli's

Given the time since Equicola had originally suggested stories for Alfonso's paintings, and the preceding account of alterations to that plan, it is possible that other humanists at the Ferrarese court contributed to the subject matter. Ludovico Ariosto, admired by the Este and a *familiaris* in Alfonso's household from 1518 to 1522, would naturally have been called upon to offer his opinion.<sup>99</sup> His literary masterpiece, *Orlando Furioso*, was composed early in the century, at least by 1506, and was first published in 1516. The poet there included a description of an elaborately embroidered wedding pavilion, recalling Catullus' *ekphrasis* of the nuptial bedspread. And in the third edition, in 1532, he added the set-piece of the character Olimpia's abandonment by Bireno, in blatant evocation of the Ovidian abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus—and of how Titian ultimately portrayed it.<sup>100</sup> Ariosto's currency with such details hints that he may have been a deviser of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, coming up with the motif then illustrated so compellingly that he inserted it, in turn, into his poem.<sup>101</sup> It would be an interesting example of poet-following-painter-following-poet, which is, of course, the very essence of the ekphrastic mode: to describe with words a visual image that was inspired in turn by poetic words. And Titian's work would then rival those of the antique painters: its beauty so

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*Mars and Venus* as well (Holberton, "Botticelli's *Hypnerotomachia* in the National Gallery, London," *Illinois Classical Studies* 9, 2 [1984]: 167).

<sup>99</sup> Shearman, *Only Connect*, 257. Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was patronized by Alfonso's brother, Cardinal Ippolito, or Hippolytus, who is memorialized in the poem. Ariosto was himself also a regular correspondent of Equicola's, stationed then at Mantua.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Heroides* X. See Daniel Javitch, "The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando Furioso*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 38 (1985): 222-228. Javitch points out that because Ovid was himself parodying Catullus' more earnest rendition of Ariadne's lamentous situation, it makes it difficult to tell "whether Ariosto is imitating Catullus or Ovid, or Ovid imitating Catullus" (225-226). Ariosto also imitates Virgil's *Aeneid*, which may influence the interest in that subject for Dosso's frieze of paintings for the Camerino.

<sup>101</sup> Shearman, *Only Connect*, 256-257. *Orlando Furioso*, canto 46.73-99, regarding the pavilion (which is a paean to Hippolytus); canto 10.1-34, regarding Olympia's abandonment.

compelling that one is moved to write about it in response. In other words, it is Titian's material realization of the written word that supersedes language, giving primacy to the image.

### *BACCHANAL OF THE ANDRIANS*

The *Bacchanal of the Andrians* was taken from another antique *ekphrasis*—that of Philostratus the Elder's *Imagines*—but appears to issue from the idiosyncratic translation by Demetrius Moscus that Alfonso had borrowed from Isabella:<sup>102</sup>

The stream of wine which flows on the island of Andros and the Andrians made drunk by the river are the subject of this picture, for the land of the Andrians made rich in wine by Bacchus breaks open and sends (the wine) to them as a river. If you think it is water it is not a large river but if you think it is made of wine then it is large and, of truth, divine....

Such things, as I apprehend it, do the Andrians, crowned with ivy and sage, sing to their women and children. Some of them dance on the one and some on the other shore, and others recline on the ground. Perhaps this too may be a part of their song... that this river has the gift to show forth men to be mighty in council, rich, attentive to their friends, and to let them grow beautiful and six foot tall from a small size. For, once a man has drunk his fill of its stream he is equipped to gather all these qualities into one and let them enter into his soul. And perhaps they also sing that this river alone is not waded into by either cattle or horses, but was graciously given by Bacchus to men only to drink from it, and as it is drunk is flows on without ever exhausting its course.

You will have to pay attention to hear that some of them are singing these things, for their [minds] are confused by the wine. But what you may (readily) see in the picture is the river himself. He is lying on a bed of grapes, pours out his source neat, and looks ever so committed to his desire....<sup>103</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See the discussion of this painting in Chapter Three.

<sup>103</sup> Trans. Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," Appendix III, 90-92. Demetrius Moscus' vernacular edition of Philostratus' *Imagines* I.vi, Ms. Ital. 1091, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, fols. 35r-36r: "Il corso del vino che e in Andro insula et li andrii inebriati da fiume sono ragion della pittura perche rompe il terreno delli Andrii vinoso da Baccho e manda a quelli un fiume. se tu pensi che'l sia di aqua non grande ma se tu pensi che sia di vino, grande, e per certo questo fiume e divino. [...] Tal cose cantono li andrij: quanto io comprendo a femine e putti coronati d'edera e di salvia et alcuni di quelli ballono in l'una e l'altra riva. Altri sono distesi. forse anchor questo e parte del suo canto.... ma questo fiume po mostrar' homini potenti in consigli e ricchi e curiosi verso li amici e belli e grandi e de piccoli. percio ch'e possibile comprendere insieme tutte queste cose a uno che sia satio del suo fluto et condurle nello suo animo cantono anchora forsi che questo sol fiume ne a mandre di bestiami ne a cavalli e licito passare ma e ben dato a beber da baccho e bevese salvandosi senza manchar' mai il suo corso ali homini soli: Datte ad intender' udir queste cose da alcuni cantar con la voce con fusa per il vino: ma quello che veder' poi di la pittura

For Philostratus, wine is the ultimate deceiver, since it seems to “make... men rich, and powerful in the assembly, and helpful to their friends, and beautiful and, instead of short, four cubits tall; for when a man has drunk his fill of it he can assemble all these qualities and *in his thought* make them his own.”<sup>104</sup> But in Moscus’ translation, these words shift, making the effect of wine—understood as the inspiring and enlivening gift of a god—appear to be real and lasting.<sup>105</sup> This surely was a suitable, and desirable, message for a ruler like Alfonso: to understand that the pleasures enjoyed in good faith as gifts from God will not weaken or dissipate, but ennoble and strengthen. In his *Libro de nature de amore*, Equicola had written: “[I]l piacere e volutta ne governa, che di quello piu ci cale per cui vivemo piu che gioiosi, e di quello avemo maggior cura, che maggior piacere ne puo apportare,” and suggested that Bacchus “freed men from worry.”<sup>106</sup> His selection of the various *istorie* for the Camerino allies with the function of the rooms being for the *otium* of the ruler.

As the culminating contribution for the Camerino, there is a feeling of denouement in this painting. The glass *oenochoe* with its amber-colored wine held aloft at the near center of the canvas becomes the visual and metaphorical focus around which all the many revelers—indeed, the whole room—revolve (fig. 6.27). The flow of wine echoes the movement of their bodies. Wine is poured into a shallow dish held up by a blond Venetian *donna* in red, who reclines with her friend and music partner in midnight blue. Wine is guzzled by a paunchy Silene at left while

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il fiume giace in uno letto de uve dando la fonte esso lui chiaro: et di aspetto molto disiderosamente inclinato nascono...” (transcribed by Maria Raina Fehl, in Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrscherallegorie*, Anhang II, 135-136).

<sup>104</sup> (Emphasis added.) *Imagines* I.25, ll. 31-34, trans. Fairbanks, 97.

<sup>105</sup> Plutarch’s *Moralia*, which Alfonso also owned, similarly said that wine enhanced virtues like wisdom, sincerity, and veracity (Marek, “Trying to Look at Paintings with Contemporary Eyes,” 71).

<sup>106</sup> Equicola quoted in Bravo, “L’Equicola e il Dosso,” 73; Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 38.

behind him a bearded satyr hauls a large krater on his shoulder (recalling a typical antique type, fig. 6.28).<sup>107</sup> And all along the bottom flows the red stream as it descends from the hillside at the right. On the near side lies a sleeping maenad, recumbent against a metal vessel tipped over on its side, her empty cup still clasped in her hand. A baby boy-cum-putto lifts his shirt to urinate into the stream. At the left, a nude Bacchant dips his ceramic pitcher into the river to refill it, while his attention is distracted by the luminous nymph upstream.

The reclining nude, who is not described in Philostratus' text, begs for identification (fig. 6.29). Some have seen her simply as a characteristic maenad, or perhaps, as Ariadne herself, asleep on the shore.<sup>108</sup> Others have seen her as a nymph of the water, intoxicated by the river that has now turned to wine.<sup>109</sup> It has been proposed that she represents the figure of "Revel" or Komos mentioned in the ancient text (although in Moscus's translation this word is masculine).<sup>110</sup> Another possibility is that the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnos has been used by the humanists composing the picture, and that she is derived from passages describing Dionysus'

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<sup>107</sup> One of the Cupids in the *Worship of Venus*, seen at the foot of the base of the monument to Venus, holds a basket of apples in a similar manner. This motif can be seen at the far left of the antique relief showing the "Triumph of Pan" in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin: Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 157, pl. 184. That this relief was familiar to northern Italian artists is indicated by Jacopo Bellini's own drawing of the motif in the Paris Book, fol. 85 (Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, pl. 65).

<sup>108</sup> Crowe and Cavalcaselle called her Ariadne, and the painting a "Bacchanal," before the text of Philostratus was linked with the painting, securely linking it to Andros (*Titian: His Life and Times* [London: 1877], vol. 1, p. 226). Wind calls her an Andrian woman in the form of Ariadne (*Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, 60). Panofsky saw her as a maenad, but one who stood for the middle phase of the Three Ages of Man, represented at the other extremes by the urinating putto and the elderly figure on the bed of grapes in the background (*Problems in Titian*, 99-102).

<sup>109</sup> Fehl, "The Hidden Genre: A Study of the *Concert Champêtre* in the Louvre," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 16 (1957): 164-167; Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," 76. Fehl argues that she is like one of the "invisible" nymphs in the *Concert Champêtre*.

<sup>110</sup> Moscus writes "il riso et anchora il como." Murutes, "Personifications of Laughter and Drunken Sleep in Titian's *Andrians*," 521. The motif of the urinating child was often described as humorous, bestowing on him associations with the figure of "Laughter," or *Gelos* (an identification made in the *Hypnerotomachi Poliphili*). *Komos* or "merrymaking" could be the sleeping figure because of medieval etymology linking *koma*, or "deep sleep," with an idea of "drunken sleep" for *Komos*. Cf. Revel is "il como" in Moscus' translation (Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus," 90).

pursuit of Nicaea, an Indian nymph whose refusal to give in to the god results in his causing the river she drinks from to be converted to wine; when she was finally overcome by intoxication, the god was able to have his way with her.<sup>111</sup> Although Dionysus is not included in Titian's painting, this sort of layering of textual sources would not be exceptional. Still, in the context of reading the picture as a whole, with its mix of nude and dressed figures, male and female, *all'antica* and modern, it may be more instinctive to read her simply as that luxuriant nymph of the spring, metamorphosed by the divine gift of wine into a maenadic symbol of transcendent ecstasy.

Two contemporary youths, one in distinctive *calze* or hose, linger near the trees and sing in harmony, their faces turned toward one another as they match their voices (fig. 6.30). They have lost the attention of their ladies, who likewise seem to have eyes only for each other. The girls do not sing, and have let lie their recorders, a sheet of music left idle on the grass (fig. 6.31).<sup>112</sup> The lyrics written there read: "Qui boyt et ne reboyt, il ne scet que boyre soit"—"He who drinks and does not drink again, does not know what drinking is."<sup>113</sup> The musical form, a four-part canon, reflects a contemporary attempt to recreate ancient Greek music with modern harmonics.<sup>114</sup> Pointedly, a canon itself was a type of music considered to be comparable to a

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<sup>111</sup> *Dionysiaca* XVI.250-280. See Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 116-117.

<sup>112</sup> Replacing sung notes with a musical instrument was normal practice at this time. See Emanuel Winternitz, "The Knowledge of Musical Instruments as an Aid to the Art Historian," in his *Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 51-52.

<sup>113</sup> Edward Lowinsky, "Music in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*: Origin and History of the *Canon per tonos*," in *Titian: His World and His Legacy*, ed. David Rosand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 193-194, fig. 6.3. It has been proposed that the composer of the canon was the Flemish musician Adrian Willaert, then in the service of Alfonso, and who is also known to have composed a song about the effects of wine, "Quid non ebrietas." See also Gertrude P. Smith, "The Canon of Titian's *Bacchanal*," *Renaissance News* 6 (1953): 52-56, from whom Lowinsky adapts his interpretation.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 204. In Veronese's *Wedding of Cana*, Titian is portrayed playing the bass viol, which suggests that he had personal experience reading music. See Panofsky, *Problems in Titian*, 6.

riddle or motto: an allegorical device in which meaning is cloaked by a veil.<sup>115</sup> The jest hidden in this canon is that the music is intended to ascend one note up the chromatic scale with each repetition, as a metaphor for becoming tipsy, literally “alticcio”—that is, high.<sup>116</sup> “Il vino me monta alla testa,” one would say (as in English, also, “the wine has gone to my head”).<sup>117</sup> That this music would be understood by the viewer, and very likely performed with the picture, is expected, since a courtier was required to be well-versed in poetry, art, and music.<sup>118</sup> The dancers weaving in and out of each other, forming a grapevine, recall both the origin of the wine and the intersection of the canon’s four parts with their movements (fig. 6.32).<sup>119</sup>

Titian fashions the ancient tale in the current pastoral mode, so that unlike the Andros of myth, this Isle is accessible to Venetians, nymphs, and satyrs alike. The humans in their

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<sup>115</sup> Johannes Tinctoris wrote a dictionary of musical terminology c. 1475, and wrote: “Canon est regula voluntatem compositoris sub obscuritate quadam ostendens” (“A canon is a prescription indicating the composer’s design under the veil of some riddle”) (cited in Lowinsky, “Music in Titian’s *Bacchanal of the Andrians*,” 209). Unlike our presumption that a canon is the same as a fugue, in contemporary terms, a “canon” would signify that the composer is giving a clue to the correct reading of the notes, so that the correct composition must be read into the notation, adjusting it according to the directions in the accompanying riddle (ibid., 223). “Willaert tested the mettle of Alfonso’s musicians: he wrote only one line; the performers had to find the right solution, guided by the text of the canon and the program of Titian’s painting” (263).

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 220-222. The canon involves sometimes reading the one line of music backwards and upside-down (as it is actually portrayed to the viewer in the painting), in order to achieve the appropriate harmonies. Cf. Dalyné Shinneman, who argues for a four-part canon that does not ascend in pitch, but rather is “simple” so that the “drunks” can manage to sing it (“The Canon in Titian’s *Andrians*: A Reinterpretation,” Appendix IV to Fehl, “The Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 93-95). That version would be terribly “dull,” argues Lowinsky. His version, instead, eliminates the contrapuntal errors of Smith’s transcription, and adds the chromatic richness, literally “color,” that would be appropriate for a painting by the colorist Titian.

<sup>117</sup> Lowinsky, “Music in Titian’s *Bacchanal of the Andrians*,” 217.

<sup>118</sup> Castiglione’s *The Courtier* details the sort of music one appreciates and emphasizes aural literacy. Ibid., 219.

<sup>119</sup> One point where I must disagree with Lowinsky’s interpretation of the painting is his decision that the performers of the canon include the two ladies and the nude man reclining with them and the running man in orange, whom he argues, must have just leapt up from the ground, where he was lately sitting and playing. There is a third alto recorder visible on the grass by the nude man’s knee, suggesting that someone else was playing besides the two girls. However, the man in orange appears to me to be intended as part of the dancing group: his attire matches the short tunics the other three male dancers wear; the fluttering garment, raised arm, and kicked-up right foot (just like the man-in-pink’s foot at the right) convey that he is dancing; all of the dancers appear below the foreshortened lip of the rolling hillside; and the same dance is shown in the *Worship of Venus* in the central background being performed by *five* cupids, like the five dancers appearing *en rond* here.



contemporary garb take a picnic, their golden goblet, claret glass, and unfinished luncheon of quail left abandoned on the grass. The unusual depiction of the three young, nude men near the center of the composition (often overlooked in the glare of the more lavishly displayed nude female) creates an atmosphere like that in the *Concert Champêtre*, in which clothed humans and nude nymphs appear to mingle.<sup>120</sup> Instead of nymphs, however, it is the males who are nude, though lacking in any obviously satyric or otherworldly characteristics; they appear, plainly, naked, but mythical they must be.<sup>121</sup> The three men form a triangle around the two Venetian ladies, and almost block out view of their earthly male compatriots (fig. 6.33). Despite the ministrations of these magical men (one fetches more wine from the river, another pours wine into the blond girl's dish, as the third caresses her bare ankle), the maidens seem oblivious to their existence—a further indication that this is a pastoral world, in which the mythological intersects with the present.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> See Fehl, who sees the two clothed women and two men in modern dress by the trees as the four singers of the Bacchic *chanson*, who have come into the country to picnic, and have attracted the Bacchic spirits and nymph to their party. The men, in fact, he identifies with the city dandy and rustic swain of the *Concert Champêtre* itself (“A Hidden Genre,” 164-167).

<sup>121</sup> As a corroborating example of this, consider Titian's earlier *The Three Ages of Man (Story of Daphnis and Chloe)*, c. 1516, Duke of Sutherland Collection, on loan to the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, in which a nude man (but for the thin veil over his genitals) and clothed woman sit on the ground facing each other (Joannides, *Titian to 1518*, 193-201). David Jaffé recognizes that the depiction of nude male and clothed female is an inversion of the usual pastoral formula and has supposed that the exposure of her *camicia*—really her underclothes—suggests that she also is in a state of undress (*Titian*, cat. 8, p. 88). Alfonso's own youthful naked jaunt through the streets of Ferrara was certainly an aberration. Botticelli's *Mars and Venus* is, of course, an obvious comparison, although in that case, both are divine characters.

<sup>122</sup> In 1540, a gentleman and Florentine exile named Priscianese writes a letter detailing a supper he attended at Titian's house. His evocation of a warm, festive evening, with its “wine, women, and song” epitomizes the essence of the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*: “To the Very Reverend Missier Ludovico Becci and his [friend,] Missier Luigi del Riccio, On 1 August I was invited to celebrate the kind of Bacchanal which, I know not why, is called *ferrar agosto*, so that for most of the evening I argued about it in a delightful garden belonging to Missier Titiano Vecellio, the excellent Venetian painter (as everyone knows), a person truly suited to spice every worthy feast with his pleasantries.... As soon as the sun set, this part of the sea teemed with gondolas adorned with beautiful women and resounded with the varied harmony of voice and musical instruments which accompanied our delightful supper until midnight...” (quoted in Chambers and Pullan, *Venice: A Documentary History*, 180).

## BEHIND THE VEIL

As in Mantegna's Bacchanalian engravings, Titian reveals every level of inebriation in the *Andrians*, from the slightly merry to the insensate.<sup>123</sup> But the impression is less of a drunken debauch than the pleasant aura of a harmless afternoon of relaxation. Plutarch had himself evoked this sense of Bacchus' role with his statement that "...the task of Aphrodite is not carnal intercourse, nor is that of Dionysus strong drink and wine, but rather the friendly feeling, the longing, the association, and the intimacy, one with another, which they create in us through these agencies."<sup>124</sup> As an image that a princely ruler should like to convey, it accords not with a touting of hedonistic principles and flaunting of sexual license but rather a message of liberality and magnanimity. Alfonso proves himself to be a leader who can establish such wealth, security, and peace that his lands have become a new Arcadia, enjoying the vast pleasures of a renewed Golden Age. He is the patron whom Horace urged to live in the moment and experience the rewards of stability:

Why is fortune mine, if I may not use it? He who, from regard to his heir, pinches and spares overmuch is next door to a madman. I shall begin the drinking and the scattering of flowers, and shall suffer you, if you will, to think me reckless. What a miracle cannot the wine-cup work! It unlocks secrets, bids hopes be fulfilled, thrusts the coward into the field, takes the load from anxious hearts, teaches new arts. The flowing bowl—whom has it not made eloquent? Whom has it not made free even amid pinching poverty?<sup>125</sup>

Alfonso's court was a refuge of poets, musicians, and artists, as well as humanists and other intellectuals. As a haven for creativity, it is not unreasonable to guess that some discussion about

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<sup>123</sup> Lowinsky, "Music in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*," 224.

<sup>124</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. II: *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* 156, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). Moscus was commissioned to translate Plutarch's *Moralia* as well. See M. Fehl in Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie*, 124.

<sup>125</sup> Horace, *Epistles* I.5.12-20, in *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, trans. Fairclough, 281-283.

the qualities of imagination and the nature of emulation and *ingenio* occurred at court (as it had at Alfonso's ancestor Leonello d'Este's court some eighty years before).<sup>126</sup> Among writers like Ludovico Ariosto and Pietro Bembo, it is not surprising either to find that these ideas should be framed in terms of the ideal of the mythological pastoral, where genius could be nursed in the bosom of nature from a milk tempered with a little of the juice of the vine. As Horace had expressed:

[N]o poems can please long, nor live, which are written by water-drinkers. From the moment Liber enlisted brain-sick poets among his Satyrs and Fauns, the sweet Muses, as a rule, have had a scent of wine about them in the morning. Homer, by his praises of wine, is convicted as a winebibber. [...] 'To the sober I shall assign [a life of business]; the stern I shall debar from song.' Ever since I put forth this edict poets have never ceased to vie in wine-drinking by night, to reek of it by day.<sup>127</sup>

And further: "The whole chorus of poets loves the grove and flees the town, duly loyal to Bacchus, who finds joy in sleep and shade. [...] [H]ere, amid the waves of life, amid the tempests of the town, am I to deign to weave together words which shall awake the music of the lyre."<sup>128</sup> In Titian's painting, the dancers clad in *all'antica* dress crown themselves with wreaths, just as Silenus and Bacchus received their garlands in Mantegna's *Bacchanals*. There is self-consciousness in these gestures of the painter's manifestation of the pastoral: as poetry becomes painting, the artist takes possession of the same self-aware features of inventiveness and genius. The poet's habit of reflecting on his own process translates into the artist's contemplation of his own particular methods. The fuel of genius is no longer merely described, but is held up at the

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<sup>126</sup> For example, Pietro Bembo and Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola (1470-1533), the nephew and successor of Giovanni, engaged in an epistolary debate regarding the question of imitation and emulation between 1512 and 1513 (a transcription can be found at <[http://www.italica.rai.it/scheda.php?monografia=rinascimento&scheda=rinascimento\\_cento\\_opere\\_pico](http://www.italica.rai.it/scheda.php?monografia=rinascimento&scheda=rinascimento_cento_opere_pico)>). See Marek, "Trying to Look at Paintings with Contemporary Eyes," 71.

<sup>127</sup> Horace, *Epistles* I.19.2-11, trans. Fairclough, 381.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, II.2.77-78, 84-86, p. 431.

center of Titian's painting: the amber globe of wine. The painter realizes Propertius' words: "Bacchus, you provide fertile ground for Phoebus."<sup>129</sup>

Of course, Alfonso's painting gallery was not a glorification of drunken artists by any means. As we have seen, the pastoral world was not purely a *locus amoenis*, or land of unadulterated bliss. The vision of Arcadia did not entail optimistic blindness, but inherently brought to mind the contrast with real life. The desire for beauty was not an effort at escapism, but a more admirable and ambitious drive toward heavenly communion with God. As Equicola stated, the good and the beautiful are the same; love, being a desire for beauty, must be divine love.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, "pastoral topoi supply a poetic correlative for emotions reflecting sadness and tranquility, permanence and displacement, nostalgia and withdrawal. They correspond to the intellectual tensions and skepticism of the age."<sup>131</sup> Mantegna's *Bacchanals* may depict that sense of threat more literally, as the battle between the Tritons rages. Yet even the Camerino's more peaceful imagery cannot disguise the ephemerality of joy. As Lorenzo de' Medici expressed in his "Canzona di Bacco": live for today, because one never knows how long happiness (like youth and beauty) will last. Conversely, the attention to sensuality, pleasure, and amorous passion in the paintings necessarily confronts the reality of moral and decorous behavior, so that each admirer of the works must consider how to balance his or her own earthly desires with appropriate restraint.

Using Bacchus and Venus as the basis for this exploration of an Arcadian world brings into play the affiliation of Bacchic themes with fertility. The literal reproductive function of the

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<sup>129</sup> *Elegies* IV.6, trans. Katz, 383.

<sup>130</sup> *Libro di nature d'amore*: love is "quella cupidità per la quale semo tirati a generare et parturire nel bello" ("that desire by which we are drawn to procreate and give birth in beauty") (quoted in Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, 114).

<sup>131</sup> Kennedy, "Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of the Pastoral," 28.

imagery was understood from the ancient phrase “Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venere.”<sup>132</sup> We know that wine and feasting fuel the flames of love, and that Bacchus especially is a protector of fecundity. Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods* relates to the aphorism, since both Ceres and Bacchus are there to foster the sensual passions of the gods.<sup>133</sup> The motto might rightly apply to the whole cycle, as all the paintings show variations on the theme of drinking, eating, and lovemaking. The theme was alluded to several times in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, and Equicola noted the idea in his *Libro di natura d’amore*, written around 1509: “...[A]fferme non temerariamente dicersi Venere esser gionta con Baccho, donde Terentio disse, senza Cerere et Baccho è fredda Venere.”<sup>134</sup> As long as Bacchus and Ceres are present, love will not grow cold. So even in winter, represented perhaps in Bellini’s “midwinter” feast of the solstice, passion will keep them all warm. As Battista Fiera said of a fresco in the Gonzagan Palazzo di Revere, it showed a garden guarded by the “ithyphallic one” (Priapus) that would not freeze even in January.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> The most recognized ancient sources for this aphorism were Terence’s *Eunuchus* IV.732-735, and the reference to this in Cicero’s *De natura deorum* II.23-60. Polydore Vergil (c. 1470-1555) included the idiom in his popular anthology of proverbs published in Venice in 1498: *Proverbiorum Libellus (Adagia)* no. 134. See Denys Hay, *Polydore Vergil: Renaissance Historian and Man of Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952); Wilk, “Tullio Lombardo’s ‘Double-Portrait’ Reliefs,” appendix B; Anderson, “The Provenance of Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*,” 274-280. Terence’s play was performed at least twice in Ferrara: 1499 and 1503. See Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 67.

<sup>133</sup> Jaynie Anderson proposes that the figures at the right of the *Feast* show, in fact, Liber, and not Priapus, approaching the sleeping figure, who would be Venus, representing an awakening of Love. She asserts that Bellini intentionally depicted Liber—the Italian agrarian god of wine and fertility—and not Bacchus, and that Liber’s attributes include an enlarged phallus, the scythe (which can be seen hanging in the tree above the sleeping figure), and a flowered crown, according to Varro (recorded in Augustine, *City of God*), Virgil (*Georgics* I.7), Lucretius 5.14, and *Fasti* 5.345. Ceres, she argues, is suggested by the offerings of bowls of fruit (“The Provenance of Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*,” 265-287). Bacchus and Liber were, however, clearly indistinguishable in the Renaissance. The scythe, moreover, is linked with Priapus in the woodcut illustration of his altar in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, fol. m6. It is curious to note the pairing of Liber and Libera in this context. Augustine variously calls Libera Ceres and Venus, but she is also, of course, identified with Ariadne, as in Ovid, *Fasti* III.512.

<sup>134</sup> *Libro* (Venice, 1526), fol. 111v, quoted by Anderson, “The Provenance of Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*,” 275. Equicola discusses the Pseudo-Aristotelean *Problemata*’s assertions relating wine as an aphrodisiac because of its qualities of heat and air. See Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 68.

<sup>135</sup> Fiera describes a cycle of paintings by Mantegna decorating three chambers in a palazzo on the Po, thought by modern scholars to be that of the Revere (which was described also by Filarete): 1) Venus and nymphs in a landscape; 2) Naiads dancing around a fountain, Ulysses and Nausicaa, and a Bacchanal; 3) allegorical imagery

But Bacchic juices also fuel the inner mind—the intellectual fertility—by stimulating the source of inspiration. The noble inspiration that is translated through the Dionysian frenzy is a gift to the poet and artist alike. As we have seen, Apollo and Bacchus were not so far apart; both could “grant... the two principle gifts that illumine and refresh the spirit: Apollo, light and the lyre; Bacchus, wine and fragrance.”<sup>136</sup> It was Macrobius in his *Saturnalia* who tells us the gods were, in Ficino’s words, “indivisible companions and almost the same”:<sup>137</sup>

‘What I’ve said about Apollo can be taken to apply to Liber too. For Aristotle [really Aristocles] ... advances many proofs to support his claim that Apollo and father Liber are one and the same, including the fact that [there is in Thrace] a shrine consecrated to Liber from which oracles issue. In this shrine the soothsayers drink a great deal of unmixed wine before pronouncing their prophecies.... The Lacedaemonians also wear the ivy garlands of Bacchic cult in the rites their perform for Apollo.... Similarly, though the Boeotians say that Mount Parnassus is sacred to Apollo, they maintain the cult of the Delphic oracle and the caves of Bacchus in the same place at the same time, as consecrated to a single god, so that sacrifice is offered both to Apollo and Liber on the same mountain.... Every other year on Mount Parnassus they celebrate the rites of Bacchus.... And lest anyone suppose that Mount Parnassus is dedicated to two distinct gods, Euripides also writes... indicating that Apollo and Liber are one and the same god.’<sup>138</sup>

The two were a blended divinity—a *numine mixto*; the aura of inspiration that moved through an artist is their shared afflatus. For the humanist composer of Alfonso’s picture gallery and for the

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(Battisti, “Il Mantegna e la Letteratura Classica,” 26; Chambers, Martineau, and Signorini, “Mantegna and the Men of Letters,” 20, n. 76).

<sup>136</sup> Panofsky, *A Mythological Painting by Poussin in the Nationalmuseum Stockholm* (Stockholm: Nationalmusei Skriftserie, no. 5, 1960), 37.

<sup>137</sup> Ficino, *De vita* III.24; also translated as “brothers and inseparable companions.”

<sup>138</sup> Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.18.1-5, in *Saturnalia Books 1-2*, vol. 1, trans. Robert A. Kaster (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 2011).

painters as well, the pastoral theme captured this process of engaging “with inner self-reflexive meditation on the artistic process, the composition of poetry, and the endeavors of art.”<sup>139</sup>

Titian’s remarkable, unparalleled portrayal of Bacchus—literally buoyant, floating in the air—becomes the epitome of this inspiring and inspired god (fig. 6.34, 35).<sup>140</sup> Titian surpasses Michelangelo’s spiraling Bacchus with one that twists and tilts without regard to stability—or gravity. The pink raiment flying behind him ruffles in his own breeze like a flag heralding his arrival. The Bacchic energy that lifts men’s spirits and allows the mind to soar is here manifested literally in a flying god.<sup>141</sup> Titian captures what Catullus implied by writing that “on another part of the tapestry young Bacchus was flitting about.”<sup>142</sup> The depiction of an airborne Bacchus translates a perception of the heat of wine being like a rising flame, here mimicked by Bacchus’ rosy mantle. Plato had said that wine “warms the soul as well as the body”<sup>143</sup>; Plutarch added:

[W]ine inspirits some men, and raises a confidence and assurance in them, but not such as is haughty and odious, but pleasing and agreeable. Thus they say that Aeschylus composed his tragedies over a bottle, and that all his plays... were Bacchus’s. For wine (according to Plato), heating the soul together with the body, makes the body pliable, quick, and active, and opens the passages; while the fancies draw in discourse with boldness, and daring.

[...] [T]he ancients called the god the Freer and Loosener, and thought him considerable in divination; not, as Euripides says, because he

<sup>139</sup> Kennedy, *Jacopo Sannazaro and the Uses of Pastoral*, 35.

<sup>140</sup> There are few similar figures, but we might compare him to Piero di Cosimo’s flying Perseus in *The Liberation of Andromeda*, c. 1510-1513, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Titian’s Bacchus also bears some resemblance to the torch-lighting figure atop an elephant in Mantegna’s fifth Triumph of Caesar canvas, *The Elephants (Trumpeters, youths leading oxen, elephants with attendants)*, c. 1500-1506, Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court.

<sup>141</sup> Recall Giovanni di Paolo’s 1444 illustration of Bacchus as a winged Cupid in Dante’s *Paradiso*. Pope-Hennessy, *Paradiso*, fol. 152r, p. 47.

<sup>142</sup> *Carmina* LXIV.251: “At parte ex alia florens volitabat Iacchus.”

<sup>143</sup> Plato, *Timaeus* 60A, trans. Benjamin Jowett, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, 1185.

makes men raging mad, but because he looseth and frees the soul from all base distrustful fear, and puts them in a condition to speak truth freely to one another.<sup>144</sup>

These were the concepts that would allow the mid-sixteenth-century emblematisers to come up with aphorisms such as “vinum ingenii fomes,” “wine kindles genius,” accompanied by an illustration of an imagined ancient statue in Amyclae showing a Bacchus with wings.<sup>145</sup> The elevating conception of inspiration was captured in this notion of Bacchus “psilax”—that is, winged—which existed in antiquity and was revived in the Renaissance.<sup>146</sup> In his commentary on Alciati’s *Emblemata* 23, “Vino prudentiam augeri,” Claude Mignault cited a reference to Plato, quoting, “by moderate and honourable relaxation while drinking, the souls of men are restored and renewed for undertaking again the duties of sobriety; it makes them visibly more joyful and renders them more fit to renew their strivings.”<sup>147</sup> In many ways this could be another motto, like those carved in Lombardo’s marbles, for Alfonso’s Camerino: taken in moderation, wine relaxes and brings joy to those who deserve respite from care and duty, sharpens the wits, and enhances the eloquence of the gifted.

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<sup>144</sup> Plutarch, *Symposiacs* VII.10.715 E-F, trans. Richard Chenevix Trench, in *The Complete Works of Plutarch*, vol. 3 (New York: Crowell, 1909).

<sup>145</sup> Hadrianus Junius, *Emblemata* (1565), XXXIII: “Uviferum Bromium, volucrum sed praepete penna, / Quid tacitae posuistis Amyclae? / Tollit humo ingenium Bacchus, mentem erigit altam, / Pegaseaque velut vehit ala” (“Peaceful Amyclae, you set up a statue of Bromius [Bacchus] the grape-bearer: but why as a flying creature with swift wings? Bacchus takes inventive genius from the soil, and elevates the mind, and carries it on wings like Pegasus’s” (<<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/emblem.php?id=FJUb034>>). See M. A. Screech, “The Winged Bacchus (Pausanias, Rabelais and Later Emblematisers),” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 260.

<sup>146</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece* III (Laconia).xix.6: “The natives worship the Amyclaeian god and Dionysus, surnaming the latter, quite correctly I think, *psilax*. For *psila* is Doric for wings, and wine uplifts and lightens their spirit no less than wings do birds” (trans. Jones and Omerod). Screech asserts that this passage had gone unnoticed before Rabelais’s *Quart Livre* (1552), LXV (“The Winged Bacchus,” 260).

<sup>147</sup> Screech, “The Winged Bacchus,” n. 3.



Alfonso often fulfilled his need for rest and relaxation at his many country estates, called *delizie* or “delights.” As his predecessors had done, Alfonso cherished these retreats and invested greatly in their decoration. Though now lost, the many Estense villas were brimming with fanciful paintings. As Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti recorded in his *De triumphis religionis* of 1497, the court and its outlying properties were “a bright, charming, and cheerful setting, with shining marble, and gaudily painted brick walls, babbling springs, gilded flowers and fragrant herbs, and the happy sounds of gracious people talking, singing, and playing musical instruments.”<sup>148</sup> At the Boschetto, on a small island in the Po, Alfonso built a villa called “Belvedere” with a garden and *bosco* in which he maintained his animal collection. Contemporaries recount Alfonso’s fondness for the residence, where his days were spent in “princely leisure.”<sup>149</sup> Dosso Dossi had an extensive role in decorating the rooms of the various *delizie* with painted friezes, as at the Via Coperta in the city. This spirit of delight and pleasure appears to be the mood that Alfonso sought to recreate in the Camerino, where one feels one is out in the wild again, with gods and nymphs and satyrs, enjoying rustic freedom, apart from the strictures and obligations of court, politics, and governing. So in his “camerini nostri,” Alfonso established a place of inner retreat, or happy escape, where he could go with friends to have a glass of wine, play the lute or *lira da braccio*, and engage in amusing conversation.<sup>150</sup> As one

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<sup>148</sup> Gundersheimer, *Art and Life at the Court of Ercole I d’Este*, 25.

<sup>149</sup> Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 44-45.

<sup>150</sup> Alfonso was personally accomplished at the viol, and like his sister in her Mantuan Studiolo, would have invited privileged guests into this sanctum to relax and create music together. He actually performed on the *viola da braccio* in a piece accompanying the performance of Plautus’ *La Cassina* during the festivities accompanying his marriage to Lucrezia Borgia in 1502 (Bradford, *Lucrezia Borgia*, 163). For Isabella’s taste in music, see Rose Marie San Juan, “The Court Lady’s Dilemma: Isabella d’Este and Art Collecting in the Renaissance,” *Oxford Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (1991): 71. As revealed in Castiglione’s *The Courtier*, the invocation of delight, entertainment, and pleasure was a crucial part of court life. Castiglione also included a discourse on the essential benefit of laughter. “[E]verything which provokes laughter exalts a man’s spirit and gives him pleasure, and for a while enables him to forget the trials and tribulations of which life is full.” Therefore “all kinds and conditions of men willingly... seek solace in light recreation. [...] Nor were grave philosophers averse to such displays, and they would often, both at

biographer wrote: “There were always entertainments, including chess and other games; but not these alone, for there was also music, and readings from romances, especially since the poetry of Count Matteo Maria Boiardo was much appreciated as were the first proofs of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*; likewise comedies and tragedies were read, some of which had already been staged, and stories from the Old Testament.”<sup>151</sup> This was a place in which he could fulfill his princely duties by offering *delectatione*, *recreatione*, and *hilaritas* to his guests.<sup>152</sup> The harmonious mood of an all-embracing landscape (pointedly enforced by Titian and Dosso’s repainting of Bellini’s background) established the desired look and feel of the cycle.<sup>153</sup> Alfonso clearly wanted to

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spectacles... or at banquets, relax their minds which were weary from their exalted discourse and inspired thoughts.” Laughter is, moreover, understood as a particularly human trait, setting us apart, and above, mere animals; “it is nearly always the sign of a certain inward hilarity of the spirit, which is naturally attracted to pleasure and desirous of rest and recreation” (*The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull, rev. ed. [New York: Penguin Books, 1976], 155). Wine consumption was also an essential part of any diet, and especially amongst the wealthy courtiers. Alfonso had a keen interest in collecting, and also making, drinking vessels. In 1517, Dosso was paid “per tanti lui spese in Venezia in tre bichier et broche per il studio nove del Signore” (Goodgal, “The Camerino of Alfonso I d’Este,” 175; Shearman, “Alfonso d’Este’s Camerino,” 216).

<sup>151</sup> Agostino Mosti, quoted in Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 30, citing Angelo Solerti, “La vita ferrarese nella prima metà del secolo decimosesto descritta da Agostino Mosti,” *Atti e memorie della R. deputazione di storia patria per le provincie di Romagna* 10, 3rd ser. (1892): 171.

<sup>152</sup> Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 130-133, 156-157.

<sup>153</sup> I find the idea of the contiguous ordering of *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the *Andrians*, and the *Feast of the Gods* very convincing, since the landscape—while not strictly conjoined—forms a very pleasant and harmonious parabolic wave. The trees at the right of the *Bacchus and Ariadne* meld with the trees at the left of the *Andrians*. The cavorting satyrs and Silenus on the left of the *Andrians* also form an iconographic link with the descending train of Bacchic revelers in the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, who unusually approach from right to left—as if from the other painting. The links between the right edge of the *Andrians* and the left background of the *Feast of the Gods* are even more pronounced since it is known that Titian repainted Bellini’s background (after Dosso’s earlier attempt) to harmonize more fully with his composition and style. (The final touches were possibly made during the artist’s prolonged stint in Ferrara in the spring of 1529.) Titian added the mountainside, which descends into the grassy knoll in his *Andrians*. The obscure pool of water, with its waterfall and stream bending to the left edge of Bellini’s painting behind Silenus and the Satyr, were also added, I would argue, to merge with Titian’s own river of wine in his painting (which does not actually flow down directly from the sleeping god on the hillside, but from the adjacent painting). Perhaps, in other words, Titian carries the metaphor of the river of wine stemming from Bacchus himself more literally, by suggesting that the river flows from the depths of the grotto where Bacchus himself was reared, that is from the Nysian peak at the top of Mt. Parnassus. The sleeping god in the *Andrians* may still represent the source, which then is understood to seep down through the earth, to emerge in the spring, and flow back into the world. Behind it all is the stretching expanse of ocean: the blue of the sea at the left edge of Naxos appears to curl up around the distant shore all the way to the beaches of Andros, and from there around the far side of Mt.

recreate a country hide-away within this “private” room: a vision of the pleasure he felt in an idyllic nature.<sup>154</sup>

Further enhancing the connection between the depicted realm in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* and the princely *delizie* outside was the insertion of the large guinea fowl in the tree at the right, mentioned nowhere in the literary sources for the story in the painting. Rather, the bird originates in other classical texts associating guinea fowl with the Ferrarese River Po.<sup>155</sup> The importance of this river to the success and vitality of the Este duchy was never out of mind, and Alfonso’s own fascination with the famous waterway led to his development of his recreational villa Belvedere on a mid-stream island. The mythological fall of Phaethon and the subsequent mourning and metamorphosis of his sisters, the Heliades, into poplars and the annual shedding of their tears of amber were all associated with the mythical river Eridanus, later identified with the Po of northern Italy.<sup>156</sup> The guinea fowl, or African bird, as it was sometimes called, was also famed to shed those same glowing tears, enhancing the bird’s mythic, phoenix-like aura. So Alfonso purportedly stocked his island getaway with guinea fowl and the terrain was naturally dotted with its native poplars, creating upon the isle the dream of a living antiquity, with its breathing stand of female trees, still dropping their sun-hardened clumps of grief-filled sap. Anthony Colantuono argues that in Titian’s *Andrians*, the River Andros has been metamorphosed into the local River Po, with its particular importance for the Estense realm and

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Parnassus, to the land hosting the Feast of the Gods. Together the three paintings appear to form one island, a mystical, conglomerate space.

<sup>154</sup> Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 45.

<sup>155</sup> See Anthony Colantuono, “Tears of Amber: Titian’s *Andrians*, the River Po and the Iconology of Difference,” in *Phaethon’s Children: The Este Court and Its Culture in Early Modern Ferrara*, ed. Dennis Looney and Deanna Shemek (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), 229, 232-235.

<sup>156</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II.319ff; Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines* I.11. Pontano had also written about the metamorphosis of the poplars in his *Eridanus*. Kidwell, *Sannazaro and Arcadia*, 140.

its added layers of nostalgia and remembrance. In consequence, Alfonso's personal realm becomes fused with the ancient one, becoming the mythical domain of plenty, with flowing wine, pleasure, and security, where courtiers can meet with nymphs, *belle donne* with satyrs. This reverie might not always have been an accurate reflection of the war-ravaged region, yet it was a laudable dream. Titian embodied the vision of a Golden Age; the elevated glass carafe of glowing amber wine illuminating the center of the painting harkens back to the luster of amber tears shed by the surrounding poplars and fowl.

The viewer's first reaction to this idyllic vision is sensual. The paintings enact all five senses simultaneously, stimulating his own: taste, in the drinking of wine and biting of apples; smell, in the imagined odors of fruit, meat, and sweat; sight, in the bursting colors and movement; touch, in the many sensuous gestures and realistic textures; and hearing, in the clanging, piercing instruments, in the written and sung canon, and in the babbling streams and pouring wine.<sup>157</sup> But instead of becoming mere "pleasing trifles" or *parerga*, the works were elevated by their *all'antica* mythological subject matter.<sup>158</sup> The blatant pleasures of these Bacchanals provided a venue in which to explore physical experiences and sensations while protecting the viewer from outright participation and self-identification by displacing those experiences onto another world. This was not a traditional mirror of princes, in which the ruler ensconced in his *studiolo* was intended to see himself (or at least his ideal self) reflected in the stalwart virtues and noble strengths of *uomini famosi* or the Muses. Rather, the imagery shows the viewer the inevitable, and even necessary, sensual forces in human nature—drinking, eating, dancing, singing, sleeping, urinating, lusting, consummating, and loving—within the safe

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<sup>157</sup> Goffen, *Titian's Women*, 115.

<sup>158</sup> See E. H. Gombrich, "The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape," in *Norm and Form*, 4th ed. (London: Phaidon Press, 1985), 114. See also the discussion of the term "parerga" in Fiorenza, *Dosso Dossi*, 7.

confines of mythological fantasy. There was enough fantasy to provoke an elated response but enough reality to ensure empathy and comprehension. Indeed, the final painting in the series, in its legibly written notes and lyrics, calls the viewers to join in—like the reaching youth who pours wine in the painting—in order to know, truly, “what drinking is.” And drinking is more than wine in one’s mouth and alcohol in one’s blood and brain. Wine is the gift of a god, and as such opens the drinker to experience the divine. In order to share fully in these characters’ epiphany—their union with the gods and the world that is invisible—ultimately the viewer too must drink and sing.<sup>159</sup> Just as the visitors to Alfonso’s Camerino entered from the world into this room, they also passed through the liminal realm into the transformative world of Bacchus and Venus.

The play of antique and modern would have appealed to Alfonso’s appreciation of the intellectual contest of *paragone*.<sup>160</sup> This was a place of retreat and sensual pleasure, but a pleasure that derived also from thoughtful discourse and learning. In deriving the paintings from literary sources, a lively discussion comparing the visual to the literary would have been provoked. As Baldassare Castiglione would articulate in his *Book of the Courtier*, the art of *paragone* was a highly valued exercise at court.<sup>161</sup> The question of imitation, or *emulatio*, was intriguing as well, comparing art to nature, artist to God, and new master to old. As Petrarch had previously instructed: “A proper imitator should take care that what he writes resemble the

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<sup>159</sup> See Fehl, “The Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 81-87 (including Appendix I).

<sup>160</sup> Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,’” chap. 4, *passim*, esp. 193-198, 218-222.

<sup>161</sup> Castiglione, *The Courtier*, 96-101. See also Robert W. Hanning, “Castiglione’s Verbal Portrait: Structures and Strategies,” in *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real in Renaissance Culture*, ed. Hanning and David Rosand (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 131-133.

original without reproducing it.”<sup>162</sup> Alfonso’s artists were not instructed to follow the texts absolutely, but to create from them novel and contemporary works of art—*historie*, as Alberti called them.<sup>163</sup> Titian, moreover, introduced a personal *paragone* with Bellini, by adding his own version of a reclining female figure to the *Andrians* (uncalled for by the text), in the same spot as Lotis in the *Feast*, and emphasizing her sumptuously radiant, naked body.<sup>164</sup> The contrast to the old-fashioned, stiff Lotis would not have gone unnoticed.

The painters’ ability to make visible the invisible, mixing gods and nature, nymphs and humans, and to materialize at once all the senses would have perfectly captured the contemporary viewer’s sophisticated appreciation of irony and subtle *paragone*. The synaesthesia encouraged a comparison of the senses themselves.<sup>165</sup> Titian also made antique

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<sup>162</sup> Petrarch, *Le familiare*, trans. as the *Letters of Petrarch*, as quoted in Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,’” 222. See Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 95; and Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie*, 25-37, for her discussion of contemporary art theory regarding “imitatio” and the ways in which ancient *ekphraseis* were used.

<sup>163</sup> Alberti, *On Painting* Book III, trans. Spencer, 90, 95. Williams, “‘Le donne, i cavalier, l’arme, gli amori,’” 223. As part of this practice of emulation, Titian may have borrowed far more heavily from antique visual precedent than usually accorded him, if we look back at Bacchic sarcophagi in relation to his Camerino paintings. At the far left of the Rospigliosi sarcophagus of the Indian Triumph of Bacchus (a source of information, no doubt, for Raphael’s version) a beautiful maenad with mantle billowing gracefully steps into the scene, with an almost unsupportable leaning stride. She looks to be the source for Titian’s dancing Andrian in blue: now in reverse, but with the same sleeveless chiton, twice-belted and gathered around the middle, and the same leaning body, in one long diagonal from her striding leg back to her head. The man kneeling at the foot of the elephant in the Rospigliosi relief is a prototype for the kneeling Silenus figure guzzling from a jug at the left of Titian’s *Andrians*. The tall Pan-type male standing before the panthers is an example, in reverse, of the open-legged stance and tilted and twisted torso that characterizes Titian’s Bacchus in his famous leap as well as the struggling Bacchant ensnared with snakes in the *Bacchus and Ariadne*. The reversals may suggest that Titian was aware of the relief through an engraving. Ariadne’s vertically spiraling pose, seen from behind, is also like that of the twisting maenad on another Bacchic sarcophagus in the Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, and like the calmly statuesque maenad seen from the back at the far right edge of the Rospigliosi relief. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 80; engraved by Jacopo Francia, c. 1506, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. The sleeping nymph, of course, is directly in line with the many sleeping Ariadnes awaiting discovery on scores of ancient sarcophagi. So it may very well be that Titian was cognizant of some comparable antique Triumph of Bacchus to which he looked when devising his own Bacchic spectacles.

<sup>164</sup> Fehl proposed that Titian’s guinea fowl may also be placed so as to compete with Bellini’s pheasant. The guinea was newly imported to Italy, and “its flesh [was] considered to be superior to that of the pheasant” (“The Hidden Genre,” n. 33)

<sup>165</sup> Goffen, *Titian’s Women*, 115.

sculptures appear as living flesh; a *Laocoön*-derived Bacchant struggles with a writhing snake; maenads from ancient reliefs are now freed from stony backgrounds, colorful cloths billowing and cymbals clanging.<sup>166</sup> Titian did not end up recreating paintings supposed to have been made by ancient artists, but actually reimagining the scenes from which that ancient artist could have made his images. The *paragone* of poetry and painting was played out before the eyes of Alfonso and his guests, painting surely “winning” for being more vivid, alive, and truthful.

The fact that these living antiquities are Bacchic is part of what makes them so real. But the emphasis on the pleasures of Bacchus and Venus is not a concession to immoral desires, but rather involves the ennobled interrelationship of love, beauty, and *voluptas* that we have seen was a preoccupation of Neoplatonic thinkers.<sup>167</sup> The viewer’s confrontation with sensual and beautiful imagery creates a physical reaction in him that must be subsumed to a higher order of existence, to the contemplation of the *summum bonum* of “true philosophical pleasure.”<sup>168</sup> The epithalamic exultation of love and desire conveys the ennobling of sexuality in the name of Bacchic fecundity, heralding the forces of *Necessitas* that keep the world animate. The convivial *symposia*, likewise, take the physical pleasures of the body and transform them into the rightful and deserved *otium* of the just ruler. As one humanist stated: “Neither Plato nor Libanius the rhetor denied themselves the joy of banquets and symposia. Even Cato the censor, the severest

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<sup>166</sup> Alfonso may even have owned a small copy of the famous *Laocoön* statue, discovered in Rome in 1506; Isabella was known to have had two made of bronze. Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 38-39; Rosand, “The Portrait, the Courtier, and Death,” in *Castiglione: The Ideal and the Real*, 91-129, esp. 104-107.

<sup>167</sup> While humanism in the Veneto had a different tone from that in Florence, by this time many of the same ideas were circulating among the courts. Ferrara was particularly impacted by Pietro Bembo and Mario Equicola, as well as the long-lived schools there and in Mantua, as well as the University of Padua. If anything, Venetian Neoplatonism was a little more relaxed, romantic, and nostalgic, emphasizing Beauty in the world. “This positive view of Man, Nature, and sensuous beauty leaves its mark on Neoplatonism in Northern Italy and also on Venetian painting of the age. Antiquity was approached more directly, sensuously, rather than by way of reasoning” (Pochat, “Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto and Petrarchism,” 4).

<sup>168</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 258.

of moralists, after long hours of government work would party with friends for two whole nights. It is therefore right to yield to the worthy pleasure that even the severest philosophers allowed themselves.”<sup>169</sup>

The paintings thus reveal the elevating and purifying process by which love ascends to a purpose above mere fulfillment of hedonistic pleasure. As we have discussed, Ariadne’s rescue by Love validates the perseverance of the spirit, and proves the reward of the good and the blessed life with the world everlasting. The ecstasy experienced by the tipsy Andrians (and all who are lucky enough to encounter the gift of Bacchus) correlates to the bliss of transcendence achieved in a literal sense through wine, which models the perfect union, or *hieros gamos*, with a higher power that is attained in divine rapture. In the *Worship of Venus* the putti play out earthly and sensual desires while Venus draws them to more elevated aspirations.<sup>170</sup> Moreover, the manner in which Bacchic imagery had been successfully harnessed over the course of the fifteenth century to herald nuptial themes shows its influence in the chosen iconography. Though Alfonso’s own marriage was long since consummated when the paintings were first programmed by Equicola in 1511, the emphasis on marriage and love was not irrelevant. On the contrary, the self-presentation by a prince of a chaste wife and perfect marriage was an essential part of the imagemaking of a magnanimous and authoritative ruler. The irony that he was her third husband and that she was already labelled as promiscuous (and worse) before their marriage would not have gone unnoticed. Yet the fabrication of amorous bliss was part of the

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<sup>169</sup> An anonymous *Oratio ad Convivium*, fol. 38r, MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Vat. Lat. 8750, quoted in D’Elia, *The Renaissance of Marriage*, 105.

<sup>170</sup> Ballarin, *Il camerino delle pitture di Alfonso I*, vol. 1, 49-353; see also Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 253, n. 9. Ballarin gives a Neoplatonic reading to the *Worship of Venus*, in which the ascent from bestial to divine love is conveyed through the statue of Venus as Venus-Urania, or celestial love. Wind likewise reads the cycle of Titian’s three paintings as a representation of the three progressive stages of Platonic love as outlined in Pietro Bembo’s *Gli Asolani*: chaotic love, represented by the *Worship of Venus (Cupids)*; harmonious love, in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*; and divine love, in the *Bacchus and Ariadne (Bellini’s Feast of the Gods)*, 60-61).



effect of the Camerino's imagery. Before her death in 1519 Lucrezia's presence would have been a part of the pleasure found in the Camerino and its message.<sup>171</sup> Her beauty, wit, intelligence, fertility, and chastity (whether real or not) would have been on display along with the paintings.<sup>172</sup>

The excellent ruler was one who could assure his own dynasty, foster security in his own land, feed his people, and enrich his soil. And a crucial part of ensuring a thriving dynasty was the successful production of heirs. The associations of Bacchus and his satyrs with fecundity and reproduction have been clearly established. In these paintings, such symbolism abounds. The childish *satyriscus* in the *Bacchus and Ariadne* and the urinating putto in the *Andrians* correlate with the hoards of putti in the *Worship of Venus*; the blatant emphasis on so many male children cannot have been mere happenstance. The choice, furthermore, of depicting Bacchus himself as a child in the *Feast of the Gods* assures the viewer that the god is present not to run amok through the crowds, nor to enact his famous savagery or revenge amongst these revelers (fig.

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<sup>171</sup> Lucrezia had her own bevy of musicians and composers in her direct employ, including one singer named Dionisio (Dionixio) from Mantua, and was a fan of rustic *villotte*, poetic amorous *frottole*, and secular songs in Spanish, her mother tongue. Secular songs tended to be about love, and could be bawdy, with many double entendres (William F. Prizer, "Music in Ferrara and Mantua at the Time of Dosso Dossi: Interrelations and Influences," in *Dosso's Fate*, 295-296).

<sup>172</sup> Of course, Lucrezia was not entirely chaste, having carried on a prolonged liaison with Pietro Bembo from 1502 to 1505. Lucrezia's death soon after giving birth would not have meant an end to such pleasures either. Alfonso maintained his virility with other beauties, especially Laura Dianti, with whom he also had children. She too had an entourage of poets and artists who likewise contributed to the vitality of the court. Bayer, "Dosso's Public," 46. Like so many courtly women (remember that Castiglione centers the evening of *Libro del cortigiano* on the figure of Elisabetta Gonzaga, and Pietro Bembo's *Gli asolani* focuses on the court around Caterina Cornaro), they gathered scintillating humanists and all of their conversation around themselves. These women may have been relatively cloistered within their chambers, but these glowed with life: with music, games, humor, and recitations, shared with friends and visitors. Women were part of the world, at least the world they could touch from within their walls, helping to govern when their mates were away on campaigns, running their own finances and households, and corresponding with whomever they wished. Lucrezia's close relationship with Pietro Bembo likely influenced the tenor of courtly conversation and perhaps can itself be seen as a contribution to the themes of Alfonso's Camerino. For the relationship of the poet with Lucrezia, see Hugh Shankland, trans. and preface, *The Prettiest Love Letters in the World: Letters between Lucrezia Borgia and Pietro Bembo 1503 to 1519* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1987). Bembo dedicated his *Asolani* to Lucrezia in 1505. See Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, for his potential influence on the Camerino.

6.36). His gift of wine, which the little Bacchus is collecting in a glass pitcher, is a mollified one; the drunken gods gathering in this clearing are really quite well-behaved. Even the lustful gods restrain their libidos for the sake of decorum. The usually ithyphallic satyrs and erect Priapus politely hide their phalluses.

The surmounting frieze of ten canvases by Dosso Dossi depicting episodes from Virgil's *Aeneid* added another level of meaning. These tumultuous scenes may have been intended to serve as a sobering contrast to the pleasures depicted below, but they also recalled to the observer Bacchus' own militaristic connotations, and his reputation as a powerful warrior and just ruler, as told in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica* and followed in Valturi's *De re militari*.<sup>173</sup> Indeed, Diodorus knew Bacchus not solely as a god of wine and frenzy, but more importantly as a god of conquest, reputed for "maintaining strict discipline on his journeyings, treating all the inhabitants kindly, and, in a word, making it clear that his campaign was for the purpose of punishing the impious and of conferring benefits upon the entire human race."<sup>174</sup> A comparison to Christian crusades (and the bitter regret at the rise of the Turks) is unmistakable. The role of Vulcan, believed to have appeared in one of Dosso's paintings, also connoted militaristic allusions, as he actively created a suit of armor at the forge—recalling Alfonso's own passion for metalworking. The *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, too, would have stressed the role of Bacchus as triumphant victor, with the vanquished masses of booty, animals, men, and women

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<sup>173</sup> Jaffé, *Titian*, 102. Marek describes the militaristic virtues of Bacchus as understood in the Renaissance, and in Alfonso's court especially, by virtue of the three copies of Diodorus' text recorded in the library of Ercole I (*Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie*, 63-69). Alberti mentions "Dionysius" three times in the *De re aedificatoria* as a conquering, militaristic character; IV.2: "When Dionysius was marching his army through India, and his men were overcome by heat, he took them up into the mountains"; VII.2: "Dionysius gave a temple to every town he founded, and instituted certain religious rites during his expedition through India"; VIII.9: "Dionysius built a dockyard in the port of Syracuse containing one hundred and sixty buildings, each able to hold two ships, and an armory that in a few days could assemble more than one hundred and twenty thousand shields and an incredible number of swords" (trans. Rykwert, Leach, and Tavernor, pp. 97, 193, 286).

<sup>174</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* III.72, trans. C. H. Oldfather (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957-1967), as quoted in Marek, *Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie*, 63, n. 315.

surrounding him. Plutarch had described how Alexander the Great and Mark Antony after him employed such triumphal Dionysian imagery, not solely as a shallow token of their infamous personal license, but truly as a glorification of their military prowess.<sup>175</sup> Mark Antony was greeted in Ephesus as if he were Dionysus returned to conquer the East, with the local population dressed up in masquerade as the Bacchic *thiasos*:

The women met him dressed up like Bacchantes, and the men and boys like satyrs and fauns, and throughout the town nothing was to be seen but spears wreathed about with ivy, harps, flutes, and psalteries, while Antony in their songs was Bacchus, the Giver of Joy, and the Gentle. And so indeed he was to some but to far more the Devourer and the Savage; for he would deprive persons of worth the quality of their fortunes to gratify villains and flatterers....<sup>176</sup>

The plethora of ancient coins and gems portraying the Triumph of Bacchus (including the widely copied cameo in the Medici collection reproduced in the courtyard of their Florentine palazzo) attests to the pervasiveness of such imagery. The humanist and emblemist Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, resident of Ferrara and friend of Equicola, would himself write “that Bacchus brought not license but liberty, and that his arrival in India installed civility and well-being there.”<sup>177</sup> As just such a magnanimous ruler, Alfonso would have sought to bring peace and harmony in the wake of triumph—or at least to promote the image of doing so.<sup>178</sup> While Hercules had been an

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<sup>175</sup> Marek also notes five books about Alexander in Ercole’s library (*Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie*, 69). As Sheard notes: “Portraying heroes as Dionysus was already a form of panegyric in Roman antiquity, which readers of Roman historians during the Renaissance must have known” (“Antonio Lombardo’s Reliefs for Alfonso d’Este,” n. 111).

<sup>176</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Mark Antony*, 494-495, in *Plutarch’s Lives*, vol. II, trans. John Dyren, ed. Arthur Hugh Clough (New York: The Modern Library, 2001). See also Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* II.82.4: “He had previously given orders that he should be called the new Father Liber, and indeed in a procession at Alexandria he had impersonated Father Liber, his head bound with the ivy wreath, his person enveloped in the saffron robe of gold, holding in his hand the thyrsus, wearing the buskins, and riding in the Bacchic chariot” (trans. Frederick W. Shipley [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924], 225).

<sup>177</sup> Quoted by Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 38.

<sup>178</sup> Marek similarly reads the cycle of paintings as a panegyric to Alfonso’s leadership qualities as a benevolent pacifier and dispenser of justice, as well as a great conqueror (*Ekphrasis und Herrschersallegorie*, 60-71).

obvious icon for his father Ercole, perhaps Alfonso, the son, sought a unique mythological triumphator to be his paradigm. An attempt to acquire a *Bacchus* by Leonardo already in 1505 demonstrates an interest in the god from the onset of his dukedom, a sign that this was indeed his chosen ideal.<sup>179</sup> The series of paintings modeled on ancient *ekphraseis* not only trumpeted the glorious reign of Bacchus and his cohort, but also literally recreated an idea of an ancient princely gallery, in which only the most magnanimous and liberal ruler would live.

The symbol of such a Renaissance scholar-prince was the suitably outfitted *studiolo*. We do not know if Alfonso maintained this specific sort of room: small and isolated, filled with treasures and curiosities. One speculates about the use of the Camerino d'Alabastro, guessing that it housed cabinets or shelves and, accordingly, small objects and books, in addition to the

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Elsewhere, Marek notes the inscription on a portrait of Alfonso (private collection, Venice) that read “Alfonso duca terzo con il fiasco et il bichiere conservò il ducato di Ferrara e ricuperò quello di Modena e Reggio quando alli VI di Marzo MDXXXVII s'abovvò con Borbone nel finale” (“Alfonso I d'Este e il programma del suo studiolo,” in *Frescobaldi e il suo tempo nel quarto centenario della nascita* [Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1983], 81-82). To be able to conquer with the wine glass is certainly an admirable feat. See Sheard, “Antonio Lombardo's Reliefs for Alfonso d'Este,” 355, n. 111; Felton Gibbons, *Dosso and Battista Dossi: Court Painters at Ferrara* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 262-263, no. 183, fig. 221.

<sup>179</sup> Letter of 1 April 1505 (Archivio di Stato, Modena), just a few weeks after the death of his father, Alfonso wrote to his ambassador in Milan urging the acquisition of this piece (which was possibly a drawing). Unfortunately, as Gerolamo Seregni wrote back to him, the owner of the work had previously promised it to the cardinal of Rohan (Carlo Pedretti, *Leonardo da Vinci inedito. Tre saggi* [Florence, 1968], 14-15, cited in Sheard, “Antonio Lombardo's Reliefs for Alfonso d'Este,” 333 and n. 114). See also Pedretti, *Leonardo: A Study in Chronology and Style* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), chap. 5: “Bacchus,” pp. 140-170. Another hint at this established interest in Bacchus may be that Alfonso, like other members of his family, was an avid card player, and his Guardaroba records of 1505 indicate that he had a deck of what were called in this document “Tarochi” for the first time. His calling his Tarot cards by this name is interesting since there is intriguing thought that “Tarocche” may derive from the character of Tharope, who appears in the story of Dionysus and Lycurgus, the king of Thrace, as told in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* III.64f. This Tharope is taught the secret rites of initiation by the god as a reward, and as the grandfather of Orpheus, ultimately leads to the perpetuation and expansion of his mysteries (see Michael S. Howard, “Dionysus and the Historical Tarot,” online with Le Taro Associazione Culturale, at <<http://www.letarot.it/page.aspx?id=317>>). The playing of such cards was recommended as “fitted to the serious man wearied of virtue... [and restorative to] the noble working of the intellect of he who was fatigued”; “Sometimes it is pleasing to be thus diverted, and you will be delighted therein” (Martiano da Tortona, *Treatise on the Deification of Sixteen Heroes*, c. 1425, trans. Ross Gregory Caldwell, at <<http://trionfi.com/martiano-da-tortona-tractatus-de-deificatione-16-heroum>>).

large canvases.<sup>180</sup> With his large suite of rooms, however, Alfonso could have chosen to subdivide his collection (as his sister also did). If one looks closely at the painted details, moreover, one begins to note the many decorative items depicted that evoke the traditional inclusions of a princely studio, obviating their need to be physically present in the room. The *Feast of the Gods* emphasizes beautiful Ming Chinese blue and white porcelain bowls that were accessed through the Venetian trade routes and highly prized (fig. 6.37).<sup>181</sup> Other items include ceramic pots, gilt and silver hammered vessels, glass pitchers and cups, and musical instruments (fig. 6.38, 39). The many baskets in the *Worship of Venus* display attached cameos and gems, alluding to the real glyptics the duke would have owned (fig. 6.40). Ficino had recommended, in his discussion of the study, that scholars susceptible to melancholy should strive to reduce black bile with “pleasant smells.... Spring flowers are especially useful and the leaves of the citron or of the orange, and fragrant fruits, but especially wine.” Indeed, he said, “Nothing... is better against this pest than wine which is light, clear, pleasant, fragrant—the best adapted to generate spirits clearer than any others.”<sup>182</sup> In the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* it is just such a clear, amber wine that is displayed in its beautiful crystal pitcher. The painting also shows recorders and sheet music, which along with the viol in the *Feast*, allude to the typical playing of music in the *studiolo*, as well as Ficino’s prescription to alleviate sorrow with “harmonious lyre and song.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Other *studioli* that also included oil paintings are known to have had shelves for objects or a frieze of paintings above a higher shelf held up with brackets to display smaller sculptural objects. See Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*, 104.

<sup>181</sup> Rosamond E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 105-106. Chinese porcelain were traded through Persia, Syria, and Egypt.

<sup>182</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, I.x, p. 135. See Ruvoldt, “Sacred to Secular, East to West: The Renaissance Study and Strategies of Display,” *Renaissance Studies* 20 (2006): 648.

<sup>183</sup> *Three Books on Life*, I.x, p. 135. Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*, 123. Isabella had many fine instruments in her collection, and was skilled at the lute, *lira da braccio*, keyboard, as well as voice. For the important role of music at the Ferrarese court, see Lewis Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400-1505* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); Prizer, “Music in Ferrara and Mantua at the Time of Dosso Dossi,” 290-308.

The citrus fruit in the *Feast* and apples in the *Cupids* materialize the sweet, fragrant abundance that makes for a salubrious environment. There are ancient or *all'antica* urns and vases, and contemporary gilded metalwork (fig. 6.41). The paintings also emphasize birds—a pheasant, guinea hen, and kingfisher—where a *studiolo* might contain taxidermic specimens. One of Dosso's paintings had a chameleon in it, alluding to the many other examples of *naturalia* that *studioli* housed.<sup>184</sup> The evocation of the *Laocoön* in the *Bacchus and Ariadne* winks at that famous statue, two miniature replicas of which Isabella had in her collection.<sup>185</sup> Indeed, the paintings include almost everything recommended by Fra Sabba di Castiglione for his ideal *studiolo*, including “a steel mirror,” like the one held up in the *Worship of Venus*, which he would hold “more dear, because it represents reality more than the others.”<sup>186</sup> By stepping out of the limiting box of the *studiolo*, Alfonso invented something unique and revolutionary in his *camerino*: a much larger, taller room, paved and glazed, brightly illuminated, with an organized display of thematically integrated paintings that needed only to allude to the wealth of treasures owned by the duke—a true princely picture gallery. The Camerino d'Alabastro inaugurates what Galileo Galilei saw, stylistically, in Ludovico Ariosto's writing: “[There] one sees opening out before one [not a cramped antiquarian study, but] a Guardaroba, a Tribuna, a royal gallery,

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<sup>184</sup> Ruvoldt cites Marcantonio Michiel's 1532 visit to Andrea Odoni's study, which contained a dried sample, as well as “carved *tazze* of porphyry, crystal and petrified wood, vases of semi-precious stones, ‘porcelain vases and bowls, ...antique vases and medals and natural things...’” (“Sacred to Secular,” 644).

<sup>185</sup> Liebenwein, *Studiolo*, trans. Cieri Via, 99. After her trip to Rome in 1514, she was inspired to acquire copies of several pieces in the Belvedere Courtyard, including the Cleopatra/Ariadne.

<sup>186</sup> Sabba's *Ricordi* (Venice, 1560), in a chapter entitled “On the Suitable Decoration of Grand Interiors,” 59, as quoted in Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*, 110. Sabba (c. 1480-1554) had been an agent for Isabella d'Este.

ornamented... by the best of illustrious painters... replete with rare, precious and remarkable things of the greatest excellence.”<sup>187</sup>

#### —THE AGES OF BACCHUS

In addition to the several ancient *ekphraseis* that were inspiration for the Camerino’s *fabule* was the late antique *Saturnalia* by Macrobius: a handbook of ancient myth, philosophy, literature, and history, as well as a lengthy analysis of Virgil’s style and his emulators.<sup>188</sup>

Macrobius’ revelation of the complex intertextualities used already by ancient authors themselves provided Renaissance writers with a legitimizing authority for their own imitations, evocations, and plagiarisms.<sup>189</sup> As pictures devised by humanist advisors, Alfonso’s paintings inevitably and intrinsically invoke humanist paradigms of rhetorical argumentation and poetical explication.<sup>190</sup> The palimpsest of texts, allusions, myths, and meanings in the Camerino paintings is part of this history of building upon the work of forebears, and is part of the very means by which paintings were viewed at the time. Deviations from the texts, or for that matter

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<sup>187</sup> Galilei, *Considerazioni al Tasso* (c.1589), in *Scritti letterati*, ed. A. Chiari (Florence, 1943), 96, as quoted in Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study*, 125.

<sup>188</sup> This insight was initially made by Erika Tietze-Conrat, as mentioned in a footnote in Walker’s 1956 study of the painting (Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*, 5, n. 10). Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* is a late fourth-century A.D. dialogue in seven books that purports to be a conversation held over a banquet during the celebration in 384 of the Saturnalia, the festival of goodwill and Christmas-like cheer traditionally held from December 17 to 19 but which by the fourth century had moved to New Year’s day. This festival included a huge public banquet, with each household choosing a mock king to preside. Macrobius’ text was available in numerous editions from 1472 on, and was certainly available to humanist poets like Ludovico Ariosto and Mario Equicola, with influence at court.

<sup>189</sup> See Javitch, “The Imitation of Imitations in *Orlando Furioso*,” 228-233. He writes of Ariosto: “[R]ather than display, like other Renaissance poets, the derivation of his text from a single classical parent, he revealed the derivation, too, of his parent text in order to provide a real genealogy. [...] Ariosto was not simply imitating a passage in the *Aeneid* but Virgil’s own practice of imitating imitative poetry.”

<sup>190</sup> Charles Dempsey and Michael Baxandall have also emphasized this approach to interpreting paintings of the Renaissance (Dempsey, *Inventing the Renaissance Putto*, and Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, 2nd ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1988]). Titian’s contact with the likes of Pietro Bembo and Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola was likely to affect his thinking about exploring and tinkering with antique themes.

from the prescribed programs, were deliberate epistemological and artistic choices, not haphazard whims.<sup>191</sup> For the elite visitor to this room, the slow simmering of understanding and the exhilarating rush of new insights would have tickled his intellect as well as his pride as he harnessed his collective knowledge together with that of his fellow courtiers in order to discern each detail.<sup>192</sup> A room like this, in the privileged quarters of the duke, would have encouraged slow, thoughtful contemplation and the careful composition of witty or astute observations.

Anthony Colantuono's studies of the Camerino paintings have demonstrated that particular aberrations in the paintings that fail to derive from the texts of Ovid or Philostratus bear meaning in and of themselves.<sup>193</sup> In particular, features of how Bacchus is portrayed in the paintings fall outside of the adduced *ekphraseis*. In Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, Bacchus kneels before the open bung of a large wine cask, holding the stopper with his right hand, filling with his left a glass pitcher with a pale, golden wine. He has the sweet face of a five- or six-year-old child, with glistening blond locks wreathed with young grapevines and grapes. In Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the child has grown up a bit, but is still remarkably youthful, almost juvenile. Surprising, this youthfulness is rarely commented upon. He has a soft face and body: hairless, white, and fleshy. He seems small, much shorter than the Ariadne he will land before. His abundant, flowing golden hair is fuller and longer than in Bellini's portrayal, and gently

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<sup>191</sup> Cf. Charles Hope, who argued that "[t]he actual subjects were altered on two occasions, and these changes seem to have been prompted by visual rather than iconographic considerations." Hope considered the various subjects of the paintings to have been unrelated except on the barest grounds of sharing an antique, erotic theme: "The history of the project does not suggest that Alfonso had any very elaborate iconographic program in mind. [...] In so far as there was any common basis for the choice of subjects, it was apparently that they were to be erotic or bacchanalian" ("The 'Camerino d'Alabastro' of Alfonso d'Este," part II, 718).

<sup>192</sup> John Shearman describes these sorts of works as having "slow fuses" (*Only Connect*, 258).

<sup>193</sup> I am indebted to Colantuono's analysis of these paintings; although my conclusions are broader than his, as I incorporate the works into a larger Bacchic hermeneutic, I rely on Colantuono's evidence to decipher certain details. See Anthony Colantuono, "*Dies Alcyoniae*: The Invention of Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*," *Art Bulletin* 73 (1991): 237-256; idem, "Tears of Amber," 225-252; and idem, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation: Equicola's Seasons of Desire*.



caresses his right shoulder. This is not the slightly effeminate adult with swaying hips found on antiquities. Rather this is more accurately a pubescent boy, more akin to Donatello's *David* than to Michelangelo's *Bacchus*.

Colantuono proposes that Equicola specified the artist to show an "infant Bacchus" in the *Feast* based upon his knowledge of a passage in Macrobius. The setting of Macrobius' text was a theoretical banquet occurring around the winter solstice, during the festive celebration of the Saturnalia—the same moment Ovid points to for his account of Priapus and Lotis.<sup>194</sup> Macrobius explains the changing annual phases of the sun, marked by the two equinoxes and solstices, as paralleled in an idea of the changing form of Bacchus, from his birth, at the winter solstice, to his youth, adulthood, and old age, respectively (fig. 6.42). The text reads:

...Therefore there may be no doubt that the Sun [Apollo] and Liber are to be considered one and the same divine spirit.... Likewise, they make images of Liber Pater sometimes as a child, and sometimes as a young man. And beyond this also as a bearded man and as an old man.... These differences in age have reference to the sun, for at the winter solstice the sun would appear to be a little child, like that which the Egyptians bring forth from a sanctuary on an appointed day, since the day is then at its shortest and the god is accordingly shown as a tiny infant. Afterwards, however, as the days go on lengthening, the sun at the vernal equinox acquires the strength of an adolescent, and so the god is given the appearance of a young man. Subsequently, he is represented in his maturity, with a beard, at the summer solstice, when the sun has attained its greatest strength. Finally, on account of the diminution of the sun, as though growing old, the god is represented in the fourth of his appearances.<sup>195</sup>

Equicola evidently used this text as a gloss for the *Fasti*, in effect blending the story behind the origin of the Feast of Bacchus, told by Ovid, with a celebration of the birth of the god, for whom

<sup>194</sup> The context in which this event is described in the *Fasti* is the date of January 9; Ovid calls the following date, January 10, "midwinter." The Latin *bruma* was translated as "winter solstice" in the fifteenth century. Poliziano's lectures on the *Fasti* indicate that this understanding of the word was accepted.

<sup>195</sup> *Saturnalia*, I.18.7 and 9-10, quoted in Colantuono, "*Dies Alcyoniae*," 244-245. Cf. trans. Kaster, pp. 249, 251.

the festival is held.<sup>196</sup> Various iconographic details appear to derive from the intervening Macrobian account. Mercury appears near Bacchus in Bellini's painting, an allusion to his role in delivering the infant god to Nysa where he would be reared by the nymphs and Silenus. Jupiter appears next, in clear reference to Bacchus's parentage. The various naiads in the scene refer as easily to the river nymphs present at Priapus' failed seduction of Lotis as to the nymphs of Nysa who nurtured Bacchus. The later alterations to the landscape enhanced this depiction of Bacchic genealogy: the flowing stream with its waterfall and dark, cavernous source above and behind Silenus elicit a vision of the sacred grotto in which Bacchus spent his infancy; the rising mountainside, with its wild verdure and scampering satyrs, suggests in turn the ascending slope of Mt. Parnassus, the second peak of which is sacred to Apollo, while the gods feast below on the peak holy to Bacchus, that of Nysa. In further corroboration of this interpretation Colantuono points to the small figure of the kingfisher, or *halcyon*, in the foreground, a bird known in antiquity and the Renaissance to nest only during a special window of opportunity, a respite in the weather known as the Halcyon days, which takes place precisely around the winter solstice.<sup>197</sup> A sense of winter is enhanced by the cool tonalities of the flesh and air in the

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<sup>196</sup> Ovid, *Fasti* III.773-774 (March 17), also says of Bacchus that "thou seemest ever to be a boy and a youth, and thy age is midway between the two; ...[and] thou art a father...." Bellini produced at least one other painting of an infant Bacchus—that is, a Bacchus represented as a young child. There are multiple versions of this work, the chief being in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. Others are in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome (formerly Hertz Collection); and in Gallery, Cassel. See Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, 33. In the version now housed in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, the sweet-faced boy is shown with a white chemise and blue tunic, kneeling in a verdant landscape, and holding a glass pitcher of wine, appearing like the youthful Bacchus in his *Feast of the Gods*. If the artist followed Macrobius' text here as well, then this Bacchus would refer to the solstitial infancy of the sun and likewise the reborn life of the earth that will soon emerge to replenish the world. The infant god pours out his wine, refueling the ground, offering hope that the vines will again resprout (in the spring), and bring forth bursting grapes (in the summer), and finally engender the new wine (in the fall).

<sup>197</sup> Colantuono, "*Dies Alcyoniae*," 248-249. Ariosto includes halcyons flying in the morning of Olympia's abandonment, linking in turn this bird with the themes of Bacchic "abandonment." See *Orlando Furioso*, canto X.20: "The shore was left behind; and poor Olympia, too, who slept on until Dawn of the golden rays scattered the ground with hoar frost, and the halcyons could be heard over the water lamenting their age-old sorrows" (trans. Guido Waldman [New York: Oxford University Press, 1983], 95). Kingfishers are included also in Nonnos' account of Ariadne's abandonment. *Dionysiaca* XLVII.295: "[T]he Cydonian [Cretan] maiden lamented with the kingfishers, and paced the heavy murmuring shore..." (vol. 3, p. 393).

painting. The dry riverbed in the foreground pertains to the low watertable present in winter, before the arrival of the spring rains. The trees in the distance at the right also appear a bit denuded, as if the starkness of winter is upon them (or at least as much as it may in the blessed land of Parnassus). The pheasant in the tree above may allude to the winter holiday meal.

In Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the god has become an adolescent youth, an allusion to Macrobius' description of the subsequent vernal equinox, the season of spring. Ovid's description of the discovery of Ariadne correlated with the appearance of her constellation on the eighth day of March, at the forefront of spring. The blooming of iris and columbine corresponds to the flowering of late spring; that of the caper announces the onset of summer. The Macrobian cycle of ages may have been intended to continue in the *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, which from Raphael's design and from extant derivations, appears to have shown Bacchus as a strapping, virile adult. Colantuono disregards this painting, however, suggesting that Bacchus appears in his bearded mature state—analogue to summer—in the figure of the sleeping, white-bearded man lying on the bed of grapes upon the hilltop in Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*.<sup>198</sup> As Philostratus said, the stream of wine that flows on Andros “is a draught drawn from Dionysus....” But in the *ekphrasis*, Dionysus approaches on his ship, and leads a band of satyrs and Bacchantes and Sileni, along with Laughter and Revel, to the stream so that “he may reap the river's harvest.” Titian does not depict Bacchus in this way, having already show the robust god in his *Bacchus and Ariadne* canvas nearby. Satyrs and Silenus appear at the far left of the *Andrians*, but the young men in the center of the painting are not Bacchus but semi-divine Bacchants. The old man lying at the source, moreover, seems too aged to represent Bacchus in his “summertime” maturity, although the river itself could be understood metaphorically to be

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<sup>198</sup> Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, chap. 3 and 154.

Bacchus, just as the wine may be understood to flow directly from him (fig. 6.43).<sup>199</sup> In this case, metaphor and symbol would merge into one figure: a river-god-Bacchus, who is reaped of his juice just as the full grapes are squeezed out at the harvest.

Colantuono argues that the emphasis on the Macrobian seasonal cycle in Alfonso's paintings was directly related to contemporary theories of libidinal and reproductive seasons as they related to the crucial princely prerogative to create heirs.<sup>200</sup> While Alfonso himself, in his already fertile second marriage to Lucrezia Borgia, was not personally in need of reproductive advice or totems, his young son and duke-to-be, on the other hand, could only benefit from such instruction.<sup>201</sup> The success of Alfonso's reign, ultimately, would be measured only in its ability to self-perpetuate.<sup>202</sup> Any one ruler's dynastic ambitions depended on his offspring begetting further legitimate heirs. All could witness the uncomfortable fate of Guidobaldo da Montafeltro's impotence: the loss of his duchy to a nephew, which meant, ultimately, to the papacy.<sup>203</sup> A duke could not afford to dedicate himself to Platonic love, nor, on the other hand,

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<sup>199</sup> Rigas Bertos identifies the old man as a symbolic river god, described in Philostratus as "pouring out the source" ("A Short Note on the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 20 [1976]: 407-410).

<sup>200</sup> Colantuono, *passim*.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 156. Alfonso's children were Ercole, b. 1508 (later Duke), Ippolito, b. 1509 (later Cardinal), Alessandro, b. 1514 (d. 1516), Leonora, b. 1515, Francesco, b. 1516, Isabella, b. and d. 14 June 1519 leading to death of Lucrezia.

<sup>202</sup> As Colantuono attests, there was at this time genuine concern and even anxiety regarding issues of marital fecundity and the production of legitimate heirs (*Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 2, 231, *passim*). Unfortunately, Alfonso's grandson, Alfonso II, died in 1597 without a male heir, and the Este line died out. Pope Clement VIII took over the duchy of Ferrara in 1598. The failure of the duchy, as Colantuono states, was ultimately a failure of genitalia (*ibid.*, 3).

<sup>203</sup> Guidobaldo was impotent as a consequence of a congenital illness and other medical problems. Although married to Elisabetta Gonzaga (the sister of Isabella d'Este's husband) in 1488, he died childless (their marriage never consummated) in 1508. The illustrated 1499 Aldine edition of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* was dedicated to Guidobaldo by the book's patron and Urbino courtier Leonardo Grassi. *The Courtier* is set at his court in 1507 (but composed later and published in 1528), but the character of the duke is absent due to his illness, and the gathering described therein is hosted instead by Elisabetta.

to the solely physical pleasures of the flesh.<sup>204</sup> Procreative fecundity required a certain sexual imperative, but a balance of passions had always to prevail, like the mixing of wine and water or the hot and cold taps of Venus' fountain in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.<sup>205</sup> In the libidinal cycle, expounded in the *Libro di natura d' amore* by the very same Mario Equicola who devised the gallery's program, winter was the height of vacant male sexuality, summer the height of woman's, while spring was the optimum medium in which the elements of male and female, hot and cold, and wet and dry were balanced for the satisfactory conception of children (fig. 6.44).<sup>206</sup> Balance was crucial so that no one quality predominated. But at the same time, legitimate sexual pleasure was deemed acceptable and even an advantage, since it drove the whole process of reproduction.<sup>207</sup> Colantuono argues that in devising the *invenzioni* for the series of paintings, Equicola related the belief that princes should marry because it promoted bloodline as well as civic harmony, being a good example for their subjects. The prince, in other words, must be

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<sup>204</sup> An inability (or unwillingness) to consummate a marriage had dire consequences. On the other hand, infidelity was not uncommon; Francesco Gonzaga Marquess of Mantua (and husband of Isabella d'Este) is thought to have had an affair with Lucrezia Borgia, and to have meanwhile contracted syphilis, supposedly from a prostitute; Lorenzo II di Piero de' Medici Duke of Urbino (1516-1519) also died of syphilis. Alfonso himself had an acknowledged lover, Laura Dianti, with whom he had children after the death of his wife.

<sup>205</sup> See the discussion of this woodcut in Chapter Three. Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 234. See his analysis of the "Panton Tokadi" woodcut in his chap. 8.

<sup>206</sup> For Equicola's *Libro de natura de amore*, see the critical ed., *La redazione manoscritta del Libro de natura de amore di Mario Equicola*, ed. Laura Ricci (Rome: Bulzoni, 1999). His treatise was begun around 1508 and was published in 1525. Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 6.

<sup>207</sup> Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 3; see also D'Elia, "Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides in the Wedding Orations of Fifteenth-Century Italy," 379-433; *The Renaissance of Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). D'Elia demonstrates how wedding orators of the fifteenth century revived the ancient rhetorical form of the epithalamium (especially popular at the courts, including Ferrara) and with it its notions regarding physical beauty, sexual pleasure, learned brides, and mutual affection. The earliest such oration is by Guarino Guarini da Verona in Ferrara ("Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides," 380, 388-389).

both *pater familias* and *pater patriae*.<sup>208</sup> “Liber Pater”—the ultimate “father of liberality”—was therefore just the figure to be a legitimate and invigorating role model for the magnificent leader.

In Colantuono’s interpretation, the *Worship of Venus* was the final season of the libido, showing a “mournful” Venus whose mood is depressed due to the absence of Adonis. Besides the appropriately autumnal activity of harvesting apples, however, it feels unnatural to read this depiction of intense sexual excitement as an episode of “waning libido.” Furthermore, the possibility of there being two more paintings included in the room (since Equicola records that he composed stories for six) is dealt with by Colantuono desultorily, adding in a concluding aside that the last two could have been complementary pictures to each solstitial piece, serving to distinguish the contrasting male and female libidos during those seasons.<sup>209</sup> He concludes, however, that the room ultimately focused only on the four extant paintings, perhaps with Dosso’s contribution as a superfluous aside, and assumes that the *Indian Triumph of Bacchus* was eliminated at the outset (fig. 6.45).<sup>210</sup>

Finding merit in Colantuono’s emphasis of procreative urgency at court, I propose nevertheless an alternative ordering of the pictures that still maintains the allusions to Bacchic seasons and cycling fertility. My proposal suggests that the *Indian Triumph* would still have

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<sup>208</sup> D’Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 393. Certainly Alfonso knew a thing or two about marrying for the sake of one’s country. When his first wife died leaving them childless, he was quick to obey his father’s decision to marry him to Pope Alexander VI’s daughter, Lucrezia Borgia, whom he had not even seen before she arrived in the dukedom for the wedding.

<sup>209</sup> Meaning, summer as high female, low male libido, and winter as low female, high male libido.

<sup>210</sup> Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*, 154-155, 157. Colantuono interprets the documents to say that in 1598, only the four paintings are recorded as being removed from the Camerino by Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, after the takeover of Ferrara by Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini. He states: “Vasari’s statement to the effect that there was a ‘bacchanal’ by Dosso in the same *camerino* with Bellini’s and Titian’s paintings is certainly wrong” (165). Yet a painting by Dosso is in Aldrovandi’s 1603 inventory, and a few years later (1608) Cardinal Scipione Borghese seized Dosso’s *Aeneas* frieze and, perhaps, the *Bacchanal* (according to Colantuono, p. 157). See Humfrey and Lucco, *Dosso Dossi*, cat. 24a and b, p. 147, n. 7. Evidently, that last painting was in the Camerino; it just was not as valuable as a Bellini or Titian, which may have been why Aldobrandini did not bother to take them along with everything else he appropriated.

been included in the Camerino, because it would have better captured the Macrobian notion of summer than the *Andrians*, by showing Bacchus at the apex of his physical strength and beauty. Unlike the adolescent, impetuous, “springtime” youth in the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, here Bacchus would have appeared returning from his exploits in noble triumph, physically mature and at the height of his powers. The *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, in turn, bears certain indications of Autumn: the grapes twining up the tree at the left are ripe, as they are in early fall; the filling of wine storage jars and the celebratory consumption of last year’s must harken to the activities of the vintage; and the light spreading over the scene has a cooler quality, like that of shortening days or the approach of evening (fig. 6.46). The truly aged appearance of the man lying on a bed of grapes at the far right more appropriately suggests the lethargy of an elderly god. The *Worship of Venus* would complement the *Bacchus and Ariadne* as paragons of spring, the time of year sacred to Venus, who would then be mistress at the young couple’s wedding, just as in epithalamic tradition. And Dosso’s *Bacchanal* could have paralleled Titian’s *Andrians*, reemphasizing the seasonal and phenomenological culmination of the cycle.

Moreover, the yearly progress of the sun, with its corresponding ages of Bacchus, relates not only to the passing of the Seasons, but also to the aging of the wine. The bare vines of winter are infantile and must wait for the sun’s return to grow again. In spring, the green vines leap back to life, bursting with leaves, like the pubescent, leaping Bacchus of Titian’s painting. In summer, the warmed grape buds fill with juice and sugar, and offer the promise of wine to come. And finally in fall, the bursting grapes, replete with the season’s glowing sun, are harvested and turned into wine. Bacchus had always been associated with the Eleusian mysteries linked with the cycles of the harvest. As the related Orphic Hymn “To the God of Annual Feasts” (the “chthonic Dionysos”) sang: “[A]s the seasons revolve, he puts to sleep and wakes up the

years.”<sup>211</sup> The *Bacchanal of the Andrians* shows this culminating jolly harvest festival, recalled to us by the image on the left of the vine wed to the tree, with its full grape cluster. As in local tradition when the grapes are carried in in September or October, the completion of the harvest is marked in an evening celebration around the making of the wine. The grapes are piled into large vats (one of which can in fact be seen in the middle distance of the *Andrians*) and pressed with enthusiastic stomping of bare feet and legs (recalled in the short tunics and naked legs of the men dancing and the skirt of the woman in blue tucked up in her belt) (fig. 6.47). The cyclical, Bacchic nature of the seasons relates to the importance of love (Venus) and fertility (Priapus) as conveyed in Alfonso’s paintings. An emphasis on the importance of each season to the vitality of Priapus is shared by the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. On the altar to the ithyphallic god, four reliefs around the base depict Venus (Spring), Ceres (Summer), Bacchus (Autumn), and Aeolus (Winter), the last indicating the freeze that can set in without Bacchus and Ceres to fuel love.<sup>212</sup>

Ficino had also explained Bacchus in relation to the sun and to the seasons in his widely read *De vita triplici* of 1489. There he referred to the youth of the god, and explained his interrelationship with Apollo:

‘Phoebus and Bacchus alone have youth eternal,  
For uncut hair befits both gods.’

Phoebus and Bacchus are always inseparable brothers; the two are practically identical. Phoebus indeed is the very soul of that sphere, Bacchus assuredly is the sphere itself. Phoebus is the whole circle of the sphere [the circuit of the planet Sol]; Bacchus is that flaming little circle [the visible sun] in this circle. In that flaming globe Phoebus is the fostering light; in the same place Bacchus is the salutary heat from that light. Therefore they are always brothers and comrades and practically always second selves. How is this? If the Sun in spring is Phoebus—then

<sup>211</sup> Orphic Hymn 53, trans. Athanassakis, 71.

<sup>212</sup> *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* m4v-m6, trans. Godwin, 192-195. See Wilk, “Tullio Lombardo’s ‘Double-Portrait’ Reliefs,” 79-80, and appendix B. See also Helena Katalin Szépe, “Desire in the Printed Dream of Poliphilo,” *Art History* 19 (1996): 381-387.



exciting by his singing the song of the birds, with his lyre in turn tempering the weather—in autumn, the same Sun as the creator of wine is Bacchus. Bacchus, that Father Liber who loves hills, gives us three things to preserve youth: first, those hills exposed to the Sun; on these hills, moreover, the sweetest wine; and in wine perpetual freedom from care.<sup>213</sup>

Ficino's characterization of the autumn sun and of the youth-shielding gifts of Bacchus fits well with the mood and landscape of the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*. The verdant hillside, lush grapes, amber wine, and evident "freedom from care" all correspond to this Bacchanalian season. To think of Bacchus as the flaming sun, shedding his "salutary heat," matches well with Macrobius' vision of the god as the sun, exuding lifegiving energy and aging with the seasons. The aura in Titian's Bacchanalian paintings befits this conceptualization of Bacchus as the source of eternal spring and easy spirits. With Dosso's "*Bacchanal of Men*," there could have been an Arcadian counterpart to Titian's more feminine *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, perhaps a sort of mirror image for the courtly ladies and gentlemen present. Where elaborately-dressed women are waited upon by ephemeral Bacchantes, there could have been urbane men attended by voluptuous nymphs, a recollection, perhaps, of Titian's *Concert Champêtre*.

The fecund vine itself was also an important metaphor for love and marriage. As Ariosto warns his nubile female readers, "I am [not] telling you to resist being loved—that would be quite wrong of me: without lovers you would be as vines growing wild in a vineyard, with no stakes or shrubs for their support. But I do urge you to avoid the downy-cheeked lad, flighty and inconstant, and to avoid plucking fruits which are bitter and unripe...."<sup>214</sup> Viticultural metaphors abound in expressions such as "marrying" the vine to the tree. Catullus took up such apparently

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<sup>213</sup> Ficino, *Three Books on Life* II.20, trans. Kaske and Clark, 233-235. He goes on: "With equal kindness, Phoebus the brother of Bacchus also gives three things to preserve youth: in the first place, daylight; then herbs sweetly smelling with the warmth of daylight; and in the shade of this light, the lyre and perennial song."

<sup>214</sup> Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso* X.9, trans. Guido Waldman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 93.

age-old idioms for poetical purposes when in his *Carmina* LXII he has a group of boys explain to a group of skeptical girls the benefits of marriage. Unlike a “virginal” flower, standing alone and protected in an enclosed garden (the girls’ preferred state of being), the grapevine trained up the sturdy elm can become lush with fruit, proving that when bound to and supported by her husband a woman can become useful, fertile, and loved.<sup>215</sup> Virgil, Pliny, and Ovid employed this idea, and in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the metaphor thrived with the revival of epithalamic poetry. We saw it appear in Baldini’s engraving of the *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*. Ovid, moreover, used the metaphor in his tale of Vertumnus and Pomona (who I contend appear in the *Feast of the Gods*). When she rebuffs Vertumnus’ love, he (in the disguise of an old woman) points out to her “an elm whose boughs were artfully arrayed with gleaming grapes,” telling her:

‘But if that trunk stood there alone, unwed  
to that grapevine, in every way except  
for foliage it would seem worthless—and  
the vine that now embraces lovingly  
the tree to which it’s mated, would lie flat,  
dispirited, upon the ground. That plant  
has taught you nothing; you shun marriage—and  
desire no one. If you’d welcome men,  
the crowd of suitors who would seek you then  
would far outnumber those who sought the hand  
of Helen! [...] [I]f you’re wise,  
and would agree to a fine marriage...  
accept Vertumnus as the one to share your bed!  
[...]  
Pomona, my dear nymph, just keep these things  
in mind, and set aside your arrogance:  
wed him who loves you. And in recompense,  
no late spring frost will nip your fruits in bud,  
and headlong winds won’t rip your blossoms off.’<sup>216</sup>

<sup>215</sup> Peter Demetz, “The Elm and the Vine: Notes toward the History of a Marriage Topos,” *Publication of the Modern Language Association* 73 (1958): 521-532.

<sup>216</sup> *Metamorphoses* XIV.663-678, 761-764, trans. Mandelbaum, 501, 505. Propertius *Elegies* IV.2 also regard Vertumnus: “[S]ince I receive first fruit at the year’s turning, / do you believe it’s sacred to Vertumnus? / The first

In the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, a healthy vine entwines the trunk of a tree at left, an abundant *grappola d'uve* hanging near the top. In the neighboring *Bacchus and Ariadne*, another vine can be glimpsed climbing a tree at right, but it is not yet filled out with fruit (fig. 6.48). This immaturity symbolizes that, in this painting, the marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne is merely imminent, while in the *Andrians*, a postcoital Bacchanalian celebration of fecundity plays out. Just as the tree “tames” the vine, so the husband tames the passions of his wife, women being deemed inherently susceptible to physical passions.<sup>217</sup> Marriage, as Saint Augustine had said, was a cure for lust.<sup>218</sup> In the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the satyr wrestling with the snake may act as such a symbol: as Bacchus approaches Ariadne with the intention of marriage, so also will their passions be tamed.<sup>219</sup>

That does not mean there will not be wedded coital bliss. I suggest that the *Worship of Venus* could have hung at right angles to the left of the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, and that Bacchus and Ariadne’s married union may be implied by the abandoned cloths placed prominently in the foreground of the *Cupids*: the white, red, and blue of Ariadne’s attire and the pink taffeta drape worn by Bacchus in the later painting here displayed as casually discarded (fig. 6.49). Although scholars typically suggest that the putti have laid aside their cloaks, none of the scores of putti

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grape mellows for me into purple clusters, / and the hairy grain swells with milky fruit. / [...] / Sober in litigation: but when the drinking crown’s put on, / you’ll shout that the wine has gone to my head. / Put a miter on my head, I’ll steal the look of Iacchus; / I’ll steal Phoebus’, if only you’ll give me a plectrum. / [...] / Not one flower opens in the meadows, without first languishing, / having been properly set before my eyes” (trans. Katz, 349-351).

<sup>217</sup> D’Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 407: fifteenth-century misogynist literature tends to see women as “by nature and will so inclined toward lust,” in the words of Domencio Sabino’s *On the Conveniences and Inconveniences of Wives* (fol. 110v).

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 409-410.

<sup>219</sup> One misogynist writer, Lionardo Giustiniani (1389-1405), wrote in his *Oration in Disgust of Women* that women were like dangerous snakes: “...at least let their unbridled habits excite fear in you and make you more cautious of their embraces” (Giustiniani, fol. 29r, quoted in *ibid.*, 402).

are clothed and only four pieces of cloth here appear. Given that Titian repeats other colored dresses (the light blue maenad in the *Bacchus and Ariadne* appears in the dancing group in the *Andrians*; the red and dark blue dresses of the ladies lounging in the *Andrians* are similar to those worn by the pair of “mothers” in the *Worship of Venus*) perhaps it is not coincidence that Bacchus and Ariadne wear the same colors as appear on the ground before the Cupids. In the context of the whole cycle, this subtle wink at Bacchus and Ariadne’s sexual foreplay may have called to an astute courtier’s mind the description in Xenophon’s *Symposium* in which the guests are privy to a balletic dance portraying the amorous couple, with Ariadne dressed as a bride, in which they began kissing passionately so that none present believed that they were not truly making love, before they walked off the stage, presumably to consummate their embrace.<sup>220</sup> That performance led “those of them who were unmarried [swear] that they would wed, those who were wedded mounted their horses and galloped off to join their wives, in quest of married joys.”<sup>221</sup> One might imagine that Alfonso’s provocative paintings might also have had the same intention, enjoining those present, including his son and heir, to marriage. The attention to love, and especially to marriage, in these paintings was an inherent part of court culture, where the *all’antica* delight in natural desires supported the illusion of happy marriages in a world where calculated political unions were common, and the myth that the passions one felt elsewhere might be attained with one’s wife.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Xenophon, *Symposium* IX, trans. H. G. Dakyns, in *The Works of Xenophon*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1890-1897), Project Gutenberg Etext #1181, Jan. 1998: “[T]hey could see that Dionysus was indeed most beautiful, and Ariadne like some lovely blossom; nor were those mocking gestures, but real kisses sealed on loving lips, and so, with hearts aflame, they gazed expectantly. [...] [T]he boy and girl [performing the parts] were verily and indeed a pair of happy lovers. So much less did they resemble actors, trained to certain gestures, than two beings bent on doing what for many a long day they had set their hearts on.”

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> D’Elia, “Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides,” 412-413.

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Alfonso's room presents the nexus of all the Bacchic trends of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Here is the emergence of full-scale mythological art, before all the myths are codified, shaking out all the quirks as well as the freedoms. A spirit of renewal and rebirth permeates the imagery; these artists could still imagine that they were the *first* to bring back the ancient gods, style, and spirit. Humanists could play with their sources, blending and imitating, almost to the point of obliterating them. They harnessed every bit of inspiration, all in the service of their patrons. The obsession with birth and origins drove the fascination with seeking out the first myths and the first authors: Greek was older than Roman; Vulcan originated fire; Orpheus, music; the Muses, poetry.<sup>223</sup> Likewise it was understood that in Bacchus originated wine, bringing its gifts and woes to mankind; but also that in Bacchus fermented other processes of emergence: of imagination, sensual enlightenment, and spiritual bliss. The words of Ficino ring out: that initiation has led to rebirth; that minds, "deeply drunken with God, seem now to have been reborn."<sup>224</sup> As Ficino expressed in "On Obtaining Life from the Heavens":

[S]omewhat having started at first with Apollo, we immediately fall into mention of Bacchus. And justly indeed from light we proceed to heat, from ambrosia to nectar, from intuition of truth to ardent love of truth. For assuredly Phoebus and Bacchus are brothers and inseparable companions. Phoebus brings us principally two things, namely light and the lyre; just so, Bacchus brings us principally two things in particular, wine and the odor of wine to renew the spirit, by the daily use of which the spirit finally becomes Phoebean and liberated....

Now, brothers, I've conversed with you enough, and we've drunk together enough. Therefore, farewell.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 251-252.

<sup>224</sup> Ficino, *De vita triplici*, Proem, p. 103.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, III.24, pp. 379-381.

## CONCLUSION

*Many are the thyrsus-bearers, but few are the bacchoi.*  
— Plato, *Phaedo*<sup>1</sup>

The rapturous enthusiasm of this moment was soon to pass. The tide of *all'antica* fervor receded, leaving behind a more arid antiquarian rigor. The exuberant mood of Piero di Cosimo's facetious satyrs or Titian's blithe revelers captured the pleasure aroused by the first flush of the rediscovery of the god Bacchus. It evinced a complex admixture of ideas: the feeling of living in a new Golden Age combined with a romantic nostalgia for a longed for but lost antiquity—a melancholy sense of the passing of time and the irrevocable slipping away of greatness. And so when Rome was again brought to its knees in 1527 in a siege of the city by the Emperor's troops, it felt like a divinely ordained confirmation that the wheel of Fortune had turned and that the feast of the gods had come to an end.

Much had changed in Rome already, with the death in 1520 of Raphael and the great antique-loving patron Agostino Chigi soon after. In 1521, the Medici pope, Leo X, passed away suddenly, inaugurating the stringent papacy of Adrian VI, an ascetic Dutchman who was disgusted by the “stufa d'ignudi” on the Sistine ceiling.<sup>2</sup> He called humanists “followers of Terence,” and men who “eagerly celebrated the damned names of false gods in their imitation of the ancients.”<sup>3</sup> He threatened to burn antique statues for lime. Humanists and their students felt

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<sup>1</sup> *Phaedo* 69D, trans. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 4. Cf. trans. Hugh Treddenick: “Many bear the emblems, but the devotees are few” (in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Hamilton and Cairns, 52).

<sup>2</sup> Vasari, *Le vite*, ed. Milanesi, vol. V, 456: “a bath-house of naked bodies.” See Gaisser, “The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts,” 53.

<sup>3</sup> Views recorded by Valeriano and Giovio, quoted in Gaisser, “The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts,” 52.

stifled, constrained in their exploration of classical literature. Pierio Valeriano offered to appease the authorities by excluding the racy parts of Catullus' poems from his lectures at the university, but, as he reported, his students protested, crying: "[W]e have fallen back into the time of the Goths and the Vandals because it seems that just as they used to cut off the genitals of all the statues, so now anything titillating [*pruriat*] is taken out of books, too."<sup>4</sup> The pleasures of sodality at the gatherings of the last straggling advocates of Pomponio's Academy were quashed by the shift in attitudes. And papal wars drained the curial coffers in the 1520s, so that Clement VII's political and economic hold on the city was tenuous.

The Sack of Rome in 1527—followed by a year-long brutal occupation—was ultimately to stand as a fundamental turning point in the life of this enthusiastic, idealistic dream of a Golden Age.<sup>5</sup> Some assert the supposed impact of this event has been overemphasized; that to see it as an end, or a beginning, is overstating the evidence.<sup>6</sup> But it cannot be denied that the Sack caused a palpable shift in the mood of the Renaissance. Artists and writers were dispersed from their sympathetic enclaves, seeking new patrons and audiences to the north where the sensuous themes of antiquity might still be enthusiastically received. But many were chastised into greater modesty. Erasmus, who wrote his *Praise of Folly* in 1511 in critique of an irrational era induced by the papacy, would later write that Rome at that time “with its passion for stylishness and ancient pomp was nothing more than a den of paganism.”<sup>7</sup> Although Erasmus had anti-papal motives for denying the true depth and seriousness of antiquarian interests, his

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Gaisser, “The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts,” 53.

<sup>5</sup> See Kenneth Gouwens, “Discourses of Vulnerability: Pietro Alcionio's Orations on the Sack of Rome,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 50 (1997): 38-77.

<sup>6</sup> See André Chastel, *The Sack of Rome, 1527*, trans. Beth Archer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, referring to Erasmus's *Ciceronianus* (1528).

denigrating remarks offer a pertinent insight into just how dominant the “pagan” spirit had in fact been in this era. There was a joy and pleasure in the humanists’ encounter with the past. The early antiquarians took in all that could be found, valuing each glimpse of the past on equal terms, and stood in awe of the ancient world that stood like a mirage on the horizon. The excitement and titillation of this encounter was right on the surface, in their poetical imitations and theatrical revivals, paintings and songs. The symposiasts aspiring to collegial, Socratic debate were not merely playing dress-up, but believed passionately in the power of their studies to change the present. The Sack of Rome put an end to such idealism. Antiquarianism and secularism continued, of course; indeed, with the dispersal of artists and humanists after the Sack, some of this discipline and taste spread to other parts of Italy and Europe.<sup>8</sup> But the absolute confidence of the Academicians in their efforts to restore and bring to life their beautiful vision of an idyllic classical *convivium* did come to an end.

With the French king and Spanish emperor encroaching on the Italian states, previous hopes for an Arcadian Golden Age were proved unattainable. But ultimately of even greater significance than the Sack was the spreading consequence of the Counter-Reformation in Italy, which instituted a deadening constriction of the *bonus voluptas* of the unrestrained embrace of a longed-for past.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the more momentary and isolated Savonarolan movement against secular hedonism in the 1490s, this new sobriety was more persuasive and marked an entire cultural shift away from the idealistic humanism that had culminated in the first decades of the sixteenth century. The Counter-Reformers, supported by the iron hand of the Inquisition,

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<sup>8</sup> Reconstruction in Rome was actually fairly rapid during the papacy of Paul III (1534-1549).

<sup>9</sup> As Anthony Blunt said of this period: “The movement was just as much a Counter-Renaissance as a Counter-Reformation, and it set itself to destroy the human scale of values in which the Humanists believed and to replace it once again with a theological scale...” (*Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1978], 105).



believed religious art must be simple and obvious, so that all could understand its imagery, and must be purged of anything apocryphal or pagan. The confident aspiration to unify paganism and Christianity was suppressed, and the quest to recreate an earthly grove for Venus and Bacchus was abandoned. The Church did not entirely condemn ancient mythology, but the philosophical depth that it had gained in the Renaissance was no longer considered acceptable. Those who still adhered to syncretism had to find more amenable patrons elsewhere, as Giulio Romano did with the Gonzaga in Mantua or Francesco Primaticcio and Rosso Fiorentino did with Francis I at Fontainebleau.<sup>10</sup> Others lost hope, like Johann Goritz, who died soon after the Sack, having fled north, “tormented with longing for his lost possessions and for Rome.”<sup>11</sup>

Michelangelo had delved into the figural and emotional expression of Bacchic frenzy, gleaned through his study of antiquities and practiced in his *Bacchus*. He harnessed this pathos for his religious art, giving depth and vigor to Christian iconography that to him seemed stiff and lifeless.<sup>12</sup> The artistic heirs to his figural innovations, ignorant of the *furor* that inhabited Michelangelo’s bodies, often created gestural excess that became meaningless, distracting, even ugly. In the post-Reformation period, the syncretic fervor that fed the visual and intellectual combination of the divine mysteries of Bacchic and Christian ecstasy and salvation was replaced by an absolutist purity and cloistering of faith that no longer allowed pagan energies to surface. Some Mannerist religious artists relied on stylistic excess to create the appearance of ecstasy, forgetting the underlying solemnity that had governed Michelangelo’s art. And a Counter-

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<sup>10</sup> Ernst Gombrich, “Hypnerotomachiana,” in *Gombrich on the Renaissance, Volume 2: Symbolic Images* (London: Phaidon, 1985), 108.

<sup>11</sup> Valeriano writing about Goritz, quoted in Gaisser, “The Rise and Fall of Goritz’s Feasts,” 55.

<sup>12</sup> See Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art*, 87-99, regarding Michelangelo’s unfinished *Entombment* (National Gallery, London).

Reformation reaction against the nude in religious art was something entirely new.<sup>13</sup> The nude had had a long history as an acceptable mode of artistic expression, important for its timelessness and naturalism—a vehicle of pure truth, isolated from the worldly vanities and temporal vagaries of human dress. Images of Truth, as in the Calumny of Apelles, or of Heavenly Venus, as in Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*, indicate the elevated status the nude form once had. But the decrees of the final Council of Trent in 1563 threatened the entrenched significance of the naked body, leading to cries to cover the “shame” in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, another critical shift in scholarship and iconography toward analytical and categorical mythography and antiquarian accuracy occurred, which dispensed with the earlier delight in the unknowable and uncontrollable, as expressed in the ideas of *fantasia* and *invenzione*. Free-flowing inspiration was superseded by archaeological precision and textual literalness. Boccaccio's old desperation to be “right” reared up again. Pirro Ligorio epitomized this new trend, with his forty volumes on Roman antiquities.<sup>15</sup> The new antiquarians were *cognoscenti* who were “trained professional curators, recorders, interpreters, and purveyors of antiques.”<sup>16</sup> This more dispassionate approach to antiquity can be glimpsed in the increasingly analytical attempts to record antique remnants—a sort of proto-archaeology.<sup>17</sup> We begin to see

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<sup>13</sup> Baxandall, “A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este,” 308.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 26 and note; Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600*, chap. 8, esp. 118-124.

<sup>15</sup> Mandowsky, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities*, 42ff.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> As preserved, for example, in the travel account of the Venetian Giosafat Barbaro, written in 1487 about his journeys East in the 1460s and 1470s. There “one finds sure signs of a new sense of the past that seems to oscillate between two worlds: one which clings to medieval views of antiquities as commodities (if not as buried treasure), and the other which begins to privilege scientific inquiry, accurate measurement, and objective analysis. [...] [H]e describes ruins without a hint of Petrarch's need to *repopulate* an imagined intact past or Cyriacus's need to *reconstruct* it” (Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 156).

accurate study, uninterpreted or uninflected transcription, and precise record-keeping, with the purpose of recording the location and appearance of a surviving remnant of antiquity. But mere “remnants” were often all these archaeologists seemed to see. The comprehensive mid-sixteenth-century mythographies encouraged the “correct” reading of antique iconography, and often imagery that came afterwards displayed amalgamations of set attributes, iconography with a knowable code—a code, however, that might not be based in actual classical precedent. These emblematisers sought deep allegorical significance, much in the way their medieval counterparts like Albricus and Boccaccio had, and felt free to synthesize meanings out of nothing. The efflorescence of these books began with Lilio Gregorio Giraldi’s *De diis gentium varia et multiplex historia* (Basel, 1548), written in the 1520s, and expanded with Natale Conti’s *Mythologiae sive explicationis fabularum libri decem* (Venice, 1551), Vincenzo Cartari’s *Imagini de i Dei de gli Antichi* (Venice, 1556), and Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia overo Descrittione dell’imagini universali cavate dall’antichità et da altri luoghi* (1593).<sup>18</sup>

The drive in this new antiquarianism was to control, order, and rationalize all the fragments of the past, in contrast to the fantastical and imaginative experimentation once found in Colonna’s romance or Riccio’s *Paschal Candelabrum*. The virtual free-for-all that had characterized the artistic and interpretive process in fifteenth-century *all’antica* image-making underwent a major constriction. With encyclopedias at the fingertips, mythology became reducible to formulaic complexity, spawning elaborate programs that required guidebooks to be deciphered, such as the intricate and opaque *rappresentazioni* put forth by the Medici and others after the middle of the sixteenth century, or the complex painted cycles in sixteenth-century

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<sup>18</sup> Mandowsky, *Pirro Ligorio’s Roman Antiquities*, 46. Interestingly, it was in Ferrara that many of these scholars were fostered, showing the Este family’s interest in antiquity to be unwavering. Giraldi’s text was dedicated to Ercole II d’Este; Cartari’s to Luigi d’Este, and the first illustrated edition (1571) to Cardinal Ippolito d’Este.

palazzi and villas.<sup>19</sup> These ornate iconographies would have been inconceivable without the bulwark of antiquarian codification behind them; yet at the same time, the syncretic enthusiasm that had fostered fantastical hieroglyphics and Christo-pagan *groteschi* in the early sixteenth century was stifled, its imagery becoming unreadable in just a few decades.<sup>20</sup>

Alfonso's Camerino d'Alabastro was a culmination of the earlier, freer moment. While perfecting the form of an intimate, integrated picture-gallery—stemming, as it did, out of the *studiolo* chamber, and verging into the grandeur of the gallery—it was also, however, the last of its genre. To follow were the true exhibition halls like Fontainebleau: lavish, fully decorated spaces that lacked intimacy or subtlety, filled with paintings and objects like a museum; later still came massive state rooms that required a manual to be deciphered. The Doge's Palace in Venice and the Palazzo della Signoria in Florence (the Medici Palace during the Grand Duchy) gained complex, ideological decorative programs. Other venues like the Palazzo Te, Villa Farnesina, and Villa Barbaro were in some respects retrograde, with their wall-to-wall frescoes not unlike the Palazzo Schifanoias of former days (fig. C.1). But there too the elaborate sequences of large panoramic scenes mixed with fictive architecture and sequences of smaller vignettes became something different from what Alfonso had achieved. Alfonso's "little room" had retained the personality of its patron and the intimacy of the *studiolo*. In the paintings he had commissioned, a sense of experiential wonder and of discovery, freedom, and originality was all-pervasive. His paintings depended upon conversation and insight to be understood at their deepest levels.

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, James M. Saslow, *The Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as Theatrum Mundi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); "All the world's a stage...": *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque, Part 1: Triumphal Celebrations and the Rituals of Statecraft, Part 2: Theatrical Spectacle and Spectacular Theatre*, ed. Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower (University Park, PA: Papers in Art History from The Pennsylvania State University, vol. VI, 1990); Giancarlo Malacarne, *Le feste del principe: giochi, divertimenti, spettacoli a corte* (Modena: Il Bulino edizioni d'arte, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> See the discussion of the afterlife of Riccio's *Paschal Candelabrum* in Allen, ed., *Andrea Riccio*.

Intimates would receive and share little gems of secret knowledge, the tiny keys for comprehension. Although his room was intended to broadcast the splendor of his rule, it was a message expressed on a more intimate scale, selectively dispensed to those privileged with personal contact with the duke.

As the new century progressed, the appearance of Bacchus himself began to change. Soon after Titian painted for Alfonso that radiant, agile Bacchus in a leaping descent from his cheetah-drawn chariot, the figure of Bacchus often devolved into the corpulent, jolly fool that would come to dominate representations of the god.<sup>21</sup> This “big baby” type appears to have emerged from a conflation of Bacchus with the figure of Silenus, incorrectly identified as the god in some instances (as Balducci had done in his *cassone*), or from an attempt to portray accurately the “infant” Bacchus mentioned in classical sources (fig. C.2).<sup>22</sup> As Ovid had said, Bacchus “seemest ever to be a boy and youth, and thy age is midway between the two.”<sup>23</sup> Already in 1499, the illustrator of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* portrayed the relief “Sacred to the Autumn Vintage” as an “infant” Bacchus: a rotund, chubby, childishly proportioned, but adult-sized, nude male (fig. 6.17). The legs are thick; the tummy rolls pronounced; the face is soft, swollen, and clean-shaven, though still not truly babyish. Sometimes the “big baby” appearance is retained for the figure of Silenus. Titian’s own Silenus, seen deep in the background of *Bacchus and Ariadne*, is plump, hairless, and youthful, nodding on his companion like a sleepy toddler (fig. C.3). But the roles of Silenus and Bacchus become blurred later in the sixteenth century, as they

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<sup>21</sup> See Iain Buchanan, “The Collection of Nicolaes Jongelincq: I. ‘Bacchus and the Planets’ by Jacques Jongelincq,” *The Burlington Magazine* 132, no. 1043 (1990): 102-113. Jongelincq’s garden statue of *Bacchus* of the late 1560s appears as an obese, naked young man sitting astride a barrel.

<sup>22</sup> The “big baby” Bacchus appears at the left of the engraving by the Master of the Die after Raphael or Giulio Romano, c. 1520s, depicting a *Sacrifice to Priapus*, British Museum, London.

<sup>23</sup> *Fasti* III.16: ll.773-774: “sive quod ipse puer semper iuvenisque videris, et media est aetas inter utrumque tibi.”

had begun to do already in Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, in the illustration of a relief described as being on a vase, showing putti at the vintage and "a jolly divinity resembling a deceitful girl" (fig. C.4).<sup>24</sup> When Silenus is separated from his donkey, it often becomes impossible to distinguish him from the god (fig. C.5, 6).<sup>25</sup>

The late Quattrocento invention of this "big baby" Bacchus, and its popularity and wide acceptance as the actual figure of Bacchus in the Cinquecento, suggest a shift in the mindset toward the ancient god of wine. While antique figures of Bacchus might show him swaying or supported by satyrs, he was never the effete, pathetic fool that he often becomes in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art. Nothing could be further from the comparison made by Mantegna between his pitiful Silenus and his graceful Bacchus. The new infantile Bacchus, riding a chariot or sitting on a wine barrel, becomes a fat, tippling, grotesque figure of fun, the simplistic manifestation of the happy spirit of humankind set free in the celebration of alcohol, or of man's foibles and baser passions fueled by over-indulgence (fig. C.7, 8; 5.14).<sup>26</sup> The debilitating aspects of drunkenness come to dominate the figure of the god himself, denying him his elevated divinity, instead of shifting those aspects of his gift onto other figures. Silenus and satyrs had previously embodied the negative aspects of drink while Bacchus himself could stand tall and proud. But this new Bacchus lacks the charm and grace of the antique god as well as the vigor

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<sup>24</sup> *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* fol. 14, trans. Godwin, 174.

<sup>25</sup> See the prints after Mantegna showing a "Silenus" sitting with putti: he has the appearance of the Silenus from Mantegna's *Bacchanal with Silenus*, but as depicted here—surrounded by putti, sitting on a barrel, reaching for a drink and for grapes while two putti crown him—the figure becomes indistinct from Bacchus. This corpulent character definitively becomes Bacchus in Hendrik Goltzius's woodcut of a standing Bacchus with cup, grapes, and wreath (three attributes possessed by Michelangelo's *Bacchus* as well). Hieronymus Hopfer, after Mantegna, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, inv. 2004.97.2; Henrik Goltzius, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, inv. 1988.31.1.

<sup>26</sup> The shift is blatant in the comparison of the different illustrations of "In Iuventam" in the 1546 and 1621 editions of Alciati's *Emblemata*. The earlier woodcut shows Bacchus and Apollo equivalently; the later one converts Bacchus into a "big baby" while Apollo retains his previous proportions.

and power once conveyed by his presence (fig. C.9, 10, 11). In order to show the elevated aspects of Bacchus, a few artists shifted to the emblematic form of the “winged” Bacchus—an explicit and obvious way to demonstrate the elevating aspects of the god and of wine.<sup>27</sup>

However, the more typical Bacchus became the overindulgent fool from whom he had previously stood apart.<sup>28</sup>

While Bacchus evolved, on the one hand, into a simpleton, who drinks, dallies grapes, stumbles, or sits astride a wine barrel, he could also appear, on the other, as a sweet, youthful dainty who triumphs or banquets with other gods or with his many jovial male, female, and animal followers (as in Giulio Romano’s frescoes in the Palazzo Te, fig. C.12, 13).<sup>29</sup> Decorative friezes, grand mythological cycles, and garden figures from the next centuries abound with these happy and relatively innocuous symbols of bounty, fertility, and affluent pleasure (fig. C.14).<sup>30</sup> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a lavish Bacchus symbolized hedonism, indulgence, and an unfettered abandon to pleasure. Nineteenth-century Romantics indulged again in beautiful naked maenads traipsing with putti or a lithe, handsome god.<sup>31</sup> That is not to say that

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<sup>27</sup> See Cave, “The Triumph of Bacchus and Its Interpretation in the French Renaissance,” 249-270; Berry, “Apollo versus Bacchus: The Dynamics of Inspiration,” 88-95; and Screech, “The Winged Bacchus (Pausanias, Rabelais and Later Emblematists),” 259-262.

<sup>28</sup> We can see this effect even in Condivi’s response to Michelangelo’s *Bacchus*, fifty years later, by which point the artist’s ingenious integration of literal and spiritual drunkenness in the body of the god was already unreadable. See Bull, *The Mirror of the Gods*, 230.

<sup>29</sup> Janet Cox-Rearic, ed., *Giulio Romano, Master Designer: An Exhibition of Drawings in Celebration of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of His Birth* (New York: The Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College of City of New York, 1999).

<sup>30</sup> Hall, *After Raphael*; Lazzaro, Claudia. “The Visual Language of Gender in Sixteenth-Century Garden Sculpture,” in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 71-113; Joscelyn Godwin, *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance* (Boston: Weiser Books, 2005). Look at Sebastiano Ricci’s Bacchanals for Burlington House in London or Palazzo Fulcis-Bertoldi, Belluno.

<sup>31</sup> Consider Gustave Courbet’s reclining *Bacchante* (1840s, Rau Foundation, Cologne) or Camille Corot’s various idylls (including *Bacchante by the Sea*, 1865, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

Bacchus would never again retain his fierce and multifaceted fifteenth-century manifestation. Caravaggio would most notably revive this strange and unknowable god in his curious, solipsistic portraits (fig. C.15, 16).<sup>32</sup> His self-identification as Bacchus attests to the fifteenth-century idea that the god could embody the inspiration and experience of the artist, and be a symbol of the visual artist's process, distinct from Apollo or Orpheus, inspirers of poetry and music. Caravaggio shows Bacchus with the beauty, allure, and insidious power that artists a hundred years earlier had begun to know. Yet he shows Bacchus as a far more treacherous guide. Poussin too would explore Bacchus in complex and elegant forms.<sup>33</sup> But his approach, while respectful of the god's nobility, was enmeshed in antiquarian, mythographic accuracy in a way that fifteenth-century artists could not have approached.

The climax in the Renaissance life of Bacchus was passed, after which his dangerous, frenzied, and inspirational forces would be neutralized. This later phenomenon is summed up in Achille Bocchi's *Symbolicarum quaestionum* (1555, illustrated 1574), in which the motto "Cum virtute alma consentit vera voluptas" was illustrated with an image of Minerva and Venus reconciled (fig. C.17).<sup>34</sup> The goddesses embrace atop a sandy bluff while goatish satyrs assist a stumbling, elderly Bacchus across the foreground below them. Minerva and Venus, arms slung around each other's shoulders, together extend what appears to be a laurel wreath over the god's head, while he holds out his empty cup and a wine flask spills out onto the beach before them. The old man and satyrs are derived from the antique relief depicting Bacchus visiting the poet

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<sup>32</sup> Kristina Hermann Fiore, "Il *Bacchino malato* autoritratto del Caravaggio ed altre figure bacchiche degli artisti," *Quaderni di Palazzo Venezia* 6 (1989): 95-143; Avigdor W. G. Posèq, "Caravaggio and the Antique," *Artibus et historiae* 11, no. 21 (1990): 147-167.

<sup>33</sup> See Panofsky, *A Mythological Painting by Poussin*.

<sup>34</sup> Motto X. First published in 1555, the illustrated edition appeared in 1574. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, 71 and n. 68.



Icarius, although the relief's young fauns, with tales and human legs, have been transformed into the typical Renaissance Pan-like satyr (fig. C.18).<sup>35</sup> The motto conveys the Neoplatonic assertion that the pursuit of virtue could include pleasure, and vice versa. With such an idea, this iconologist managed to preserve a great deal of Quattrocento thinking, a consequence of his contact with Pico della Mirandola's relative, Alberto Pio, and by virtue of his own intellectual fascination with hieroglyphic work and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. In so doing, Bocchi's work, like that of Gyraldus, enriches our understanding of fifteenth-century mythography and philosophy to a greater extent than the more popular, less recondite compendia of his contemporaries Ripa and Cartari.<sup>36</sup> Yet what we see here is not a potent Bacchus spreading his divine inspiration, but an old, decrepit, and unsteady figure, who tips out his cup and drops his jug of wine. This Bacchus has been conflated with Silenus, the ugly fool who appears elsewhere on the antique relief, with his balding pate and bulbous features, playing the double *aulos*. The god who had been coming to dine with a poet, offering him his frenzied *furor*, becomes instead a drunken Silenus, incapacitated with drink, held up by goatish satyrs. The goddesses embrace because love and wisdom need not be antithetical, and because the pleasures of Bacchus veil deeper gifts. Silenus, the ultimate hedonist, and here an effete, old drunk, is the ugly mask which disguises great wisdom; with the pursuit of enlightenment—via Bacchic inspiration, no less—that mask can be peeled away; then truth and knowledge—the Absolute Virtue and Pleasure—

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<sup>35</sup> Wind does not mention the ancient source, and calls the elderly male figure Silenus. However, the relief was known in the sixteenth century in two versions, one in the British Museum, London; the other, Museo Archeologico, Naples. Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat. 90. This "Triclinium" scene was studied several times in the sixteenth century, including a drawing by Aspertini in the Wolfegg Codex, fol. 46v-47, and a drawing by Fra Bartolomeo, Uffizi, 14544Fv. The same pairing of an aged Dionysus supported by a young faun is depicted on the Bacchic Krater in Pisa. Bober and Rubinstein, cat. 91. On the Triclinium relief, one satyr crouches down to help remove Bacchus' sandal and the other stands under his elbow, supporting him so he will not fall over.

<sup>36</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, n. 68, pp. 71-72.

can be encountered. But this depiction of the Socratic Silene is a memory only, a memory no longer embodied by the beautiful, vigorous god himself. This Bacchus is far removed from Mantegna's svelte, noble Bacchus, who also received a crown, but as a physical paragon, in and of himself, of creative fury and transcendent *voluptas*.

Looking at that earlier Bacchus and his followers, as they were depicted in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, demonstrates how one particular mythological subject participated in all of the major phenomena of the Renaissance period, from the revival of antiquity, the revolution of the visual arts, and the development of Neoplatonic thought, to the emergence of engraving, the fascination with the pastoral, and the monumentalization of mythological painting. Because Bacchus was appreciated for all of his multivalency, he was not limited to a simplistic representation as the god of wine but rather reflected the wider thriving and idiosyncratic culture of the fifteenth century. His maenads embodied movement and vitality as well as passion, emotion, and ecstasy. Their form could be adapted by Renaissance artists looking for just such a way to represent great pathos as an archetype for energy, frenzy, grief, or beauty. The maenad evolved into the lightly stepping *ninfa*, who for some time epitomized an *all'antica* ideal.

Ariadne, lying languidly on the shore or rushing in frenzied despair, likewise spawned quintessential Renaissance figurative types. The sleeping nude became one of the hallmarks of early sixteenth-century style, and came to be affiliated with the romantic dream of a rediscovered antiquity and with notions of divine inspiration. Her discovery and unveiling at the hands of a satyr proliferated into one of the most recognizable motifs of this era. Notes of prurience and titillation mixed with ideas of salvation and epiphany, ensuring wide use and varied meaning for the iconography. The triumphant coupling of the princess with Bacchus easily adapted to

contemporary parade traditions and revived epithalamic celebrations. Lorenzo de' Medici's song to Bacchus, or Baldini's engraving of the couple on an elaborate chariot, captured the mood and spirit that characterized much of Bacchic imagery in this moment, being a mix of amorous *furor* and bittersweet, melancholy nostalgia.

An array of unexpected implications attached to the image of the overly-sexed satyrs that accompanied Bacchus in his train. While an association with the vice of intemperance had dogged the subhuman creature since his inception, his vital sensuality also conveyed the crucial necessity of fertile reproduction. The Aristotelian doctrine of *Necessitas* contained a certain natural acceptance of sexuality in the order of the universe. This idea combined with Neoplatonic conceptualizations of spiritual and intellectual fertility, giving rise to the metaphor of the drunken satyr as an essential element, along with fire and water, of the creative process. Bronze statuettes of such satyrs holding inkwells and candles or oil lamps adorned the desks of humanist and collectors, symbols fueling their antiquarian imaginations. Pan, a rustic god associated with music and shepherds, stood as an archetypal figure for the pastoral movement, and attained elevated status in the hierarchy of the cosmos. Silenus, his elderly, paunchy counterpart, besides being a jovial figure of fun, was also ascribed rank as a morosoph, the Socratic Silene.

Like Pan, Bacchus truly represented the All in the Renaissance. He contained within himself so many of the favored paradoxes of humanism: the *dolce-amaro*, the *discordia-concors*, the *serio-ludere*, the *sobria-ebrietas*. He pertained to the young and the old, the beautiful and ugly, the ancient and the modern. Plato made him a god of divine madness, a *furor divino* that was understood to inspire the pursuit of the good and the truthful, or *summum bonum*. The self-consciousness of Renaissance artists as they aspired in this period to the status of the liberal arts

and of courtier-intellectuals entailed some internal contemplation of their own processes of creativity and inspiration. As I have proposed here, for some artists, an enthusiastic embrace of the Bacchic figure may have channeled for them a vision of the inspirited mechanism firing their imaginations. The amorous frenzy of Venus and poetic frenzy of Apollo may indeed have been matched by the creative frenzy of Bacchus. That wine had long been thought to loosen the mind was translated into those little *spiritelli del vino*, the airy essence of intoxication that lifts the mind to the heights of otherworldly contemplations. For an artist like Michelangelo or Titian, Bacchus swayed or leaped with the elevated *furore* of an inspired and inspiring god, a symbol indeed of divine genius.

The embrace of contrarities characterized the intellectual flexibility of this period, in which Ficino could unite Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives in fashioning his doctrine of genius, and Neoplatonism could establish its compatibility with Christianity. Ideas of “right pleasure” or of “irrational wisdom” could only come out of a culture attuned to subtle gradations of truth and goodness and an appreciation of the middle ground between life’s extremes. The Neoplatonic principle that “the contraries coincide in the One” (*contradictoria coincidunt in natura uniali*)—that is, the coincidence of opposites—was symbolized in the pairing of Pan and Proteus.<sup>37</sup> In this Orphic tenet, all the gods contained within themselves their opposite, and could manifest such contrary traits. The “sameness” of Bacchus and Apollo was a manifestation of this, for they each contained within themselves aspects of the other. This fascination with hybridity may explain in part the enthusiasm for the satyr, whose combination of man and beast captured the essence of man’s interior struggle between passion and control, pleasure and

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<sup>37</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 54, 192, 194, appendix 1. Nicholas of Cusa (or Nicolaus Cusanus) wrote a work called *De docta ignorantia (On Learned Ignorance)* in 1440 in which he laid out the idea of *coincidentia oppositorum*, a “union of opposites.” Although Cusanus was well-known in Italy, it’s not clear that his texts were available. Pico della Mirandola arrived at his own formulation, quoted here, in his *Conclusiones paradoxae numero LXXI*, no. 15.

penitence.<sup>38</sup> It is just when contraries are so united that the difference between *Voluptas* and *Virtus* becomes blurred, illuminating a path that straddles between two worlds instead of insisting on a strict choice between opposites.

The paintings in Alfonso's Camerino d'Alabastro combined to create a room glorifying and embodying the paradoxical nature of Bacchus and his followers. It was there that—with Venus and her cupids, Ariadne, satyrs and maenads, and indeed all the gods—Bacchus presided over an Arcadian kingdom of peace and goodwill, filled with love and passion, frenzy and surfeit, pleasure and conviviality. The god of madness and violent rages brought calm and abundance to his happy followers, serving as a model of the just and benevolent ruler for Alfonso. As an embodiment of the Seasons and the ebbs and flows of the yearly cycle, the room stood as a symbol of Bacchic vitality as well as Estense supremacy and legacy. As a monument to a family that would ultimately fall, the Camerino too would one day become an object of nostalgia for a scintillating Renaissance that was in turn lost, just as its paintings had harkened back to a pastoral antiquity. The paintings alone remain to bear witness to the magnificent, complex Bacchus that once existed in the Renaissance.

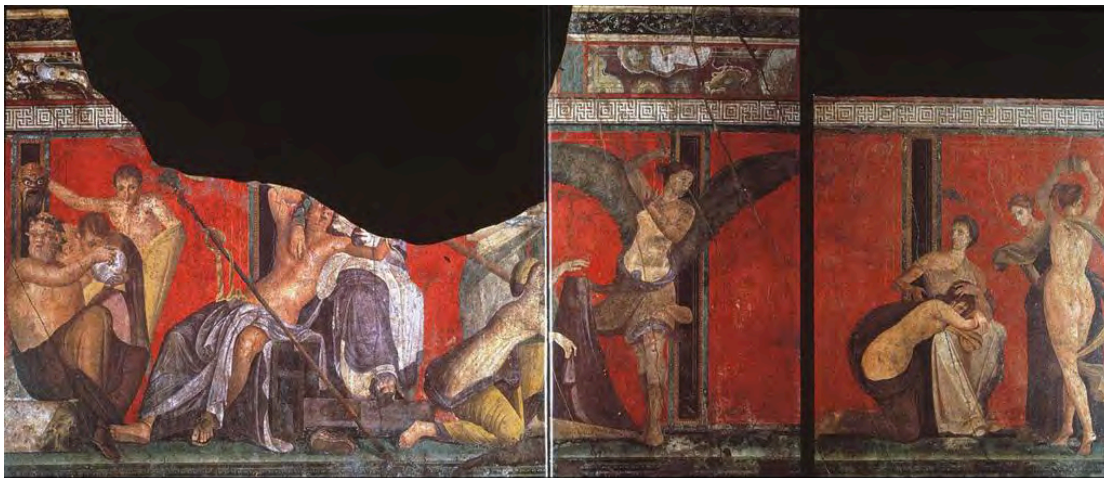
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<sup>38</sup> Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 204.

## CHAPTER ONE



Fig. 1.1 *Dionysian Initiation*, c. 60-40 B.C., wall painting, Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii



detail (ARTstor)

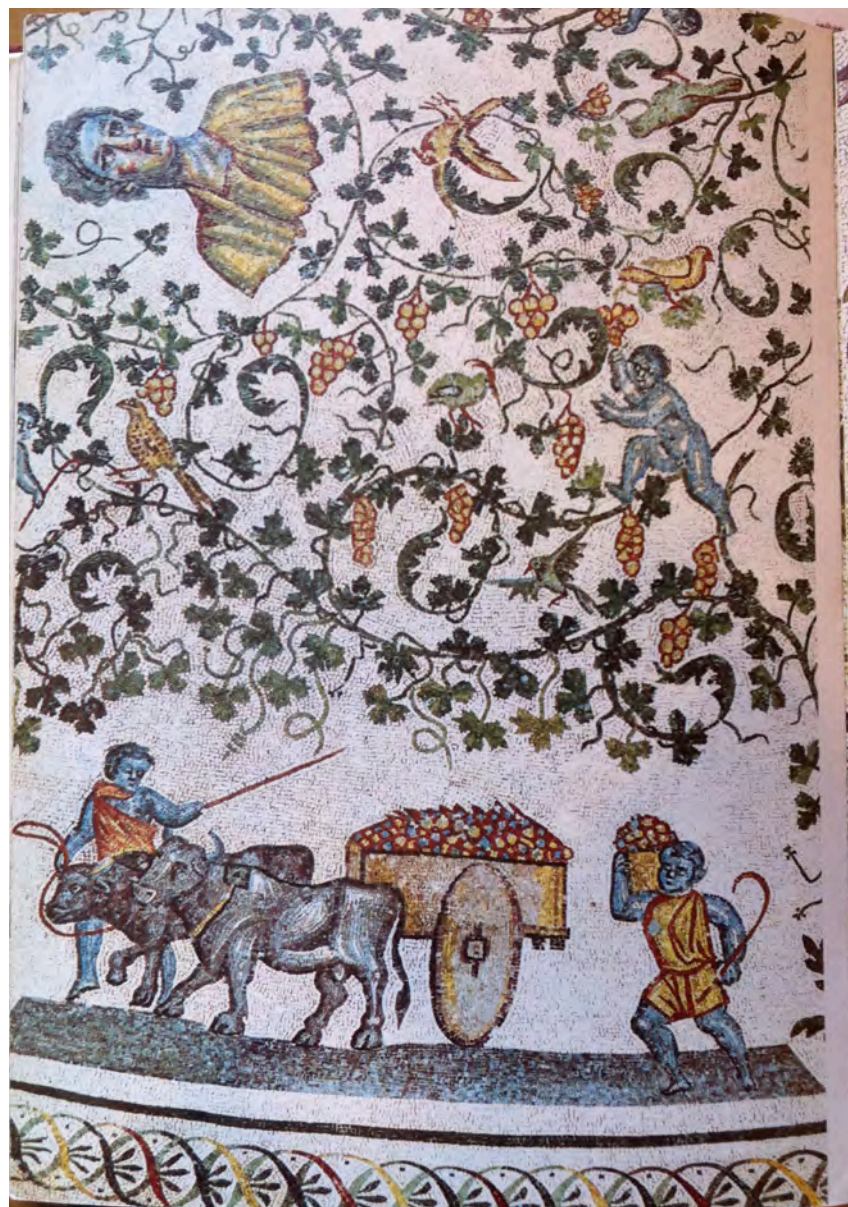


Fig. 1.2 *Putti at the Vintage*, mosaic, 4th c. A.D., Santa Costanza, Rome (Gough, 1973, fig. 70)



Fig. 1.3 *Putti at the Vintage*, porphyry sarcophagus of Helena, daughter of Emperor Constantine, c. 361, originally Sta. Costanza, Rome, now Museo Pio Clementine, Vatican





Fig. 1.4 *Sarcophagus of the Good Shepherds*, Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 49)



Fig. 1.5 *Spiritelli in a grapevine*, Città di Castello Cathedral, door jamb (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 24)



Fig. 1.6 *Putti with Bacchic Cult Objects*, child's sarcophagus, Camposanto, Pisa (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 53b)



Fig. 1.7 Jacopo Bellini, *Putti at the Vintage*, London Drawing Book, fol. 59v, British Museum (Eisler, 1989, pl. 73)



Fig. 1.8 Master of the E-Series Tarocchi, *Putti at the Vintage*, engraving, Albertina, Vienna, Hind E.III.18 (Levenson et al., 1973, fig. 6-5)



Fig. 1.8a Attributed to Master of the E-Series Tarocchi, *Putti at the Vintage*, pen and bistre, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, Rome (Levenson et al., 1973, fig. 6-6)

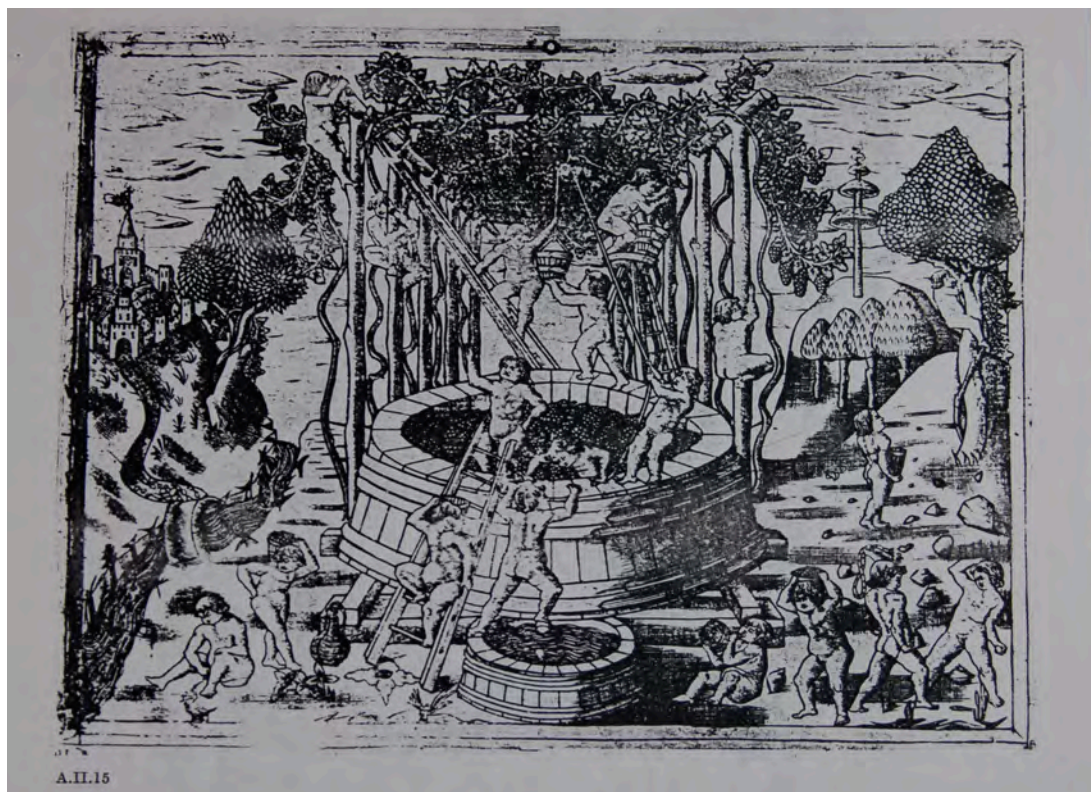


Fig. 1.8b Anonymous Florentine, *Putti at the Vintage*, engraving, c. 1460-1470 (Hind, 1938, A.II.15)



Fig. 1.8c Anonymous Florentine, *Putti at the Vintage*, engraving, c. 1460-1470 (Hind, 1938, A.II.14)



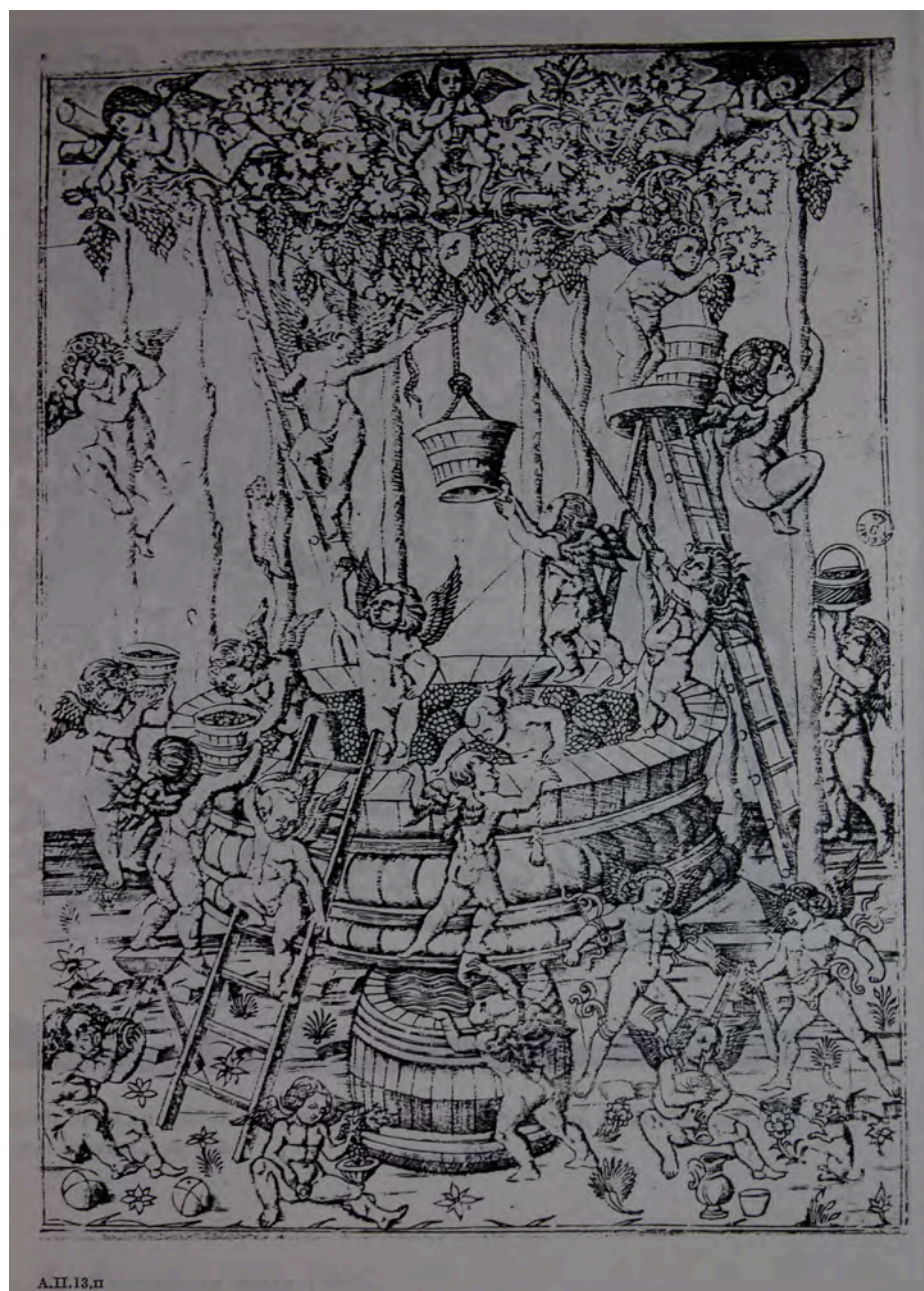


Fig. 1.8d Anonymous Florentine, *Putti at the Vintage*, engraving, c. 1460-1470 (Hind, 1938, A.II.13,ii)



Fig. 1.9 Anonymous, *Putti at the Vintage*, painting, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author's photo)



(detail)



Fig. 1.10 *Battle of Bacchus and Amazons*, Roman sarcophagus, Museo Diocesano, Cortona (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 237, p. 258)



Fig. 1.11 *Putti Playing with Bacchic Cult Objects*, sarcophagus fragment, Louvre, Paris (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 53)



Fig. 1.11a Cassiano dal Pozzo, drawing after Bacchic relief, 17th century, British Museum, London, album vol. I, f. 21 (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 53a)



Fig. 1.12 *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, sarcophagus, Palazzo dell'Arcivescovado, Lucca (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 90, pl. 110)



Fig. 1.13 (Left) Brunelleschi, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, competition panel for the Baptistery Doors, 1401, bronze, Bargello, Florence (Krautheimer, 1982, fig. 1)  
(Right) Ghiberti, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, competition panel for the Baptistery Doors, 1401, bronze, Bargello, Florence (Krautheimer, 1982, pl. 1)





Fig. 1.14 Donatello, *St. George and the Dragon* (detail), marble relief, c. 1417, Or San Michele, Florence (Janson, 1982, pl. 11c)



Fig. 1.15 Detail of rearing horse, *Battle of Bacchus and Amazons*, sarcophagus, Cortona (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 237, p. 258)



Fig. 1.16 *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, sarcophagus, British Museum, London (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 88, pl. 110 and pl. 113)





Fig. 1.16a Detail of Bacchus and Ariadne, British Museum (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 88, pl. 112)



Fig. 1.16b Detail of Silenus on his Donkey, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* sarcophagus, British Museum (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 88, pl. 112)



Fig. 1.17 *Drunken Pan*, left side of British Museum sarcophagus (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 88, pl. 114)



Fig. 1.18 *Punishment of Pan*, right side of Bacchic sarcophagus, British Museum (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 88, pl. 114)



Fig. 1.19 Unknown artist, *Drunken Pan*, drawing after left side of S. Maria Maggiore (British Museum) sarcophagus, Louvre, Paris, n.5611 recto (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 53)



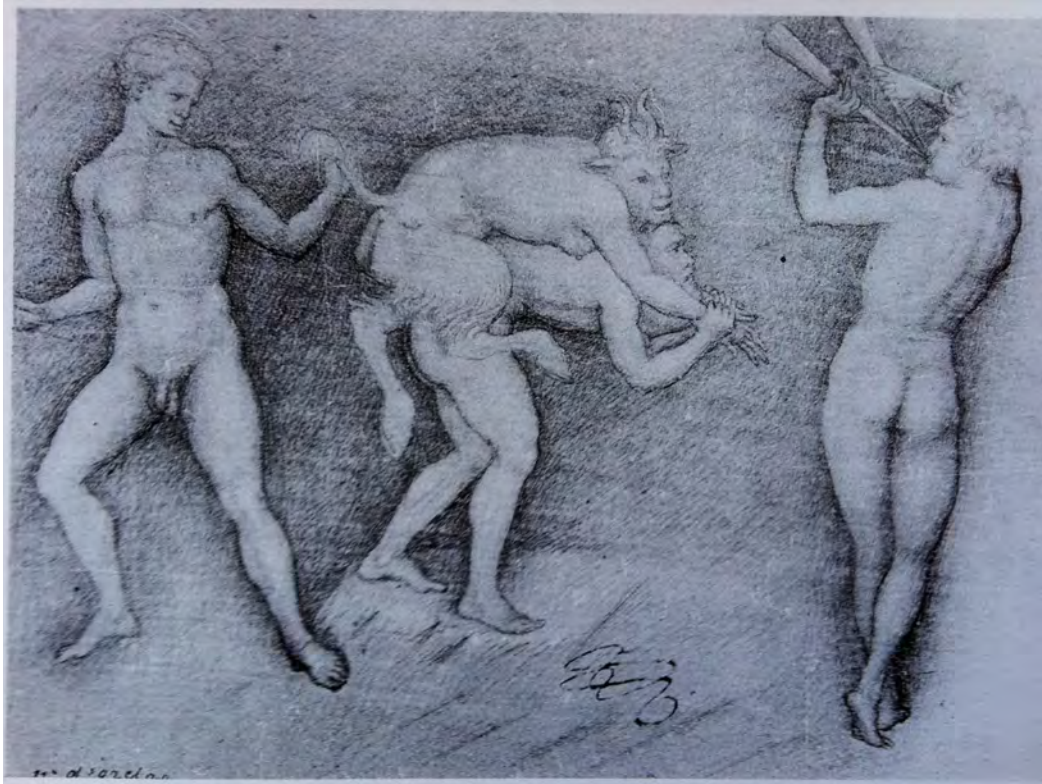


Fig. 1.20 Unknown artist, *Punishment of Pan*, drawing after right side of S. Maria Maggiore (British Museum) sarcophagus, Louvre, Paris, n. 5611 verso (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 53)



Fig. 1.21 Unknown artist, *Drawing after antique figures* (including maenad on left from Amsterdam sarcophagus; satyr with infant on right from S. Maria Maggiore sarcophagus), Louvre, Paris, R. F. 38 (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 53c)



Fig. 1.22 oval Bacchic sarcophagus, back, Allard Pierson Museum, University, Amsterdam, inv. 10854 (formerly Hever Castle, Kent) (Matz, *ASR*, IV. 1, cat. 44)



Fig. 1.23 Attributed to circle of Jacopo or Giovanni Bellini, Drawings after antique motifs, Louvre, Paris, R. F. 524 (Eisler, 1989, fig. 15)



Fig. 1.24 *Bacchic Procession with Pan driving a cart*, sarcophagus fragment, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 157, pl. 184)



Fig. 1.25 *Silenus with infant Bacchus*, left half of a version of a sarcophagus known in the Renaissance, Museo delle Terme, Rome (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 206, pl. 216)



*Childhood of Bacchus*, complete sarcophagus, Rome, Museo delle Terme (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 69)



Fig. 1.26 Circle of Pisanello, drawing after Belvedere sarcophagus, c. 1431-1440, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, inv. F.214 inf. 15 recto (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 25)



Fig. 1.27 Bacchic sarcophagus, Belvedere Courtyard, Vatican (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 25a)





Fig. 1.27a Detail of Bacchus and satyr, Vatican Belvedere (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 171, pl. 193)



Fig. 1.28 Circle of Pisanello, Drawing after fragment of Bacchic Battle sarcophagus in Grottaferrata and a marine dragon, c. 1431-1440, pen and ink and brown wash over metalpoint on parchment, 16.3 x 22 cm, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F. 214 inf. n. 14r (Syson and Gordon, 2001, fig. 3.55)



Fig. 1.29 *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, sarcophagus fragment, Roman, second century, 69 x 70 cm, Museo del Monumento Nazionale, Grottaferrata (Syson and Gordon, 2001, fig. 3.54)



Fig. 1.30 Circle of Pisanello, drawing after Bacchic sarcophagus in Amsterdam, c. 1431-1435, silverpoint and pen on parchment, 183 x 240 mm, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. P.II.41 verso (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 57)



Fig. 1.31 Bacchic Krater, Camposanto, Pisa (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 91)

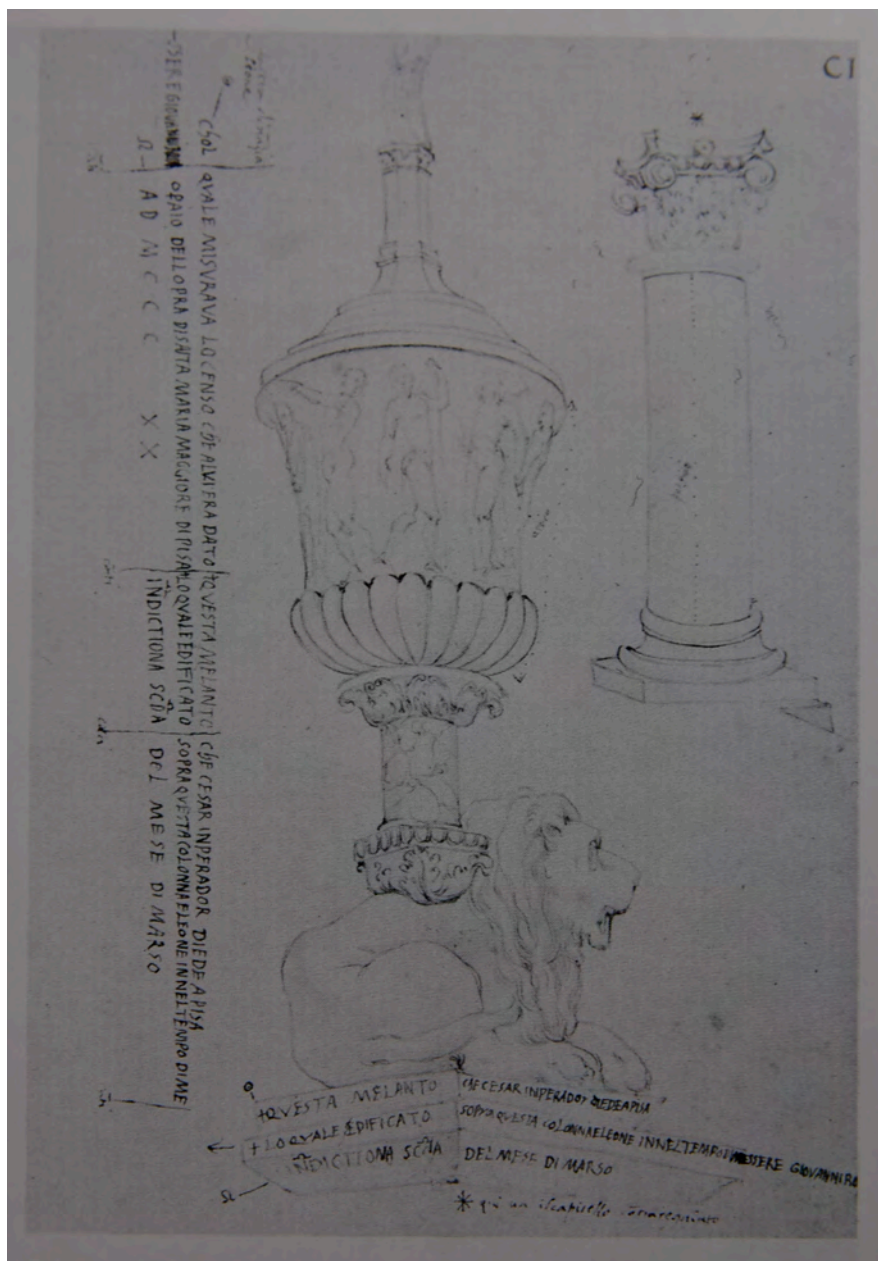


Fig. 1.32 Giovanni Antonio Dosio, Installation of Bacchic Krater, second half of sixteenth century, Codex Berolinensis, fol. 17, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 91a)

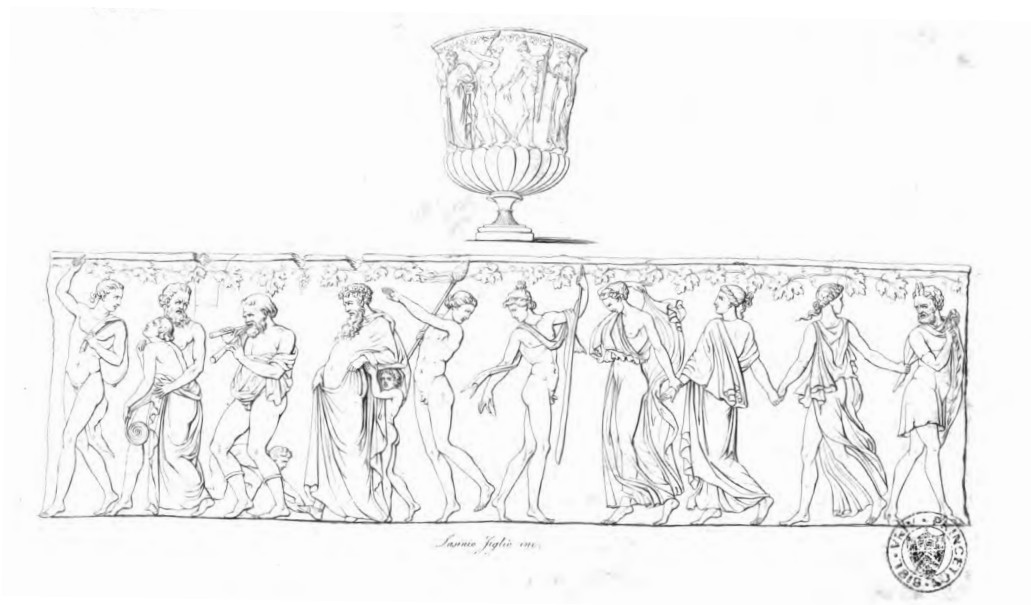


Fig. 1.33 Giovanni Paolo Lasinio, Engraving of Bacchic Krater, *Raccolta di sarcofagi, urne e altri monumenti di scultura del Camp Santo di Pisa*, Pisa, 1814, pl. LXI (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 91b)



Fig. 1.34 Nicola Pisano, *Presentation*, detail of pulpit, 1260, Baptistry, Pisa (John White, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400*, 3rd ed. [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993], fig. 41)





Fig.1.35 Nicola Pisano, Detail of Patriarch, Baptistery pulpit, Pisa



Fig. 1.36 Nicola Pisano and assistants, *Last Judgment*, baptismal font relief, Pisa, Baptistery (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 72)



Fig. 1.36a Nicola Pisano, *Last Judgment*, detail, Baptistery, Pisa (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 72)



Fig. 1.37 Nicola Pisano, right half of the *Last Judgment*, pulpit relief, Duomo, Siena



Fig. 1.38 *Vulcan, Pluto, Bacchus, Mercury*, c. 1023, in *De rerum naturis* of Rabanus Maurus, Library of Monte Cassino, MS. 132 (Nikolaus Himmelmann, *Antike Götter im Mittelalter*, Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 1986, pl. 3, fig. 1)



Fig. 1.39 Lorenzo Lotto, *An Ecclesiastic in his Study-Bedchamber*, brush and brown wash over traces of chalk, c. 1530, British Museum, London (Thornton, 1997, fig. 24)



Fig. 1.40 Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Miriam*, Gates of Paradise, Baptistry, Florence (Krautheimer, 1982, pl. 129a)



Fig. 1.41 Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Prophetess*, Gates of Paradise (Krautheimer, 1982, pl. 125a)





Fig. 1.42 Fra Carnevale/Master of the Barberini Triptych, *Birth of the Virgin*, detail of man holding up an infant derived from Childhood of Bacchus sarcophagus in the Museo delle Terme, Rome. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 35.121 (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 69b)



Fig. 1.43 Filarete, bronze reliefs on the Doors of St. Peter's, Rome



Fig. 1.44 Donatello, *Genietto*, bronze, c. 1440, Museo del Bargello, Florence (Janson, 1963, fig. 67a)



Fig. 1.45 Donatello, rear view (Janson, 1963, fig. 67b)



Fig. 1.45a Donatello, detail of satyr's tail

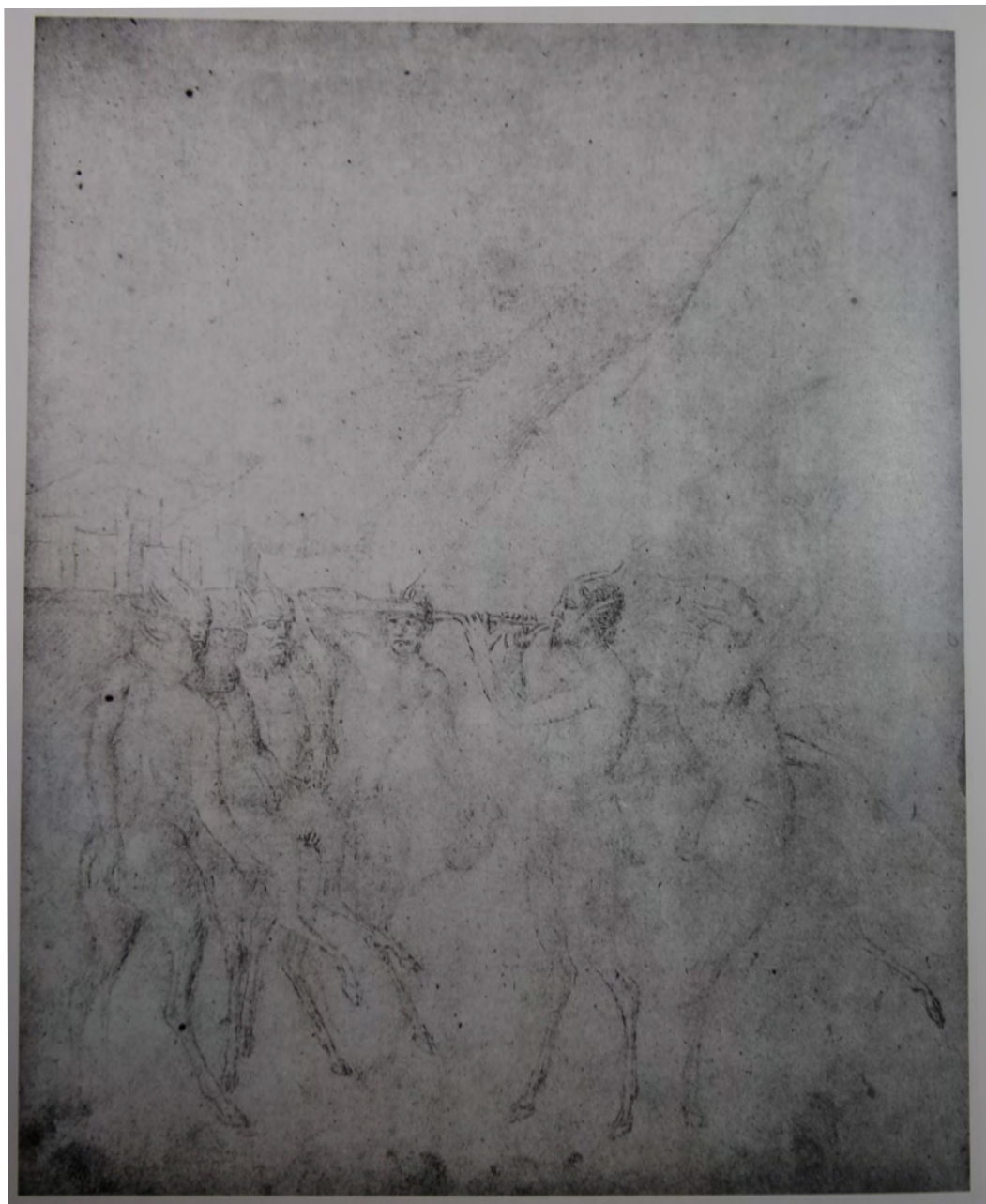


Fig. 1.46 Jacopo Bellini, left half of *Triumph of Bacchus*, London Drawing Book, fol. 93v, British Museum, London (Eisler, 1989, pl. 76)



Fig. 1.47 Jacopo Bellini, right half of *Triumph of Bacchus*, London Drawing Book, fol. 94, British Museum, London (Eisler, 1989, pl. 77)



Fig. 1.48 Jacopo Bellini, detail of satyrs holding a drunken companion, fol. 93v





Fig. 1.49 Jacopo Bellini, detail of Bacchus and satyr holding bowl of fruit, fol. 94



Fig. 1.50 After Mantegna, *Putti Playing with Masks*, pen and ink on paper, c. 1485-1495, Louvre, Paris, inv. 5072, nouveau 2854 (Martineau, 1992, cat. 149)



Fig. 1.51 (top) terracotta matrix for a plaquette, Museo del Palazzo Venezia, Rome (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 69)



(bottom) "*Larvate Erotos Frightening a Companion*," bronze plaquette, National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, Washington, D.C., inv. 1942.9.190, A-1512 (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 70)

## CHAPTER TWO



Fig. 2.1 Drawing after the antique, c. 1460, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F. 237 inf. 1707 recto (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 55r)



Fig. 2.2 *Maenad*, detail of Bacchic sarcophagus, British Museum, London



Fig. 2.3 (top) Baccio Bandinelli, *Descent from the Cross*, drawing, École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (Wind/Antal, 1937, pl. 9d)  
(bottom) Sir Joshua Reynolds, drawing from a sketchbook, British Museum, London (Wind/Antal, 1937, pl. 9b)



Fig. 2.4 (left) Maenad, candelabrum base, Roman, neo-Attic, 1st c. A.D., Museo Archeologico, Venice (Bober and Rubinstein, cat. 89)  
(right) Maenad, marble vase with the birth of Bacchus, Museo Nazionale, Naples (Draper, 1992, fig. 78)



Fig. 2.5 (top) Medea Sarcophagus, detail, mid 2nd c. A.D., Museo Nazionale, Ancona (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 110)  
 (bottom) *Triclinium* (“Bacchus visiting the Poet Icarus”), detail, Roman copy after Greek neo-Attic relief or painting, Museo Archeologico, Naples (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 90c)





Fig. 2.6 Lasinio, engraving after the figures on the Bacchic Krater in the Camposanto, Pisa, detail, 1814, pl. LXI (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 91b)



Fig. 2.7 Bertoldo di Giovanni, *Crucifixion*, bronze, 59 x 59 cm, Museo Nazionale di Bargello, Florence (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.8 Warburg's *Mnemosyne Picture-Atlas*, pl. 46 "Ninfa 'Eilbringitte'" (Warburg, 2000, p. 85)



Fig. 2.9 Warburg's *Mnemosyne Picture-Atlas*, pl. 47, "Ninfa as Guardian Angel and as Head Huntress" (Warburg, 2000, p. 87)



Fig. 2.10 (top) *Maenads*, neo-Attic relief, marble, 58.8 x 97.2 cm, Uffizi, Florence, inv. no. 1914.318 (Touchette, 1995, pl. 18a, cat. 21)  
 (bottom) Ghirlandaio, *Birth of John the Baptist*, detail of handmaid, fresco, Santa Maria Novella, Florence



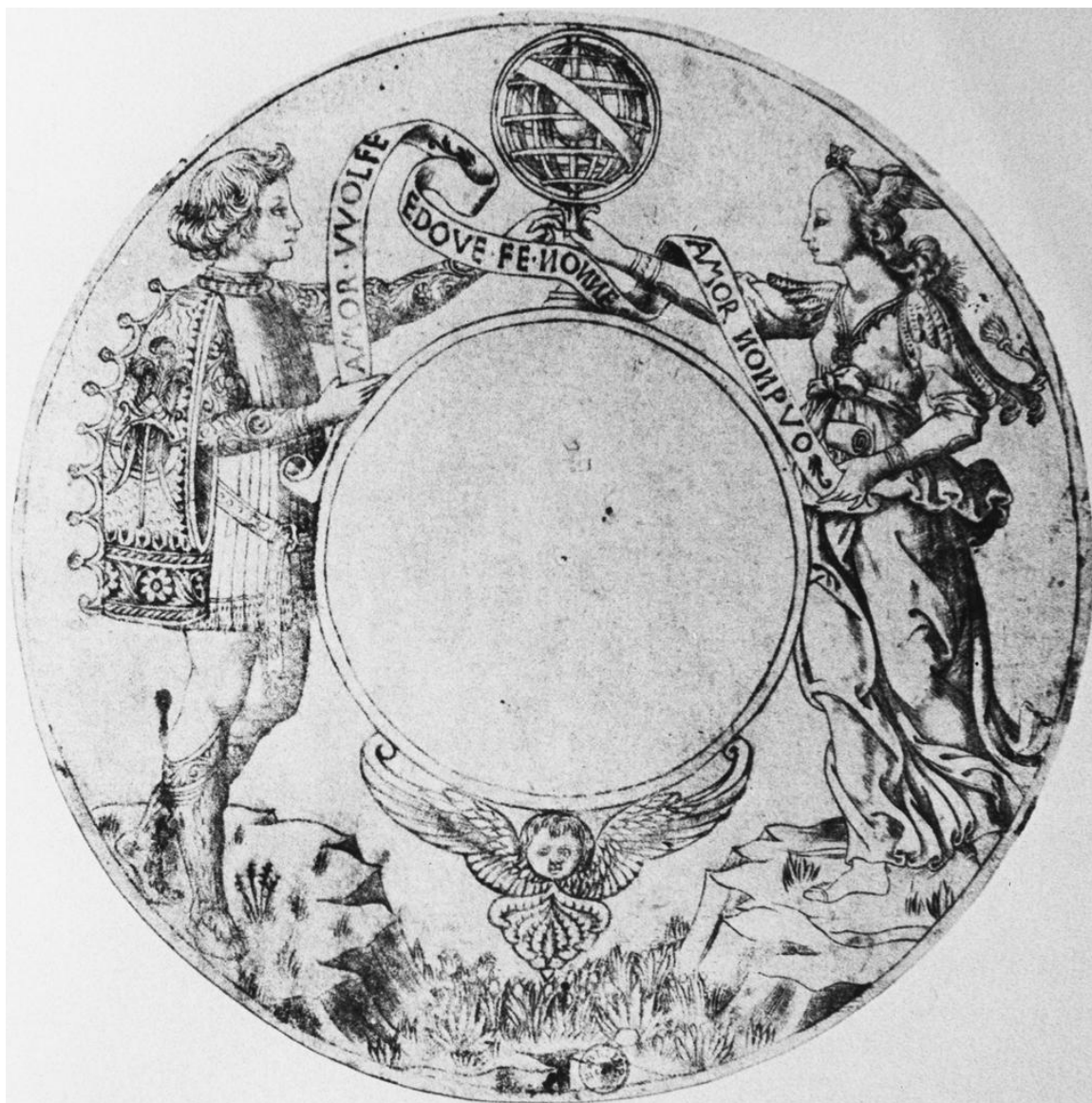


Fig. 2.11 Otto Print, "Amor vuol fe," engraving, c. 1465-1480, TIB 24.17 (148) (ARTstor)

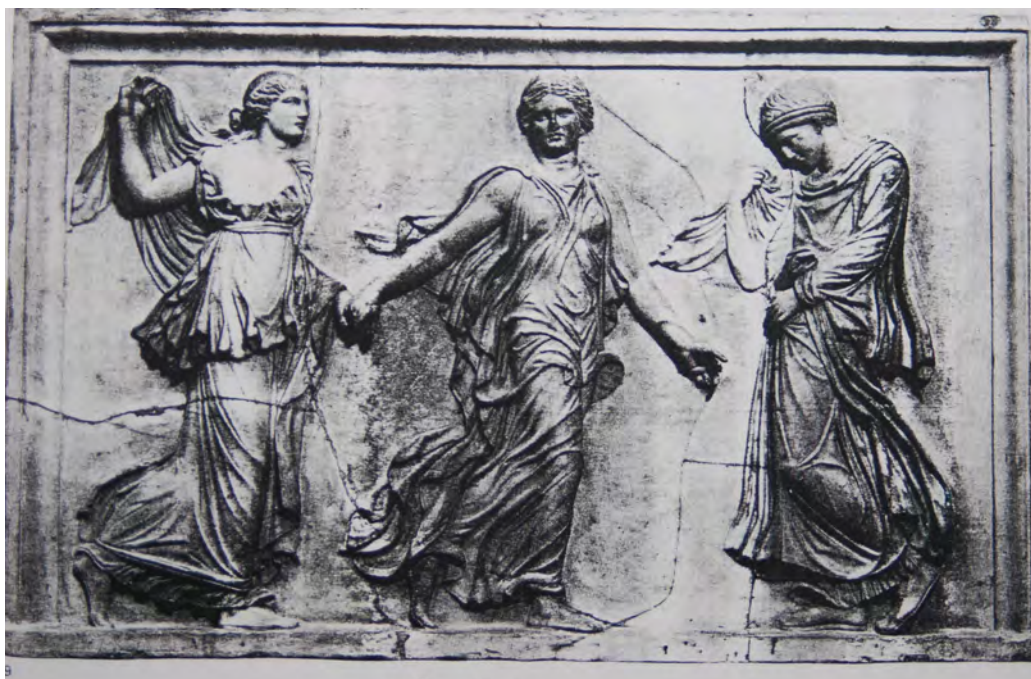


Fig. 2.12 (top) Maidens decorating a Bacchic candelabrum, relief, Roman, neo-Attic, Louvre, Paris (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 59B)  
 (bottom) Dancing Maenads, Graeco-Roman relief, first c. B.C., Uffizi, Florence (Dobrick, 1979, fig. 19)



Fig. 2.13 (top) Lasinio, engraving, detail of Bacchic Krater in Camposanto, Pisa;  
(bottom) Dancing “Maidens” (Maenads?), relief, Roman, neo-Attic, Louvre, Paris (Bober  
and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 59A)





Fig. 2.14 Dancing Maenad figure types (drawn by Susan Bird) based on Hauser's classifications, neo-Attic models based on Callimachus' designs, late 5th c. B.C. (Touchette, 1995, pl. 1)



Fig. 2.15 Bacchic sarcophagus, Belvedere Courtyard, Vatican (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 171, pl. 192)



Fig. 2.16 Circle of Pisanello, Drawing after Bacchic sarcophagus in the Belvedere Courtyard, c. 1431-1440, pen and ink over metalpoint on parchment, 19.5 x 27.4 cm, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, inv. F. 214 inf. 15r (Cavallaro, 1988, pl. III, cat. 25)



Fig. 2.17 Jacopo Bellini, Paris Drawing Book, fol. 48, drawing, Louvre, Paris (Eisler, 1989, pl.84)



Cf. *Dancing Maenads*, round altar, 1st-2nd c. A.D., Museo Civico, Padua (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 88)



Fig. 2.18 Attributed to Giovanni Maria Falconetto, *Bacchic procession*, terracotta relief, Odeo Cornaro, Padua (Schweikhart 1975)



Fig. 2.19 Attributed to Michele di Giovanni di Bartolo, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, Camino della Iole, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino



Fig. 2.20 Matteo Balducci, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, cassone, early 1500s, Pinacoteca, Gubbio (Gregori, 2003)



Fig. 2.21 Vittorio Ghiberti, *Eve*, border to south doors of Baptistery, Florence (Krautheimer, 1982, fig. 128)





Fig. 2.22 Baccio Baldini, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, engraving, British Museum, London (Hind, A.II.26)





Fig. 2.23 *Maenad*, stucco, Roman, Basilica sotterranea di Porta Maggiore (Bialostocki, 1981, fig. 57) – a favorite image of Warburg's.



Fig. 2.24 Kallimachos (Roman copy), Relief with Maenad, marble, Musei Capitolini, Rome (SCALA/Art Resource; ARTstor)



Fig. 2.25 Neo-Attic relief, Maenad, Uffizi, Florence



Fig. 2.26 Bacchic sarcophagus, Camposanto, Pisa (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 170, pl. 191)



Fig. 2.27 *Death of Pentheus*, detail of sarcophagus cover to Bacchic sarcophagus, Camposanto, Pisa (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 230A, pl. 255)



Fig. 2.28 School of Mantegna (Marco Zoppo attributed), *Death of Orpheus*, drawing, British Museum, London (Ephrussi, 1978)

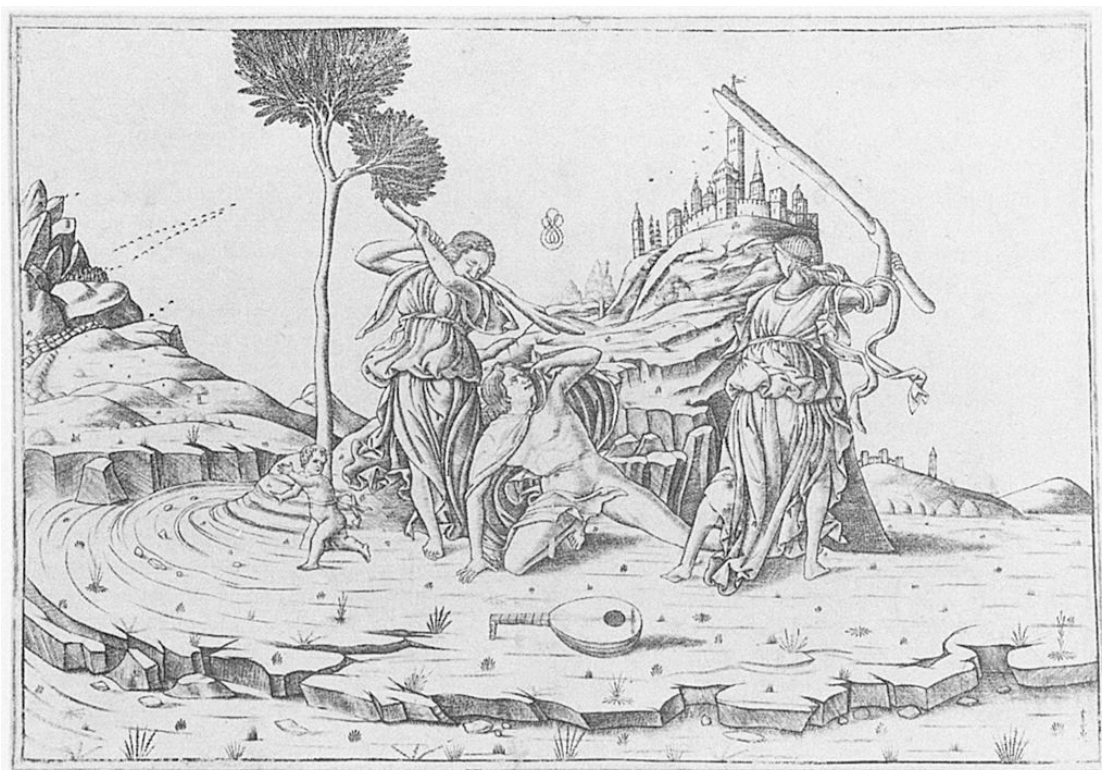


Fig. 2.29 *Death of Orpheus*, engraving, Ferrara, c. 1470-1480, British Museum, London, Hind E.III.17 (ARTstor)





Fig. 2.30 Albrecht Dürer, *Death of Orpheus*, pen drawing, 1494, Kunsthalle, Hamburg (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.31 “Master of the Orpheus Legend,” *Death of Orpheus*, plaque, last quarter of fifteenth century, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author’s photograph)

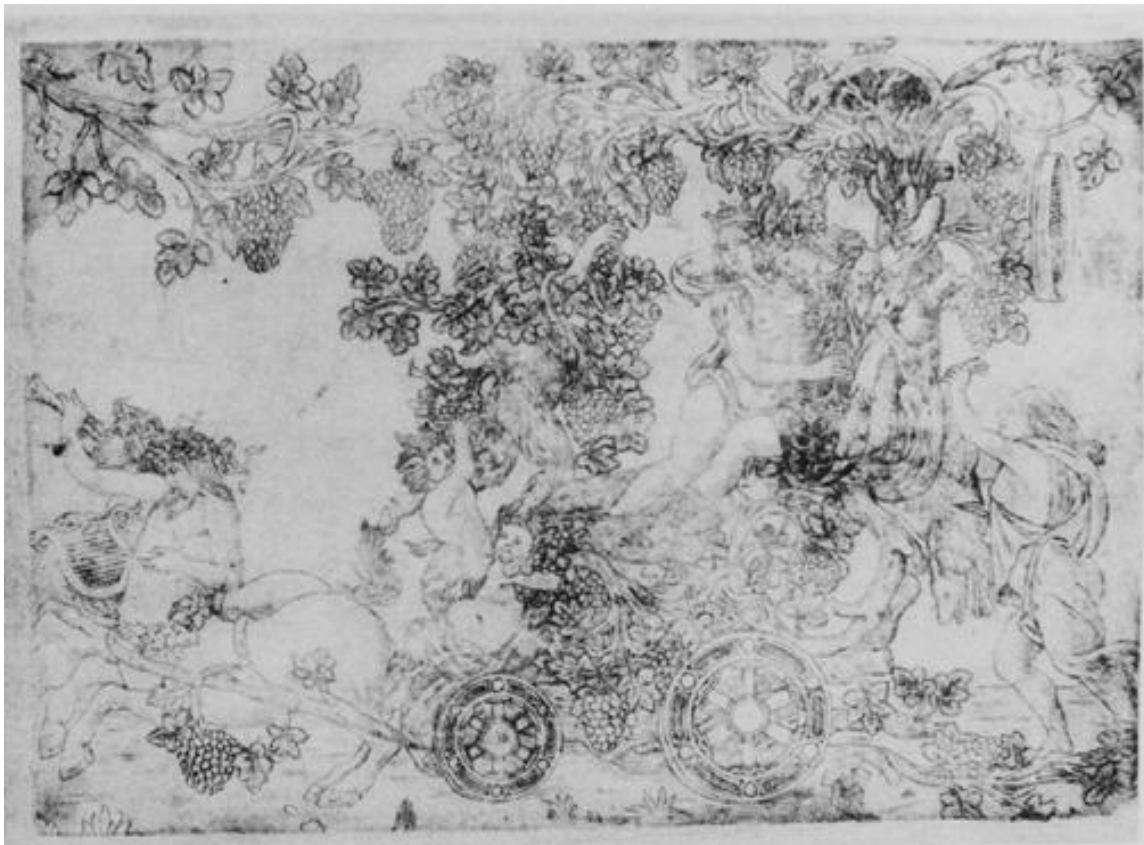


Fig. 2.32 Baccio Baldini, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, right half, engraving, British Museum (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.33 Baccio Baldini, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, left half, engraving, British Museum (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.34 Donatello, *Entombment*, limestone relief, 1446-1450, High Altar, San Antonio, Padua (Janson, 1963, pl. 88a)



Fig. 2.35 Donatello, *Crucifixion*, bronze relief, north pulpit, 1460-1470, San Lorenzo, Florence (Janson, 1963, pl. 106)



Fig. 2.36 Donatello, *Deposition*, bronze relief, north pulpit, c. 1460-1470, San Lorenzo, Florence (Janson, 1963, pl. 107)



Fig.2.36a Details of grieving women under the cross, *Deposition*





Fig. 2.37 Agave with the head of Pentheus, antique gem



Fig. 2.38 Circle of Baccio Baldini, Otto Print, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, Florentine engraving, Hind A.IV.1, TIB 24.13 (147) (Warburg, 1999, fig. 21)



Fig. 2.38a Otto print, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, Florentine engraving, The Illustrated Bartsch 24.14 (147) (ARTstor)

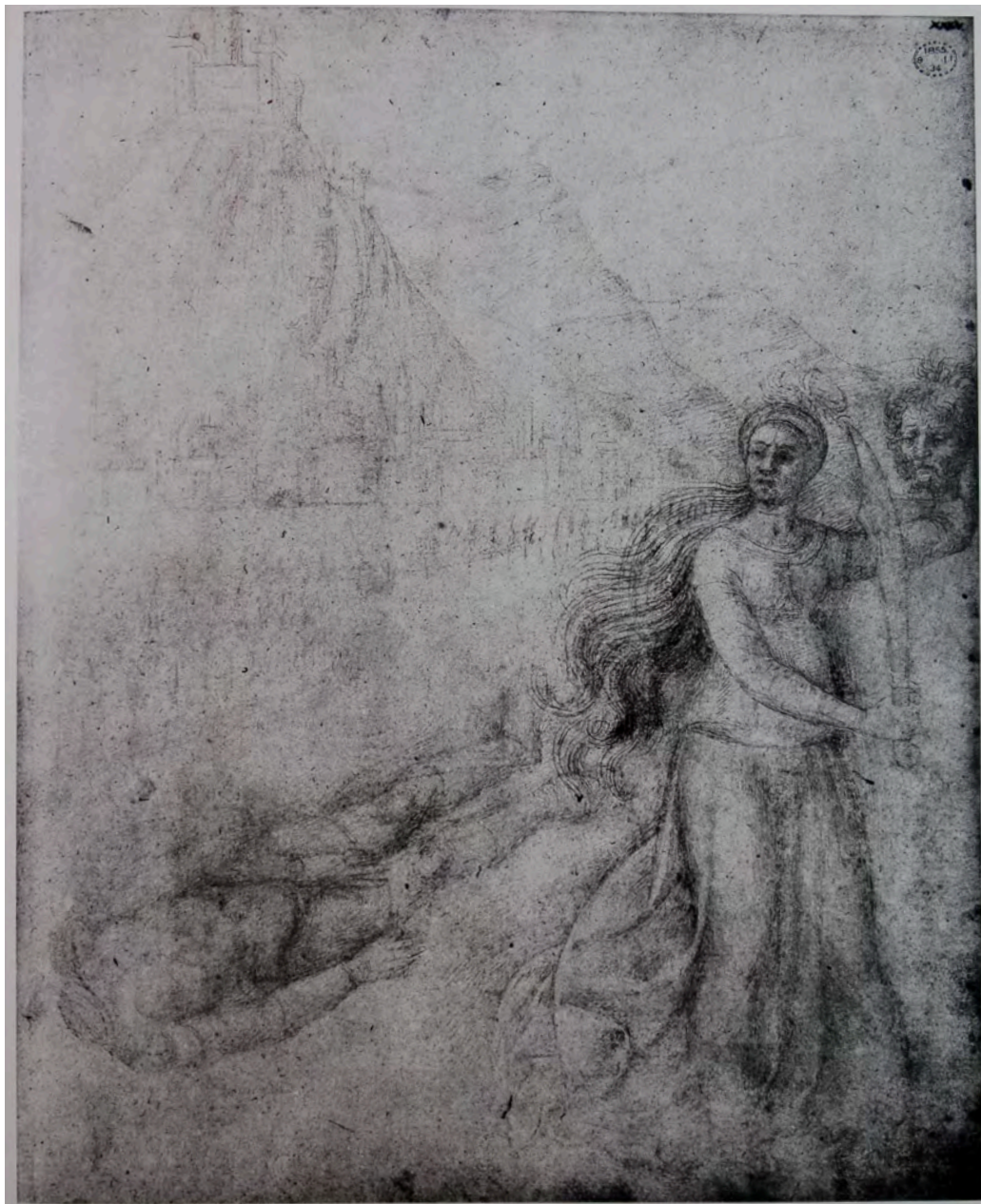


Fig. 2.39 Jacopo Bellini, *Judith and Holofernes*, London Drawing Book, fol. 35, British Museum (Eisler, 1989, pl. 149)



Fig. 2.40 Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Judith*, c. 1430s-1440s, Gates of Paradise border, Baptistery, Florence (Ciletti, 1991, fig. 12)



Fig. 2.41 Pisa sarcophagus  
(Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 170)



Rospigliosi sarcophagus  
(Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 96)



Belvedere sarcophagus  
(Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 171)



Fig. 2.42 Circle of Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Judith*, bronze statuette, c. 1465-1475, Detroit Institute of Art



Fig. 2.43 Workshop of Giovanni della Robbia, *Judith*, enameled terracotta, c. 1520, Museo Bardini, Florence (Musacchio, 2008, fig. 251)





Fig. 2.44 Andrea Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, 1491, pen, brown wash and some heightening in white on paper, Uffizi, Florence, 4041 (Martineau, 1992, fig. 109)



Fig. 2.44a Neo-Attic relief, *Maenad*, Uffizi, Florence (Dacos, 1962, fig. 30)



Fig. 2.45 Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, bronze, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (Janson, 1963, pl. 96b)



Fig. 2.46 Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, side and rear view (Janson, 1963, pl. 96a and 97a)



Fig. 2.47 Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, detail of base, “la Vendemmia”



Fig. 2.48 Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, detail of base, “la Pigiatura” (Janson, 1963, pl. 99a)



Fig. 2.49 Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, detail of base, “la Bacchanale”



Fig. 2.50 Donatello's workshop (Bertoldo?), detail of top border of north pulpit, above *Entombment*, San Lorenzo, Florence (Janson, 1963, pl. 109)





Fig. 2.51 Donatello's workshop (Bertoldo?), detail of top border of south pulpit, above *Christ appearing to the Apostles* (a replication of the frieze atop the *Deposition* on north pulpit), San Lorenzo, Florence (Janson, 1963, pl. 114)



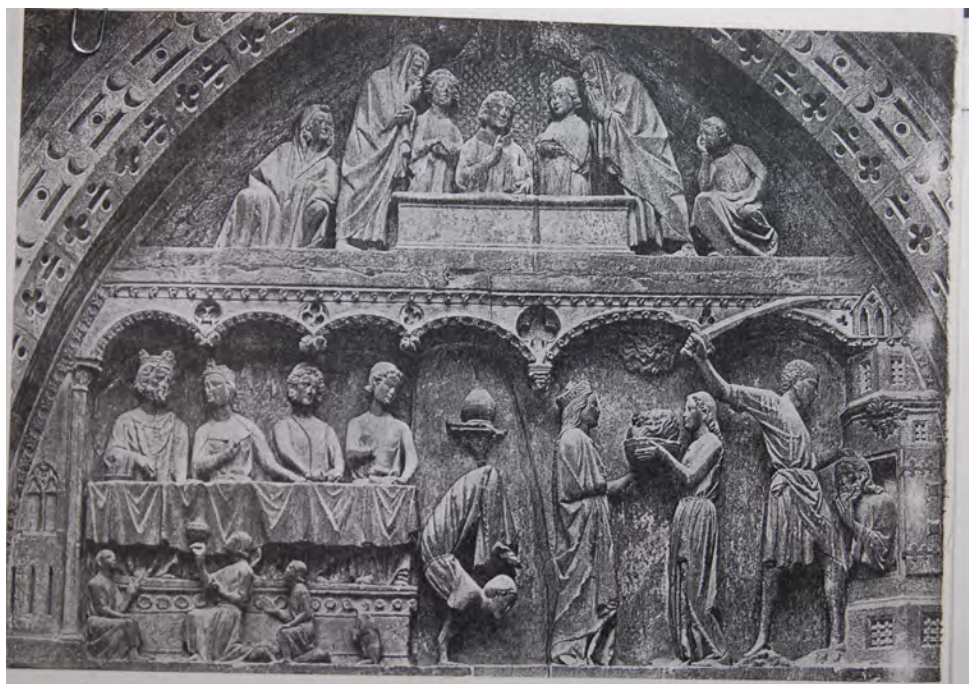
Fig. 2.52 Donatello, *Judith* (detail)



Fig. 2.53 Florentine engraving, *The Beheading of a Captive*, c. 1470s, Kunsthalle, Hamburg (Hind A.II.11)



Fig. 2.54 (top) *Feast of Herod*, left door with scenes from Old Testament, bronze relief on wood, 1030 A.D., San Zeno Maggiore, Verona (ARTstor)



(bottom) Rouen Cathedral, west portal, *Dance of Salome*, c. 1240 (Sauerländer, 1972, fig. 182)

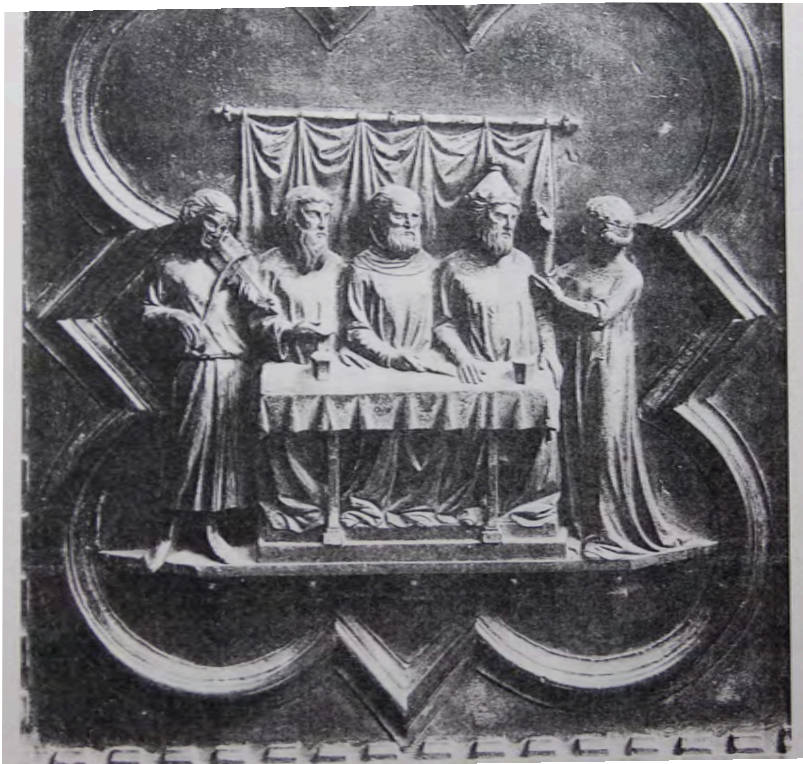


Fig. 2.55 Andrea Pisano, *Dance of Salome*, doors, 1330-36, Baptistery, Florence (Moskowitz, 1986, fig. 20)

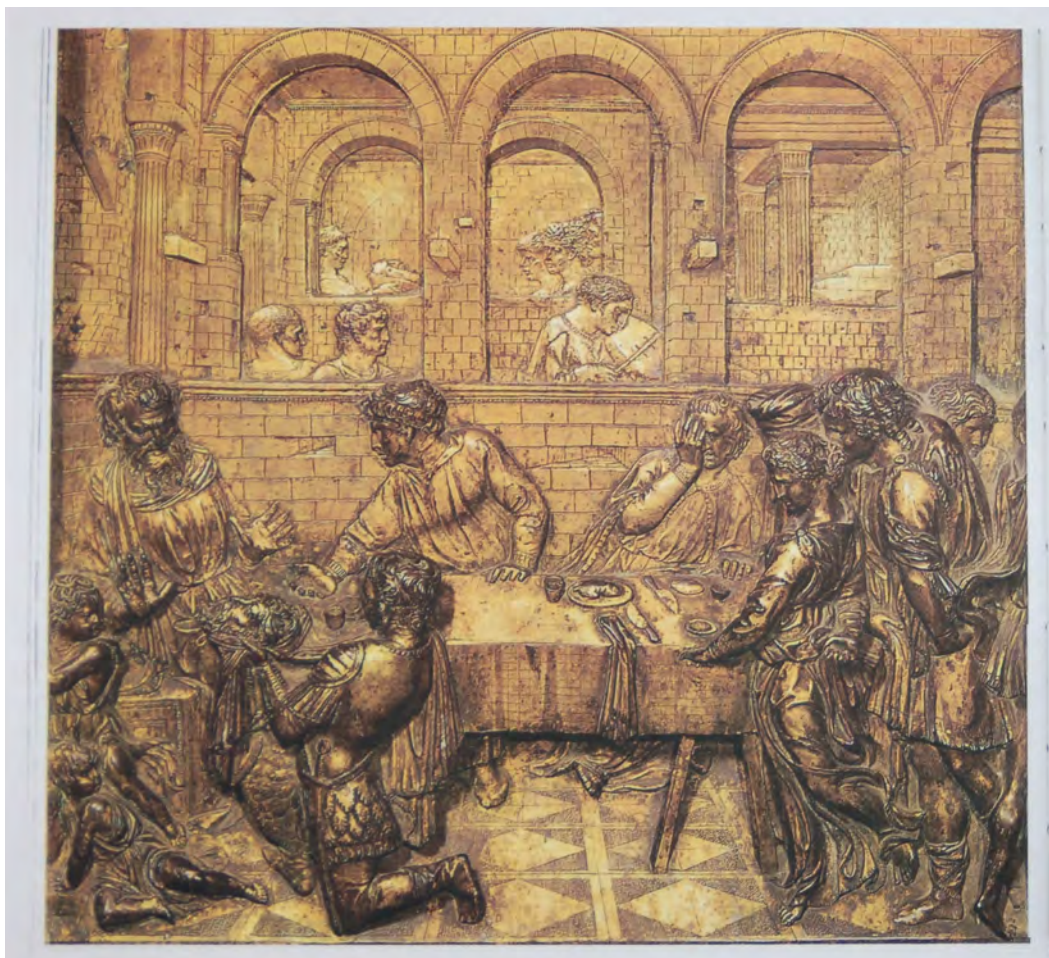


Fig. 2.56 Donatello, *Feast of Herod*, gilt bronze relief, 60 x 60 cm, c. 1425-27, Baptistry font, Siena



Fig. 2.57 Donatello, *Feast of Herod* (detail), Siena



Cf. *Dancing Maenad*, neo-Attic relief, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.58 Donatello, *Feast of Herod*, marble, 50 x 71.5 cm, c. 1433-35, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille





Fig. 2.59 Donatello, *Feast of Herod* (detail), Lille; Cf. maenad from right edge of Bacchic sarcophagus, Camposanto, Pisa (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 170, pl. 191)





Fig. 2.60 Filippino Lippi, *Feast of Herod*, fresco, 1452-1465, Prato Cathedral



Fig. 2.61 After a design by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Dance of Salome, or nué* embroidered vestments for the Baptistery, 1469-1480, Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Florence (Ettliger, 1978, cat. 26, fig. 48)



Fig. 2.62 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Dance of Salome*, fresco, 1485-1490, Santa Maria Novella, Florence



Fig. 2.63 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Dance of Salome* (detail), fresco, Santa Maria Novella, Florence (Micheletti, 1990, fig. 64)



Cf. detail of maenad, *Triumph of Bacchus* sarcophagus, Camposanto, Pisa (Papini, 1912, cat. 64)



Fig. 2.64 Fra Filippo Lippi, *Birth of the Virgin*, "Pitti Tondo," 1452-53 (or mid-1460s), Palazzo Pitti, Florence



Fig. 2.65 (left) Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of John the Baptist* (detail), fresco, 1488-1490, Santa Maria Novella, Florence  
(right) Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Birth of John the Baptist* (detail), relief on silver altar for the Baptistery, 1477-1480, Museo dell' Opera del Duomo, Florence (Prinz and Seidel, 1996, p. 55, figs. 18 and 19)



Fig. 2.66 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *The Birth of John the Baptist*, fresco, 1485-1490, Tornabuoni choir, Santa Maria Novella, Florence (Musacchio, 2008, fig. 115)



Cf. maenad from *Death of Pentheus* (detail), sarcophagus lid, Camposanto, Pisa (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 87)





Fig. 2.67 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Judith with Her Maidservant*, painting, 1489, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.68 Sandro Botticelli, *Return of Judith from Bethulia*, half of diptych (with *Discovery of the Body of Holofernes*), tempera on wood, 31 x 24 cm, c. 1467-1472, Uffizi, Florence (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.69 (left) Workshop of Giovanni della Robbia, *Dovizia*, enameled terracotta, c. 1494-1513, Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Musacchio, 2008, fig. 147)  
 (right) Unknown artist, *View of an Ideal City*, panel, c. 1470-1500, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.70 (left) detail of Bacchic sarcophagus, Camposanto, Pisa (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 170, pl. 191)  
(right) Workshop of Marco (Fra Mattia della Robbia), *Dovizia*, glazed terracotta, c. 1494-1513?, Casa Buonarroti, Florence (Randolph, 2002, fig. 1.7)



Fig. 2.71 Botticelli, *Allegory of Abundance*, drawing in pen, wash and chalk on pink paper, c. 1480, 31.7 x 25.3 cm, British Museum, London (ARTstor)



Fig. 2.72 Agostino di Duccio, collage of reliefs from Chapel of St. Augustine, right-hand pilaster, c. 1456, Tempio Malatestiano, San Francesco, Rimini (King, 1988, pl. 21b)



Fig. 2.73 (left) Agostino di Duccio, *La Danza*, relief, Tempio Malatestiano, Rimini (King, 1988)  
(right) Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus (detail), Camposanto, Pisa (Papini, 1912, cat. 64)



Fig. 2.74 Agostino di Duccio, detail of *Miracle of St. Bernardino*, 1457, façade of San Bernardino, Perugia (ARTstor)

Cf. Maenad (detail), *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* sarcophagus, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 38)







Fig. 2.74a (top) Agostino di Duccio, detail of angel, King Sigismund encountering an angel on his way to Agaunum, relief, c. 1450-1457, Castello Sforzesco, Milan  
(bottom) detail of maenad on round altar, Museo Civico, Padua



Fig. 2.75 Giovanni Santi, *Tersicore*, Galleria Corsini, Florence (Zampetti, 1989, fig. 8)



Fig. 2.76 Tarocchi card, *Erato XIII*, engraving, British Museum, London (Hind E.I.14, a)



Cf. Dancing maenad

## CHAPTER THREE

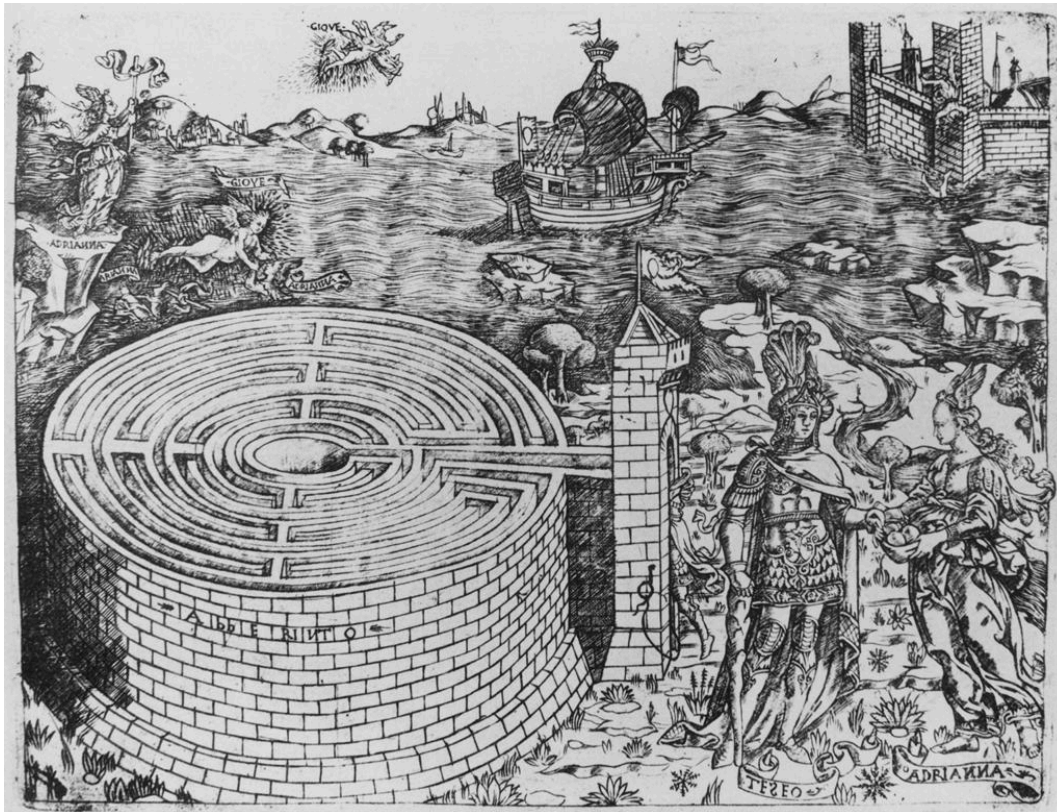


Fig. 3.1 Baccio Baldini, *The Cretan Labyrinth with Theseus and Ariadne*, c. 1460-1470, British Museum, London, Hind A.II.16.ii (ARTstor)



Fig. 3.2 Bartolomeo di Giovanni (Master of the Campana Cassoni), *Theseus and the Minotaur*, painted panel, Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon (Ward, 1970, fig. 205)



Fig. 3.3 Bartolomeo di Giovanni, *Abandonment and Discovery of Ariadne*, cassone panel, 69 x 155 cm, c. 1500-1515, Campana Collection, Musée du Petit Palais, Avignon (formerly Musée de Longchamp, Marseilles) (Ward, 1970, fig. 206)



Fig. 3.4 Details of second panel



Fig. 3.5 Codex Coburgensis, drawing after Discovery of Ariadne, sarcophagus, Blenheim Palace (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 1, cat. 44, beilage 18)





Fig. 3.6 (top) Master IO. F. F., “Ariadne on Naxos,” bronze plaquette, c. 1500, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author’s photo)



(below) Jacopo Tintoretto, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, oil on canvas, 1576, Palazzo Ducale, Venice (ARTstor)

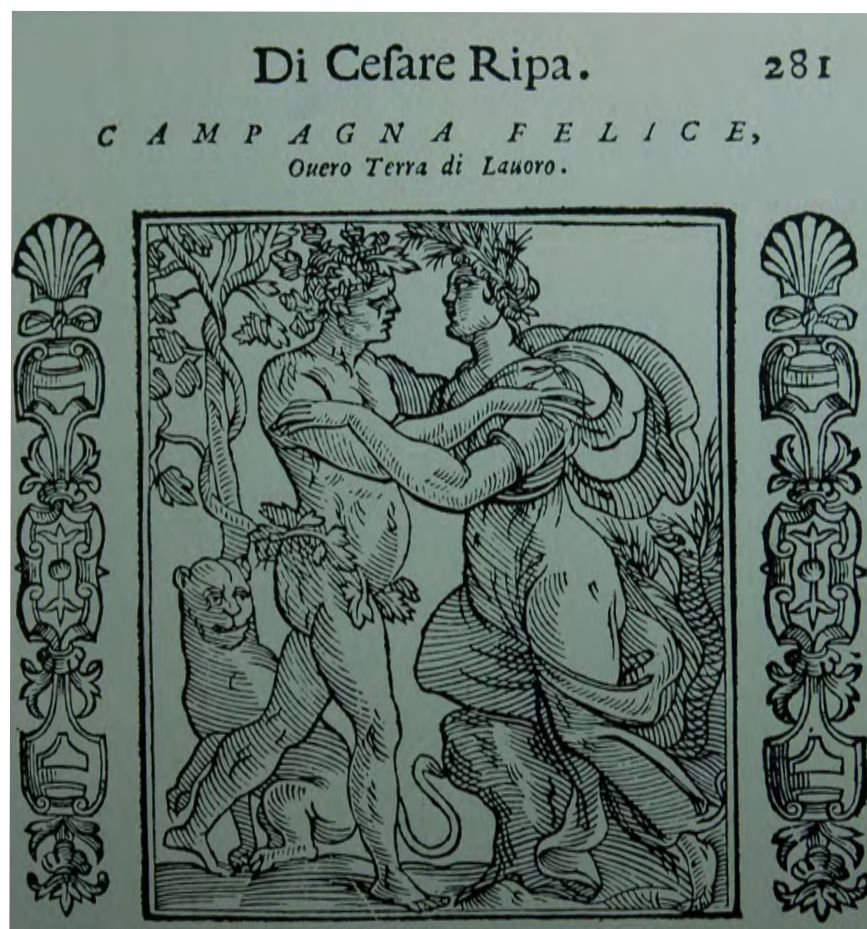


Fig. 3.7 Cesare Ripa, "Campagna Felice," *Iconologia*, p. 281



Fig. 3.8 *Discovery of Ariadne*, sarcophagus, Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 1, cat. 45, pl. 46)



Fig. 3.9 Codex Coburgensis, drawing after lost Discovery of Ariadne sarcophagus from the Villa Aldobrandini (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, no. 215)



Fig. 3.10 *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* (detail), sarcophagus, British Museum, London



Fig. 3.11 *Ariadne in the lap of Somnus* (detail), Blenheim sarcophagus (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 1, cat. 45)



Fig. 3.12 Giovanni di Paolo, *Theseus and the Minotaur and Ariadne on Naxos*, illumination, c. 1445, Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XIII.14-15, fol. 152r, Ms. Yates-Thompson Codex, British Museum, London (Pope-Hennessy, 1993)





Fig. 3.13 Girolamo del Pacchia, *Ariadne Abandoned*, cassone, oil on panel, 1520, Chigi Saracini collection, Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena (Gregori, 2003, 268-9)





Fig. 3.13a Ariadne (detail)



Fig. 3.13b Bacchus on his chariot (detail)



Fig. 3.14 Baccio Baldini, *Venus*, The Planets series, engraving (TIB, 2403.005, ARTstor)



Fig. 3.15 Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, oil on canvas, c. 1520-1523, National Gallery, London (Titian cat., 2003, cat. 13)

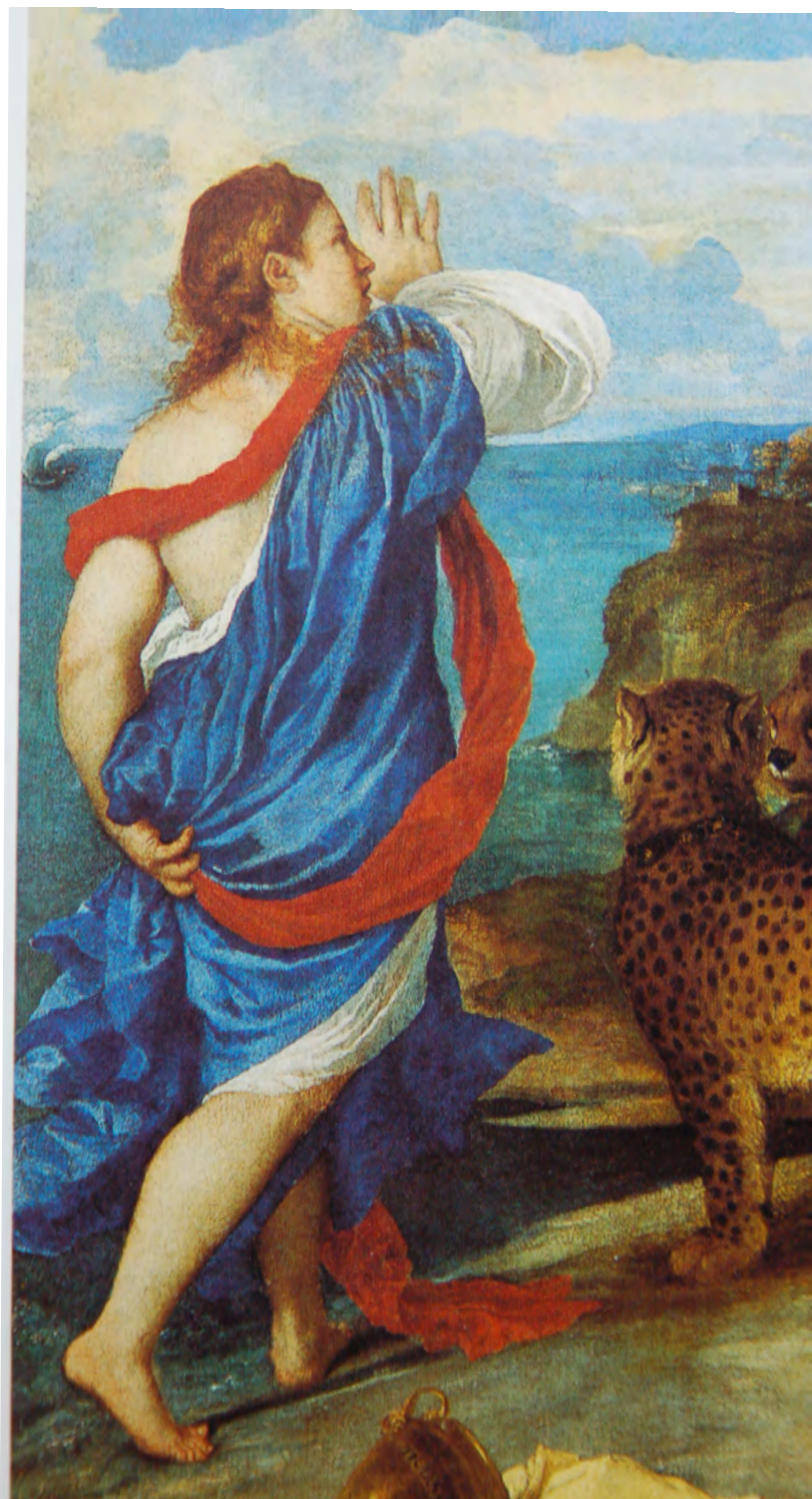


Fig. 3.16 Ariadne (detail)



Cf. Agostino di Duccio, *King Sigismund encountering an angel on his way to Agaunum*, marble relief, c. 1450-57, Castello Sforzesco, Milan (thought to have originally been part of the Chapel of St. Sigismund in the Tempio Malatestiano)



Fig. 3.17 Bacchus (detail)



Fig. 3.18 Bacchic *thiasos* (detail)





Fig. 3.19 Bacchus and Ariadne (detail)



Fig. 3.20 Infant satyr and caper flower (detail)

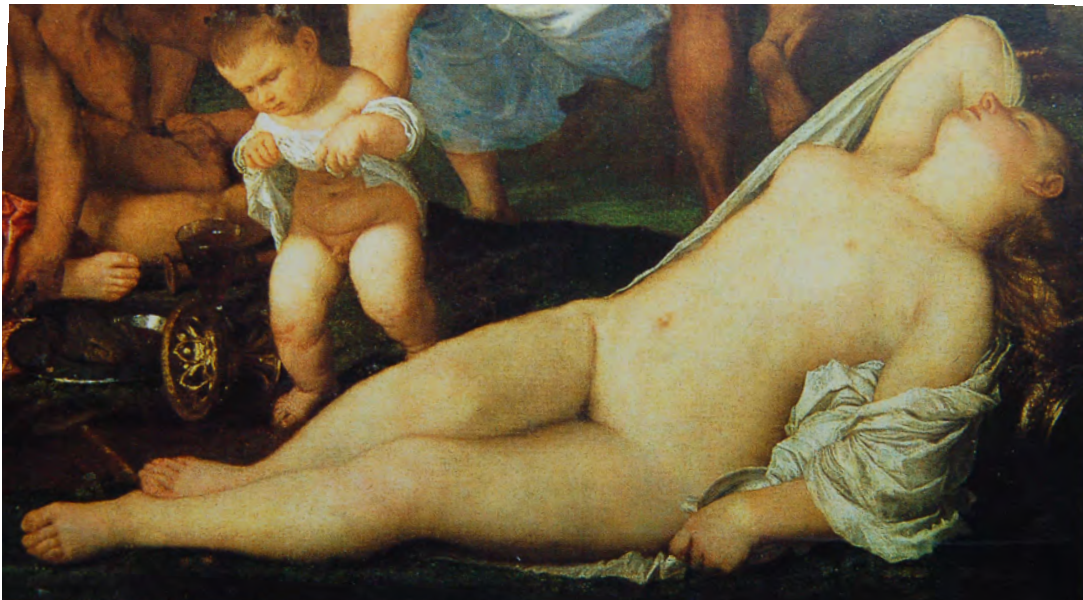


Fig. 3.21 Titian, sleeping maiden (detail), *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, oil on canvas, Prado, Madrid (Titian cat., 2003, cat. 14)

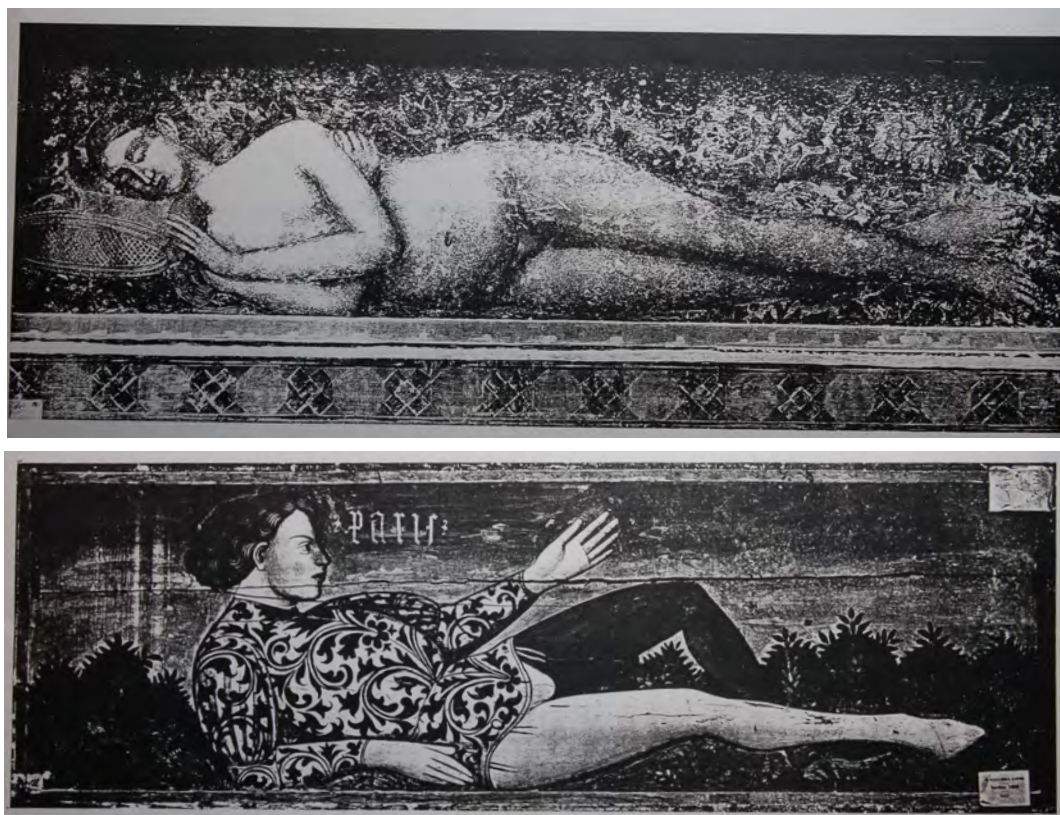


Fig. 3.22 (top) The Paris Master, sleeping woman, inside lid of *cassone*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

(bottom) The Paris Master, Paris, inside lid of *cassone*, Uffizi, Florence (Schubring, 1923, pl. XXXVIII, nos. 185 and 184)



Fig. 3.23 *Ariadne/Cleopatra*, statue, Roman, 2nd century A.D., copy of Hellenistic original, Galleria delle Statue, Vatican (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 79)



Fig. 3.24 *Selene and Endymion*, sarcophagus, Roman, first half of 2nd century A.D., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. 3.25 (top) Mars and Rhea Silvia sarcophagus, installed in the wall of Palazzo Mattei, Rome (in the Quattrocento, in the basilica of S. Giovanni in Laterano) (Cavallaro, 1988, cat. 1)



(bottom) Attributed to Gentile da Fabriano or Pisanello, drawing, River god and Rhea Silvia from Pal. Mattei sarcophagus and Oreste and Clytemnestra sarcophagus (then in front of S. Stefano del Cacco; now Palazzo Giustiniani, Rome), c. 1431-1432, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, F.214, inf. 13 (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 25a)



Fig. 3.26 Francisco d'Ollanda, drawing showing installation of Cleopatra (the "Vatican Ariadne") in Belvedere established under Julius II, Sketchbook, f.8v, 1538-1540, El Escorial, Spain (Brummer, 1970, fig. 136)



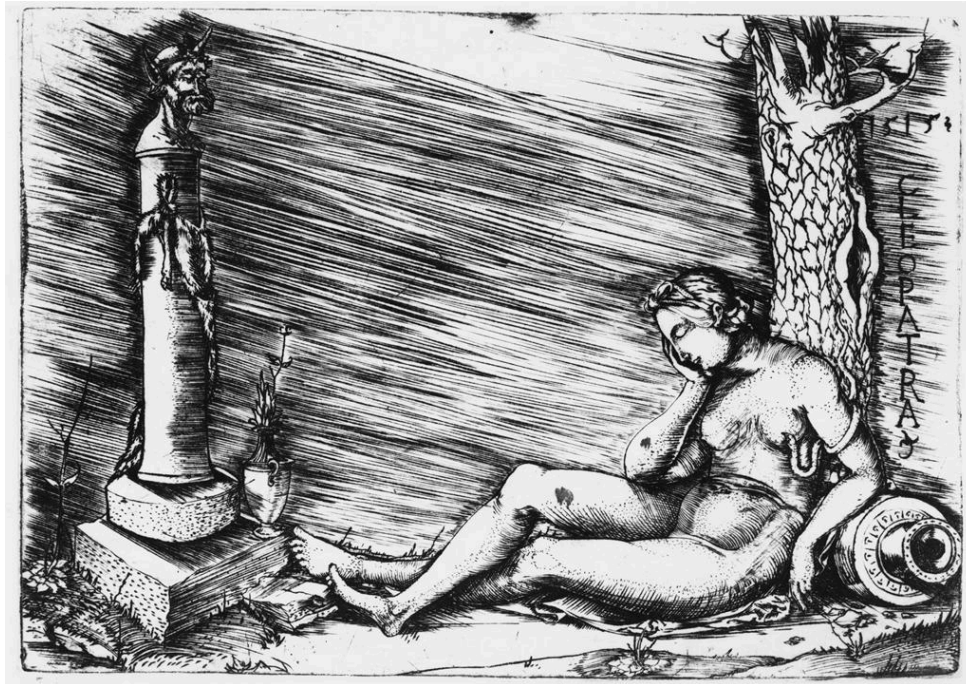


Fig. 3.27 (top) Master of the Year 1515, *Cleopatra with a Term*, engraving, TIB vol.25, 12 (415) (ARTstor)  
 (bottom) Master of the Year 1515, *Cleopatra*, engraving, TIB 2522.013 (ARTstor)





Fig. 3.28 Sleeping nymph fountain in garden of Angelo Colucci, engraving by I. J. Boissard (MacDougall, 1975, fig. 2)

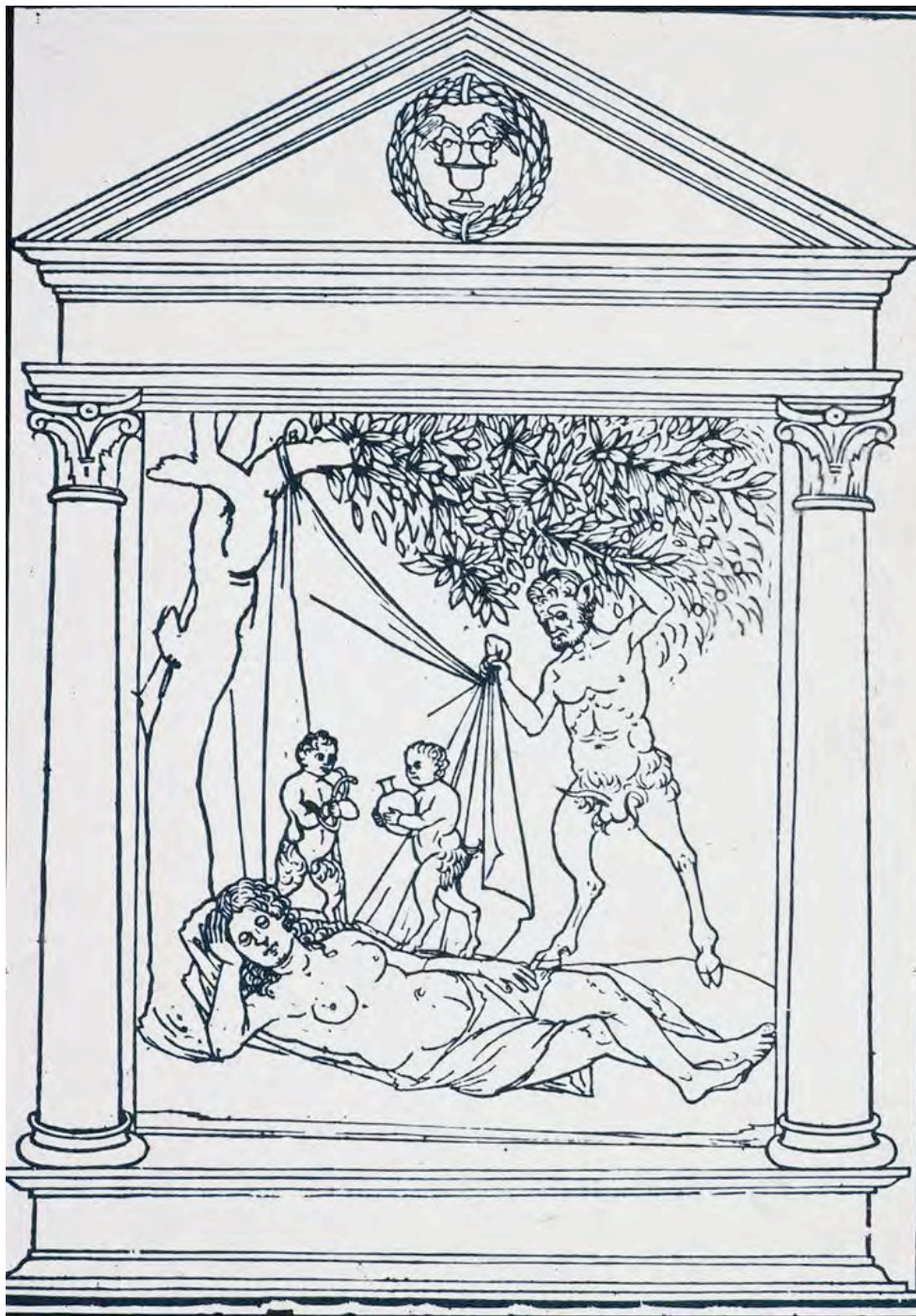


Fig. 3.29 “Fountain of Venus”/Panton Tokadi, woodcut illustration, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Venice 1499 (Godwin, 1999, fol. e1)

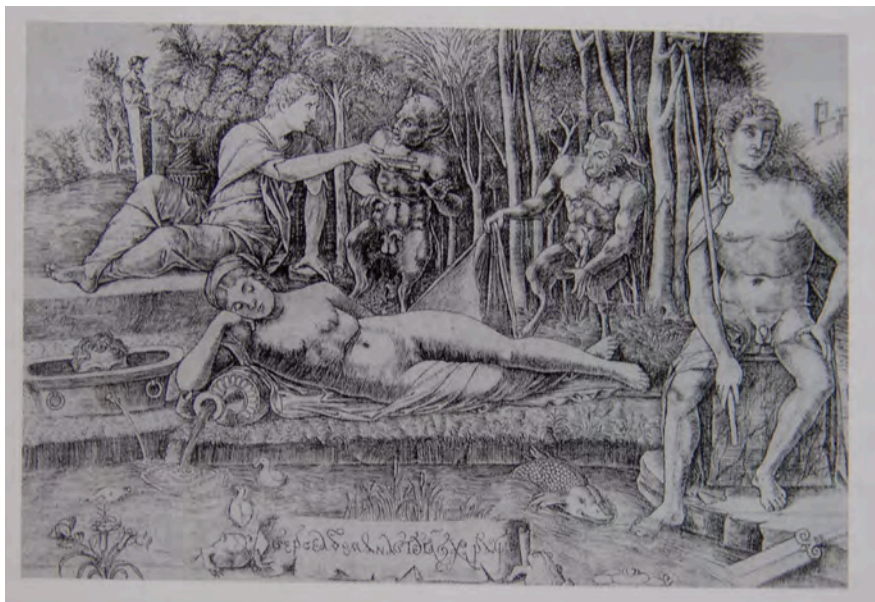


Fig. 3.30 Girolamo Mocetto, *Amymone*, engraving, British Museum, London



Fig. 3.31 Marco Dente da Ravenna, *Satyr uncovering a Sleeping Nymph*, engraving, c. 1515-1527, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. 3.32 *Satyr and Maenad*, antique gem of satyr and maenad, blue chalcedony, late 5th century B.C., private collection (plaster impression on the right, Robert Wilkins, Institute of Archaeology, Oxford)



Fig. 3.33 *Sleeping Maenad, satyr, and Eros*, sardonyx, 1st century B.C.-1st century A.D., inv. no. 314, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg



Fig. 3.34 Giovanni Bellini, *Feast of the Gods*, Lotis (detail), National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 3.35 (top) *Abundance and a Satyr*, obverse, bronze medallion, after 1506, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

(bottom) *Sleeping Nymph and two Satyrs*, reverse, bronze medallion, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author's photos)



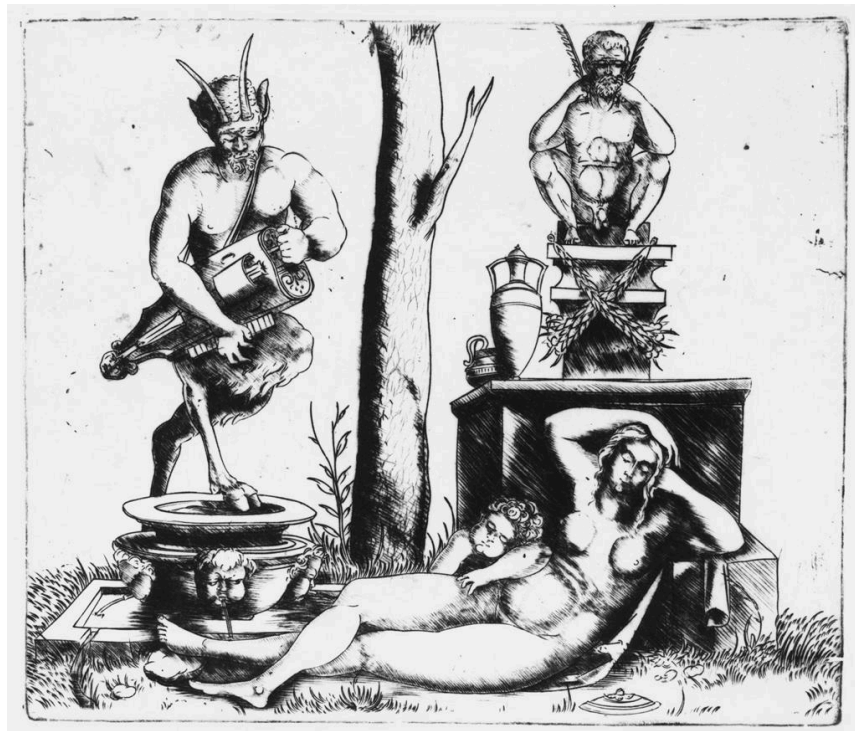


Fig.3.36 Master of 1515, *Satyr Playing a Hurdy-Gurdy beside a Sleeping Nymph and Child*, engraving, TIB vol. 25, 15 (416) (ARTstor)



Fig. 3.37 Discovery of Ariadne, Palazzo Medici, tondo (Wester and Simon, 1965, pl. 12)



(left) Discovery of Ariadne, antique cameo, Museo Nazionale, Naples (formerly Lorenzo de' Medici coll.)

(right, top) Discovery of Ariadne, antique gem, Brocklesbey Park, Lincolnshire (formerly Cardinal Gonzaga coll.)

(right, bottom) Discovery of Ariadne, antique cameo, Museo Archeologico, Florence



Fig. 3.38 Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, tondo, Palazzo Medici, Florence (Wester and Simon, 1965, pl. 10)



Triumph of "Bacchus and Ariadne" (or "Dionysus and Satyr"), antique sardonyx cameo, Museo Nazionale, Naples (formerly Barbo, then Medici collection) (Boardman, 1997, fig. 18)



Fig. 3.39 (top) Attavante, frontispiece, *Missal of Thomas James*, fol. 6v, 1483, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lyons, MS 5123 (Alexander, 1994, cat.3a)  
 (bottom) Attavante, frontispiece, *Geografia*, Ptolomy, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Dacos, 1973, fig. 88)





Fig. 3.40 Cesare Ripa, "Sostanza," p. 495, *Iconologia* (1611)



Fig. 3.41 Camino della Iole, c. 1460, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino (Christiansen, 2005, fig. 31)



Fig. 3.41a Details



Fig. 3.42 Cima da Conegliano, *Coronation of Ariadne*, cassone fragment, 1505-1510, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan





Fig. 3.43 Matteo Balducci, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, *cassone*, oil on panel, c. early 1500s, Pinacoteca, Gubbio (Gregori, 2003, pl. XI.3)

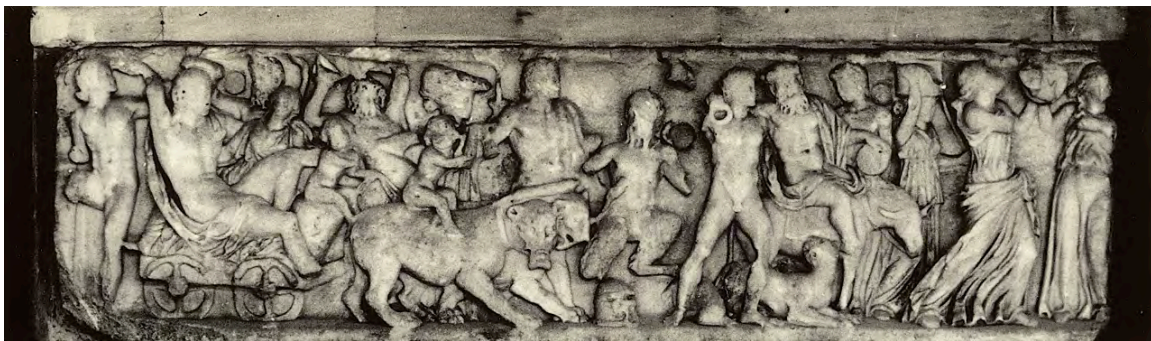


Fig. 3.44 *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, sarcophagus, Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 80, pl. 96)

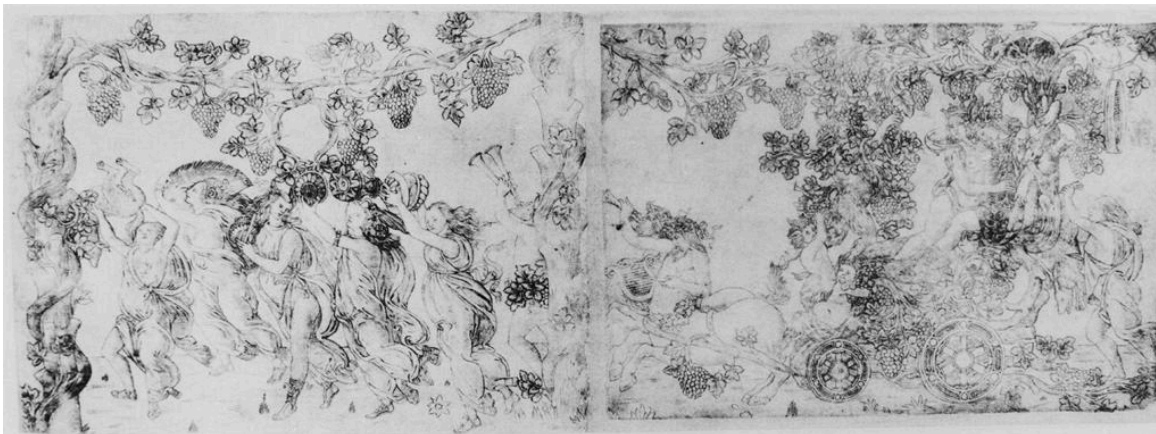


Fig. 3.45 Baccio Baldini, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, engraving, c. 1475, British Museum, London (ARTstor)

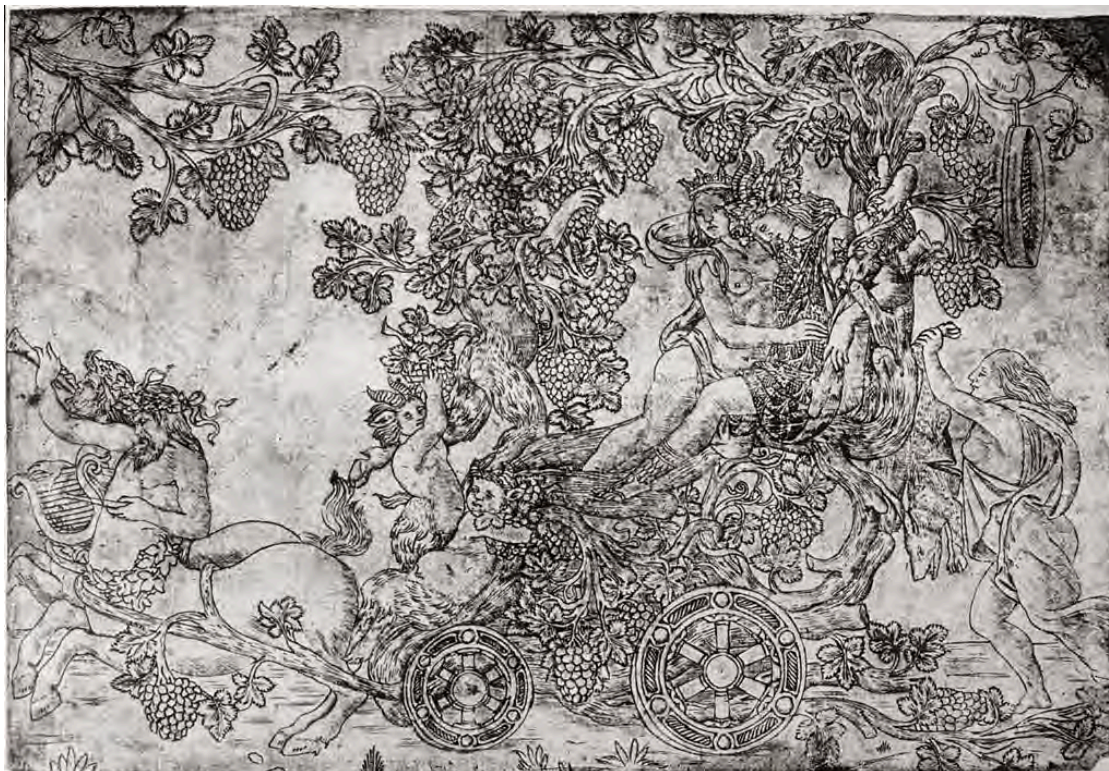




Fig. 3.46 Tullio Lombardo, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, relief, c. 1500-1520, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

## CHAPTER FOUR



Fig. 4.1 Jacopo Bellini, *Triumph of Bacchus*, Paris Drawing Book, fol. 40, Louvre (Eisler, 1989, pl. 82)



Fig. 4.2 Mantegna, *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* (detail), tempera on canvas, c. 1499-1502, Louvre, Paris, inv. 371 (Martineau, 1992, cat. 136)

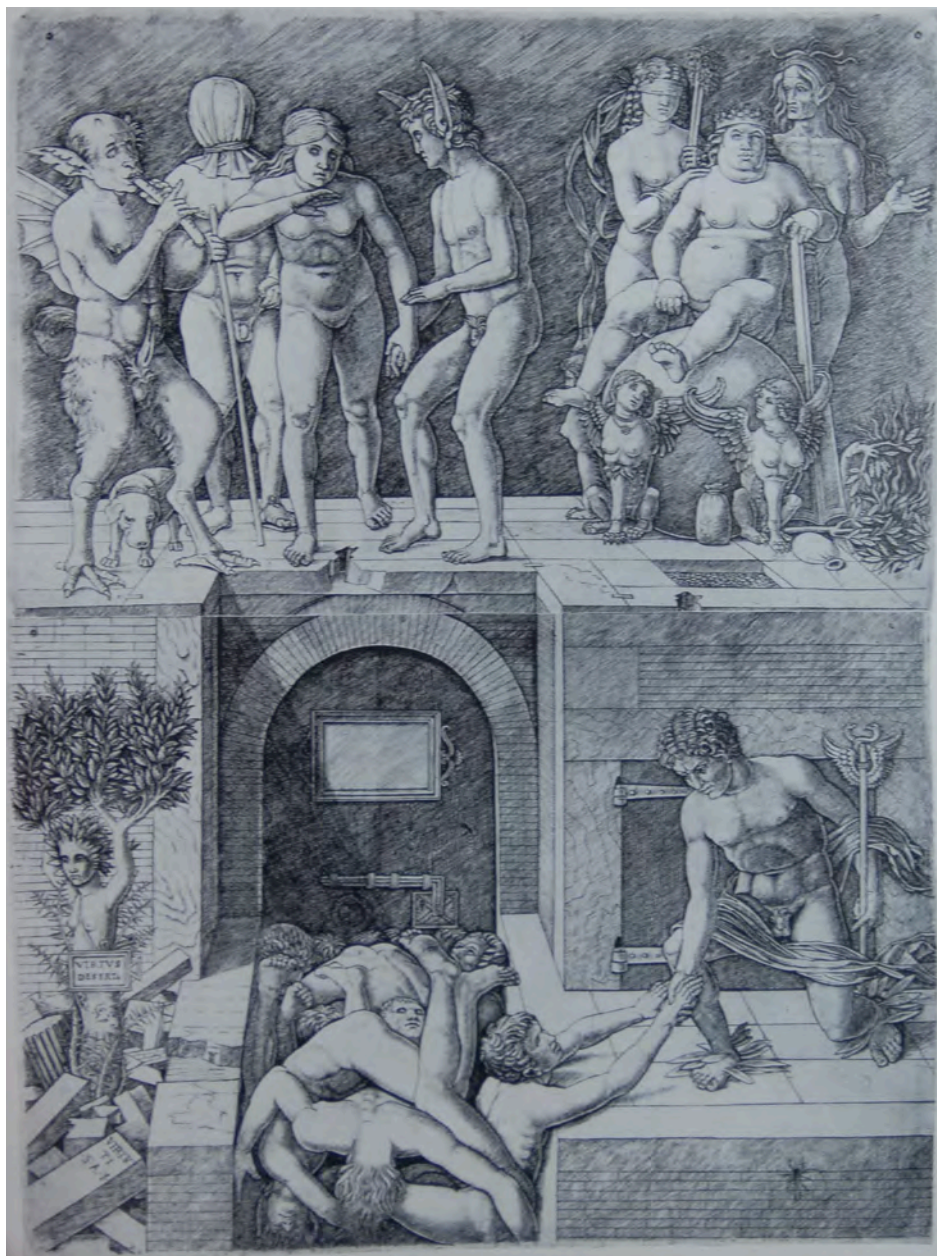


Fig. 4.3 Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, after Mantegna, *Virtus Combusta Virtus Deserta*, engraving, c. 1500-1505, Josefowitz Collection (Martineau, 1992, cat. 148)

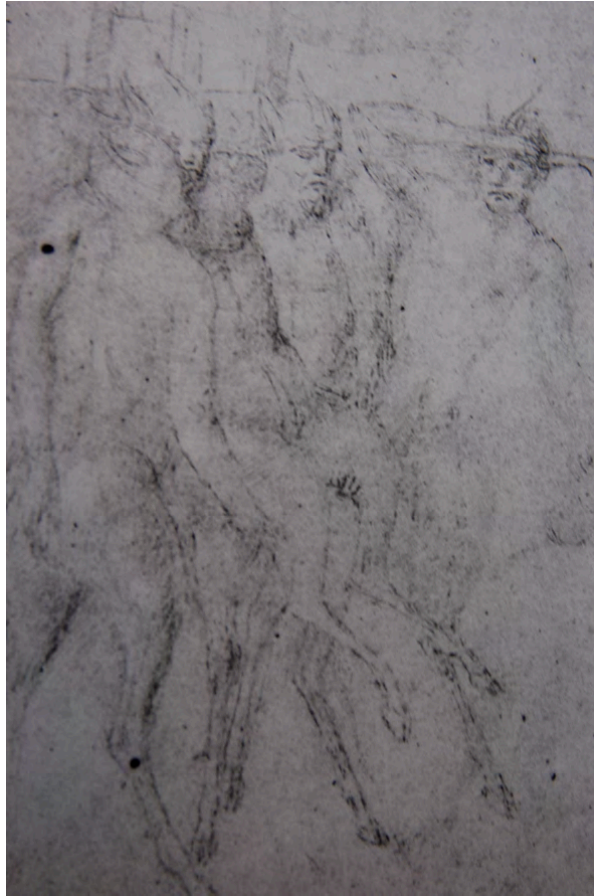


Fig. 4.4 Jacopo Bellini, satyrs (detail), *Triumph of Bacchus*, London Drawing Book, fol. 93v, British Museum (Eisler, 1989, pl. 76)



Cf. Silenus (detail), *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, sarcophagus, Munich, formerly Pal. Braschi, Rome (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 84, pl. 102)





Fig. 4.5 Jacopo Bellini, *Silenus*, London Drawing Book, fol. 97v, British Museum (Eisler, 1989, pl. 75)



Fig. 4.6 Jacopo Bellini, *Cupid Abducting a Satyr*, Paris Drawing Book, fol. 43, Louvre (Eisler, 1989, pl. 83)



Fig. 4.7 The Pico Master, frontispiece with arms of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Pliny, *Historia naturalis*, 1481, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MS Lat. VI, 245 (= 2976), fol. 3 (Alexander, 1994, fig. 28)



Fig. 4.8 Illumination tentatively attributed to Bartolomeo Sanvito of Padua, satyrs and epigraphic initial, Virgil, *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*, c. 1490, The British Library, London, Kings MS 24, fol. 17r (Alexander, 1994, cat. 43)



Fig. 4.9 Gaspare da Padova, Frontispiece, Domizio Calderini's *Commentary* on Juvenal's *Satires*, codex composed by Bartolomeo Sanvito, 1474, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence, MS. Pluteo 53.2, fol. 1 (Gregori, 2003, cat. III.31)



Fig. 4.9a Detail



Fig. 4.9b Detail



Fig. 4.9c Detail





Fig. 4.9d Detail

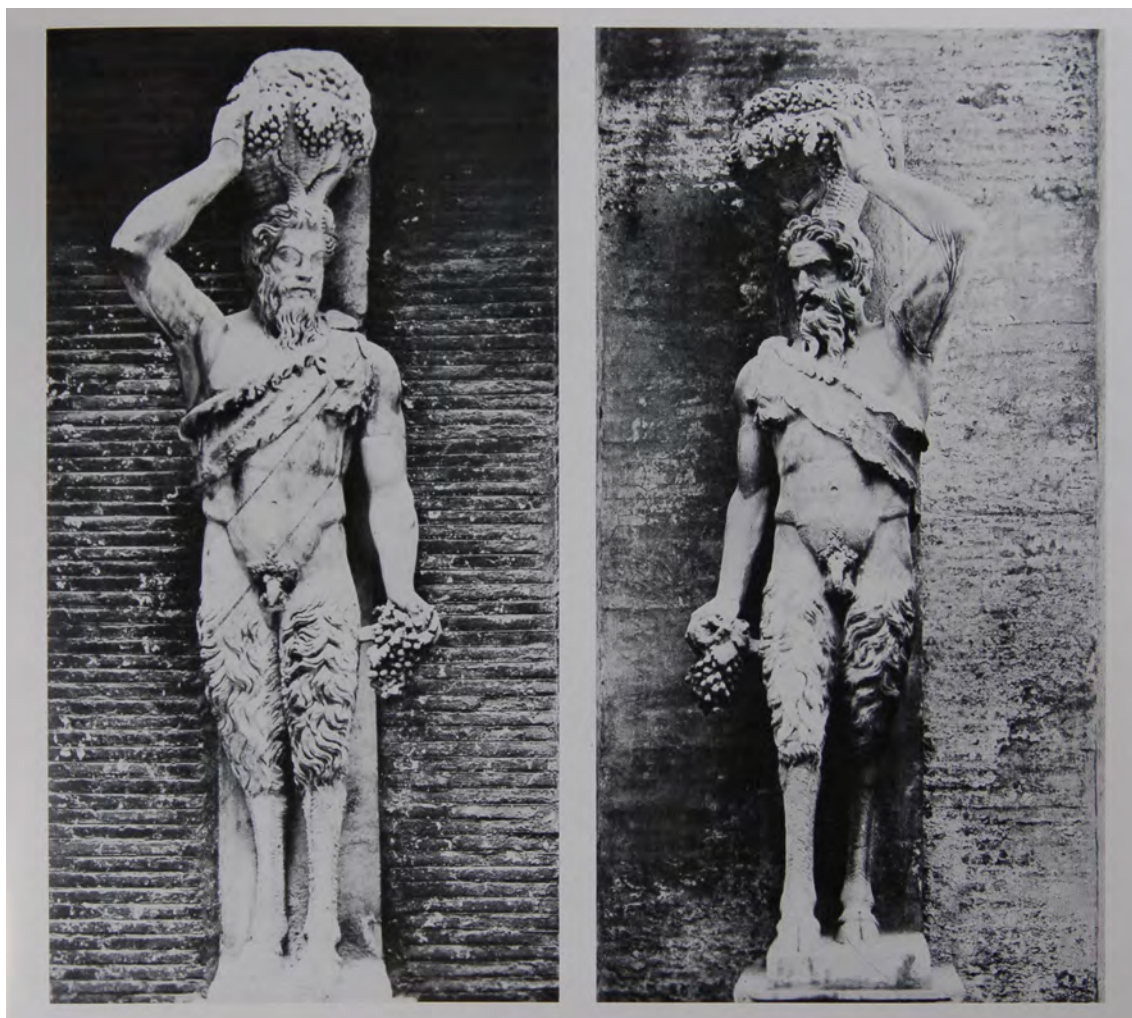


Fig. 4.10 *Della Valle Satyrs*, antique statues, Museo Capitolino, Rome (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 75)



Cf. Attributed to Bernardino da Parenzo, *The Della Valle Satyrs*, engraving, Codex Destailleur OX 111, Kunstbibliothek, Berlin, fol. 85r (Allen, 2008) - Shows how the satyrs' arms appeared in the Renaissance.



Fig. 4.11 Girolamo da Cremona, frontispiece,  
Plutarch, *Vitae vivorum illustrium*, vol. 1, Venice,  
1478, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Vélins 700, fol.  
1r (Alexander, 1994, cat. 94)





Fig. 4.12 Girolamo da Cremona, frontispiece, first volume of Aristotle's *Works*, Venice, 1483, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, PML 21194, fol. 2r (Alexander, 1994, cat. 101a)



Fig. 4.12a Detail



Fig. 4.13 Girolamo da Cremona, frontispiece, Aristotle, *Works*, Volume II, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, PML 21195, fol. 1r (Alexander, 1994, cat. 101b)



Fig. 4.13a Detail





Fig. 4.14 Benedetto “Padovano” Bordon, frontispiece to Justinianus’ *Digestum novum*, 1477, Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Gotha, Mon. Typ. 1477, 2° 13, Bl. A2a, fol. 2r (Alexander, 1994, cat. 97)



Fig. 4.15 Northern Italian, *Martelli Mirror*, c. 1470-1480, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Beck, 1985, cat. 146)



Fig. 4.16 Bacchic sarcophagus, Naples (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 176, pl. 196)



Fig. 4.17 Detail of Satyres and Pan herm, Bacchic sarcophagus, Naples (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 176, pl. 198)



Fig. 4.18 Detail of Priapus, Bacchic sarcophagus, Naples (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 176, pl. 198)



Fig. 4.19 Detail of Satyress with herm, Bacchic sarcophagus, Naples (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 176, pl. 199)



Fig. 4.20 Detail of Martelli Mirror

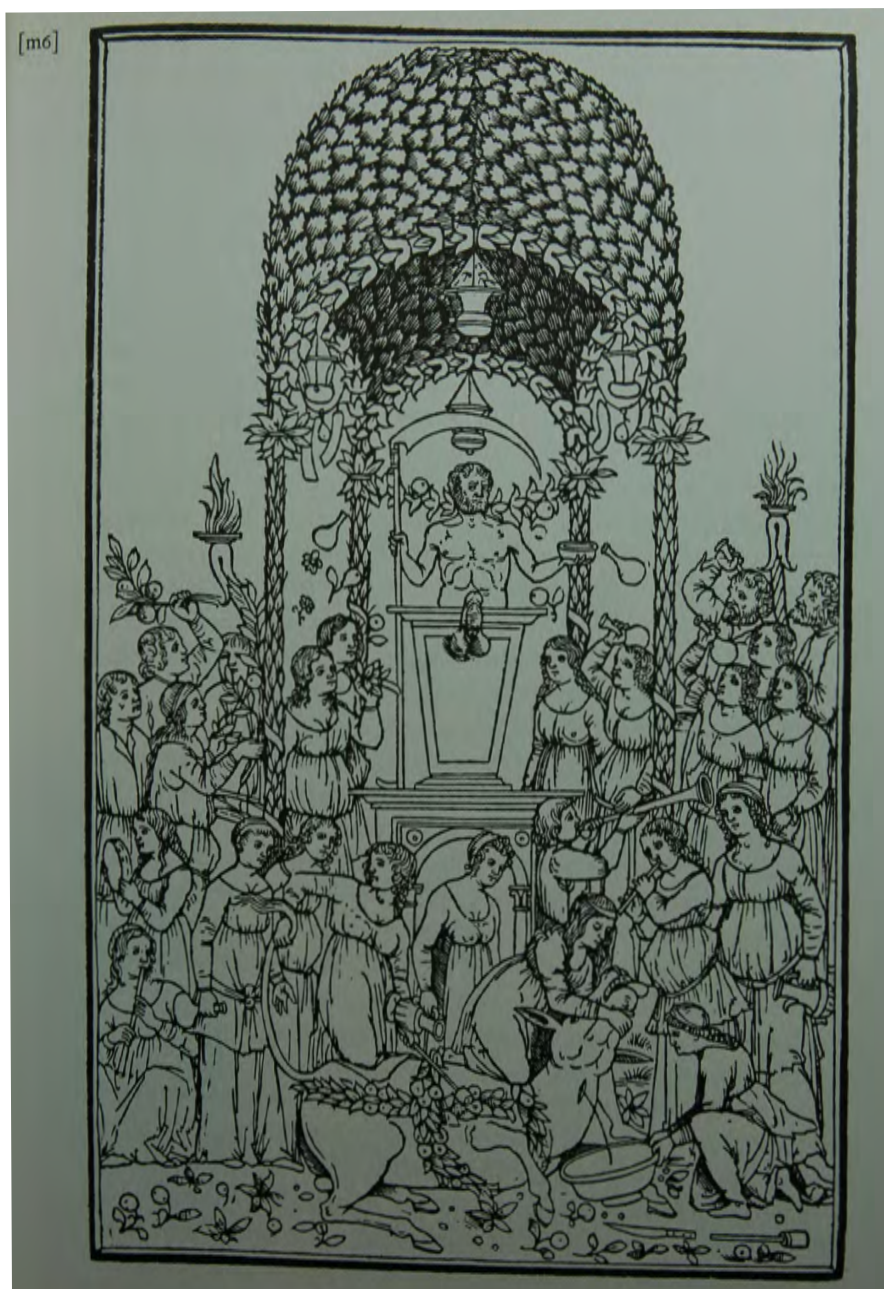


Fig. 4.21 Sacrifice to Priapus, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, fol. m6





Fig. 4.22 Jacopo de' Barbari, *Large Sacrifice to Priapus*, engraving, c. 1499-1501, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author's photo)



Fig. 4.23 Luca Signorelli, *Pan Deus Arcadiae*, c. 1484-1492, formerly Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin (destroyed)



Fig. 4.24 Luca Signorelli, *Apollo*, drawing, Uffizi, Florence, n. 130 F verso (Berenson, 1954, pl. 31)



Fig. 4.25 Cima da Conegliano, *Apollo, Midas, and Pan*, Galleria Nazionale, Parma



Fig. 4.26 Andrea Riccio, *Drinking Satyr*, bronze statuette, c. 1515, 21.7 cm high, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstammer inv. no. KK 5539 (Allen, 2008, cat. 10)



Fig.4.26a side view



Fig. 4.27 Andrea Riccio, *Standing Satyr*, bronze statuette, c. 1507, 35.9 cm high, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1982.45 (Allen, 2008, cat. 8)



Fig. 4.27a back view,  
detail of face







Fig. 4.28 Andrea Riccio Workshop, *Seated Satyr*, bronze statuette, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence (Allen, 2008, fig. 8.1)



Fig. 4.29 Manner of Andrea Riccio, *Kneeling Satyr*, bronze statuette, 23.5 cm high, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 30.95.109 (Met website)



Fig. 4.30 Manner of Riccio, *Satyr* statuette, inkwell, penholder, and candlestick, bronze, 19.7 cm high, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1974.236 (Met website)



Fig. 4.31 Riccio, *Seated Satyr*, bronze statuette, c. 1520, 23.5 cm high, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 64.101.1417 (Met website)



Fig. 4.32 Riccio or Desiderio da Firenze, “Pan Listening to Echo,” bronze statuette, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, inv. no. WA 1899.CDEF.B1077 (Allen, 2008, cat. 23)



Fig. 4.32a Side and back views



Fig. 4.33 Siennese workshop, *Pan and two acolytes*, arms of Pandolfo Petrucci and others, Maiolica plate, c. 1510, British Museum, London (Syson, 2001, fig. 55)



Fig. 4.43 Andrea Riccio, *Drinking Satyr*, bronze statuette, 20.2 cm high, Louvre, Paris, inv. TH 89 (Allen, 2008, cat. 12)





Fig. 4.35 Riccio, *Paschal Candelabrum*, bronze, 1507-1516, San Antonio, Padua



Fig. 4.36 Bound Satyr (detail), Paschal Candelabrum



Fig. 4.37 Riccio, Bacchanal of Putti, *Paschal Candelabrum* (Allen, 2008, fig. III.12)



Fig. 4.38 Lorenzo Lotto, *De' Rossi Portrait Cover*, oil on panel, 56.6 x 42.2 cm, 1505, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, Washington, D.C. (D. A. Brown, 2006, cat. 47)



Fig. 4.39 Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Bishop de' Rossi*, oil on panel, 54.7 x 41.3 cm, 1505, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples (D. A. Brown, 2006, cat. 46)



Fig. 4.40 Venetian School (Pietro degli Ingannati, attributed), *Allegory*, c. 1530, oil on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Brown, Humfrey, Lucco, 1997, cat. 3, fig. 1)



Fig. 4.41 Riccio, *Satyr and Satyress*, bronze statuette, 24.0 cm high, c. 1510-1520, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. A.8-1949 (Allen, 2008, cat. 1)



Fig. 4.41a Detail of faces



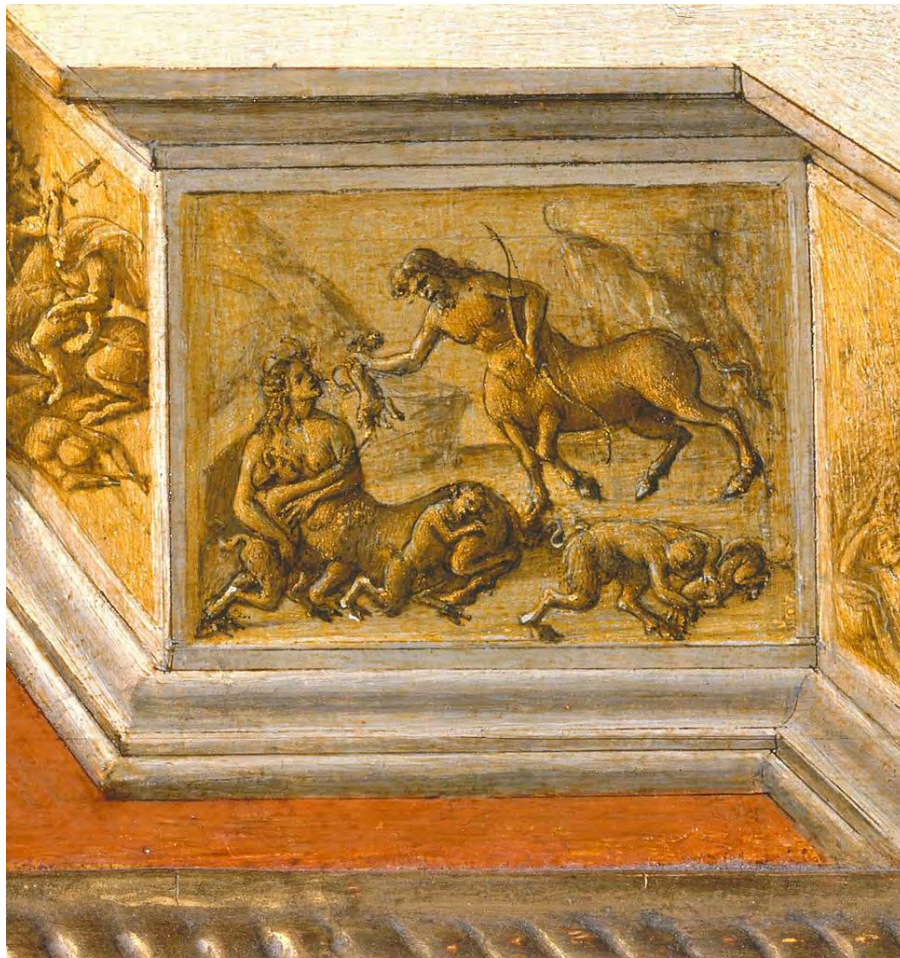


Fig. 4.42 Botticelli, Centaur and satyr family, detail of *Calumny of Apelles*, c. 1497, Uffizi, Florence (ARTstor)



Fig. 4.43 Jacopo de' Barbari, *Satyr Family*, c. 1503-1504, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, inv. 1943.3.939. (author's photo)



Fig. 4.44 Master of 1515, *Satyr's Family*, engraving, c. 1510-1515, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1950.1.110 (author's photo)



Fig. 4.44a Detail of sleeping infant



Fig. 4.45 Giovanni Battista Palumba (Master IB with the Bird), *Faun Family*, engraving, c. 1507, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (author's photo)



Fig. 4.46 Benedetto Montagna, Satyr's Family, engraving, c. 1512-1520, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1943.3.6242 (author's photo)



Fig. 4.47 Piero di Cosimo, *Death of a Nymph (Procris)*, panel painting, c. 1495-1500, National Gallery, London



Fig. 4.48 Lorenzo Lotto, *Allegory of Chastity*, oil on panel, 42.9 x 33.7 cm, c. 1502-1505, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, Washington, D.C. (D. A. Brown, 2006, cat. 37)





Fig. 4.49 Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of a Woman*, oil on panel, 36 x 28 cm, c. 1502-1505, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon (D. A. Brown, 2006, cat. 36)



Fig. 4.50 Demonstration of how the cover would slip over the portrait (D. A. Brown, 2006, cat. 36, fig. 1)



Fig. 4.51 Detail of maiden

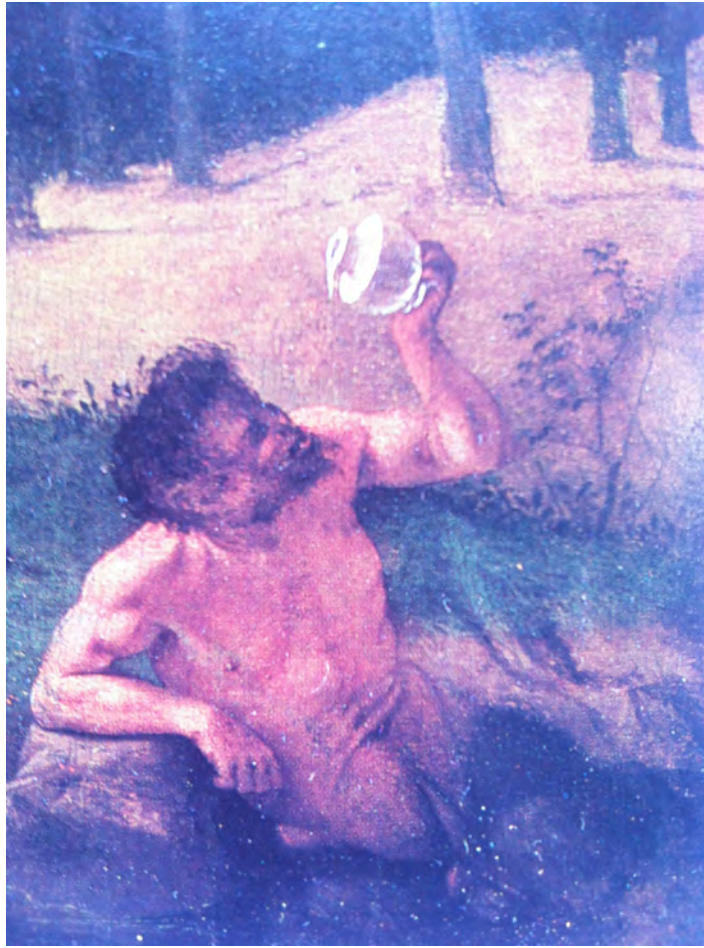


Fig. 4.52 Detail of satyr



Fig. 4.53 Detail of satyress



Fig. 4.54 The Month of March, pen illustration in *Chronography of 354 A.D.*, manuscript, c. 1620, Biblioteca Vaticana, Rome, R1-Barberini lat. 2154 (Brendel, 1980, fig. 4)



Fig. 4.55 Detail of bird



Fig. 4.56 Piero di Cosimo, *The Discovery of Honey*, oil and tempera on panel, 79.2 x 128.5 cm, c. 1500, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester (ARTstor)





Fig. 4.57 Piero di Cosimo, *The Misfortunes of Silenus*, oil and tempera on panel, 80 x 129.7 cm, c. 1500, The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA (Geronimus, 2006, fig. 71)



Fig. 4.58 sixteenth-century drawing of *Silenus on his donkey*, after Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne sarcophagus, Woburn Abbey, Chatsworth (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 80, beilage 31)







Fig. 4.60 Francesco Francia, *Ancient Sacrifice with Silenus*, drawing, Hermitage, St. Petersburg (Gregori, 2003, p. 454)



Fig. 4.61 Peruzzi, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, (detail), Sala delle Prospettive, Villa Farnesina, Rome (ARTstor)



Fig. 4.62 School of Marcantonio Raimondi, *Bacchus Carried by Two Satyrs*, 1528, engraving, 62 x 89 mm, British Museum, London (The Illustrated Bartsch, vol. 26; ARTstor)



Fig. 4.63 Silenus carried and Pan carried, sarcophagus ends, Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne sarcophagus, Subiaco (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, cat. 78, pl. 95)



Fig. 4.64 Caradossa, *Misfortunes of Silenus*, bronze plaquette, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author's photo)





Fig. 4.65 Bertoldo, "*Triumph*" of *Silenus*, details, bronze relief, c. 1460s, Museo del Bargello, Florence.





Fig. 4.66 (above) *Putti Frightening a Companion*, bronze plaquette, National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, Washington, D.C., inv. 1942.9.190, A-1512 (Dempsey, 2001, fig. 70); (below) National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection, inv. A.289.12B (Pope-Hennessy, 1965, cat. 361)





Fig. 4.67 Master of the Die, *Putti in a Bacchanalian Procession* (detail), engraving, c. 1520s, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (ARTstor)

## CHAPTER FIVE

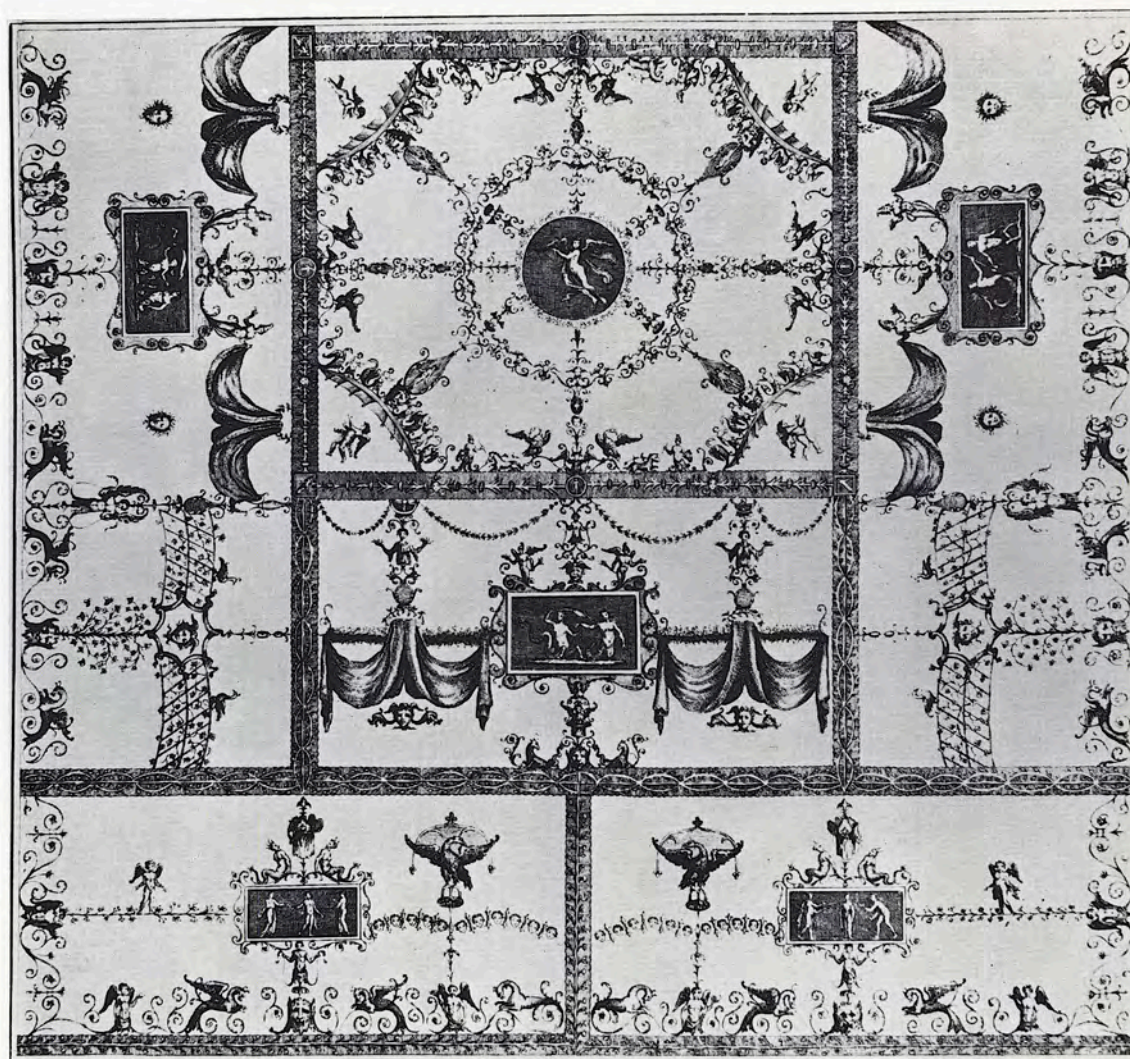


Fig. 5.1 N. Ponce, engraving of the Volta gialla of the Domus Aurea, detail (Dacos, 1969, fig. 50)

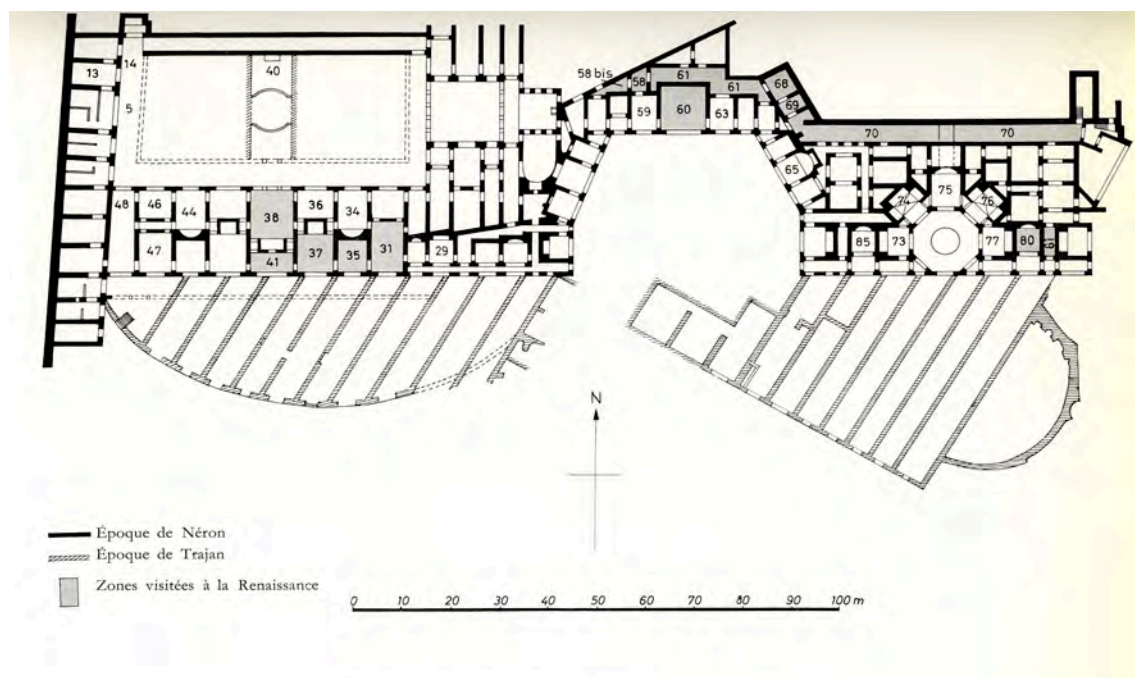


Fig. 5.2 Plan of the Domus Aurea, with areas visited in the Renaissance highlighted in grey (Dacos, 1969, fig. 1)

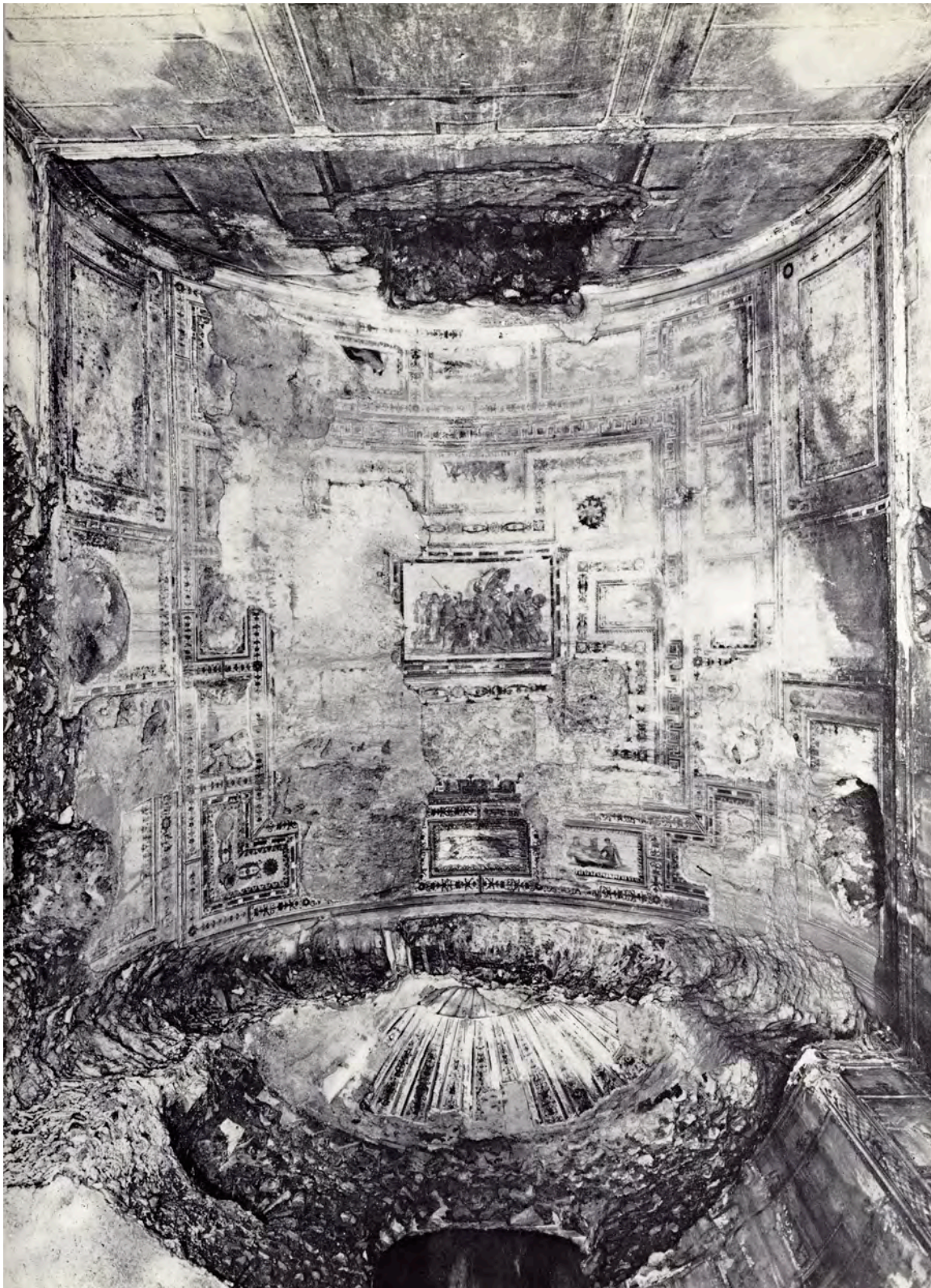


Fig. 5.3 View of the vault of a chamber in the Domus Aurea (Dacos, 1969, fig. 3)



Fig. 5.4 Codex Escurialensis, fol. 14, Drawing after the Volta gialla of the Domus Aurea (Dacos, 1969, fig. 54)



Fig. 5.5 A schematic of a fresco in a catacomb inscribed with the names of Renaissance explorers, including “Pomponius,” Catacomb of SS. Pietro and Marcellino





Fig. 5.6 Catacomb of SS. Pietro e Marcellino, Rome: acrosolium with banquet scene (Nicolai, 1999, fig. 126)



Fig. 5.7 Catacomb painting in the Hypogeum of the Aurelii on Viale Manzoni, banquet scene (Nicolai, 1999, fig. 124)

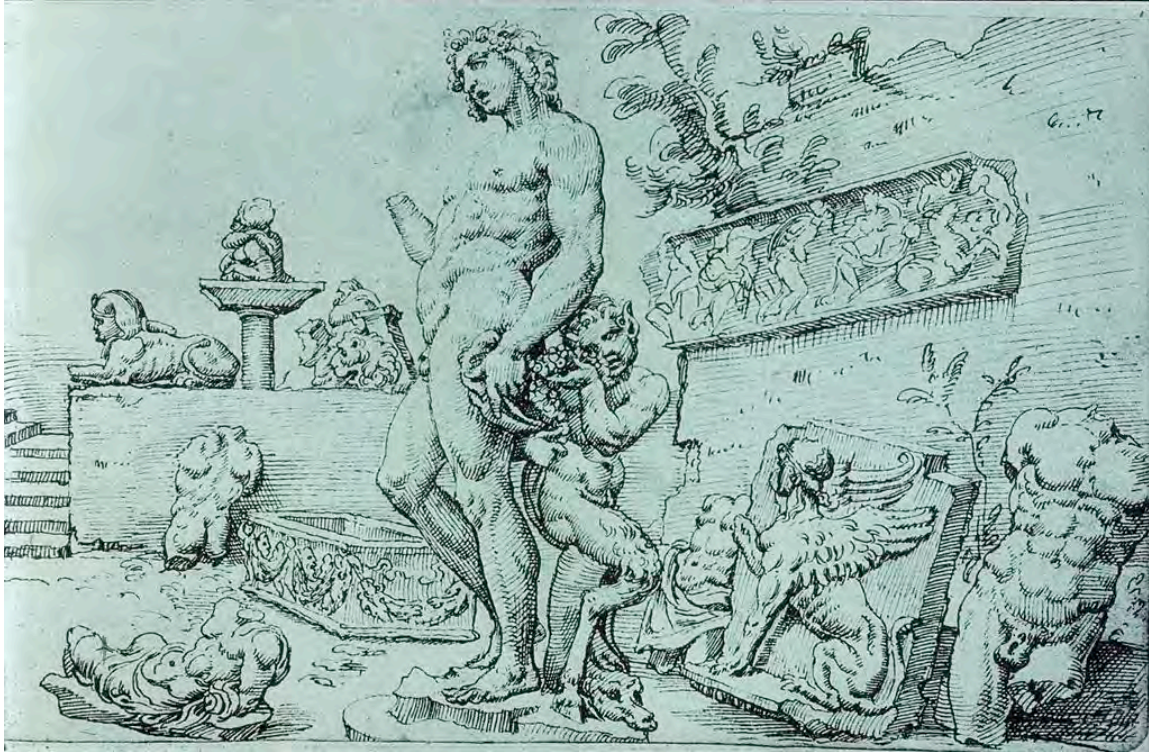


Fig. 5.8 Marten van Heemskerck, drawing of Jacopo Bellini's garden with Michelangelo's *Bacchus*, Sketchbook I, fol. 72, 1532-1536, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.9 (above) Marten van Heemskerck, Naiad in Casa Galli's upper garden, drawing, Sketchbook I, fol. 27a, 1532-1536, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, fig. 62a)  
 (below) Sleeping Naiad, statue, Roman, 2nd century, Vatican (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 62)

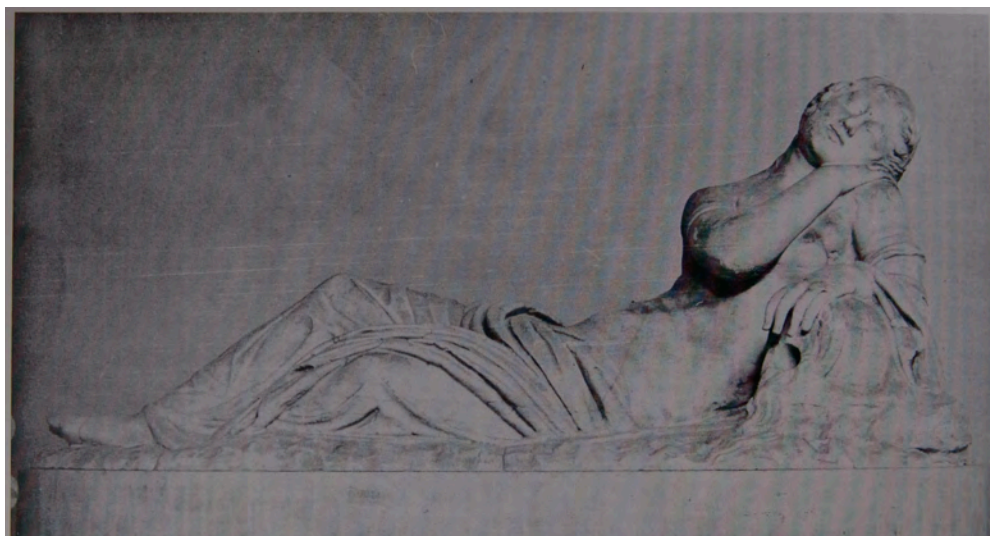




Fig. 5.10 *Apollo Citharoedus*, statue, Roman copy of Hellenistic type, Villa Poggio Imperiale, Florence (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 35)



Fig. 5.11 *Bacchus with satyr*, statue, Palazzo Altemps, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome (theoi.com)



Fig. 5.12 *Apollo and Marsyas*, antique cornelian intaglio, owned by Lorenzo de' Medici, Museo Archeologico, Naples, inv. 26051 (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 31)

Fig. 5.13 (detail) Bacchus in *Marsyas and the Contest with Apollo*, sarcophagus, formerly Hever Castle, Kent (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 29)



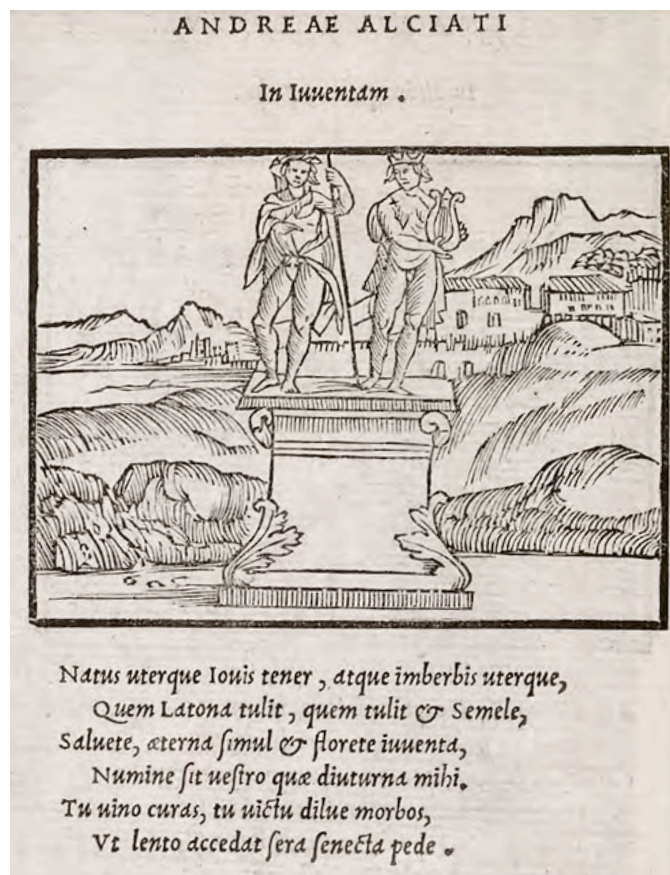


Fig. 5.14 (top) Andrea Alciati, "In Iuuentam," *Emblematum libellus* (Venice, 1546), fol. 3v; (bottom) Alciati, "In Iuuentam," *Emblemata* (Padua, 1621), p. 418





Fig. 5.15 Girolamo Mocetto, *Bacchus*, c. 1510, British Museum, London (Fliedl, 1992, cat. 17)





Fig. 5.16 Attributed to Piero de Cosimo, *Drinker and a Woman*, private collection, Amsterdam (Van Marle, 1931, v.13, fig. 247)

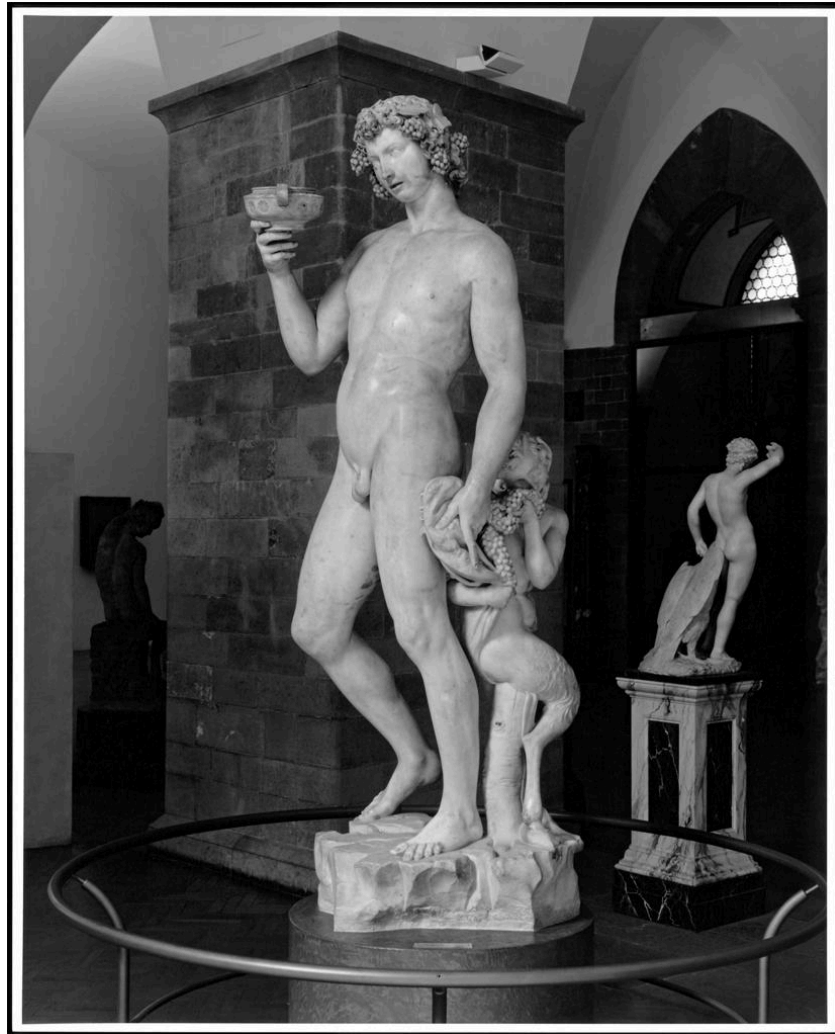


Fig. 5.17 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Bacchus*, marble, 2.03 m high, 1496-1497, Museo nazionale del Bargello, Florence (ARTstor, Ralph Lieberman photo)

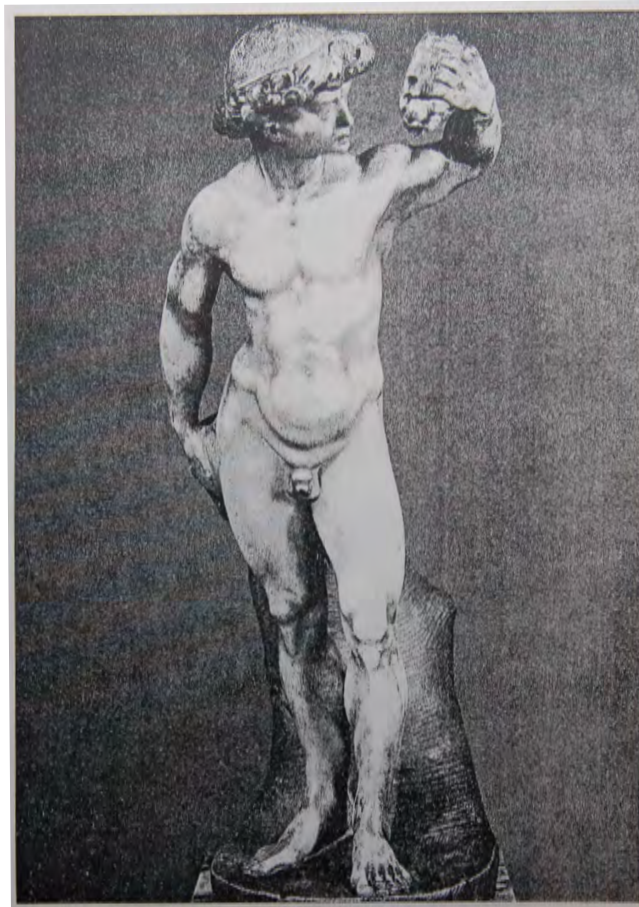


Fig. 5.18 Antonio Federighi, *Bacchus*, 1465-1475, 60 cm high, Monte dei Paschi, Siena (Emmerling-Skala, 1994, fig. 57)



Fig. 5.19 Michelangelo, *Bacchus* (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.20 (left) Bacchus and companion, Borghese Krater, Louvre, Paris  
(right) Bacchus supported by a satyr, sarcophagus relief, Belvedere Courtyard, Vatican



Fig. 5.21 Michelangelo, *Bacchus* (detail) (ARTstor)

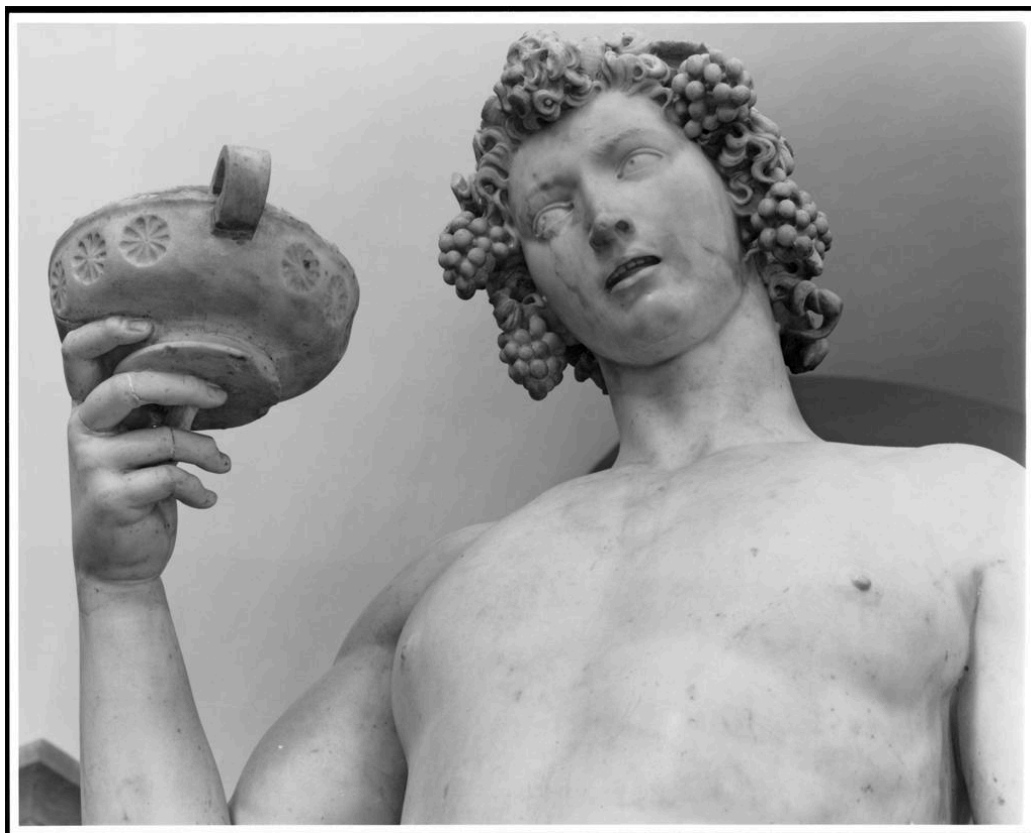


Fig. 5.22 Michelangelo, *Bacchus* (detail) (ARTstor)

Fig. 5.23 Jacopo Sansovino, *Bacchus*,  
c. 1510-1515, Museo Nazionale del  
Bargello, Florence (ARTstor)



Giambologna, *Bacchus*, bronze sculpture,  
before 1562, Borgo San Jacopo, Florence  
(ARTstor)



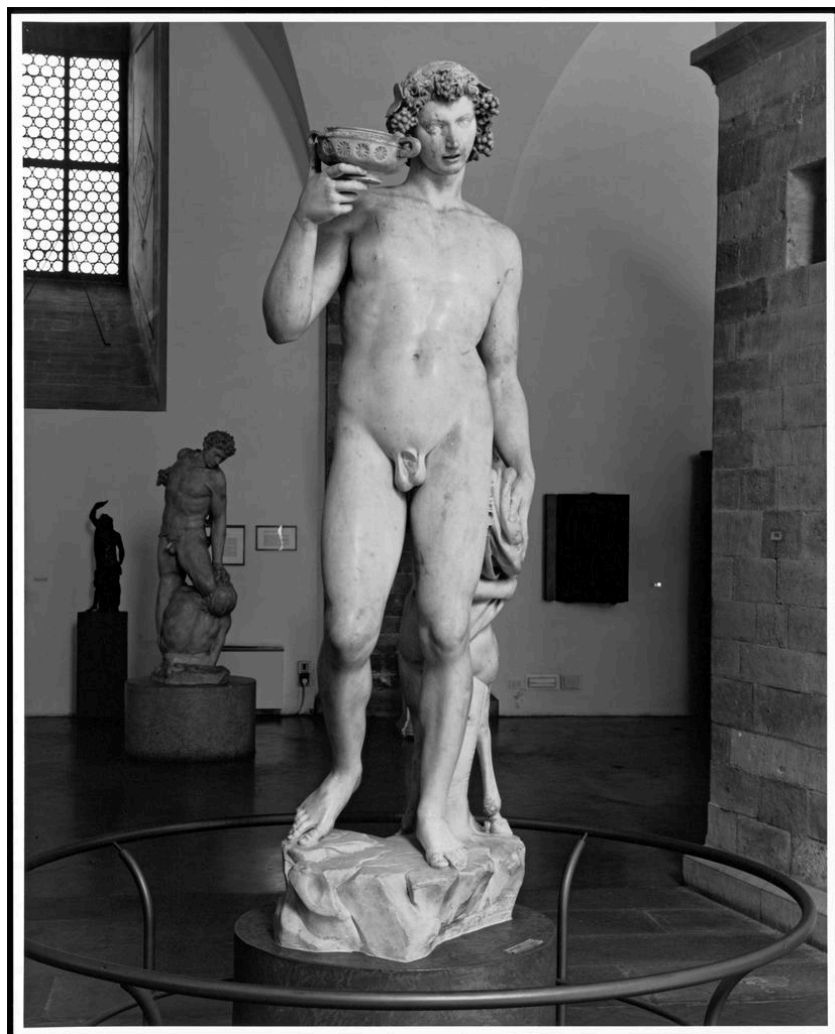


Fig. 5.24 Michelangelo, *Bacchus* (ARTstor)

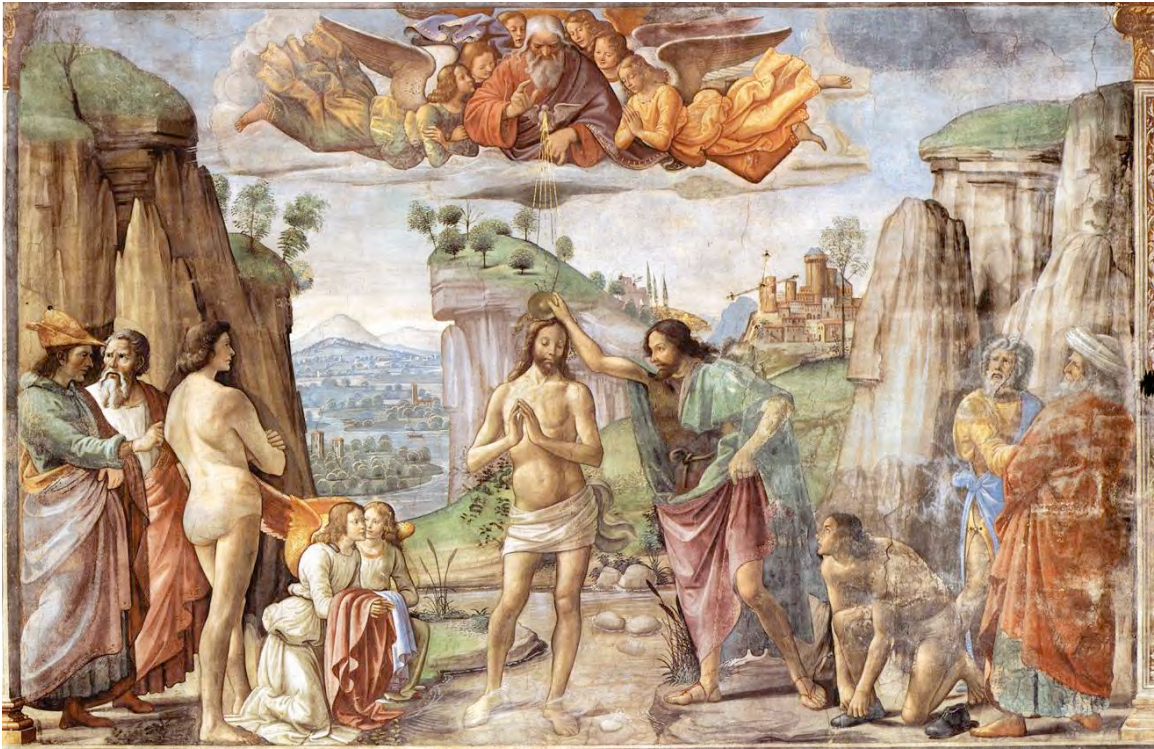


Fig. 5.25 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Baptism of Christ*, fresco, 1486-1490, Cappella Tornabuoni, Santa Maria Novella, Florence (Web Gallery of Art)



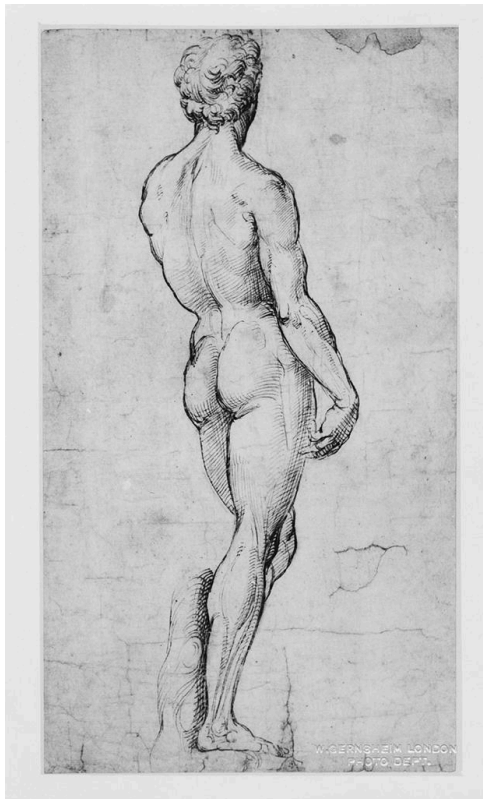
Fig. 5.26 (left) Michelangelo, *Bacchus* (detail)  
(right) Ghirlandaio, *Baptism of Christ* (detail)



Fig. 5.27 Detail of piping nude from Luca Signorelli's *Court of Pan*



Raphael, Drawing of Michelangelo's *David*, c. 1505 or later, pen and brown ink, British Museum, London (ARTstor)



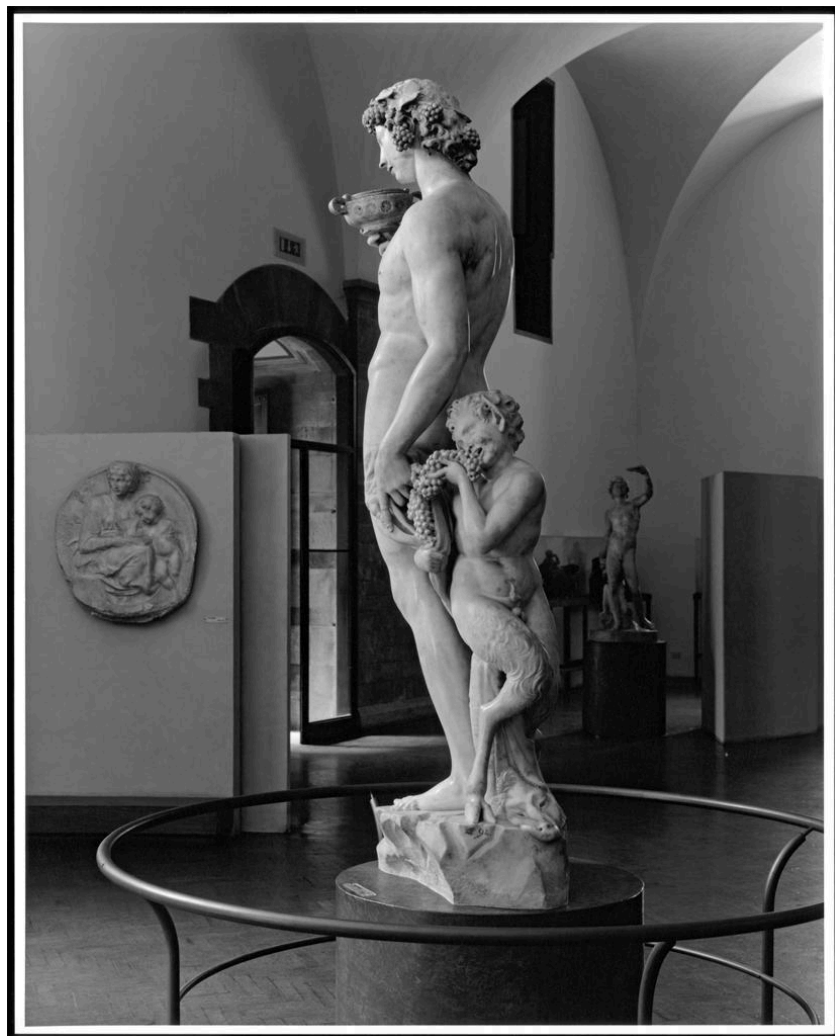


Fig. 5.28 Michelangelo, *Bacchus*, view from the left side (ARTstor)

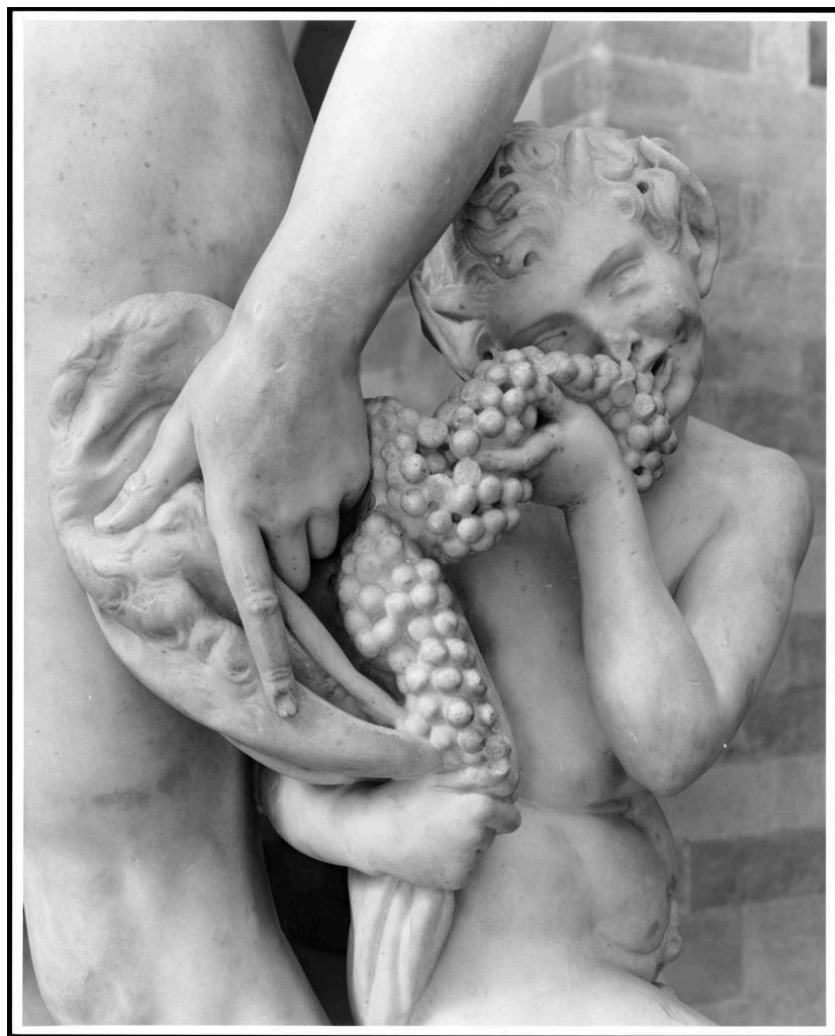


Fig. 5.29 Detail of satyr, grapes, and pardalis (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.30 The twisting satyr (ARTstor)

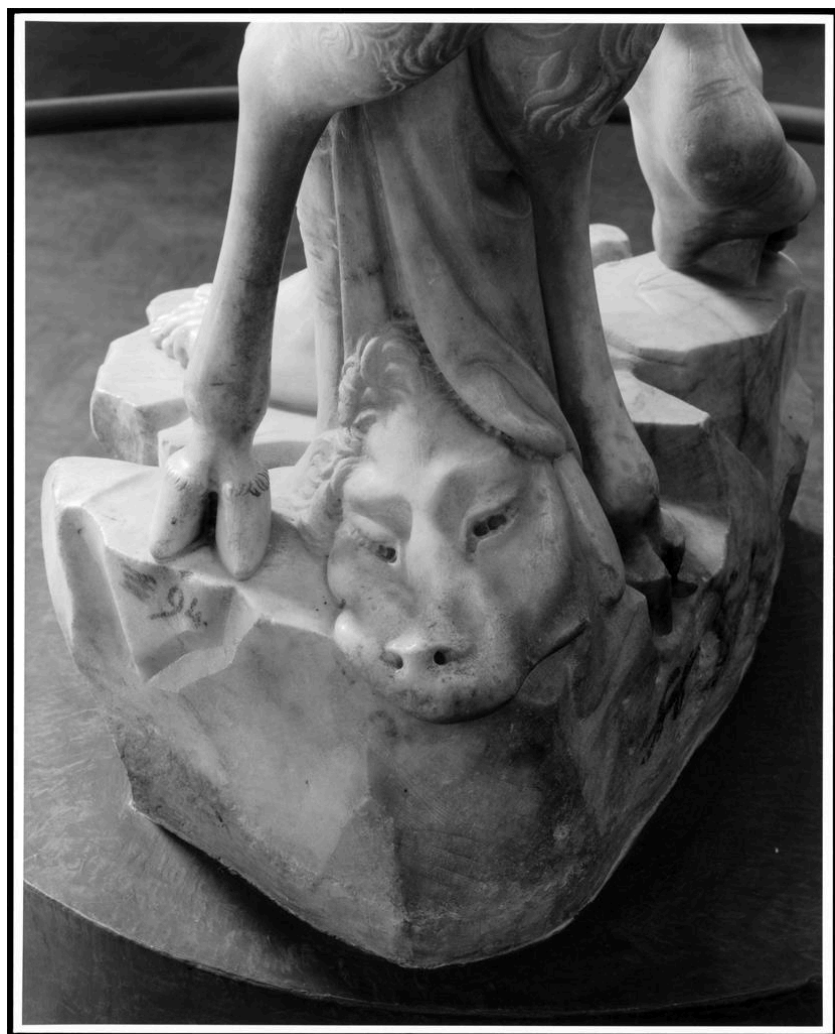


Fig. 5.31 flayed lion skin (ARTstor)



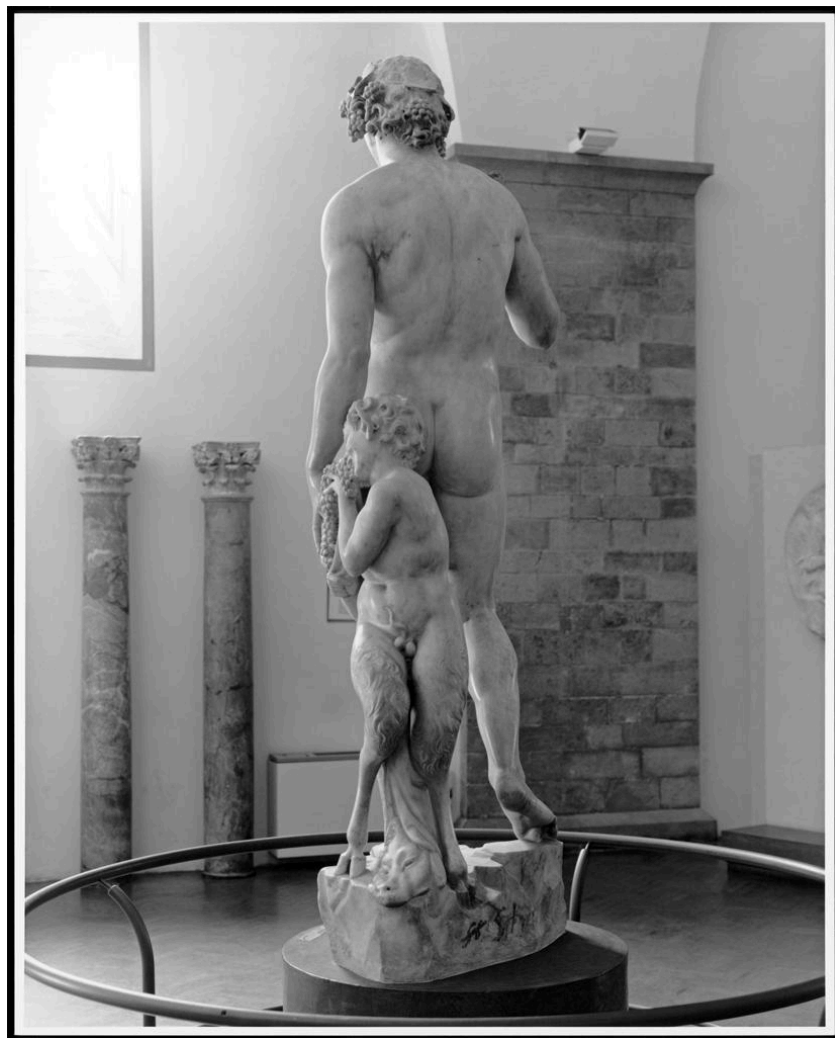


Fig. 5.32 Michelangelo, *Bacchus*, from the back (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.33 Michelangelo, *Bacchus*, looking up from the back and side (ARTstor)

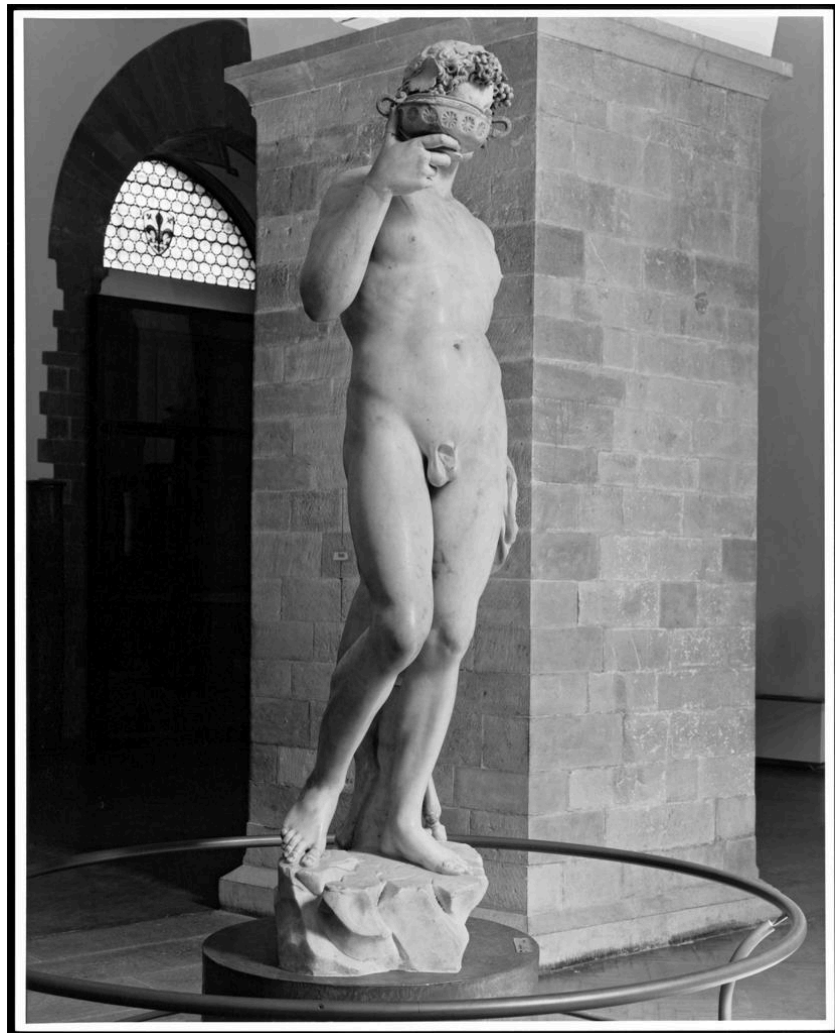


Fig. 5.34 Michelangelo, *Bacchus*, from the front right side (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.35 Mantegna, *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*, engraving, mid-1470s, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (author's photo)



Fig. 5.36 Mantegna, *Bacchanal with Silenus*, engraving, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., inv. 1943.3.5775 (author's photo)



Fig. 5.37 The *Bacchanals* placed together as a frieze (images from Martineau, 1993, figs. 74 and 75)



Fig. 5.38 *Bacchanal with the Wine Vat*, Bacchus receiving wreath



Fig. 5.39 (top) Bacchus and satyr, fragment of ancient sarcophagus, British Museum, London (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 4, no. 310, pl. 313)

(bottom) Seasons with Bacchus on a panther, Roman sarcophagus, 3rd century A.D., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, formerly Badminton Hall, Gloucestershire, England (ARTstor). The figure holding a cornucopia on the right is Autumn.



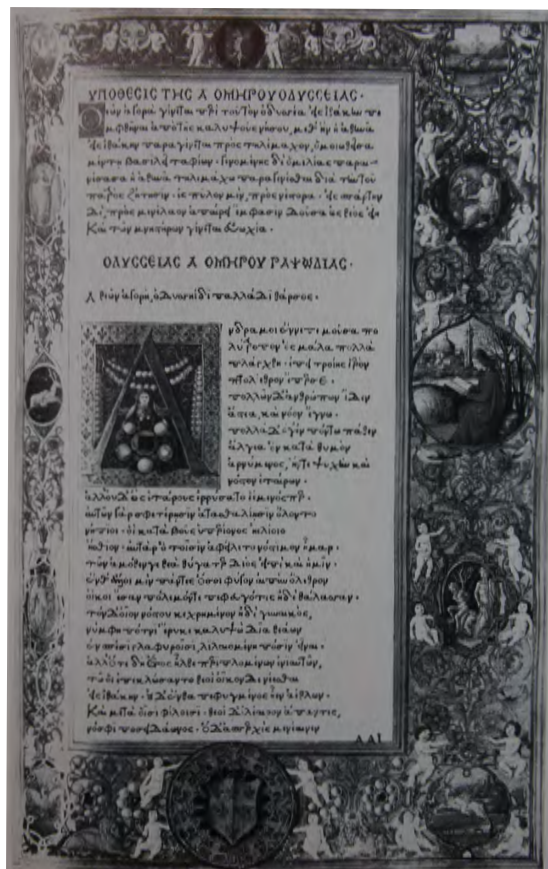


Fig. 5.40 detail of Bacchus from Gherardo di Giovanni, incipit page of the *Odyssey*, fol. 244r, incunable of Homer's works (Florence 1488), Biblioteca Nazionale, Naples, SQ XXIII K22 (Wyss, 1996, fig. 20)  
cf. Bacchus, Greek, agate, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Yuen, 1997, fig. 26)



Fig. 5.41 Baccio Bandinelli, *Self-Portrait*, pen and brown ink, Uffizi, Florence (Franklin, 2005, fig. 98.1)

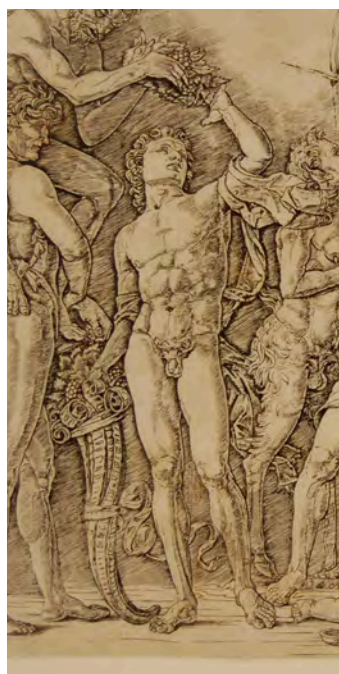


Fig. 5.42 Bacchic Triumph, *pastiglia cassone*, c. 1480s, Museo Stefano Bardini, Florence (Schubring, 1923, cat. 71, pl. X)



Fig. 5.43 Jacopo Franco, after Blenheim sarcophagus (fig. 3.8), engraving, c. 1506, British Museum, London



Fig. 5.44 Detail of satyr



Fig. 5.45 Detail of plaque



Fig. 5.46 Detail of satyr and ephebe



Fig. 4.47 Detail of sleeping putti





Fig. 5.48 Detail of drinking satyrs



Fig. 5.49 Detail of satyrs' legs



Fig. 5.50 Obese woman (detail), *Bacchanal with Silenus*



Fig. 5.51 Detail of Bacchantes, *Bacchanal with Silenus*



Fig. 5.52 Detail of Silenus



Fig. 5.53 Detail of musicmaking satyrs



Fig. 5.54 Mantegna, *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, oil on canvas, 150 x 192 cm, 1502, Louvre, Paris (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.55 Raphael, *Apollo and Marsyas*, fresco, 1509-1511, Stanza della Segnatura, Palazzo Pontifici, Vatican





Fig. 5.56 Mantegna, Ignorance being carried by Avarice and Ingratitude (detail), *Pallas Expelling the Vices*



Fig. 5.57 Mantegna, *Virtus Combusta* (detail showing Ignorance enthroned), c. 1490-1506, pen and ink on paper, British Museum, London, inv. Pp. 1-23 (Martineau, 1992, cat. 147)



Fig. 5.58 Mantegna, *The Calumny of Apelles* (detail showing Ignorance on the right), pen and ink on paper, British Museum, London, inv. 1860-6-16-85 (Martineau, 1992, cat. 154)

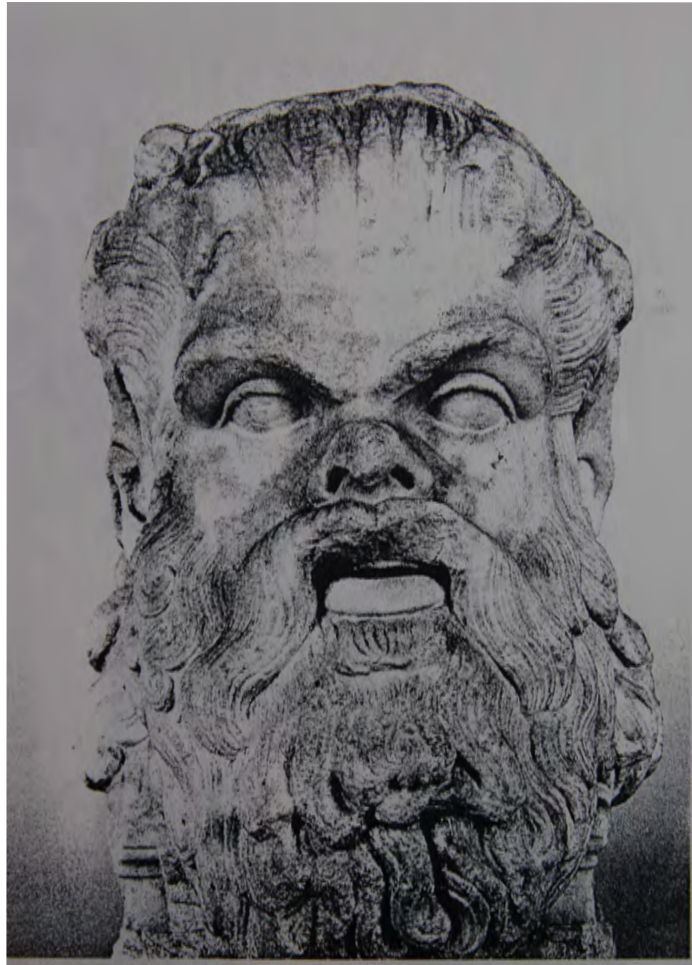


Fig. 5.59 *Silenus*, antique double-headed bust of Silenus, Museo Chiaramonti, Vatican (*Bildkatalog der Skulpturen des Vatikanischen Museums* vol. 1:1 [New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995], pl. XIV 13, cat. 229)

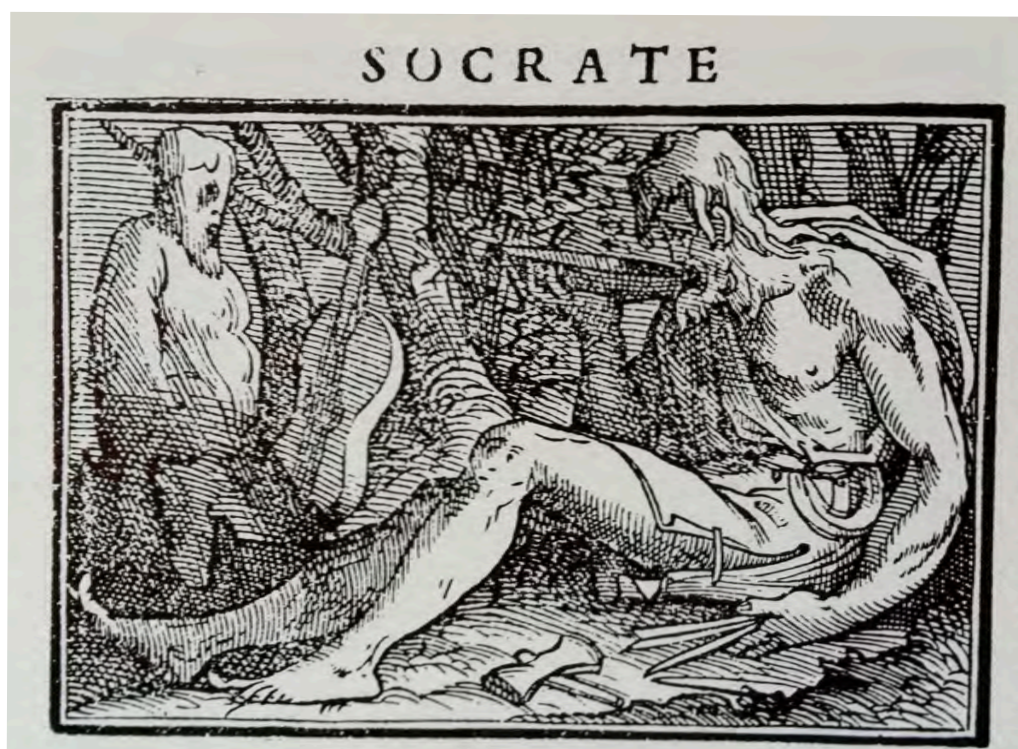


Fig. 5.60 Venetian, *Socrates*, woodcut illustration from Francesco Marcolin, *Le sorti* (Venice, 1540) (Wyss, 1996, fig. 110)



Fig. 5.61 Mantegna, *Battle of the Sea Gods*, left half, engraving, 1470s, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., inv. 1941.1.7 (author's photo)



Fig. 5.62 Mantegna, *Battle of the Sea Gods*, right half, engraving (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.63 Man riding a sea monster, left print (detail)





Fig. 5.64 Figure of Envy and her plaque, left print (details)

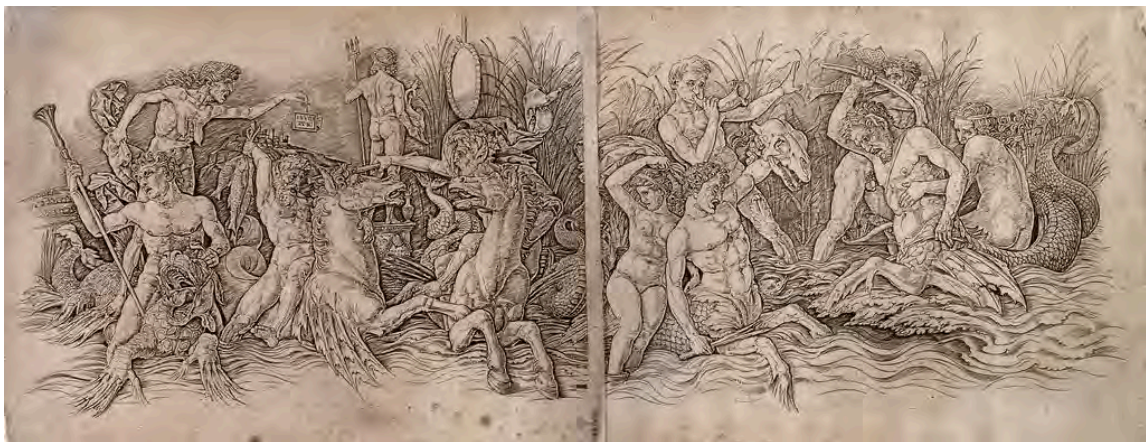




Fig. 5.65 Detail of Neptune, left print



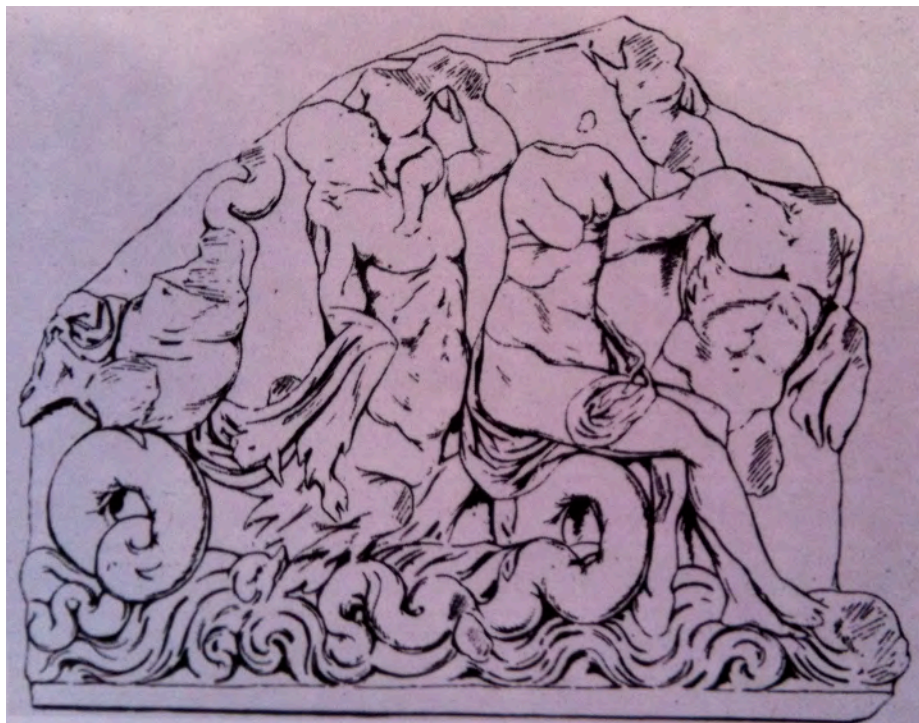
Fig. 5.66 (top) *Battle of the Sea Gods* pasted together, Chatsworth, Devonshire (ARTstor)



(bottom) *Battle of the Sea Gods* pasted together, showing overlapping edge, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, inv. P.68.210-211 (ARTstor)



Fig. 5.67 (top) *Nereids with Sea-Centaurs and Sea-Creatures*, sarcophagus, Roman, mid-2nd century A.D., Louvre, Paris (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 103) -- located in the fifteenth century in S. Francesco a Ripa in Trastevere



(bottom) Schematic after fragment of Nereid relief, Villa Medici, Rome (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 100ii)



Fig. 5.68 Detail of frontispiece for the *Missal* for Thomas James, the Bishop of Dol, Bibliothèque Municipale, Lyons, illuminated by the Florentine workshop of Attavante de' Attavantibus, showing sea *thiasos* sarcophagus and Bacchus and Ariadne gems (Alexander, 1994, cat. 3a)



Fig. 5.69 *Battling Tritons*, sarcophagus, Roman, installed beneath the Vatican Ariadne/Cleopatra, Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican (Haskel and Penny, 1981, fig. 96)



Fig. 5.70 Paduan, *Sea thiasos battling*, bronze plaquette, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Pope-Hennessy, 1965, fig. 139)



Fig. 5.71 Piero di Cosimo, *Tritons and Nereids fighting*, tempera on panel, c. 1500, 27 x 158 cm, Altomani and Co., Pesaro (Geronimus, 2006, fig. 74) -- a second, worn panel is in the Sydney J. Freedberg Collection, Washington, D.C.





Fig. 5.72 Illumination of *Tritons fighting*, Pliny, *Natural History*, fol. 5r, Biblioteca Nazionale, Turin, MS I.I 22-2, c.131 (Campbell, 2006, fig. 69)



Fig. 5.73 Zoan Andrea (perhaps after Mantegna), *Neptune Fountain*, engraving, c. 1480-1485, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (Levenson, Oberhuber, and Sheehan, 1973, cat. 100)



Fig. 5.74 *Sea Thiasos of Bacchus and Ariadne*, illumination, Petrarch, *Sonetti, Canzoni e Trionfi* (1472), fol. 40, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, Inc. Petr. 2

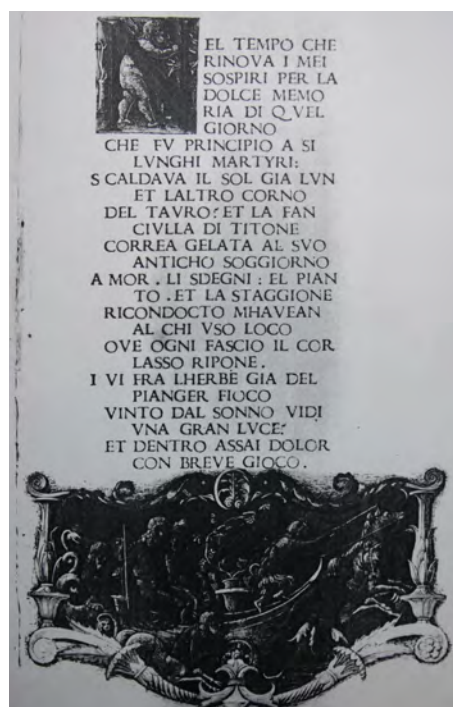




Fig. 5.75 Neroccio (in Louvre as Francesco di Giorgio), drawing after Woburn Abbey Indian Triumph of Bacchus sarcophagus, Louvre, Paris, inv. RF. 459 (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 100, beilage 49)



Fig. 5.76 *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, sarcophagus, Woburn Abbey (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 100, pl. 126)



Fig. 5.77 *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, Casino Rospigliosi, Rome (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 96, pl. 122)



Fig. 5.78 Detail of "Envy" figure



Fig. 5.79 Amico Aspertini, drawing after Rospigliosi sarcophagus, Indian Triumph of Bacchus, and detail of Envy figure, Wolfegg Sketchbook, fols. 36v-37, c.1500-1503, Schloss Wolfegg, Baden-Württemberg (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 96, beilage 43)



## CHAPTER SIX



Fig. 6.1 Giovanni Bellini, *The Feast of the Gods*, oil on canvas, 1.70 x 1.88 m, 1514 (background Titian, c. 1529), National Gallery of Art, Widener Collection, Washington, D.C.



Fig. 6.2 Titian, *Worship of Venus (Cupids)*, oil on canvas, 1.72 x 1.75 m, 1518-1520, Prado Museum, Madrid (ARTstor)



Fig. 6.3 Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, oil on canvas, 1.75 x 1.90 m, 1520-1522, National Gallery, London (ARTstor)



Fig. 6.4 Titian, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, oil on canvas, 1.75 x 1.93 m, c. 1523-1525, Prado Museum, Madrid



Fig. 6.5 Dosso Dossi, frieze of stories from Virgil's *Aeneid*, c. 1520-1521 (Jaffé, 2003, figs. 49-51)

(top) *The Plague at Pergamea*, private collection, New York

(middle) *The Sicilian Games*, private collection, New York

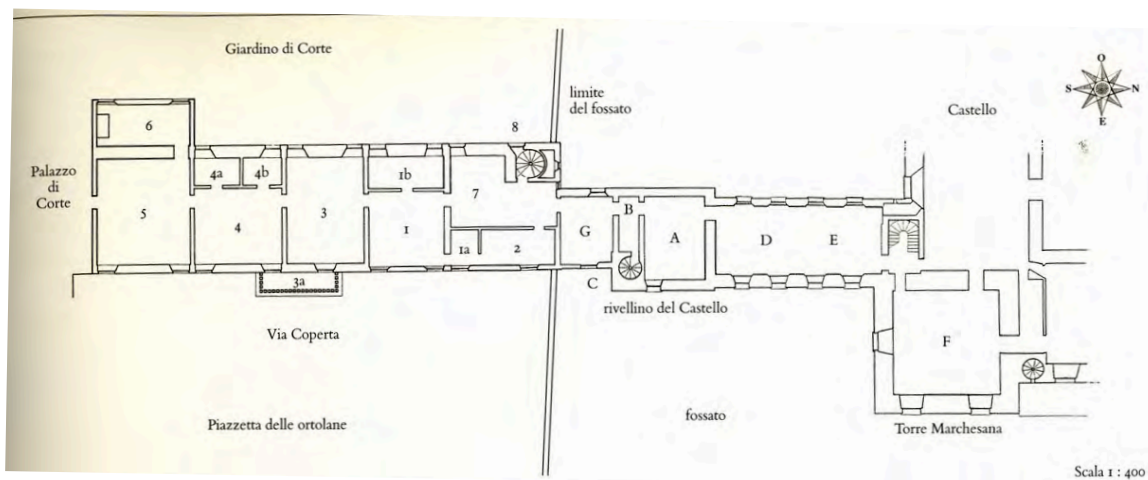
(bottom) "*Trojans on the Libyan Coast*" ("*The Sicilian Games*"), The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, England



Fig. 6.6 Attributed to Dosso Dossi or Girolamo da Carpi, *Portrait of Alfonso d'Este* (after lost Titian), oil on canvas, 1535-1536, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina, Florence (ARTstor)



Fig. 6.7 View of the Via Coperta and Ravelin and Tower of the Castello Estense, Ferrara. (Ballarin, 2002)



#### AMBIENTI DELLA VIA COPERTA

1. camera del duca 1a. alcova 1b. stanza o stanzini di servizio e di guardaroba 2. studio dei marmi 3. camera del poggiolo 3a. poggiolo 4. studio delle medaglie o camerino dorato 4a e b. camera segreta e camerino a questa contiguo 5. salotto su cui dà la scala che sale dalla piazzetta 6. cappelletta 7. galleria di accesso alla Via Coperta dal Castello 8. scala a chiocciola da cui scendere nel mezzanino e sotto i vòltri della Via Coperta.

#### AMBIENTI DEL CASTELLO

A. studio nuovo del duca o camerino delle pitture, già camera da letto di Lucrezia E anditino di fronte alla scala C. scala a chiocciola da cui scendere nell'appartamento de bagno e della grotta, scala ed appartamento fatti allestire da Lucrezia di servizio alla sua camera da letto D, E. camerino e galleria dello studio nuovo del duca, sull'area dei camerini di Lucrezia F. camera Marchesana G. andito di giunzione del rivellino di Castello alla Via Coperta, fatto costruire da Alfonso dov'era la "pontesella".

Fig. 6.8 Hypothetical reconstruction of the Via Coperta and Ravelin after the additions of 1518. (Ballarin, 2002)



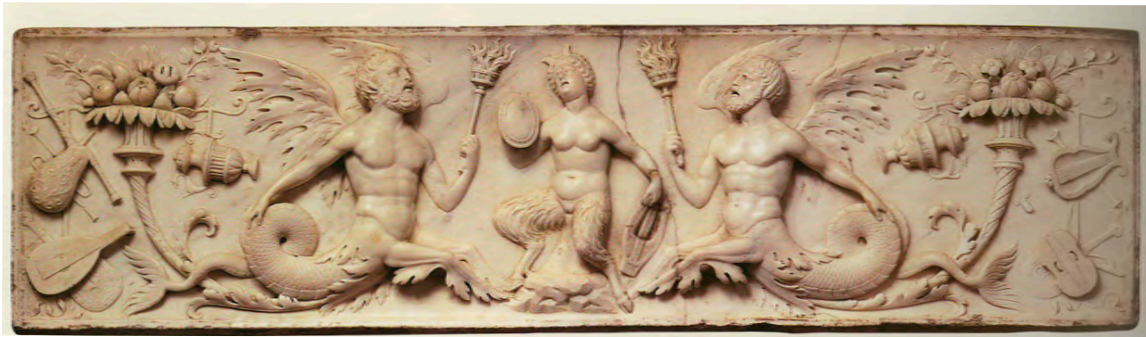


Fig. 6.9 Antonio Lombardo, *Satyress between two Tritons*, c. 1507-1508, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (Ballarin, cat. M.7, fig. 11)



Fig. 6.10 Antonio Lombardo, *Forge of Vulcan*, marble relief, 83 x 107 cm, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (ARTstor)



Fig. 6.11 Anonymous Sixteenth-Century Venetian, *Priapus and Lotis*, woodcut, illustration to Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, fol. 98v (Venice, 1509), Princeton University Library (Goffen, 1989, fig. 178)



Fig. 6.12 (detail) Lotis and Priapus, and Apollo's viol



Fig. 6.13 Giovanni Bellini, "*Perseverance*," restello panel, fir on hardwood, 32 x 22 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice (Goffen, 1989, fig. 171)

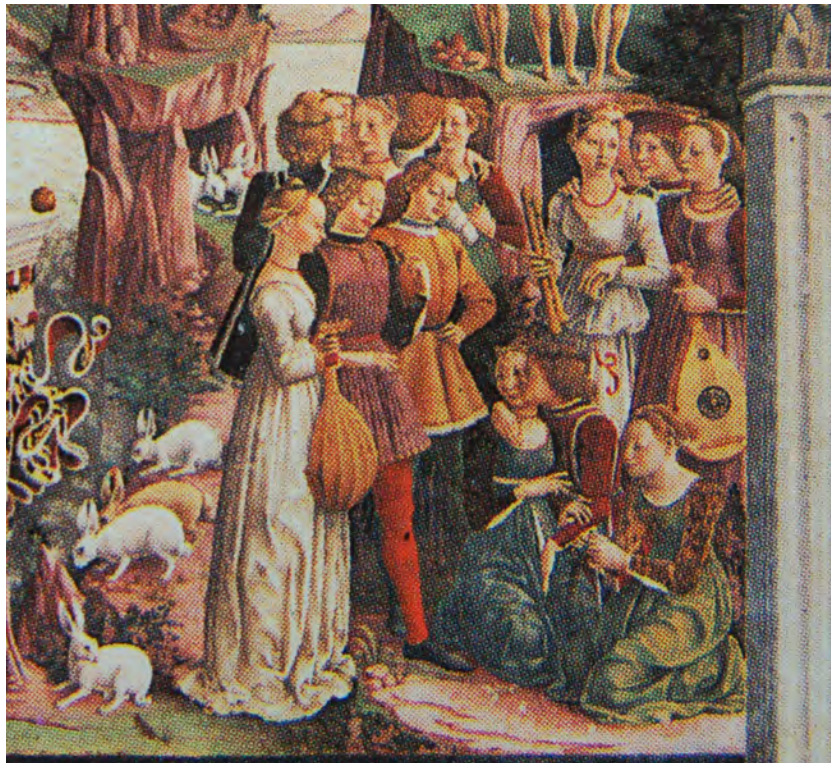


Fig. 6.14 Francesco del Cossa, *April* (detail), Palazzo Schifanoia, Hall of the Months, Ferrara

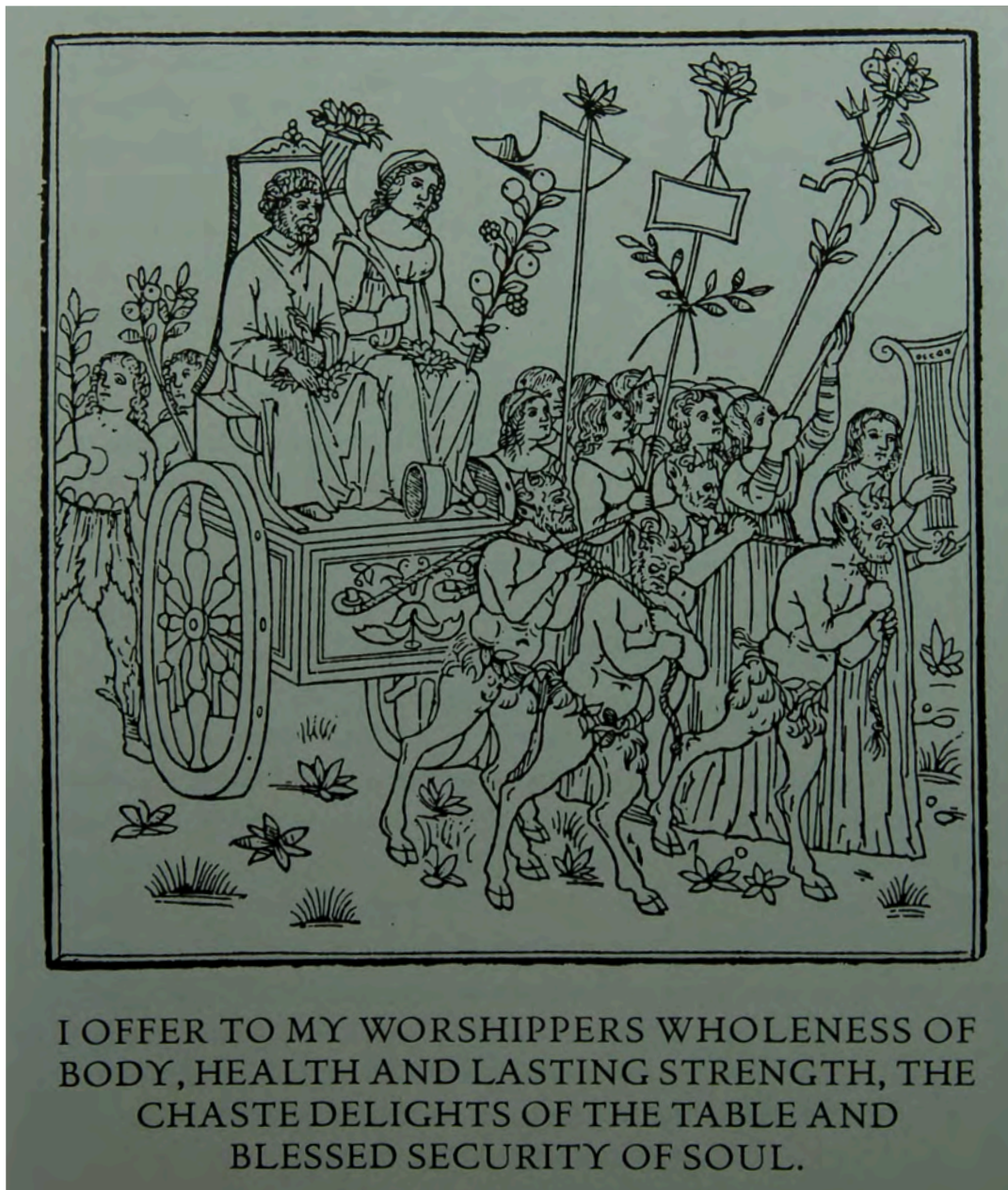


Fig. 6.15 *Triumph of Vertumnus and Pomona*, illustration to Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* fol. m4 (Godwin, 1999, 1991)



Fig. 6.16 “To Flowering Spring” and “To Yellow Harvest”, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, fol. m4’ and m5 (Godwin, 1999, 192-193)





Fig. 6.17 “To Autumn Vintage” and “To Winter Winds,” *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* fol. m5 and m5’ (Godwin, 1999, 193-194)



Fig. 6.18 (detail) Young Bacchus



Fig. 6.19 Fra Bartolomeo, *Worship of Venus*, preparatory drawing, chalk on paper, c. 1516-1517, Gabinetto dei Disegni, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Fig. 6.20 Conrad Martin Metz, *Indian Triumph of Bacchus* (after Raphael's *modello*, c. 1516-1517), aquatint from *Imitations of Ancient and Modern Drawings*, 1789, fol. 51, London, British Museum, Dept. of Prints and Drawings, mm. 350 x 383 (the print). (Ballarin, 2002)



Fig. 6.21 Giovanni Francesco Penni, *Indian Triumph of Bacchus*, Albertina, Vienna



Fig. 6.22 Garofalo, *Indian Triumph of Bacchus* (after Raphael's *modello*), 2.18 x 3.13 m, 1540, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Gal.-Nr. 138

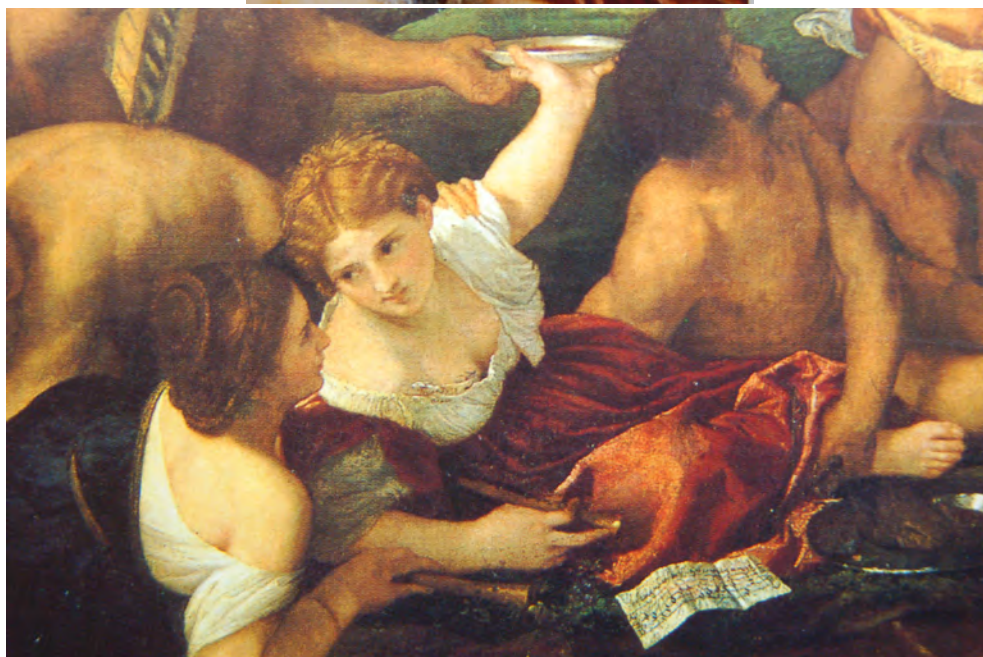


Fig. 6.23 (top) detail of “mothers of Cupids” from the *Worship of Venus*;  
(bottom) detail of women in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians*



Fig. 6.24 Unknown (attributed to Dosso Dossi by Ballarin), *Triumph of Bacchus*, 1.35 x 1.68 m, date unknown, Bombay, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, inv. n. 22.4620 (Ballarin, 2002, cat. P. 2)





Fig. 6.25 Dosso Dossi (attributed), *A Bacchanal*, oil on canvas, National Gallery, London



Fig. 6.26 Unknown (Dosso Dossi), *The Bath*, oil on canvas, 108.5 x 163 cm, c. 1530, Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome (ARTstor)



Fig. 6.27 Detail of wine pitcher, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*



Fig. 6.28 *Triumph of Pan*, sarcophagus fragment, Staatliche Museen, Berlin (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 2, no. 157, pl. 184)



Fig. 6.29 detail of sleeping maenad, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*;  
Cf. detail of sleeping maenad, Bacchic sarcophagus, Naples (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 176,  
pl. 198)



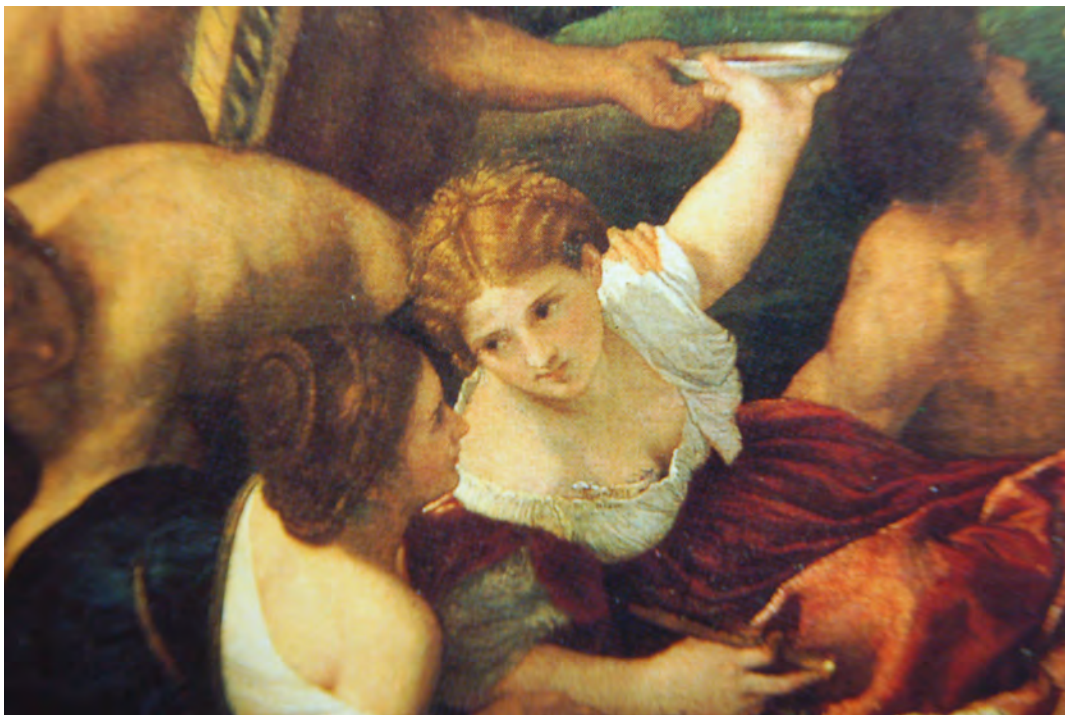


Fig. 6.30 (top) detail of Venetian youths singing, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*  
(below) Venetian ladies



Fig. 6.31 Detail, sheet of music (turned right side up), *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (Lowinsky, 1982, fig. 6.3)



Fig. 6.32 Detail of dancers, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*; detail of dancing Cupids, *Worship of Venus*;

Cf. Dancing maenad, from Bacchic sarcophagus, Belvedere Courtyard, Vatican (Matz, *ASR*, IV, 3, cat. 171, pl. 193)





Fig. 6.33 Detail of three nude men around the four Venetians, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*



Fig. 6.34 Detail Bacchus leaping, *Bacchus and Ariadne*



Fig. 6.35 (top) Piero di Cosimo, *Perseus and Andromeda* (detail), panel, c. 1510-1513, Uffizi, Florence

(bottom) Mantegna, *Triumph of Caesar* series, canvas V, c. 1500-1506, Her Majesty the Queen, Buckingham Palace, England (Martineau, 1992, cat. 112) -- the image on the right is flipped to demonstrate the similarity of the pose to that of Bacchus



Fig. 6.36 Giovanni Bellini, Young Bacchus (detail), *Feast of the Gods*



Fig. 6.37 Detail of ceramic bowl in *Feast of the Gods*, and an example of such a bowl, Chinese, Ming period (fifteenth century), Asia Society Museum, New York (ARTstor)



Fig. 6.38 Details from the *Feast of the Gods*



Fig. 6.39 Details from the *Feast of the Gods*

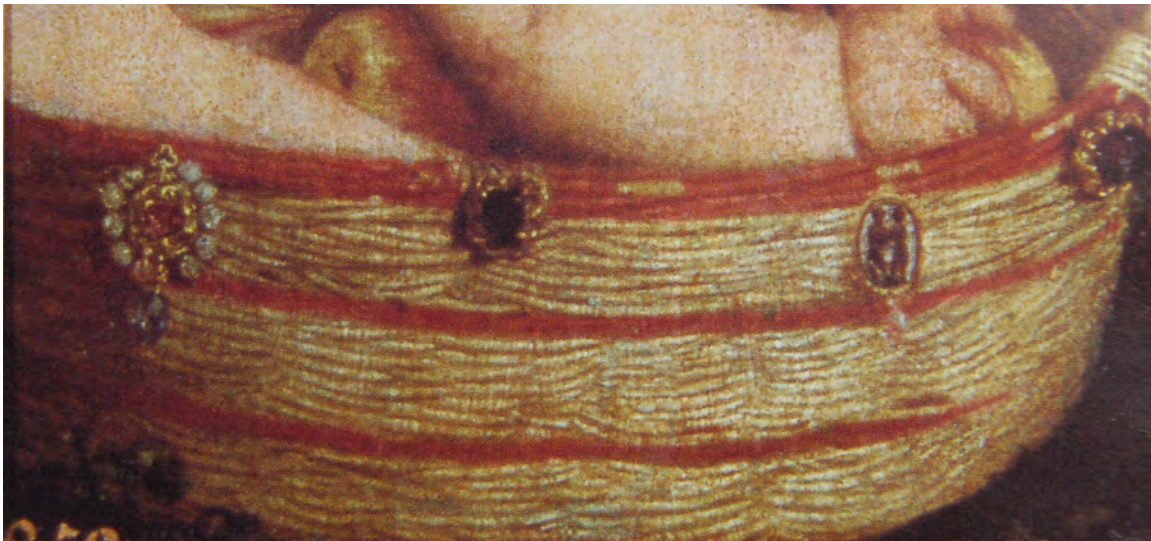


Fig. 6.40 Details of gem-encrusted baskets, *Worship of Venus*



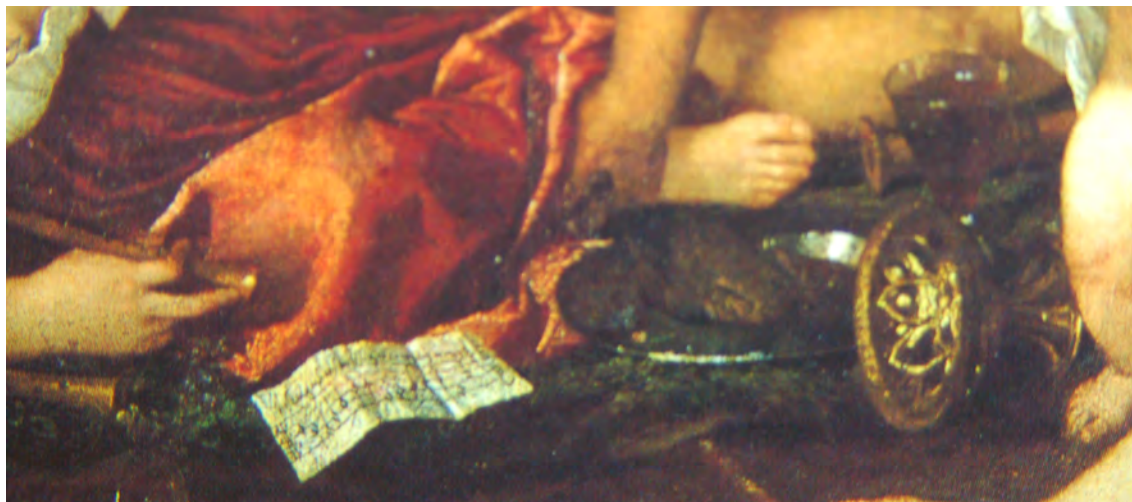


Fig. 6.41 Details of vessels, recorders, and dishes in *Bacchanal of the Andrians*



Fig. 6.42 Bolognino Zaltieri, *Three of the Four Macrobian Bacchuses*, engraving from Vincenzo Cartari's *Imagini degli Dei degli Antichi* (1571) (Colantuono, 2010, fig. 1.4)



Fig. 6.43 Detail of old man lying on a bed of grapes, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*

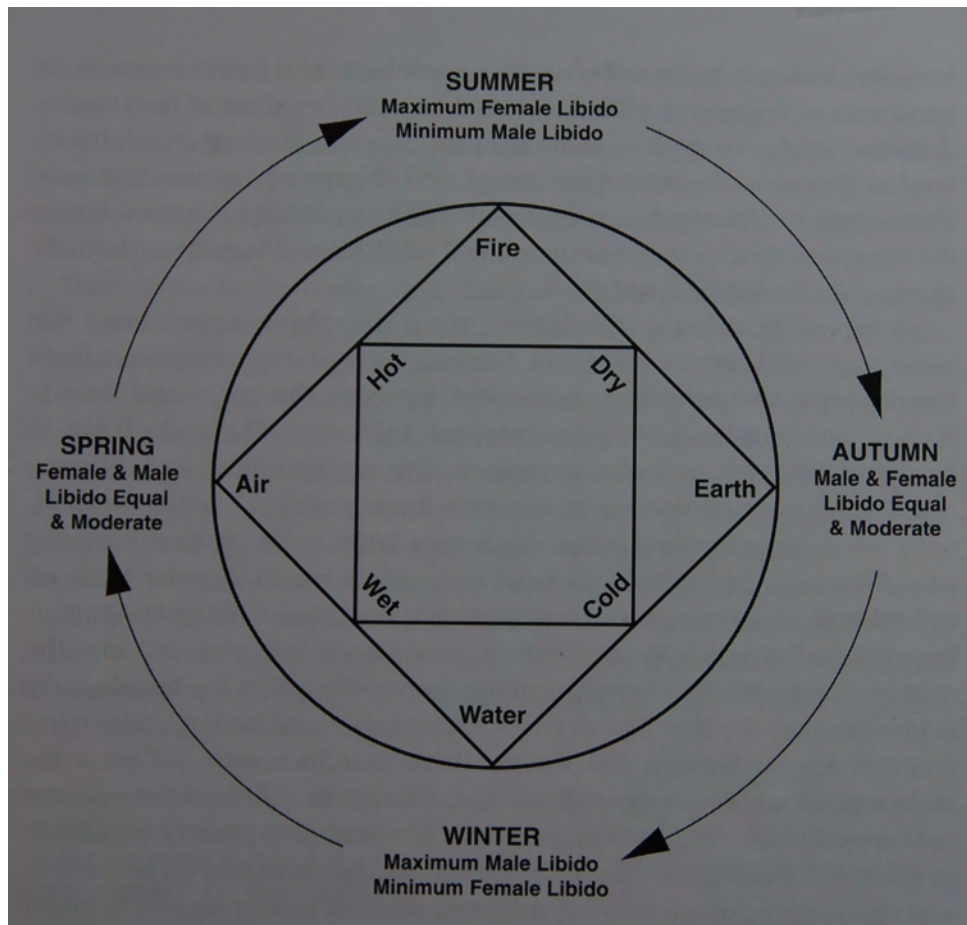


Fig. 6.44 The Libidinal Cycle, illustration by Anthony Colantuono (2010, fig. 0.1)

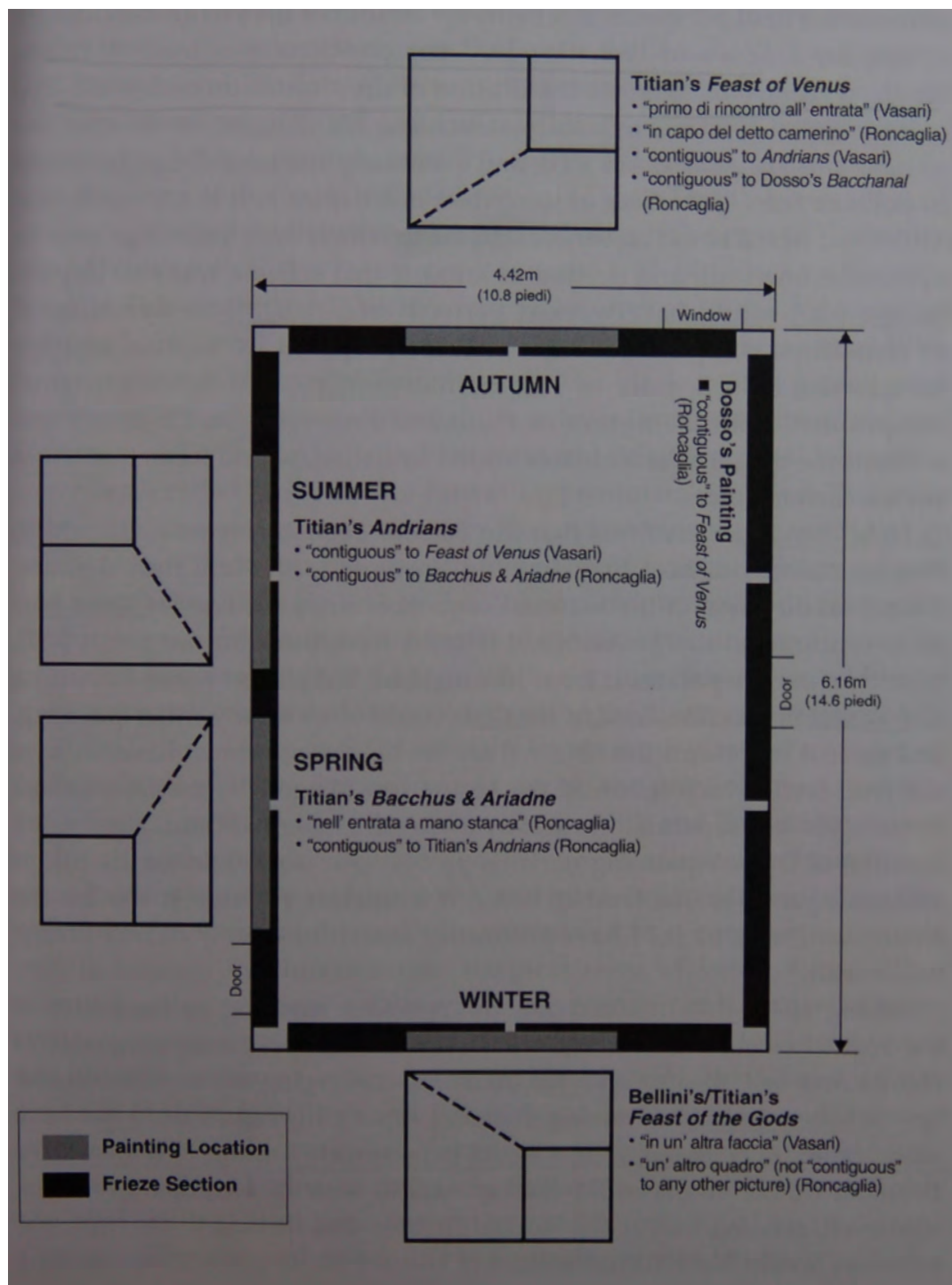


Fig. 6.45 Colantuono's seasonal arrangement of the paintings of the Camerino d'Alabastro (2010, fig. 5.4)

### Proposed Arrangement of Camerino d'Alabastro Paintings



Fig. 6.46 Proposed Arrangement of the Camerino d'Alabastro Paintings

### Proposed Arrangement of Camerino d'Alabastro Paintings

*Bacchus and Ariadne*  
Spring

*Worship of Venus*  
Spring



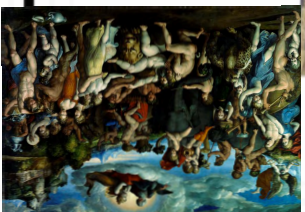
*Bacchanal of the Andrians*  
Autumn



*Feast of the Gods*  
Winter



*Indian Triumph?*  
Summer



*Dosso's Bacchanal?*  
Autumn



Fig. 6.47 Detail of men filling krater and amphora with wine, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*





Fig. 6.48 Detail of grapevines, left *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, right *Bacchus and Ariadne*

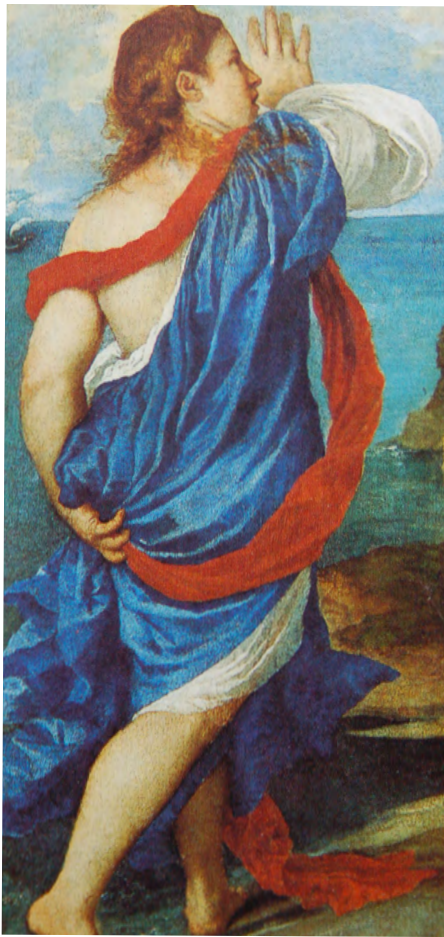
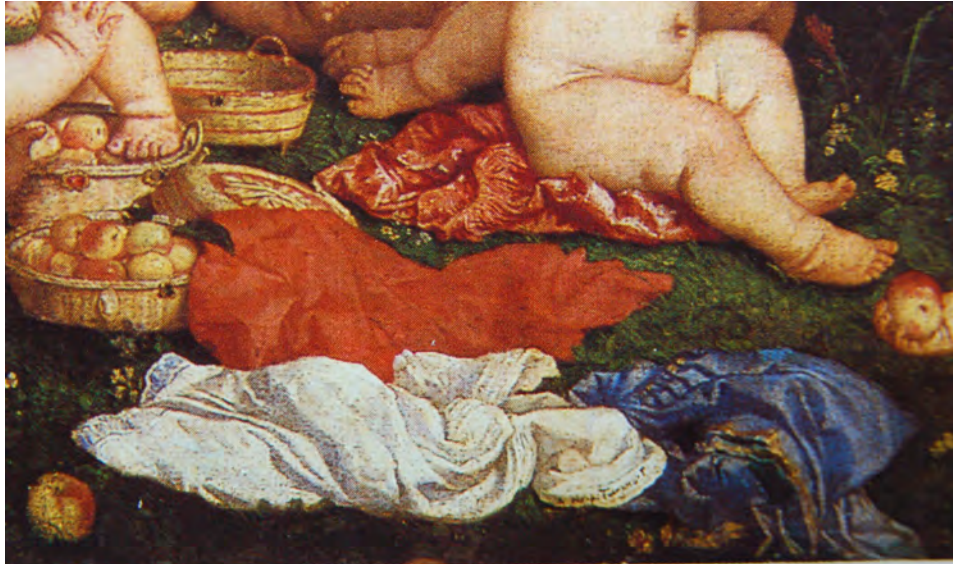


Fig. 6.49 Detail of cloth in foreground of *Worship of Venus*, and of Ariadne and Bacchus in *Bacchus and Ariadne*

## CONCLUSION



Fig. C.1 Baldassare Peruzzi, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, fresco, Salone delle Prospettive, 1518-1519, Villa Farnesina, Rome (ARTstor)

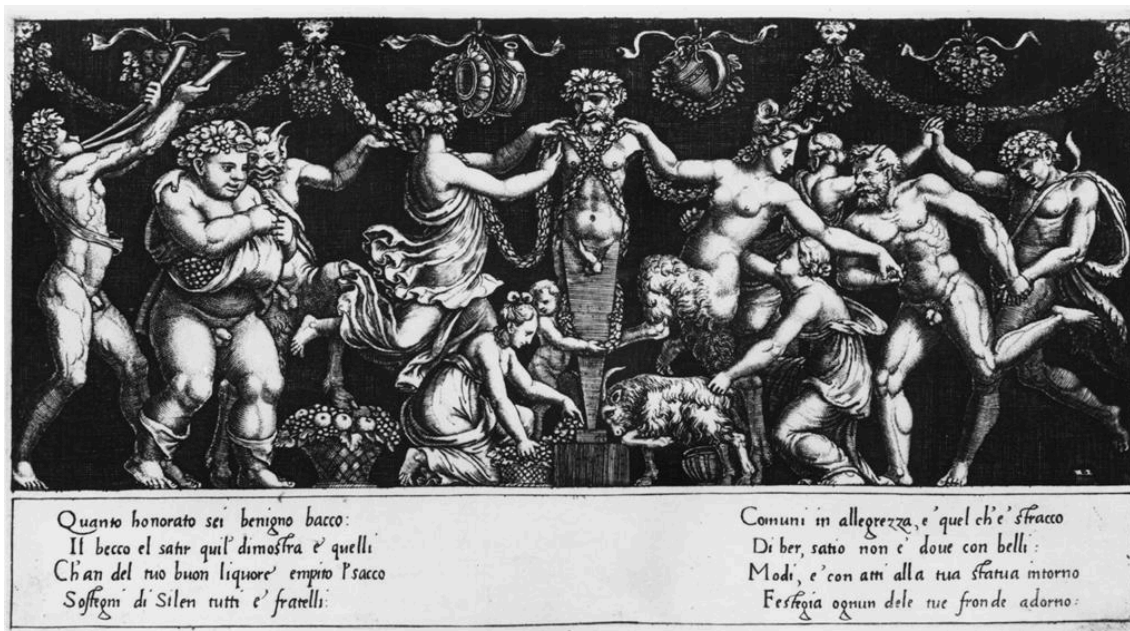


Fig. C.2 Master of the Die, after Raphael or Giulio Romano, *Sacrifice to Priapus*, engraving, 157 x 284 mm, c. 1520s, British Museum, London, *The Illustrated Bartsch* vol. 29.27 (203) (ARTstor)



Fig. C.3 Titian, detail of Silenus, *Bacchus and Ariadne*



Fig. C.4 *Putti and a Divinity at the Vintage*, 1499, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* fol. 14 (Godwin, 1999, 175)



Fig. C.5 Hieronymus Hopfer, after Mantegna, *Silenus Surrounded by Cupids*, etching, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., inv. no. 2004.97.2 (author's photo)



Fig. C.6 Hendrik Goltzius, *Bacchus*, woodcut, state 2 with monogram, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., inv. 1988.31.1, *The Illustrated Bartsch* 0301.228 S2 (author's photo)





Fig. C.7 Philips Galle, *Bacchus Astride a Barrel*, engraving, c. 1585, series Statues of Roman Gods, Vienna, The Illustrated Bartsch 5601.089:8 (ARTstor)



Fig. C.8 Marten van Heemskerck, *Triumphal Procession of Bacchus*, painting on panel, 56 x 106 cm, c. 1536-1537, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna





Fig. C.9 Jusepe de Ribera, *Drunken "Silenus,"* oil on canvas, 185 x 229 cm, 1626, Museo e gallerie nazionali di Capodimonte (ARTstor)



Fig. C.10 (top) Cornelis de Vos, after Peter Paul Rubens, *The Triumph of Bacchus*, oil on canvas, 180 x 295 cm, c. 1636, Museo del Prado, Madrid (ARTstor)  
 (right) Rubens, *Bacchus*, oil on canvas, c. 1638-1640, Hermitage, St. Petersburg





Fig. C.11 Jean de Gourmont the Elder, *Triumph of Bacchus in a Temple*, pen and brown ink and wash drawing, first half of the sixteenth century, British Museum, London (ARTstor)



Fig. C.12 Attributed to Rinaldo Mantovano, from design by Giulio Romano, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, Sala di Psiche, fresco, 1527-1530, Palazzo Te, Mantua (ARTstor)



Fig. C.13 Giulio Romano and assistants, *The Marriage of Psyche* (detail), in Sala di Psiche, fresco, 1528, Palazzo Te, Mantua (Gregori, 2003, fig. 127)





Fig. C.14 Annibale Carracci, *Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne*, fresco, 1597-1601, Palazzo Farnese, Rome (ARTstor)





Fig. C.15 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Bacchus*, oil on canvas, 95 x 85 cm, c. 1597-1598, Uffizi, Florence (ARTstor)



Fig. C.16 Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Self-Portrait as Bacchus (Sick Bacchus)*, oil on canvas, 67 x 53 cm, c. 1593-1594, Galleria Borghese, Rome, inv. no. 534 (ARTstor)



Fig. C.17 Giulio Bonasone, Motto X: “Cum virtute alma consentit vera voluptas,” engraved illustration in Achille Bocchi’s *Symbolicae quaestiones*, 1574, London, The Illustrated Bartsch vol. 29.187 (159) (ARTstor)

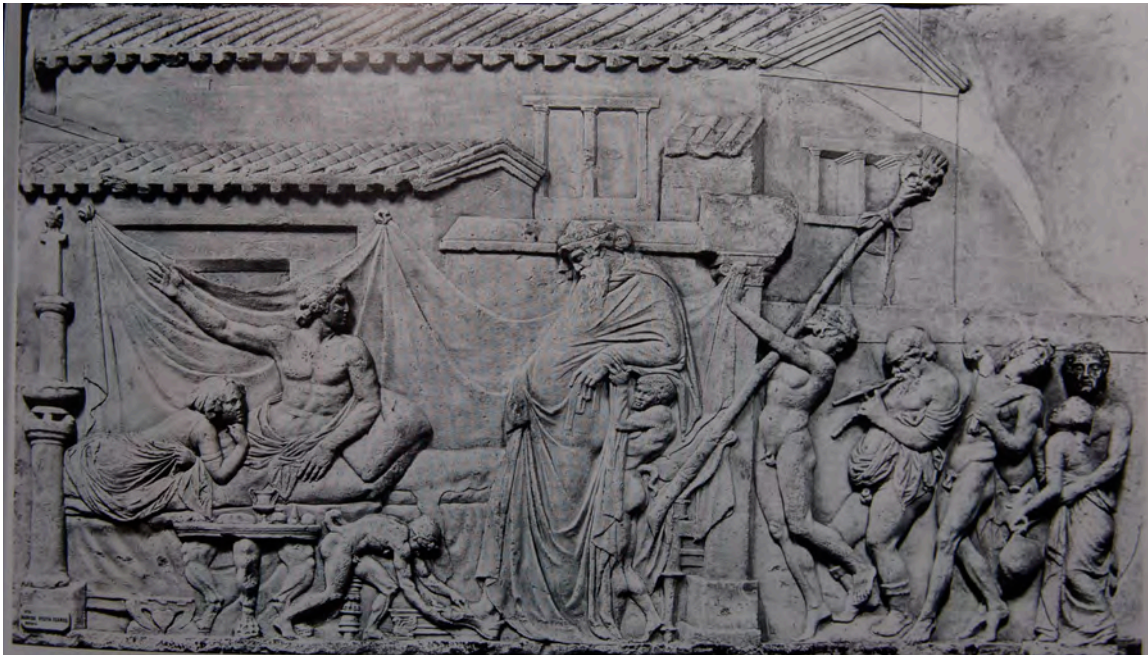


Fig. C.18 *Bacchus visiting the Poet Icarus* (“*Triclinium*”), Roman copy after Greek neo-Attic relief or painting, Museo Archeologico, Naples (Bober and Rubinstein, 2010, cat. 90c)

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## APPENDIX 1

**Records of Eleanora d'Aragona's wedding *feste* of 1473:**

In Siena, they were fêted with a fountain of wine:

(Olivi, 42-43, cites Allegretto Alleghetti's *Diari Sanesi*, fol. 775-776):

E nella detta strada fu ordenato un tino de tenuta di 40 staja tramezzo, e una colonna in mezzo ornata suvi un Leone e la Lupa, cioè il Leone gettava Vino bianco in una parte della detta tina e la Lupa gettava Vino vermiglio dall'altro lato della detta Tina ed un Pispino in mezzo tra il Leone [sic] e la Lupa, acqua. E nella tina stavano sempre tazze d'argento acciochè ognuno potesse bere.

The Ferrarese event was remembered in frescoes decorating several walls of the villa Belfiore, described by Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti in his *De triumphis religionis*.

(Anonymous *Diario ferrarese dall'anno 1409 sino al 1502*, ed. G. Pardi, in *Rerum Italicum Scriptores*, vol.24, part 7, 88-89.) The diarist records:

Prima de Sancta Maria del Vado era uno carubio [a large *carro*] cum gente suso ordinato pulidamente, a similitudine de li septe pianeti. [...] El septimo pianeto era dal campanile del vescovado adornato cum gente asai, che balava e cantava a che sonava cum molte gentilezze. [...] E fu una bella cosa, quelli septe pianeti, da vedere. [...] Et... fu facto gran festa et triumpho.

In Rome:

The main banquet performance ended with a grand *ballo* depicting eight famous couples, who were then interrupted by a troop of centaurs, whom Hercules battled and soundly defeated.

Corio described this finale:

Doppo venne sopra il tribunale forse da otto huomini, con otto altre vestite da ninfe e sue inamorate. Tra i quali era Ercole con Deianira per mano, Giasone con Medea, Teseo con Fedra, e così degli altri, con le sue inamorate, tutti di convenienti habiti vestiti, e giunte lì, cominciarono piferi, e motl'altri stromenti a sonare, et ivi in mezo cominciarono a danzare e festeggiare con le loro ninfe; ...sopragiunsero certi vestiti in forma di centauri, ...; quivi si fece una bella scaramuzza fra Ercole e i detti centuari....

Then:

Ivi fu ancora la rappresentatione di Bacco e di Ariadna, e molte altre cose dignissime di grandissima et inestimabile spesa.... Suoni e canti, con buffoni variati infiniti; tutti bevono in oro vini di ogni ragione eletti.<sup>1</sup>

Tito Vespasiano Tito wrote:

Sollicatae quicquid mensis regalibus aptum  
Artifici luxu composuere manus.  
Praepetibus quicquid liquidum secat aethera pennis,  
Quicquid alit tellus, aequora quicquid habent.  
Inlyta quos Latias Ferraria misit ad urbeis,  
Ponitur hospitibus maxime Petre tuis.  
Saepe ferunt nobis epulas, Bacchumq; ministri,  
Coenamq; multiplices dat repetita cibos.

...Liber adest, sparsis nec abest Adriadna capillis,  
Auratas varia lynce trahente rotas.  
Capripedes curram Fauni, Satyriq; Sequuntur,  
Et madidas hederis implicuere comas. (193v)

...Laetatur populus, vultu Lianora sereno  
Ridet, & Herculeis laudibus ipsa favet.  
Sed cum tanta tuae dederint spectacula mensae,  
Sunt tamen haec animo Petre minora tuo. (194r)<sup>2</sup>

This pantomime was accompanied by the following verses, recorded in Eleanora's letter of 10 June 1473:

Et colli supradicti Herculi Baccho et Andriana, con versi infrascripti:  
Letus odoratis properat nunc Bacchus ab Indis  
Lustrat et Herculeas barbara pompa dapes.  
Iamque iubet comites tantis discumbere mensis,  
Hic celebrat talamos pulcra Ariadna tuos.  
Non cernis vitem, geminataque gaudia sentis?  
Grata puer duplica pocula Bacchus adest.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cruciani, 164: Bernardino Corio, *Dell'Historie milanesi* (Venice, 1554), p. IV.

<sup>2</sup> Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, "Convivum Romae factum à Petro Cardinale (*Aeolosticon* Libro I)," in *Strozii Poetae, Pater et filius* (Venetiis: 1513), 193v-194r.

<sup>3</sup> Cruciani, 159: Letter written from Campagnano, outside of Rome, 10 June 1473, to D. Carafa of Naples, edited by A. de Tummullillis, *Notabilia temporum* (modern ed., 1890), 194-203 and in Corvisieri (1887), 645-654 (with some differences). Compare the epigram of Domizio Calderini (recorded by Perosa, and quoted in Emmerling-Skala, 877): "Laetus odoratis properat nunc Bacchus ab Indis, / lustrat et Herculeas barbara pompa dapes, / iamque iubet

Bacchus reappeared soon thereafter upon a chariot with Venus, along with the following verses:

Dea Venus in sul carro col Baccho et colli infrascripti versi:  
 Hec sibi legitimos Martis defendit amores  
 Cum tangit caesto fortia terga dei.  
 Ac tuus Alcides servabit federa, talem  
 Vellet habere Juno pulcra Venusque virum.<sup>4</sup>

In Boccabella's poem celebrating the occasion, *Admirabile Convivium ad divam Leonoram Ferdinandi Regis Filiam*, Bacchus appears with Ceres:

Sic leonora tuus post martia bella maritus  
 Te petat: et thalamo gaudeat ille tuo.  
 Subsequiturque novis dapibus nova pompa deorum  
 Quos iuvat humana condicione frui.  
 Bacchus adest: et flava ceres, fraterque sororque,  
 Laetitia hic deus est, frugibus illa dea est.  
 Altus uterque sedet: geminos turrata per angues:  
 Provehitur curru spicea sarta gerens.  
 Inque manu, natam graias ululata per urbes  
 Dite deo raptam fert (pia causa) facem.  
 Liber pampineo redimitus tempora serto,  
 Tigre catenata fulget et ante deos.  
 Qualis ubi ardentem libiem superavit et indos:  
 et rediit victor primus ab orbe novo.  
 Talis erat curru in medio: talemque ferebat  
 Effigiem: Sixti motus honore patris  
 Plurima de hinc veniunt variis decorata figuris  
 Quis color haud idem nec sapor unus erat.  
 Arciger ecce puer placida cum matre cupido  
 Quos sequitur summos plurima turba deos,  
 Et tu ni fallor mater leonara futura,  
 Nanque tue causa fertilitatis erunt.  
 Non carpit regina cibum: non dulcia sumit  
 Pocula: delectat copia tanta tamen.  
 Adveniunt mimi, venit istrion, ludia presto est  
 Femina: quos inter nanus et unus adest.<sup>5</sup>

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comites tantis discumbere mensis: / hic celebrat thalamos, pulcra Ariadna, tuos. / Non cernis vitam geminataque  
 gaudia sentis? / Grata, puer, duplica pocula: Bacchus adest!"

<sup>4</sup> Cruciani, 160.

<sup>5</sup> Corvisieri, Part II, 675, citing ms. Vat. Urbin. n. 707 menre., sec. XV, a c. 14, ll. 179-204.

## APPENDIX 2

**Lorenzo de' Medici's "Canzona di Bacco"**

(quoted from Bowra, "Songs of Dance and Carnival, pp. 351-352):

Quant'è bella giovanezza,  
che si fugge tuttavia!  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.

Quest'è Bacco e Arianna,  
belli, e l'un dell'altro ardenti:  
perché'l tempo fugge e inganna,  
sempre insieme stan contenti.  
Queste ninfe ed altri genti  
sono allegre tuttavia  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.

Questi lieti satiretti,  
delle ninfe innamorati,  
per caverne e per boschetti  
han lor posto cento agguati;  
or da Bacco riscaldati,  
ballon, salton tuttavia.  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.

Queste ninfe anche hanno caro  
da lor esser ingannate:  
non può fare a Amor riparo,  
se non gente rozze e ingrate:  
ora insieme mescolate  
suonan, canton tuttavia.  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
di doman non c'è certezza.

Questa soma, che vien drieto  
sopra l'asino, è Sileno:  
cosí vecchio è ebbro e lieto,  
giá di carne e d'anni pieno;  
se non può star ritto, almeno  
ride e gode tuttavia.  
Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:

di doman non c'è certezza.

Mida vien drieto a costoro:  
 ciò che tocca, oro diventa.  
 E che giova aver tesoro,  
 s'altri poi non si contenta?  
 Che dolcezza vuoi che senta  
 chi ha sete tuttavia?  
 Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
 di doman non c'è certezza.

Ciascun apra ben gli orecchi,  
 di doman nessun si paschi;  
 oggi sian, giovani e vecchi,  
 lieti ognun, femmine e maschi;  
 ogni tristo pensier caschi:  
 facciam festa tuttavia.  
 Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
 di doman non c'è certezza.

Donne e giovinetti amanti,  
 viva Bacco e viva Amore!  
 Ciascun suoni, balli e canti  
 arda di dolcezza il core!  
 Non fatica, non dolore!  
 Ciò c'ha a esser, convien sia.  
 Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:  
 di doman non c'è certezza.

#### Translation

(in *The Penguin Book of Italian Verse*, ed. George Kay [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968], 142-145):

“How lovely youth is that ever flies!  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow.

This is Bacchus and Ariadne, fair,  
 and each burning for the other:  
 because time flies and deceives,  
 they always stay together in happiness.  
 These nymphs and other people are always merry.  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow.

These glad little satyrs are in love with the nymphs,

and have laid a hundred ambushes for them in caves and woods:  
 now, heated by Bacchus,  
 they keep up their dancing and their leaping.  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow.

These nymphs would fain be tricked by them:  
 no one can guard against Love but uncouth, ungrateful people:  
 now mingling together,  
 they play instruments and sing always.  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty about tomorrow.

This load who comes behind them upon an ass is Silenus:  
 so old and drunk and glad,  
 and full, by now, of years and meat:  
 if he cannot stand upright,  
 at least he laughs and has enjoyment still.  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow.

Midas comes after these:  
 whatever he touches turns to gold.  
 What point is there in having treasure,  
 if it does not make you happy?  
 What sweet pleasure do you imagine a man has who is always thirsty?  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow.

Let every one open their ears wide:  
 let no one feed on tomorrow;  
 let every one, young and old, women and men,  
 be glad this very day;  
 banish every sad thought,  
 let us keep perpetual holiday.  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow.

Women and young lovers,  
 long live Bacchus and long live Love!  
 Let each one play, and dance, and sing!  
 Let the heart burn with sweetness!  
 Neither labour, nor grief!  
 What is to happen needs must be.  
 Let him be glad who will be:  
 there is no certainty in tomorrow”