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# Alessandro Moretto and the Decomposition of the Painter's Art in Renaissance Brescia

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# Alessandro Moretto and the Decomposition of the Painter's Art in Renaissance Brescia

## **Abstract**

The religious paintings of Alessandro Moretto, also known as Moretto da Brescia, have endured a mixed reception from modern art historians. Certain of his paintings are routinely praised for their supposedly unaffected naturalism and their attention to the mundane details of lived experience, while many more of his altarpieces, chapel laterals, and domestic religious images have been criticized for their compositional incoherence and their overly obvious references to other artworks. Through four focused case studies covering the full extent of his career and including both domestic and liturgical images, this dissertation interrogates the relationship between Moretto's compositional disintegration and the subject matter of the pictures where this lack of integrity is most pronounced. Moretto's images concerning Christ's body frequently pursued a strategy of pictorial incoherence that forcefully separated the recognition and interpretation of Christ's physical form from a painting's perceived ability to make absent bodies present for a beholder. In each of the cases examined, Moretto is shown to have set his pictures in opposition to one or more images—often well-known monuments of High Renaissance art—in which pictorial integrity signaled a potentially problematic relationship between the image and its maker. Contemporary publications that encouraged the discontinuous reorganization of an authored text are also identified as having encouraged the piecemeal appearance of Moretto's highly referential pictures. Moretto's fractured compositions distanced his paintings from the creative activities of nature and of God, making the works unsuitable as proxies for bodies but allowing them to facilitate a more complex contemplation of Christ's body and its meaning in the era of pre-Tridentine Catholic reform.

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ALESSANDRO MORETTO AND THE DECOMPOSITION OF THE PAINTER'S  
ART IN RENAISSANCE BRESCIA

Kirk Nickel

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Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

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ALESSANDRO MORETTO AND THE DECOMPOSITION OF THE PAINTER'S  
ART IN RENAISSANCE BRESCIA

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To my parents

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## ABSTRACT

ALESSANDRO MORETTO AND THE DECOMPOSITION OF THE PAINTER'S  
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Kirk Nickel

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The religious paintings of Alessandro Moretto, also known as Moretto da Brescia, have endured a mixed reception from modern art historians. Certain of his paintings are routinely praised for their supposedly unaffected naturalism and their attention to the mundane details of lived experience, while many more of his altarpieces, chapel laterals, and domestic religious images have been criticized for their compositional incoherence and their overly obvious references to other artworks. Through four focused case studies covering the full extent of his career and including both domestic and liturgical images, this dissertation interrogates the relationship between Moretto's compositional disintegration and the subject matter of the pictures where this lack of integrity is most pronounced. Moretto's images concerning Christ's body frequently pursued a strategy of pictorial incoherence that forcefully separated the recognition and interpretation of Christ's physical form from a painting's perceived ability to make absent bodies present for a beholder. In each of the cases examined, Moretto is shown to have set his pictures in opposition to one or more images—often well-known monuments of High Renaissance art—in which pictorial integrity signaled a potentially problematic relationship between the image and its maker. Contemporary publications that encouraged the discontinuous reorganization of an authored text are also identified as having encouraged the piecemeal appearance of Moretto's highly referential pictures. Moretto's fractured compositions distanced his paintings from the creative activities of nature and of God, making the works unsuitable as proxies for bodies but allowing them to facilitate a more complex contemplation of Christ's body and its meaning in the era of pre-Tridentine Catholic reform.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction: How Painters Form Paintings

Throughout his *Dialogue on Painting*, published in Venice in 1548, Paolo Pino has his characters Fabio and Lauro reiterate that painting's defining quality is its imitation of "nature in its surface aspects."<sup>1</sup> However, once the pair begin their *paragone* of painting and sculpture—where a reader might expect painting's capacity to imitate surface details to take precedence—Fabio opens with an observation that departs from the imitation of appearances and begins to touch upon the ontology of the painted image. Painting's superiority, Fabio asserts here, is a consequence of its ability to incorporate superficial appearances into a larger coherent entity: painting, unlike sculpture, *integrates* the parts of "the whole composite carnal form" it portrays.<sup>2</sup> "The sculptor," he elaborates, "never forms the thing he makes in the proper way that things are formed, as we [painters] do."<sup>3</sup> Painting alone "builds within the figure," following nature's own course.<sup>4</sup>

Because when a painter forms a figure, he begins at the center, and this is something nature teaches from the order of its operations, for nature proceeds from simple things to complex ones. First the cadaver is framed, following anatomical principles; then it is covered with flesh, and the veins, ligaments, and members are defined, using true means to consolidate the figure to a point of integrated perfection. But the sculptor proceeds backwards, in reverse like Hebrew writing, and thus performs his art the other way around from

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Pardo, "Paolo Pino's 'Dialogo di Pittura': A Translation with Commentary," Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1984, 331. Pino's characters articulate variations of this idea throughout the text; see, for instance, 301, 303, 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 360-61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 362

nature...[S]o it is that [painters] grow their figures while [sculptors] diminish theirs.<sup>5</sup>

Two aspects of Fabio's monologue are especially striking. First, the account reduces the art of painting to the specific act of fashioning a human figure. And second, it begins by comparing painting to the creative processes of nature and ends by setting the art in opposition to the (supposed) backwardness of Hebrew script. Under Fabio's description, painting's additive fabrication amounts to organic growth: beginning from a notional center, the painter applies an increasing quantity of material, and the creature swells into reality. In this way, Pino aligns painting with the creative, self-generating capacity of nature that natural philosophers since the Middle Ages had referred to as *natura naturans*, nature naturing.<sup>6</sup> This creative side of nature had long been identified with God's creativity, and Pino in turn suggests that painting also is a creative act that enjoys divine (Christian) privilege. Just as painting is superior to the backward methods of the sculptor, painting is also the antipode to the Hebrew language, the medium of the

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<sup>5</sup> This passage follows Pardo's translation, 362, in almost all respects, though I have translated certain words, such as "riducendo" and "accregono," in ways that show their participation in Pino's overarching metaphor of organic growth. Pino's Italian in *Dialogo di Pittura* (Gherardo, 1548), 25v-26r, reads as follows: "State à udire. Lo scultore non mai forma quella cosa, ch'egli fà al modo diritto di formare, come facciam noi, imperò che quando uno pittore forma una figura, egli precipia dal centro, & ce l'insegna la natura nell'ordine del suo operare, la qual comincia dalle cose semplici, & vien poi alle miste. Si ordisce prima il cadavero per modo anothomico, poscia si cuopre di carne, distinguendo le vene, le legature, & le membra, riducendolo per li veri meggi [mezzi] alla sua integra p[er]fettione, mà lo scultore v[er]o retrogradando alla rebuffa, come ritto Hebraico nello scrivere, & così opera l'arte all'opposito della natura, possiamo dire, che tant'è la scultura inferior alla pittura, quanto è differentia dall'arte alla natura, & non fabrica mai nella figura, ma nella superficie della pietra, la qual vien à poco à poco tanto scemata, & tagliata dal maestro, ch'egli ritrova la figura intesa da lui, si che li accrescono, & loro diminuiscono. Non so voi m'intendete."

<sup>6</sup> On the Renaissance equations of the artist's creative powers with *natura naturans* and furthermore to God, see Jan Bialostocki, "The Renaissance Concept of Nature and Antiquity," in *The Renaissance and Mannerism. Studies in Western Art. Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art*, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), 19-30.



Old Law. That is to say, Pino suggests that painting can triumph over both sculpture and Judaism because painting is an act of materialization, an incarnation.

When Renaissance writers discussed the relative merits of painting and sculpture, they tended to treat the former as an art of two dimensions, or even as an art of mental concepts that required no physical instantiation.<sup>7</sup> Set within such an exchange, Pino's description of painting as an act of materialization is extraordinary. Still, his premise was far from unprecedented. Iconophiles attempting to justify the use of religious images during the eighth-century Byzantine iconoclastic debates, and for centuries afterward, had argued that the material fabrication of Christ's image was not only permissible but even a necessary act acknowledging his Incarnation.<sup>8</sup> In recent years, scholars have recognized the fundamental contribution these medieval debates made to Renaissance European ideas about the nature of images and the powers wielded by their makers.<sup>9</sup> As Hans Belting has asserted, the iconophiles' argument had reached a logical, if perhaps

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<sup>7</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *On painting*, trans. Cecil Grayson (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 88, claimed that the primary virtue of the *historia* lay in the painter's invention of it: "Indeed, invention is such that even by itself and without pictorial representation it can give pleasure." Later, Leonardo da Vinci would praise painting above sculpture on the grounds that painting was primarily a labor of the mind, see Claire J. Farrago *Leonard da Vinci's Paragone. A Critical Interpretation with a New Edition of the Text in the Codex Urbino*. (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 256-57. For further comment of the rhetorical nature of this distinction and its distance from the practices of Renaissance artists, see Michael W. Cole, *Cellini and the Principles of Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), esp. 1-14.

<sup>8</sup> For an analysis of and further bibliography on this line of justification, see Herbert L. Kessler, "'Thou Shalt Paint the Likeness of Christ Himself': The Mosaic Prohibition as Provocation for Christian Images," in *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 29-52.

<sup>9</sup> Foremost among these studies, despite their divergent opinions on the importance of irrationality in humans' responses to images, are Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A Study of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), and David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989).

unforeseen, end “when it was no longer the incarnation of God that became elucidated by the image, but the image explained with the help of the Incarnation...”<sup>10</sup>

Renaissance accounts of painters’ divine capacity for creation are numerous, and many were well-known in their own day.<sup>11</sup> By around 1400 in Italy, the painter’s God-like creativity appeared in Cennino Cennini’s manual for aspiring painters, which begins with a prologue that defines the painter’s brief as the discovery of “things not seen” and sets that task in relation to God’s own *ex nihilo* creation.<sup>12</sup> Leon Battista Alberti soon would claim for the painter the “truly divine power” to “make the absent present,” and his description of the painter as “another God” would find reformulation in Leonardo’s assertion that the painter was “lord and god” of whatever he wished to materialize from his imagination.<sup>13</sup> Lodovico Ariosto seems to have been the first to apply the moniker “divine” to Michelangelo (*Michel più che mortal Angel divino*), and this assertion Pietro Aretino would leverage in his further adulation of the Florentine, who “held within his hands a second nature,” even as Aretino assured his readers that Titian wielded a “divine brush.”<sup>14</sup> Albrecht Dürer, too, acknowledged the artist’s divine creativity, a claim that he expressed with special force in assimilating his own features to the traditional form of Christ as Salvator Mundi in his 1500 *Self-Portrait*.<sup>15</sup> For the generation of painters that

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<sup>10</sup> Belting, 153.

<sup>11</sup> In addition to Bialostocki, see Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist: A Historical Experiment* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1979), 38-60.

<sup>12</sup> Cennino d’Andrea Cennini, *The Craftsman’s Handbook: The Italian “Il Libro dell’Arte”*, trans. Daniel V. Thompson, Jr. (New York: Dover, 1960), 1-2.

<sup>13</sup> Alberti, 60; Farrago, 194-95.

<sup>14</sup> These and other Renaissance ascriptions of artistic divinity factor into Stephen Campbell’s analysis of this trope and the contrary impulse that arose in the 1510s and 1520s; see that author’s, “*Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva: Michelangelo, Rosso, and the (Un)Divinity of Art*,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (December 2002): 596-620.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1993), 63-138. Margaret A. Sullivan, “Alter Apelles: Dürer’s 1500 Self-Portrait,”

followed, however, the equation of artifice and divine creation was not always a desirable, or even acceptable, goal.

This dissertation examines the religious images of the North Italian painter Alessandro Moretto, also known as Moretto da Brescia (born Alessandro Bonvicino, ca. 1498-1554), an artist whose pictures both strike out against the conception of the painter as a creator and refute the notion that a painting is an integral whole. Paolo Pino was Moretto's contemporary and the pupil of Moretto's fellow Brescian, Gian Gerolamo Savoldo. And what makes Pino's explanation of painting as an act of God-like creation and organic growth especially interesting for the present study of Moretto's art is neither Pino's claim of its novelty nor its recognizable conventionality in its time, but the fact that even as Pino wrote, the issue he discussed was an open polemic. Several decades before Pino wrote his dialog, the assertion that ambitious painting consisted in the formation of integral, whole bodies had come under scrutiny and visual resistance, even among those very artists who garnered reputations as unique creators.

Around the turn of the sixteenth century, a fault line had appeared between Leonardo and Michelangelo on the issue of the whole, circumscribed body.<sup>16</sup> Leonardo viewed contour lines as detrimental to a painting's optical truth; a line that bounded a figure was "not part of the body...nor...part of the air surrounding that body," and Leonardo's development of *sfumatura* has been understood by most modern writer as his

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*Renaissance Quarterly* 68 (2015): 1161-91, has recently disputed the claim that Dürer's primary model for the self-portrait was the Salvator Mundi tradition, though her rejection of its impact on the painting is perhaps too strong.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Cole, *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2015), 31-81, provides an extensive analysis of the two artists' attitudes toward the circumscription of figures.

way of eliminating this extraneous pictorial artifact.<sup>17</sup> Leonardo's suppression of contours opposed Michelangelo's investment in those same lines, which he seems to have understood to imbue his figures with a powerfully constrained vitality. For Michelangelo the bounding line registered a figure's animate existence, which he described, through reference to his sculptural activity, as placing "in hard, alpine stone a living figure."<sup>18</sup> But while Michelangelo saw his pronounced contours as reifying and animating the bodies they surrounded, Leonardo admonished artists that when "making their figures whole (*per fare le figure intere*), they ruin their compositions."<sup>19</sup> Even for artists who avowed the near-divinity of the painter's creativity, the integrity of the painted figure was problematic.

With the significant exception of the altarpiece examined in this dissertation's final chapter, Moretto did not primarily seek to disintegrate depicted bodies, as Leonardo advised. Rather, from about the middle of the 1520s onward, Moretto regularly pursued compositional strategies that undermined the notion of the painted image's body-like integration. His mature works frequently appear as discontinuous compilations, and even modern scholars interested in promoting Moretto's reputation have censured his pictures

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<sup>17</sup> *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. 1, ed. Jean-Paul Richter (London: Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883), 29: "Li termini delli corpi sono la minima cosa di tutte le cose provasi essere vero quel che si propone, perchè il termine della chosa è vna superfittie, la qual non è parte del corpo uestito di tal superfittie, nè è parte dell'aria circu(n)datricie d'esso corpo ma'l mezzo interposto infra l'aria e'l corpo come a suo loco è provato; Ma li termini laterali d'essi corpi è la linia termine della superfittie, la qual linia è di grossezza invisibile; adu(n)que tu pittore no(n) circu(n)dare li tua corpi di linie..." For a consideration of this comment in relation to *sfumatura*, see Alexander Nagel, "Leonardo and *sfumato*," *RES* 24 (autumn 1993): 7-20, esp. 11.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Ryan, ed. and trans., *Michelangelo: The Poems* (London: J. M. Dent, 1996), 140: "Sì come per levar, donna, si pone in pietra alpestra e dura una viva figura, che là più cresce u' più la pietra scema;..."

<sup>19</sup> This translation follows Cole, *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure*, 57. For Leonardo's original text, see *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. 1, 291: "Del comporre storie; del non riguardare le membra delle figure nelle storie come molti fanno che per fare le figure intere guastano i componimenti."

for being conspicuously composite, at times “puzzle”-like.<sup>20</sup> This tendency to fracture the picture’s unity is all the more fascinating for the fact that much of Moretto’s production aimed to convey truths about real, historical bodies, especially the incarnate body of Christ. This dissertation takes it as a significant fact that Moretto’s dismantling of pictorial unity often became most pronounced when a painting’s subject most clearly addressed the nature and the accessibility of Christ’s body.

While all of the cases studied in the following chapters center on pictures that concern Christ’s physical form, it may be helpful here to consider an especially demonstrative example of Moretto’s work in this dis-integrating mode. The *Virgin Adoring the Christ Child* exists in two autograph versions, both painted in the 1520s (figure 1).<sup>21</sup> Framed by a masonry arch, the kneeling Virgin dominates the picture’s shallow space. In front of her, on the ground, lies the Christ Child, and next to him sits a broken fragment of a stone arch, roughly identical in size to the infant. Behind this trio, a patchwork of architectural remnants rises nearly to the upper limit of the canvas, permitting the slightest view onto the upper storey of Brescia’s own centrally planned church of Santa Maria in Solario. In its combination of wooden and stone structures from various periods in time, the setting recalls the innumerable scenes of Christ’s adoration in the stable at Bethlehem, where toppled antique architecture might symbolize the ancient rulers whose power Christ’s advent has overthrown.<sup>22</sup> But Moretto’s architectural bricolage so consumes the beholder’s field of vision that it becomes difficult to interpret

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<sup>20</sup> Barbara Maria Savy, “Moretto and Romanino per la confraternità del Corpo di Cristo nel Duomo di Brescia: i cicli decorativi e un gonfalone perduto,” *Prospettiva*, nos. 110-111 (Apr.-July, 2003), 109.

<sup>21</sup> Pier Virgilio Begni Redona, *Il Moretto. Alessandro Bonvicino da Brescia* (Brescia: Banca San Paolo di Brescia, 1988), cat. no. 18, 130-31, and cat no. 41, 234-35.

<sup>22</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1953), 134-37, who interprets the ruins as a symbol of a supplanted order.

the mounting stratigraphy as disguised symbolism. This dissolving screen of incoherent parts, instead, functions on a structural level of meaning, presenting the physical order—especially those physical objects worked by humans, like the painting itself—as transient and unstable.

Moretto's pictures announce themselves as insufficient substitutes for the bodies they represent, but the paintings' physicality and their portrayal of materials are often used as analogies to characterize those absent bodies. For instance, that fragmentary backdrop behind the adoring Virgin is a foil for the whole, fully integrated bodies of Christ and his mother. At the same time, however, the arch fragment that has fallen to the ground interjects itself into the intimate exchange between the two figures. In its placement, size, and equivalent proximity to the Virgin, that fragment is *like* the body of the Christ Child. Cleaved open and exposing its raw interior matter, the fragment lies next to the infant and offers a profoundly tangible analog for the recent materialization of God within the physical order and that new body's ineluctable connection to the matrix of the Virgin's own flesh.

My description of Moretto's paintings as thoughtfully disintegrated images focuses attention on disruptive aspects of his work that modern scholars have frequently observed but have rarely considered to be strategic. The dominant twentieth-century view of Moretto's career was that of a painter whose primary contribution was his adherence to nature and the mundane details of everyday life. It was readily acknowledged that his production passed through phases when stilted Mannerist imitation overwhelmed this central pursuit of reality, but the importance of his overtly artificial compositions were

downplayed in favor of those pictures that might confirm Moretto's capacity to eschew artifice altogether.

The argument for Moretto's special contribution as a Brescian naturalist was first proposed by Roberto Longhi in several still-influential articles from the first decades of the previous century.<sup>23</sup> Seeking to explain the revolutionary pictorial realism of Caravaggio, Longhi identified the source of that realism in late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century Brescia, in the works of Vincenzo Foppa, Savoldo, and Moretto. These "forerunners" of Caravaggio, Longhi proposed, possessed an inherent aptitude for rendering the effects of natural light and for attending to the unpretentious details of lived experience. In his introduction to the important 1953 exhibition *I pittori della realtà in Lombardia*, Longhi would go so far as to claim that this aptitude revealed itself in "an approachable simplicity, a penetrating attention, a certain calm faith in their ability to express directly the 'reality' around them, without stylizing mediation."<sup>24</sup> Few today would support without qualification Longhi's claim of an inherent regional aptitude or the potential of a painting to present an unmediated view of reality, though his ideas have been invaluable for subsequent scholars who have explored the ways Renaissance Lombard painters sought to replicate the optical effects of nature in their pictures of mundane reality and sacred history.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Roberto Longhi, "Cose bresciane del Cinquecento," *L'Arte* 20, no. 2-3 (May 31, 1917): 99-114; Longhi "Quesiti caravaggeschi. II.—I precedenti," *Pinacoteca* 1 (March-June 1929): 258-320.

<sup>24</sup> Roberto Longhi, "Dal Moroni a Ceruti," in Renata Cipriani and Giovanni Testori, *I pittori della realtà in Lombardia*, exh. cat. (Milan: Palazzo Reale, 1953), ii.

<sup>25</sup> Important in this regard is Andrea Bayer, ed., *Painters of Reality: The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), which draws extensively on Longhi's legacy of critical thought while also expanding and usefully complicating his definitions by including other relevant Lombard painters into its analyses.

Turning decisively toward social history in the 1970s and 1980s, the study of Moretto's paintings during these years became increasingly attentive to patronage and the role of Brescia's civic and religious institutions. A provincial Venetian city located closer to Milan than to the lagoon, Brescia's religious initiatives were often motivated by local interests arising within wealthy lay confraternities and by the actions of local-born vicars, who occupied the see in place of the city's frequently absent Venetian-born bishops.<sup>26</sup> Moretto himself was a lifelong member of the cathedral's confraternity of the Holy Sacrament, and scholars have related his pictures' subject matter to his own (largely surmised) devotional activities and the official priorities of Brescia's religious and lay institutions. The most comprehensive of these studies, Valerio Guazzoni's *Moretto. Il tema sacro*, was the first major study to attempt to connect Moretto's paintings to their devotional contexts by attending to the scriptures, commentaries, liturgies, and orthodox beliefs that were intended to regulate thought and behavior in those spaces.<sup>27</sup> More recently, Barbara Maria Savy's "*Manducatio per visum.*" *Temi eucaristici nella pittura di Romanino e Moretto* has followed a similar method in seeking to explain the imagery painted by Moretto and Romanino for the two most lavishly decorated Eucharist chapels in Brescia, that in the cathedral and that in San Giovanni Evangelista.<sup>28</sup> The histories of these two programs are complex, and Savy's extensive research into the original

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<sup>26</sup> On Brescia's civic and religious history during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see especially Stephen D. Bowd, "*Venice's Most Loyal City*": *Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 2010), and Giovanni Treccani degli Alfieri, ed., *Storia di Brescia. II. La dominazione veneta (1426-1575)* (Brescia: Banca S. Paolo, 1961).

<sup>27</sup> Valerio Guazzoni, *Moretto. Il tema sacro* (Brescia: Grafo, 1981). Also, the same author's "Temi religiosi e contenuti devozionali", in Mina Gregori, ed., *Pittura del Cinquecento a Brescia* (Milan: Cassa di Risparmio delle Province Lombarde, 1986), 17-31.

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Maria Savy, "*Manducatio per visum.*" *Temi eucaristici nella pittura di Romanino e Moretto* (Padua: Bertoncetto artigrafiche, 2006).



locations and arrangements of the chapel spaces, the membership of these sodalities, and the theological priorities that each organization promoted has greatly increased our knowledge of the circumstances that occasioned these two monuments of Brescian painting.

Focus on the role of local institutions in Moretto's activity has brought considerable light to the kinds of organizations he painted for, but it has also incurred certain costs. The peculiarities of Moretto's compositions very often have gone unaddressed in the effort to connect his paintings' nominal subjects to official texts and orthodox patterns of belief. This has resulted in the marginalization of the perceived eccentricities in his pictures, as had happened in the style-focused scholarship of the previous decades. To a large extent, the effort to explain Moretto's artistic production (and that of his Brescian contemporaries) by concentrating inquiry on a circumscribed set of local factors has insulated his paintings from interpretation within the larger context of Renaissance European art-making.

Only very recently have scholars begun to investigate Moretto's religious pictures for the ways they register local Brescian concerns about image-making with regard to transregional debates over the status of images and the authority of the artist. Stephen Campbell has returned to the topic of Brescian painters' pronounced naturalism to reevaluate their strategic deployment of artifice.<sup>29</sup> He argues persuasively that Savoldo, Romanino, and Moretto sought out optical and compositional means to place their pictures outside the visual economy of poetic invention and imitation that underpinned

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<sup>29</sup> Stephen J. Campbell, "Renaissance Naturalism and the Jewish Bible: Ferrara, Brescia, Bergamo, 1520-1540," in Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg, eds., *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 291-327.

the work of painters like Titian and Raphael, artists who would become pillars of the “modern manner” later articulated by Giorgio Vasari. By circumventing the appearance of this still-incipient manner, grounded in “the systematic imitation of other art, the pursuit of ideal beauty, and a self-conscious command of the resources of style,” these Brescian painters’ “sacred naturalism” aspired to a representational mode that might more closely resemble the perfect representational economy of the consecrated Eucharistic host, dispensing with conspicuous invention and artful imitation.

Campbell’s insightful analysis offers a new direction for the study of Brescian pictorial style, though it will take time to gauge whether its nuance sways the pervasive understanding of these painter’s innate hold on representational truth. A profound consequence of the attention to and belief in the unstudied truthfulness of Moretto’s naturalism has been the bifurcation of his artistic production into two distinct parts. Those paintings that are judged optically persuasive have been praised and routinely incorporated into exhibitions of North Italian painting, while those that exhibit sustained attention to the art of other painters have been condemned for their weakness of conception and have even been put forward as evidence of a crisis in Moretto’s career, especially during the 1530s and 1540s.<sup>30</sup> As a result of this perceived division in his output, Moretto has come to appear as a painter who either copied nature directly and without style, or else imitated the art of his contemporaries without being able to master their motifs and without knowing much about the critical contexts from which they

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<sup>30</sup> See especially Alessandro Ballarin, “La cappella del Sacramento nella chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista a Brescia” (based on oral presentations made between 1988 and 1990), in Ballarin, *La “Salomè” del Romanino ed altri studi sulla pittura bresciana del cinquecento*, I, ed. Barbara Maria Savy (Padua: Bertoncetto Artigrafiche, 2006), 157-194.

originated. This perceived lack of artistic intentionality has reinforced the perception that Moretto's paintings passively acquired whatever innovations reached his corner of Europe's cultural periphery from artistic centers such as Venice and Rome.<sup>31</sup> When we turn our attention to Moretto's deliberate and highly intentional practice of pictorial composition, it becomes clear that he possessed a sophisticated understanding of the art of Venice and Rome and also harbored concerns over the potential of the "modern manner" to interfere with the beholder's ability to recognize and consistently direct his or her veneration toward the proper object of devotion.

The four chapters that follow examine works that span the period from Moretto's early maturity to his final completed work, roughly the three decades from around 1525 until his death in 1554. Each chapter centers on a small number of paintings, either a single work or a few programmatically related works from a single context. While Moretto's impulse to fragment, dissolve, and recombine the picture's surface carries through all of these cases, it has been important to focus attention on a few important paintings in order to attend closely to the subtle but crucial links between these pictures and the cultural material that Moretto drew upon. To explain Moretto's disintegration of the painted picture, these case studies identify the pictorial and textual models that informed his compositional choices. The religious images that Moretto imitated, emulated, and critiqued in his own paintings were well-known to his audience, and most of those pictures will be familiar even to readers who are not specialists of Renaissance Italy. The textual models that Moretto used will be far less familiar. In those instances

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<sup>31</sup> For a still fundamental analysis of the center-periphery dynamic in Italy, see Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, "Centro e periferia," in Giovanni Previtali, ed., *Storia dell'arte italiana. Questioni e metodi, pt. 1. Materiali e problemi, vol. I, Questioni e metodi* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979), 283-352.

when I have identified a specific text or literary genre that Moretto engaged in his paintings, these frequently represent modes of writing and reading that intentionally complicated, even subverted, a dominant mode of literary creation or philological interpretation that sought stable, unified wholes. Although the frequent inscriptions in Moretto's paintings have been considered indicative of a proto-Counter-Reformation impulse, we will see that when Moretto used inscriptions in his paintings, these texts were rarely intended as simple labels of the picture's subject matter. They were meant to be edifying, but they typically demanded the beholder's engagement with multiple levels of meaning and, frequently, with erudite intertextual associations.

The first of these case studies, Chapter Two takes up Moretto's fresco decoration for a room, likely a semi-private studio, in the residence of Mattia Ugoni, Brescia's acting bishop from 1519 until 1535. Ugoni was Moretto's most frequent patron during the years of the painter's early maturity, and this chapter finds in the studio's visual program a collaborative effort between cleric and painter that deeply affected Moretto's subsequent approach toward the composition of religious images. The program featured a central ceiling fresco of *Moses before the Burning Bush* and ten spandrel images of prophets bearing scrolls with illegible Arabic and Hebrew script. I have identified the gibberish inscriptions held by the prophets as fragmentary excerpts from an early printed psalter, and it is now possible to recognize that the cycle of prophets, like the narrative scene above, addresses the mystery of Christ's Incarnation and the divinely-ordained process of revealing sacred truth through physical manifestation. The room's decoration

spurs contemplation on the opacity of images and the need to work through and beyond them to obtain full revelation.

The third chapter moves out of the private environment of the bishop's studio to consider Moretto's *Massacre of the Innocents*, originally situated next the pulpit in the nave of the church of San Giovanni Evangelista. The documentary record surrounding the commission and early years of the altarpiece is not thick, but even so it is among the most descriptive for any of Moretto's paintings. A holistic reading of these documents suggests that the Casari family commissioned the image to serve as the centerpiece of a family mortuary shrine, and this insight allows us to compare the complex to the similar, if far more grandiose, initiative by Altobello Averoldi that occasioned Titian's *Resurrection* polyptych. At issue in the *Massacre of the Innocents* is the efficacy of the religious image to move the beholder to pious prayer for the souls of the dead and to an understanding of the body of Christ that is not constrained by the physical limitations of the painting. This was an especially challenging task within the context of a subject famous for its display of tortured bodies. In Moretto's hands, the beholder's desire to view this infanticide becomes a part of the painting's subject matter, as the image also refers to and inverts well-known images by Raphael, Titian, and Vincenzo Foppa. The picture was described by a local seventeenth-century writer as a "jumble" (*miscuglio*), and the altarpiece pursues a pictorial strategy that belied the presumed clarity—both visual and ideological—of some of Brescia's most revered images, as well as its ancient Roman heritage.

Chapter Four centers on a pair of large narrative scenes that Moretto painted for the chapel of the Holy Sacrament at San Giovanni Evangelista. *Elijah and the Angel* and *The Gathering of Manna* were long thought to pertain to Moretto's activity of the early 1520s, until Alessandro Ballarin persuasively redated them to the years around 1543-1545.<sup>32</sup> These works have epitomized for recent art historians Moretto's troubling Mannerism. By attending closely to the paintings' citations of imagery from prints and painting, as well as to Pietro Aretino's recently published comments on those same visual sources, it is evident that Moretto's selections of figures and motifs were not absent-mindedly perpetuating a fashionable style but rather staging style itself for the beholder's consideration. Together, the two paintings set the hermetic persona of Michelangelo and his art against the sociability and imitative prowess that was held to be essential to the art of Raphael and his circle. The dating of the paintings to the 1540s also allows for a reconsideration of Moretto's artistic milieu in the years leading up to their production. I propose that the literary genre of the *cento*, reinvigorated in just these years by a poet known to Moretto, can help us to understand the superabundance of artistic reference in these pictures as something other than rote imitation. Ultimately, the patchwork composition that characterizes these paintings allows their painter to occupy the role of a compiler rather than that of an author, allowing the paintings to be brought into being—begotten—rather than feature Moretto's own inventive faculties.

The final chapter turns to a late moment in Moretto's career, when we can observe him exploring the viability of "un-making" as a painterly act. Executed for a flagellant confraternity dedicated to the ideal of bodily mortification, Moretto's

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<sup>32</sup> Ballarin, 192-93.

*Entombment* of 1554 makes a theme of Christ's willful decomposition in death. The causes of Christ's death were a theological concern, but they were also a preoccupation of the artist who needed to depict Christ's dead body properly. Taking seriously Moretto's awkward depiction of Christ, the chapter explains his unusual handling of the figure as an attempt to align his art-making with the theological truth that Christ had not been made to die, but had chosen instead to dissolve himself for humanity's benefit. The notion of martyrdom as bodily dissolution was one that Moretto had addressed before. But in this final painting, the dissolving body assumed a polemical stance against growing critical attention given to the artfully wrought figure, whose thoughtful design and overt facture, Moretto concluded, had no place in the representation of the dead Christ.

## Chapter Two

### Illegibility and Divine Revelation in Bishop Ugoni's Studio

...Origen, and many others along with him, have seized the occasion of torturing Scripture, in every possible manner, away from the true sense. They concluded that the literal sense is too mean and poor, and that, under the outer bark of the letter, there lurk deeper mysteries...For many centuries no man was considered to be ingenious, who had not the skill and daring necessary for changing into a variety of curious shapes the sacred word of God....Scripture, they say, is fertile, and thus gives birth to a variety of meanings.<sup>33</sup>

—John Calvin, *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 1548

Around 1525 Mattia Ugoni (1446-1535), Brescia's vicar, arranged for Moretto to decorate the studio in his private residence. Officially the Bishop of Famagusta (Cyprus), Ugoni had led a peripatetic professional life, traveling extensively both in western Europe and the eastern Mediterranean rim. He had been born to the Brescian nobility, but he had

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<sup>33</sup> The epigraph comes from Calvin's commentary on Galatians, published in both Latin and French versions in 1548. My translation largely follows that found in *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1854), 135. The Latin reads: "...inde occasionem arripuit Origenes, et cum eo permulti alii, scripturae a genuino sensu huc illuc torquendae. Sic enim colligebant, literalem sensum nimis humilem esse et abiectum: latere igitur sub literae cortice altiora mysteria, quae non aliter erui possent quam allegorias cudendo. ... Neminem siquidem multis saeculis ingeniosum putarunt, nisi qui subtiliter transfigurare sacrosanctum Dei verbum sciret ac auderet. ... Scriptura, inquit, foecunda est ideoque multiplices sensus parit." See *Ioannis Calvinii Opera quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 50, ed. G. Baum, A. E. Cunitz, E. Reuss, et al. (Braunschweig: C. A. Schwetschke et filium, 1893), cols. 236-237. The French reads: "...Origene a pris de cecy occasion, et avec luy plusieurs autres, de corrompre l'Escriture en diverses sortes, et la tirer loing de son vray et naturel sens. Car voicy qu'ilz disoyent: que le sens literal estoit trop abiect et contemptible: et que par ce moyen il y avoit de plus hautz secretz cachez souz l'escorce de la lettre: lesquelz on n'eust peu arracher, sinon en forgeant des allegories. ... Et certes il y a desia long temps, qu'on n'a estimé nul estre ingenieux, s'il ne savoit et n'eust esté si hardy d'oser transfigurer la tressainte parolle de Dieu. ... L'Escriture, disent ilz, est fertile: et pour ceste cause elle engendre plusieurs sens et de diverses sortes." See *Commentaire de M. Jean Calvin, sur quatre Epistres de saint Paul : assavoir, aux Galatiens, Ephesiens, Philippiens, Colossiens* (Geneva: Jean Girard, 1548), 155-56.



spent most of his life away from the city, permanently re-establishing his residence there only in the later months of 1519.<sup>34</sup> Moretto's decoration for Ugioni's studio has inspired some art historians to connect the imagery to the bishop's travels near the Levant, but no event in Ugioni's or Moretto's biography can fully explain the complexity or the esoteric quality of the wall paintings.

At the center of the room's program was Moretto's *Moses before the Burning Bush* (figure 2) frescoed on the ceiling and supported by ten spandrels painted with half-length male prophets, each holding an unfurled scroll bearing inscriptions, nine in Arabic and one in Hebrew letters (figures 3-12). No documentation has survived regarding Ugioni's commissioning of the frescos, the major pieces of which were detached in the nineteenth century and now reside in Brescia's Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo. The paintings have been dated on the basis of their style to the middle of the 1520s, and this date accords well with what we know of both men's activities.<sup>35</sup> In 1524, Moretto was just completing his *Last Supper* for the chapel of the Holy Sacrament in San Giovanni Evangelista, and that same year Ugioni was transitioning back to Brescia after a brief tenure as governor of Parma.

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<sup>34</sup> Altobello Averoldi, papal legate to Venice, seems to have called Ugioni from Viterbo back to Brescia in 1519; see Michael M. Tavuzzi, *Renaissance Inquisitors: Dominican Inquisitors and Inquisitorial Districts in Northern Italy, 1474-1527* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 191. By October 4, 1519, Ugioni was in Brescia, where he is recorded as present for the laying of the cornerstone of the new Observant Franciscan church of San Giuseppe, presumably in his new capacity as vicar; see Pietro Emilio Tiboni, *Mattia Ugioni, vescovo di Famagosta*. Memoria letta all'Ateneo di Brescia il 23 luglio 1871 (Brescia: Tipografia Apollonio, 1872), 12, or, more easily accessible, Giovanni Agosti and Paolo Zani, "Sul Moretto in casa Ugioni," in *Il ritorno dei profeti. Un ciclo di affreschi del Moretto per Brescia* (Brescia: Istituto Delfo, 1992), 20.

<sup>35</sup> For the most recent assessment of the paintings' date of execution see Giovanni Agosti's and Carlo Zani's catalogue entry in *Le siècle de Titien: L'âge d'or de la peinture à Venise*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1993), 426-28. Their conclusions are based largely on the determinations of Alessandro Ballarin, who briefly discusses the Ugioni studio paintings at the end of his catalogue entry in the same volume, 423-26. For an overview of the paintings' historiography with attention to the varying dates ascribed to them see Begni Redona, 172-79.

The studio decoration, therefore, came relatively early in the two men's working relationship, which appears to have begun soon after Ugoni's arrival in Brescia. In March of 1520, the bishop went before a meeting of the city's special council to request funds for a new processional banner for the cathedral's confraternity of the Santissimi Crocifissi, the first of several prominent commissions involving Ugoni that would fall to Moretto to execute.<sup>36</sup> Between Ugoni's return to Brescia in 1519 and his death in 1535, his participation can be inferred in no fewer than six of Moretto's major projects during these same years. In addition to the *gonfalone* for the cathedral's confraternity of the Holy Crosses, we can count: the *Madonna of Paitone*, whose shrine Ugoni sanctioned; the *Christ Carrying the Cross* frescoed above Ugoni's mortuary chapel in the church of San Giuseppe; that same chapel's lost altarpiece depicting the Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Matthew; and the *Assumption of the Virgin* for the high altar of one of Brescia's twin cathedrals, a commission that Ugoni as acting bishop must have overseen and that is documented to 1524-1526, contemporaneous with Moretto's frescos for Ugoni's studio. The first five of these commissions were highly visible projects, and most of them can rightly be considered, like the sacrament chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista, part of Brescia's effort at public revitalization following the devastations of foreign occupations during the War of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516) and, according to local reports, decades of laxity toward the maintenance of the city's churches.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Begni Redona, 116.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, the letter of September 1494 from Laura Cereto to Paolo Zane, bishop of Brescia, describing the derelict state of altars and Eucharist cabinets to be found in the city. Agostino Zanelli, "Laura Cereto al vescovo Zane," *Brixia Sacra* XIV (1923): 272-278; the letter is also transcribed in Savy,

When, in 1518, Moretto completed his first documented work, the mounted figures of Saints Faustino and Iovita for the cathedral's organ shutters, he was an up-and-coming talent to be sure, but he was still regarded as the junior colleague of more established Brescian artists, such as the aged Floriano Ferramola, who painted the *Annunciation* on the same shutters' exterior, and Girolamo Romanino, who would serve as the more experienced partner in the pair's decoration of the sacrament chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista from 1521 to 1524. By the end of the 1520s, Moretto stood alone as the dominant painter of religious images in Brescia. It is clear that Moretto's professional rise was aided greatly by his connection to Ugoni; what exactly initiated the two men's association remains more obscure. Much writing about their association either has assumed that the bishop found in Moretto's early pictures a quality sympathetic to his own reformist agenda or has insinuated that Ugoni took Moretto to be a pliant workman whom he could turn to his own interests. Neither of these scenarios has been supported convincingly, although the reality of a sustained bond between the cleric and the painter is evident.

Taking up Moretto's decoration of Ugoni's studio, this chapter explores the concerns shaping the least publicly visible of Moretto's projects for the cleric. We have no historical reports of how Ugoni used this room or who else had access to this semi-private space within his home. Still, the lack of documentary evidence for the project can now be partly ameliorated by the clarification of the ten prophetic scrolls, each bearing an inscription that is illegible but not meaningless. The textual source for these cryptic

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*Manducatio per visum*, 254. On Brescia's city-wide repristination that began in the late 1510s, see especially Andrea Jane Bayer, "Brescia after the League of Cambrai: Moretto, Romanino and the Arts," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1991.

epigrams will be identified below as an early sixteenth-century printed psalter, and this identification profoundly reshapes our understanding of Ugoni's interest in the translation and interpretation of biblical scripture, as well as our understanding of how Moretto's decoration for the studio commented on the theological goals of those activities.

### **A Problem of Seeing, a Problem of Reading**

Moretto's frescos for the studio now exist as eleven individual gallery pictures. Due to the increasing deterioration of the room's vault, the large ceiling image of *Moses before the Burning Bush* and the ten anonymous prophets painted on the room's spandrels were detached and transferred to canvas supports in 1861.<sup>38</sup> In fact, the studio's visual program was even more elaborate than the multi-part conservation effort suggests. While the priority was to preserve Moretto's ceiling narrative and his prophets, the program also featured Moretto's only known grotesque decorations, with these drolleries and a series of fictive marble revetments alternately embellishing the corners of the ten spandrels. The grotesques and the fictive marbles are visible on the ten smaller canvases, although they have been clipped as a result of fitting the triangular spandrels to the rectangular format of the stretched canvases.

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<sup>38</sup> The extraction of the figural imagery from the studio's walls both preserved these portions of the original program and imposed a substantial hindrance to their interpretation. The large *Moses before the Burning Bush* entered Brescia's pinacoteca in the late nineteenth century, while the ten prophets remained in private hands until 1989, going on public exhibition only infrequently during the intervening years. As a result, the spandrel figures have received much less scrutiny than the Moses, and these two major registers of the studio's program have yet to receive a satisfyingly holistic reading. For an overview of the studio frescos and their literature see Begni Redona, 172-79. For the frescos' extraction and the events leading to their entrance into the holdings of the Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia, see the prefatory essays in Agosti and Zani, eds., *Il ritorno dei profeti*.

Additionally, the soffits beneath the spandrels seem to have been richly elaborated not only with extensive vine work but also with what appears to be a stylized rendering of an open book, a six-pointed star, and a shell.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, most of the soffits, like much of the ceiling, have not been fully cleared of the nineteenth-century overpainting that followed the extraction of Moretto's frescos, and those soffits that have been uncovered are heavily damaged. Even so, it is evident that the figural elements of the studio's decoration were imbricated in a set of pictorial relationships that included a range of potentially arcane symbols that remain only partially recovered today.

The most controversial element of the studio decoration has been the female figure rising from the bush. The late medieval iconographic tradition suggests she is the Virgin Mary. Patristic commentators since the fourth century held the Burning Bush to be a figure of the Incarnation, an analogy whereby the bush is understood as the Virgin's body, which remained intact even as it was filled with the consuming spirit of God.<sup>40</sup> Images of the Virgin immersed in the flaming bush, often but not always with the Christ Child, appear from the late twelfth century onward. But Moretto's female figure does not hold her son and she wears a diadem, and these deviations from the traditional type, exemplified for instance in Nicolas Froment's winged altarpiece of 1476 for the

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<sup>39</sup> The photograph of the soffit with the vining and book is reproduced, along with a clarified line rendering, in *Il ritorno dei profeti*, as Tavola XVIII and fig. 17. The six-pointed star and the shell are painted on the soffit between the spandrels that bound the northwest corner of the studio. No photographs of this portion of the decoration have been published.

<sup>40</sup> Gregory of Nyssa seems to have first proposed the analogy. For the late antique exegesis and the late medieval development of the iconography, see Kristen M. Collins, "Visual Piety and Institutional Identity at Sinai," in *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2006), 95-119, esp. 110.

Carmelite church in Aix-en-Provence (figure 13), have led more recent commentators to conclude that she is Ecclesia, the personified Church.<sup>41</sup>

The most thoughtful exponent of the Ecclesia argument has been Valerio Guazzoni, who attempted to bolster his identification with affinities he noted between Moretto's visual description of the narrative and Ugoni's own writings on the embattled state of the Church.<sup>42</sup> For Guazzoni, Ugoni's professed belief that it was the role of Church councils "to remove the brambles, thistles and thorns of heresy, error and schism" (*vepres, tribulos et spinas haeresum, errorum et scismatum extirpat*) explained perfectly why Moretto painted the ceiling as he did: the Church (figured as Ecclesia) is tormented by contemporary religious dissent (the thorny bush) as Ugoni (Moses) acts as a shepherd of the Church, guiding and comforting the flock.

This reading accounts for the major elements of the picture, but it is problematic. To understand the Burning Bush as a symbol of torment not only borders on perverse, but it also would draw the painting into a bitter controversy that Ugoni was unlikely to have wanted to memorialize on the ceiling of his home. Brescians recently had witnessed a horrific succession of human figures atop burning pyres when almost two hundred individuals were executed for witchcraft in Brescia and its dependent communities

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<sup>41</sup> E. Harris, "Mary in the Burning Bush: Nicholas Froment's Triptych at Aix-en-Provence," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 1, no. 4 (April, 1938), 281-6, identified the figure in Moretto's fresco as Mary, an identification based on homiletic associations of the Virgin to the Burning Bush. Harris's identification was followed by Mirella Levi d'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (New York: College Art Association of America, 1957), but discounted by Guazzoni, *Moretto. Il tema sacro*, 27-29, who saw the figure as Ecclesia persecuted by the flames of Protestantism. More recently, Agosti and Zani, eds, *Il ritorno dei profeti*, 28, have favored her identification with Ecclesia while recognizing the complications of doing so.

<sup>42</sup> Guazzoni, *Moretto. Il tema sacro*, 28.

between 1516 and 1518.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Altobello Averoldi, a Brescian noble and the papal legate to Venice, had called Ugoni back to their home city in 1519 in order to investigate these controversial prosecutions and to attempt to pacify the tensions that had developed between the city, its Venetian governors, and the local inquisitor as a result of the trials. Ugoni's practices of reading and writing bear directly on the room's central image; however, the scene is not an allegory of the Church's struggle against Protestant heresy.

Lost in the dispute over the identity of the Virgin and the prophets has been the very specific, and unexpected, way that Moretto described Moses's relationship to the supernatural phenomenon before him. The episode of the Burning Bush described in Exodus 3 relates that when Moses saw the bush filled but not consumed by flames he approached, and

[God] called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said: Moses, Moses. And he answered: Here I am. And [God] said: Come not nigh hither, put off the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And he said: I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses hid his face: for he durst not look at God.<sup>44</sup>

Moretto's Moses makes no gesture toward removing his shoes, a narrative detail frequently depicted in medieval images and present in Froment's altarpiece, as well. Looking into the flames but remaining shod, the frescoed Moses is captured in the moment before he has become aware of the cause that lies behind the divine apparition.

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<sup>43</sup> Tavuzzi, 186-92.

<sup>44</sup> Exodus 3:4-6 (Douay-Rheims).

Since the Burning Bush is first of all a visual phenomenon, we should be attentive to how Moretto delimited Moses's field of vision. Intently focused, Moses raises his left hand to his brow, shielding his eyes so he might better focus on the phenomenon opposite him. As Victor Stoichita has noted, the gesture of the seer's raised hand, known as the *apokopein*, was a common way for Renaissance artists to signal the perception of visionary or celestial subject matter within an earth-bound scene, and, again, we can look at Froment's panel for an instance of this gesture.<sup>45</sup> In Moretto's mural painting, however, Moses's gesture becomes both less affected and more schematic. Even as Moses strides deeper into the space of the narrative, Moretto has situated his line of sight nearly parallel to the picture plane, diagramming Moses's act of seeing. Moses's raised hand—casting a shadow over all but the nearest corner of his right eye—together with his long, stiff beard define the vertical extent of his vision. The viewer is shown, in Albertian terms, the cross-section of Moses's visual pyramid. It becomes clear that this almost graphic presentation of Moses's act of seeing was entirely purposeful when we extend the described visual triangle out to its object: the lower half of the Burning Bush falls within Moses's field of vision, but the Virgin remains beyond the limits of his sight. The hand Moses uses to aid his understanding creates a division between the material manifestation he perceives and that manifestation's full Christian significance, which eludes him.

Moses fails to perceive the Virgin, and therefore the Incarnational meaning of the Burning Bush. For this reason, it is difficult to follow Guazzoni and others in interpreting this benighted figure of Moses as a protagonist and proxy for Ugoni. *Moses before the*

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<sup>45</sup> Victor I. Stoichita, *Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art*, trans. Anne-Marie Glasheen (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), 32.



*Burning Bush* is an image of divine revelation that stages Moses's partial apprehension against the fuller understanding of the contemporary Christian viewer. Any visitor to the studio—certainly Ugoni himself—could perceive more than Moses does. A viewer's alertness to the dramatic irony must have been part of the pleasure in viewing the ceiling. Yet any feeling of superiority this inspired in Ugoni's guests would have dissipated when they turned to Moretto's spandrel frescos in the lower register. Here viewers would find themselves sharing Moses's bewilderment.

The room's arrangement of ten figures presenting scrolls evokes a programmatic grouping.<sup>46</sup> But since the scrolls cannot be read, the program cannot be fitted to any conventional cycle of prophets or ancestors of Mary, and the unexplained decoration has been used to point up the idiosyncrasies and shortcomings of such provincial commissions. In light of our observations about the ceiling's interest in unintelligibility and revelation, an assumption that the prophets' seemingly impenetrable texts are arbitrary and meaningless must be reconsidered. Moses's absorption in the physical manifestation of divine revelation causes his failure to apprehend the full meaning that might be extracted from that revelation. The predicament that the inscriptions pose for the studio's occupant is similar, but the inscriptions re-characterize the difficulty from an issue of seeing the full range of the landscape to one of reading the full range of meaning enclosed within the letters of sacred texts. The inscriptions, like the Burning Bush, are analogs for the manifestation of divinity within the physical order, specifically the supernatural conception of Christ in the Virgin's womb. For this analogy to operate, a

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<sup>46</sup> Levi d'Ancona, 69, based her identification of Mary on the presence of the accompanying prophets, whom she took to have foretold of Mary, not the Church.

reader must, at least in theory, be able to extract real and substantive meaning from these opaque inscriptions.

### **The Inscriptions**

Scholars have treated the illegible Arabic and Hebrew letters painted on the unfurled scrolls in Ugoni's studio as exoticizing pseudoscripts, "scribblings that simulate the ancient language of the Law."<sup>47</sup> To identify a text as pseudoscript is to ask (and answer) the question, "Can this be read?" In the case of the studio inscriptions, the answer is decidedly no. But determining that these ten collections of letters do not conform to the rules of the languages they purport to speak tells us little about why they ended up on the walls of Ugoni's home.

Within the literature treating these decorations, the predominant assumption has been that the space served as a domestic chapel. Yet, the inscriptions certainly do not operate along the lines of a liturgical program. We expect textual inscriptions in liturgical spaces to have stable meanings that support and explicate mysteries of the faith, even if the content of those texts seems enigmatic. For instance, Moretto's and Romanino's twelve prophets (visible in figures 82-83), completed a few years earlier for the sacrament chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista, each present a legible Latin quotation or paraphrase from the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible that contributes to the overall program (generally regarding the advent of the messiah), and, presumably, these citations

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<sup>47</sup> Agosti and Zani, "Sul Moretto in casa Ugoni," in *Il ritorno dei profeti*, 27. The authors did perceive a linguistic logic to the inscriptions and subsequently put forward a provisional translation of the inscription held by the armored prophet (Fig. 10) as "Ki Kol Aniecha Kechol Acheca," see *Le siècle de Titien*, 427. For a recent meditation on the role of pseudoscript in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italian painting, see Alexander Nagel, "Twenty-five notes on pseudoscript in Italian art," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 59/60 (spring/autumn 2011): 228-48.

were themselves quoted in the liturgical ceremonies conducted for the confraternity of the Holy Sacrament.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, the inscriptions in Ugoni's home offer no discursive content, not even for those capable of reading the languages represented there.

This illegibility makes the suggestion that the room functioned as a studio particularly intriguing.<sup>49</sup> The scholar's study was a space defined by reading and translation, a place where meaning was regularly negotiated between linguistic systems. When we look to the preceding century for cycles of individual figures with accompanying inscriptions that decorated domestic spaces, such as Cardinal Giordano Orsini's cycle of prophets and sibyls that decorated the *camera paramenti* in his Roman palazzo or the cycle of muses in the Este studiolo at Belfiore, it is clear that the content of the inscriptions was devised prior to and was, to some extent, descriptive of these programs' constituent figures. In a statement regarding Cardinal Orsini's sibyls, Poggio Bracciolini recognized that the visual description, name, and epigram associated with each sibyl had been coordinated "with the greatest possible diligence by extremely learned men."<sup>50</sup> Such an investment of intellect had the potential to place the mural decoration on equal footing with the books and other objects of naturalia and artificialia that such rooms contained. At first sight, Ugoni seems to have undertaken his own studio's decoration either in ignorance of or with disregard toward such precedents, replacing a treasury of philological scholarship with an exoticizing pastiche. But it can now be shown that the mural decorations reflect a great deal of attention to the study of

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<sup>48</sup> The inscriptions from the six prophets currently installed in the intrados of the arch that frames Moretto's *Last Supper* in the sacrament chapel at San Giovanni Evangelista are transcribed and identified in Begni Redona, 138.

<sup>49</sup> Agosti and Zani, "Sul Moretto in casa Ugoni," 24.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Dempsey, *The Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 121-22.

ancient languages, specifically scripture, and to the potential for meaning to reside beyond the envelope of legibility.

Each of the inscriptions was composed of excerpts from the printed text of the *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, et Chaldaeum cum tribus latinis interpretationibus et glossis* (hereafter *Psalterium*). The *Psalterium*, edited by the Dominican Agostino Giustiniani (born Pantaleone Giustiniani, 1470-1536) and published in his native Genoa in 1516, was a milestone of early typography. The volume contained the first printed Arabic translation of a full book of the Bible, and it placed this text alongside versions of the Psalms printed in Hebrew, Greek and Latin typeface (figure 14).<sup>51</sup> As stated in the book's preface, addressed to Pope Leo X, Giustiniani intended the *Psalterium* to be the initial step in a similarly formatted polyglot Bible. Although the full Bible never materialized, perhaps more than two thousand copies of Giustiniani's psalm book were printed.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> On the major events of Agostino Giustiniani's activities as a humanist, the *Psalterium*, and the position of both within Italian humanism during the pontificate of Leo X, see most recently Paul F. Grendler, "Italian Biblical Humanism and the Papacy, 1515-1535," in Erika Rummel, ed., *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 227-76, esp. 233-40. I differ from Grendler where he sees Giustiniani fitting squarely among those Italian biblical humanists "whose primary concern was to get the text right in order to elucidate the books of the Bible in their literal and historical meaning," (p. 275). The most comprehensive modern biography of Giustiniani is Aurelio Cevolotto, *Agostino Giustiniani. Un umanista tra Bibbia e cabala* (Genoa: ECIG, 1992). For passing references of Giustiniani's relevance to more specific issues of Renaissance language study, see also Guy Bedouelle, *Le Quincuplex Psalterium de Lefèvre d'étaples. Une guide de lecture* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1979); François Secret, *Les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris, Dunod, 1964); François Secret, "Les grammaires hébraïques d'A. Justinianus," in *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* XXXIII (1963); François Secret, "Guillaume Postel et les études arabes à la Renaissance," in *Arabica* IX (1962); François Secret, "Les dominicains et la kabbale chrétienne à la Renaissance," in *Archivum fratrum praedicatorum* XXVII (1957); J.L. Blau, *The Christian interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (Port Washington, NY, 1944).

<sup>52</sup> In his history of Genoa, *Castigatissimi Annali con la loro copiosa tavola della Eccelsa et illustrissima Republi. di Genoa...* (Genoa, 1537), Giustiniani stated that two thousand copies of the *Psalterium* were printed on paper and another fifty copies on vellum; see Cevolotto, 45.

The *Psalterium* was an ambitious project, not only for its typographical demands but also for its pretensions to philological sophistication. Whereas many polyglot editions of the preceding century had arranged their translations in succession, Giustiniani took pride in the *Psalterium*'s parallel column format.<sup>53</sup> Each set of facing pages presents the psalm text in eight columns. Beginning at the far left is the Masoretic Hebrew text of the Psalms. Immediately to the right is Giustiniani's Latin translation of that Hebrew, a "word for word" rendering as he states in the rubricated header above Psalm 1. The third column presents Jerome's *Gallicum* translation of the psalter—the translation used in the Vulgate Bible. The fourth column presents the Psalms as rendered in the Greek Septuagint.

The right page begins at the left with an Arabic translation. To the right of the Arabic is the Targum (Giustiniani refers to this as Chaldean), an ancient paraphrase of the Hebrew into Aramaic using Hebrew letters. To the right of the Targum is Giustiniani's Latin translation of this Aramaic text. And the column at the far right, labeled *Scholia*, provides a gloss that amplifies the meaning of the Hebrew original and the Latin translations with a mix of explanations drawn from patristic and contemporary biblical commentaries, cabalistic texts, and Giustiniani's knowledge of Semitic languages.

With the *Psalterium* in hand, we can now determine that the cycle began on the north spandrel of the studio's east wall, directly beneath Moses's feet in the ceiling image.<sup>54</sup> While none of Ugoni's ten inscriptions reproduces a full verse from the Psalms,

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<sup>53</sup> Giustiniani notes the distinct format of his publication in the *Psalterium*'s preface, sig. Aii'.

<sup>54</sup> Ugoni's studio was a rectangular room with shorter east and west walls and longer walls on the north and south. The relative order, but not the beginning and end of the sequence, was re-established in 1992 when the removal of portions of the nineteenth-century paint from the studio's ceiling and walls exposed the

they combine clusters of letters extracted, in most cases, from a single verse. Nine of the ten inscriptions were composed from the *Psalterium*'s Arabic translation, and the first three (perhaps four) inscriptions were drawn from a single page of Psalm 36(37, Masoretic).<sup>55</sup> The first of these (figure 15) is a fairly accurate reproduction of the left half of two adjacent lines (figure 16) that pertain to Psalm 36(37):2, "For they shall shortly wither away as grass, and as the green herbs shall quickly fall." The sequence then continues along the room's north wall, moving from a viewer's right to left and, thus, participating in the right-to-left movement inherent in reading Arabic and Hebrew.

The second inscription (figure 17), also consistent with the *Psalterium*'s lettering (figure 18), is taken from a single line of Psalm 36(37):4, "Delight in the Lord, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart." Although both of these first two painted inscriptions are faithful transposition of the letters from the *Psalterium*'s printed text to the studio wall, it is apparent that the process of excerpting and transposing has changed their function as language. What was contiguous in print is still contiguous in paint, although in the first inscription, letters that were originally interposed between the two fragments are no longer present, and in the second case, the left half of the line has been placed above the right half, inverting their proper linguistic order.

The third inscription (figure 19) is also an end-over-beginning transposition of a single line (figure 20), now from verse 7, "Be subject to the Lord and pray to him. Envy not the man who prospereth in his way; the man who doth unjust things." Here, with an

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"impronte" left on the spandrels after Moretto's *intonaci* were removed. See Agosti and Zani, eds., *Il ritorno dei profeti*, 26, tavole XIII and XIV.

<sup>55</sup> Agostino Giustiniani, *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, et Chaldaeum cum tribus latinis interpretationibus et glossis* (Genoa: P.P. Porrus, 1516), sig. Fvii.

additional letter in the bottom line, deviations from the *Psalterium*'s printed text begin to appear in the painted inscriptions. Whether this was an intentional alteration or a slip of the pen (or brush) is indeterminable, but the subsequent inscriptions also become increasingly free in their adaptation of the printed text.

The surface of the west spandrel on the north wall—the fourth in the sequence—sustained considerable structural damage, and as a result, its inscription is severely abraded (figure 21). Because much of the scroll's paint has been lost, its textual source may no longer be identifiable. Elements of the frescoed inscription resemble lines 22 and 23 of signature Fvi<sup>r</sup> that pertain to verse 9, but this can be no more than a suggestion (figure 22).<sup>56</sup>

Having reached the west wall of the studio, the source text for the subsequent inscriptions changes; the fifth through the eighth inscriptions all derive from Psalm 77(78). The fifth inscription (figure 23) combines numerous fragments drawn from the ends of lines pertaining to verses 2 and 3 (figure 24).<sup>57</sup> If this looser connection to the printed psalter seems surprising given Ugoni's strict adherence at the beginning of the cycle, we might ascribe this freer mode of excerpting and recomposition to the content of these verses, which specifically invoked cryptic speech: "I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter propositions from the beginning. How great things have we heard and known, and our fathers have told us." Since antiquity, writers who wanted to argue

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<sup>56</sup> Psalm 36(37):9 reads, "For the evil doers shall be cut off: but they that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the land."

<sup>57</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Nvii<sup>r</sup>.

for the enigmatic, figurative quality of sacred scripture frequently sought authorization in these very lines.<sup>58</sup>

The next two inscriptions relate to passages found further along in Psalm 77(78), when the psalmist has begun to recount the miraculous provisions God made for the Israelites during their time of wandering in the desert. The method of excerpting for the sixth inscription (figure 25) is like that for the first inscription, where adjacent but non-continuous portions of two consecutive lines are extracted as a block, although the right half of the bottom line varies slightly from the printed source (figure 26). This inscription draws from verse 16, “He brought forth water out of the rock: and made streams run down as rivers.” The seventh inscription (figure 27) follows this same method of excerpting, although the upper and lower fragments were inverted and two letters from the lower printed line have been removed in its transposition to the upper line of the scroll (figure 28). These excerpts appear on the same page of the *Psalterium* as verse 16 and pertain to verse 25, “Man ate the bread of angels: he sent them provisions in abundance.”<sup>59</sup> These two miraculous provisions of sustenance, first recounted in Exodus 17 and 16, respectively, were commonly treated in patristic commentaries as Old Testament figures of Christ, and later in Chapter Four, we will see Moretto piecing together images of Old Testament narratives, including *The Gathering of Manna*, that were understood as Eucharistic prefigurations. The four inscriptions related to Psalm 77(78) bracket the southwest corner of the studio, and it is likely not a coincidence that the Virgin in the Burning Bush appears in this same corner of Moretto’s ceiling fresco.

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<sup>58</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, book V, chap. 4, was perhaps the earliest Christian writer to do so.

<sup>59</sup> The Arabic translations of both Psalm 77(78):16 and Psalm 77(78):25 are found on Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. O<sup>r</sup>.



This psalm, with its reputation as a bearer of sacramental mysteries, literally buttresses the mystery of the Incarnation represented symbolically on the ceiling.

The last of the four inscriptions taken from Psalm 77(78) points to the end of that psalm and is the inscription perhaps most directly related to the narrative content of the ceiling fresco. As he did with verses 2 and 3 of this psalm, Ugoni composed this eighth inscription (figure 29) from a scattered array of fragments, now taken from verses 70 and 71, “And he chose his servant David, and took him from the flocks of sheep: he brought him from following the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob his servant, and Israel his inheritance” (figure 30).<sup>60</sup> The verses speak of a shepherd and a flock, but it is David, not Moses, that they concern. In fact, Moses’s name never appears in Psalm 77(78), though he was a principal actor in many of the events that the psalm recounts, including the issue of water from the rock and the provision of manna. In this psalm, and in Ugoni’s studio, David supplants Moses. The psalmist, not the shepherd, is the model for the studio’s occupant, one who wishes to intone the divine mysteries of scripture.

The ninth inscription is unique as the only one not composed from the *Psalterium*’s Arabic translation. It is composed of Hebrew letters, but not all of the fragments derive from the Hebrew text. Ugoni compounded the problems of identifying the inscription’s source by selecting fragments of text from the column of Masoretic Hebrew text and from the Targum, the Aramaic paraphrase written with Hebrew letters. The upper line of the inscription (figure 31) reproduces with considerable fidelity a full line of Psalm 118(119):23 from the Masoretic Hebrew, “For princes sat, and spoke

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<sup>60</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Oiiii.

against me: but thy servant was employed in thy justifications” (figure 32).<sup>61</sup> Ugoni constructed the lower line from two fragments of the Targum that bracket Psalm 49(50):7-10 (figure 33),<sup>62</sup> a passage in which God is described as speaking to the Israelites about his desire for the people’s praise rather than its blood sacrifices:

Hear, O my people, and I will speak: O Israel, and I will testify to thee: I am God, thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices: and thy burnt offerings are always in my sight. I will not take calves out of thy house: nor he goats out of thy flocks. For all the beasts of the woods are mine: the cattle on the hills, and the oxen.

The mention of flocks is again relevant to the ceiling’s pastoral theme, but, as we will see when we expand our investigation of these verses in the following section, greater weight is likely being placed on God’s self-revelation through the “I am” construction that echoes his words to Moses on Mount Horeb at the Burning Bush. Ugoni may also have judge this passage especially relevant to his studio’s program as it follows the psalmist’s potentially-Christological pronouncement in verse 3 that “God shall come manifestly...”

The tenth inscription (figure 34) returns the cycle to the studio’s east wall. In drawing from Psalm 118(119):13-15 (Figure 35),<sup>63</sup> this final inscription is the only one that clearly reverses the cycle’s progression through the psalm text (although the ninth inscription incorporates a much earlier psalm and the losses to the fourth inscription make it impossible to identify securely). The fragments here are loosely transcribed with deletions and substitutions, perhaps incorporating a letter from an adjacent word with a similar construction. The verses read, “With my lips I have pronounced all the judgments of thy mouth. I have been delighted in the way of thy testimonies, as in all riches. I will

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<sup>61</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. X<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. I<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Xii<sup>r</sup>.

meditate on thy commandments: and I will consider thy ways.” The ninth and tenth inscriptions were both drawn at least partially from Psalm 118(119), but in this final pair the excerpts are arranged in descending order as if to close the circuit by turning back toward the beginning.<sup>64</sup> This return to the origin is further personified in the final, conspicuously rear-facing prophet, whose pose seems to return the flow of inspired verse coursing around the studio walls back to its source in the blue firmament that we can just glimpse through the painted oculi.

Recognizing the *Psalterium* as Ugoni’s source for the scrolls’ text, we now have a much better vantage from which to consider the identity of the studio’s ten mysterious figures. Certainly, they do not represent a collection of identifiable historical personages. They cannot be specifically namable prophets, since they all present texts derived from the psalms. Nor can they be identified with David and the lesser-known psalmists (Asaph, Korahites, Heman, Ethan, Moses, and Solomon) since only six other authors are named among the psalms. Some of the figures’ garments possess antique qualities, but they seem generally to describe a long span of history down to the contemporary moment, indicated by the fashionable besagues on the cuirass of the armored figure on the ninth spandrel. It is likely that their collective number was more significant to Ugoni than their individuality.

On the opening pages of Psalm 1 (figure 14), the *Psalterium* provided a lengthy gloss on the word “psalterium.” Giustiniani’s commentary explains that the word identifies the book of hymns that the reader presently holds but that the word properly

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<sup>64</sup> I thank Christopher Nygren for the suggestion that the final descent in the ordering of the psalms may reflect a desire to emphasize a cyclical quality in the program.

refers to a type of stringed musical instrument.<sup>65</sup> The psalterium, Giustiniani continues, resembles the cithara but produces a more pleasing sound because it possesses ten strings unlike the cithara's six, and its resonating chamber opens upward, accepting its airs from above.<sup>66</sup> Giustiniani based his gloss on comments by Jerome and Augustine, but later medieval commentators had also found significance in the psalterium's ten strings, seeing them as a figure of the Ten Commandments appropriate for the era of the Church.<sup>67</sup> Ugoni likely read Giustiniani's exposition on the psalterium's ten strings, and it would have been difficult to incorporate the *Psalterium's* text into the decoration of his studio without associating Moretto's ten figures with one or more of these typologically driven symbols. But, for our larger consideration of the studio's decoration and its affect on Moretto's art, it is less important to discern one exclusive interpretation than to acknowledge the structural function that the ten prophets collectively perform. Moretto's prophets personify a physical medium through which divine will and intention circulates,

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<sup>65</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Av<sup>r</sup>: "Itaque psalterium, ut a libri nomine ordiamur, grecum verbum est, quod latine laudatorium organum dici potest. Est autem ut Hieronymus ad Dardanum scripsit, vas in modum quadrati clypei cum decem chordis, secundum quod scriptum est in psalterio decem chordarum psallite illi."

<sup>66</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, begins on sig. Av<sup>r</sup>, then continues on sig. Aiiii<sup>v</sup>: "In commentariis vero psalmodum idem Hieronymus quid sit psalterium magis exprimit, dicens illud esse genus organi musici melius sonantis quam cithara, similitudinem que habere cithare sed non esse Citharam, interque psalterium et citharam hoc interesse, quod cithara deorsum percutitur psalterium que sursum hoc pluribus constare chordis. Idem decem illam tam sex, hoc superius habere concavitatem illam vero inferius Augustinus vero psalterium sic descripsit. Psalterium est organum quod quaedam manibus portatur percutientis, & chordas distinctas hae: sed illum locum unde sonum accipiunt corde, illud concavum lignum quod pendet et tactum resonat, qua recipit aërem psalterium in superiore parte hae. Cithara vero hoc genus ligni cavum & resonans, in inferiore parte hae. Itaque in psalterio chorde desuper sonum accipiunt." Hippolytus, writing in the early third century, seems to have originated the differential interpretation of the instruments' resonating chambers. See Martin van Schaik, *The Harp in the Middle Ages: The Symbolism of a Musical Instrument* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 81-85, esp. 82 n. 79.

<sup>67</sup> The *Glossa Ordinaria* conveyed the equation in language representative of the patristic tradition: "The psalterium with ten strings is the Church with the Ten Commandments of the law (*Psalterium cum decem chordis Ecclesia est cum Decalogo legis*). See van Schaik, 81 n. 76, who cites several other medieval commentators who understood the psalterium's ten strings to figure the Mosaic Law.

and in this they are similar to the scrolls' linguistic gibberish, pointing to sacred truth that lies just beyond an inert system of signs.

### **Translation as Nativity**

The inscriptions' break with legibility has never been explained in terms other than pseudoscript—an unlearned imitation of a proper model. Ugoni, however, was unlikely to have been satisfied with a meaningless set of textual inscriptions. He was proficient in Latin and Greek, and one of his biographers has suggested that he knew Syriac as well.<sup>68</sup> We have no indication that he had facility with the languages evoked in the studio inscriptions (Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic), but he took considerable pains to present himself publically as a man renowned for his good judgment and humanist learning. While serving as bishop of Famagusta (1504-1530), Ugoni had a portrait medal struck that announced his fair and accurate evaluation of all matters that came before him (figure 36).<sup>69</sup> On its obverse, the medal portrays the bishop in profile with the inscription “MATHIAS VGO EPS PHAMAVG” (Mattia Ugoni bishop of Famagusta); the reverse depicts a set of scales surrounded by a palm frond and a laurel (or olive) branch encircled by the words, “TRVTINAE EXAMINE CASTIGATO” (He will reprove/correct with the tongue of the scales, i.e. with great accuracy). Ugoni might have commissioned the medal at any point in his twenty-six year tenure as bishop, but the sentiment was especially suited to the moment of Ugoni's return to Brescia in 1519, when Altobello Averoldi

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<sup>68</sup> Tiboni, *Mattia Ugoni*, 10.

<sup>69</sup> For the medal, see Agosti and Zani, “Sul Moretto in casa Ugoni,” 21-22.

empowered him to investigate the region's recent witchcraft trials.<sup>70</sup> It is also interesting to consider the medal's motto in relation to the studio inscriptions painted only a few years later. The verb *castigare* had a very specific meaning within humanist circles: *castigatio* was the process of purging an ancient text of later scribal contaminations in order to restore its original purity.<sup>71</sup> Ugoni's composite inscriptions defy the developing tradition of rigorously analytical philology by creating linguistic confusion. But in the early sixteenth century, multiple traditions of scriptural interpretation and use were viable, as John Calvin bemoaned in this chapter's epigraph. For some readers, letters had an outer husk (*cortex litterae*) and an inner life.<sup>72</sup>

The *Psalterium* sets the outer appearance of letters on display and provides an initial framework for thinking about why Ugoni chose to compare Moses's limited understanding of the Burning Bush to the (attempted) reading of the inscriptions on his studio walls. The arrangement of the facing pages quickly draws a reader's attention to the precarious link between the letter shapes that constitute language and the meanings applied to those shapes. The parallel columns permit instantaneous comparison of translations of vastly disparate appearance that all purport to convey a single sense. The implicit equivalence of the translations is almost immediately undermined, however, by the presence of three distinct Latin translations: Giustiniani's translation from the

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<sup>70</sup> Another piece of circumstantial evidence weighing in favor of dating Ugoni's medal to ca. 1520 is the likely dating of a portrait medal of Altobello Averoldi to the same years. See Mark Wilchusky's catalogue entry on the Averoldi medal in Stephen K. Scher, ed., *The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*, exh. cat. (New York: Abrams with The Frick Collection, 1994), cat. no. 30, 109-10.

<sup>71</sup> On the concept of *castigatio* in relation to the art of North Italy around 1500, see Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2004), 130.

<sup>72</sup> For a contemporaneous discussion of the importance of interpreting Christian scripture beyond the *cortex litterae*, see Francesco Giorgio, *De harmonia mundi totius cantica tria* (Paris: Berthelin, 1545), fols. 30v-31r. (First published in Venice, 1525.)

Hebrew, Jerome's *Gallicum* (which was essentially a Latin translation of the Greek Septuagint), and Giustiniani's Latin translation of the Targum.

This proliferation of interpretations, even within a single language, is an important indication that Giustiniani's linguistic interests in the *Psalterium* were not entirely congruent with the dominant humanist methodology of his day. A fundamental goal of the humanistic study of ancient literature—and a preliminary step in the grammatical analysis of any ancient text, or *auctoritas*—was the production of the *emendata lectio*, the pristine original form of that text as its author had conceived it.<sup>73</sup> When, for example, Desiderius Erasmus published Jerome's *Gallicum* and *iuxta Hebraeos* Latin translations of the Psalms next to these texts' Greek and Hebrew sources, his intention was to offer a tool for comparison of the translations Jerome had made so that the original sense might be surmised. The *Psalterium* is not a tool for this sort of analysis. The format of the printed pages shows Giustiniani to have been far more concerned with examining the potential of the *auctoritas* to transform than in eliminating corruptions in order to recover a pristine original version. The interest of the *Psalterium* lies in watching the formal permutations of the letters as the psalm text passes through the medium of each new language and attending to the nuances in meaning that this process creates. This mutation is not only a primary visual aspect of the *Psalterium*, but as we will see shortly, Giustiniani suggested that attending to the exotic qualities of the

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<sup>73</sup> For a consideration of the *auctoritas* and its *emendata lectio* in the writings of Quintilian and, later, of Lorenzo Valla, see Salvatore I. Camporeale, "Renaissance Humanism and the Origins of Humanist Theology," in John W. O'Malley, Thomas M. Izbicki, and Gerald Christianson, eds., *Humanity and Divinity in Renaissance and Reformation. Essays in Honor of Charles Trinkaus*, (New York: Brill, 1993), 120.

translations was indispensable in extracting the full meaning of sacred scripture. Not all of Giustiniani's contemporaries were willing to go this far.

There are several ways Ugoni might have become aware of Giustiniani and his psalter, but it is likely that the bishop would have known that in the years following its publication the *Psalterium* and Giustiniani's own aptitude as a grammarian had been drawn into a widely publicized philological controversy between Erasmus and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples.<sup>74</sup> The dispute was both philological and Christological, and it centered on a phrase in Hebrews 2:7, a line that Jerome had translated as "minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis" (Thou hast made him a little less than the angels), and which is, in its turn, a quotation of Psalm 8:6. The Greek text of Hebrews 2:7 uses the word *aggelous*, the etymological root of the Latin *angelus*, but Lefèvre believed that the phrase should be rendered not as "ab angelis" but rather as "a deo" (i.e., Thou hast made him a little less than God). Lefèvre looked to support his interpretation through recourse to Jerome's so-called "iuxta Hebraeos" translation of the Psalms, in which Psalm 8:6 is rendered with "a deo" rather than "ab angelis." Erasmus responded that Jerome had produced two other translations of the Psalms that preferred "ab angelis," that the patristic tradition was entirely on the side of "ab angelis," and that with regard to Hebrews 2:7, it would flout sound philological method to translate *aggelous* as anything but *angelus*.

Lefèvre's counter-position was founded on his belief in scripture's two-fold literal sense (*duplex sensus literalis*). As he articulated in the prefatory letter to his own *Quincuplex Psalterium* of 1509, Lefèvre believed that the spiritual sense of the text was

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<sup>74</sup> On the protracted, and largely one-sided, dispute between Erasmus and Lefèvre, see *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 83. *Controversies*, ed. Guy Bedouelle (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998), xvii-xxii.



its literal sense: "...I perceive another sense, namely the intention of the prophet and the Holy Spirit who speaks in him, and I call this the [true] literal, which coincides with the spirit."<sup>75</sup> This was the hermeneutical stance that had led him to prefer "a deo" when rendering Psalm 8:6 and Hebrews 2:7. For Lefèvre, it was unconscionable—and likely heretical—to assert that Christ had been in any way subject to the angels. This could not have been the spiritual sense of these scriptures, and he would not translate them in a way that forced them to speak against themselves.

Stung by the implication that his adherence to well-founded philological principles had led him to take a heterodox position on the nature of Christ, Erasmus published his *Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem* in August 1517. It was in the *Apologia*, appearing in five editions between 1517 and 1522, that Giustiniani and his *Psalterium* would come in for harsh criticism.<sup>76</sup> Lefèvre had commended the *Psalterium* in the second edition of his Pauline commentaries, where he had responded to Erasmus's initial concerns over his translations of Hebrews 2:7 and Psalms 8:6. So it was Lefèvre who first invoked the *Psalterium*, but the Dutch humanist's thoroughgoing criticism of the book reveals that he knew the publication well and that it had struck a raw nerve. After questioning Lefèvre's wisdom in breaking with the traditional interpretation of Psalm 8:6, Erasmus turns to Giustiniani:

...you [Lefèvre] cite this new author, for want of a better word, with such great pomp, you might be producing an oracle delivered right from the tripod at Delphi. Not that I would wish to disparage the man's zeal. By the same token, however, I would not wish to be completely overwhelmed by the weight of his authority. For as far as the usefulness of his work is concerned, there has already been published

<sup>75</sup> *The Prefatory Epistles of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Related Texts*, ed. Eugene F. Rice, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 192-201, esp. 193-94.

<sup>76</sup> For the early editions of the *Apologia*, see Bedouelle, ed., *CWE*, vol. 83. *Controversies*, 2-3.

at Basel a Psalter in three languages, a timely and excellent work, in my opinion [i.e. Erasmus's own edition of Jerome's *Gallicum* and *iuxta Hebreos* Latin translations arranged in parallel with their Greek and Hebrew source texts]. And apart from these three languages there is nothing else to turn to for assistance if something in the Psalms puzzles us...What does it matter, then, if at some time you bring before us a Psalter decanted into six hundred languages? For as far as authority is concerned it does not make much difference whether you offer me a Psalter in Suevian, Gaelic, Gothic, Arabic, or Armenian. As a curiosity it may have a good deal to offer, but I see hardly any profit in it...A word too about the annotations which he [Giustiniani] brings forward out of the Jewish, cabbalistic, talmudic, and rabbinical authors: in the first place, they are few in number, and in the second, most of them are feeble. I shall not take the trouble to wrangle over them at length at this juncture, save only to say that whatever I have so far seen derived from Jewish apocryphal writings for the most part either is regarded as doubtful or appears insignificant and having very little relevance to our Christ. Further, a word about the man's learning. His level of proficiency in the Greek and Latin languages may be discovered from his prefaces by anyone versed in both; how proficient he is in the other languages I leave to others to judge. What point was there, then, in our reading his preface in so many languages? So that we might have instant faith in his proficiency in Greek and Latin?<sup>77</sup>

Several aspects of Giustiniani's *Psalterium* were likely to have frustrated Erasmus. On the specific issue of Psalm 8:6, Giustiniani had included a lengthy gloss that effectively reproduced Lefèvre's commentary on the same verse in his 1509 *Quincuplex psalterium*. Erasmus also may have felt that Giustiniani's *Psalterium* posed a threat to his own polyglot psalter of 1516. Lefèvre's *Quincuplex psalterium* rendered Jerome's three versions of the psalter (*Gallicum*, *Romanum*, and *iuxta Hebreos*) in parallel columns, and then followed with a second part that rendered the *Vetus Latinus* and a *Conciliatum* that corrected the *Gallicum* with the aid of the *iuxta Hebreos*. Lefèvre's edition allowed for comparison of the translations, but it was not a polyglot. Erasmus's 1516 polyglot psalter rendered corresponding sections of the psalms from the Masoretic text, printed in Hebrew, and the Septuagint, printed in Greek, alongside Jerome's Latin translations of

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<sup>77</sup> Bedouelle, ed., *CWE*, vol. 83. *Controversies*, 20-21.

these texts, laid out in four parallel columns across facing pages. Erasmus may have feared that readers interested in comparative biblical study would be taken in by the greater number and exotic appeal of the translations on offer in Giustiniani's volume.

Erasmus clearly found Giustiniani's language skills wanting, but his comments indicate that the *Psalterium*'s failings were not merely linguistic. For those familiar with Giustiniani's psalter, Erasmus's opening comment about a Delphic oracle was not only a gibe at Lefèvre for allowing himself to be flattered by the *Psalterium*'s citation of his own work; it also referred to Giustiniani's *scholion* to Psalm 77(78), the psalm from which Ugoni would later produce the four inscriptions bordering Moretto's Virgin in the Burning Bush. In the *Psalterium*, Giustiniani had glossed this psalm with a Greek poem that, he tells the reader, was included as a preamble to this psalm in all of the ancient Greek psalters:

Orpheus, be silent and cast aside Mercury's lyre;  
The tripod at Delphi has sunk into oblivion.  
David now plays the Spirit's lyre for us;  
He reveals the hidden mysteries of God;  
He describes an abundance of ancient wonders;  
He moves all creation to sing in praise of the Creator;  
He saves all who he initiates into the mysteries;  
He is unstinting as he lifts the fallen;  
He opens the Judge's judgments on what is to come;  
He instructs the guilt-stained soul to be clean.<sup>78</sup>

The Davidic psalms are likened here to the oracular prophecies at Delphi. They communicate strange wonders and divine mysteries. As Giustiniani insinuates with his gloss, Psalm 77(78) had, in fact, long been understood figuratively, and it had fascinated

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<sup>78</sup> I have based this translation on the two Latin translations by Furnius and Cigala that Giustiniani printed beneath the Greek poem.

Christian commentators since late antiquity who understood it to authorize figurative connections between the Old and New Testaments.<sup>79</sup> By the early sixteenth century, its appeal reached beyond strict biblical exegesis. Pierio Valeriano, for example, cited Psalm 77(78), which begins with the statement “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter propositions from the beginning,” as a prominent example of ancient enigmatic speech in his seminal *Hieroglyphica*, a work begun in the same years that the *Psalterium* came to light.

Erasmus viewed Giustiniani’s effort to frame the Psalms within the mysticism of cabalistic teachings and hieroglyphic utterance as antithetical to the historically and grammatically grounded study of the Bible. His critique of the *Psalterium* within his response to Lefèvre was meant to position it as a deviation from good learning and to forestall its acceptance within scholarly circles. And, whether owing to Erasmus’s critique or not, this seems largely to have taken place. In a brief comment on the *Psalterium* included in his chronicle of Genoese history published posthumously in 1537, Giustiniani admitted that the polyglot had not sold well.<sup>80</sup> Nor did Leo X or any subsequent pope pursue Giustiniani’s wish to expand his psalter into an eight-column Bible; ultimately, the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (printing begun 1514, published 1520), which did receive Leo’s support, would become the dominant polyglot Bible for many decades thereafter.

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<sup>79</sup> For a consideration of Psalm 77(78) within the hieroglyphic tradition, see Diana Wronski Galis, “Lorenzo Lotto: A Study of His Career and Character, with Particular Emphasis on his Emblematic and Hieroglyphic Works,” Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1977, 97.

<sup>80</sup> Cevelotto, 45. In his *Castigatissimi Annali*, Giustiniani claimed to have sold only one fourth of the volumes printed, that is, about 500 copies.

Erasmus's brand of philologically-based examination of scripture would triumph, but its ultimate success should not blind us to the plurality of approaches to scriptural interpretation that the new studies of ancient languages facilitated in the decades around 1500 and that, for a time, seemed to open new and legitimate paths to the full revelation of scripture. That Ugoni fully accepted the cabalistic interpretations of the Psalms on offer in Giustiniani's *Psalterium* is not at all apparent; certainly, he never espoused such interpretive methods in his writings. Still, Ugoni's use of the *Psalterium* in the face of Erasmus's philological objections indicates that he found some value in Giustiniani's appreciation of sacred texts as encoded revelation.

For Giustiniani, the foreignness of scripture translated into non-Biblical languages was not a "curiosity," as Erasmus would have it, but an additional pathway into the mysteries concealed behind scripture's outward appearance. The dedicatory letter that opens the *Psalterium* is, in part, a plea to Pope Leo X to fund Giustiniani's effort to produce a polyglot Bible, but it is also a prefatory statement about why the "decanting" of scripture matters.<sup>81</sup> It begins by announcing the purpose of the book's parallel column format:

I am aware, blessed father, that news has reached your ears of...this tool of the sacred law in which we would publish in a single edited volume each of five principal languages—Hebrew, Chaldean, Greek, Latin, and Arabic—making conspicuous the structure of the correspondence between the words. Obviously, this was a task to which my personal powers were unequal but to which our profession is especially well suited. Nothing so befits the priest as the explanation and translation of sacred texts.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Giustiniani published the letter in successive translations in the five languages of the *Psalterium*, sigs. Aii<sup>r</sup>-Aiiii<sup>r</sup>. The Latin version of the letter is transcribed in William Roscoe and Luigi Bossi, *Vita e pontificato di Leone X* (Milan: Sonzogno, 1816), 169-70.

<sup>82</sup> "Scio pater beatissime perlatum ad aures tuas iam diu laborasse nos, quo utrumque sacrae legis / instrumentum quinque praecipuis linguis, hebraea, chaldaea, graeca, latina, & arabica, in unum / redactum corpus, conspicua verborum sibi invicem respondentium structura ederemus. / Opus nimirum ut meis

The *Psalterium* is constructed to make visually apparent the correspondence (*respondentium*) between words in the different languages. To follow Giustiniani, the identification and structuring of such correspondences is the product of professional competencies—translation and scriptural commentary—proper to the priesthood. But what exactly makes for a “correspondence”? Although Giustiniani does not define an interpretive method here, he comes closest when speaking about how the several languages presented in the *Psalterium* strike the reader’s eye:

...but it is not so much from elegance as from faith that one word corresponds to another word and one sense to another sense. In fact, these barbaric figures, clipped and circumlocutory, which the clarity of our Latin rejects, *are pregnant with mysteries and sacraments*. Whether or not our effort here will soon *bear fruit within the catholic mother* over whom you [Leo] worthily preside, it has been a pleasure attempting to make this Davidic psalter...<sup>83</sup>

Giustiniani’s claim that correspondences of sense and word are grounded ultimately in faith, as opposed to elegance, is yet another indication of his debt to Lefèvre’s “two-fold literal sense” of scripture. But then Giustiniani makes a turn, switching from a predominantly philological argument to a defense of exotic translations of scripture essentially on account of their strangeness. The “*barbarae figurae*”—and here I take Giustiniani to refer both to the foreignness of the language *and* the brutish appearance of the shapes as they strike an unaccustomed eye—are incommensurate with familiar Latin letters, what—to extend Giustiniani’s metaphor—we could call “*nativae*

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viribus impar, ita nostre professioni, vel maxime congruens. Nihil / enim aequae sacerdoti convenit, quam sacrarum literarum expositio et interpretatio.”

<sup>83</sup> “...non tam ut eleganter, quam ut ex fide, verba responderent / verbis, sensaque sensibus. Ipsae enim barbarae figurae, incisaque & circuitus, quae omnia nostri huius latini candor/ respuit, foeta sunt mysteriis & sacramentis. An vero noster hic labor fructum aliquem sit pariturus, in catholica/ matre cui ipse digne praesides, libuit periculum facere hoc Daudico psalterio...” My emphasis.

figurae.” These foreign shapes are extrinsic to the native system, but even in their incomprehensible forms they contain “mysteries and sacraments” of the faith that are not entirely available through the more familiar language. The implication of Giustiniani’s claim is that those professionally equipped to translate the scripture, can draw these mysteries out of the “pregnant” linguistic components by translating them from their foreign and incommensurate form into a native form. That Bishop Ugoni was attending to Giustiniani’s distinction and intentionally pursuing the “barbaric” and its attendant pregnancies of meaning is suggested by his decision to excerpt almost exclusively from the *Psalterium*’s Arabic text, the only non-Latin Psalm text that the *Psalterium* did not pair with a Latin translation.

In the *Psalterium*’s preface, we have a nexus of themes and images that clearly informed Ugoni’s planning of the studio’s visual program. Giustiniani’s metaphor for the revelation awaiting the translator is one of pregnancy, and he reiterates this image when he expresses his hope that his *Psalterium* will “bear fruit within the catholic mother” that Leo protects. These are the terms of Incarnation, when Christ took on flesh in the Virgin’s womb and the absolute foreignness of the Divinity was translated into humanity’s native terms. Giustiniani’s contention—one Ugoni evidently appreciated to some degree—was that the scholarly organization and reorganization of the superficial appearances of scripture could extract mysteries closed within language and that these acts of translation could affect a Nativity of the Word.

### **Concealment and Revelation**

Ugoni composed the inscriptions for his studio from fragments of verses found in four psalms and taken predominantly from the Arabic text, but also from the Hebrew and the Aramaic, in Giustiniani's *Psalterium*. The contents of those verses relate, in varying degrees, to the scene depicted on the ceiling and to the encoded nature of scripture, particularly of the Hebrew Bible as it was understood by Christians to contain types and symbols that would find their full meaning in Christ's Incarnation, his sacrificial death, and the life of the Church. It must be admitted that the verses as a group do not present a unified theme that could be distinguished easily from the general concerns of the Psalms as a whole. Nor do the four psalms in questions—Psalms 36(37), 49(50), 77(78), and 118(119)—constitute a common liturgical grouping. Based on the fame of certain verses that Ugoni selected as source material for some inscriptions, they evidently were not chosen at random, and certain of the verses even contain themes that relate to Ugoni's biography, such as his role as a "shepherd" of the Church. Still, the content of the verses does not seem to be enough to define the selections as a coherent program. If, however, we consider the critical commentaries that Giustiniani and others applied to the psalms from which Ugoni excerpted, it becomes clear that the chosen psalms all concern the occlusion of divine truth for humanity's benefit and that truth's ultimate revelation for those prepared to receive it.

The first three (or four) inscriptions in the sequence introduce the theme of divinely-sanctioned delays of cognition. To grasp this, it is helpful to turn to Augustine's commentary on that psalm in his influential *Enarrationes in psalmos*. This psalm, and



particularly the early verses from which Ugoni excerpted, promises the eventual punishment of the wicked and the ultimate vindication of the righteous. Augustine's commentary on the text begins with a preamble that redirects attention from the promise of justice to an explanation of why God chooses to delay certain outcomes, such as the meting out of justice or the acquisition of knowledge about the Divinity.<sup>84</sup> Augustine explains Christ's reluctance to speak in specific terms about the "day or hour" of the Day of Judgment as the proof of Christ's wisdom as a teacher:

But because it was not for our good to know that, which however was known to Him [Christ], Who came indeed to teach us, though not to teach us that which it was not good for us to know, He not only, as a teacher, taught us something, but also as a teacher, left something untaught. For, as a teacher, He knew how both to teach us what was good for us, and not to teach us what was injurious.

God's decision to leave humanity partially ignorant, Augustine continues, only appears deceptive from certain, limited positions within the flow of human history:

Now what is meant by "causes us not to know [the Day of Judgment]? Conceals it, so that what is not profitable for us to have told be not communicated. This is what I said of the good teacher knowing what to communicate, what to keep back: as we read that some things He postponed.

This postponement is productive, as Augustine explains, because it creates circumstances where an individual's faith can be tested and increased. The commentary recounts Peter's denial of Christ and Abraham's near-sacrifice of Isaac as examples of how God's decision to leave one in ignorance can serve productive ends.

The second set of four inscriptions, taken from Psalm 77(78) as we have seen, begins by referring to the psalmist's declared intention to encrypt his speech. Inscriptions

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<sup>84</sup> *Expositions on the Book of Psalms by S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, translated with notes and indices, vol. 2, Psalms XXXVII-LII* (Oxford: John Henry Parker; F. and J. Rivington, London, 1848). Augustine, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Opera Omnia. Enarrationes in psalmos*, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, 1845), 36.I.1.

6 and 7 refer to verses that were held to be foremost among those “parables” and “propositions from the beginning” that the psalm’s opening lines announce. Verses 16 and 25 treat God’s provision of sustenance for his people while they wandered in the desert: the former verse recalls the rock that released streams of water when struck by Moses’s rod, the latter recounts the fall of manna from heaven. Interpretations of these episodes ranged in their specificity, but all major patristic commentators understood these figures as heralding Christ. The *Enarrationes* interpreted the rock of verse 16 as Christ “who, like the rod, drew near to himself the wood of the Passion, in order that grace might flow forth for those who believe.” The psalmist declares the manna to be the “food of angels,” and the *Enarrationes* extended this interpretation by superimposing the language of incarnation and nativity from the first chapter of John’s gospel: the manna “truly is the food of angels, the incorruptible Word of God that nourishes incorruptibly, and which became flesh and dwelt among us so that man might eat.”<sup>85</sup>

Rather than provide an expository gloss for psalm 77(78), Giustiniani appended the Greek poem (together with two separate Latin translations of it) describing David’s supersession of all other ancient prophets (figure 37).<sup>86</sup> This gloss-poem functions as an excursus on the mysteriousness of the psalter as a whole, and we have already encountered it in connection with Erasmus’s dismissal of Giustiniani’s *Psalterium* as pretending to be “an oracle delivered right from the tripod at Delphi.” The *Psalterium*’s

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<sup>85</sup> J.-P. Minge, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, vols. 36-37 (Paris, 1841), Ps. 77:16, “Ad quem velut virga lignum passionis accessit, ut emanaret credentibus gratia;” Ps. 77:25, “...qui vere cibus est Angelorum, quos Dei Verbum incorruptibiles incorruptibiliter pascit; quod ut manducaret homo, caro facium est, et habitavit in nobis.” This last comment paraphrases John 1:14.

<sup>86</sup> The two Latin translations were produced by Iacobus Furnius and Baptista Cigala, the men who Giustiniani here credits for their corrections of the *Psalterium*’s Greek and Latin, respectively. Interest in the poem and in its relation to Psalm 77(78) may have been stirred recently when Aldus Manutius’s Greek *Psalterion* (ca. 1496-98) published the poem as a preamble to the psalm.

lack of *scholia* for this mystery-filled psalm is striking, and it emphasizes Giustiniani's decision to place the poem not at the beginning of the psalm but adjacent to the verses Ugoni would excerpt, concerning the miracles God worked on behalf of the Israelites in the desert.<sup>87</sup> The oracular foreknowledge imputed to David's poetry frames these figures of Christ as elements of a divine plan intentionally encoded in the language of the psalm from the moment of its inspired authorship.

As the cycle draws to a close, the ordering and the composition of the final two inscriptions become more complicated. Ugoni composed the ninth inscription's lower line from two fragments in the Aramaic translation of Psalm 49(50) (figure 38). These two excerpts stand at the beginning and end of a series of verses that relate God's lack of interest in the Israelites' animal sacrifices, and if we refer again to the *Enarrationes* for a sense of the interpretative tradition, we see that they "foretell of the New Testament, wherein all the old sacrifices have ceased. They were foretelling of a certain future sacrifice, by whose blood we were to be cleansed."<sup>88</sup> And as mentioned above, Ugoni's chosen passage includes God referring to himself with the "I am" construction familiar from the Burning Bush, and it is preceded by the declaration that "God shall come manifestly..." linking Christ's Incarnation and his sacrificial death to God's enigmatic speech on Mount Horeb.

The studio's final inscription returns to the *Psalterium*'s Arabic translation, composing its lines, like the upper line of the ninth inscription, from fragments of Psalm

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<sup>87</sup> There is only one word-specific gloss for Psalm 77(78), concerning the toponym Tanis.

<sup>88</sup> J.-P. Minge, *Patrologiae Latinae*, vol. 36: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Opera Omnia. Enarrationes in psalmos* (Paris, 1841), col. 576, pt. 16: "Praenuntiat Testamentum novum, ubi omnia illa sacrificia vetera cessaverunt. Erant enim tunc praenuntiantia futurum quoddam sacrificium, cujus sanguine mundaremur."

118(119). Like Psalm 77(78), this was another famously “coded” psalm. With 176 verses, it is the longest in the psalter, and it is constructed of twenty-two octaves. Each octave is keyed to one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, so that each of the eight lines of a given octave begins with the same letter. The acrostic form of the psalm, however, was only the beginning of its complexities.

Giustiniani’s gloss at the beginning of Psalm 118(119) describes the themes buried deep within the text’s structure. First noting the acrostic format, he then turns to the words themselves:

There have been among the Latins, both ancient and modern, those who observed that every verse of these twenty-two octaves (with only one exception) contains at least one of the following twelve words: *via*, *lex*, *testimonium*, *mandatum*, *iustificatio*, *iudicium*, *iustitia*, *sermo*, *eloquium*, *verbum*, *veritas*, and *bonum*. And they have said all this in harmony, and according to divine law it is accepted that these things are equivalent; there is one substance but there are many names, and many types of names. And this also was first observed by the Hebrews, who were not content to have the dignity of their law constrained by those twelve names alone, and so they claim seventy names of the law, seventy names of the synagogue, and seventy names of God. And to these three they also impute equivalence. Those names that I considered worth listing omit many that they adduce...And so, here read the seventy names of God in cabalistic fragments...<sup>89</sup>

The gloss then lists these seventy “fragments” in their Hebrew forms and translates them all into Latin, and similarly lists and translations follow for the names of the synagogue and the names of the law.

The invocation of “cabalistic fragments” and the initial list of these in Giustiniani’s gloss appear adjacent to the columns that contain the two passages from which Ugoni constructed part of the ninth and the entire tenth inscriptions (figure 39). Earlier, I suggested that Ugoni’s decision to excerpt from the opening lines of Psalm

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<sup>89</sup> Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. X<sup>r</sup> and Xii<sup>r</sup>. Lefevre’s *Quincuplex Psalterium* (1509) had already published tables of the octaves that noted, verse by verse, the occurrence of the twelve words within Psalm 118(119).

77(78) may have been spurred by those verses' proclamation about the mysterious and occluded nature of that psalm's mode of discourse. The excerpts from Psalm 118(119), however, represent the first occasion when we can observe Ugoni pointing to—perhaps acknowledging his debt, perhaps seeking authorization for—his own mode of fragmentary composition. And it is worth noting here that the *Psalterium* was not the only book in which Ugoni could have read Giustiniani expounding on the spiritual revelations to be produced by disassembling and recomposing scriptural text. Prior to the *Psalterium*, Giustiniani had published a small treatise entitled “A prayer, full of piety, to omnipotent God composed from the seventy-two divine names in Hebrew and Latin, together with a brief interpretive commentary” (*Precatio pietatis plena ad Deum omnipotentem composita ex duobus et septuaginta nominibus divinis hebraicis et latinis una cum interprete commentariolo*).<sup>90</sup> The “seventy-two names of God” were produced by means of a cabalistic exercise performed on the text of Exodus 34:19-21, three successive verses that describe the parting of the Red Sea and that each contain precisely 72 letters in their original Hebrew.<sup>91</sup> The method proceeded as follows. To form the first of the seventy-two names, one combined the first letter of the first verse, the last letter of the second verse, and the first letter of the third verse. The second name was then formed from the second letter of the first verse, the penultimate letter of the second verse, and the second letter of the third verse. This progression continued until all seventy-two three-letter names had been composed (figure 40). Once he has described the procedure of

<sup>90</sup> The *Precatio* is not dated, but in it Giustiniani announces his still unfinished work on the *Psalterium*. A publication date of 1513 is commonly accepted.

<sup>91</sup> The “seventy-two names of God” had appeared in Johannes Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* in 1494, and this is the most likely source for Giustiniani's acquaintance with the exercise. Cevolotto suggests, however, that Giustiniani sought to connect the exercise to the authority of medieval Hebraists in a way that Reuchlin never did. See Cevolotto, 38.

excerpting and recombining, Giustiniani pauses to confirm, in language highly evocative of the *Psalterium*'s "pregnant" texts, that the procedure can be reversed by creating a table of the seventy-two names that, when read in the proper direction, will allow the scripture of Exodus to "emerge" (*emerget*) and to "issue forth" (*exiet*).<sup>92</sup> The text of the *Precatio* then continues with a commentary on the Trinitarian significance of the three-letter names, each of which, Giustiniani claims, relates directly to a specific epithet of God in the Psalms.

That Ugoni was aware of the "cabalistic fragments" in the *Psalterium*'s gloss is beyond doubt, and his method of excerpting bits of text from specific verses in order to create new and enigmatic texts bears a strong likeness to the operations proposed in the *Precatio*. Even so, Ugoni's inscriptions do not show him to have been particularly interested in following Giustiniani's specific exercises: Ugoni excerpted no verse from the *Psalterium* for which Giustiniani had provided a verse-specific gloss; none of the "cabalistic fragments" from the gloss to Psalm 118(119) appear in the studio's one inscription that uses Hebrew letters; and Ugoni's new composites do not aim to recreate any legible word or phrase, much less an individual name of God. In forming the inscriptions for his studio walls, Ugoni was not devising magical incantations. Rather, his compositions are pictures of language that resist being read and that point beyond their own inert signs to the meaning embodied in the incarnate Word.

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<sup>92</sup> Giustiniani, *Precatio*, sig. Bii<sup>r</sup>.

### Composita Ex

As anyone reading Giustiniani's published writings would have been aware, a particular fecundity could be seen to inhere in texts produced by stitching together excerpts of sacred scripture, even—and perhaps especially—when the newly composed texts lacked discursive intelligibility. This creation of textual pregnancy is precisely what is insinuated in the title of Giustiniani's *Precatio pietatis plena ad Deum omnipotentem composita ex duobus et septuaginta nominibus divinis hebraicis et latinis una cum interprete commentariolo*, where the prayer attains its plenitude as a result of being composed from (*composita ex*) all seventy-two of the three-letter names of God written end-to-end as one incomprehensibly long word.<sup>93</sup> The premise here is very close to Giustiniani's subsequent description of the *Psalterium*'s "barbaric letters, clipped phrases and sentences," that Giustiniani found so "pregnant with mysteries and sacraments," as well as his notion of the cabalistic fragment found in his gloss to Psalm 118(119).

Of course, Ugoni's similar method of composing from fragments would not have been the only trouble for a viewer-reader invited into the bishop's studio. The decision to incorporate multiple Semitic languages, and, in one instance, the dissimulation of the language under consideration, helped to secure the incomprehensibility already begun by the process of fragmenting and recombining the discontinuous components of the Psalm text. With all of these linguistic complications acting in concert, it seems impossible that the inscriptions could have communicated their complex system of references to anyone

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<sup>93</sup> The names, as Giustiniani acknowledges, are themselves fragmentary since they lack their vowel markings. See Giustiniani, *Precatio*, sig. B<sup>2</sup>v: "Verum magna insurgit difficultas, de ipsorum nominum lectione. Apud hebreos namque litere omnes alphabetarie consonantes habentur, nulle autem vocales. Vocalibus autem puris dicere, legere, aut proferre, quippiam, impossibile est. . . . Quas autem quotae notas ad sui lectionem exigant suapte natura divina nomina que singula tribus tantum consonantibus constant non facile reperias."

other than Ugoni. His manner of selecting and recomposing the fragments was so idiosyncratic that it would be nearly impossible for anyone else to understand the inscriptions' logic without knowledge of the source text. Ugoni's manipulations of the *Psalterium* are highly self-reflexive, and this is not especially surprising. Much recent scholarship on the Renaissance studio has emphasized its function as a space of display and self-representation for its occupants, be they scholars, collectors, artists, or any combination of these.<sup>94</sup> The idiosyncratic construction of the individual inscriptions should not, however, lead us to discount Ugoni's studio and its mode of construction as solipsistic or untethered from a wider culture of reading, writing, and picture-making in operation on the Lombard plain during the early decades of the sixteenth century. That is to say, while a guest to Ugoni's studio may not have been able to read its highly contrived inscriptions, that same guest still may have recognized Ugoni's fragmentary mode of composition as a way of veiling something of profound significance.

In the same years that Moretto was at work on Ugoni's studio decoration, Parmigianino executed a portrait of Galeazzo Sanvitale, Count of Fontanellato, in which the count displays a bronze medallion bearing the number "72" (figure 41).<sup>95</sup> Ute Davitt Asmus connected the medallion's puzzling inscription to the importance placed on the

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<sup>94</sup> For some of the more significant recent studies and for further bibliography, see Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Campbell, *Cabinet of Eros*, esp. 29-57; and Michael Cole and Mary Pardo, "Origins of the Studio," in *Inventions of the Studio, Renaissance to Romanticism*, eds. Cole and Pardo (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1-35.

<sup>95</sup> The portrait bears on its reverse the inscription "OPVS DE MAZOLLA 1524", a date that fits well with the painting's style and with the period when Parmigianino is believed to have frescoed the *camerino* in the Rocca Sanvitale for Count Galeazzo. See Mary Vaccaro, *Parmigianino: The Paintings* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi & Co., 2002), 194-96.



number seventy-two by so-called Christian cabalists.<sup>96</sup> By the time Parmigianino painted Sanvitale's portrait, Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, and, most recently, Agostino Giustiniani had all associated that number with the name (or names) of God through numerological or linguistic manipulations. Davitt Asmus argued that the presence of God's name in this disguised form provided an analog to Parmigianino's rendering of Sanvitale's face, which, while presumably a suitable likeness of the count, she saw as also embodying the image of Christ's face as codified in the *vera icon*. It is possible that Ugoni came into contact with ideas of concealed wisdom directly from Parmigianino's art or his Parmese milieu; during 1524, Ugoni was the acting governor of Parma and likely spent substantial time in the city during 1523 and 1524.<sup>97</sup> Whatever contact Ugoni may have had with Parmigianino's circle of patrons and their views, the painter's captivating image of Sanvitale was neither the only nor the most opulent rendering of hermetic expressions to be seen in Parma. In the enigmatic inscriptions adorning the private apartments of Gioanna da Piacenza in the convent of San Paolo, Ugoni would have found a manipulation of language that—in its mode of fragmentation and recomposition—offered a ready model for his own textual manipulations a few years later.

Abbess of the Benedictine convent of San Paolo, Gioanna was fond of hosting elite visitors in her private rooms at the convent until her death and the convent's closure

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<sup>96</sup> Ute Davitt Asmus, "Fontanellato I. Sabatizzare il mondo. Parmigianinos Bildnis des Conte Galeazzo Sanvitale," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 27, no. 1 (1983): 2-40.

<sup>97</sup> Agosti and Zani, eds., *Il ritorno dei Profeti*, 17, fig. 1, reproduces a page from the ordinances published in Parma in 1524 that refers to Ugoni ("Ordines.Rever.Episcopi Phamaugustani...") on its title page. The title page is also reproduced in *Correggio e il suo tempo*, ed. M. Dall'Acqua, exh. cat. (Parma: Museo Nazionale, 1984), 141. Based on the *grida* and Ugoni's known activities in Brescia, Agosti and Zani, eds., *Il ritorno dei Profeti*, 24, surmise that Ugoni may have spent considerable portions of 1523 and 1524 in Parma.

by papal decree in 1524,<sup>98</sup> and while we have no record of Ugoni visiting Gioanna's lavishly decorated rooms, his sustained connection to Parma and his demonstrated interest in the promotion of painting within his home town make it nearly inconceivable that he was unaware of the abbess's spectacular quarters. The best known of these rooms is the Camera di San Paolo, with its vault, lunettes, and chimney painted by Correggio around 1519. Adjacent to the Camera is the so-called *camerino*, decorated some five years earlier with Alessandro Araldi's ceiling grotesques and lunette images of hieroglyphic expressions based on descriptions in Horapollo's *Hieroglyphica*.<sup>99</sup> This earlier decorative program also incorporated, beneath Araldi's hieroglyphs, a prominent intarsia frieze that surrounded the room and on each wall paired one Latin and one Greek inscription on either side of the abbess's personal device, the da Piacenza shield and a pastoral staff encircled by the *ouroboros*, itself a hieroglyph signifying eternity and wholeness (figures 42-45).

The four Latin intarsia inscriptions were pithy axiomatic quotations from ancient texts, and in this way they are directly related to the similar Latin axioms carved in the stone mantels and lintels throughout Gioanna's apartments. These Latin inscriptions take the notion of plenitude as a recurring motif. One of the Latin intarsia inscriptions quotes Virgil in declaring "IOVIS OMNIA PLENA" (*Eclogues*, III.60), and this epigram becomes the basis for a variation on Gioanna's device (Figure 44) in which the letters IO and PL appear within the *ouroboros*, a partly verbal, partly pictorial pun that can be

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<sup>98</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *The Iconography of Correggio's Camera di San Paolo* (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1961).

<sup>99</sup> Giuseppa Z. Zanichelli, *Iconologia della camera di Alessandro Araldi nel monasterio di San Paolo in Parma* (Parma: Univ. di Parma, Centro studi e archivio della comunicazione, 1979).

understood as the initials of Gioanna's name (IOANNA PLACENTIA) or, taken together with the *ouroboros*, may be rendered either as a repetition of the Jovian epigram in the *camerino* intarsia or as "IOANNAE OMNIA PLENA" (All is full of Gioanna).<sup>100</sup> The contraction and expansion of language between and among the inscriptions becomes a mechanism for the production of new meanings and a source of almost endless plenitude themselves.

The four Greek inscriptions within the *camerino*'s intarsia frieze operate differently than their Latin pairs, but it is in the Greek epigrams that the idea of Gioanna's plenitude becomes even more evident and where the closest parallels to Ugoni's inscriptions are found. All of Gioanna's Greek inscriptions are composed from the same fifteen letters, derived from the transliteration of the abbess's name into Greek (ΙΩΑΝΝΕ ΠΛΑΚΗΝΤΙΗ). The resulting epigrams do not constitute legible Greek, though some groupings of letters constitute or approximate actual words.<sup>101</sup> As Charles Dempsey has observed, the underlying principle for Gioanna's Greek inscriptions is the anagram, the desire to create many partially or potentially meaningful expressions through a reordering of the letters of a single original text. Within the abbatial apartments, the resulting anagrams take on special significance since their original text coincides with Gioanna's name, and to search out this original text is to search for Gioanna herself. Ugoni's studio inscriptions do not seem to contain such personalized anagrams; the body one is led to pursue is not Ugoni's own but that of Christ. Still, the

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<sup>100</sup> For further comments on the San Paolo intarsie and their manipulation of language see Charles Dempsey, "SVA CVIQUE MIHI MEA: The Mottos in the Camerino of Gioanna da Piacenza in the Convent of San Paolo," *The Burlington Magazine* 132, no. 1048 (July, 1990), 490-92.

<sup>101</sup> Dempsey, "The Mottos in the Camerino of Gioanna da Piacenza," 491-92.

barbarization of language for the purpose of posing the beholder with a problem of linguistic interpretation that is resolved through the identification of a text and the identification of a body is provocatively similar in these two elite private chambers.

Moretto is not known to have spent time in Parma, although his association with Ugoni and the historical ties between artists of the two cities, such as Gian Gerolamo Savoldo's residence in Parma in 1506 with the aforementioned Alessandro Araldi,<sup>102</sup> allow for the possibility that Moretto could have known about the rich play of language and imagery within the convent of San Paolo. We do have confirmation, though, of Moretto's active participation in an important commission for the choir of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo that brought him into direct contact with, and perhaps called on him to design, enigmatic images composed of fragmentary components that have been productively studied as examples of Renaissance hieroglyphic.<sup>103</sup> In December of 1528, Lorenzo Lotto sent a letter to Moretto, addressed "Carissimo da fratello," requesting that the Brescian painter assume control of a "nova impresa" that the Consorzio della Misericordia in Bergamo had commissioned from Lotto as part of his ongoing commitment to provide designs for the intarsia-makers constructing the church's wooden choir.<sup>104</sup> Lotto had first agreed some five years earlier, in 1523, to provide the Consorzio with designs for Old Testament histories, a project that soon expanded to include designs for a series of *coperti*, also in intarsia, that would bear images (sometimes incorporating

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<sup>102</sup> Agosti and Zani, "Sul Moretto nella casa Ugoni," 20.

<sup>103</sup> See Diana Galis, "Concealed Wisdom: Renaissance Hieroglyphic and Lorenzo Lotto's Bergamo *Intarsie*," *The Art Bulletin* 62, no. 3 (Sep., 1980): 363-75, as well as the author's unpublished dissertation on which the article was based, "Lorenzo Lotto: A Study of His Career and Character, with Particular Emphasis on his Emblematic and Hieroglyphic Works."

<sup>104</sup> For a reproduction and transcription of Lotto's letter to Moretto see Pietro Zampetti, ed., *Il "Libro di spese diverse" con aggiunta di lettere e d'altri documenti* (Venice and Rome: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1969), 288-90. The letter is also transcribed in Begni Redona, *Il Moretto*, 593-94.

words) that “correspond in meaning to the panels over which they [were] respectively placed,” as specified by the Consorzio.<sup>105</sup> The compositions for the *coperti*, such as the cover for the image of *The Submersion of Pharaoh’s Army in the Red Sea* (figure 46), are characterized by pictorial components notable for being “...economical and often oddly juxtaposed” that “clearly indicate some kind of ideography or rebus.”<sup>106</sup> Corresponding as it does to its underlying historical scene, the enigmatic image of the *coperto* simultaneously conceals that history within a disjointed language of images and offers a pathway toward an interpretation of that history that penetrates to its most meaningful sense.

The exact nature of the intarsia designs for which Moretto received payment from the Consorzio in April of the following year is not specified in Lotto’s letter, nor is it stated in the register of payment by the Consorzio. Still, the exchange tells us something of Moretto’s reputation and capabilities in the years immediately following his work on Ugoni’s studio. Evidently, Lotto recognized Moretto as an artist who could act as a proxy for himself when dealing with the complex, at times highly esoteric, program of the Bergamo intarsie, suggesting that the Brescian possessed a facility with the sort of allegorical and symbolic logics at issue in the program’s imagery. Given the familiar tone of Lotto’s letter to Moretto, it cannot be ruled out that the two artists had specifically discussed such matters before Lotto left Bergamo until 1525. The relatively short period of a few months between Lotto’s initial request and the Consorzio’s record of payment also indicates that Moretto had little difficulty in executing the desired compositions for

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<sup>105</sup> Galis, “Concealed Wisdom,” 364.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 365.

the Consorzio's intarsia-makers. The logic of recomposing disparate pictorial elements was nothing new for Moretto by 1528. Moretto's experience painting in Ugoni's studio had steeped him in a mode of compositional thinking that favored the expansive interpretive possibilities of the discontinuous fragment.

Whereas the letters Moretto painted on the studio walls were almost certainly arranged for him by Ugoni, it is likely that the painter had much greater liberty in devising the program's human figures. In this aspect of the decoration, Moretto chose to pursue a similar mode of excerption and productive recontextualization. The fourth, sixth, and tenth prophets in the sequence of personifications are all slight variations on three of the twelve apostles appearing in Moretto's *Last Supper*, recently completed for the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in San Giovanni Evangelista (figure 47). As is frequently noted, Moretto's *Last Supper* resembles Leonardo's *Last Supper* in many respects, and although Moretto incorporated none of Leonardo's figures into his own painting, the reputation of the Milanese fresco as the preeminent example of painting's ability to capture internal human psychology through external posture and gesture surely effected Moretto's inventions of bodily expression in his own version.<sup>107</sup> It is significant, therefore, that the three apostles Moretto extracted from his *Last Supper* for re-use in Ugoni's studio show little external sign of their psychological state but rather are absorbed in their own act of looking.

The fourth prophet (figure 6) is a turbaned version of the apostle seated second from the left in the earlier lunette (figure 48). Brightly lit from the viewer's left so that his

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<sup>107</sup> For a discussion of Leonardo's physiognomic studies and the historiography surrounding this aspect of the *Last Supper* specifically, see Michael W. Kwakelstein, "The Lost Book on 'moti mentali,'" *Achademia Leonardi Vinci* 6 (1993): 56-66.

face is cast in deep shadow, the elderly apostle supports his head with one arm as he considers Christ and the mysterious utterances that have thrown many of the apostles into frenzied debate. This figure type is one that Moretto repeated in other compositions of the middle and late 1520s, and in each instance he used the posture to describe the figure's acts of rapt visual attention to a mysterious, sacred event. Around 1526, one of the witnesses to Christ's self-revelation in the *Supper at Emmaus* stares, head in hand, at Christ's transfiguring countenance (figure 49), and about a year later, Moretto depicted Joseph in this same posture, gazing past the cloudy boundary demarcating the physical from the celestial to witness Mary's coronation (figure 50).<sup>108</sup> Using a truncated version of this figure type for one of the prophets in Ugoni's studio, Moretto includes in the studio's program an expression of visual wonderment and perplexity that reinforces the theme of the *Moses before the Burning Bush* but that does not recall one narrative or one personage alone.

The sixth prophet (figure 8) is distinctive not only for his fur hat but also for the unusual disposition of his right hand that both supports his head and acts as a screen from behind which he warily looks out. Having already identified the scroll this figure holds as a reference to the issue of water from the rock for the welfare of the wandering Israelites, the figure's gesture could be taken to express an awestruck reaction to this miraculous event, but in its original context, it conveyed the wonder of an awestruck apostle looking toward Christ from the right end of the *Last Supper's* long table (figure 51). Moretto also

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<sup>108</sup> For the *Supper at Emmaus*, see Begni Redona, 192-95. The date of the SS. Nazaro e Celso *Coronation of the Virgin* has been controversial. For the argument that would situate it in the latter half of the 1520s, see Ballarin, "La cappella del Sacramento nella chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista a Brescia," 188.

retained this apostle's left hand, which once secured a drinking glass, to now secure the unfurled scroll to the rim of the fictive oculus in Ugoni's studio.

The unlikely source of the third figure taken from the *Last Supper* and placed into Ugoni's studio confirms Moretto's attention to the transformative potential of an excerpt's context. The studio's lone back-turned figure (figure 12), whose inscription is the last in the sequence of scrolls and whose pose seems designed to return the prophets' inspiration back to the heavens, is a benign version of the *Last Supper's* Judas (figure 52). The lost right profiles, the inverted V-shaped notch in the collar, and the left elbow jutting rearward toward the viewer make the source unmistakable.

Moretto's most significant recontextualization for the studio, though, is the ceiling image of *Moses before the Burning Bush*, a composite that joined together elements of arguably the two most important altarpieces in Brescia at the moment of the room's decoration. Both of these altarpieces were very recent commissions for the city, and both depicted experiences of witnessing the divine re-animation of sacred bodies. The figure of Mary in the Burning Bush, with her red tunic, blue mantle, and white veil looping behind her as she gazes upward toward the right, is nearly the identical figure that Moretto executed contemporaneously in the *Assumption of the Virgin* for the cathedral's high altar (figures 2 and 53). The similarity between the two figures has been noted before, but it should be added that as Brescia's vicar, Ugoni had direct oversight not only over Moretto's work in his private residence but also over the cathedral's altarpiece and that these simultaneous projects may have been planned to draw Ugoni's residence



(which was not the official episcopal residence) into closer association with the city's seat of episcopal authority.

Moretto's Moses, finally, modifies a figure found in Titian's *Resurrection* polyptych (figure 54), and this emulation of Titian's figure marks Moretto's first response in a prolonged series of reactions to the discomfort that Titian's altarpiece prompted among Brescian painters.<sup>109</sup> Chapter Three will address the polyptych and Moretto's subsequent responses in greater detail. Presently, it is sufficient to note that Titian's painted image purported to offer the beholder an experience equivalent to personally witnessing Christ's resurrected body. Moretto's Moses is an older version of Titian's Roman soldier, who now strides forward with the aid of a staff. The broken branch sprouting new growth appears in both images, and in each, the ultimate object of attention, lofted high above, is the incarnate body of Christ. By appropriating the witnessing tomb guard for his own image of the benighted Moses, Moretto addressed Titian's insinuation of visual access to Christ by means of a virtuoso performance of painterly verisimilitude, turning the claim into a counter-statement on the inability of the coherent physical image to grant access to divine truth.

The desire for revelation and access to the incarnate body of Christ permeated the studio decoration. But a principal theme of the room's program was the inevitable, even divinely-ordained, mediation of that access through images and words, both of which are shown to require interpretation, contextualization, and commentary. Moretto's activity in

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<sup>109</sup> Titian's polyptych for the church of SS. Nazaro and Celso, also referred to as the Averoldi polyptych, was commissioned by Altobello Averoldi, a member of the Brescian nobility and the papal nuncio to Venice who was responsible for Ugioni's return to Brescia and the investigation of the city's witch trials of the preceding decade. For a timeline of the commission and completion of the polyptych, with the associated documents, see Elena Lucchesi Ragni and Giovanni Agosti, eds., *Il Polittico Averoldi di Tiziano restaurato* (Brescia: Grafo, 1991).

the studio was not the first occasion when he had developed his own work with an eye toward another painter's art, but the impulse to compile his own images from elements of other images—and to subvert the notion of painting's tendency toward embodiment—would only increase after this moment.

## Chapter Three

### ***The Massacre of the Innocents: Clarity, Obfuscation, and the all'Antica***

#### **A New Altar**

In the autumn of 1530, seventeen-year-old Giovanni Innocenzo Casari lay dying in the care of the Augustinian canons who administered the Brescian church of San Giovanni Evangelista. The branch of the Casari family to which the young man belonged had been active in the city as goldsmiths for more than a century, although Giovanni Innocenzo's father, Giovanni Battista, had foregone the family trade to become a notary of considerable reputation.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, two of the youth's uncles had more than matched his father's success by rising to the highest levels of leadership among the canons at San Giovanni Evangelista, and at the moment of Giovanni Innocenzo's death, these uncles, named Innocenzo and Giovanni, respectively held the positions of general and provost among the church's Augustinian canons. In these first decades of the sixteenth century, the Casari was a Brescian family on the ascent, which made the fatal illness of Giovanni Innocenzo in late 1530 all the more threatening. His close male relatives all having preceded him in death or entered ruled life at San Giovanni Evangelista, Giovanni Innocenzo was the last of his family line. The youth's wealth

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<sup>110</sup> The most comprehensive history of the Casari family, including its involvement in Brescia's goldsmith trade, is the cursory biographical sketch written by Paolo Guerrini in the prefatory remarks to "Innocenzo Casari. Il sacco di Brescia del 1512 e gli avvenimenti militari del 1513," in *Le cronache bresciane inedite, dei secoli XV-XIX*, vol. 2, transcr. and annot. Paolo Guerrini (Brescia, 1927), 262-64. The city of Brescia honored Giovanni Battista, the notary, by paying the expense for his funeral, which involved depositing his remains in Nave, some five miles northeast of Brescia. See Pandolfo Nassino's account transcribed in Savy, *Manducation per visum*, 234-35.

would go to the Augustinians, and with the proceeds of that gift, his uncles would commission a new altar dedicated to the Holy Innocents and adorned with Moretto's singular image of the Innocents' massacre (figure 55), likely completed by the time of the altar's consecration in December 1532.<sup>111</sup>

The contract for the altarpiece has not survived, and yet the documentation related to the development of the altar, its consecration, and its ultimate relocation provides us with one of the richest historical perspectives onto any site for which Moretto painted. From a statement dictated by Innocenzo Casari, the canons' general, we learn something of his nephew's priorities. In addition to the altar table and its furnishings, Giovanni Innocenzo wished that a tomb be created beneath the altar to house his remains as well as those of his parents and his sister, all of whom had died recently.<sup>112</sup> He also requested that a flame burn perpetually above the altar and that a daily mass be performed there, in addition to regular masses for the welfare of his soul and the souls of his family members.<sup>113</sup> These directives suggest that Giovanni Innocenzo intended for the altar to function as the centerpiece of a mortuary shrine within San Giovanni Evangelista, where regular prayers would be performed for the souls of the Casari family.

In addition to his uncle's report, we have independent evidence that the young Casari's desire to establish a liturgical space to expedite his time in Purgatory was honored. Accounting records confirm that the youth had willed the Augustinians a house, and rent from that property was still paying for the annual performance of Gregorian

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<sup>111</sup> Giovanni Innocenzo Casari's testament is transcribed in Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 232. The date of the consecration ceremony is recorded by Nassino, for which see *ibid.*, 234-35.

<sup>112</sup> See Nassino's comment transcribed in *ibid.*, 234-35.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 232-34, esp. 233.

masses at the altar of the Holy Innocents in the seventeenth century.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, the inscribed *tabula ansata* depicted at the top of the altarpiece ensured that future generations would recognize the altar's funerary origins (figure 56). Hanging by a crimson ribbon above the infant Christ, the tablet bears the words "INNOCENTES ET RECTI ADHESERUNT MIHI" (The innocent and the upright have adhered to me), a quotation from the last lines of Psalm 24(25) that invoke the Lord's aid for the besieged Israelites. Of course, the opening word of the inscription, "innocentes," simultaneously labels the altarpiece's narrative subject, the altar's dedication, and the identity of the altar's donor, but the inscription also held special relevance for an altar with funerary associations.<sup>115</sup> As the Augustinian canons and anyone else who regularly prayed the Divine Office would have known, Psalm 24(25) formed part of the Matins readings for the Office of the Dead (a text present in every Breviary and every Book of Hours) and likely would have been recited over Giovanni Innocenzo's body by the canons in the hours before his burial, and regularly thereafter.<sup>116</sup> The inscription both elicits a memory

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<sup>114</sup> The relevant record, housed at the Archivio di Stato di Milano, is cited and summarized in *ibid.*, 232.

<sup>115</sup> Gabriele Neher, "Moretto and Romanino: Religious Painting in Brescia, 1510-1550. Identity in the Shadow of *La Serenissima*," Ph.D. diss., University of Warwick, 1999, 76-77, is among the few scholars to have considered the altarpiece's inscription in relation to its liturgical context. She notes that "this [Psalm] phrase is not part of the mass for the day, and does also not appear in any of the local offices for the Feast of the Holy Innocents," though she does not consider the Psalm in relation to the Office of the Dead.

<sup>116</sup> Within the Office of the Dead, Psalm 24 is the second psalm reading in the second nocturn of Matins. For an explanation of the Office of the Dead and a useful registry of the readings comprising it, see Roger S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art*, exh. cat. (New York: Braziller, 1997), 117-32, 142-43. For an account of the late medieval ideal of Christian death including the role of the Office of the Dead, see also Wieck, "The Death Desired: Books of Hours and the Medieval Funeral," in Edelgard E. DuBruck and Barbara I. Gusick, eds., *Death and Dying in the Middle Ages* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 431-476. With regard to the recitation of the Office of the Dead by laity, that is, outside a liturgical context, it is relevant to remember that the Office of the Dead was the one text in private Books of Hours that was precisely the same as it appeared in the breviaries used for the recitation of the office during the liturgy.

of Giovanni Innocenzo's funerary rites and prompts the viewer to perform the specific kind of prayer that would aid his soul's journey toward heaven.

While the foregoing suggests that Giovanni Innocenzo's powerful uncles fulfilled the spirit of his final wishes, it seems clear that the project developed in ways calculated to associate the altar with the uncles themselves. A carved inscription that still flanks the altar in its modern configuration announces: "Be advised, here lies Giovanni Casari to whom life had given the name of the Innocents" (MONET, SITVS IOAN(N)ES HIC IACET CASARIUS CVI VITA NO(M)EN DEDERAT IN(N)OCE(N)TIU(M)). Much of this language is formulaic for a burial marker, and yet the indirect identification of the deceased seems to encourage misidentification with one or the other of his relatives. Furthermore, it is not even clear that Giovanni Innocenzo was, in fact, buried at the site of the altar he endowed. The sixteenth-century Brescian chronicler Pandolfo Nassino recorded that Giovanni Innocenzo was interred not in San Giovanni Evangelista but in the community of Nave (five miles northeast of Brescia) at the expense of one of his uncles.<sup>117</sup> If Nassino's report is accurate, it does not necessarily imply malice on the part of the elder Casari; occasionally, fear of plague spreading through Brescia had required a cessation of burials inside the city walls. Even so, the uncles were eager to use their

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<sup>117</sup> Paolo Guerrini, "L'altare dei Santi Innocenti in S. Giovanni e la famiglia Casari," in *Illustrazione bresciana* 6, no. 81 (Jan. 1, 1907), 7-9; reproduced in *Pagine sparse. Vol. III. Araldica. Miscellanea* (Brescia, 1984), 14-15. It should be noted that the transcription of Nassino's passage included in Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 234-35 (itself a transcription from Guerrini's transcription), omits the phrase naming the uncle as the party responsible for Giovanni Innocenzo's burial in Nave. The passage, as transcribed by Guerrini, reads: "...et lo filiolo suo [the son of Giovanni Battista Casari, i.e. Giovanni Innocenzo Casari] fu condotto, a quello se diceva, ala terra de Navi, luntana dela città de Bressa circa milia cinque, per mezo del Rev.do padre frate...[lacuna in Nassino's manuscript], qual era di Casari, fratello del sudeto meser Jo. Baptista."

administrative influence to promote the altar, with its dedicatory associations to their own name saints, and to elevate its importance within the church and the city.

In late December 1532, two years after Giovanni Innocenzo's death, the canons performed an elaborate procession through Brescia's streets to celebrate the altar's consecration.<sup>118</sup> On the night of December 27-28—that is, during the final hours of the feast of Saint John Evangelist and the vigil of the feast of the Holy Innocents—the canons, accompanied by the members of the flagellant confraternity associated with the church and other men bearing lamps and torches, carried relics of the Holy Innocents through the city. As Innocenzo would later attest, these holy remains comprised “three intact bodies, clothed in the very shirts they had been wearing when the iniquitous King Herod ordered his executioners to murder them.”<sup>119</sup> When the Innocents' bodies returned to San Giovanni Evangelista, they were deposited in their new altar “at the junction of the pulpit and a [nave] pier.”<sup>120</sup> This single extant description of the altar's original location does not allow for certainty about the orientation of Moretto's panel, but it is reasonable to imagine that the altar and the altarpiece would have faced the church's main portal at the west end of the nave. However the altarpiece was positioned, it evidently competed for attention with the church's high altar. During his apostolic visit to Brescia in 1580,

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<sup>118</sup> A discrepancy exists between Nassino's account, which dates the procession to 1532, and the transcribed statement of Innocenzo Casari, which places the event in his third term as general of the canons, therefore in 1533.

<sup>119</sup> Savy, *Manducation per visum*, 234: “...tribus corpusculis integris, indutis proprijs camiseis ut a carnificibus fuerunt trucidati iussu iniquissimi Herodii regis...”

<sup>120</sup> Nassino describes the altar as located “al incontro del pulpito ad uno pilastro”; see Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 234. Nassino's account is also transcribed in Guerrini, “L'altare dei Santi Innocenti in S. Giovanni e la famiglia Casari.”

Cardinal Archbishop Carlo Borromeo ordered the altar to be moved, likely to its current position against the wall of the church's right aisle.<sup>121</sup>

The precise route of the relics' passage through the neighborhoods near San Giovanni Evangelista is not recorded, but Moretto's altarpiece promoted a specific connection between the altar that housed the Innocents' relics and the city's urban landscape by setting the *Massacre* within one of Brescia's most prominent civic spaces.<sup>122</sup> The scene's strong recession leading to a raised loggia in front of low hills falling away at the right (south) identifies ancient Bethlehem of the gospel narrative with Brescia's Piazza Grande, located only a few hundred yards from the church (figure 57).<sup>123</sup> There are two extant images of the Piazza Grande that predate Moretto's painting, and they depict the space similarly. An intarsia panel created between 1504-1512 for a choir stall in Bergamo (figure 58) and a tournament scene (figure 59) frescoed in Brescia's Palazzo Calini around 1512 each present a perspectival view from the west end of the piazza looking toward the so-called Loggetta. Located at the east end of Piazza Grande beneath the clock tower, the Loggetta served as a ceremonial seating area for the city's Venetian *rettori*, or rectors, the collective term for the *podestà* and *capitano* assigned to rule each Venetian provincial capital.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 154-65, esp. 156, 160. The brief comment on the altar's repositioning in the decretals of Borromeo's apostolic visit mentions neither the reason for the altar's removal nor the ultimate location: "Altare Sanctorum Innocentium ad quindecim dies tollatur, eius vero titulus, emolumenta et onera cum sacris reliquis ad aliud altare superioris ecclesiae arbitrato transferantur." See Angelo Turchini, Gabriele Archetti, eds., *Visita apostolic e decreti di Carlo Borromeo alla diocesi di Brescia. I. La città*. In *Brixia Sacra. Memorie storiche della diocesi di Brescia*. 3<sup>rd</sup> series, VIII (2003), 323.

<sup>122</sup> Begni Redona, 254, and Bowd, 208, have recognized the setting of the depicted action as the Piazza Grande.

<sup>123</sup> The Piazza Grande is known today as the Piazza della Loggia in reference to the palazzo comunale, or Loggia, at the west end of the piazza, opposite the location where the Loggetta stood until the mid-1540s.

<sup>124</sup> These images testify to a preference for rendering the piazza from a western vantage point, and in the case of the intarsia, which formed part of a cycle of perspectival views of Italian cities, it seems evident that



The decision to locate the biblical massacre within the urban space of contemporary Brescia may also have served to promote the Casari by reminding viewers of the family's courage during the city's traumatic recent history. In February 1512, Brescia endured a devastating sack at the hands of French soldiers, and as general of the canons at San Giovanni Evangelista, Innocenzo had faced down invaders who threatened to harm those sheltered in the church. He subsequently related the horrifying events of the sack and his own participation in the resistance in a lengthy letter written in humanist Latin that compared the sacking of Brescia to the ancient or mythic sieges of Troy, Carthage, and Jerusalem.<sup>125</sup> The Casari's subsequent commission of an urban battle scene set within contemporary Brescia, which shapes the gospel episode into something resembling local history, may have been designed similarly to elevate the city's recent suffering to the level of ancient combat and to make the Casari family protagonists of that quasi-epic struggle.<sup>126</sup>

What we know of the altar's early development suggests that the Casari used their nephew's bequest of a new mortuary altar as an opportunity to consolidate the legacy of their leadership at San Giovanni Evangelista, to place this personal commemoration prominently within the public space of the church, and to associate their tenure with the city's survival through a harrowing period of violence. In each of these aspects, the altar

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the view of the eastern end of the Piazza Grande was closely associated with the identity of the city, even by those living outside it. For the intarsia panel see the catalogue entry in Giovanni Agosti, Mauro Natale, and Giovanni Romano, eds., *Vincenzo Foppa*, exh. cat. (Milan, Skira, 2003), 244. On Ferramola's tournament scene and the larger fresco cycle to which it belonged, see Elena Lucchesi Ragni, "Floriano Ferramola e la 'bellissima' sala di Palazzo Calini," in *Museo bresciano. Studi e notizie dai Musei civici d'arte e storia* (1991-1993), vol. 5 (1995), 23-45.

<sup>125</sup> For the account of the canons at San Giovanni Evangelista suffering at the hands of the French, see "Innocenzo Casari. Il sacco di Brescia del 1512 e gli avvenimenti militari del 1513," 290.

<sup>126</sup> Bowd, 207, has noted the relevance of the commissioned altarpiece to the content of Innocenzo Casari's letter to Fra Pellegrino di Bologna, Prior of San Eufemia, Piacenza.

of the Holy Innocents resembles another honorific mortuary complex that was then taking shape in Brescia at the collegiate church of SS. Nazaro e Celso. With the installation of Titian's *Resurrection* polyptych in 1522 (figure 54), Altobello Averoldi began to fashion that church's choir into his own mortuary shrine. Titian's depiction of Averoldi witnessing the Resurrection alongside the church's titular saints was joined by Averoldi's tomb shortly after 1522 and by Averoldi's own mortal remains following his death late in 1531.<sup>127</sup> Thus, it was in the very years when Averoldi, son of a noble Brescian family and the papal legate to multiple north Italian cities, was finalizing the assembly of his tomb complex, including an astonishingly vivid image of the resurgent Christ by Venice's leading painter, that Giovanni Innocenzo Casari's uncles chose to expand the ambitions of their family's mortuary altar and selected Moretto to create its altarpiece.

In the decade after Brescia's return to Venetian rule in 1516, Averoldi's embellishment and glorification of SS. Nazaro e Celso as the setting for his own honorific tomb was among the most visible and prestigious of the city's post-war developments. Not only had he installed portraits of himself in painting and sculpture in the church's choir, but he had also persuaded Pope Leo X to elevate the church's status from "collegiata" to "collegiata insigne."<sup>128</sup> The aspirations embodied in the Casari's new altar next to the pulpit in San Giovanni Evangelista echoed the grand statement of power and presence being made by Averoldi across town. But the ways in which the altar of the Innocents departed from the model set by Averoldi raise the question whether the Casari

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<sup>127</sup> Agosti, "Sui gusti di Altobello Averoldi," esp. 63-75.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

desired to imitate Averoldi's choir complex or whether they hoped to promote their family and its values through opposition to Averoldi's elaborate complex.

The two families held markedly different positions within Brescian society, but Innocenzo's leadership of an important religious community in Brescia had brought special distinction to the Casari family, which now, with the death of his nephew, would likely stand as the high-water mark of the family's fame.<sup>129</sup> At the same time, the altarpiece's depiction of a violent siege set within Brescia's walls called attention to the Casari's history of pastoral care for the city in its time of greatest need. This was an important example of constancy and fidelity to the people of Brescia that Averoldi could not claim equally. While the Casari endured the sack of 1512 in the city with their fellow Brescians, Averoldi had spent the period of the sack and the tumultuous years that followed in the relative safety of the Papal States.<sup>130</sup> Averoldi's most demonstrative involvement in Brescia following the War of the League of Cambrai was his advancement of SS. Nazaro e Celso and the creation of his funerary monument there. The Casari had cause to see Averoldi's current involvement in the affairs of Brescia's religious institutions, its monuments, and its sacred images as belated and opportunistic, and their new family altar gave them a conspicuous platform from which to respond.

We have nothing as direct as a recorded statement of the Casari's opinion of Averoldi and his conspicuous reentrance into Brescian affairs, but Moretto's altar image

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<sup>129</sup> Both families had ties to the Brescian church of Santa Maria del Carmine, where the Averoldi had a family chapel that was decorated by Vincenzo Foppa in the 1470s. On the Casari's connection to the Carmelite church, see Guerrini, "Innocenzo Casari. Il sacco di Brescia del 1512 e gli avvenimenti military del 1513," 263.

<sup>130</sup> In 1512, Averoldi was in attendance at the Fifth Lateran Council in Rome and afterward was named legate to Bologna, where he remained until 1516. In 1517, Leo X named him papal legate to Venice. See Agosti, "Sui gusti di Altobello Averoldi," 58-59; also, see the entry on Altobello Averoldi in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*.

evinces a clear opposition to the centerpiece of Averoldi's choir complex, Titian's *Resurrection* polyptych. Titian's polyptych has never before been considered a touchstone for Moretto's thinking about the *Massacre of the Innocents*, and yet the hovering Christ Child—making a highly unusual appearance in an image of the *Massacre*—takes its principal features directly from Titian's resurrected Savior. The local response to Titian's achievement of wedding his bravura brushwork and chiaroscuro—so evocative of tactile sensation—to the idealized forms of ancient statuary—specifically the *Laocoön*, which served as the model for Christ's pose—was not unambiguously positive. In the first decade after its installation, artists working in Brescia, Bergamo, and their dependent territories began to reinterpret the polyptych in their own paintings, criticizing Titian's watershed statement of the modern manner by supplanting its strong simulation of bodily presence.

And Titian's polyptych was not the only image of local renown that Moretto's altarpiece reimagined. In the depiction of the *rettori*'s Loggetta at the center of the altarpiece there is an allusion to another of the city's most prized images, Vincenzo Foppa's *Justice of Trajan*, and as previous scholars have observed, the altarpiece also sought a dialogue with Marcantonio Raimondi's *Massacre of the Innocents*, engraved after a design by Raphael. Each of these three pictures could be classified as a Christian image, though each was also especially prized for its relationship to the sculpture of pagan antiquity. It was not the apparent comingling of Christian and pagan content, *per se*, which seems to have bothered Moretto. Rather, his *Massacre of the Innocents* aimed its criticism at the assumption that the imitation of the antique offered a visually and

morally clarifying effect on images. Redressing the dangers of a rhetorical, and potentially false, clarity did not, however, compel Moretto to make an image that was itself especially clear. Occlusions and inversions define the altarpiece's structure, and while paradoxical, this should not be surprising. As we observed in the decoration for Ugoni's studio, Moretto had become adept at designing images that allowed a viewer to gain awareness gradually by working through difficult visual relationships. In the *Massacre of the Innocents*, Moretto further developed this strategy in order to reorient the understanding of several local pictures whose efficacy as Christian images had been compromised by the presumed clarity of the antique.

### **Miscuglio**

Moretto's *Massacre of the Innocents* was among the most intentionally confusing renditions of the episode produced in the sixteenth century. While some contemporary versions of the subject contain greater numbers of figures, none seems so thoroughly invested in upsetting a viewer's assumptions about what the scene should offer the beholder. In the first (and one of the few) recorded comments on the compositional structure of the painting, Francesco Paglia's *The Garden of Painting (Il giardino della pittura)* describes the painting's battling figures as forming "un miscuglio senza confusione," an unconfused jumble.<sup>131</sup> Paglia's use of antithesis here and elsewhere to describe an image of the *Massacre* is a heavy-handed attempt by a professional painter to model his description on the poetics of Giambattista Marino, whose own profoundly

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<sup>131</sup> Francesco Paglia, *Il giardino della pittura* (1675-1714), ms. Queriniana G.IV.9 and ms. Di Rosa 8. Critical edition edited by Camillo Boselli, in *Commentari dell'Ateneo di Brescia*, 1967 (Supplement).

influential madrigal on the subject, *La Strage degli Innocenti*, was filled with horrific images made memorable through a deft use of antithesis.<sup>132</sup> Even so, the conspicuous artifice of “unconfused jumble” does not entirely negate its critical value. Regardless of our ultimate agreement with all of Paglia’s descriptive claims, the terms of this paradox help to attune us to the qualities of Moretto’s altarpiece that were salient for its early modern viewers.

The altarpiece’s compositional “miscuglio” results from a highly controlled collection of overlapping and fragmented bodies that fill the picture’s foreground. At the center, two mothers clutch their sons as soldiers bear down on their infants with raised daggers. The soldier who strides into the scene from the left raises his blade to strike, and his action becomes oddly doubled by a second dagger-wielding arm only apparently connected to his elbow. His own hand and its dagger are hidden from view and the dagger of his counterpart on the right has been pressed into the shadows by the kneeling mother. The two children held by these mothers are similarly obscured from view; only two small feet protrude past the right arm of the standing woman, while two feet and an arm are visible around the left arm of her compatriot. This suppression of the Innocents’ bodies at the picture’s center foreground is only the most overt instance of the altarpiece’s unexpected strategy: with the exception of the lifeless infant lying in the picture’s lower right corner, no Innocent is depicted as a whole body. Display of the Innocents’ tender flesh and the executioners’ violence against it was a principal feature of the subject’s iconography by Moretto’s day. Moretto’s jumble of overlapping and

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<sup>132</sup> On the relationship between Marino’s poem and seventeenth-century painting, see Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey, *Nicolas Poussin: Friendship and the Love of Painting* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press), 253-78.

interlocking bodies performs the iconographically familiar dissection of the infants' limbs, while it eliminates any depiction of the gory actions.

The frieze-like composition that Moretto adopted for the foreground battle was also an iconographic commonplace. Giovanni di Matteo's altarpiece or Ludovico Mazzolino's cabinet picture both demonstrate the common frieze-like composition of *Massacre* scenes, as well as their frequent inclusion of ancient carvings depicting battles (figures 60 and 61). But whereas this planarity traditionally had been used to press the act of slaughtering the infants toward the viewer, the screening effect of Moretto's composition compromises the beholder's apprehension. Specifically, relations of cause and effect become muddled. The pictorial complications of the hidden knife and doubled arm slow comprehension and compel a more active engagement with the means by which the picture's composition mediates our access to the bodies of the Holy Innocents.

Other complications were obviously designed to shock. At the left and right foreground, Moretto presents two appalling images of mothers apparently killing their own sons. In each mother's arms, we see the head of a small child with a dagger driven into it by a determined fist that initially seems to be the mother's own. With some effort we can discern that the child at left has been killed by a soldier whose plumed helmet is barely visible behind the "double-armed" soldier in the foreground. Similarly, the mother and child at right have been assaulted not by the man directly in front of them with his forearm seemingly at the mother's throat, but by a figure beyond the picture's edge, who, we can surmise, has gripped the mother's hair with his left hand and has reached around her body to kill her child with his right hand. Even if only producing apparent filicides,

these moments of pictorial confusion introduce the possibility of misinterpreting the actions of characters commonly understood to be entirely benevolent.

It is difficult to agree with Paglia that Moretto's picture is "senza confusione," but the comments that frame his dialogue's discussion of the altarpiece's appearance help reconcile the claim. The first of the dialogue's interlocutors to speak begins his description of the altarpiece by praising it for being "so accurate, so erudite, and so heroically expressed that it would move a heart of stone to compassion."<sup>133</sup> Only at the end of his description, when he claims that many viewers have wrongly supposed the picture to have been painted by Raphael, does the reader understand that the accuracy, erudition, and heroism of expression in Moretto's battle scene are to be understood as specifically related to Raphael's study and application of antique narrative forms. For Paglia, Moretto's composition is almost by definition "unconfused" because it evinces in its massing of figures a connection to Raphael's handling of multi-figure action, itself deeply informed by the structures of ancient relief carvings.<sup>134</sup>

Yet, if the battling figures in the altarpiece's foreground draw heavily upon Raphaellesque models, as Paglia would have it, they do so in order to undermine the very clarity of action that Paglia and others understood to be characteristic of Raphael's art. At

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<sup>133</sup> Francesco Paglia, *Il giardino della pittura*, 243.

<sup>134</sup> On the continuation of Raphael's *all'antica* style in the years soon after his death, see recently Morten Steen Hansen, *In Michelangelo's Mirror: Perino del Vaga, Daniele da Volterra, Pellegrino Tibaldi* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 35. In discussing Perino del Vaga's paintings for Genoa in the late 1520s, Hansen observes the importance of Raphael's *all'antica* inventions to the development of that idiom and the formal critique of style embedded in it: "It has long been recognized that painting *all'antica* resulted in the incorporation of formal features from relief sculpture, and that the parts of the Sala di Costantino that were ideated by Raphael, drawing on Trajan's Column and the Arch of Constantine, set the parameters for such painting. The translation of formal features natural to one medium into another where they had no technical justification resulted in a heightened sense of artifice while tying into the paragone between the sister arts...Painting *all'antica* and *al tutto Raffaellesca*, to use Raffaello Soprani's phrase, had become inseparable to Perino."



the center of Moretto's composition is the striding figure of the frightened mother we have just been considering. While she has been referred to frequently as Raphaelesque, Moretto took the contours of this figure directly from the *Massacre of the Innocents* designed by Raphael and engraved by Raimondi (figure 62).<sup>135</sup> Moretto's striding mother reproduces the frightened mother running from the nude executioner who unsheathes his sword at the left center of the engraving. The significant difference between the two, of course, is that Moretto's figure presents a back-for-front reversal of Raphael's invention.

The engraving was known widely by the time the Casari commissioned Moretto's altarpiece, and it is clear that the print was receiving special attention in Brescia around 1530. In addition to the central standing mother in Moretto's picture, direct quotations of multiple figures from the engraving appear in Callisto Piazza's *Massacre of the Innocents*, painted between 1529 and 1533 immediately upon his return to Lodi after several years of activity in Brescia (figure 63).<sup>136</sup> Piazza's incorporation of the fleeing mother differs from Moretto's in its adherence to the engraving, turning mother and child to face the viewer. At least one of these painters was aware of the other's handling of Raphael's design: the soldier entering the scene from the left to attack the fleeing mother is nearly identical in the two images, and this is not a figure found in the engraving. Since

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<sup>135</sup> Stephen Campbell, "Sacred Naturalism and the Art of Moretto and Savoldo," part of *Inventions of Place: Rethinking the Geography of Italian Art in the Age of Lotto and Titian*, Louise Smith Bross Lecture Series, University of Chicago (May 10, 2012), recently made this observation, and, to my knowledge, he is the first to recognize the specificity of the citation. A video recording of the lecture is accessible on-line at "[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S\\_-xGUIBCb4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_-xGUIBCb4)". Campbell's comments on the inversion of Raphael's figure begin at minute 37. On the collaborative development of the engraving, see Lisa Pon, *Raphael, Durer, and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying the Italian Renaissance Print* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

<sup>136</sup> For Piazza's *Massacre of the Innocents* polyptych, see the catalog entry in Gianni Carlo Sciolla, ed., *I Piazza da Lodi. Una tradizione di pittori nel Cinquecento*, exh. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1989), 214-20. On Piazza's early activity in Brescia and elsewhere, see Bruno Passamani, "L'afermazione di Callisto," in *I Piazza da Lodi*, 163-75

the period of Piazza's activity on the Lodi *Massacre* encompasses the period of Moretto's work on the Casari altarpiece, we cannot determine whether Moretto chose to reverse the fleeing mother after seeing Piazza's picture, or whether Piazza felt that his project constrained him to return the figure to its original and less enigmatic orientation. In either case, the nearly simultaneous appearance of the motif in these paintings suggests that the engraving was of particular interest at least to artists and likely to some patrons around Moretto. His decision to invert Raphael's figure would have registered among this group not just as a conscious deviation from a highly regarded model but as an outright subversion of the narrative clarity that Raphael's style sought to convey.

Campbell has described Moretto's flipping of the fleeing mother as a signal of Moretto's desire to distance his art from Raphael and the Roman tradition as presented in the engraving. The inversion "call[s] into question the authority or sufficiency of Raphael as a model or ideal of practice," especially because the engraving had "turn[ed] a horrifyingly violent event into a spectacular choreography..."<sup>137</sup> The potential to devise beautiful images of horrifying acts from the narrative of the Innocents' murder was recognized as early as the fifth century, when a Byzantine sermon first elaborated the shocking violence implied in the Gospel of Matthew to produce a lavishly ornamented verbal description.<sup>138</sup> The tradition of joining rhetorical beauty to explicit, gruesome content was long-lived in sermons and biblical commentaries devoted to the Massacre, and would continue to characterize less specifically religious representations of the

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<sup>137</sup> Campbell, "Sacred Naturalism and the Art of Moretto and Savoldo," minutes 36-37.

<sup>138</sup> For the early history of the Massacre of the Innocents as a subject of visual art and the ekphrastic tradition that underpinned these images, see Henry Maguire, *Art and Eloquence in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981). Cropper and Dempsey, 258-60, relate Maguire's study to the tradition inherited by Raphael and his contemporaries, and they argue for certain of Raphael's figures as responses to the description of the massacre established in the fifth century by Basil of Seleucia.

subject such as Pietro Aretino's description of the event in his *Umanità di Cristo*, published in Venice in 1535, the text that would provide Marino with many of the vignettes comprising his own later *Strage degli Innocenti*.<sup>139</sup> The novelty of Raphael's *Massacre of the Innocents*, instead, lay in a heroic visual idiom that facilitated a redefinition of the episode from saint's *vita* to epic. Elizabeth Cropper has described this transformation:

Like the orators, ancient and modern, Raphael understood how the story might be amplified by associating it with ancient images of the capture of a city, for example, or by combining images of war taken from pagan antiquity with the particulars of the story as told in the Gospel. His executioners, accordingly, are heroic nude warriors, fit for epic battle, and the whole violent scene is conceived as a noble exposition of the sort that contemporaries believed best revealed the full possibilities of painting.<sup>140</sup>

Transformed into epic, this minor episode from the Gospel of Matthew showed itself to possess the *materia* for a scene of siege equal to those of antiquity and worthy of artful description.

At nearly the same moment that Raphael and Marcantonio were reconceiving the Massacre of the Innocents as ancient epic, Innocenzo Casari had attempted a similar transformation of the sack that ravaged Brescia in 1512 in a lengthy letter describing its horrors. Innocenzo's comparison of the Brescian sack to the sieges of Troy, Carthage, and Jerusalem was both a humanistic exercise and an attempt to communicate the shattering effect of the violence upon the city's residents. His description asserted that the trauma inflicted upon Brescia was greater than anything experienced in those earlier

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<sup>139</sup> Cropper and Dempsey, 257-58.

<sup>140</sup> Cropper, "Marino's 'Strage degli Innocenti': Poussin, Rubens, and Guido Reni," in *Studi Secenteschi*, vol. 33 (1992): 143. Campbell also notes the importance of Raphael's *grazia* to the transformation of the scene into a "spectacular choreograph."

battles because in none of those precedents had an army attacked people that worshiped their same gods; it was, in effect, an attack upon oneself.<sup>141</sup> Given the aggrandizing aim of Innocenzo's account and his conception of the event as a betrayal against one's own people, it might be expected that Moretto would have followed the Raphael/Marcantonio model with greater sympathy in his representation of Herod's attack on the inhabitants of Bethlehem. But for an artist wanting to engage critically with the *Massacre's* presentation of violence in the context of an altarpiece, the engraving could place a visual artist in a double bind. By refusing to acknowledge the Massacre as an epic battle, an artist risked being thought ignorant of the most current developments of figure style and narrative composition that had been widely dispersed by the print; however, using the engraving as a model for an altar image posed the risk of transforming villainous murderers into heroic protagonists. In this regard, it is significant that Callisto Piazza placed the treacherous Herod into his Lodi altarpiece, which otherwise asserted a strong affiliation with Raphael's invention.

Moretto's revision of the engraving suggests that he viewed its rhetoric of epic battle as ill-suited to his task of depicting the Massacre of the Innocents in an image destined for a religious, specifically liturgical, context. Moretto's solution was to acknowledge the print as an important model while refusing to perform a clear and detailed exposition of its action, thereby subverting the potential of Raphael's design to make epic heroes out of murders. But in its refusal of Raphael's clear and beautiful horror, Moretto's jumbled and occluded composition was not a return to the older tradition of cramped, bloody scenes strewn with dismembered bodies (for instance, figure

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<sup>141</sup> "Innocenzo Casari. Il sacco di Brescia del 1512 e gli avvenimenti military del 1513," 292.

61). A crucial feature of Moretto's altarpiece lay in its demand on the beholder to imagine the sort of violent desecration of beauty that surpassed description in paint.

In a close reading of Gian Gerolamo Savoldo's *Magdalene* (figure 64), Mary Pardo demonstrated that the near-total occlusion from view of a painting's subject matter could produce a pleasing picture and that during the very years that Moretto was at work on the *Massacre of the Innocents*, his fellow Brescian was pursuing such a strategy to satisfy his Venetian clientele.<sup>142</sup> Essential to the effect of Savoldo's invention is the picture's implication—through a conjunction of narrative detail and pictorial effects—that the viewer takes part in the picture's narrative at Christ's empty tomb and that Christ is understood to be standing next to the viewer and serving as the source of light illuminating the Magdalene and her shimmering cloak. Strategies of pictorial indirection, conceived specifically to disguise a work's subject, had been recognized since antiquity for the ability to heighten the effect of an image beyond the capacity of visual description to move a viewer's emotions. Pliny had lauded the ancient painter Timanthes for his representation of Agamemnon's surpassing sorrow in a painting of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, in which Timanthes showed Agamemnon with a veil covering his face. The story appeared in Leon Battista Alberti's *De pictura* in the fifteenth century, and in regard to sacred subjects, Gabriele Paleotti's *Discorso intorno alle imagine sacre et profane* (1582) would again praise the Timanthean strategy as especially effective:

...Let us recall that there is a kind of, so to speak, perfect imperfection, and a diminution with augmentation, in the form of that figure called by the rhetoricians *aposiopesis*, which through suppression signifies greater things. Thus, in the art of painting things may, and often should, be depicted in such a manner that, by one's

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<sup>142</sup> Mary Pardo, "The Subject of Savoldo's *Magdalene*," *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 1 (Mar., 1989): 67-91.

leaving something out and only alluding to it deftly, the viewer will of his own imagine greater things...<sup>143</sup>

Pictorial suppression demands that the painter practice his art imperfectly, but this imperfection, Paleotti asserts, impresses all the more. By reducing the amount of self-reflexive skill on display—in this case, the painter’s skill in rendering fully formed, nude infant bodies—Moretto’s altarpiece allowed the viewer’s imagination to elaborate on the undepicted content in ways that would be uniquely resonant for the individual.

The one fully-formed infant depicted in the altarpiece is the Christ Child hovering above the Massacre in the guise of the resurrected Savior. His corporeal integrity and unblemished flesh sets him apart from the Innocents depicted below, with the single exception of the lifeless Innocent lying in the right foreground, and this is a correspondence we will address shortly. As a viewer attempts to reconstruct mentally the bodies of the Innocents that have been fragmented through occlusion, it is the body of the infant Christ that provides a model for that reconstruction. The Innocents figure Christ’s future bodily sacrifice, and his body provides a template for how their bodies might become whole again.

The *Massacre of the Innocents* posits an analogy between the mental restoration of limbs and bodies created (and fragmented) through artifice and a process of spiritual renewal and salvation facilitated by Christ’s perfect Incarnation. The altarpiece’s inscription, “The innocent and the upright have adhered to me,” alludes to this notion of spiritual salvation grounded in material unification. Adherence and assimilation are presented in bodily terms in the relationship of the Innocents to their mothers, who cling

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<sup>143</sup> Translation from Pardo, “The Subject of Savoldo’s *Magdalene*,” 87.

desperately to their sons, but this instinctual parental gesture also figures a more lasting adherence to Christ. Once assimilated to the flesh of their mothers, the Innocents must now find comfort and salvation in the flesh of Christ. Moretto's handling of the infant flesh in the *Massacre of the Innocents* compels a viewer to meditate on the integrity and disintegration of bodies—how they come apart and how they might come together and regain wholeness after death. Moretto's painting was not, however, the first painting in Brescia to present the restoration of fragments as an analogy for spiritual salvation. Titian's *Resurrection* polyptych had begun that conversation in highly vivid terms a decade earlier.

### **Titian's Presence**

The *Resurrection* was a stunning addition to the visual landscape of the western Veneto when it arrived in Brescia in 1522 (figure 54). The first decade of the century had seen a marked increase in the appearance of the adult Christ in the city's altarpieces; no fewer than five major new altarpieces commissioned during the years before the French occupation depicted Christ's adult, mostly nude, body. All of these paintings were scenes of the Lamentation, and most adorned altars dedicated to the Holy Sacrament.<sup>144</sup> Titian's *Resurrection* was among the first major altarpieces to appear in the city following Venice's reconsolidation of Brescia and its territory. The polyptych's installation marked a renewed political affiliation for Brescia, and it also heralded a new moment for painting

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<sup>144</sup> These included Vincenzo Foppa's *Lamentation* for the sacrament chapel in the cathedral church of San Pietro de Dom, Bernardo Zenale's for San Giovanni Evangelista, Romanino's and Altobello Melone's for San Lorenzo, and Vincenzo Civerchio's in Sant' Alessandro. For a discussion of the Lamentation as a theme in Brescian altarpieces during the first decade of the sixteenth century, see Savy, *Manducation per visum*, 3-11.

in the city. After the series of Lamentations that marked the century's beginning, the *Resurrection* could easily have been perceived as an intentionally disruptive force meant to rouse the dead Christ of Brescia's local tradition to new, triumphant life through the infusion of Titian's highly affecting technique. Dozens of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century replicas and emulative versions after Titian's altarpiece document its appeal within and beyond the Bresciano.<sup>145</sup> By contrast, Moretto's *Massacre of the Innocents* advanced a conception of spiritual connection and integration with the body of Christ that opposed Titian's dramatic appeal to the beholder's senses. To understand the terms of Moretto's dissent we will need to examine the claims the *Resurrection* made for its portrayal of Christ and for Titian's art generally. And to understand those claims it will be helpful to understand what type of image the *Resurrection* aspired to be.

Titian's polyptych for Altobello Averoldi enters the historical record while the panels are still in the painter's Venetian workshop, and one of the very earliest references to the work clearly describes it as an altarpiece (*tavola da altare*).<sup>146</sup> This may seem an easy point to concede, given that the art historical designation "polyptych" is frequently assumed exclusively to be a sub-category of the altar image; however, it is important to establish the object's status as an altarpiece because much else about the polyptych's imagery and its position within the church of SS. Nazaro e Celso had the potential to cast doubt on its precise function.

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<sup>145</sup> For copies of the Saint Sebastian, see catalogue nos. 10-27, in Lucchesi Ragni and Agosti, *Il polittico Averoldi di Tiziano restaurato*, 115-22.

<sup>146</sup> The phrase appears in a letter of November 25, 1520, written from Jacopo Tebaldi to Duke Alfonso I d'Este. See Lucchesi Ragni, "Le vicende del polittico," 89.



Our first confirmation of its location within the church describes it occupying much the same place it holds today: attached to the center of the apse wall, positioned directly behind and some distance away from the high altar.<sup>147</sup> While its placement at the head of the church's long axis would have ensured the polyptych's connection to the liturgical activities at the high altar, its dislocation from the altar would have allowed the cluster of images to interact visually and thematically with other elements in the church's choir. For instance, no one could have failed to associate the new polyptych, which included an image of Averoldi kneeling beside the church's titular saints, with the monumental tomb that the legate commissioned the same year that the polyptych was installed. Erected along the left wall of the apse, the funerary monument incorporated sculpted recumbent effigies of Averoldi and his Roman benefactor, Cardinal Raffaele Riario (also known as Cardinal San Giorgio).<sup>148</sup> If, in 1522, the polyptych's image of the risen Christ could have appeared to local viewers as a timely emblem of civic and spiritual renewal available to all, by the time Moretto was at work on the *Massacre of the Innocents*, Titian's polyptych had been revealed as part of a far more exclusive program that specifically reached beyond Averoldi's Brescian pedigree.

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<sup>147</sup> Bernardino Faino, *Catalogo delle chiese di Brescia* (Manoscritti Queriniani E.VII.6 ed E.I.10), ed. Camillo Boselli Supp. *Commentari dell'Ateneo di Brescia*, 1961 (Brescia: Tipolito Fratelli Geroldi, 1961), 24, describes the church's choir: "...à il suo Coro maestoso laltar maggiore è in isola et apeso al muro nel mezo ui è la pala grande..." For Faino's description, see also Lucchesi Ragni, "Le vicende del polittico," 93.

<sup>148</sup> For Averoldi's specification of his burial site, see Agosti, "Sui gusti di Altobello Averoldi," 63; for the location of the double funerary monument, see *ibid.*, 68. The portion of the monument dedicated to Riario was merely a cenotaph; the cardinal had been buried in Rome after his death in Naples in 1521. Agosti proposes persuasively that the tomb likely comprised two stacked tiers with one effigy above the other, as seen in the funerary monument of Giovanni Michiel and Antonio Orso at San Marcello in Rome. This was a tomb configuration common in Rome and may have been another way for Averoldi to signal his Roman affiliations.

In addition to holding Averoldi's remains, the sculpted tomb also served to promote the legate's memory and convey his piety to those who would pray for his soul, while at the same time drawing attention to his time in Rome and the relationships he had forged in Riario's circle. Surprisingly, many of these goals were already embodied in Titian's altarpiece. The *Resurrection* polyptych is essentially a boldly painted variation of the patrician wall tombs that lined the aisles, and at times the choirs, of prominent Venetian churches. In the disposition of its iconography, the polyptych distilled several of the most common elements found in the sculpted tomb ensembles produced for Venetian doges in the final quarter of the preceding century: Gabriel and the Annunciate Virgin bracket an image of the Resurrected Christ standing over his empty tomb, with soldiers flanking the central compartment below (figures 65 and 66). Recognizing the wall tomb format underlying the polyptych's organization allows us to more fully appreciate how invested the entire polyptych, and not merely its nudes, was in demonstrating the ability of Titian's painting to surpass sculpture by appearing to enliven it. The sheen of polished armor, the angel's ribbon-thin scroll, the waving banner of the Resurrection, and Christ's acrobatic pose, all conspicuously exceed the physical limits of sculpted stone.

The entirety of the *Resurrection* polyptych, then, stands in a competitive relationship to sculpture, and especially to the conventions of the Venetian wall tomb. However, the altarpiece's competitive features collect around the figures of Christ and Sebastian, and these two nudes have drawn most of the scholarly attention that the work has received. Much of the debate about the two figures has concerned their relationship to the recently discovered *Laocoön* (figure 67) and the subsequent sculpture by

Michelangelo indebted to that celebrated antique group.<sup>149</sup> Despite some lingering dissent, the most persuasive arguments have posited the figure of Laocoön as Titian's model for his Resurrected Christ, with Sebastian likely modeled on Michelangelo's *Rebellious Slave* (figure 68), a sculpture intended for Julius II's tomb.

Doubts that Titian could have known these sculptures, particularly Michelangelo's *Rebellious Slave* (begun 1513), by the early 1520s have caused some to resist interpreting the polyptych as a forceful statement of emulative rivalry with these Roman works.<sup>150</sup> It is true that we cannot place a design after Michelangelo's slave in Venice prior to Titian finishing the altarpiece, yet there is a strong circumstantial case for Titian knowing a considerable amount about these sculptures, about Michelangelo, and about the competitive Roman milieu in which art and artists circulated as trophies for patrons.<sup>151</sup> Cardinal Riario, to whom Averoldi had been close while in Rome from 1508 to 1511, was a renowned collector of antiquities and the first Roman patron of Michelangelo's sculpture. Ascanio Condivi reports that Riario had purchased Michelangelo's *Sleeping Cupid*, believing it to be genuinely ancient when in fact Michelangelo had buried the sculpture for the purpose of passing it off as antique.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, vol. 1 (London: Phaidon, 1969), 126-127. See also Una Roman D'Elia, *The Poetic's of Titian's Religious Paintings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 34-36; and Tom Nichols, *Titian and the End of the Venetian Renaissance* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2013), 72-77.

<sup>150</sup> For Michelangelo's activity on the *Rebellious Slave*, see Charles De Tolnay, *Michelangelo: IV. The Tomb of Julius II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1970), 100-102.

<sup>151</sup> Rona Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 289, considered that Averoldi might have supplied Titian with information about the Roman sculptures, owing to the legates experience in that city while Michelangelo was at work on the slaves, but she seems not to have found the possibility more convincing than the other possible explanations she and others have suggested.

<sup>152</sup> Michelangelo's burial of the *Sleeping Cupid* in order to age its appearance and Riario's purchase of the work are first mentioned in Paolo Giovio's short biography of Michelangelo written around 1527 (published in the eighteenth century). The earliest published acknowledgement of Riario's brief ownership

Evidently, the fraud impressed Riario and led to the commission of Michelangelo's *Bacchus*, which Riario seems ultimately to have declined and which was soon sold to one of the cardinal's close associates.<sup>153</sup> Later, Riario had been determined to acquire the newly recovered *Laocoön*, trying to purchase the sculpture group in the first weeks after its discovery, although he would lose his bid to Pope Julius II.<sup>154</sup> And it was in the pope's collection that Michelangelo studied the ancient marble, emulating its figures in many subsequent works, most conspicuously in the slaves for the pope's projected tomb, originally planned for the enlarged apse of Saint Peter's.

An avid patron of artists in the cities he served as papal legate, Averoldi surely knew of Riario's history as a collector of statuary, his unsuccessful relationship with the young Michelangelo, and his competition with Julius for the *Laocoön*. If we lack evidence in the form of early drawings or models that Titian knew Michelangelo's slave at the time of his work on the *Resurrection*, we likely need to look no further than Averoldi and his connections in Rome for a channel by which Titian could have acquired

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of the piece appears in *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti raccolta per Ascanio Condivi da la Ripa Transone* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1553), 10<sup>r</sup>-11<sup>v</sup>; also in translation as *The Life of Michelangelo*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1999), 19-23. De Tolnay, *The Youth of Michelangelo* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), 201-02, rejects as apochryphal Condivi's account of the statue passing through Riario's collection, although he gives no explanation for his mistrust of Condivi on this point. For a clarification of the sculpture's early provenance and strong circumstantial evidence of Riario's brief ownership of the *Sleeping Cupid*, see Michael Hirst and Jill Dunkerton, *Making and Meaning: The Young Michelangelo* (London: National Gallery/Yale Univ. Press, 1994), 22-24.

<sup>153</sup> For the circumstances surrounding the *Bacchus*'s commission and execution, see Hirst and Dunkerton, 29-32.

<sup>154</sup> On Riario's attempted acquisition of the *Laocoön*, see Agosti, "Sui gusti di Altobello Averoldi," 56. While the use of the *Laocoön* group as a model for Titian's Christ and Sebastian in the Averoldi polyptych is universally acknowledged, there is still debate on the point of Sebastian's debt to the *Laocoön* directly, to one of the son's in the antique sculpture, or to Michelangelo's *Rebellious Slave*, itself modeled on one or both of the aforementioned figures in the antique group. For this debate and its historiography, see Roman D'Elia, 34-36; see also, Bruno Passamani, "Tiziano, Averoldi, Brescia. Il politico di San Nazaro tappa nodale nell'arte di Tiziano e polo catalizzatore per la pittura bresciana del primo Cinquecento," in *Il politico Averoldi*, 9-15, for further consideration of this point, as well as conjecture on how Titian might have come to know Michelangelo's *Rebellious Slave* by 1519.

such material. But more importantly, Averoldi's desire to promote his relationship with Riario may have been a primary motivation for incorporating the Roman statuary into the polyptych's imagery and for Titian's highly competitive emulation of them. In effect, Averoldi adorned his commemorative complex in SS. Nazaro e Celso with a *Laocoön* (in the form of the Resurrected Christ) that surpassed Julius's by means of Titian's living colors that vivified that sculpture's dead material, and in achieving this victory, Michelangelo's slave (in the guise of Sebastian), destined for Julius's own tomb and itself an imitation of the *Laocoön*, begins to lose its life and return to its stony origins. Those origins are represented quite literally in the fallen marble column beneath Sebastian's right foot that bears Titian's signature and the altarpiece's date.

While the marble column in the polyptych's lower right panel is a relatively small detail, the material history of Titian's sculptural models, particularly the *Laocoön*, was central to the poetics of his altarpiece. The buried statue's astonishing recent emergence was a ready analogy for the wonder of Christ's resurrection, and Titian extended the theme of emergence throughout the painting. The metaphor is particularly strong in Titian's treatment of light. Christ's emergence coincides with the first rays of the morning sun breaking over the horizon. The dawn has not dissipated all of the darkness, and just enough remains to allow Christ's brilliantly shining body to stand out all the more prominently.

In the preceding decade, light shining in the darkness had become an analogy for the recovery of antique material and the restoration of ancient forms. This imagery was elaborately developed, for instance, in the poetry of Roman humanists associated with

Johannes Goritz, and Angelo Colocci, a circle with which Averoldi's patron, Cardinal Riario, had close contact.<sup>155</sup> Commenting on the verbal imagery deployed in the *Coryciana*, a compendium of poems produced by this Roman coterie, Kim E. Butler has observed that "[contrasting light and dark] constitutes...one of the most common formal motifs of the *Coryciana* poems, where illumination in darkness is employed as a metaphor for the divinely sanctioned contemporary repristination of ancient Rome (inflected at times by the beauty of the statues' *candida membra*, or white/shining limbs)."<sup>156</sup> The *Resurrection* exploits this poetic trope, but Titian also used the contrast of light and dark as a technique to enhance the visual power of Christ's resuscitated body. The high contrast of Christ's gleaming body with the surrounding darkness takes advantage of an optical effect that had intrigued Leonardo da Vinci as early as the 1490s: placing a light colored figure against a darker background, which will cause the figure to appear larger, and therefore closer, than it is.<sup>157</sup> The optical effect of Titian's Christ is to expand, to appear to exceed the bounds of its actual size and even its real distance from a viewer. Through this effect of artificial relief, the *Resurrection* correlates Christ's historical passage out of the tomb to the painted Christ's expansion, perceptually, across the boundary of the painting's surface. Through this bold simulation of presence, Titian's art suggested itself as a means to close the existential gap between the body of Christ and the viewer.

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<sup>155</sup> For Riario's connection to Goritz and Colocci, see Phyllis Pray Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 40 (1977): 223-39, esp. 226-30.

<sup>156</sup> Kim E. Butler, "'Reddita lux est': Raphael and the Pursuit of Sacred Eloquence in Leonine Rome," in Stephen J. Campbell, ed., *Artists at Court: Image-making and Identity, 1300-1550* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, 2004), 145-46.

<sup>157</sup> For Leonardo's observations on tonal contrasts between figure and ground and the consequences of this on visual perception, see, for instance, *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, nos. 242, 246, 252, and 254.

The production of optical relief through sudden contrasts of light and dark was not Titian's discovery, but it was Titian's insight to strengthen the claims of his painting's creative potential by reinforcing the beholder's role as a witness to the real presence of Christ's resurrected body. The effect of emergence that Titian attained in the painted Christ is contingent upon its being observed, and Titian connected his successful simulation of presence to the reality of the Resurrection by suggesting that both are certified through visual verification. Beneath Christ, an inscription on the tomb emerges from behind the undergrowth: "[S]VRREXIT/[V]ERE ([The Lord] is truly risen)" (figure 69). These powerful words are related to Christ's resurrection in the Gospel of Luke, but they were not spoken at the site of Christ's tomb. Rather, they are the words spoken by the men to whom Christ revealed himself at Emmaus when these same men later reported their encounter with Christ's resurrected body.<sup>158</sup> These are the words of eye-witnesses to the true presence of Christ's living flesh following his resurrection, and they are spoken as a guarantee of that truth even in the absence of his body. Titian's artifice promises a similar guarantee of Christ's post-Resurrection presence, simulating for a viewer what those early witnesses saw and attempting to persuade the viewer, on the basis of visual evidence, that the body before him or her is truly present.

Paglia had recognized the *Resurrection's* overlapping claims of Christ's historical emergence from the tomb and Titian's simulacrum of that bodily presence in *The Garden*

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<sup>158</sup> Luke 24:33-35 (Douay-Rheims): "And rising up, the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were staying with them, saying: *The Lord is risen indeed*, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way and how they knew him in the breaking of the bread." My emphasis.

of *Painting*. Once inside SS. Nazaro e Celso, the dialogue's interlocutors turn their attention immediately to Titian's altarpiece:

In that central compartment we attentively observe the Savior risen from the sepulcher; so natural and true, I seem to see him vanish from and also remain [literally, breath] in our presence, he is so full of life. I do not believe it would be possible to form a figure more beautiful, more solemn, more majestic or heroic. You infer worth when your eyes and cognition perceive those cultivated and excellent qualities that indicate Truth. And yet, [here] we see the feigned coming to life in the arousal of the painted Savior.<sup>159</sup>

Christ's destiny required his body to fade from earthly presence, but Titian has brought him to life and fixed him before the beholder's eyes. Paglia's description registers that what was particularly astounding about Titian's image was that it seemed to conjure and hold Christ in a state of being that should dissolve from view and that it accomplished this through the verisimilitude of Titian's art. Such a claim offers an interesting counterpart to the description of the Saint Sebastian made by Jacopo Tebaldi, Alfonso I d'Este's ambassador to Venice, while the polyptych panels were still in Titian's workshop. Struck by the wounded saint's verisimilar appearance, Tebaldi declared that Titian had created a body almost indistinguishable from a natural one (*simili[ssi]ma ad uno corpo da natura creato*), only to then draw the life out of it.<sup>160</sup>

Returning to Moretto's *Massacre of the Innocents*, we see that its most overt citations of Titian's *Resurrection* appear along the picture's central vertical axis. At the bottom center of the altarpiece, the seated mother is a transposition of the seated soldier

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<sup>159</sup> Francesco Paglia, *Il giardino della pittura*, 310. "In quel [vano] di mezzo osserveremo attente, il Salvatore risorto dal sepolcro; così naturale e vero, che quasi parmi vederlo sparire non che spirar dalla nostra presenza, tanto è vivace. Non credo possa formarsi figura più bella, più grave, più maestosa et eroica. Argomenti il valore dal vedere per le qualità dottive et eccellenti, che destingueranno La Verità col sguardo, et con la cognitione. E ancor vedrem à ravvivarsi il finto nel sussitar del Salvator dipinto."

<sup>160</sup> Lucchesi Ragni, "Le vicende del polittico," 90, letter of December 1, 1520. "Io non ho già iudicio, perché non me intend de design, ma mirando tute le parte, et muscoli della persona, a me pare che sia simili[ssi]ma ad uno corpo da natura creato, et morto."



at Christ's tomb; her right arm, extended to block the knife, is the reflection of his left arm, reaching for the broken tree branch. Directly above, Moretto's Christ Child recapitulates several of the salient features of Titian's mature Christ, including the open stance of the legs, the outstretched arm and dramatically unfurled burial winding, while the Child's diminutive wooden cross replaces the banner of the Resurrection. It is uncommon for Christ to appear in a scene of the *Massacre*, and his inclusion here, as an antithesis to Titian's resurrected figure, indicates that one of Moretto's principal concerns for the project was reestablishing the limits of a religious image's ability to bring Christ's body before the eyes of a prayerful beholder.

In the ways that the *Massacre of the Innocents* reconfigured its citations of the *Resurrection*, Moretto draws attention to Titian's artificial effects, directing the viewer's response away from affective impulse and toward intellectual synthesis and rumination. Whereas Titian's strong simulation of Christ's presence emphasized the immediacy of the Resurrection—its instantaneity as an event—Moretto's Christ stands outside of time. He hovers above the massacre, separated from the historical event by a radiant light and rings of clouds. Within that envelope of heavenly glory, his child's body and the attributes of his passion compress the years of his human existence into a symbol that is easily intelligible but far from a visually persuasive facsimile of reality. Moretto's insistence on Christ's dislocation from the passage of historical time would have been especially clear to the altarpiece's first viewers. Situated directly above the Loggetta at the east end of the Piazza Grande, Christ and his heavenly radiance obscure what would

otherwise be a direct view of the piazza's clock tower.<sup>161</sup> Titian had proposed to ennoble his representation of Christ by modeling his form on a renowned antique; Moretto's Christ displaces the passage of time by which such an antique is defined and valorized.

Moretto's preference for symbols over an appeal to experience and sensation extends also to the way he painted Christ's flesh. Titian rendered his Christ in warm tones and a flickering chiaroscuro that simulates the appearance of living, pliant flesh. Moretto, on the other hand, undercut the appeal of Titian's painted nudes by bathing his Christ in a golden light that overwhelms any natural flesh tones and severely reduces the sculptural modeling of his forms. Moretto communicated the fleshiness of Christ through the plump contours of his infantile body and by allowing the energetic loincloth that had covered the resurrected Christ to slip away and reveal the Child's genitals, "the evidence of Christ's sexual member [serving] as the pledge of God's humanation," in Leo Steinberg's words.<sup>162</sup> For Moretto's viewer, Christ's flesh is a fact deduced from the theological truth of his Incarnation, and this sacrifice of empirical sensation appears also in the treatment of the relationship between Christ's body and its surrounding space. The darkened sky that allowed Titian to place the gleaming body of his Christ in dramatic relief, Moretto replaced with a brilliantly lit backdrop that renders the infant little more than a schematic outline.

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<sup>161</sup> The clock tower was torn down, along with the Loggetta, little more than a decade after Moretto painted the *Massacre of the Innocents*. For the destruction of the Loggetta and of the Torre dell'Orologio, see Vasco Frati, Ida Gianfranceschi, and Franco Robecchi, eds., *La Loggia di Brescia e la sua piazza*, vol. 2, (Brescia: Grafo, 1995), 158, 167 n. 10.

<sup>162</sup> On the "ostentatio" of Christ's genitals as a sign of his manifest humanity, see Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (New York: Pantheon/October, 1983), esp. 13-23. Appended to Steinberg's book-length essay is a short but important statement by John W. O'Malley, S. J., emphasizing the central position of the Incarnation in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century theological considerations, what O'Malley calls the period's "incarnational theology."

Moretto's reconsideration of the role of painted flesh extended also to include Titian's competitive stance toward sculpture. The motionless body of the dead infant in the *Massacre's* lower right corner and the hovering Christ Child are the only fully depicted infant bodies in Moretto's altarpiece, and their locations correspond to those of Titian's Christ and Sebastian at the upper center and the lower right of the composition. But whereas Titian's rendering of supple, yielding flesh suggests the triumph of painting over the physical qualities of cold, obdurate stone, Moretto determined to show the effect of death on the Innocent's body as enacting precisely the opposite process. Having lost its animating force and growing ever colder, the rounded mass of the infant's body has begun to conform to the shape of the fallen marble column beneath Sebastian's foot.

Through the polyptych's literary allusions, sensuous paint handling, and optical relief, Titian attempted to present his Christ as a persuasively "true" experience of Christ's body. The responses to the polyptych by Moretto and other contemporaries working in the western Veneto, such as Romanino's Capriolo *Resurrection* (figure 70), indicate an allowance for images of Christ to take a variety of forms in order to facilitate understanding of the mystery of his incarnate body. They seem quite opposed, however, to a type of painting that would claim its artifice as a proxy for truth. A painting's mediation between the human viewer and divine realities needed to be unmistakable. As we have seen, one of the main ways Moretto sought to keep the medial role of his altarpiece in focus was through citations of other works of contemporary art that he stripped of their affect through inversion or obfuscation, sending a viewer's thoughts

outward from the painting to find satisfaction and understanding in ideas prompted by the painting but not embodied there.

In the previous chapter we observed Moretto's interaction with Lorenzo Lotto in the years immediately before his activity on the *Massacre of the Innocents*. No other artist's work could have offered Moretto a richer selection of alternatives when trying to rethink the way painting, and specifically Titian's *Resurrection*, mediated Christ's body. The year that Titian's polyptych was installed in Brescia, Lotto signed and dated a polyptych for a sacrament chapel in Ponteranica (Bergamo) that offered a high degree of devotional symbolism in its depiction of Christ (figure 71).<sup>163</sup> Moretto would turn to Lotto's altarpiece when he was asked some years later to paint for the sacrament chapel in SS. Nazaro e Celso (figure 72). But it was likely another of Lotto's Bergamask Christ's that Moretto was contemplating as he executed the Casari's altarpiece.

Moretto borrowed the inscribed tablet and the crimson ribbon that holds it above Christ's head from Lotto's rendering of the Christ-Vine in the Suardi Chapel in Trescore (figures 73 and 74). Lotto represented Christ transformed by his own words, "I am the vine, you the branches" (EGO SVM VITIS VOS PALMITES), into a figure of the relationship between him and his disciples. Christ's words in the Gospel of John describe both the connection between Christ and his believers and the vitality that this connection engenders, "I am the vine, you the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing."<sup>164</sup> In Lotto's scheme, the "branches" are saints, shown within the roundels created by the looping tendrils that

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<sup>163</sup> For the reappearance of the date after cleaning, see Giovanni C. F. Villa, ed., *Lorenzo Lotto*, exh. cat. (Milan: Silvana, 2011), 118.

<sup>164</sup> John 15:5 (Douay-Rheims).

extend from Christ's fingers. With few exceptions, these men and women became saints by having their eyes, teeth, heads, or more torn from their bodies. By having grafted themselves to Christ, they now are assured of the spiritual nourishment for which they sacrificed the health of their flesh. In the *Massacre of the Innocents*, Moretto conceived of the restoration and renewal of broken bodies through different pictorial means, but he must have found Lotto's diagrammatic expression of an unrepresentable state of spiritual completion satisfying in a way that Titian's simulation of divine presence was not. Grafting, abiding, and adherence. These are the metaphors of Christian vitality and spiritual renewal operative in Moretto's and Lotto's images of Christ among his martyrs. In these pictures, fragmentation and dismemberment figure a state of lack that can only be remedied by adherence and assimilation to the flesh of Christ, and adherence is a function of prayer and belief, not optical persuasion or poetic allure.

### **Ancient Stones and the Movement of the Soul**

Hardly more than a decade after Moretto completed the *Massacre of the Innocents*, alterations to the eastern end of the Piazza Grande would have made the altarpiece's description of the piazza's architecture nearly unrecognizable. The inscribed *tabula ansata* suspended above the Christ Child, however, would still have directed a viewer's thoughts to that important civic space only a short walk away from San Giovanni Evangelista. Since the 1480s, the Piazza Grande had become a repository for newly unearthed artifacts from the city's ancient Roman period. New *all'antica* inscriptions quickly appeared alongside these antiquities. Programmatic commemorations of Venetian benevolence and Brescian loyalty sat adjacent to fragmentary inscriptions

left by an ancient bureaucracy whose virtues Brescia's Venetian governors claimed to perpetuate in the life of the contemporary city. Moretto's *Massacre* espoused a counter-position to this official, monumentalizing message of the Piazza Grande. At present, we know too little about the Casari's sentiments toward Venetian rule to speak about how the altarpiece communicates their allegiances, but the painting takes a wary view of the Piazza Grande's tendentious and politically opportunistic appropriation of antiquity.

For contemporaries, one of the most shocking features of the painting would have been Moretto's placement of Herod and his entourage inside the Piazza Grande's Loggetta. Located on an elevated platform directly in front of the clock tower, the Loggetta was the honorific seating area occupied by the Venetian *rettori* during the frequent ceremonies and pageants that occurred in the piazza. The structure was lavishly decorated with numerous mural paintings, sculptures of the city's patron saints, and a dedicatory inscription.<sup>165</sup> When, in the 1540s, the Loggetta was demolished to make way for a new eastern entrance to the piazza, the only element of the structure's decoration that seems to have inspired concern over its preservation was an image of the *Justice of Trajan* painted by Vincenzo Foppa on one of the Loggetta's interior walls. Foppa's mural was among the most treasured public images in Brescia, and Moretto's decision to paint Herod, the *tiranno* (tyrant), in the place of the emperor *Traiano* (Trajan) pointedly inverted this programmatic expression of good government.

When Foppa added his mural to the Piazza Grande's accreting images of Venetian magnanimity and just rule, he was contributing to the rhetoric of a space that in its very existence constituted a miscarriage of justice in the minds of many Brescians. Before

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<sup>165</sup> *La Loggia di Brescia e la sua piazza*, vol. 1, 115-20.

Venice took Brescia from Filippo Maria Visconti in 1426, the Milanese lords already had constructed a double-walled fortification, known as the Cittadella Nuova, which extended from the old Cittadella on the high ground in the northeast section of the city down to the southern city walls (figure 75).<sup>166</sup> The structure bisected Brescia into eastern and western halves, and while its nominal function was to provide a secondary stronghold to defend the city if its perimeter walls were breached during invasion, the Cittadella Nuova was equally useful in controlling the local population living within the city. Most bothersome to the local population, these fortifications encompassed the city's twin cathedral churches and the Broletto, as well as the large piazza that fronted these buildings, severely restricting access to Brescia's most important spaces of civic government and religious celebration. With Venetian expansion into the Italian mainland and the expulsion of the Visconti from Brescia, the city hoped that their traditional civic spaces would be returned to them.

Venice refused Brescia's initial request to dismantle the Cittadella Nuova, and for nearly a hundred years it would continue to refuse all such petitions from the Brescian council to destroy or modify the central fortifications.<sup>167</sup> As an alternative to demilitarization, in 1433 podestà Marco Foscari proposed that a new piazza be opened just to the west of the Cittadella Nuova "for the benefit and honor of the entire Brescian community."<sup>168</sup> In its first years, the new Piazza Grande (referred to in the ensuing

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<sup>166</sup> For the history of the Cittadella Nuova, see *ibid.*, 12-20.

<sup>167</sup> For Brescia's repeated and unsuccessful attempts to open the Cittadella Nuova or to incorporate its structures into the fabric of the living city, see *ibid.*, 16-18. The Cittadella Nuova was opened in 1517, once Venice regained the city following the Wars of the League of Cambrai. However, access to the Piazza del Broletto and Piazza del Duomo from the Piazza Grande remained limited by the presence of a castellan at Porta Bruciata until 1531. See *La Loggia di Brescia e la sua piazza*, vol. 2, 147 and 158, respectively.

<sup>168</sup> *La Loggia di Brescia e la sua piazza*, vol. 1, 30.

decades variously as “platea carcerum nova” and “platea magna”) served as a site for judicial pronouncements, the executions of prisoners and heretics, public preaching, feast day processions, and tournaments in honor of visiting dignitaries. It was also a preferred site for graffiti complaining about the Venetian *rettori*.<sup>169</sup>

In 1480, construction projects near the south edge of the Piazza Grande unearthed a substantial amount of Roman stonework bearing carved lettering and decoration. The city’s general council acted quickly to prohibit the sale, export, or gifting of these *lapides laborati*, thereby preserving them for the city and the embellishment of its public buildings.<sup>170</sup> By the time of Moretto’s birth in the following decade, most of these ancient stones had been incorporated into the piazza’s long southern façade, where they are still visible today (figure 76).<sup>171</sup> The recovery of these Imperial Roman relics initiated a decade of embellishing the Piazza Grande with newly made *all’antica* inscriptions and images that elaborated the space’s antiquarian theme. By themselves, the ancient stones were markers of Brescia’s Roman past, a past that predated the city of Venice. Once embedded among the new *all’antica* inscriptions that studded the piazza’s walls, the antiquities seemed to confirm that Venetian-ruled Brescia had seen a revival of virtuous government unknown since the city’s ancient past.

This purported revival found expression in grand terms of ancient heroism that belied the full cost of Venetian rule incurred by the Brescian populace. Perhaps the most visible example of this high rhetoric took shape in the commemorative archway that *podestà* Marcantonio Morosini inserted into the piazza’s south façade. Morosini was

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 83, 97 n. 1 and n. 2.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 137, 140-41.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 167-69.



particularly active in shaping the monumental character of the Piazza Grande in the mid-1480s, leaving his name inscribed over the Loggetta (destroyed, ca. 1544) and on multiple revetment slabs imbedded in the piazza's fabric.<sup>172</sup> In order to further harmonize the piazza's important southern façade, Morosini installed a commemorative arch between the older and the newer buildings of the Monte di Pietà. The images in the roundels that flank the arch and the inscription between them have been effaced, but the inscriptions around the bases of the arch's engaged square columns are explicit about the terms in which Brescia was worthy of honor (figures 77 and 78). The three inscribed slabs of the eastern base form an independent thought from those of the western base, but they are highly related: "Oppressed by disease, famine, and war in 1438, Brescia was the foundation of faithfulness;" "Behold the marvelous constancy of the Saguntines and of the Brescians."<sup>173</sup>

Saguntum was a city in Roman Spain whose residents were believed famously to have destroyed themselves and their property rather than surrender these to Hannibal and the invading Carthaginians. The inscription compares this famous *exemplum* of fidelity to the faithfulness of those Brescians who maintained a defiant presence in the city while besieged by Filippo Maria Visconti from 1438 until 1440. The siege of 1438 was a defining memory for fifteenth-century Brescia, and by the last decades of that century, participation in the resistance had become a decisive factor in determining membership in

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 142-43. One such inscription reads: M. ANT. MAV/ROCENE PR. RARISS. RELIQVISTE/QVO TECVM CVM/AETERNITATE.VIVAMVS.

<sup>173</sup> The inscriptions of the eastern column base read: BRIXIA/FIDEI/BASIS; MCCCCXXXVIII; PESTE/FAME/BELLIS/OPPRESSA. Around the western base: SAGVN/TINO/RVM/ ET; BRIXIANORVM; MIRANDA CONSTANTIA.

the Brescian council.<sup>174</sup> Saguntum was a powerful image of Brescia's dependent political status and one that enjoyed a long life in the cultural imagination. In 1546, the example was still viable when Romanino painted an image of besieged Saguntum on a temporary arch set up for the procession of Brescia's newly appointed bishop, the Venetian Marco Andrea Cornaro.<sup>175</sup> The arch that Romanino decorated was dedicated to "Fides," and his scene received an explanatory epigram that conveyed a by-now familiar message to the Brescian citizenry. Beneath the image of the ancient city's self-immolation was the inscription, "Faithfulness is placed ahead of public welfare" (*fides saluti publicae praeponitur*).<sup>176</sup>

Several features of the *Massacre of the Innocents* engage in a polemic with the Venetian state over how it had rationalized its actions through an aggrandizing rhetoric of antique heroism and exemplarity. If the recognizably antique form of the *tabula ansata* at the top of the altarpiece directed thoughts to the Piazza Grande, then the tablet's address to the "Innocentes" would have brought one inscription, above all, to mind. An extremely prominent claim of Venetian innocence had been carved on the face of the palazzo comunale by *podestà* Domenico Trevisan (figure 79). On the south pier of the palazzo's facade, the inscription honored the city and Trevisan, declaring:

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<sup>174</sup> In 1488 the city's special council declared that future dignities and offices would be restricted to those citizens who could show that their family had been listed on Brescia's tax rolls in 1426, when Venice took possession of the city, or else could show that their family had remained in the city during the siege by Visconti in 1438.

<sup>175</sup> A drawing by Romanino records his early thoughts for the scene. Its inscription identifies the image as "SAGUNTOM OBSESSOM," Saguntum besieged. See Alessandro Nova, *Girolamo Romanino* (Turin: Umberto Allemandi, 1994), 334-35.

<sup>176</sup> For the arches for Cornaro's entry and their decorative program, see *ibid.*, 335. See also Bowd, 27-29.

Domenico Trevisan, knight and podestà most innocent (*innocentissimo*), and this most auspicious city have founded this hall on March 5, 1492.<sup>177</sup>

The painted tablet's "innocentes et recti" resonates with the idea of a "rettore innocentissimo" emblazoned on the palazzo comunale; however, Moretto's image displaced the questionable governance offered by Venice and its governors with the sure salvation offered by Christ.

Pandolfo Nassino reports that Trevisan's declaration of exceeding innocence was surmounted originally by the *podestà*'s own coat of arms, which remained in place until the French entered the city in 1510 and pulled down his insignia.<sup>178</sup> By the time Moretto painted his altarpiece, Venetian magistrates had professed their benevolent rule over Brescia for decades, even as that rule had been frequently punctuated by episodes of extreme deprivation and violence within the city. And in the years immediately preceding Moretto's execution of the altarpiece, fear had mounted that Emperor Charles V might choose to overtake the poorly protected city.<sup>179</sup> To place the biblical scene of government-instituted infanticide within Brescia's Piazza Grande was to take an extremely critical stance against the claims of just rule and mutual benefit that the piazza's decoration perpetuated.

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<sup>177</sup> The inscription reads: DOMINICO TRIVISANO EQUITE PRAET[ORE] INNOCENTISS[IMO] ET HUIC URBI AUSPICATISS[IMO] BASILICA FUNDATA III NON[AS] MARTII MCCCCLXXXII.

<sup>178</sup> *La Loggia di Brescia e la sua piazza*, vol. 1, 128.

<sup>179</sup> Charles's arrival in Lombardy in late 1529 seems to have sent a chill through Brescia. Agostino Gallo fled Brescia together with his family and the noted mystic Angela Merici in search of safe quarters in Cremona. He would later recount that "Emperor Charles V having arrived in Piacenza for his impending coronation, it was doubted whether he might not lay siege to Brescia, being as he was an enemy of our most illustrious Signori;" for which, see Luciana Mariani, Elisa Tarolli, and Marie Seynaeve, eds., *Angela Merici. Contributo per una biografia* (Milan: Editrice Ancora, 1986), 189.

Moretto's inversion of the image of Trajan's justice does not merely concern a heavy-handed use of antique rhetoric to support ambiguous political agendas. In the context of an altarpiece for the Casari's funerary altar, Moretto's allusion to the *Justice of Trajan* returns to Foppa's image the power of its (purportedly) ancient prototype, that is, the power to move a viewer, not to political action, but to efficacious prayer for the souls of the dead. To understand how Moretto could have suggested that the image of exemplary good government frescoed in the Loggetta was, in fact, an affecting prompt for intercessory prayer, it is necessary to revisit the origins of the story of Trajan's justice and the history of the theme in literature and in Brescia's recent visual art.

The *Justice of Trajan* is a medieval literary invention that describes the emperor stopping his retinue on its march to war in order to hear the plea of a widow whose only son had been killed (in some versions, through the negligence of the emperor's own son). Resistant to delaying the urgent business of state for such a seemingly small affair, the virtuous Trajan was moved ultimately by the widow's plea; he halted his march and adjudicated her case immediately. The scene of Trajan rendering justice to the childless woman became a late medieval emblem of just action, but it is rarely apparent in these images of the Trajanic pseudo-history that the story, in fact, was created as a vignette within the early *vite* of Pope Gregory the Great and that the vignette points, ultimately, to Gregory's piety and the power of *his* intercession.

The Trajanic story first appeared in an eighth-century English *vita* of Saint Gregory the Great, and it was repeated throughout the later Middle Ages within the

context of the saint's deeds.<sup>180</sup> In nearly all these accounts, Gregory is said to have been walking through Rome when he crossed Trajan's Forum and "found" or "learned" that the emperor had acted with exemplary justice on behalf of the childless mother. Moved by the performance of such Christian virtue in a pagan, Gregory rushed to Saint Peter's Church and pleaded for Trajan's soul until God pardoned the emperor from eternal punishment.<sup>181</sup> In her analysis of the legend, Nancy Vickers has observed that Gregory's "learning of a story' [while in Trajan's Forum] implies a storiated medium: not Trajan's architecture, but rather narrative art about Trajan would seem to be at issue..." For medieval and Renaissance readers, Vickers recognizes, narrative art in the context of Trajan's Forum would have implied relief sculpture, foremost the narratives carved into Trajan's Column.<sup>182</sup> Evidence of this line of thinking is preserved in the text accompanying the scene of Trajan's justice in the fifteenth-century *Trajan and Herkenbald* tapestry, which states that "[Gregory], on a certain occasion when in the city of Rome, passed through Trajan's forum and near his column, which brought to mind both the previously depicted episode [i.e., Trajan's justice for the mother] as well as other just actions performed by Trajan..."<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> For a concise summary of the later medieval versions of the story in Gregory's *vitae*, see Nancy J. Vickers, "Seeing is Believing: Gregory, Trajan, and Dante's Art," *Dante Studies*, no. 101 (1983): 70-71. See also Gordon Whatley, "The Uses of Hagiography: The Legend of Pope Gregory and the Emperor Trajan in the Middle Ages," *Viator* 15 (1984): esp. 25-50.

<sup>181</sup> The earliest version of the story is repeated in Vickers, 70-71. The same narrative details reappear in Jacobus de Voragine's life of Gregory, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993), 178.

<sup>182</sup> Vickers, 76. Salvatore Settis, "Traiano a Hearst Castle: due cassoni estensi," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 6 (1995): 40 n. 26, challenges Vickers's suggestion that a scene depicted on the Column of Trajan may have inspired the apocryphal story of Trajan's justice. Settis deems the assertion improbable on the grounds that "scenes from the Column of Trajan were neither described nor cited before the middle of the Quattrocento."

<sup>183</sup> The lengthy inscription annotating the images of the *Trajan and Herkenbald* tapestry (Brussels, before 1450; now Bern) specifically mentions Gregory remembering the episode of Trajan's justice while passing by the Column of Trajan: "[Gregory] on a certain occasion when in the city of Rome passed through

In the vast majority of the early Gregorian *vite*, then, the vignette of Trajan's justice is essentially an unacknowledged *ekphrasis* of an image that Gregory studies among the ruins of pagan Rome. The *Justice of Trajan* was, from its beginnings, not a fictitiously chronicled event but a fictitiously posited image. Vickers's observation has important consequences for the conceptual framework that surrounded images of Trajan's justice for late medieval and Renaissance viewers and should alert modern scholars to the potential of such images to have been understood by their early viewers as images of that original image posited in the accounts of Gregory's deeds.

Relatively few late medieval depictions of the *Justice of Trajan* treat the scene within the context of Gregory's life. It is far more common for the episode to appear alone, as an ancient *exemplum* of just action.<sup>184</sup> About a decade after Foppa painted his now-lost version of the scene, however, the Brescian Carmelite Giovanni Maria da Brescia produced an engraving after Foppa's Loggetta fresco that re-inscribed the political emblem within the original narrative of Gregory's piety (figure 80). In the absence of Foppa's original painting, our best guide to the appearance of the Loggetta fresco is a drawing now in Berlin attributed to Foppa or his immediate circle (figure

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Trajan's forum and near his column, which brought to mind both the previously depicted [episode in the tapestry, i.e. Trajan and the mother] as well as other just actions performed by Trajan, which in God's eyes had passed into oblivion. (Qui dum quadam vice in urbe roma, foru[m] trayani et secus eius colu[m]pnam p[er]t[ra]nsiens, ac p[re]figuratum atq[ue] cetera iustitie illius studia memoratus, q[uod] illa coram deo sub oblivione transissent.)" A copy of this tapestry is recorded in Ferrara among Lionello d'Este's possessions at his death in 1450. For the tapestry, its inscriptions, and the presence of a similar tapestry in Ferrara, see *Die Burgunderbeute und Werk burgundischer Hofkunst*, exh. cat. (Bern: Bernisches Historisches Museum, 1969), 366-72, no. 242. For the tapestry, see also Guy Delmarcel, *Flemish Tapestry* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 36, 37, 40-42.

<sup>184</sup> Settis, "Traiano a Hearst Castle," illustrates numerous fifteenth-century versions of the Trajanic scene depicted as an isolated historical event. But he also illustrates Michael Pacher's *Saint Gregory liberating Trajan from Hell* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), which is concerned expressly with Gregory's intercession on Trajan's behalf, though that image makes no explicit reference to the episode of Trajan's justice for the mother.

81).<sup>185</sup> The vertical orientation of the engraving makes it impossible for the drawing to have served as a direct model for the print, but the two works are indisputably linked. The foreground of Giovanni Maria's engraving is a compressed version of the figure group in the Berlin drawing: both designs include nine figures in Trajan's retinue, with the same numbers being mounted and on foot, and, while the figures are not identical, most of them bear strong resemblances of physiognomy and costume to their counterparts. Less certain is the appearance of the painting's architectural backdrop. Nothing in the Berlin drawing suggests the inclusion of the framing narrative of Gregory's intercession that Giovanni Maria's engraving insists upon. The printed image presses the Trajanic narrative into the shallow space of the foreground, bracketing the knowing glance between Trajan and the culpable young rider with a heavy archway bearing the inscriptions, "Forum of Trajan" (FOR./TRA/IANI) and "Everlasting example of uncorrupted justice" (INCORRVPTAE IVSTICIAE/SEMPITERNVM EXEMP). Located between the ancient pseudo-history and the inscribed entablature is a balcony identifying Saint Gregory (DI/VV/S GR/E/GO/RIS), who receives word that his plea for the virtuous emperor's soul has been granted.

With the Trajanic scene occupying fully two-thirds of the engraving, we might assume that the ancient episode held greater interest for Giovanni Maria and his viewership than the Gregorian frame narrative, but the relationship between the two components is complex and emphasizes the importance of their interrelation. While foreground and background can be taken as two moments in a continuous narrative

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<sup>185</sup> For the Berlin drawing see Giovanni Agosti's catalogue entry (no. 70), in Agosti, Natale, and Romano, eds., *Vincenzo Foppa*, 242.

stretching across centuries, Giovanni Maria, through a conventionalized piece of visual wit, made it possible to read all of the engraving's narrative elements as pertaining entirely to Gregory's time and place—and partially to the viewer's.

The fulcrum for such a reading is the large fly that appears to have come to rest on the rounded belly of Trajan's horse. As a form of artistic self-reference, the *trompe-l'oeil* fly has its origin in a story told by Filarete of how the young Giotto had bested Cimabue by painting flies onto Cimabue's portraits that fooled the master into trying to brush them away.<sup>186</sup> For Filarete, the anecdote is part of a series of famous demonstrations throughout history that show the power of painting to make mere matter—specifically the raw, untransformed matter of sculpted stone—appear inert by comparison. Giovanni Maria's fly performs a similar action on the Trajanic group, making this tableau appear to exist as an inert image within the wider (fictional) reality of Trajan's Forum and the city of Rome as presented in the engraving. On one hand, the fly's reduction of this "Trajanic frieze" to the level of an image-within-an-image can be interpreted as a competitive gesture whereby Giovanni Maria appropriated Foppa's painting and redeployed it as a work of art within the fiction of his own engraving. On the other hand, this change of status from image to image-of-an-image signifies no diminishment at all but only returns the *Justice of Trajan* to its original condition as an image, in particular, that special image that spurred Gregory to accomplish an exemplary act of justice himself.

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<sup>186</sup> Antonio Averlino (called Filarete), *Trattato di architettura*, eds. Anna Maria Finoli and Liliana Grassi (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1972), 664-65.



Recognizing the engraved scene of Trajan and the widow as a representation of a (relief) image not only transforms our understanding of what the engraving portrays but also of the sort of response it could potentially elicit. The engraving allows the viewer to see what Gregory saw in Trajan's Forum and connects the act of viewing such an image to Gregory's exemplary act of intercession with God. It is not only Trajan's just act but also Gregory's desire to render justice to the virtuous soul of the pagan emperor that constitutes an "everlasting exemplum of uncorrupted justice." This places at stake the power of images to motivate virtuous action and the willingness of the viewer to be moved to virtuous action by similarly mediated expressions of virtue and faith.

The engraving's claim for the capacity of images to motivate pious action was more pronounced than was usual in depictions of the scene, but it was not an eccentric understanding of the subject. The most famous recounting of the *Justice of Trajan* appeared in Canto X of Dante's *Purgatorio*, where the efficacy of the image *as an image* was paramount. Entering Purgatory, Dante and Virgil immediately confront a series of three images carved by God himself into the brilliant white marble of the mountainside and sculpted in such a way that "not only Polycleitus but nature would have been put to shame."<sup>187</sup> These reliefs mark the entry to the Terrace of Pride with a series of exemplary acts of humility that culminate with the episode of Trajan and the widow. As he stands in front of this final scene, Dante pauses to note the spiritual efficacy of the image, even before describing the exemplary action that it represents: "There was depicted the high

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<sup>187</sup> Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*, ed. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 88 (Canto X, v. 28-33): "Là sù non eran mossi i piè nostri anco,/quand'io conobbi quella ripa intorno/che dritto di salita aveva manco,/esser di marmo candido e addorno/d'intagli sì, che non pur Policleto,/ma la natura li avrebbe scorno." The translation is mine.

glory of the Roman prince whose worth moved Gregory to his great victory...”<sup>188</sup> Central to Dante’s course through the realms of the *Divina Commedia* is the special ability of the painful, startling, or beautiful images he encounters to continually motivate his journey toward God. On the Terrace of Pride, where several visual artists are not only discussed but even number among the penitents, the divinely carved image of the *Justice of Trajan* is presented as the most powerfully motivating image in the history of Christian intercession—a source of hope for the suffering, purgatorial soul and a spur to the living who still pray for them.

Moretto recognized in the Loggetta’s frescoed image of the Trajanic scene a rich vein of themes relevant to his own project for the *Massacre of the Innocents*. The cast of characters for both narratives is nearly identical: the monarch, his soldiers, a distraught mother, and her dead son, playing out their story on the stage of an ancient (or *all’antica*) piazza. And while the Brescian council’s desire to preserve Foppa’s fresco surely indicates that the image was an official statement of the city’s just governance (as well as a major work by an important Brescian artist of the preceding generation), Giovanni Maria’s engraving is significant for documenting a contemporaneous understanding that the true historical value of the *Justice of Trajan* was its capacity to “[move] Gregory to his great victory.”

The sort of victory that Gregory won for Trajan was incomparable to that celebrated by Venice and its partisans in the Piazza Grande. Trajan’s was an act of justice, but his true virtue, as Dante had espoused, was his humility despite his high

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<sup>188</sup> Dante, 90 (Canto X, v. 73-75). “Quiv’era storiata l’alta gloria/ del roman principato, il cui valore/ mosse Gregorio a la sua gran vittoria...”

station. The *Justice of Trajan* fit well with the messages of magnanimity and orderly rule that Venice and its *rettori* hoped to project in Brescia's urban center and which Brescia itself had a stake in promoting. Moretto's inversion of the scene suggests, however, that the sacrifice of the ruled population—memorialized, for instance, in the Saguntum/Brescia monument—and the self-sacrifice of the just ruler—emblemized in Foppa's *Justice of Trajan*—rarely balanced. To present these messages, through the homogenizing and moralizing forms of the piazza's *all'antica* decoration, as equivalent expressions of good government was to cover over the real cost of provincial rule and the identity of those who bore the expense.

In the *Massacre of the Innocents*'s sharp distinction of foreground and background and its presentation of the *mêlée* “in an artificial, theatrical space illuminated by stage lights,” we see Moretto's response to Giovanni Maria's engraving and that image's clever reassertion of the *Justice of Trajan* as the sculpted relief it was believed to have been in Trajan's Forum.<sup>189</sup> Vickers notes that “Gregory's story demonstrates that within the drama of intercession there may well be a third term: intercessor, intercessee, and that which moves one to intercede—the work of art...”<sup>190</sup> In considering Moretto's altarpiece as an image that aimed at just this sort of mediation, it is now possible to see the frequent criticism of the painting's lack of naturalistic light and space and its inconsistent imitation of the antique as decisions that pursued devotional and intercessory

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<sup>189</sup> Savy, “Moretto e Romanino per la confraternità del Corpo di Cristo nel Duomo di Brescia: i cicli decorative e un gonfalone perduto,” *Prospettiva*, nos. 110-111 (April-July, 2003): 99. Moretto's *Massacre of the Innocents* does not seem to include any formal citation of Foppa's lost fresco that might be recognizable from Giovanni Maria's engraving or the Berlin sheet, but Andrea Bayer, *Brescia after the League of Cambrai*, 110, suggests that one or both of Moretto's mounted figures of Saints Faustino and Jovita (1518) for the organ shutters of Brescia's cathedral church of Santa Maria de Dom may have been based on Giovanni Maria's engraved figure of the mounted Trajan.

<sup>190</sup> Vickers, 80.

goals. Like God's brilliantly gleaming relief carvings that first greet the soul on its climb through Purgatory, Moretto did not attempt to match Polykleitos or nature but to surpass them.

In its inversions of Titian's *Resurrection* and Raphael's and Marcantonio's engraving, Moretto's *Massacre of the Innocents* offered a model for the Christian altarpiece that did not rely on the affective appeal of these seminal works of the "maniera moderna." Both sides of this polemic were deeply interested in moving a viewer to the point of response. But rather than stimulating his viewers to delight in graceful horror or attempting to persuade them of the reality of a verisimilar presence, Moretto's altarpiece worked against the unconscious responses that images can elicit in order to slow the viewer's reaction and move him or her on account of the overwhelming truth conveyed through the image, not embodied within it. The *Massacre of the Innocents* is a vehicle for marshalling devotional attention that does not allow that attention to stop at the image but forces the viewer to negotiate its obfuscations, discrepancies, and allusions, ultimately moving far beyond its optical and emotional effects. Like Gregory, who sped from Trajan's Forum to pray at the altar of Saint Peter, viewers had to abandon the image that prompted their pious thoughts if they were to replicate the saintly pope's great victory.

## Chapter Four

### Old Testament Scenes for the Sacrament Chapel in San Giovanni Evangelista: Artistic Persona, Imitation, and Patchwork Composition

It is nobler to draw even an unremarkable style from one's own vein of natural talent than to be shameless enough to assemble a patchwork of borrowed passages (*conficere centones*) with laborious and worthless effort...<sup>191</sup>

—Paolo Giovio, *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*, c. 1527-30

Indeed, who would not praise that artist, who, from a multiplicity of small bits and scattered fragments gathered together and arranged according to his skill, would bring about a varied and brilliant work?<sup>192</sup>

—Editor's preface to Lelio Capilupi, *Centones ex Virgilio*, 1543

When the altarpiece for the Casari family entered San Giovanni Evangelista, it joined several other paintings by Moretto that he had painted for the church over the preceding decade. Foremost among these earlier works were Moretto's contributions to the church's chapel of the Holy Sacrament, which included the *Last Supper* and the six Old Testament prophets, works that preceded Moretto's activity in Bishop Ugoni's

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<sup>191</sup> "Magis enim est ingenuum vel mediocriter a propria naturalis ingenii vena stilum deducere quam impudenter et operoso vilique labore conficere centones..." For Giovio's text and this translation see, Paolo Giovio, *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*, ed. and trans. Kenneth Gouwens (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2013), 326-27.

<sup>192</sup> *Laelii Capilupi Mantvani Cento ex Virgilio De Vita Monachorum et Gallus* (Venice, 1543), sig. A<sup>v</sup>. (NB. Page signatures for the two stories are not consecutive but repeat.) Paolo Gherardo, the same publisher, incidentally, who would publish Paolo Pino's *Dialogo di Pittura* five years later, addressed his prefatory letter to Giovanni Michiel. The passage in its original Latin: "Etenim quis illum non laudet artificem, qui ex multiplicibus minutisque; fragmentis undique; collectis, et ex arte dispositis varium et illustre opus efficiat?"

studio.<sup>193</sup> In a contract signed in 1521, San Giovanni Evangelista's Augustinian canons, the church's *massari*, and the Scuola del Santissimo Sacramento arranged for Romanino and the younger Moretto to decorate the left and right walls, respectively, in the *scuola*'s chapel. The contract dictated that the painters accomplish their work within three years, although the document did not define the number of canvases expected, nor did it describe their subject matter.<sup>194</sup> Ultimately, the lateral decorations would include twenty-two canvases. Romanino would paint the *Mystical Mass*, *Raising of Lazarus*, and *Christ in the House of Levi*; Moretto the *Last Supper*, *Elijah and the Angel*, and the *Gathering of Manna*. Between the two of them, they also would execute four evangelist portraits and twelve images of Hebrew prophets (figures 82 and 83).

Setting the two painters to work on equal and opposite walls ensured that their paintings would be compared and interpreted against one another for the typological associations that connected them. For modern scholars, the works' spatial opposition has been an equal inducement to compare and criticize the painters' distinct visual styles. For most of the twentieth century, describing this dialectic and its implications for a definable "school" of Brescian painting far outweighed the analysis applied to the pictures' contents.<sup>195</sup> Many critics noted a contrast between Moretto's disjointed compositions of classicizing figures and Romanino's roughly hewn forms and striking optical effects of light, but whether this distinction represented divergent artistic priorities or

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<sup>193</sup> For these six images of prophets, see fn. 48.

<sup>194</sup> The original contract is held in the Archivio di Stato di Milano (*Pergamene*, cartella 80), and Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 220-26, transcribes the original along with the text of a nearly identical eighteenth-century copy, which has been known since the late nineteenth-century.

<sup>195</sup> See Begni Redona, 138-65, for an extensive account of the critical reception of Moretto's portion of the chapel decoration by twentieth-century writers.

complementary elements of a local pictorial vernacular has remained a point of persistent debate.<sup>196</sup>

On the occasion of the major Moretto exhibition in 1988, Alessandro Ballarin advanced the now widely-accepted theory that Moretto and Romanino produced the chapel's lateral decoration in two distinct phases.<sup>197</sup> To the earlier phase, associated with the contract of 1521, Ballarin assigned the two large lunettes, the *Mystic Mass* and the *Last Supper*, as well as the twelve images of prophets installed in the two intrados that frame the lunettes. The execution of the lower register, dominated by Moretto's Old Testament scenes and by Romanino's scenes from the life of Christ, Ballarin ascribed to the years around 1543-1545. While no documentation survives to substantiate this hypothesized second campaign, Ballarin's argument for placing Moretto's Old Testament narratives in the mid-1540s rested on his recognition that Moretto's figures in the two scenes possess a strong kinship with Central Italian Mannerism.<sup>198</sup> Giorgio Vasari and Francesco Salviati had been active in Venice between 1540 and 1542, and, Ballarin

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<sup>196</sup> Longhi, for instance, consistently described the two walls of the chapel as illustrative of Romanino's Venetian superficiality and Moretto's break with those same Venetian tendencies; see, for instance, "Cose bresciane del Cinquecento." Later in the century, the poet and playwright Giovanni Testori would make the influential claim that the two painters' styles reflected twin elements essential to the Brescian visual idiom, analogous to Brescia's local dialect of speech; see Testori, *Romanino e Moretto alla cappella del Sacramento* (Brescia: Grafo, 1975), 7-19.

<sup>197</sup> Alessandro Ballarin, "La cappella del Sacramento nella chiesa di San Giovanni Evangelista a Brescia."

<sup>198</sup> Ballarin's disruptive proposal has been a welcome prod for further reconsideration of the chapel's early history. One of the more significant recent findings has been the clarification of the chapel's site when Moretto and Romanino decorated it. The chapel initially occupied a large chapel off the right (south) aisle but was relocated to its current location off the left (north) aisle around the middle of the seventeenth century. The case for the chapel's original location is a fundamental contribution of Savy, *Mancudatio per visum*, esp. 73-81.

surmised, Moretto had tried—mostly unsuccessfully in his opinion—to incorporate this new style into his typological narratives.<sup>199</sup>

Ballarin's re-dating resolved several problems. Moretto's subject matter had seemed particularly precocious for an Italian sacrament chapel of the 1520s, whereas the themes of Elijah in the Wilderness and the Fall of Manna find many more comparable examples in the 1540s.<sup>200</sup> Also, the complex contour lines of Moretto's figures in *Elijah and the Angel* and the overloaded composition of the *Manna* seemed at odds with the clear sense of space and volume in the *Last Supper*. The "discomposed Michelangelism"<sup>201</sup> that renders Elijah a "graphic knot of arms and legs"<sup>202</sup> stems far more from the sort of imitation of Michelangelo occurring in the 1540s than in the 1520s. Likewise, the numerous citations after Raphael and his circle that "imprint themselves on the two-dimensional plane of the [*Gathering of Manna*] as in a large intarsia," resemble the compositional strategies of Vasari and Salviati during this later period. Yet, once identified, these strong signals of stylistic dependence call for explanation, and here the interpretation by Ballarin is less persuasive. Moretto's reliance on Central Italian models, Ballarin argued, helped him to overcome a long period of artistic "crisis" that had begun a decade earlier with the *Massacre of the Innocents*.<sup>203</sup> But if Moretto drew heavily upon

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<sup>199</sup> Salviati was in Venice by July 1539, and had returned to Rome by July of 1541; see Iris H. Cheney, "Francesco Salviati's North Italian Journey," *The Art Bulletin* 45, no. 4 (Dec. 1963): 337-38. Vasari arrived in Venice in December 1541, departing the city in the late summer of 1542; see Juergen Schulz, "Vasari at Venice," *The Burlington Magazine* 103, no. 705 (Dec., 1961): 500.

<sup>200</sup> Compare the examples collected by Maurice E. Cope, "The Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament in the Sixteenth Century," Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1965, 190-219.

<sup>201</sup> Ballarin, "La cappella del Sacramento," 192.

<sup>202</sup> Savy, "Moretto e Romanino per la confraternità del Corpo di Cristo nel Duomo di Brescia," 99.

<sup>203</sup> Ballarin, "La cappella del Sacramento," 188-90.



Mannerist formulas, it is unlikely that he did so because he recognized a deficiency in his own abilities.

Moretto's second campaign on the chapel decoration followed a period of increased demand for his paintings outside of Brescia. In the years around 1540, Moretto executed five large paintings for churches in Milan and Verona.<sup>204</sup> To the extent of our current knowledge, none of these paintings were embedded into larger programmatic ensembles nor required the complex figurative associations that defined Moretto's typological paintings for San Giovanni Evangelista, yet they confirm that Moretto's artistic production gained greater visibility during these years and was sought by a widening group of patrons. And it is clear that Moretto was keen to expand his reputation further. A significant indication of this appears in Moretto's increased activity as a portraitist at this moment. Most of Moretto's portraits have been dated on the basis of their style to the years around 1540, and while many of the sitters remain unidentified, one now-lost portrait from this period clearly signaled Moretto's ambition to promote himself among elite circles of patrons. Before late 1543, Moretto painted a portrait of Pietro Aretino and consigned the work to Aretino's friend, the sculptor Jacopo Sansovino, to deliver to the writer in Venice.<sup>205</sup> Aretino had recently published two volumes of his collected letters, in which he frequently discussed the work of contemporary artists, and despite the lack of any verifiable acquaintance between the two men, Moretto would have had reason to hope that Aretino would repay his gift by

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<sup>204</sup> Begni Redona, cat. nos. 76, 77, 85, 86, and 155.

<sup>205</sup> Sansovino's role as courier is confirmed in Aretino's letter to Moretto of September 1544; see *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, vol. 2, ed. Ettore Camesasca (Milan: del Milione, 1957), 24. The portrait's execution must have occurred before 1544, since Aretino refers to Moretto's painting in a letter to Vasari that Camesasca dates to September 1542, though it may have been written the following year, in September 1543; see *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, vol. 1, 231.

praising the portrait in the pages of some future publication. Aretino's letter thanking Moretto and applauding his skill would have arrived in Brescia late in 1544, when Moretto was at work on the *Elijah* and the *Manna*. Although the letter would not appear in print until 1546, Moretto must have been pleased to learn that the poet had already made a gift of the portrait to Guidobaldo II della Rovere, Duke of Urbino.

The hallmarks of Central Italian Mannerism visible in *Elijah and the Angel* and in the *Gathering of Manna* have fascinated recent scholars, but the intense focus on regional traits and the influence of art-making centers on provincial cities has fostered little insight into why Moretto chose certain figural motifs or why he arranged those motifs as he did. If, however, we consider Moretto's presentation of Central Italian inventions as subordinate to other themes that unite larger portions of the chapel's program, then thematic concerns begin to emerge. For instance, if we compare the chapel's New Testament narratives (*Christ in the House of Levi*, *Raising of Lazarus*, and *Last Supper*) to the Old Testament scenes, it is apparent that the images of Christ consistently show him acting within architectural spaces among groups of figures that tend toward the Albertian norm of "nine or ten men" (figures 86-87 and 47).<sup>206</sup> By contrast, the Bible describes the events of *Elijah and the Angel* and *The Gathering of Manna* taking place in harsh exterior environments, and Moretto depicted these outdoor scenes with an extreme paucity and an extreme abundance of figures (figures 84-85). Compared to these extremes of location and number, the more moderated images of Christ acquire an

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<sup>206</sup> Alberti, 75-76, states: "I do not like a picture to be virtually empty, but I do not approve of an abundance that lacks dignity...In my opinion there will be no 'historia' so rich in variety of things that nine or ten men cannot worthily perform it. I think Varro's dictum is relevant here: he allowed no more than nine guests at dinner, to avoid disorder."

additional level of cohesion among themselves and separation from the extreme poles of the Old Testament prefigurations.

This kind of differentiation (and reciprocal definition) between the Old and New Testament scenes operates on a structural level distinct from the two artists' approaches to optical verisimilitude and artistic citation, but these valences are mutually inflecting. Stephen Campbell has recently argued that Romanino's scenes from Christ's life "[seek] to place the sacred in the realm of immediate experience, the tactile as well as the visible," by "conspicuously avoid[ing] the mediations of metaphor, allegory, or the citation of other art."<sup>207</sup> In contrast to this highly mimetic mode, Campbell sees Moretto's Old Testament scenes as so "self-conscious about the practice of imitation, making visible the procedures of expropriation and dismembering" that they embody "a principle of mediation."<sup>208</sup> Seen together, the narrative scenes represent Christ's body acting within the physical order with an immediacy of experience that Romanino presents as central and normative, whereas the extreme compositions of Moretto's Old Testament prefigurations help to define Christ's body as immediate and central through their mediating citationalism and their minimal and maximal figure groups.

Extraordinarily, Moretto even carried the theme of mediation into his portrayals of the gospel writers that flank his Old Testament scenes. In Romanino's images of Saint Matthew and Saint John, the older painter depicted each evangelist in the act of writing while hearing the inspired words of God from the mouth of his zoomorphic attribute (figures 88 and 89). Romanino's evangelists write what they here God tell them.

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<sup>207</sup> Campbell, "*Renaissance Naturalism*," 315.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 311-12.

Moretto's author portraits, conversely, do not emphasize the direct receipt of divine inspiration (in both cases the saints' zoomorphs lie mute at their feet), but instead emphasize the act of copying (figures 90 and 91). Saint Luke reads from a codex, presumably his own gospel, while a Byzantine painting on the wall reminds the beholder that Luke's evangelism was not limited to his writings. Medieval tradition held that Luke had depicted the Virgin and Child from life, and this supposed original portrait became the source for multiple lineages of Lucan Madonnas that claimed to perpetuate Luke's original painting.<sup>209</sup> Moretto *does* show Saint Mark at work writing his gospel, but here the theme of copying is even more conspicuous. To my knowledge, it has gone unnoticed that Mark reads from a second codex as he writes his gospel, and I know of no other evangelist portrait that depicts the gospel writer's activity in this way, as a scholar transcribing texts. While the images of Luke and Mark are ancillary to the larger narrative images of Jewish history that Moretto painted, their emphasis on replication should prompt us to reconsider how we interpret Moretto's reuse of figures and compositional motifs from other works of art.

This chapter seeks to explain the routinely cited "disjointedness" of Moretto's *Elijah and the Angel* and the *Gathering of Manna* by examining Moretto's strategies of artistic reference. These strategies were keyed both to the individual picture's subject matters and their structural position within the chapel's larger programmatic scheme. Fundamental to this argument are Moretto's knowledge of and pointed references to

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<sup>209</sup> On Lucan Madonnas in Western Europe in the fifteen and early sixteenth centuries and further bibliography, see Maryan Ainsworth, "À la façon de grèce: The Encounter of Northern Renaissance Artists with Byzantine Icons," in ed. Helen Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004), 544-593.

recent Central Italian paintings and prints and to the critical attitudes toward these images that circulated throughout Italy and beyond. In nearly every case, my contentions about Moretto's stance toward these sources are based on the choices he made in selecting and manipulating the motifs that went into his two Old Testament narratives. We have no information concerning Brescian artists' opinions on the spread of Florentine and Roman art into North Italy except for what is recorded in their paintings. Of course, scholars have written a great deal about the reception of Leonardo's art in and around Milan, and about Venetian efforts to contend with Michelangelo's innovations, seen first in Titian's paintings and later throughout the works of Veronese, Tintoretto, and their contemporaries.<sup>210</sup> The attitudes of artists working in the North Italian provinces toward these foreign models is less well understood, and the appearance of Central Italian Mannerism in the art of cities like Brescia has regularly been ascribed to the periphery's inevitable acquiescence to developments in dominant centers. These biases, coupled with the absence of any comment by Moretto or his fellow painters, have undoubtedly skewed modern perceptions of the "mannerism" found in the *Gathering of Manna* and *Elijah and the Angel*.

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<sup>210</sup> On Leonardo and the Leonardeschi, see Tatiana Kustodieva and Susanna Zatti, eds., *Leonardeschi da Foppa a Giampietrino. Dipinti dall'Ermitage di San Pietroburgo e dai Musei civici di Pavia* (Milan: Skira, 2011). Also significant are Luke Syson, "Leonardo and Leonardism in Sforza Milan," in Stephen Campbell, ed., *Artists at Court: Image-making and Identity, 1300-1550* (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; distributed by Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004), as well as Jill Pederson, "Henrico Boscano's *Isola Beata*: New Evidence for the Academia Leonardi Vinci in Renaissance Milan," *Renaissance Studies* 22 (2008): 405-75, and idem., "Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio's Portrait of Girolamo Casio and the Poetics of Male Beauty in Renaissance Milan," in *Renaissance Love: Eros, Passion, and Friendship in Italian Art around 1500*, eds. Jeanette Kohl, Marianne Koos, Adrian Randolph (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2014). On Michelangelo's reception in Venice see for further bibliography, Fredrika H. Jacobs, "Aretino and Michelangelo, Dolce and Titian: *Femmina, Masculo, Grazia*," *The Art Bulletin* 82, no. 1 (March 2000): 51-67. Also Mary Pardo, "Artifice as Seduction in Titian," in *Sexuality and Gender in Early Modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993); Rodolfo Pallucchini, ed., *Tiziano e il manierismo europeo* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1978).

In the early 1540s, Moretto was eager to enter a trans-regional dialogue about picture-making, and he seems to have been especially attentive to the way such a conversation was then taking shape in Aretino's writings. He had little need of Vasari's or Salviati's Mannerism as a novelty with which to promote his work, but as an emergent style associated with Central Italy and presently finding interested patrons in the Po Valley and Venice, it offered a powerful new visual idiom. The following analysis aims to describe Moretto's critical reaction to this ascendant pictorial mode and its claims for the painter's artistic authorship. Initially, we will consider Moretto's selection of figure types and compositional tropes for the Old Testament scenes. In fashioning a Michelangelesque *Elijah and the Angel* and a Raphaellesque *Gathering of Manna*, Moretto emblemized these artists' distinguishing pictorial characteristics. But more than this, the two paintings also align their respective subjects with the distinct professional personae that had become associated with these two men. The withdrawal and isolation of the *Elijah* and the swarming action of the *Manna* were amenable not only to characteristic visual qualities of Michelangelo's and Raphael's pictures but also to the ways contemporaries described these two men as practitioners of art. Having established Moretto's attentiveness to these artists' reputations as distinct but equally powerful artistic creators, we will turn to consider how Moretto's super-abundant compilations of motifs and schema characterized his own painting practice as something other than the imitation of these authoritative sources.

### **Elijah's Isolation**

After Elijah killed the prophets of Baal, who enjoyed the favor of Queen Jezebel, he received word that the queen was intent on putting him to the sword, also. Under this threat of death, Elijah escaped into hiding, where the Bible tells of his encounter with an angel.

And he [Elijah] went forward, one day's journey into the desert. And when he was there and sat under a juniper tree, he requested for his soul *that he might die*, and said: 'It is enough for me, Lord, take away my soul, for I am no better than my fathers.' And he cast himself down, and slept in the shadow of the juniper tree, and behold an angel of the Lord touched him, and said to him: 'Arise and eat.' He looked, and behold there was at his head a hearth cake and a vessel of water, and he ate and drank, and he fell asleep again. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said to him: 'Arise, eat; for thou hast yet a great way to go.' And he arose and ate, and drank...<sup>211</sup>

Moretto's painting of this scene for San Giovanni Evangelista was the second of two versions he would execute during his lifetime. He had painted the earlier picture for the cathedral's sacrament chapel some ten years earlier, and the differences between the two images are striking.

The cathedral version depicts Elijah lying prone on the ground with his head supported by his left forearm (figure 92). An angelic putto descends with the bread and water mentioned in the text. The extent of Elijah's retreat into seclusion is suggested by the town that occupies a hill on the other side of stream that cuts through the picture's middle distance. Two men have stopped their journey by the side of a bridge, and one traveler urinates into the water while a third man fishes downstream. The vignette might be classified merely as a genre detail except that it is a foil for the painting's main subject. The tainted stream—the source of the fisherman's food—stands in contrast to

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<sup>211</sup> 3 Kings 19:4-8 (Douay-Rheims). My emphasis.

both the divine sustenance that the angel delivers and the incorruptible Eucharist that the hearth cake prefigures.

Rather than commenting on the purity of the heavenly food, Moretto's later scene for San Giovanni Evangelista centers on the encounter between the sleeping prophet and the attending angel (figure 84). Consequently, the divine bread and water are marginalized and the vast landscape, which more than one modern writer has related to Netherlandish models, holds only a tenuous connection to the figure group that dominates the picture's foreground.<sup>212</sup> As the angel touches the sleeping prophet's head, the two bodies form a linked series of bent and torqued limbs that stand at odds with the painting's nominal theme of comfort. Coupled with Elijah's inattention to the food placed before him, the angel's strangely aggressive pose could be taken to indicate that the prophet may be about to receive the death he requested from God.

Attempting to describe the essence of the San Giovanni *Elijah and the Angel*, Bernard Berenson entirely dismissed the painting's biblical subject matter, finding the work to be "really a highly poetical landscape, in the foreground of which we see two grand figures that we might easily mistake for the sleeping Centaur Chiron mounted by Victory."<sup>213</sup> Berenson's assessment of Moretto's intentions for the picture is contentious, but it is valuable in that it prompts us to consider how the painting emphasizes figure types, even while it relates the details of its narrative. Thinking about Moretto's *Elijah and the Angel* and *Gathering of Manna* as pictures developed from a consideration of

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<sup>212</sup> See Begni Redona, 162-63, for earlier writers' acknowledgement of the picture's Netherlandish influences.

<sup>213</sup> Bernard Berenson, *North Italian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 127-28.



types is important, not only because these episodes from the Hebrew Bible were understood as typological prefigurations of the Eucharist, but because it allows us to reinvest the composition of these pictures with Moretto's agency, if not quite his creative authorship.

The sleeping prophet's physique, muscular and bent into a composition of taut contours, has led to claims that Moretto conceived the figure in imitation of Michelangelo. But it is the angel stationed above the prophet that fully clarifies the picture's specific address to the Florentine. Moretto had portrayed the comforting angel as a putto in the version executed for the cathedral's *scuola*, and after the San Giovanni decoration, he would return to this type of youthful angel to represent the heavenly aid rendered to the sleeping Saint Roch (figure 93).<sup>214</sup> In Moretto's paintings of the 1530s and 1540s, these putto-angels are unthreatening, benevolent agents who can approach, at times quite intimately, a vulnerable protagonist in need of care. The stern angel in the San Giovanni painting is categorically different. This more mature angel's cuirass imparts an unexpectedly martial tone to the scene, and when compared to Moretto's previous paintings, the angel's pleasing but angular features, his mass of curly golden hair, and his armored torso closely resemble the figures of Saint Michael that Moretto and his workshop had executed for the *Virgin and Child in Glory with Saint Francis and the Archangel Michael presenting a Donor* and the *Coronation of the Virgin* (figure 94).<sup>215</sup> Moretto's second portrayal of Elijah is Michelangelesque, therefore, not merely because

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<sup>214</sup> Begni Redona, 443, assigns the Saint Roch altarpiece to "not much later than 1545."

<sup>215</sup> Begni Redona, 382-84 and 274-79, respectively.

of his muscular build and difficult pose but also because Moretto has shown the prophet, quite unusually, under the hand of Michelangelo's namesake.

Moretto's portrayal of Michael atop the vanquished devil in the *Coronation of the Virgin* is especially relevant to our consideration of Moretto's compositional choices for the *Elijah and the Angel*, because the latter painting's figure group is a variant of the explicit master-subject arrangement seen in the altarpiece.<sup>216</sup> This type of two-figure composition had a particularly illustrious history in Michelangelo's home city, where the tradition of more or less violent encounters between a triumphant (usually standing) protagonist and a subjugated (usually kneeling, bent, or unconscious) opponent was a theme in major works, public and private. Considered in the context of Florentine master-subject imagery, Berenson's description of Moretto's figures seems much less fanciful.<sup>217</sup> Saint Michael's fingers woven into Elijah's hair perform the same action as seen, for instance, in Botticelli's *Pallas and the Centaur*, Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* (figure 95), and Baccio Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* (figure 96). Later in the century, Giambologna would take up this type in his *Hercules and the Centaur*, a composition that seems likely to have prompted Berenson's intuitive description of Moretto's figures.

Around 1530, Michelangelo had developed two designs for master-subject marble sculptures, the *Victory* (figure 97), left in Florence when Pope Paul III called him to

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<sup>216</sup> On the master-subject type and the thematic expression of sculptural mastery, see Cole, *Cellini*, 85-86, 97-98. For the continued development of the motif in relation to the *paragone* of sculpture and painting in the years following Moretto's *Elijah and the Angel*, see Hansen, 79-80.

<sup>217</sup> Like Berenson's description, Ballarin's identification of Titian's *David and Goliath*, originally installed in the ceiling of Santo Spirito in Isola, as an essential point of reference for Moretto's *Elijah and the Angel* seems to register an unstated (and perhaps unconscious) recognition of the master-subject theme in Moretto's composition. Ballarin's acknowledged basis for comparison is a "decorative articulation of the limbs" shared by Titian's and Moretto's two paintings. See Ballarin, "La Cappella del Sacramento," 192.

Rome in 1534, and the *Samson* (figure 98), which never advanced beyond the model.

There is no evidence that these specific designs had reached Brescia by the early 1540s, but Moretto could have come to associate Michelangelo with the type through other means. Much earlier in Michelangelo's career, the image of a triumphing youth gripping his vanquished foe by the hair appeared in *David Beheading Goliath* (figure 99), among the scenes of Jewish history that Michelangelo had painted on the Sistine Chapel vault.<sup>218</sup>

And it was a very similar configuration that a woodcut designer devised to portray Michelangelo for Sigismondo Fanti's *Triumpho di Fortuna*, published in Venice in 1527 (figure 100).<sup>219</sup> Shown in the act of carving a recumbent marble figure, Michelangelo, his loincloth billowing behind him from the force of the assault, mounts the block in order to deliver a blow to the figure's chest. Moretto and other artists active well beyond Central Italy had reason to understand Michelangelo's artistry in terms of combat.<sup>220</sup>

Moretto's archangel, lacing his fingers into the hair of the sleeping prophet, does not hold the sculptor's hammer or David's sword, but there is a peculiar flexion in the angel's left arm, which cannot be explained by the simple act of securing the fluttering sash at his hip. The shape of the angel's closed hand, the bend in his elbow, and the forceful over-rotation of his shoulder would all relate more naturally to an arm held

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<sup>218</sup> In his brief biography of Michelangelo, written around 1527, Paolo Giovio noted the high reputation among the Roman artistic community of the program's corner images, specifically the *Judith and Holofernes* and the *Haman*. See Paolo Giovio, "Michaelis Angeli Vita," reproduced in *Paolo Giovio: Scritti d'arte, lessico ed ecfasi*, ed. Sonia Maffei (Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 1999), 246-47.

<sup>219</sup> Sigismondo Fanti, *Triumpho di Fortuna* (Venice: Agostin da Portese, 1527), sig. F.

<sup>220</sup> In a famous inscription appended to a study for a bronze statue of David, Michelangelo equated his own act of carving with David's act of slaying Goliath; see Charles de Tolnay, *Corpus dei disegni di Michelangelo*, vol. 1 (Novara: Istituto Geografico de Agostini, 1975), 37, cat. no. 19 recto. While it is almost certain that Moretto could not have known this sheet, the illustration in Fanti's *Triumpho* verifies that Michelangelo's agonistic conception of his own artistry found expression far beyond Florence and Rome. The sculpting figure of Michelangelo from the *Triumpho* would later provide the model for the sculptor of ancient marble statues at work in the background of Maarten van Heemskerck's *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* in Rennes.

overhead. Viewing the misalignment, one has the sense that Moretto developed the figure with the left arm ready to striking a blow and then rotated it downward, leaving a latent sense of violent action in the figure's artfully awkward pose.

If this angel is a crypto-Michelangelo in the guise of Saint Michael, what does that make the figure he masters? Like his attending angel, Elijah underwent substantial reconsideration between Moretto's first and second versions of the scene. In the earlier picture, he lies on the ground, whereas the later figure sleeps against a rocky outcropping that supports his upper body. The green cloth beneath this second Elijah rises to cover most of this stone, but his left hand comes into direct contact with the outcropping. Precisely at this meeting of hand and stone Moretto's description of the prophet's sinewy musculature becomes indistinguishable from the craggy rock (figure 101). The fingers, still fused together, appear as if they have yet to be defined by a sculptor who has nearly freed the figure from its raw material. This confluence of articulated figure and raw stone is subtle, but Moretto's intention to "petrify" the sleeping figure is further confirmed by the presence of the pruned stump that supports Elijah's left leg (figure 102). A ubiquitous statuary convention, the stump marks the sleeping figure as the product of sculptural artifice.

Moretto's presentation of Elijah as a figure cut from stone made literal a complaint about the relative "hardness" of Michelangelo's painted figures that Lodovico Dolce would voice in his *L'aretino* a decade later.<sup>221</sup> But Moretto's seemingly-sculpted recumbent figure alluded to more than a general observation about Michelangelo's

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<sup>221</sup> On the comparison in Dolce's dialogue of Michelangelo's rough and hard figures to the soft figures of Raphael, see most recently Hansen, 14-19.

sharply defined contours. In addition to the violent undertones stemming from the picture's master-subject arrangement, Moretto's composition also invoked the subject of Michelangelo's erotic cabinet pictures, the designs for which had recently entered North Italy. Giorgio Vasari arrived in Venice in 1541 with cartoons reproducing Michelangelo's inventions for *Leda and the Swan* and *Venus and Cupid* (figures 103 and 104), and he quickly began promoting his own skills, particularly his competence in Michelangelesque *disegno*, by offering to paint copies after Michelangelo's inventions for local elites. As Vasari could have explained, Michelangelo had derived the paintings' recumbent figures from two of his sculptural inventions for the Medici tombs in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence.<sup>222</sup>

Vasari's decision to promote his skill to a Venetian audience through the vehicle of Michelangelo's erotic pictures was undoubtedly guided by his calculation that the images would be recognized as participating in the genre of the "sleeping nymph" picture. Even while offering the novelty of Michelangelo's recognizably non-Venetian figure types placed within drastically reduced or eliminated landscape settings, the pictures could be understood as an alternative to the tradition of Giorgione's and Titian's Dresden *Sleeping Venus*. Titian had recently returned to the theme of the reclining nymph to create his Urbino *Venus*, which Guidobaldo II della Rovere, quickly acquired. And it would be Guidobaldo, also, who would receive Aretino's famous letter (written and published in 1542) extolling the erotic allure, as well as the philosophical learning, that

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<sup>222</sup> For a brief account of these two paintings within Michelangelo's body of work, as well as discussion of their meaning and their influence, see Charles de Tolnay, *Michelangelo. Vol. 3, The Medici Chapel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1948), 106-09 and 190-96. These two compositions received more exhaustive examination in a 2002 exhibition in Florence; see Franca Falletti and Jonathan Katz Nelson, eds., *Venere e Amore: Michelangelo e la nuova bellezza ideale*, exh. cat. (Florence: Giunti, 2002).

inherited in Michelangelo's designs.<sup>223</sup> Aretino recognized that Vasari's paintings would make interesting companion pieces to Titian's *Venus*, creating a comparison that was likely to spark a range of conversations from the relative merits of painting and sculpture to the affective potential of contour lines and brushwork.

A painting of the reclining Venus and Cupid that issued from Moretto's workshop in the years around his execution of *Elijah and the Angel* registers his own engagement with this specific type of picture (figure 105). And the gesture that both winged figures make with their right hands (figure 106) further suggests a conscious association between the biblical narrative and this lone erotic picture in Moretto's oeuvre.<sup>224</sup> Of course, *Elijah and the Angel* has none of the overt erotic content of this Venus and Cupid or of Michelangelo's recumbent nudes, yet, like them, the *Elijah and the Angel* portrays a sedate, largely nude recumbent figure who has become engaged by a winged divinity. And though Moretto sought to heighten the sculptural allusions of his sleeping giant rather than the diffused light and pliant flesh that characterized Giorgione's and Titian's Venuses, the associations with the sculptural qualities of Michelangelo's models did not necessarily lessen the *Elijah's* potential eroticism.<sup>225</sup> A short time after Moretto finished his painting, Benedetto Varchi would point to Michelangelo's *Venus and Cupid* (in this case, the version painted by Pontormo) as singularly capable of arousing desire in a viewer. At a moment in his lecture to the Florentine Academy when he argued for the

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<sup>223</sup> *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, vol. 1, 247-48.

<sup>224</sup> György Gombosi, *Moretto da Brescia* (Basel: Holbein-Verlag, 1943), 102, cat. no. 100, attributed the painting to Moretto and assigned it to the 1540s, a date Begni Redona also affirms.

<sup>225</sup> For comment on the poetic tradition that ascribed to statues the ability to communicate and arouse desire within a spectator, as well as Varchi's intention to transfer the Cnidian man's *agalmatophilia* to the viewer of Michelangelo's design, see Leatrice Mendelsohn, "'How to Depict Eros': Greek Origins of the Malevolent Eros in Cinquecento Painting," in Faletti and Katz Nelson, eds., *Venus and Love*, 96.

allure of sculpture's materiality, Varchi turned to a famous episode in Pliny the Elder's

*Natural History*:

Doesn't [Pliny] say that men fell in love with marble statues, as happened with Praxiteles's Venus [of Cnidus], even as the same thing occurs in our own day to the Venus that Michelangelo designed for Bartolomeo Bettini, which was painted by the hand of Jacopo Pontormo.<sup>226</sup>

Even as Cupid goes unnamed in Varchi's account of Michelangelo's painting, the winged boy's impassioned embrace of his mother enacts the response that Varchi describes, making him a proxy both for Varchi's viewing public and for Pliny's anonymous Cnidian man who "joined himself to the statue, and a stain there being the index of his desire (*cupiditatis*)."<sup>227</sup> Moretto's angelic voyeur could hardly have been shown engaging in such an act. Still, the presentation of the recumbent semi-nude (and quasi-sculpted) Elijah and his angelic attendant within a kind of pastoral bower restaged the scenario of Michelangelo's two-figure erotic compositions without explicitly breaching the narrative details of the biblical text.

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<sup>226</sup> Benedetto Varchi, *Dve lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi nella prima delle quali si dichiara vn sonetto di M. Michelagnolo Buonarroti: nella seconda si disputa quale sia piu nobile arte la scultura, o la pittura, con vna lettera d'esso Michelagnolo & piu altri eccellentiss. pittori et scultori sopra la quistione sopradetta* (Florence: Torrentino, 1549), 104: "...non dice egli, che gl'huomini medesimi si sono innamorati delle statue di marmo, come avvenne alla Venere di Prassitele, Benche questo stesso avviene ancora hoggi tutto il giorno nella Venere, che disegnò Michelagnolo à M. Bartolomeo Bettini, colorita di mano di M. Iacopo Puntormo."

<sup>227</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, vol. 10, ed. D. E. Eichholz (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), 16-17 (XXXVI.IV.21): "Ferunt amore captum quondam, cum delituisset noctu, simulacro cohaesisse, eiusque cupiditatis esse indicem maculam." Christophoro Landino, *Historia naturale di C. Plinio secondo di Latino in volgare tradotta per Christophoro Landino, et nuovamente in molti luochi, dove quella mancava, supplito* (Venice: Gabriel Iolito, 1543), 883, in his fifteenth-century Italian translation, republished in 1543, rendered Pliny's Latin in less explicit terms: "Dicono che uno si innamorò di questa statua, et che vi rimase nascoso una notte, et che l'abbraccio. Il che dimostra la macchia rimasavi." Whereas, the 1548 translation of Antonio Brucioli, *Historia naturale di C. Plinio secondo, nuovamente tradotta di latino in volgare toscano per Antonio Brucioli* (Venice: Alessandro Brucioli, 1548), 1011, offered a much more literal translation with: "Dicano che uno certo, preso dallo amore suo, essendosi ascoso, di notte, si congiunse à esso simulacro, e la macchia essere segno della sua cupidità."

Moretto's *Elijah and the Angel* evokes Michelangelo's work in both master-subject compositions and in his images of reclining lovers, yet these seemingly disparate themes achieve harmony in the way Moretto reuses Michelangelo's figural motifs. The theme of the subdued or unconscious giant in scenes like *David and Goliath* and of the incestuous love of *Venus and Cupid* share an introversion and self-absorption that Moretto further accentuated in his rendering of the biblical narrative. Moretto's depiction of Elijah in the moment when the angel has touched him and he has not yet reacted is especially rare among contemporary images of the scene, but it emphasizes the prophet's self-absorption in a way consistent with the figure's "petrification" and with the psychological and bodily captivation expressed in the Michelangelesque models. Further emphasized by its pairing with the *Gathering of Manna*, a scene of dozens of active figures, the *Elijah and the Angel* presents a hermetic figure presently receiving a heavenly (and potentially deadly) cajoling, instructing him to attend to the sacred stuff in front of his closed eyes. The painting transformed the standard description of Elijah's encounter into a warning against inattention to the *panis caelorum*, a message that would have resonated with any religious or devotional confraternity charged with protecting the Eucharist.

For beholders who could recognize Moretto's multiple, layered allusions to Michelangelo's art, the scene's poetics of introversion and hermetic isolation would have been strengthened by Michelangelo's own professional reputation. Well before the 1540s, multiple writers had described Michelangelo's art-making as an autonomous, even



unfriendly, process. Paolo Giovio's brief biography of the artist, written around 1527 and circulated in manuscript, declared that Michelangelo's

...great genius was accompanied by a rustic and wild nature that infused his domestic life with an incredible meanness and deprived posterity of disciples to continue his art. Even when begged by princes, he never allowed himself to be made a master to any pupil or even to admit anyone into his workshop as an observer.<sup>228</sup>

And Francisco de Hollanda, essentially reinforced such criticisms in the dialogues that he was preparing for publication at the same time that Moretto painted the *Elijah and the Angel*. Hearing Vittoria Collona sardonically praise him for his ability to remain aloof, Hollanda's Michelangelo attempts to acquit himself of the charge:

There are many who assert...that eminent painters are strange and make rough and insufferable company, when in fact they are human...For worthy painters are not in any way unsociable out of arrogance, but either because they encounter few with talents worthy of painting, or in order to avoid corrupting their intellect with the futile society of idle men and debasing it from the continuous lofty imaginings in which they are always absorbed.<sup>229</sup>

Even as Hollanda suggests Michelangelo's seclusion is a sort of laudable professional self-control, he must apologize for behavior that might seem arrogant in its self-possession. This and similar characterizations of Michelangelo's personality could have reinforced the theme of inwardness that Moretto was at pains to convey in *Elijah and the Angel*, but before we address how this characterization might relate to the concerns of a Eucharistic confraternity, it will be helpful to examine the painting's counterpart.

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<sup>228</sup> Paolo Giovio, "Michaelis Angeli Vita" (c. 1527), reproduced in *Paolo Giovio: Scritti d'arte, lessico ed ecfasi*, 246: "Caeterum tanti ingenii vir natura adeo agrestis ac ferus extitit, ut supra incredibiles domesticae vitae sordes successors in arte posteris inviderit. Nam vel obsecratus a principibus numquam adduci potuit ut quemquam doceret vel gratia spectandi saltem in officinam admitteret."

<sup>229</sup> Francisco de Hollanda, *On Antique Painting*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (University Park, Penn.: The Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 177.

### The *Gathering of Manna* and Collectivity

Similar to Elijah's desperate plea to God beneath the juniper tree, the episode of the provision of manna begins with the Israelites wishing that God had killed them while in Egyptian captivity rather than lead them into starvation in the desert.<sup>230</sup> Given that Romanino's New Testament scenes deal literally or figuratively with death and resurrection, this shared theme in Moretto's narrative scenes is not likely coincidental. Yet, Moretto's image of the Israelites gathering the heavenly bread betrays little of the sullen desperation found in the text. In nearly every way that *Elijah and the Angel* represents Michelangelo's art-making as introverted and withdrawn, the *Gathering of Manna* is manifold and exuberant (figure 85). Since Ballarin's re-dating of Moretto's narratives to the 1540s, the *Gathering of Manna*'s welter of active bodies has been described as a "manneristic puzzle" with a "suffocating formal arrangement."<sup>231</sup> If, in the *Elijah*, Moretto layered allusions to Michelangelo and his art one on top of another, in the *Gathering of Manna*, he spread his inter-artistic references across the full extent of the canvas. In its teeming groups of acquisitive figures, it presents a model of artistic professionalism dramatically different from Michelangelo's reputed hermeticism.

The identification of figural citations from paintings and engravings designed by or closely related to those of Raphael has confirmed the opinion that the *Manna* displays Moretto's desire to align his painting with Raphael's manner. Adolfo Venturi, for instance, suggested that the woman bearing the coral-colored vase at the painting's left

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<sup>230</sup> Exodus 16:2-3 (Douay-Rheims): "And all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them: Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat over the flesh pots, and ate bread to the full."

<sup>231</sup> Savy, "Moretto and Romanino per la confraternità del Corpo di Cristo nel Duomo di Brescia," 109.

edge recapitulated the famous vessel-carrying figure from the *Fire in the Borgo* in the Vatican Stanze and that the figural invention could have reached Moretto through the mediation of Giulio Romano, who had moved to the nearby court of Mantua in 1524.<sup>232</sup> Subsequent identifications of Raphaelesque models, such as the buffoon who takes the pose of a river god in Raimondi's *Judgment of Paris* engraving (figure 107), have perpetuated claims of Moretto's dependence on Raphael's inventions. The picture, in fact, cites Raphael's designs many more times than have yet been recognized. This proliferation of reference indicates Moretto's cognizance of Raphael's reputation as a prolific creator of varied inventions disseminated widely through his collaborations with other artists.

In the dialogue *L'Aretino*, Lodovico Dolce's character "Aretino" insists that Michelangelo could never compete with Raphael's facility at invention. According to Dolce's dictum, "...the man who sees a single figure of Michelangelo's sees them all."<sup>233</sup> Michelangelo's figures were singular and highly prized, but their perceived lack of variation registered a creative narrowness in their maker. "Aretino" describes Raphael, on the other hand, as a boundless source of pictorial invention, who "was always working out a narrative composition in four or six different ways, all of which were attractive and well set up."<sup>234</sup> If Moretto wanted to identify and re-stage a pictorial style and a professional persona antithetical to Michelangelo's, Raphael represented precisely that opposite pole.

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<sup>232</sup> Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, IX, 4, (Milan: Hoepli, 1929), 198 and 202.

<sup>233</sup> Mark W. Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino and the Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press in association with the Renaissance Society of America, 2000), 171, 173.

<sup>234</sup> Roskill, 129.

One way that Raphael promoted himself as a prolific source of images was through his collaboration with printmakers. Again in Dolce's dialogue "Aretino" notes Raphael's

...many extremely beautiful cartoons, which circulate in the form of copper-plate engravings carried out by no less knowledgeable than painstaking Marcantonio, and also those from his own hand which are found amongst a variety of owners. There is almost no numbering how many of them there are, a most efficacious argument for the fertility of this divine genius...<sup>235</sup>

Dolce's description characterizes the dissemination of Raphael's inventions through reproducible prints and equally mobile drawings as an ideal match of artistic and material expansiveness. One feature of Raphael's designs that his contemporaries found especially appealing was his facility in depicting historical narrative, and Dolce exemplifies Raphael's unparalleled sensibility for multi-figure composition through an analysis of one particular engraving.

... [A]cross the whole span of a historical subject which entails many figures, one should produce a collective whole which is not inharmonious. Suppose, for example, that I had to paint the fall of manna in the desert. I would have to arrange that all of the Jews who figured in such an enterprise were gathering up this heavenly food in a variety of poses. They would need to display lightness of heart and an extreme eagerness... This is what one sees in the cartoon by Raphael. Furthermore Raphael has imaginatively put in a real desert with tenements of timber appropriate to the time and place. He has given Moses a solemn expression, dressed him in a long robe and made him tall and majestic in stature; he has even clothed the Jewish women in embroidered costumes of the type they used to wear."<sup>236</sup>

The "cartoon" that Dolce describes is the unsigned engraving of the *Gathering of Manna*, likely executed by Agostino Veneziano (figure 108). In its variety, its attention to historical detail, its depiction of an activity played out harmoniously by numerous

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 125.

figures, in its fundamental involvement of a collaborating artist, and in its reproducible medium, the engraving expressed a set of artistic values that were associated with Raphael and popularly understood as antithetical to Michelangelo's art.

Although Moretto's *Gathering of Manna* preceded the publication of *L'Aretino* by more than a decade, he had occasion to be familiar with the sentiments that Dolce expressed. Dolce's judgment of Raphael's design as a supreme example of harmonious composition and historically accurate detail was merely an elaboration of Aretino's praise of the same image.<sup>237</sup> Aretino had written a letter (published in 1542) to Giorgio Vasari, thanking his fellow Aretine for a drawing of the *Gathering of Manna* that Vasari had sent in advance of his own arrival in Venice. That drawing is lost, but its particulars are of less interest to us than is Aretino's analysis of it. Praising aspects of historical specificity, variety among figures of various ages, and Vasari's portrayal of distinct psychological states, Aretino elevated Vasari's subject to the status of a set piece for the skillful demonstration of a complex and harmonious *historia*. That Vasari's drawing was more a prompt for Aretino's critical views than an exemplary work in itself is revealed in the final lines of the letter, where the poet assures Vasari that his drawing is only narrowly surpassed by "the design of the same subject by the truly sweet and graceful Raphael..."

Within months of Aretino's letter to Vasari being published, Moretto was incorporating no fewer than six identifiable references from the Raphael-designed engraving into his *Gathering of Manna* for the sacrament chapel. The robed Moses with his wand and the kneeling supplicant in front of him are quoted with only minor variation (figure 109). The bearded kneeling man holding a collecting vessel with both hands bears

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<sup>237</sup> *Le lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, vol. 1, 174.

slightly older features and stands erect in Moretto's painting (figure 110). Moretto slightly rotates the group of two women who lift a jar to place it on one woman's head (figure 111). The man and woman who transfer manna from one vessel to another take precisely the same poses as in Raphael's model (figure 112). And finally, the pointed boards from Raphael's "tenements of timber appropriate to the time and place" reappear in the two wooden structures behind Moses and Aaron (figure 113).

Whereas the components of this middle ground vignette of Moses and the Israelites all derive from a single, coherent image of this same subject, much else about Moretto's painting conveys a diachronic hodgepodge starkly incongruous with the Raphaellesque exemplar. This break appears prominently in Moretto's eclectic depiction of architecture and clothing. In addition to the wooden tenements that Dolce would find so appropriate to the biblical narrative, conical tents also dot the landscape. In the middle distance, at the upper right of the canvas, Moretto included a family of shepherds seated near the shelter of a rocky cave that presumably serves as their dwelling. And at the upper center, in the far distance, stands a masonry structure with a large oculus in the pediment and smaller oculi in the frieze, reminiscent of the Albertian architecture that Moretto could easily have come to know from examples in Mantua.

As if they belonged to that same Albertian palazzo, the woman, sleeping child, and buffoon in the lower right corner wear contemporary clothing appropriate to a courtly setting, while other figures are clad in animal skins, and still others wear belted tunics and vaguely antique costumes. From primeval cave dwellings to contemporary fashions of courtly life, the *Gathering of Manna* summarizes eons of history in a concise but

confusing genealogy. Raphael's prowess in the representation of historical subjects depended on his knowledge of a wide variety of details and on his ability to discriminate between the essential and the extraneous. In the *Manna*, Moretto allows this same body of knowledge to overwhelm specificity with a seemingly indiscriminate profusion of historical detail.

As the painting gathers together historical lineages, it also collects in its foreground a number of figural inventions that Moretto and his contemporaries would have ascribed to Raphael and his artistic lineage embodied in his circle of collaborators and pupils. Already, we have noted the buffoon at the far right and the back-turned woman at the far left of the foreground, a figure that could be associated with the *Fire in the Borgo* but also resembles the female lamp bearers that Parmigianino, "Raphael redivivus," had painted in Santa Maria della Steccata in Parma.<sup>238</sup> Additionally, the woman and sleeping child who form an uneasy grouping with the buffoon seated next to them are modeled on the Venus and sleeping Cupid at the center of an engraving by the Master of the Die that bears an inscription testifying to the power of Amor to disarm even Jove (figure 114). It is a fitting aphorism for Moretto's painting of rampant acquisitive desire, staged for the purpose of questioning that very desire's propriety within a community charged with the safeguarding of the Eucharist.

By presenting this Raphaellesque heritage of artistic imitation within a scene in which figures gather up loose bits of food, Moretto invoked a well-known metaphor. When describing the mechanisms of good literary imitation, late medieval and

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<sup>238</sup> Campbell, "Renaissance Naturalism," 311, has suggested the comparison between Moretto's vessel carrier and Parmigianino's figures in the Steccata.

Renaissance authors frequently recalled the process of bees making honey.<sup>239</sup> The analogy originated with Seneca, who compared the writer's work of incorporating and transforming his sources to the bee's work of gathering pollen and transforming the borrowed material into a new and homogenous substance. The analogy was especially fitting for a scene of gathering manna, which Exodus 16:31 describes as tasting like "flour with honey."

The profusion of figures and activity in Moretto's painting, however, looks less like a scene of workmanlike production than it does a bacchanal. The sense of cupidity that pervades the image is due partly to a final source image, again from Giulio Romano, which provided individual figures and an overall structure for Moretto's painting. In the autumn of 1539, Giulio began making cartoons for a series of tapestries, the *Puttini*, showing cupids engaged in various activities. One of the tapestries, recorded in an ink and wash study, took the subject of the *Erotos* from Philostratus's *Imagines* (figure 115).<sup>240</sup> Philostratus's description of the little cupids gathering apples and playing games in a precinct dedicated to Venus had been painted by Titian for Isabella d'Este's brother, Alfonso I of Ferrara, before Giulio took up the subject. Both artists included the image of cupids climbing a tree to toss apples down to their companions, and Moretto also included a climber who retrieves manna from the tree in his picture's middle distance.

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<sup>239</sup> On Seneca's letter and its reception in the early Renaissance, see Martin L. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 25-26. See also, Thomas M. Greene, *Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982).

<sup>240</sup> For Giulio's drawing, see Michael Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Italian Drawings: Roman and Neapolitan Schools* (London: Phaidon, 1994), 106. For the drawing in relation to the tapestry series, see E. H. Gombrich and Sergio Polano, eds., *Giulio Romano*, exh. cat. (Milan: Electa, 1989), 475; as well as Thomas P. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 2002), 506-13. Moretto either saw the tapestry, begun before 1540, at the Mantuan court or else had access to Giulio's drawing.



The two winged putti vying for a fish in Giulio's design became Moretto's fur-clad putti wrestling over the manna gathered in a tambourine. And the right-foreground group of courtly figures in Moretto's painting also seems to have been brought together in accordance with Giulio's drawing, such that the woman, the sleeping child, and the buffoon take the place of Giulio's Venus and cupids harassed by an unruly satyr. The rapacious gathering that pervades the image is further underscored by an enigmatic cipher, which Moretto did not borrow but compiled himself. Among the gathering and grasping figures depicted in the foreground, two legs appear to intersect in such a way that they form one enormous grasping hand (figure 116).

The painting's hyper-active collection of Raphaelesque figures and motifs teeters on the brink of unthinking mimicry, which Moretto personified in the buffoon and ape that mark the threshold of the pictorial space. Dressed similarly and taking nearly identical postures, these two revelers are stereotypes of rote repetition, opposed to an imitative practice grounded in the thoughtful consideration and "digestion" of models. At greatest risk of improper or gluttonous digestion would seem to be the manna gathered in the golden vessel in front of the ape. He has not yet defiled this sacred stuff, but as he looms over the jar, the beholder becomes conscious that this animal, so inclined to repeat the behavior he observes, now looks out of the picture to observe the members of the *scuola*.

How did Moretto's Old Testament narratives comment on or provide models for the activities of the confraternity? Beyond the "maintenance and care of the Host against possible acts of sacrilege," which was the general charge of any *scuola* dedicated to the

sacrament, we know little about the specific community at San Giovanni Evangelista.<sup>241</sup>

The antitheses noted in the foregoing analysis, however, do suggest the poles of a continuum wherein right behavior tends toward a middle course between the two extremes of excessive abstinence and hyper-consumption. The cleric Gasparo Contarini had recently described proper Christian religious practice in similar terms, and though the text was not aimed specifically at the custody of the Eucharist, its conception of right religion as a “middle road” may illuminate the underlying structure of Moretto’s polarized scenes.<sup>242</sup>

Written in 1517 as a gift for the new bishop of Bergamo, Contarini’s “On the Office of the Bishop” described two types of vice that must be rooted out of any congregation:

[The bishop] will [keep the whole people on the right path of religion] most easily if he avoids by a certain middle road two vices which are opposites of each other and which tend to sprout forth in most groups of men. We shall call one of these irreligiosity or impiety...

Impiety, Contarini continues, arises especially among those who,

light upon a high opinion of their own knowledge from I know not what illusions, so much so that in comparison with themselves they account others as worthless and think them ignorant of the nature of things and deride them as rabble.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> This formula for the *scuola*’s responsibility is Savy’s, see “Moretto e Romanino per la confraternità del Corpo di Cristo nel Duomo di Brescia,” 108. The general lack of information about the activities of any confraternity at San Giovanni Evangelista is due primarily to the loss or dispersal of most of the church’s archival records and much of its library in the seventeenth century. For a list of the archives that contain the extant records, see Angelo Bonetti, ed., *La chiesa e la comunità di S. Giovanni Evangelista. Studie documenti*, (Brescia, 1995), 23-27.

<sup>242</sup> Campbell has discussed this text, specifically its consideration of superstition, in relation to Lorenzo Lotto’s frescos in the Suardi Chapel at Trescore; see, “Sacred Naturalism and the Art of Moretto and Savoldo,” minutes 10-14.

<sup>243</sup> Gasparo Contarini, *The Office of a Bishop*, trans. John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. (Milwaukee: Marquette Univ. Press, 2002), 105, 107.

Contarini's impiety, or deficient participation in religion, provides a useful period-specific concept for the immobilizing self-absorption that Moretto sought in his depiction of *Elijah and the Angel*.

The vice that Contarini opposed to impiety was "superstition, which is in a sense too much religion..."<sup>244</sup> If it was detrimental to the church body for a member to become overly fond of his or her own conclusions, it was equally problematic for one to replicate mindlessly the formal structures of approved worship.<sup>245</sup> Raphael was the supreme example of an artist who succeeded in propagating his art through his tireless invention, his collaboration with artists in a variety of media, and his widely-regarded sociability.<sup>246</sup> Moretto's *Gathering of Manna* presents Raphael's powerful models and their replication in the work of others as an exciting and convivial process, but the painting also suggests that some contemporaries worried such strong artistic affiliation could slip into mindless mimicry of form. Together *Elijah and the Angel* and the *Gathering of Manna* describe extreme types of behavior detrimental to the health of the Christian body and jeopardizing to the safety of the Eucharist.

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>245</sup> For a discussion of religious superstition as a focus of Catholic reform in the early decades of the sixteenth century, see Giorgio Caravale, *L'orazione proibita. Censura ecclesiastica e letteratura devozionale nella prima età moderna* (Florence: Olschki, 2003).

<sup>246</sup> In direct distinction to his biography of Michelangelo, Paolo Giovio's biography of Raphael noted that artist's facility in social situations: "Raphael of Urbino acquired the third place in painting through the amazing sweetness of his learned talent, and through his skill. As a result of his great familiarity with the powerful, which he got through every observance of civilized behavior, no less than by the nobility of his works, he became so famous that he never lacked the opportunity to demonstrate his illustrious craft." John Shearman, ed., *Raphael in Early Modern Sources, 1483-1602* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2003), 807-12. Shearman, who reproduces Giovio's Latin and provides the translation quoted here, dates Giovio's "Raphaelis Urbinatis Vita" to c. 1525, noting that it must have been written very shortly after the completion of the Sala di Costantino in September 1524. The relevant passage of Giovio's original as given by Shearman: "Tertiam in pictura locum Raphael Urbinas mira docilis ingenii suavitate atque solertia adeptus est. Is multa familiaritate potentium, quam omnibus humanitatis officiis comparavit, non minus quam nobilitate operum inclaruit adeo ut nunquam illi occasio illustris defuerit ostentandae artis."

### **Patchwork Composition and Unauthorship**

By rendering the Old Testament narratives with pictorial elements characteristic of Michelangelo and Raphael, Moretto strengthened the scenes' themes of introversion and hyper-sociability, self-absorption and unthinking repetition. Yet, the general understanding that these two artists had contrasting professional reputations did not mean that contemporaries understood their art to be entirely dissimilar. By the time Moretto was painting this second set of images for the sacrament chapel, Raphael's and Michelangelo's art was seen to share a common set of artistic priorities, especially regarding the use of visual sources and the generation of new images. That Moretto's paintings for the sacrament chapel also take up this larger consideration of an artist's generative capacity becomes clear when we consider how the two new scenes recontextualized Moretto's own earlier work in the chapel.

In early 1520s, Moretto's principal contribution to the chapel's lateral decoration had been his lunette depicting the *Last Supper* (figure 47). When he finished that painting in 1524, its general resemblance to Leonardo's Milanese fresco would have made it one among many contemporary images of the subject that took their compositional cues from Leonardo's mural. Following the second decorative campaign, however, the relationship of Moretto's *Last Supper* to Leonardo's art-making had been recast. With the addition of *Elijah and the Angel* and the *Gathering of Manna*, Moretto's three large narrative paintings for the sacrament chapel came to represent an emblematic grouping of three artists increasingly understood as standard bearers for a new type of artistic agency.

The earliest biographies of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael were written by Paolo Giovio in the 1520s, and Giovio's *Notable Men and Women of Our Time* first grouped these three men together as the paragons of a new visual art. In articulating what distinguished this new art, Giovio also identified the supposedly defunct tradition that these three had overthrown.

But then there emerged unexpectedly from the darkness of that age those luminaries of perfect art—Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael—and their wondrous works overshadowed Perugino's reputation and name. By observing and copying them, he [Perugino] tried to hold onto the distinction he had acquired—but in vain, since, lacking the talent (*sterilitate ingenii*), he was compelled always to fall back upon those pretty faces to which as a young man he had been attached. As a result, his heart could scarcely endure the shame of his disgrace as, in an astonishing variety of genres and subjects, those artists created majestic portraits of naked muscularity and gave form to the powers of struggling nature.<sup>247</sup>

Leonardo and his best pupils had acquired these abilities, Giovio explained, by attending to the “natural power and the bodily features...underlying so great a variety of movements” and by dissecting human cadavers “in order to examine carefully the curves and sources of muscles and bones...”<sup>248</sup> By identifying sources and understanding their effects, one could “create proportionate likenesses of all things, properly and without models.”<sup>249</sup> Giovio describes an imitative process in which models are useful for the novice but in which, ideally, all models provided by nature or earlier art are so absorbed by the artist that he becomes a generative source.

Giovio's suggestion that a great artist would desire to transform himself into an autonomous generative source was an argument adapted from literary criticism.

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<sup>247</sup> Giovio, *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*, 241.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael appear in Giovio's text as examples in support of his larger topic: the proper development of good literary style. Arguing against those who saw unswerving adherence to antique models as the true path to good style, Giovio advocated for the necessary contribution of the author's unique *ingenium*. This view found considerable support from contemporaries such as Desiderius Erasmus, whose 1528 dialog *Ciceronianus, sive De optimo genere dicendi* championed

an imitation which excerpts... what is excellent in each [previous author] and most suits one's *ingenium*,... which transfers what it finds into the mind itself, as into the stomach, so that transfused into the veins it appears to be a birth of one's *ingenium*, not something begged and borrowed from elsewhere...<sup>250</sup>

Giovio's text did not provide descriptions of Raphael's or Michelangelo's process as it did for Leonardo's methods, but contemporaries made similar claims for their generative capacities, as well. Aretino's assertion that "the idea of a new nature" lived within Michelangelo's hands and Dolce's later contention that the nearly infinite number of designs by Raphael in circulation demonstrated "the fertility of this divine genius..." extolled these artists as self-generating sources.<sup>251</sup>

To follow Giovio, the creations of these fertile artists were the antitheses of those stock faces that littered Perugino's paintings, the products of a sterile *ingenium*.<sup>252</sup> But Perugino's preference for mild variation over conspicuous invention was a choice, and whether one appreciated Perugino, Francesco Francia, and the other painters of the *maniera devota* or else prized the art of Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael that

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<sup>250</sup> I have followed Pigman's English translation, although I have kept Erasmus's original references to *ingenium*, which Pigman translated as "intellect"; see G. W. Pigman, III, "Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (spring, 1980): 8-9. For Erasmus's Latin text, I have referred to *Il Ciceroniano, o Dello stile migliore*, ed. Angiolo Gambaro (Brescia: La Scuola, 1965), 290.

<sup>251</sup> For Aretino's comment, see *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, vol. 1, 64.

<sup>252</sup> Giovio, *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*, 240.

eclipsed those artists' fame depended on the place that one gave to invention and the *ingenium*'s unique contribution in the production of religious images. In the context of Brescian painting of this period, Campbell has suggested that "Perugino would have provided an alternative version of the modern manner...one valorized—as Vasari disparagingly noted—for its devout characteristics of pious simplicity, contemplative serenity, and ritualistic repetition as opposed to poetic imitation."<sup>253</sup> Imitation, as a process of transformative invention, had not always been a goal of religious image-making. And the composite, heavily citational character of Moretto's *Elijah and the Angel* and *Gathering of Manna* pursued a course conspicuously out of step with the artistic creativity then being associated with Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael.

In the context of a chapel dedicated to the Eucharist, the relationship between representation and creativity was especially fraught. Campbell has noted in Moretto's Old Testament scenes "a strong degree of self-consciousness about the practice of imitation, making visible the procedures of expropriation and dismembering..." and he has connected Moretto's representational self-consciousness with a desire to circumvent the self-referential effects of "poetic" or inventive imitation.<sup>254</sup> For those who understood the transubstantiated Eucharist to be the body of Christ, the elements of communion were signs "consubstantial with their signified[s]," and as such the Eucharist embodied an ideal model of representation.<sup>255</sup> For painters aspiring to this level of perfect representational efficiency, imitation's demand for the inventive contribution of the artist's *ingenium* could seem an undesirable imposition. Moretto resolved the problem by

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<sup>253</sup> Campbell, "Renaissance Naturalism," 301-2.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid., esp. 295-96 and 308-15.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 308-09.

turning to a strategy of patchwork composition that has struck many modern scholars as pastiche. A specific type of literary pastiche, however, was gaining new life in the 1540s, and by eliminating the mediating role of imitative authorship, it offered an especially clear view of its sources.

Moretto's process of overloading pictures with figural excerpts and allusive compositional motifs as a strategy to suppress artistic creation finds a counterpart in the precisely contemporaneous revival of the literary genre known as the *cento*. *Centos* is a Latinized version of a Greek term that Erasmus defined in his *Adages*:

*Centones*, patchwork coats, are garments stitched together from various bits and pieces, sometimes of quite different colors... The analogy of these garments has given us the word 'cento' for a kind of poem made up of different poems and fragments of poems collected from many different sources and as it were stitched together.<sup>256</sup>

The *centones* best known to Erasmus, and to the Renaissance generally, were late antique constructions that drew either from the poetry of Homer or that of Virgil. Although the form was occasionally attempted by more contemporary writers of renown, such as Jacopo Sannazaro and Pietro Bembo, the Mantuan poet Lelio Capilupi made the first concerted attempt to revive the genre.<sup>257</sup>

Lelio Capilupi, the eldest son of Isabella d'Este's long-tenured secretary Benedetto Capilupi, was a poet of vernacular and Latin verse, and he frequently acted as

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<sup>256</sup> See Erasmus's explanation of the phrase "farcire centones;" *CWE*, vol. 33: *Adages II.i.1-II.vi.100*, trans. R. A. B. Mynors (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 221-22.

<sup>257</sup> For Sannazaro and Bembo as *cento* writers, see Floriana Calitti, "Fatica o ingengo. Lelio Capilupi e la pratica del centone," in G. Mazzacurati and M. Plaisance, eds., *Scritture di scrittura. Testi, generi, modelli nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1987), 498 fn. 1. On Lelio Capilupi and his (and his brothers') revival to the *cento*, see G. Hugo Tucker, "Mantua's 'Second Virgil': Du Bellay, Montaigne and the Curious Fortune of Lelio Capilupi's *Centones Ex Virgilio* [Romae, 1555]," in G. Tournoy and D. Sacré, eds., *Ut Granum Sinapis: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Honour of Jozef Ijsewijn* (Leuven: Leuven Univ. Press, 1997): 264-291.



an emissary for Isabella and her relatives throughout Italy.<sup>258</sup> In 1543, Capilupi published two Virgilian *centones* entitled “Gallus” and “On the Life of Monks.” Both of these first offerings were bawdy texts, and the Church found the salacious imagery of “On the Life of Monks” sufficiently disreputable for it to be included in the Index of Prohibited Texts in 1557.<sup>259</sup> The novelty of Capilupi’s *centones* was not their lewd innuendos or the fun they made of religious hypocrisy but the overwhelming citational quality of their compositions. A page from the first publication conveys how fully the identification of source texts contributed to the experience of reading these poems (figure 117). Every line of the *cento* received one or more marginal citations, declaring its original context in a particular eclogue, georgic, or book of the *Aeneid*. Although Capilupi’s name appeared above the poem’s title, each line of text declared Virgil as its author, making Capilupi’s role in its production something closer to compiler than creator. By the early 1550s, Capilupi would publish more than a dozen *centones*.<sup>260</sup>

We cannot presently establish a face-to-face exchange between Moretto and Capilupi, but both men were in sustained contact with the court of Isabella d’Este in the years leading up to Capilupi’s publication of his first *centones*. Their close associations with Isabella’s court in the mid 1530s are confirmed by a bound volume of letters and poems produced in or very near 1535 by the court’s secretary, Marcantonio Bendidio, and now preserved at the University of Bologna.<sup>261</sup> The volume includes a letter to

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<sup>258</sup> For a cursory biography of Lelio Capilupi, see the *Dizionario Bibliografico degli Italiani*.

<sup>259</sup> Tucker, “Mantua’s ‘Second Virgil,’” 286.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. 278-291.

<sup>261</sup> The manuscript is catalogued as Università di Bologna, ms. cart., no. 1671. For a synopsis of parts of the volume that pertain specifically to the *leanze*, or poetic pseudonyms of the ladies, see Ludovico Frati, “Giuochi ed amori alla corte d’Isabella d’Este,” in *Archivio storico lombardo*, ser. 3, no. 9 (1898): 350-365,

Capilupi filled with sexual double entendres, and collected in the same volume of manuscript papers is a letter to Isabella's ladies that cleverly braids these women's courtly pseudonyms into its text. This second letter is signed by three men, one of whom styles himself, "Io ogni cosa dil suo" (I [am] her everything); a later inscription on the same page clarifies that "Aless[andr]o Buonvicino" (i.e. Moretto) was given the name "ogni cosa" by "la Tramontana" (the Northwind; i.e., Lady Anna) (figure 118).<sup>262</sup> The letters in the Bologna volume do not place Moretto and Capilupi together, but they do confirm, along with Moretto's use of Giulio's tapestry design for the *Erotas*, that Moretto was in intimate contact with the network of courtiers at Mantua during the years immediately before his execution of the Old Testament scenes for San Giovanni Evangelista.<sup>263</sup>

For Capilupi, Moretto, or their contemporaries to have taken the aggressively citational mode of the *cento* as a model for the production of art was to announce a conscious break with the model of creative imitation then being promoted by intellectuals such as Giovio and Erasmus. By the middle decades of the century, *cento* and related

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who first noted the appearance of the names of Alessandro Bonvicino and Lelio Capilupi, among others, within the pages of the volume.

<sup>262</sup> Università di Bologna, ms. cart., no. 1671, c. 16<sup>v</sup>. In a letter of September 15, 1535, to Mantua from the ladies of Isabella's court vacationing at Lake Garda, one of the ladies (presumably Anna) signs as "il più amorevol' d'ogni cosa"; see Università di Bologna, ms. cart., no. 1671, c. 27<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>263</sup> Begni Redona, 597, mentions the Bologna letters in his registry of documents related to Moretto's life; however, in his discussion of Moretto's activity in Verona, 348, he denies that the letters relate to Moretto, suggesting that they must pertain to someone else by the name of Alessandro Bonvicino. The author gives little reason for his decision to exclude these letters from consideration. Even so, it seems clear that the author cannot reconcile Moretto's reputation as a pious painter of religious pictures with the reality that these letters would suggest, that of Moretto as an able courtier. In fact, the Bologna letters and the drawing by Giulio are not the only evidence that a connection existed between the Mantuan court and Brescia's premier painters. In the same line of the document registry, Begni Redona suggests that a bacchanal scene by Moretto once resided in Mantua, and some year earlier, Romanino had been a welcome guest of the Gonzaga, for which see, Alessandro Nova, "Folengo and Romanino: The Questione della Lingua and Its Eccentric Trends," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 4 (Dec., 1994): 677.

terms connoting patchwork compilation became bywords for an unacceptable type of literary reuse that failed to internalize and transform its models successfully. Many humanists perceived this sort of failure in the work of Pietro Alcionio, whose example Paolo Giovio used to illustrate his belief (quoted as an epigraph to this chapter) that “to assemble a patchwork” (*conficere centones*) was both tedious and worthless. Alcionio was a prominent young commentator of ancient philosophical texts who had gained the patronage of Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici, yet he frequently came under attack from colleagues who claimed that he borrowed more of his predecessors’ ideas than he admitted.<sup>264</sup> The most egregious claim against Alcionio was the rumor that he had copied parts of a treatise from a unique copy of Cicero’s *De gloria*, subsequently destroying the Ciceronian text to conceal his theft.<sup>265</sup> According to Giovio, “...[many] observed that in [Alcionio’s *De exsilio*], as in a varied patchwork, were interwoven brilliant threads of rich purple, while all the other colors were dim.”<sup>266</sup> To reinforce his readers’ disgust for this sort of practice, Giovio describes Alcionio’s gustatory habits as a perversion of Seneca’s metaphor of the bee.

“He [Alcionio] was the unblushing slave of his appetite, often dining two or three times on the same day—but “at other men’s tables.” Nor did he show himself in this brutishness by any means a bad physician, for as soon as he got home to bed, he would relieve himself of the load of his debauchery by vomiting.”<sup>267</sup>

If imitation, properly executed, transforms borrowed material into something as sweet as honey, Alcionio’s patchworks betrayed his inability to digest his sources.

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<sup>264</sup> Kenneth Gouwens and Christopher S. Celenza, “Humanist Culture and its Malcontents: Alcionio, Sepúlveda, and the Consequences of Translating Aristotle,” in Celenza and Gouwens, eds., *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 374.

<sup>265</sup> See Gouwens and Celenza, 374; also Tucker, “Mantua’s Second Virgil,” 271.

<sup>266</sup> Gouwens and Celenza, 374-75.

<sup>267</sup> Translation follows *ibid.*, 377, which follows Gragg (1935).

Shortly after Giovio first reproached Alcionio in his unpublished *Notable Men and Women of Our Time*, Erasmus would invoke the disreputable nature of the patchwork to publicly (and posthumously) shame one of his rivals, Alberto Pio da Carpi. Erasmus and Pio had exchanged several sharp letters and publications debating whether the Dutch humanist's pointed critiques of the Roman Church set him outside the bounds of orthodoxy.<sup>268</sup> Erasmus's final salvo in the debate, published in Basel in 1531, was entitled, "The Apology of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam against the Patchworks of Calumnious Complaints by Alberto Pio, Former Prince of Carpi..." Erasmus's word for patchworks here was "rhapsodias," a term of Greek origin describing a poem composed of fragments sewn together, fully analogous with the concept of the *cento* that he had explicated in his *Adages*.<sup>269</sup>

Erasmus's claim of Pio's *XXIII Libri* as a patchwork was a refutation not only of its individual assertions but also of the method of its argumentation. He was convinced that Pio had not written the treatise himself but that it represented the combined efforts of a team of scholastically-minded monks, whose individual contributions had been stitched together to produce an inconsistent position rife with self-contradictions. Such composite forms of rhetoric, Erasmus suggested, amount to a type of masquerade or worse:

He [Pio] submitted to being decked out in others' plumage, indiscriminately gathered, and to going before the public thus costumed. I admit that it is the prerogative of princes to have others write their letters and only to affix the signature themselves, but Pio speaks, through the entire work, as if he were waging the whole campaign on his own, though most people know what mercenaries he employed.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> For an overview of the dispute, see Desiderius Erasmus, "Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii," in *CWE*, vol. 84, ed. Nelson H. Minnich (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), lxiii-cviii.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 107 n 1.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Erasmus called out Pio for requiring the assistance of an uncredited team of assistants, but within Erasmus's criticism there is also a fundamental, if polemical, claim about the nature of legitimate ideation and its method of composition. For Erasmus, Pio's "rhapsodias" could never have produced a coherent, much less a persuasive, argument, because they had not issued from a single mind that had synthesized its source materials and produced a unified expression. The patchwork composition pretended to coherence—all the more when its tags were excerpted from a single author—but its method of placing undigested citations in new and alien contexts condemned it to a compromised existence as the partial product of two or more discrete intelligences.

By the end of the sixteenth century the *cento* would find support from no less an intellect than Michel de Montaigne. Specifically mentioning Capilupi's verses and Justus Lipsius's prose *cento* entitled *Politicorum, sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (1589), Montaigne praised the well-wrought *cento* for its learning and especially for the ingenuity of its composition, distinguishing it from the "borrowed incrustation" of clumsy imitators and outright plagiarizers.<sup>271</sup> Montaigne also acknowledged that he appreciated the ancient *cento* writers, and his opinion that openly-confessed and cleverly-concatenated citations amounted to more than the sum of their parts accords well with the judgments of those earliest practitioners of the *cento*. In the explanatory preamble to his *Centio nuptialis*—the fundamental reference text for the entire genre—the late antique writer Ausonius had emphasized that "while the harmonious arrangement of the skillful [*cento* writer] is

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<sup>271</sup> *Essais de Michel de Montaigne*, book 1, ed. André Tournon (Paris: Imprimerie nationale éditions, 1998), 256-57.

marvelous, the jumble made by the unskilled is ridiculous,” and he illustrated his point by describing a game known as *ostomachia*.<sup>272</sup>

There you have little pieces of bone, fourteen in number and representing geometrical figures...By fitting these pieces together in various ways, pictures of countless objects are produced: a monstrous elephant, a brutal boar, a goose in flight, and a gladiator in armor, a huntsman crouching down, and a dog barking—even a tower and a tankard and numberless other things of this sort, whose variety depends upon the skill of the player.<sup>273</sup>

From a set of pre-existing forms, the skillful player can produce an arrangement that reveals new significance without having created anything. The *ostomachia* is an apt description of Moretto’s oversize grasping hand hidden in the *Gathering of Manna*’s foreground. It is a symbol of patchwork composition, and it registers Moretto’s understanding that the patchwork creates a situation in which forms can come into existence without the creative input of the assembler. Patchwork composition allows the “marvelous” (Ausonius’s word is *miraculum*) to materialize.

Ausonius and Montaigne prized the centonist’s ingenuity, a quality that manifested itself in a *cento*’s skillful juxtapositions and that constituted, for them, a real and transformative contribution to the citations that centonists manipulated. Recent scholarship on the *cento* also has been especially attentive to the centonist’s agency, characterizing the acts of selecting and manipulating a source text as producing a new work that expresses ideas and artistry proper to the compiler.<sup>274</sup> Such descriptions bring the activity of the centonist very close to that of the author. It is far from certain,

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<sup>272</sup> “Sed peritorum concinnatio miraculum est, imperitorum iunctura ridiculum.” My translation varies slightly from Ausonius, “Cento Nuptialis,” Loeb Series, vol. 1, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn White (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), 375.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>274</sup> See, for instance, Calitti, 503.

however, that this agency would have been the primary understanding of the *cento* writer's role for most audiences in the first half of the sixteenth century. While some readers would have enjoyed the *cento* for its mischievous perversion of authorial intent, other would have been aware of a tradition that saw the *cento* as a method for revealing prophetic truth embedded in ancient texts.

Ausonius had handed down the rules for the *cento*, but Faltonia Betitia Proba could claim equal fame among Renaissance readers and even greater renown concerning the writing of Christian *centones*. Proba's fourth-century *Centio Virgilianus* recounted a Christian history of the world from the creation of Adam through the life of Christ. The *Centio Virgilianus* was first published in 1472, when it was appended to the first edition of Ausonius's works, and Proba's text would continue to be printed for many decades, including a 1496 edition published in Brescia.<sup>275</sup> For a Christian readership, Proba's *cento* revealed Virgil's verses to bear witness to Christian history, and in so doing, Proba came to be considered a mouthpiece for prophetic speech.<sup>276</sup> One late fifteenth-century publication even imagined her as a sort of thirteenth sybil of the ancient world. Printed in Rome around 1482, a collection of "solemn and useful" (mostly Thomistic) theological explanations included images of the twelve sibyls together with their prophetic statements regarding Christ, followed by Proba's *cento* and an image of her holding a blank scroll next to a pile of books, presumably her Virgilian sources (figures 119-

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<sup>275</sup> Proba's *Centio Vergilianus* was first published appended to Ausonius's *Opera* (Venice: Girardinus, 1472). The Brescian edition was published under the title *Probae Centonae Clarissimae Feminae Opusculum* (Brescia, 1496).

<sup>276</sup> At least since the early fourth century, Virgil's Fourth Eclogue had been interpreted by many Christians as prophesying the coming of Christ in its vague descriptions of a virgin, a baby boy descended from heaven, and an ill-fated snake. For the history of Virgil's eclogue treated as Christian prophecy from late antiquity into the early modern era, see Ella Bourne, "The Messianic Prophecy in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue," *The Classical Journal* 11, no. 7 (April, 1916), 390-400.

120).<sup>277</sup> Modern historians of literature have endeavored to recover Proba's agency in the ingenuity of her *cento*'s composition, but for Renaissance audiences her capacity as a medium—her lack of invention, signified by her blank scroll—was her greatest merit.

The aspect of the *cento* that made it potentially prophetic was the same feature that allowed it to be humorous and parodic: the genre's inherently figurative use of language. In the context of the *cento*, the original author's words are understood in a new sense, yet the original meaning of the words is not forgotten. Both meanings are held in the mind simultaneously, and the resulting tension is the source of the genre's ability to amuse, to criticize, or to astound with the prophecy of foretold events. The operation is analogous to the Christian understanding of Jewish history to figure the later events of Christ's life and sacrificial death. For the painting's Christian viewership, Moretto's Old Testament paintings described events with a double existence: each is the real, historical episode it portrays *and* each is the Eucharist that it prefigures.

By following the centonist's strategy of super-abundant reference, Moretto found yet another way to undermine any suggestion that his pictures might be God-like creations. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, pictorial disintegration was a fundamental concern for Moretto, but the task of decorating a chapel dedicated to the sacrificially broken body of Christ may well have inflected Moretto's existing tendencies with special urgency. As the Creed, spoken in every Latin mass, declared, Christ's divinity was "begotten, not made" (*Genitum, non factum*). And we have reason to believe that Moretto's strategy of piecing together his Old Testament prefigurations from existing

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<sup>277</sup> Filippo Barbieri, ed., *Tractatus sollemnis et utilis per religiosum virum magistrum Philippus Syculum Ordinis predicatorum Sacre theologie professorem integerrimus in quo infrascripta per pulchre compilavit*. Rome: Georg Herolt and Sixtus Reissinger, [c. 1482].



components could have been interpreted by his contemporaries as “not made,” or at least not analogous to an integrally fashioned body. Vasari, for one, took over-abundant citation to compromise the integrity of a painter’s work. In his second edition of Michelangelo’s *vita*, he remembered that

A painter had executed a scene, and had copied many things from various other works, both drawings and pictures, nor was there anything in that work that was not copied. It was shown to Michelangelo, who, having seen it, was asked by a very dear friend what he thought of it, and he replied: ‘He has done well, but I know not what this scene will do on the day of Judgment, when all bodies shall recover their members, for there will be nothing left of it’—a warning to those who practice art, that they should make a habit of working by themselves.<sup>278</sup>

Vasari’s anecdote suggests that pictorial citations are acted upon by a sort of gravitational pull that draws the copy back to its source and that too many of these citations in one picture might rip the painting’s “body” apart. For artists intent on qualifying their art-making as a creative process, this centrifugal pull was dangerous. For Moretto, it amplified the sense that his painted prefigurations of Christ were engendered from pre-existing sources rather than artfully fashioned by a creator.

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<sup>278</sup> Vasari, *Lives*, trans. de Vere, 743-44.

## Chapter Five

### Christ's Death and Moretto's Dissolution of the Artful Figure

For much of his career, Moretto's various strategies for dissolving the integrity of his pictorial compositions rarely focused on the appearance of his human subjects. Unlike the broad features and irregular contours often present in Romanino's figures, Moretto painted bodies, which tended toward a more or less classical standard of proportion and symmetry, would be used by later interpreters to substantiate his reputation as the "Raffaello bresciano."<sup>279</sup> However, in the last years of Moretto's life, from around 1550 until his death in late 1554, several paintings representing episodes from the life of Christ demonstrate an increased urgency to locate pictorial instability within the depiction of Christ's body. Prominent in scenes of the Nativity and especially in scenes of the Passion, Moretto's pictorial disintegration would become most conspicuous in those narrative episodes when the reality and the permanence of Christ's material existence were most poignantly at issue.

In his recent examination of Italian art produced during the era of Catholic Reform, Alexander Nagel identified an aniconic impulse in the decoration of church altars in Venice's mainland provinces beginning as early as the 1530s and 1540s. The cathedrals of Vicenza and Verona were among the earliest churches of such prominence to have a eucharistic tabernacle placed over their high altars, and in both of these instances, the emphatic display of Christ's bodily presence in the eucharist was

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<sup>279</sup> Bruno Passamani, "Il 'Raffaello bresciano': formazione ed affermazione di un mito," in *Il Moretto*. *Alessandro Bonvicino*, exh. cat. (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1988), 16-28.

complemented by stridently non-representational ornament.<sup>280</sup> In Vicenza Cathedral, the main altar's central tabernacle was embedded within an elaborate array of colored and striated stones, chosen, as Nagel has argued, for their capacity to symbolize Christ's blood or God's spirit without the intervention of human artistry.<sup>281</sup> Moretto's late pictures are not aniconic, but his efforts in the 1550s to destabilize his representations of Christ do suggest that he shared with the altar designers in Verona and Vicenza a similar aspiration to separate the beholder's experience of Christ from the artist's act of pictorial facture. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the appreciation of an artfully depicted body had become closely bound to an acknowledgement of the artist's controlling agency over that form, and Moretto became increasingly intent on displacing artistic agency precisely as it related to the making—the forming and delimiting—of Christ's body.

Moretto's *Christ in Passion with an Angel*, commissioned around 1550 by the Brescian cathedral confraternity of the Santissimi Crocifissi, is an image of a body in material flux (figure 121). The painting is perhaps Moretto's best-known late work, and many art historians have regarded it as exemplary of a reforming agenda in its appeal to the beholder's emotions, embodied in the sorrowful and stern faces of the angel and of Christ, and in its prominent display of Passion relics.<sup>282</sup> These particular elements of the picture have strong ties to contemporary devotional literature, but Moretto's image also develops the interaction of Christ's body with its environment in a way that bears as

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<sup>280</sup> Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011), especially 239-85, but also elsewhere, such as 197-209.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 270-81.

<sup>282</sup> See Guazzoni's remarks in *Il tema sacro*, 52-53, as well as his catalog entry on the painting in Jane Martineau and Charles Hope, eds., *The Genius of Venice, 1500-1600*, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1983), 185-86. The painting is also discussed in this regard in Giuseppe Fusari, "Moretto e il Beneficio di Cristo," in Ennio Ferraglio, ed., *Aspirazioni e Devozioni. Brescia nel Cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia* (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2006), 60-71.

much on the fundamental painterly act of tinting with color as on the illustration of a text.<sup>283</sup> As the beholder's eye becomes accustomed to the painting's restrained palette, the sense develops that Christ's immobile body has colored much of what is visible. This process of corporeal emanation is first apparent in the tunic that the angel holds up for inspection (figure 122). The blood that seeps from Christ's body through the dozens of cuts that cover his skin has stained the tunic through direct contact with his wounds. Staining, of course, is a familiar mechanism for relic creation based on physical touch, but in Moretto's picture, the perforation of Christ's body seems to have begun a supernatural process of material expansion that proliferates far beyond the boundary of his form. The red marble steps on which Christ sits take their hue from the color of his blood, and the stone architecture that frames the scene is also streaked with crimson. These blood-red veins in the white stone are difficult to see in photographic reproduction, but Valerio Guazzoni confirms that the image possesses "a speckled reddish effect giving the impression that there is blood everywhere."<sup>284</sup> Despite being bound by his human captors, Christ's body has become immanent within the physical order, even providing it with its colors.

This chapter will focus on another of Moretto's late altarpieces that, like *Christ in Passion with an Angel*, sought to convey spiritual truths about Christ's material being by questioning the legitimacy of the painter's controlling agency over the form and appearance of that body. Moretto painted the so-called *Entombment* (figure 123), now in

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<sup>283</sup> Valerio Guazzoni, for example, has proposed a direct association between the painting and *L'Arte del'Unione*, a text whose imagery includes a sorrowful angel attending to the bound and beaten Christ in the confines of a *palazzo*. See Martineau and Hope, eds., *The Genius of Venice*, 185-86.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, for the Disciplina di San Giovanni e Marco, a flagellant confraternity attached to the church of San Giovanni Evangelista.<sup>285</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, most of that church's archival records have been dispersed or destroyed, though the altarpiece's date, "MDLIV · MENS OCT," confirms that the *Entombment* was the last work Moretto completed before his death in late 1554. This apparent guarantee of the painting's date of completion, however, has not shielded the work from doubts about its authenticity and quality, and the *Entombment*'s figure of Christ, specifically, has been a source of embarrassment even among Moretto's apologists. Adolfo Venturi described the painting's figures as "leaden giants" in whom "every beauty of art had withered," and György Gombosi felt that the painting's quality was sufficiently poor to hypothesize that its finished appearance was the work of a pupil who completed the picture after Moretto's death.<sup>286</sup> In the nineteenth century, Sir Charles Eastlake considered acquiring the painting for the National Gallery, London, only to decide against the purchase on account of the lack of spatial depth in the depiction of Christ's body and the placement of the Virgin's left hand, "very unfortunately, on [his] abdomen..."<sup>287</sup> Even for contemporary museum visitors less prudish than Eastlake about the Virgin's display of familiarity, the

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<sup>285</sup> The altarpiece is first recorded in Bernardino Faino's mid-seventeenth-century inventory of art in Brescian churches, *Catalogo delle chiese di Brescia*, 147: "In questa chiesa nel oratorio di sopra vi è la pala alaltare [sic] di mano del Moretto Cosa bellissima et di molta Consideratione vi è rappresentato nostro Signore Morto con molte figure."

<sup>286</sup> Adolfo Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, IX, 4 (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1929), 198, quoted in Begni Redona, 517: "...in quei giganti di piombo, si deve convenire che ogni bellezza d'arte era sfiorita." Expanding on his father's assessment, Lionello Venturi, *Italian Paintings in America* (New York: E. Weyhe, 1933), tav. 536, described Moretto's lack of control over the painted composition in terms better suited to a description of the dead Christ that Moretto had painted: "...he [Moretto] totters, overcome by an ideal too lofty for his delicate nature." For Gombosi's assessment see *Moretto da Brescia*, 64.

<sup>287</sup> For excerpts from Eastlake's notes on the *Deposition* and an overview of the painting's history, see Andrea Bayer, *North of the Apennines: Sixteenth-century Italian Painting in Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna*, published as *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 60, no. 4 (spring 2003): 30.

Metropolitan Museum still recognizes that the painting offers a “difficult” viewing experience.<sup>288</sup>

Today the *Entombment*'s status as an autograph work by Moretto is not seriously doubted, but the painting's awkward presentation of Christ's body remains problematic and largely unexamined. Pressed forward to the very edge of the picture plane, Christ's left foot fits squarely into the lower right corner of the canvas. His legs should recede into the depth of the scene, though the degree of foreshortening is clearly insufficient. As Eastlake observed, he “is hardly represented seated on [the Virgin's] lap the legs being nearly straight. The head drops forward awkwardly.”<sup>289</sup> Christ's proximity to the picture plane and the bend in his waist seem to suggest that his body is pitching forward into the viewer's space, yet in nearly every aspect of the figure's design where foreshortening would be required, Moretto eliminated or else minimized such *scorti* by spreading Christ's limbs and flattening his form across the width of the canvas.

If we judge the *Entombment*'s image of Christ as deficient in *disegno*, it is also important to recognize that the painting's principal subject is a body that Christ had willingly “unmade” through his self-sacrificial death. The inclusion of prominent *scorti* had become a widely recognized sign of artistic mastery by the time Moretto began painting the altarpiece, and it is not at all certain that Moretto would have desired to convey mastery over this portrayal of Christ's body. Later in this chapter, we will return to consider the critical evaluations of *scorti* that Moretto had likely encountered by the time he executed the altarpiece, but it will be helpful first to examine aspects of the

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

painting's imagery, including the inscribed stone beneath Christ that raises the issue of "making" and its possible alternatives.

### **Moretto and the Dead Christ**

No figure appears more frequently in Moretto's paintings than Christ. Whether portrayed in infancy or adulthood, Christ's physical form and his actions were the fundamental preoccupations of Moretto's activity as a painter. And as we have already seen, his consideration of Christ's body and its significance for humanity extended even to images that did not depict him directly. The frescos adorning Mattia Ugoni's studio offered an elaborate, if esoteric meditation on Christ's assumption of human flesh, and the many canvases Moretto painted for the decoration of eucharistic chapels presented the food and drink in episodes of Jewish history as types of Christ's sacrificial body. Given this sustained engagement with the subject of his incarnate form and particularly with the meaning of his death, it is remarkable that the dead Christ appears only fleetingly in Moretto's oeuvre. The Metropolitan *Entombment* and an early *Pietà* of the 1520s (figure 124), now held in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, are the only Lamentation scenes that Moretto is known to have painted.<sup>290</sup>

The three decades between the *Pietà* and *Entombment* mark a period when the custodians of eucharistic chapels in Brescia and its dependent communities turned increasing attention to the adornment of those chapels, and the centerpieces of their

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<sup>290</sup> Begni Redona, 210-212. This panel's figure group is quite similar to that of the central panel of a polyptych attributed to Vincenzo Civerchio and housed in the Brescian church of Sant'Afra. Moretto's painting is generally considered to be after the polyptych, although the issue of priority has not been convincingly settled.

decorative ensembles frequently were altarpieces depicting the Lamentation.<sup>291</sup> That Moretto seems not to have painted a single image of the subject during these years is acutely surprising. The generation of painters preceding Moretto had gone far in supplying Brescia's churches with such altarpieces. Between about 1500 and 1510, Vincenzo Foppa, Vincenzo Civerchio, Bernardo Zenale, Gerolamo Romanino, and Altobello Melone each painted a scene of the Lamentation for a Brescian altar dedicated to the Passion, the Crucifixion, or, more frequently, the Corpus Domini (figures 125-128). Yet there is no reason to suspect that the demand for similar images had dissipated in the years that followed. Between 1530 and 1550, Romanino painted three altarpieces of the Lamentation for churches in Brescia and its environs, in addition to sundry other images that featured the dead Christ.<sup>292</sup> Given Moretto's premier position among Brescian painters, and especially among makers of religious images, this disparity calls for explanation. Did patrons seeking images of the dead Christ avoid Moretto, or did Moretto himself avoid the dead Christ as a subject for painting? And if the latter was the case, how did Moretto deal with his misgivings when he came to paint the *Entombment* for the Disciplina di San Giovanni e Marco in late 1554?

Any explanation of the *Entombment's* ungainly portrayal of the dead Christ must contend with Moretto's restrained approach to the figure's foreshortening, which denies the body a sense of solidity and makes it appear not so much to pitch forward into the viewer's space but rather to collapse down the surface of the image. The lone passage of

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<sup>291</sup> On the subject, see of course Savy, *Manducatio per visum: temi eucaristici nella pittura di Romanino e Moretto*. For Moretto's paintings for sacrament chapels, as well as his "eucharistic altarpieces," see also Guazzoni, *Moretto. Il tema sacro*.

<sup>292</sup> Other than his early *Lamentation* (dated 1510) for the church of San Lorenzo, Romanino executed all of his Lamentation altarpieces between 1530 and 1550; see Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, cat. nos. 52, 105, and 111.



notable foreshortening in the picture occurs in Christ's right foot, where a bloody nail hole punctuates the adjacent inscription declaring him "obedient unto death." This single bloody *scorto* seems especially calculated, because it points to another of the picture's idiosyncrasies. Other than this visible hole in his foot and a few small drops of blood at his brow, all of Christ's wounds have been obscured from sight. A diligent viewer can locate Christ's side wound, hidden in shadow, as well as the discrete trails of blood that issue from his hands and left foot, but Moretto clearly intended to minimize these wounds as foci for devotional attention.

In place of these marks related to the Crucifixion, Moretto arranged the Virgin's left hand so that it frames Christ's navel, drawing attention to the mark of Christ's formation in his mother's womb. While we might scoff at Eastlake's stated inclination to expand the loincloth to cover more of Christ's bare abdomen, he was not wrong to attend to the Virgin's gesture.<sup>293</sup> Having accepted the task of depicting Christ in death, Moretto reasserted the process by which Christ had first been made in material form.

Directing the viewer's thoughts toward Christ's Incarnation while displaying his dead body, the painting seems to suggest that this sorrowful outcome was the preordained result of Christ's assumption of human flesh. Still, the unusual shape of Moretto's Christ encourages one to persist in asking how it is that he has come to take his present appearance. Who or what can be said to have caused his present shape in death? This is a theological question, but it was also a relevant question for artists who needed to represent the dead Christ. And the act of depicting the dead Christ held a potential

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<sup>293</sup> Bayer, *North of the Apennines*, 30, reports that Eastlake's notes show him to have considered extending the drapery in order to make the picture more pleasing to contemporary tastes.

paradox to which Moretto seems to have been acutely sensitive. For centuries, Christ's Incarnation had been cited as authorization for the fashioning of Christ's likeness.<sup>294</sup> Christ's death, however, involved the degradation of his body, and this fact alone might give an artist pause before attempting to fashion an image of the subject. But more than this, Christ's unmaking was self-imposed, the result of divine, not human agency. For Moretto, the challenge that the dead Christ presented was the challenge of portraying a body that had actively unmade itself.

We can begin to see what Moretto felt was at stake in his fabrication of the painting by attending closely to the inscribed slab beneath Christ's slackening body (figure 129). The stone bears the phrase "FACTVS EST OBEDIENS VSQVE AD MORTEM" ([He] became obedient unto death). The words point to verses in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians where the apostle explains the transformations that Christ underwent in becoming human.

[Christ] being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death (*factus obediens usque ad mortem*), even to the death of the cross.<sup>295</sup>

When discussing the altarpiece, writers have frequently treated the painting's reference to this passage as self-evident, citing the relevance of Paul's themes of humility and servitude to the civic function and devotional aims of the painting's patrons. The excerpt well suits a flagellant community professing an ideal of self-abasement, but the aptness of

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<sup>294</sup> Among the most consequential and enduring voices on the matter was John of Damascus, whose eighth-century arguments finding validation for image use in Christ's Incarnation were crucial to the pro-image rulings of the Second Council of Nicaea. For further discussion and bibliography, see works cited in fn. 8 and 9.

<sup>295</sup> Philippians 2:6-9 (Douay-Rheims).

the phrase does not explain why Moretto painted the altarpiece's figures as he did. To further examine the complex interactions of text and image at work here, we need to refer not only to Philippians but also to the biblical commentary that was the precise source for the inscription.

The words, as inscribed, are not an exact quotation of Philippians but rather are the words used by Augustine in his commentary to Psalm 88. They refer specifically to a portion of that psalm that reports God's declaration of aid for his chosen one: "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil I have anointed him. For my hand shall help him, and my arm shall strengthen him."<sup>296</sup> In his gloss of this psalm, Augustine borrowed Paul's language from Philippians to connect the divinely invigorated David to the incarnation of Christ, both initially humbled but ultimately triumphant.

*For my hand shall help him, and my arm shall strengthen him:* because there was a taking up of man; because flesh was assumed in the Virgin's womb, because by him who in the form of God is coequal with the Father, the form of a servant was taken, and he became obedient unto death (*factus est obediens usque ad mortem*), even the death of the cross.<sup>297</sup>

The difference between Augustine's phrasing and Paul's is minimal: like Moretto's inscription, the Augustinian commentary inserts the verb "est" to clarify Paul's use of "factus" to mean "became." This small grammatical expansion is of interest, however, because it confirms that Moretto and the *disciplina* developed the *Entombment's* imagery not only in the light of Paul's text but also with Psalm 88 and its Augustinian commentary at hand. For a painter considering how best to portray the dead Christ, the

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<sup>296</sup> Psalm 88: 21-22 (Douay-Rheims).

<sup>297</sup> For the English translation of Augustine's commentary on Psalm 88, see *Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, vol. IV, 253. For the Latin, see Augustinus Hipponensis, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, Psalmum LXXXVIII. Sermo I, col. 1129, in J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XXXVII: S. Aurelii Augustini, vol. IV (Paris, 1845).

latter texts could offer as much as Paul's better known description of Christ's transformation.

We likely need to look no further than Augustine's commentary for the inspiration behind the Virgin's act of framing Christ's navel with her own hand. While Paul's Christological statement in Philippians places the Incarnation at the center of God's plan for human salvation, it is Augustine who emphasizes the Virgin's role in providing Christ with flesh. And once one is inclined to read these texts for what they reveal about the making of bodies, the psalm text quickly assumes a new and peculiarly specific relevance for the painter who works with oil. Before applying his "holy oil" to David's body, God states that he "invented" ("found") him (*Inveni David, servum meum*). Then, with the body invented and oiled, God says that he will "strengthen" (*confortabit*) his servant. If "invention" was common parlance among artists by the 1550s and taken by many as a fundamental aspect of the artist's job, the legitimacy of imbuing the bodies one painted with a strengthening force was far from settled. The debate coalesced following the 1541 unveiling of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* and its straining and twisted figures (*sforzati*), which Giovanni Andrea Gilio would criticize for their lack of decorum, specifically for Michelangelo's pride in setting his art above the demands of his subject matter.<sup>298</sup> Although Gilio's dialogue would not see light for another decade, the *Entombment's* insufficient *disegno* suggests that Moretto already may have been alert to the possibility that a painter's contortions of a depicted body held the potential to imbue

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<sup>298</sup> On the polemical status of the "figura sforzata" in the mid- and late-sixteenth century, see Michael W. Cole, "The *Figura Sforzata*: modelling, power and the Mannerist body," *Art History* 24, no. 4 (Sept., 2001), esp. 526-29; idem., "Discernment and Animation, Leonardo to Lomazzo," in *Image and Imagination of the Religious Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Falkenburg, Melion, and Richardson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 154-58; idem., *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure*, 137-42.

that figure with a force that might contradict religious teaching and divert attention from its proper object of devotion.

### **Making versus Doing**

Christ's death was an act of uncoerced submission, and it mattered theologically that he had not been forced in death. In seeking to define the efficient cause of Christ's Passion, Thomas Aquinas had asked "whether Jesus was slain by others, or by himself," a question Aquinas then answered by showing Christ to have been the agent of his own death.

...[T]hose who are violently slain by others die against their will, for violence is opposed to willingness. But as Augustine says, 'Christ's spirit did not desert his flesh unwillingly but because he willed it, when he willed it, and as he willed it.' Christ was therefore not slain by others but by himself.<sup>299</sup>

There is little reason to think Moretto was familiar with the specific terms of Aquinas's analysis, but the causation and agency involved in Christ's death were prominent in Moretto's thoughts as he painted the *Entombment*. His partial obfuscation of the inscription registers his concerns almost diagrammatically.

The words "FACTVS EST" stand alone as the first line of the *Entombment's* inscription. The phrase constitutes a passive form of the Latin infinitive *facere*, produced by combining a conjugated form of *esse* (to be) and the past participle *factus* (made). Together, the linguistic compound signifies that Christ actively "became," even as the verbs convey the sense that "becoming" is a process of "being made"—of being an object brought into a new state by an external operator. *Facere* was a Latin verb well-known to

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<sup>299</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, v. 54. The Passion of Christ (3a.46-52), ed. Richard T. A. Murphy, O. P. (New York: Blackfriars with McGraw-Hill, 1965), 55.

Renaissance artists, and even the particular conjugation, such as *fecit* (made) or *faciebat* (was making), which was incorporated into an artist's signature could carry connotations about the artist's approach to the act of making and his or her relationship to the made object.<sup>300</sup> This all might seem unrelated to the appearance of "factus" in a scriptural quotation, were it not for Moretto's decision to have the Virgin's robe cast a shadow that obscures the inscription's initial F, allowing FACTVS to be read as ACTVS (figure 129).<sup>301</sup>

*Factus* and *actus* are past participles of *facere* and *agere*, respectively. While both infinitives can be translated as "to do" or "to make" depending on context, their fundamental difference turns on the directionality of the actions they describe. *Facere* pertains to actions that involve a subject acting on an external object (e.g., a lump of clay, a poem) to form or change it, whereas *agere* pertains to intransitive actions, affecting change within the motions of the subject's own mind or body.<sup>302</sup> This same distinction

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<sup>300</sup> The philosophical connotations of an artist's particular conjugation of *facere* have been addressed, above all, in relation to Michelangelo. See recently Irving Lavin, "Divine Grace and the Remedy of the Imperfect. Michelangelo's Signature on the St. Peter's *Pietà*," *Artibus et Historiae* 34, no. 68 (2013): 277-328.

<sup>301</sup> I thank Stephen Campbell for turning my attention to the interaction between shadow and inscription when I presented my initial thoughts on Moretto's *Entombment* at the University of Pennsylvania in 2011.

<sup>302</sup> Varro, *On the Latin Language*, vol. 1, ed. Jeffrey Henderson and trans. Roland G. Kent (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard Univ. Press, 1951), 210-213 and 244-247, was adamant that Latin speakers distinguish *facere* from *agere* on the basis of the relationship of subject, action, and object. "The third stage of action is...that in which they *faciunt* 'make' something: in this, on account of the likeness among *agere* 'to act' and *facere* 'to make'...a certain error is committed by those who think that it is only one thing. For a person can *facere* something and not *agere* it, as a poet *facit* 'makes' a play and does not act it, and on the other hand the actor *agit* 'acts' it and does not make it, and so a play *fit* 'is made' by the poet, not acted, and *agitur* 'is acted' by the actor, not made..." (VI.77). Varro further explains how *facere* relates to the appearance with which a "maker" imbues an object: "In its literal sense *facere* 'to make' is from *facies* 'external appearance': he is said *facere* 'to make' a thing, who puts a *facies* 'external appearance' on the thing which he *facit* 'makes.' As the *factor* 'image-maker,' when he says "*Fingo* 'I shape,'" puts a *figura* 'shape' on the object, and when he says "*Formo* 'I form,'" puts a *forma* 'form' on it, so when he says "*Facio* 'I make,'" he puts a *facies* 'external appearance' on it..." (VI.78). And in distinction to the type of making that *facere* describes, "He who furnishes a service, whose work does not stand out in concrete form

was also available within sixteenth-century vernacular Italian, and at mid-century just such distinctions were being articulated in treatises on the arts. Published in 1549, Benedetto Varchi's *Lesson Debating the Superiority and Nobility of the Arts of Sculpture and Painting*, for instance, distinguished the "factive" (*fattivo*) works of painters and sculptors from "active" (*attivo*) processes, after which "no work (*opera*) remains."<sup>303</sup> And some years later, Vincenzo Danti would similarly describe *operare* (like *facere*) as appropriate to those actions that leave traces in the materials they act upon, with *fare* (like *agere*) encompassing acts such as "speaking, moving oneself, and all the others that are done which do not leave any trace with a visible presence."<sup>304</sup>

The shadow cast by the Virgin's robe allows the statement on Christ's "becoming" to oscillate between *factus* and *actus*. This variable reading raises the question of whether Christ has taken his present form as the result of his own willful

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so as to come under the observation of our physical senses, is, from his *agitatus* 'action, motion,' as I have said, thought rather *agere* 'to act' than *facere* 'to make' something..." (VI.78).

<sup>303</sup> Benedetto Varchi, *Lezione nella quale si disputa della maggioranza delle arti e qual sia più nobile, la scultura o la pittura*, in Paola Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento. Fra Manierismo e Controriforma*, vol. I (Bari: Laterza & Figli, 1960), 10: "Dicesi 'fattivo' a differenza dell'abito della prudenza, il quale non si chiama fattivo, ma attivo, perciocché nella prudenza, oltre che dopo l'operazioni non rimane alcuna opera, può ciascuno operare a sua voglia, senza l'aiuto del corpo o d'altra cosa di fuori; il che nell'arte non avviene, come è notissimo." Varchi's discussion of the relative merits of painting and sculpture was published as one half of his *Dve lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi nella prima delle quali si dichiara vn sonetto di M. Michelagnolo Buonarroti : nella seconda si disputa quale sia più nobile arte la scultura, o la pittura, con vna lettera d'esso Michelagnolo & più altri eccellentiss. pittori et scultori sopra la quistione sopradetta* (Florence: Torrentino, 1549).

<sup>304</sup> Vincenzo Danti, *Il primo libro del Trattato delle perfette proporzioni*, in Paola Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento. Fra Manierismo e Controriforma*, vol. I (Bari: Laterza & Figli, 1960), 262: "Et in questo caso porremmo differenza fra il fare e l'operare. Perché sotto il fare, semplicemente detto, intenderò tutte le cose, delle quali non resta dopo il fatto alcuna cosa di loro, che abbia corpo; e sotto l'operare, ancor che l'operare dependa dal fare, intenderò che sieno tutte le cose che dopo il fatto rimangono in essere in corpi visibili. Verbigrazia, dirò che sia cosa di opera una statua di marmo, perché rimane di questa fattura in essere la statua. Medesimamente dirò che fare semplicemente sia il parlare, il moversi, e tutte l'altre cose che si fanno, delle quali non rimane dopo il fatto cosa che abbia corpo visibile." For contextualized discussions of Danti's distinction in sixteenth-century art, see Philip Sohm, "Maniera and the Absent Hand: Avoiding the etymology of style," *RES* 36 (autumn, 1999): 105, n. 23; and Michael W. Cole, *Ambitious Form: Giambologna, Ammanati, and Danti in Florence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2011), 135.

action or as the result of an external agent's making. Since the shadow comes close to negating a reading of "factus," the interaction of picture and language might also be understood to convey that Christ's action in death is a negation of *factus*, that Christ has not been made to die but rather has acted to unmake himself. As Aquinas's analysis attests, a tradition dating back to patristic commentaries had insisted that Christ had held all agency in the matter of his death, and the willful, active quality of his death would have been an especially poignant matter for the *disciplina* and its goal of self-mortification. By the same token, the inscription's intimation that Christ's death was an act of negating *facere*—un-making—held significant consequences for the artist who hoped to represent truthfully this climactic moment in Christian history.

While Moretto's means of directing a beholder to consider the "unmaking" of Christ's body are subtle and complex, the notion of pictorial unmaking was not entirely arcane. In the lengthy poem *Il Magno Palazzo* published in 1539, the physician Pietro Andrea Mattioli described Romanino's *ignudi* (figure 130), painted in the Tridentine residence of Cardinal Bernardo Clesio, as evidence of the Brescian's ability to "make and unmake with his divine brush" (...*che col divin pennello/ fare, e disfar...*).<sup>305</sup> In the context of Romanino's *ignudi*, Mattioli's "disfar[e]" seems to refer, at least in part, to the figures' state of undress, which the author defends by claiming that "[t]he worthy art of a

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<sup>305</sup> Thomas Frangenberg, "Decorum in the *Magno Palazzo* in Trent," *Renaissance Studies* 7, no. 4 (Dec., 1993): 370, n. 65, reproduces the portion of the poem relevant to Romanino's *ignudi*. The words cited here come from a stanza that reads: "S'honesta ben non parve la pittura./ Come si richiedeva al luogo degno./ Lo fe il pittor per mostrar che natura/ Ben sapeva imitar con suo disegno./ Ma perche d'honestà poi hebbe cura/ Il tutto ritrattò con grand'ingegno./ E dimostrò che col divin pennello/ Fare, e disfar sapea qualcolsa anch'ello." Campbell, "*Fare una cosa morta parer viva: Michelangelo, Rosso, and the (Un)Divinity of Art*," 597-98, also discusses to this passage in Mattioli's poem.



good painter is recognizable by his ability to form a nude body well.”<sup>306</sup> The sense of material formation and decomposition conveyed in Mattioli’s antithesis would seem to apply at least as well, however, to Dosso Dossi’s images of fragmented statues painted elsewhere in Clesio’s residence (figure 131). In these spandrel frescos, which Mattioli described as a “work of beautiful imperfection” (*bel lavoro imperfetto*), Dosso created idealized figures that lack significant pieces of their bodies.<sup>307</sup> For those who would criticize Dosso, Mattioli explains that these imperfect figures were designed in imitation of actual fragmentary statues in Rome, though Mattioli’s emphasis here and also in his statements on Romanino’s *ignudi* rests on the belief that an artist can, and might at times prefer, to produce a figure that strikes an uninformed viewer as insufficiently made.

Mattioli relates the artist’s ability to “disfare” to the processes of nature and God-like creation and destruction, which I introduced in Chapter One as a frequently cited source of authorization for painters’ making of integrated, body-like image and from which I have tried to distance Moretto’s own approach to composition. The generative power of nature, *natura naturans*, could provide only a specious set of principles for the representation of supernatural truths. Furthermore, Christ’s Passion involved the devolution, not the generation, of a body. Images of the Passion, to paraphrase Joseph Koerner’s provocative claim, are inherently iconoclastic.<sup>308</sup> Representing Christ’s

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<sup>306</sup> This translation is from Frangenberg, 370. “L’arte del buon pittor degna si vede/ Nel saper ben formare un corpo ignudo.”

<sup>307</sup> Giancarlo Fiorenza, *Dosso Dossi: Paintings of Myth, Magic, and the Antique* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2008), 146-51, discusses these images of fragmentary statues as embodiments of nature’s dual role as creator and destroyer. The portion of Mattioli’s *Il Palazzo Magno* describing Dosso spandrel figures is reproduced in Fiorenza, 207, n. 70.

<sup>308</sup> On the iconoclasm inherent to Passion imagery, see Joseph Koerner, “The Icon as Iconoclash,” in Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, eds., *Iconoclash* (Karlsruhe: ZKM; London: MIT Press, 2002), 164-213, esp. 189-200.

bruised and lacerated body, artists took up the contradictory task of fashioning monuments to diminution and effacement. But if Mattioli's concept of *disfare* was grounded in a nature-like cycle of creation, the idea of a bodily unmaking that resulted in spiritual transcendence was also available to Moretto and his contemporary Brescian viewership in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. Directly preceding his statement on the spiritual purpose of Christ's humiliating Incarnation, Paul had confessed that he had often wished to escape his own physical body, desiring "to be dissolved (*dissolvi*) and to be with Christ..."<sup>309</sup>

"Dissolving" a body in an effort to achieve greater connection with Christ was the implicit ideal of every flagellant confraternity, but the concept was hardly exclusive to organized sodalities. A text as fundamental to the growth of late medieval private devotion as the *Imitation of Christ* had repeated Paul's phrasing in a section concerning the "usefulness of adversity":

"When a man of good will is afflicted, tempted, and tormented by evil thoughts, then clearly his greatest need is God...He wearies of living longer and wishes for death to come, that he may be able to be dissolved and to be with Christ."<sup>310</sup>

The text presents corporeal dissolution here as the ineluctable fact of human death, but the foundational act of Christian dissolution was Christ's own self-dissolving.

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<sup>309</sup> Philippians 1:23-24 (Douay-Rheims). The text of the Vulgate reads: "Coarctor autem e duobus: desiderium habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo, multo magis melius: Permanere autem in carne, necessarium propter vos."

<sup>310</sup> *Imitatio Christi*, I.12, "De utilitate aduersitatis," (Brescia: Jacopo Britannico, 1485): "Ideo deberet se homo in Deo totaliter firmare, ut non esset ei necesse, multas humanas consolations quaerere. Quando homo bonae voluntatis tribulatur vel tentatur, aut malis cogitationibus affligitur: tunc Deum sibi magis necessarium intelligit, sine quo nihil boni se posse deprehendit. Tunc etiam tristatur, gemit et orat pro miseris, quas patitur. Tunc taedet eum diutius vivere, et mortem optat venire, ut possit dissolvi et cum Christo esse. Tunc etiam bene advertit, perfectam securitatem et plenam pacem in mundo non posse constare." The text was extremely popular throughout Europe and widely available in many editions, including this Brescian edition printed in 1485.

The mechanics of Christ's death and resurrection feature prominently in a dramatic confrontation with the Pharisees recorded in Mark's and John's gospels. In Mark's account, Christ's accusers charge him with heresy and testify to having heard him declare, "I will destroy (*dissolvam*) this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another not made with hands."<sup>311</sup> Christ's act of self-sacrifice is likened to the collapse of a built structure, and his resuscitation is compared to its unaided reconstitution. Christ's prophecy leaves little room for the contribution of human intervention, which may go some way toward explaining why Moretto portrayed the *Entombment's* Christ, only awkwardly supported by so many hands. The full collapse of his body is avoided by the collective action of John, Mary Magdalene, and the Virgin, but their hands do not make his body conform to a recognizable pose, as they had in Moretto's *Pietà* of the 1520s. In that earlier panel, Moretto had portrayed Christ, gripped by his mourners, in the process of being drawn into the iconic form of the cross. Three decades later, Moretto had reconceived the dead Christ as a limit case for the made figure's ability to represent sacred truth.

### **Dissolving Bodies**

Moretto's presentation of the dead Christ as un-made depended heavily on the manipulation of shadow and foreshortening. These were pictorial elements Moretto found to be particularly useful for the representation of bodies passing into or out of the material constraint of human flesh. Moretto's late *Nativity*, an altarpiece painted around

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<sup>311</sup> Mark 14:58 (Douay-Rheims). Vulgate: "Quoniam nos audivimus eum dicentem: Ego dissolvam templum hoc manu factum, et per triduum aliud non manu factum aedificabo." John 2:19 (Douay-Rheims) records that "Jesus answered and said to them: 'Destroy (*Solvi*) this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'"

1550 for the high altar of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Brescia, is notable in this context for its use of shadow simultaneously to obscure and to attract attention to Christ's infant body (Figure 132). In the altarpiece's upper register, a trio of angels holds a banner pronouncing that "God became man" (DEVS HOMO FACTVS EST). Below, the Christ Child appears bisected by a strong shadow that allows his torso and limbs to be seen clearly while his face remains in darkness. The shadow suggests a distinction of Christ's fleshy body from his ineffable divinity so that each of these might be considered in relation to the angels' announcement above. The reality of God becoming man is likened to a transition across a boundary, whereby the deity becomes increasingly perceptible to the viewer as his body takes on its full form under the light that permits human vision. In several respects, the *Nativity* reprises the central themes of Moretto's decoration for Bishop Ugoni's studio, representing Christ's advent as a passage from obscurity to greater clarity. That earlier program's emphasis on the analogy of Christ's incarnation to scripture's exterior "bark" (*cortex litterae*) also persists here in Moretto's opposition of external and internal realities, conspicuously figured in the *Nativity*'s numerous instances of peeling tree trunks and flaking masonry.

But how could a painter achieve a similar alignment of sacred content and pictorial technique in the portrayal of Christ's death. As an additive art form, a painting's collected strokes of pigmented medium accumulate mass, and as we saw in Chapter One, this quasi-organic growth was the broadly understood, if rarely articulated analogy that Paolo Pino brought forward in his *Dialogue on Painting* as an argument in favor of

painting's primacy.<sup>312</sup> But what could be done if a painter wanted to make a painted body, or a painted composition, fall apart? Tree bark peels and masonry crumbles. How could a painter make a body dissolve?

An altarpiece now held in the National Gallery, London, contains Moretto's earlier thoughts on that precise question. Several years before painting the *Entombment*, around 1538 or soon after, Moretto was commissioned to produce an altarpiece for the Brescian suburb of Flero (figure 133). The altarpiece portrays Saints Hippolytus and Catherine of Alexandria outside the walls of a small fortified city. Saint Hippolytus, his helmet fallen to the ground, looks to the Virgin, who holds the Child's head tenderly against her own cheek. Catherine, resting one foot on a splintered fragment of her spiked wheel, looks out of the picture to meet the beholder's gaze. The picture shares its general composition with many of Moretto's altarpieces that portray the Madonna and Child suspended on clouds above a gathering of saints. What distinguishes the Flero painting, however, is its investigation of the representational paradox bound up in images of martyrdom.

Both Hippolytus and Catherine were saints who consented to gruesome, body-rending executions, and a low stele standing immediately behind the pair reports that "They chose to dissolve their [bodily] members rather than be separated [from God] by eternal chains."<sup>313</sup> Rather than portraying the details from their *vite*, the picture is concerned foremost with the relationship between human decomposition and spiritual

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<sup>312</sup> See Introduction, fn. 5.

<sup>313</sup> "ME(M)BRIS DISSOLV(...)/ VOLVERVNT/ NE VINCVLIS/ DIVELLERE(N)TVR/ ÆTERNIS." Nicholas Penny, *The Sixteenth-century Italian Paintings, vol. I: Paintings from Bergamo, Brescia, and Cremona* (London: National Gallery Co., 2004), 159, translates the inscription as, "They chose to be dismembered rather than be sundered by chains everlasting."

union, and it prompts consideration of dissolving bodies through a series of visual metaphors. The most obvious of these metaphors appears in the stele, where Moretto depicted the stone as weathered in such a way that the word *dissolvere* has begun to crumble away (figure 134). Likewise, the disassembled pieces of body armor and the splintered wheel at the saints' feet bespeak the fragmentation that their bodies endured. The most visually poetic of the picture's metaphors, however, lies at the center of the composition (figure 135). Matching the diminishment the beholder knows to have occurred to the saints' bodies with a diminution in Moretto's own act of painting, Hippolytus's foreshortened left hand is a conspicuously artful attenuation of the figure that invites reflection on willed dissolution and on Moretto's artistry. When Moretto came to paint the *Entombment* a decade and a half later, his thoughts on the propriety of ostentation foreshortening to convey a martyr's bodily dissolution had changed.

The highly wrought contour lines of *scorti* diminished the visibility of the represented body, but they also imbued the figure with a strong sense of their making and, consequently, their maker.<sup>314</sup> The altarpiece that served Moretto as a compositional touchstone for the *Entombment* provides further evidence that around 1550 Moretto was reevaluating the function of *scorti* in religious images. In several unmistakable details, Moretto's painting recalls Bernardo Zenale's *Lamentation* (figure 126), which had adorned the altar in San Giovanni Evangelista's chapel of the Holy Sacrament since about 1505. While Moretto's composition contains fewer figures than Zenale's altarpiece,

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<sup>314</sup> Cole, *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure*, 148, notes that Michelangelo's motifs of bondage, inextricably related to that artist's reification of his figures' contour lines, "asserted that Michelangelo's work, however public, was also personal, that it could have come only from him, that it—unlike the shared repertoires and practices of the past—belonged to him."

Moretto retained the central figure of the seated Virgin, who holds Christ's body with both hands and whose plaintive gaze makes contact with the viewer. Also reprised in Moretto's picture is the turbaned Joseph of Arimathea holding the crown of thorns with his left index finger hooked around a single thorn, and Moretto's Mary Magdalene is an amalgam of the two kneeling women flanking Christ's bier in the earlier painting. Most significant for the present discussion, however, is the stone outcropping that occupies the central foreground of Zenale's painting and which carries within its contours a claim for the ability of skillful artifice to participate in the creative processes of *natura naturans*.

As a significant contributor to the sacrament chapel's decoration, Moretto would have known Zenale's altarpiece with a thoroughness that few others could claim. And among the altarpiece's most striking features is its peculiar vision of the Lamentation, set within an environment that blurs the boundary between the processes of nature and the means of art. The rocky formations in the painting's upper zone represent this ambiguity most clearly (Figure 136). The three crosses are supported by a plateau that terminates at its left in a large anthropomorphic outcropping in the shape of a human profile. Nearer to the mourners, another stony profile sprouts a tree from the top of its head, and the large outcropping that supports this second face is, in its entirety, a third rocky profile whose eye is formed by a bit of daylight seen through a vertical gap in the stone.

The 1982 exhibition *Zenale e Leonardo* addressed the presence of these anthropomorphic stones, though a definitive interpretation has proven elusive. For some of that exhibition's organizers, the heads in Zenale's *Lamentation* represented terrifying portents of the apocalyptic events being foretold by itinerant preachers traveling around

Lombardy at the turn of the sixteenth century.<sup>315</sup> An interpretation of these forms as indicative of a narrow, topical concern is debatable, however, since similar anthro- and zoomorphic forms appear in the rocky outcroppings that Zenale included in at least two other altarpieces. In the central panel of the Cantù polyptych, a face appears in the distant mountain behind the Virgin and Child. And a *sacra conversazione* (figure 137) now in the Denver Museum of Art takes place in a cave that assumes the form of a skull and contains human and animal forms that have resolved out of the cave's lithic matter, including the head and forelegs of a leonine creature situated opposite Saint Jerome's "actual" lion (figure 138). These three altarpieces exemplify Zenale's habit after 1500 of setting his religious scenes in rocky landscapes, an interest that the exhibition organizers associated with the influence of Leonardo, even as they recognized Zenale's anthropomorphic elements as entirely foreign to Leonardo's ideas about the depiction of nature.

Inserting anthropomorphic shapes into landscape scenes was not a common feature of Italian painting in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century, and Zenale's most likely point of reference for such figures would have been paintings by Andrea Mantegna made for the Mantuan court.<sup>316</sup> The cloud-figures appearing in Mantegna's Vienna *Saint Sebastian* and his *Pallas and the Vices* (figure 139), as well as the latter painting's tree-man, are among the best known examples of anthropomorphized nature produced in North Italy during the Renaissance. In Mantegna's pictures for Isabella

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<sup>315</sup> Mauro Natale, "I volti della natura," in *Zenale e Leonardo. Tradizione e rinnovamento della pittura lombarda*. (Milan: Electa, 1982), 262-64.

<sup>316</sup> Natale, 262-63, mentions several works, including Mantegna's *fabulae*, as possible precedents for Zenale's anthropomorphic inclusions. None of these is nearly as relevant to Lombard painting around 1500 or to Zenale's specific interest in metaphors of artistic creation as Mantegna's example.



d'Este's *studiolo*, the natural world exists as a realm where the products of nature and the products of human invention at times become indistinguishable. This is especially evident in the geologic structures that provide the settings for *Pallas and the Vices* and *Mars and Venus*. In the former, a mountainside, partly obscured by a foliate arcade, has formed individual voussoirs around the arched opening of a cave, while in the *Mars and Venus*, Mount Helicon, the mythic preserve of poetic inspiration, has grown a triumphal arch that serves as both a stage and a memorial to the union of the two Olympian deities. These paintings propose a fundamental connection between artifice—specifically the creation of literary and pictorial fictions (*fabulae*)—and the creative forces of nature, deriving ultimately from the potency of the Judeo-Christian God or the Greco-Roman divinities.<sup>317</sup>

Zenale's anthropomorphic figures appear in altarpieces depicting the Virgin and Christ, and undoubtedly they were interpreted by their early viewers in ways very different from Mantegna's pictures of naturally occurring *artificialia* for the Gonzaga court. Even so, Zenale's outcroppings embody a conjoining of nature and artifice through the painter's efforts, and this is nowhere more evident than in the stone formation that occupies the foreground of his *Lamentation* at San Giovanni Evangelista (figure 140). The only fully-visible side of this layered formation is a nearly abstract composition of brown paint that appears to reside exactly at the picture plane. The top of the stone, however, takes the shape of an acutely foreshortened feline head seen in left profile. This is the most dramatic *scorto* in any of Zenale's known paintings, and once recognized, it

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<sup>317</sup> Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, explores these connections at length; see especially, 132-38 and 154.

offers itself to a range of interpretation, from the iconographic to the toponymic.<sup>318</sup>

Whatever symbolic relationships Zenale might have intended to hold between the stone's form and the narrative moment portrayed above, the stone remains, at least, an assertive passage of artistic skill that binds the recognition of nature's image-making capacity to the recognition of Zenale's artistic skill in foreshortening the stone. The outcropping suggests an identity between the generative force of nature that pulses through the *Lamentation*'s rocky environment and the artist's ability to generate a figure pictorially.

In the eyes of his North Italian contemporaries, Zenale was a confirmed expert of linear perspective. Not only had he authored a now-lost treatise on the subject, but Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo considered him one of the great masters of foreshortening.<sup>319</sup> Praising Zenale together with Mantegna, Lomazzo commended these two specifically for their ability to portray figures as if seen from below, a skill on full display in Zenale's foreground outcropping and comparable in its extreme viewing angle to Mantegna's own *Dead Christ* seen from the vantage of the cadaver's pierced feet.

When, after a hiatus of about three decades, Moretto agreed to return to the subject of the dead Christ, he turned to Zenale's altarpiece in order to make a counter-statement about the applicability of generative artifice to the representation of Christ's active dissolution. He would leave underdeveloped the foreshortening needed to resolve Christ's pose visually, and the stone slab, with its shadowy comment on Christ's unmaking, would displace Zenale's blatantly manufactured outcropping in the

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<sup>318</sup> *Zenale e Leonardo*, 179. One explanation for the stony heads in Zenale's *Lamentation* has suggested that, collectively, they label the site of Christ's death: Golgotha, the place of the skull. The feline head, as in the Denver altarpiece, could function similarly with regard to Christ, whose many epithets include Lion of Judah.

<sup>319</sup> Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato della pittura, scoltura et architettura* (Milan, 1585), 274-75.

altarpiece's foreground. It is not likely a coincidence that the years separating Moretto's depiction of Hippolytus's foreshortened left hand from the *Entombment* also witnessed a new critical awareness around the inclusion of figures with contours so complex that they forced a viewer to recognize their maker's skill.<sup>320</sup> If *scorti* had once been a potential analogy for bodily dissolution, by the middle of the century, they could just as easily be taken for the opposite, a quickening into being. In the wake of the critical responses engendered by Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, the conspicuously artful contours that circumscribed extravagantly posed figures (*scorti* prominent among them) came under increasing suspicion for their ability to reify the manufactured bodies they delimited and to turn the beholder's thoughts overmuch to the painter's creative act.

### **The Enclosed Figure and its Alternative**

In the years leading up to the *Entombment*, Moretto had been paying close attention to Michelangelo's figures, especially to the ways their contours defined their poses and conveyed a sense of the forces contained within their bodies. We have already observed that, in the early 1540s, Moretto was adapting the aggressive interactions of Michelangelo's master-subject pairings for his *Elijah and the Angel* (figure 84) in San Giovanni Evangelista. A few years later, around 1550, Moretto's organ shutters for the Brescian church of San Pietro in Oliveto had featured several references to figures and themes found in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescos.<sup>321</sup> In their closed position, the

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<sup>320</sup> Witness Paolo Pino's admonishment that artists "...include at least one figure that is all twisted, mysterious, and difficult, so that from it you may be seen to be a painter of worth by whoever understands the art's perfection." Mary Pardo, "Paolo Pino's 'Dialogo di Pittura': A Translation with Commentary," Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Pittsburgh, 1984, 335.

<sup>321</sup> Gabriele Neher, "Moretto and the Congregation of S. Giorgio in Alga 1540-1550: fashioning a visual identity of a religious congregation," in *Fashioning Visual Identities in Renaissance Art*, ed. Mary Rogers

shutters portray Saints Peter and Paul seated on a low parapet, twisting rearward to support a miniature church that seems to have descended into view from behind an open curtain (figure 141). Neither saint is an exact quotation of any single Sistine figure, but both saints' poses resemble the straining bodies of the ceiling's *ignudi*. The positions of their legs and torsos are comparable, for example, to the two nudes who flank the right edge of the *Creation of Eve* (figure 142). The shutters' interior scenes depict the story of Simon Magus, a conjurer of spirits whose unholy schemes Peter and Paul exposed by calling on God to chase away the demons that transported Simon and permitted him to appear to fly under his own power (figure 143). Here the reference to Michelangelo's art is strongest. Not only does the image of Simon carried by demons recall the *Last Judgment*'s many figures of damned souls dragged away by evil spirits, but the figures of Peter and Paul restage Michelangelo's powerfully circumscribed figures of God and Eve, again from the Sistine *Creation of Eve* (figure 145).

The images of Simon Magus are especially interesting for a consideration of Moretto's effacement of his own pictorial skill. In the *Flight*, the demons that control Simon's body have carried him so high that the beholder only sees Simon's feet and lower legs. Given Moretto's attention in the *Entombment* to the transitive nature of *facere*, it is tempting to wonder whether he felt that painting Simon's body would too closely align his making of the figure with the actions of these demonic forces currently operating Simon's form. In the *Fall* (figure 144), Moretto depicted Simon's entire body, but he rendered the magician's figure as an amorphous silhouette bounded by a contour

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(Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 131-48, has discussed these organ shutters in the context of the patrons' interest in denouncing heresy and in aligning themselves with Rome and the papacy.

line that describes Simon's billowing clothing more than the shape of a recognizable human figure. If Simon's demonically-possessed body is nearly unpicturable, then Moretto shows his body, abandoned by its facilitating spirits, to have lost its structure. And this loosening of the figure's integral bonds foreshadows Simon's ruinous end; the apocryphal narrative relates that Simon's collision with the earth broke his body into four pieces.<sup>322</sup> Whereas the apostles' strong Michelangelesque contours provide a ready container for the powerful working of God's spirit, the fractured and confusing outline of the falling Simon conveys the evacuation of the spirits that motivated his body. Moretto's contours here communicate the continence or incontinence of bodies. And we have already seen Moretto exploring this theme in the emanating physicality of Christ's passionate body in the contemporaneous image of *Christ in Passion with an Angel*, where the perforations of Christ's exterior have allowed his body to spread throughout the image and begin to displace the painter's work.

In a letter to Michelangelo published in 1538, Pietro Aretino had compared the Florentine to the ancient Parrhasius, whom Pliny the Elder had extolled for his incomparable mastery of the contour line.<sup>323</sup> The comparison was an erudite tribute to the multitude of variously posed figures that Michelangelo had painted on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, but Aretino's basic claim was hardly new. It was already widely acknowledged

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<sup>322</sup> The story of Simon Magus's flight and fall comes from the apocryphal book of "The Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul"; for an English translation, see A. Cleveland Coxe, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, v. 8: *The Twelve Patriarchs, Excerpts and Epistles, The Clementina, Apocrypha, Decretals, Memoirs of Edessa and Syriac Documents, Remains of the First Ages*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886), 477-85, esp. 484.

<sup>323</sup> *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, v. 1, 64-67. The letter mentions Parrhasius by name, but Aretino's comparison of Michelangelo to the ancient painter appears most precisely in his adulation of Michelangelo's contour lines, words that Aretino closely modelled on Pliny's praise for the contours of Parrhasius's figures. On the Plinian passage in relation to circumscription in Central Italian painting around 1500, see Cole, *Leonardo, Michelangelo, and the Art of the Figure*, 38.

that Michelangelo's art consisted in creating human figures, as his inimitably skillful contour lines defined those bodies' spatial boundaries. This association of Michelangelo's art with the making of human forms was reaffirmed and further propagated following the 1541 debut of the *Last Judgment*, with its scores of uniquely posed bodies including many foreshortened (*scorti*) and twisted (*sforzati*) figures (figure 146). An agent of the Gonzaga in Rome reported within weeks of the unveiling that Michelangelo had "put all his effort (*sforzo*) into making (*fare*) extraordinary figures in a variety of poses."<sup>324</sup> Even among non-artists, Michelangelo's bent, tumbling, and powerfully torqued bodies clearly registered his own creative act of forming and delimiting figures.

But perhaps they registered little else. Beginning with Aretino's famously scathing letter of 1545 (published 1550) and for many years afterward, published criticism of the fresco would question whether Michelangelo's desire to express his capacity to generate and manipulate the human form had overwhelmed his commitment to a true and accurate depiction of sacred history.<sup>325</sup> Moretto certainly could have known Aretino's letter censuring Michelangelo's licentious artfulness, but Moretto's decision to

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<sup>324</sup> This letter of November 19, 1541, from Nicolo Sernini to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga is transcribed in André Chastel, *Chronique de la peinture italienne à la Renaissance* (Fribourg: Office du Livre, 1983), 274: "...vedro d'havere almeno uno schizzo acciò che V. S. Ill. possa vedere il compartimento che [Michelangelo] ha fatto, che questo non credo la habbia in tutto a sodisfare, et che messer Julio si sarebbe fatto più honore, et sarà opera, quando la vedrà, assai diversa di quello che essa si pensa, perchè si conosce che tutto il suo [Michelangelo's] sforzo ha messo in fare figure bizarre et in atti diversi..."

<sup>325</sup> The theme appeared in Aretino's letter to Michelangelo of November 1545 (published in 1550 as a letter of July 1547 to Alessandro Corvino) and was taken up repeatedly in Lodovico Dolce's *L'Aretino* of 1557, Gilio's *Dialogo degli errori...de' pittori circa l'istorie* of 1564, and Raffaello Borghini's *Il Riposo* of 1584, among other works of late sixteenth-century art criticism. On the theory of pictorial genres deployed by Gilio to substantiate his complaints about Michelangelo's inappropriate display of artifice in the *Last Judgment*, see Charles Dempsey's classic essay, "Mythic Inventions in Counter-Reformation Painting," in P. A. Ramsey, ed., *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1982), 55-75.

convey Christ's self-unmaking through underdeveloped foreshortening need not be taken as a direct reaction to Aretino's published remarks. By the time Moretto began work on the *Entombment*, the controversial poses and foreshortenings that divided the critical response to Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* had already become the focus of the most daring religious images then being produced in the Veneto.

Completed in 1548 for the Scuola Grande di San Marco in Venice, Tintoretto's *Miracle of the Slave*, had recently propelled that artist to the first rank of Venetian painting (figure 147). The scene of near-martyrdom features Saint Mark descending from above to aid a Christian slave lying on the ground beneath his tormentors. Filled with powerfully posed figures, the painting situates Mark opposite the slave, forming a pair of highly foreshortened bodies placed one above the other in an inverted head-to-toe arrangement. Immediately following its unveiling, Aretino praised Tintoretto's canvas, singling out the nude figure of the persecuted slave for special attention. Acknowledging the wide acclaim the painting had received from the Venetian public, the writer noted that

there is no man so little instructed in the virtue of *disegno* that he would not marvel at the relief of the figure who, quite naked on the ground, lies open to the cruelties of his martyrdom. The colors are flesh, indeed, the contours rounded and the body so lifelike... that the spectacle seems rather real than simulated.<sup>326</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> This translation follows, with minor clarifications, that of Anna Laura Lepschy, *Tintoretto Observed: A documentary survey of the critical reactions from the 16th to the 20th century* (Ravenna: Longo, 1983), 16-7. For Aretino's Italian, see *Lettere sull'arte di Pietro Aretino*, v. 2, ed. Camesasca, 204-05. The letter reads: "A Iacopo [Robusti], Tintore [Tintoretto],/ Da che la voce de la publica laude conferma con quella propria da me datavi nel gran quadro de l'istoria dedicata in la scola di San Marco, mi rallegro non meno con il mio giudizio, che sa tanto inanzi, ch'io mi facci con la vostra arte, che passa sì oltra. E, sì come non è naso, per infreddato che sia, che non senta in qualche parte in fumo de lo incenso, così non è uomo sì poco instrutto ne la virtù del disegno che non si stupisca nel rilievo de la figura che, tutta ignuda, giuso in terra, è offerta a le crudeltà del martiro. I suoi colori son carne, il suo lineamento ritondo, e il suo corpo vivo, tal che vi giuro, per il bene ch'io vi voglio, che le cere, l'arie e le viste de le turbe, che la circondano, sono tanto simili agli effetti ch'esse fanno in tale opera, che lo spettacolo pare più tosto vero che finto. Ma non insuperbite, se bene è così, ché ciò sarebbe un non voler salire in maggior grado di perfezione. E beato il nome vostro, se reduceste la prestezza del fatto in la pazienza del fare. Benché a poco a poco a ciò

As the spectators within the scene marvel at the slave's imperviousness to the weapons used against him, the beholder of the painting, Aretino assures Tintoretto, will marvel at the slave's body for its stupefying artifice.

Aretino's description of Tintoretto's slave, with its masterful *disegno* and lifelike coloring, articulated an ideal of painting gaining currency among artistic tastemakers in the 1540s: a painter who could combine Michelangelo's draftsmanship with Titian's sensibility for color and paint handling could not be bested. And in the very year that Tintoretto unveiled his painting and Aretino penned his letter praising it, Paolo Pino had stated in his *Dialogue on Painting* that the painter who could combine these two perfections would indeed be "the god of painting."<sup>327</sup> It is worthwhile, then, to recognize that Moretto appears to have actively avoided this ideal synthesis. While they each depict a martyr's body, Moretto's dead Christ differs from Aretino's description of Tintoretto's slave in nearly every respect, from the skillful contours to the colors of living flesh to the position of the body in space. However, it may have been another image, directly engaging both Tintoretto's canvas and Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, which spurred Moretto to render his dead Christ in opposition to those tightly contoured, foreshortened bodies that showed off their design.

In March of 1553, a year and a half before Moretto dated the *Entombment*, Veronese completed his *Temptation of Saint Anthony* for Mantua Cathedral (figure

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provederanno gli anni; conciosia ch'essi, e non altri, sono bastanti a raffrenare il corso de la trascuratezza, di che tanto si prevale la gioventù volonterosa e veloce. / Di aprile, in Vinezia, 1548."

<sup>327</sup> "...e se Tiziano e Michiel Angelo fussero un corpo solo, over al disegno di Michiel Angelo aggiuntovi il colore di Tiziano, se gli potrebbe dir lo dio della pittura." Pino's claim is quoted in Frederick Ilchman and Edward Saywell, "Michelangelo and Tintoretto: *Disegno* and Drawing," in Miguel Falomir, ed., *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 385-93, which also provides an analysis of Tintoretto's interest in and emulation of Michelangelo's sculptural and pictorial models.



148).<sup>328</sup> While Moretto likely would have known of Tintoretto's achievement, especially through Aretino's published letter, Veronese's altarpiece brought Michelangelo's extreme *scorti* very close to Brescia, and it did so in the form of a liturgical image. The *Temptation* was one of four altarpieces for the cathedral that Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga had commissioned simultaneously from four painters based in Verona.<sup>329</sup> At the time of the commission, Veronese was in the process of moving from Verona to Venice, and the *Temptation*'s extreme foreshortening and the inverted positions of Saint Anthony and his demonic tormenter confirm that Tintoretto's *Miracle of the Slave* was very much on Veronese's mind at this moment of professional transition. Besides the visual charge of its *scorti*, the *Temptation* is also the most violent of the four images delivered to Cardinal Gonzaga. The scene's ferocity is largely due to the male demon's taut pose, which was based on the figure of an angel in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* (figure 149) and may well have been incorporated by Veronese at Gonzaga's urging.<sup>330</sup>

Outside Rome, no city was more active than Mantua in promoting the *Last Judgment* in the years immediately after the fresco's completion. Cardinal Gonzaga had been the first patron to commission a painted copy of the fresco, though the painting by Marcello Venusti failed to materialize.<sup>331</sup> And a few years later, the Mantuan Giorgio

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<sup>328</sup> For bibliography on the painting, now in the Musée du Beaux-Arts, Caen, see Terisio Pignatti and Filippo Pedrocchi, *Veronese*, v. 1 (Milan: Electa, 1995), 61-62. The letter confirming the completion of the four altarpieces commissioned by Cardinal Gonzaga is dated March 11, 1553. It is transcribed in Pignatti and Pedrocchi, *Veronese*, v. 2, 553, doc. 5.

<sup>329</sup> For a discussion of the commission, see Geraldine A. Wojno Kiefer, "Mid-Sixteenth Century Veronese Painting in the Duomo of Mantua," *Antichità viva*, no. 2 (1987): 34-43.

<sup>330</sup> Richard Cocke, *Paolo Veronese: Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform* (Burlington and Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 3-5, has characterized Veronese's *Temptation of Saint Anthony* as another principle example of the ideal combination of Michelangelo's *disegno* and Titian's *colore*.

<sup>331</sup> Bernadine Barnes, *Michelangelo in Print* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 99-100.

Ghisi would begin work on his multi-sheet engraving after the fresco.<sup>332</sup> Of particular relevance to Veronese's altarpiece, we also have an anecdote from Vasari telling of drawings that he made after Michelangelo's new fresco expressly for the Gonzaga court. Sometime before Giulio Romano's death in 1545, Vasari gave Cardinal Gonzaga's secretary "three sheets containing the Seven Mortal Sins, copied from that Last Judgment of Michelangelo..." to carry to Giulio in Mantua.<sup>333</sup> The gift was especially welcome, Vasari confirms, "because [Giulio] had at that time to paint a chapel in the palace for the Cardinal, and they served to inspire him to greater things than those that he had in mind." Giulio would not see that project to completion, but Veronese's painting suggests that Cardinal Gonzaga had not given up on finding a place for Michelangelo's figures in the decoration of a Mantuan altar.

The "Seven Mortal Sins" that Vasari mentions correspond to a group of battling figures at the lower right of the *Last Judgment* (Figure 149). Already in the 1550 edition of the *Lives*, Vasari had explained that this band of devils, "assailing and pulling down to Hell the souls that fly toward Heaven," are all rendered "with exceedingly beautiful poses and most admirable foreshortenings (*con attitudini bellissime e scorti molti mirabili*)."<sup>334</sup> It is not known precisely which figures Vasari's drawings depicted, but Veronese's altarpiece showed that not only the contours of the devils but also those of the fair-haired

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 103-4.

<sup>333</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, vol. 2, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 138.

<sup>334</sup> Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, vol. 6, eds. Bettarini and Barocchi (Florence: Sansoni, 1971), 72 (Torrentiniana): "...non senza bellissima considerazione, si veggono i sette Peccati mortali da una banda combattere in forma di Diavoli e tirar giù a lo inferno l'anime che volano al cielo, con attitudini bellissime e scorti molti mirabili."

angels could serve for the artfully wrought body of a demonic spirit.<sup>335</sup> In following Michelangelo's contours, Veronese found (or was provided) an expeditious means of conveying the airy body of a demon in the form a palpable, straining musculature poised to enact itself physically. Both Veronese's painted figure and that figure's action within its narrative are powerfully *factive*. No image near Brescia had so clearly translated the *difficoltà* and attendant self-reference of Michelangelo's contours into an altarpiece. And no altarpiece provides so clear an antithesis to Moretto's approach toward depicting Christ's willed dissolution.<sup>336</sup>

As Michelangelo's inventions continued to filter into North Italy in the 1540s and 1550s, the imitation of his figures and compositional motifs involved a calculation. Such imitation could signal an affiliation with his masterful draftsmanship of artfully posed figures. However, after the public criticism of the *Last Judgment*, the incorporation of those highly artificial bodies could also connote an indifference to or an ironic distance from the same picture's subject matter.<sup>337</sup> Moretto's late paintings register an ambivalence toward Michelangelo's work: his figure types facilitated Moretto's representation of strenuous action in the late organ shutters, but the Brescian's paintings rarely called for this type of assertive physical torsion. For Moretto, Michelangelesque

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<sup>335</sup> Scholars have attempted to connect the male demon to several earlier models, none of which compare with Veronese's painting nearly as closely as Michelangelo's militant angel does. For bibliography on the painting and a summary of the figural sources that previous scholars have suggested, see Pignatti and Pedroco, 61-62.

<sup>336</sup> Perhaps a year or two before Veronese completed his *Temptation*, Pellegrino Tibaldi had incorporated the same battling angel from Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* into his *Saint John Baptizing the Multitude and the Chaining of the Devil* for a side wall of the Poggi Chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna. Hansen, 141, has noted Tibaldi's imitation of Michelangelo's angel and discusses it in the context of the symbolic potential of imitated figures.

<sup>337</sup> On the range of critical registers that Michelangelo's art was subjected to by imitators during his lifetime, in North Italy and in Rome, see Hansen's excellent *In Michelangelo's Mirror*.

characteristics of contour and pose also functioned as markers of a type of excess that could lead to exclusion. In *Elijah and the Angel*, for instance, the strenuous poses of the two figures served, within the context of the sacrament chapel's program, to characterize a level of self-consciousness that was extrinsic to good religion and to the example embodied in Christ's actions portrayed on the opposite chapel wall. When he came to paint the *Entombment*, Moretto understood the powerful sense of manufacture bound up in the Michelangesque *scorto*. By under-performing that consummate feat of design, Moretto found a way to express the unforced nature of Christ's self-sacrifice.

At a moment when the demonstrably circumscribed and forcefully arranged figure was recognized as a hallmark of artistic mastery, Moretto's slackening figure was a renunciation of pictorial control over the dead Christ's form. The late paintings of Christ's Passion and death confirm Moretto's continuing effort to displace himself from the act of incarnating and controlling Christ's body. Doubts about the ability of human artifice to adequately and unobtrusively communicate divine truth had led to the aniconic altar decoration at Vicenza and Verona addressed at the beginning of this chapter, and Moretto's late images of Christ can be understood as a renegotiation of the painter's role in facilitating images for devotional and, especially, liturgical use. In the *Entombment*, Moretto's effacement of artistry constituted a poignant counterpart to Paul's statement on Christ's self-imposed humiliation. In the passage from Philippians referred to by Moretto's inscribed slab, Paul stated that Christ had "emptied himself" (*semetipsum exinanivit*) when he assumed the burden of human flesh and, ultimately, human death.

Moretto's Christ embodies a similarly willful evacuation of integral form, achieved through Moretto's emptying out of the figure's skilled manufacture.

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## Figures



Figure 1. Alessandro Moretto, *The Virgin Adoring the Christ Child*, 1520-25. Oil on canvas, Sant' Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo.



Figure 2. Moretto, *Moses before the Burning Bush*, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 3. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 1, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

Figure 4. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 2, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 5. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 3, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 6. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 4, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 7. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 5, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

Figure 8. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 6, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 9. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 7, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

Figure 10. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 8, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 11. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 9, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

Figure 12. Alessandro Moretto, prophet figure with inscription 10, ca. 1525. Fresco transferred to canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.





Figure 13. Nicolas Froment, *Virgin in the Burning Bush*, 1476. Panel, Cathedral of Saint Sauveur, Aix-en-Provence.

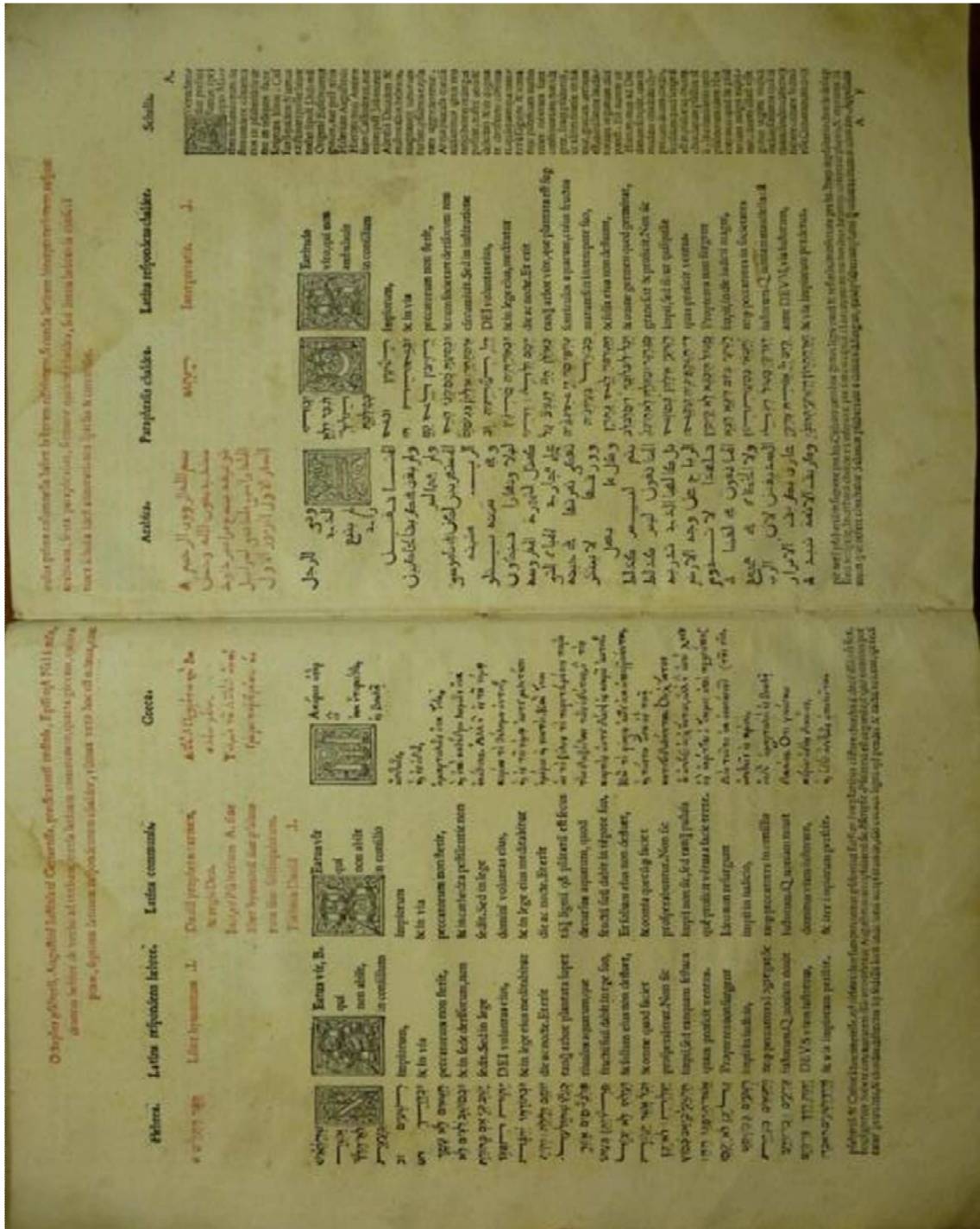


Figure 14. Agostino Giustiniani, opening of Psalm 1, *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, et Chaldaicum cum tribus latinis interpretationibus et glossis* (Genoa, 1516), sig. Aiiii<sup>v</sup>-Av<sup>r</sup>.

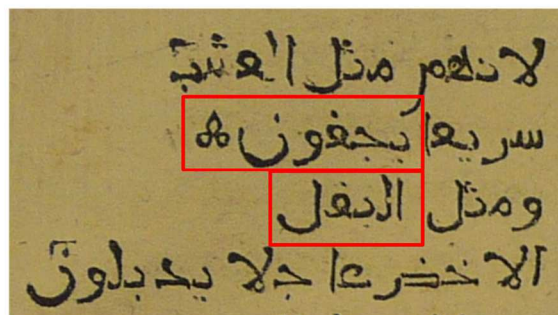
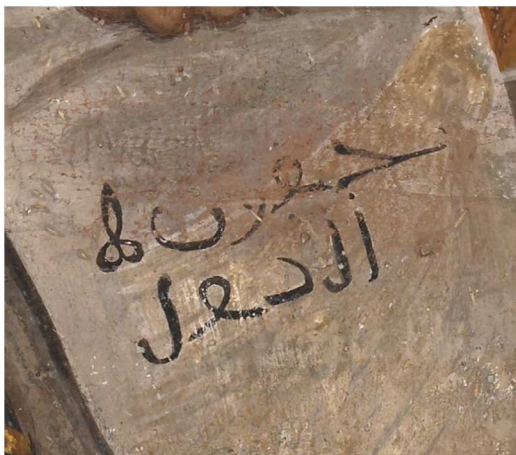


Figure 15. Detail of Figure 3.

Figure 16. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Fvi<sup>r</sup>.

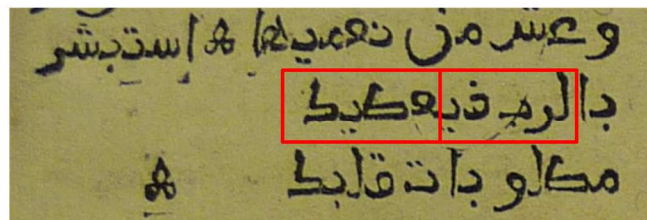
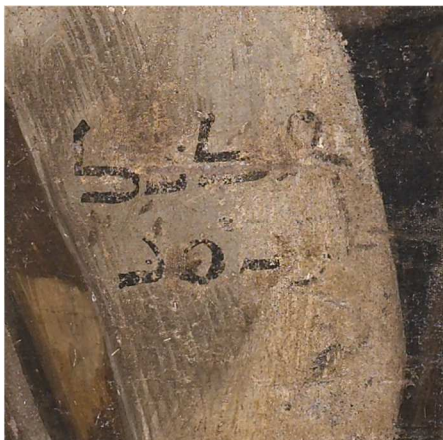


Figure 17. Detail of Figure 4.

Figure 18. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Fvi<sup>r</sup>.

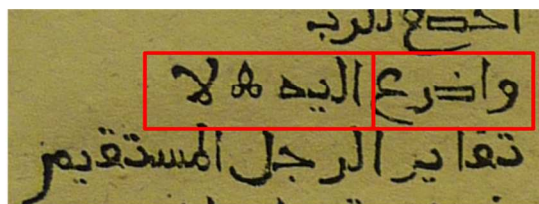
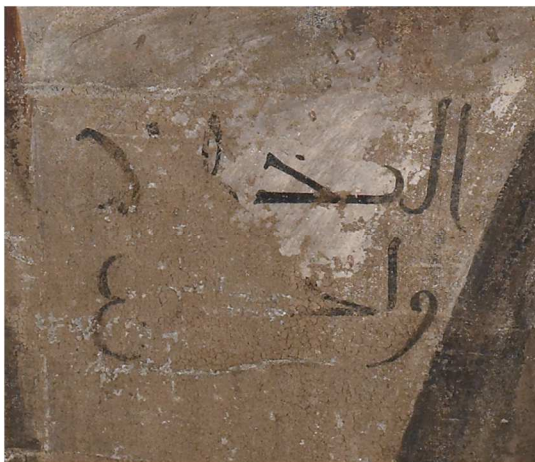


Figure 19. Detail of Figure 5.

Figure 20. Detail of Agostino Giustiniani, *Psalterium Hebraeum, Graecum, Arabicum, et Chaldaicum cum tribus latinis interpretationibus et glossis* (Genoa, 1516), sig. Fvi<sup>r</sup>.

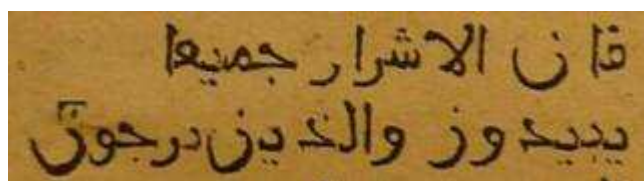


Figure 21. Detail of Figure 6.

Figure 22. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Fvi<sup>r</sup>.

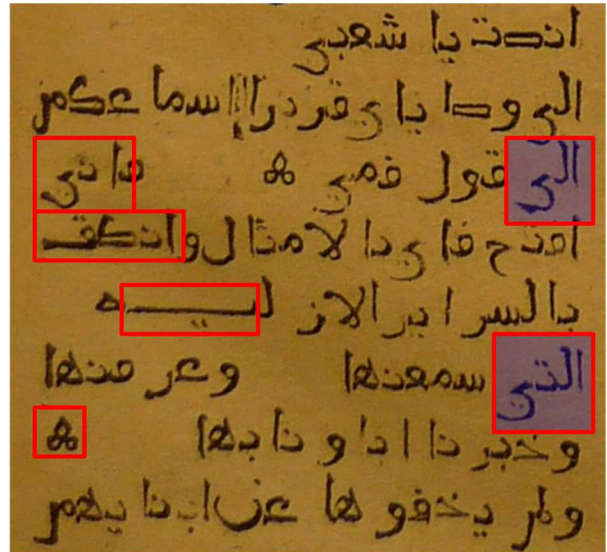


Figure 23. Detail of Figure 7.

Figure 24. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Nvii<sup>r</sup>.

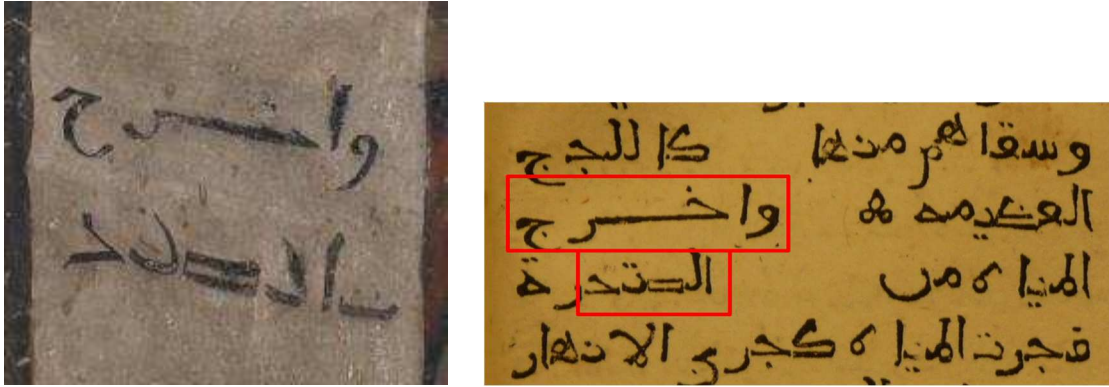


Figure 25. Detail of Figure 8.

Figure 26. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. O<sup>f</sup>.



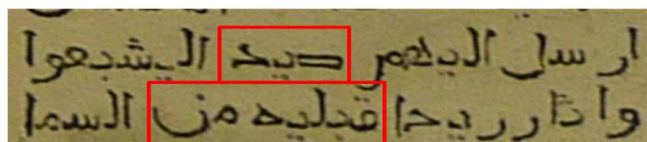


Figure 27. Detail of Figure 9.

Figure 28. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. O<sup>f</sup>.

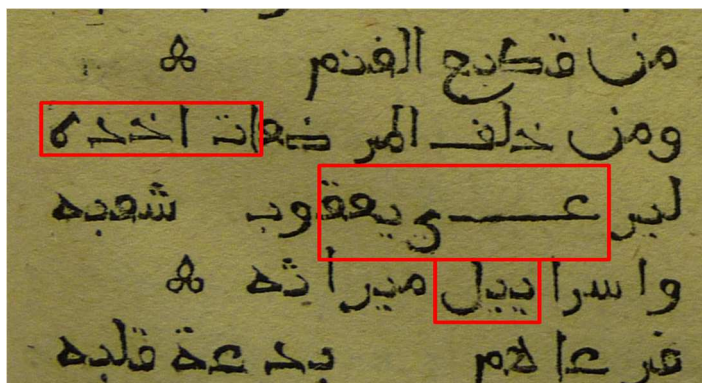
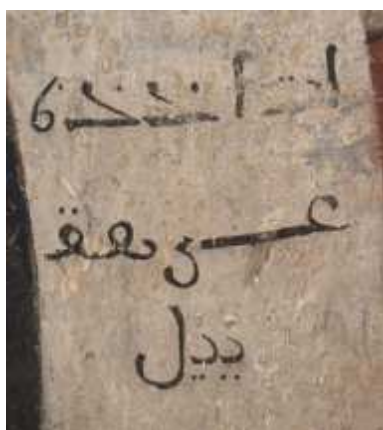
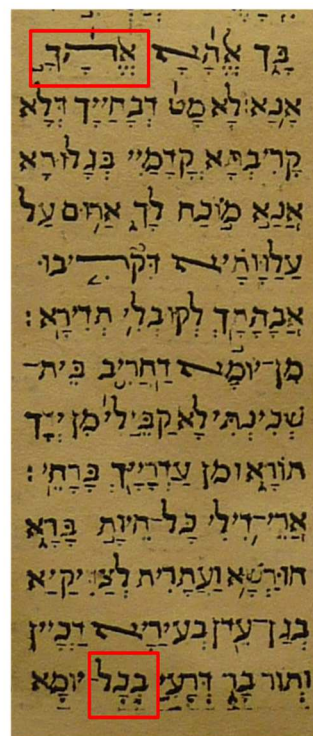
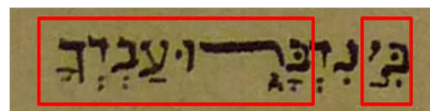


Figure 29. Detail of Figure 10.

Figure 30. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Oiiii<sup>r</sup>.



Clockwise from left:

Figure 31. Detail of figure 11.

Figure 32. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. X<sup>v</sup>.

Figure 33. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. I<sup>r</sup>.

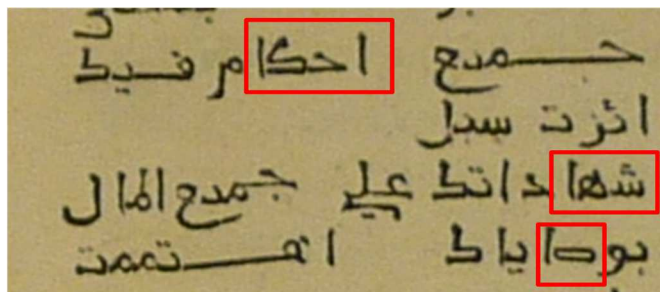


Figure 34. Detail of Figure 12.

Figure 35. Detail of Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, sig. Xii<sup>r</sup>.

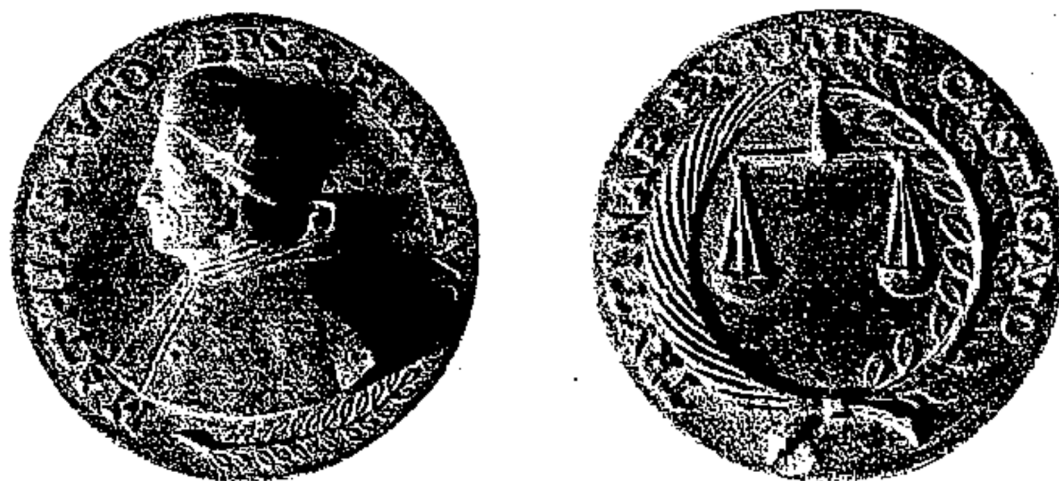


Figure 36. Anonymous, Portrait medal of Mattia Ugoni (obverse and reverse), 1504-30. Bronze, Musei civici d'Arte e Storia, Brescia.

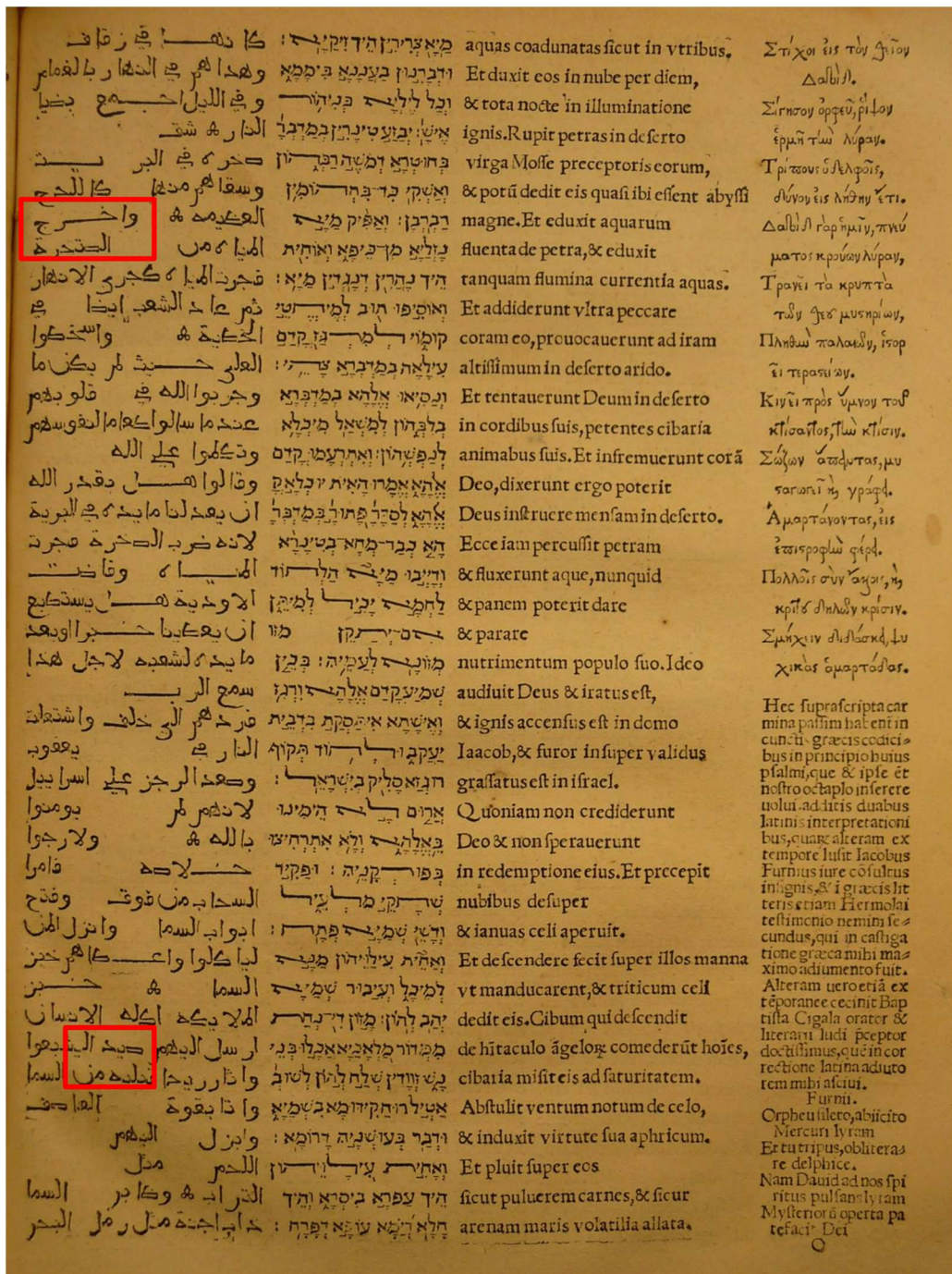


Figure 37. Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, from Psalm 77(78), sig. O<sup>r</sup>, with excerpted passages marked.

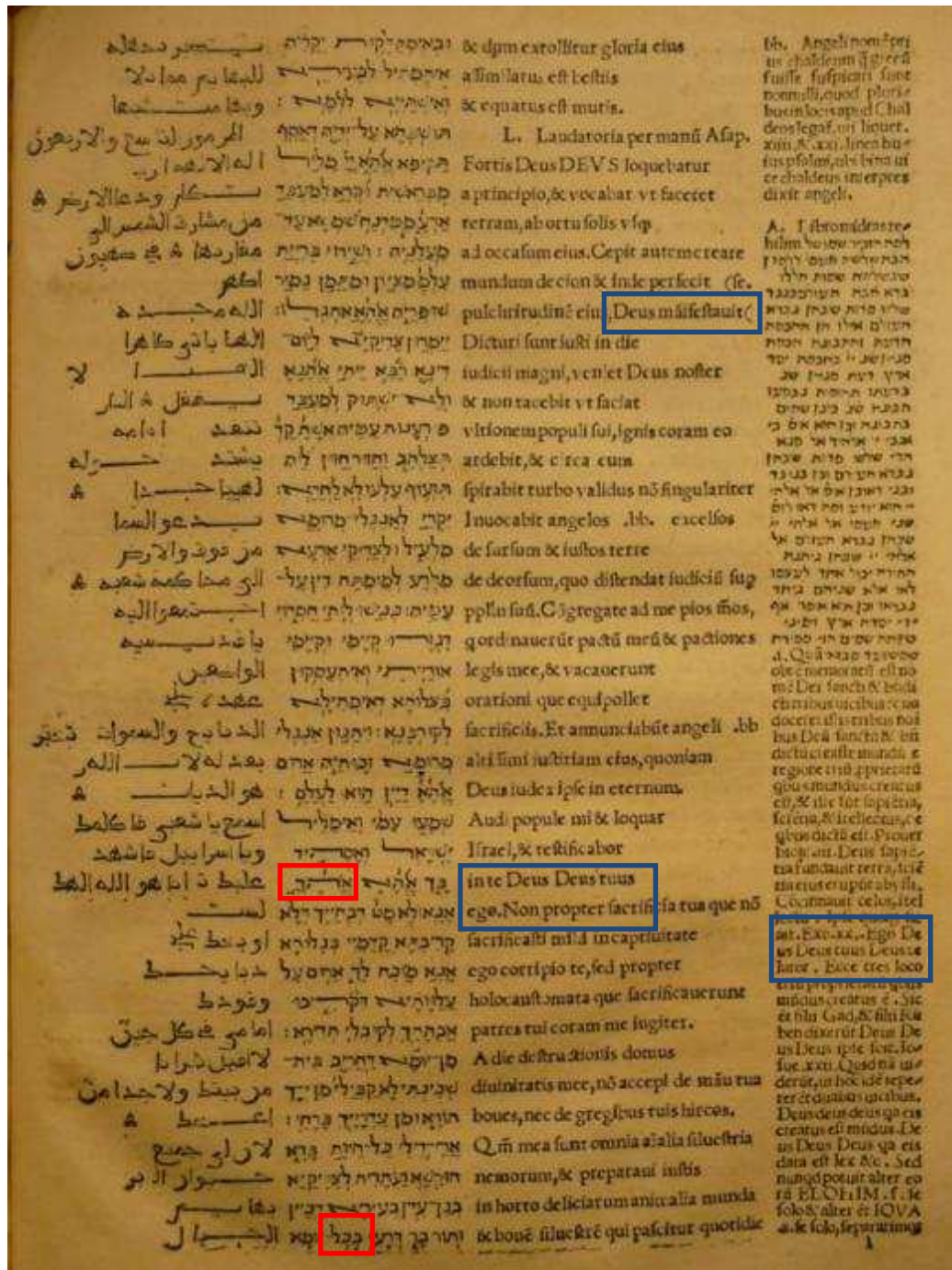


Figure 38. Giustiniani, *Psalterium*, opening of Psalm 49(50), sig. I<sup>r</sup>.

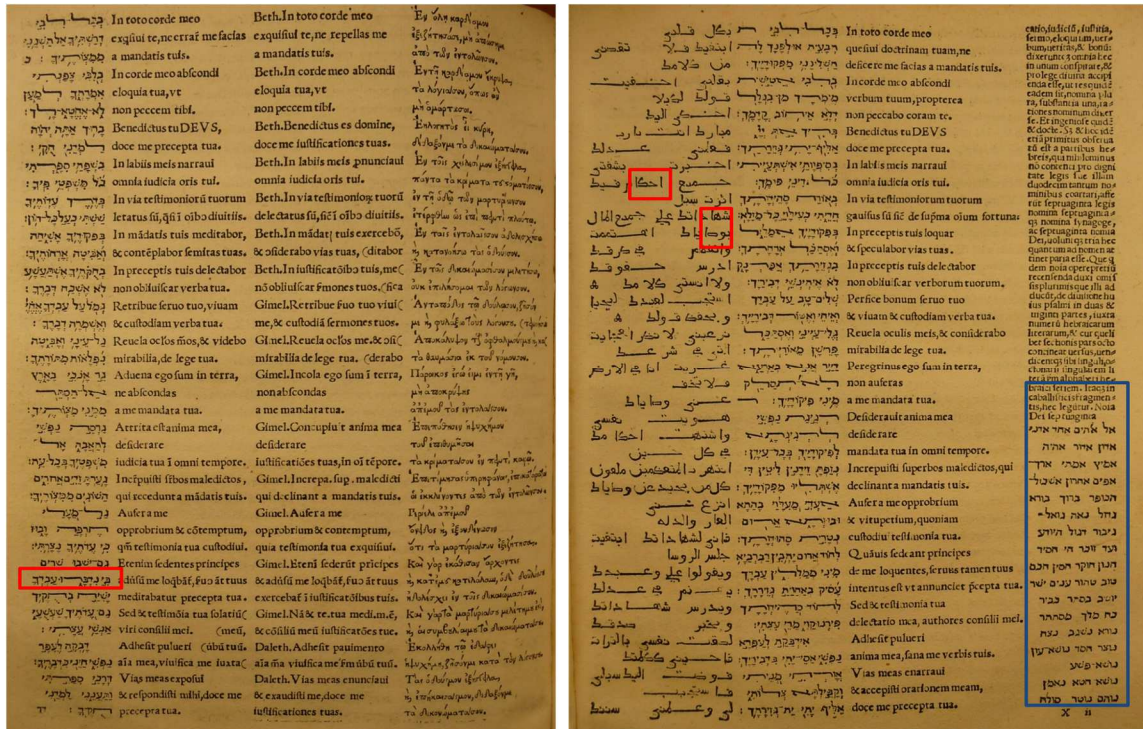


Figure 39. Gustiniani, *Psalterium*, from Psalm 118(119), sig. XV -Xii<sup>f</sup>.



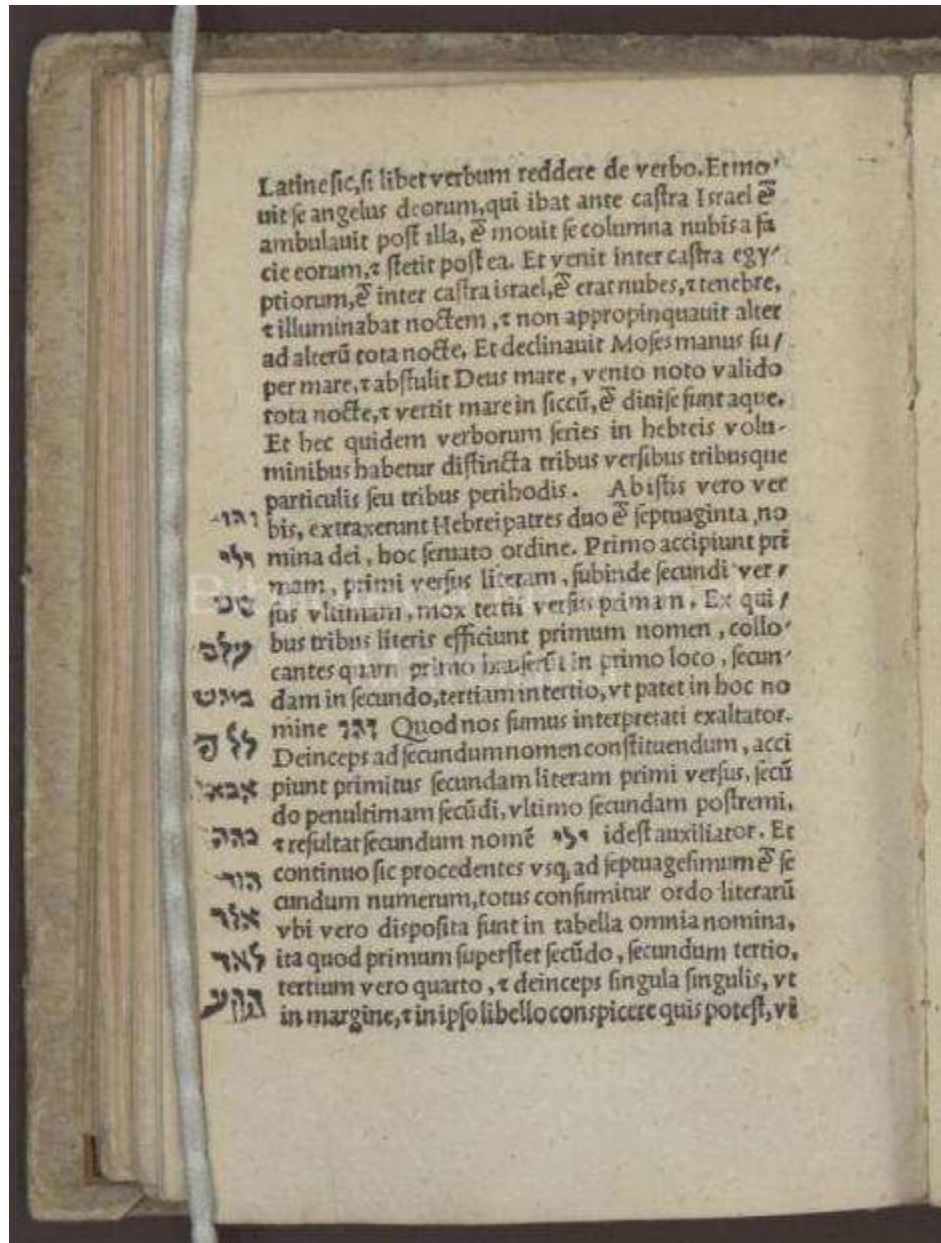


Figure 40. Giustiniani, *Precatio*, passage explaining the method of excerpting, with the forms of the first twelve names of God illustrated in the margin, sig. B<sup>v</sup>.



Figure 41. Parmigianino, *Portrait of Galeazzo Sanvitale, Count of Fontanellato*, ca. 1524. Oil on panel, Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples.



Figure 42. A Latin inscription from Gioanna's camerino intarsie.

Figure 43. A Greek anagrammatic inscription from Gioanna's camerino intarsie.

Figure 44. Gioanna's device from camerino intarsie.

Figure 45. Intarsia relief originally over doorway leading from Camera di San Paolo into the camerino.



Figure 46. Lorenzo Lotto (designed), coperto to *The Submersion of Pharaoh's Army in the Red Sea*, 1527.



Figure 47. Alessandro Moretto, *Last Supper*, 1524. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Clockwise from upper left:

Figure 48. Detail of Figure 47.

Figure 49. Moretto, detail of *Supper at Emmaus*, ca. 1526. Oil on canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

Figure 50. Moretto, detail of *Coronation of the Virgin*, ca. 1527. Oil on panel, SS. Nazaro and Celso, Brescia.

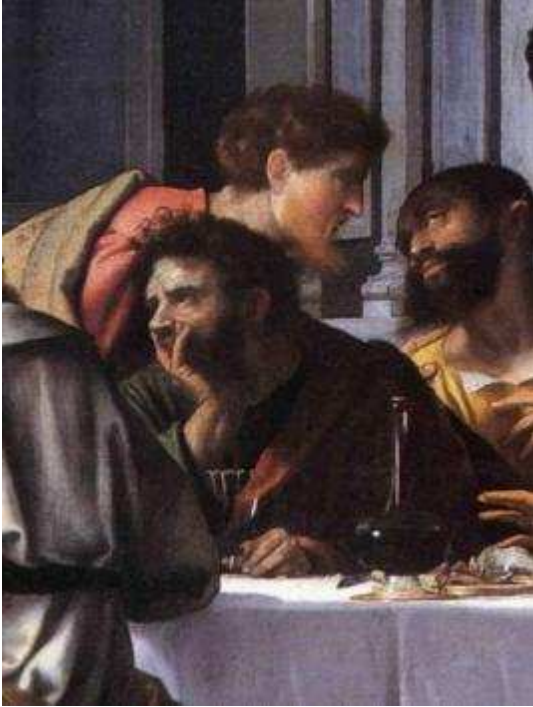


Figure 51. Detail of Figure 47.

Figure 52. Detail of Figure 47.



Figure 53. Alessandro Moretto, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1524-26. Oil on canvas, Duomo Vecchio (Santa Maria de Dom), Brescia.





Figure 54. Titian, *Resurrection* polyptych, 1522 (signed and dated). Oil on panel, SS. Nazaro e Celso, Brescia.



Figure 55. Moretto, *Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1530-32. Oil on panel transferred to canvas, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.

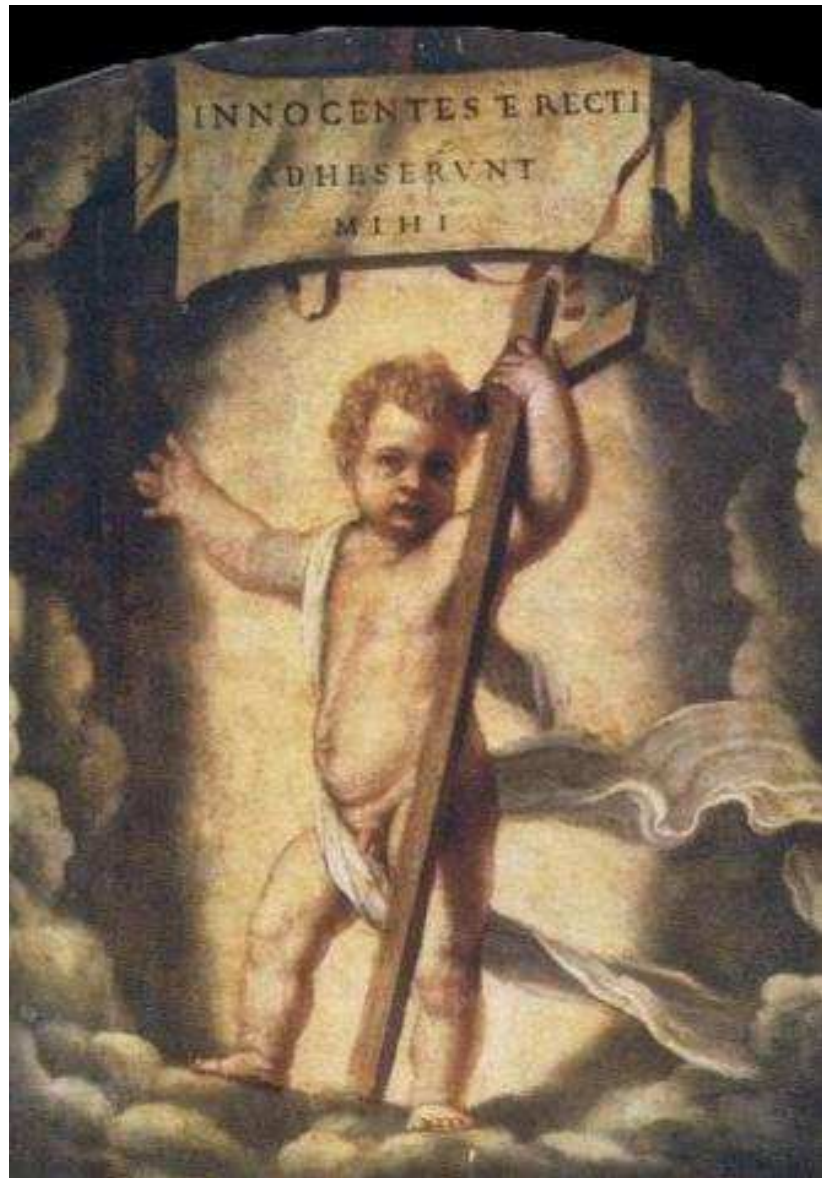


Figure 56. Detail of Figure 55.



Figure 57. Current view of the Piazza Grande (also known as Piazza della Loggia) looking to the east.



Figure 58. Damiano Zambelli, view of Piazza Grande, Brescia, ca. 1504-1512. Intarsia. Bergamo, choir of San Bartolomeo. Formerly Bergamo, S. Stefano e Domenico.

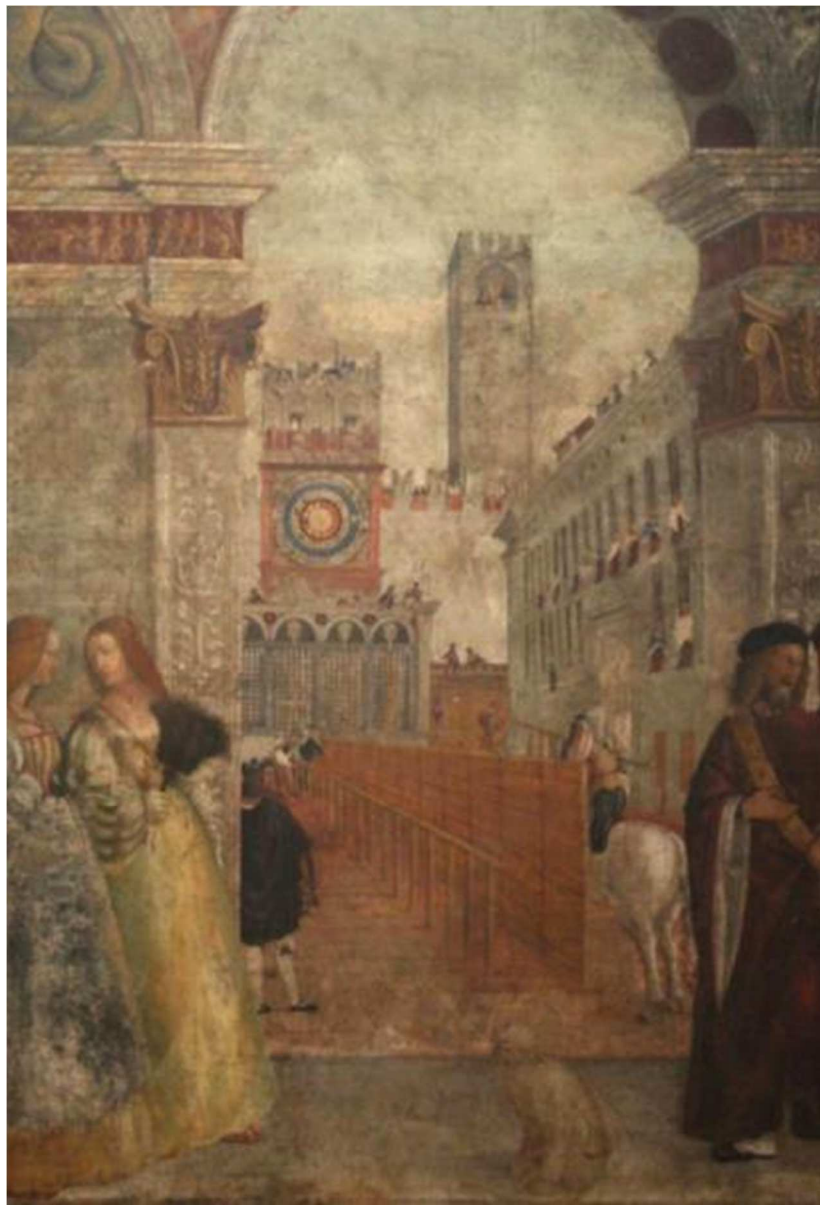


Figure 59. Floriano Ferramola, *A Tournament at Brescia*, ca. 1511. Fresco (detached), Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Formerly Palazzo Calini, Brescia.



Figure 60. Matteo di Giovanni, *Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1480s. Tempera on panel, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples.



Figure 61. Ludovico Mazzolino, *Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1520s. Oil on panel, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.





Figure 62. Marcantonio Raimondi, designed by Raphael, *Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1510-14. Engraving.

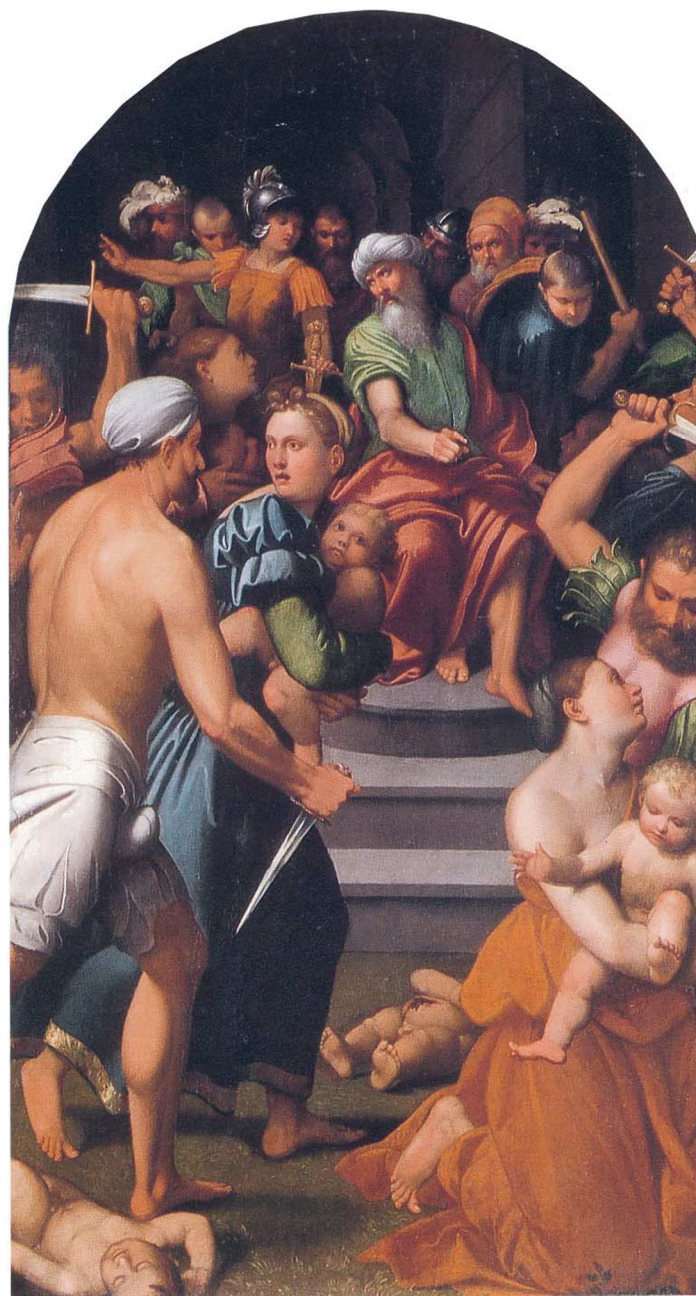


Figure 63. Callisto Piazza, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1529-1533. Oil on panel, transferred to canvas, Lodi Cathedral.



Figure 64. Gian Gerolamo Savoldo, *Magdalene*, ca. 1525-1540. Oil on canvas, National Gallery, London.



Figure 65. Antonio Rizzo, Tron Tomb, ca. 1476. Santa Maria dei Frari, Venice.

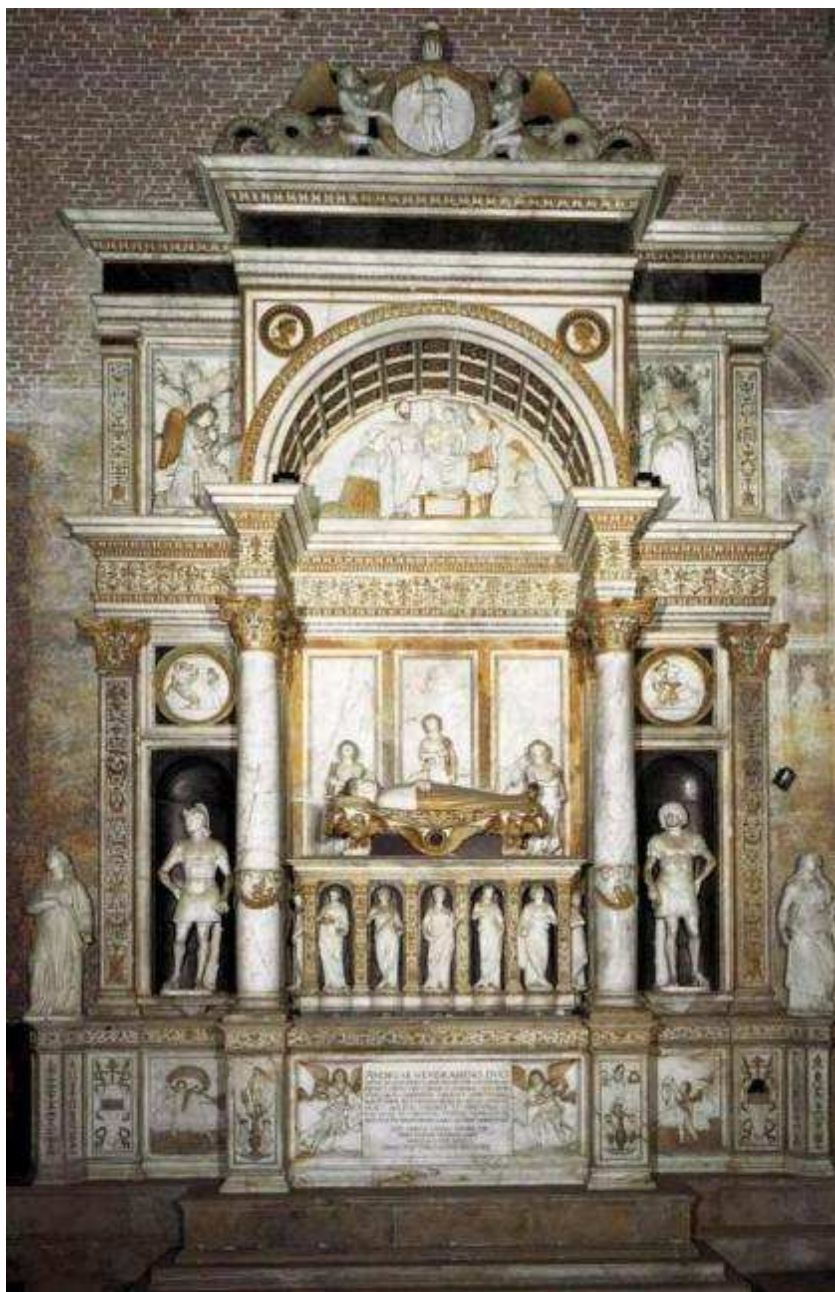


Figure 66. Tullio Lombardo, Vendramin Tomb, ca. 1490-1505. SS. Giovanni e Paolo (originally Santa Maria della Vita), Venice.

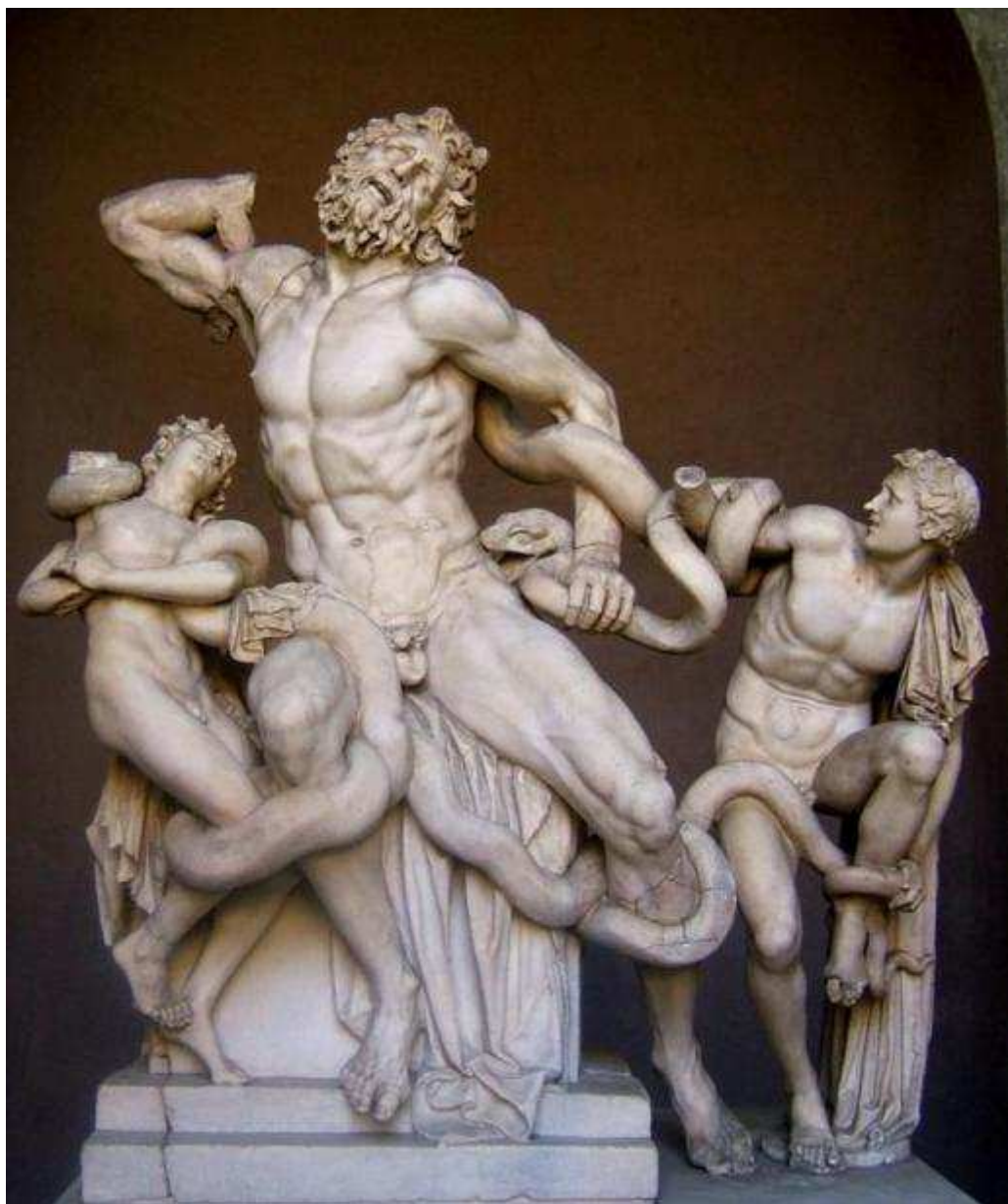


Figure 67. Hagesandros, Polydorus, and Athenodorus of Rhodes, *Laocoön*, Hellenistic Roman period. Musei Vaticani, Vatican City.



Figure 68. Michelangelo, *Rebellious Slave*, ca. 1516. Marble, Louvre Museum, Paris.

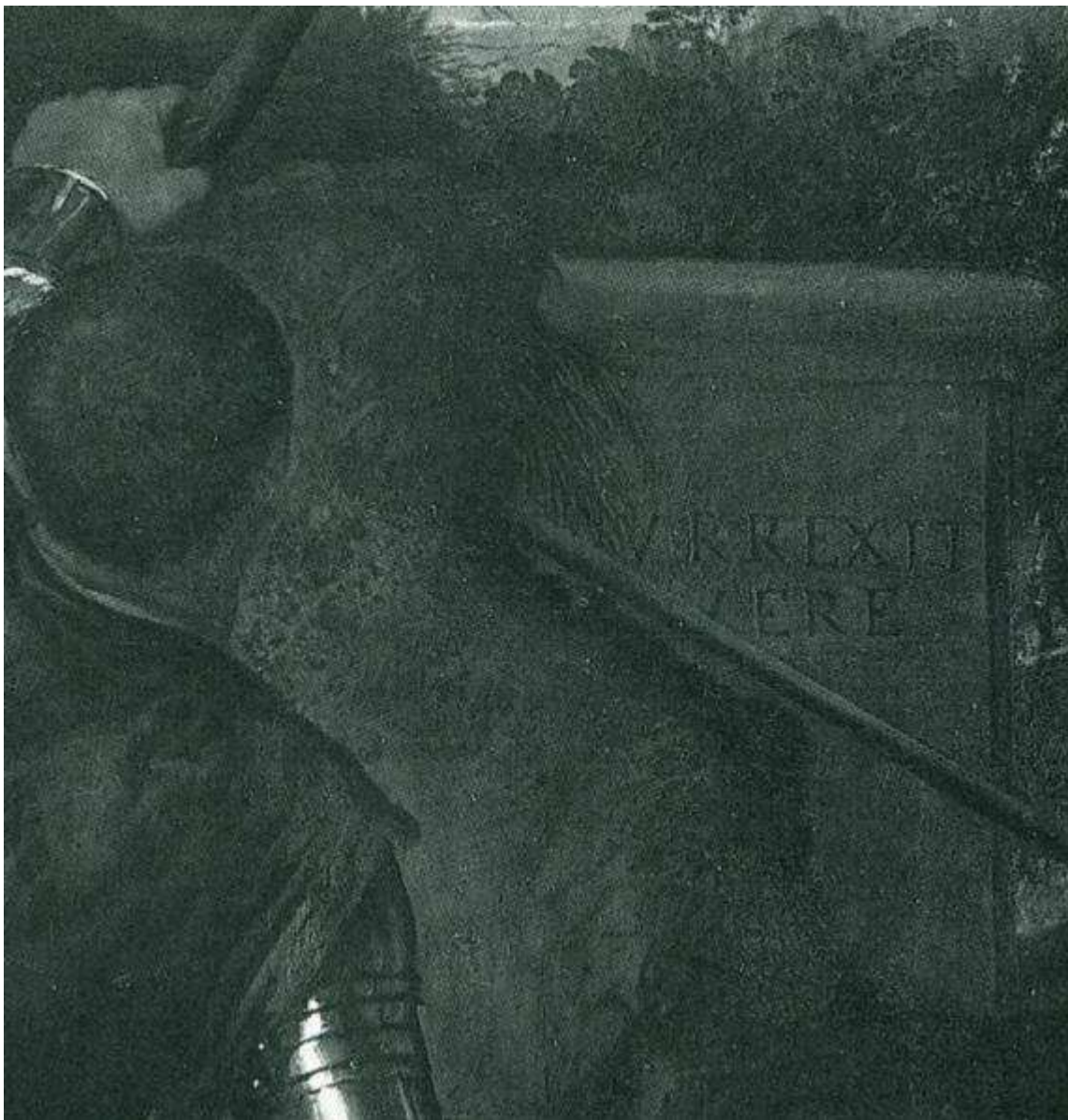


Figure 69. Detail of figure 54, before over-cleaning in the 1930s.





Figure 70. Girolamo Romanino, *Resurrection*, ca. 1526. Oil on panel. Capriolo (Brescia), parochial church.



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Figure 71. Lorenzo Lotto, Pontेरanica polyptych, 1522 (signed and dated). Oil on panel, church of Saints Alexander and Vincent Martyr, Pontेरanica (Bergamo).



Figure 72. Moretto, *Eucharistic Christ with Moses and Salomon*, 1541-42. Oil on canvas, SS. Nazaro e Celso, Brescia.



Figure 73. Lorenzo Lotto, wall of oratory, 1524. Fresco, Oratorio Suardi, Trescore (Bergamo).

Figure 74. Detail of figure 73.

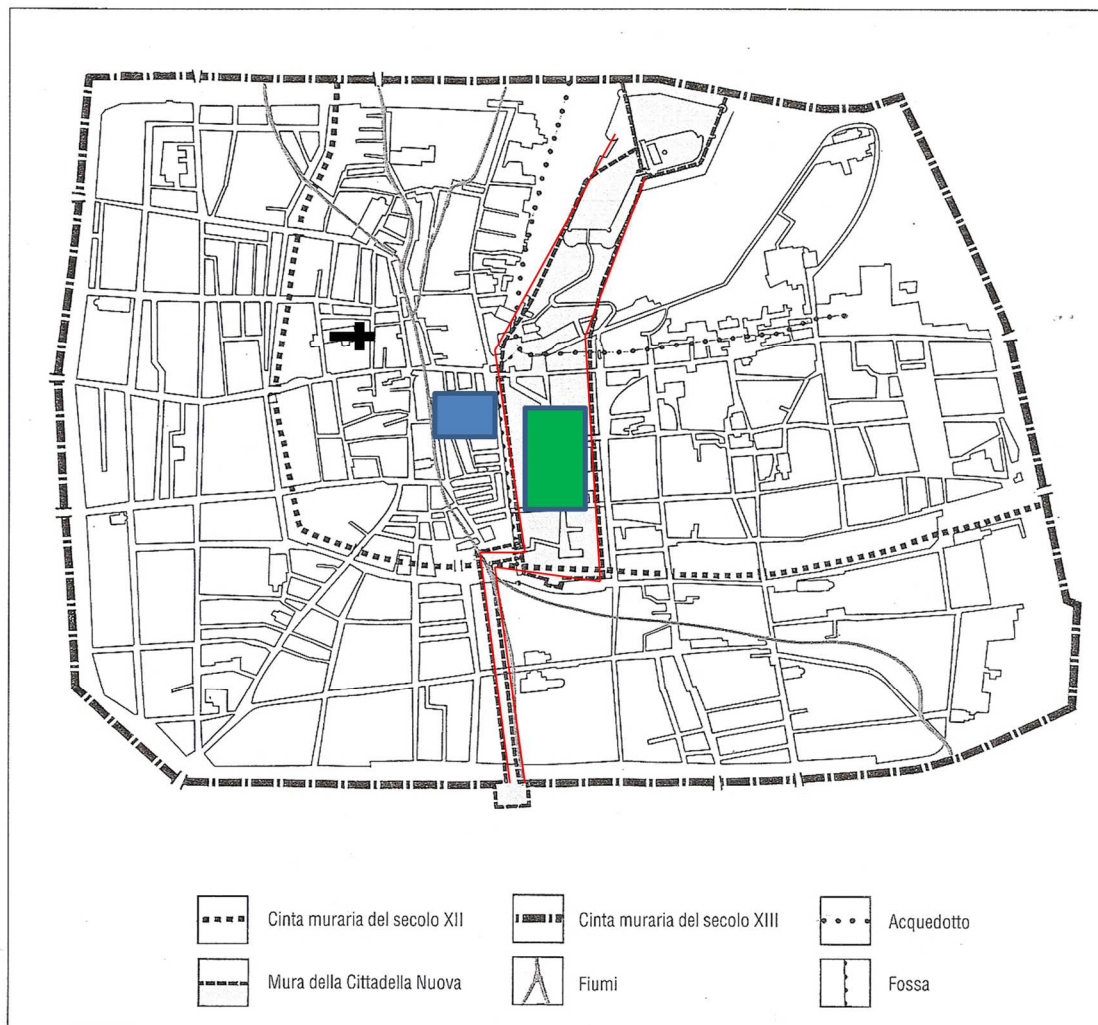


Figure 75. Plan of Brescia ca. 1426. The walls of the Cittadella Nuova are outlined in red. The footprint of the Piazza Grande during Moretto's lifetime is shaded in blue. The zone of the Broletto and cathedrals is shaded in green. The church of San Giovanni Evangelista is marked with a cross. From *La Loggia di Brescia e la sua piazza*, 13.

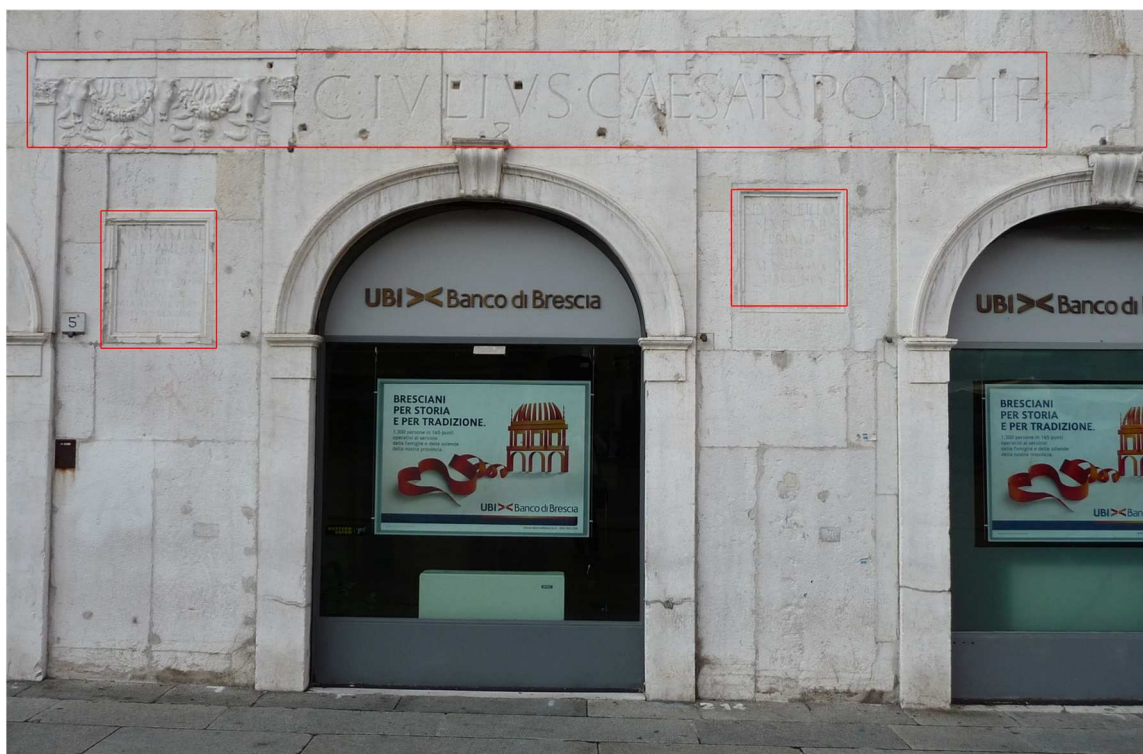


Figure 76. Detail view of the central section of southern façade of the Piazza Grande, Brescia. The ancient “worked stones” are outlined in red.



Figure 77. East base with details of inscribed panels.



"BRIXIA FIDEI BASIS"



"MCCCCXXXVIII"



"PESTE FAME BELLIS  
OPPRESSA"



Figure 78. West base with details of inscribed panels.



“SAGVNTINORVM ET”



“BRIXIANORVM”



“MIRANDA CONSTANTIA”





Figure 79. Dedicatory inscription on east face of the southeast pier of the palazzo comunale (Palazzo della Loggia). Location of inscription indicated by red outline.



Figure 80. Giovanni Maria da Brescia, *Justice of Trajan*, 1502. Engraving.



Figure 81. Vincenzo Foppa or circle, *Justice of Trajan*, 1490(?). Ink and traces of black chalk on paper (partially pricked for transfer). Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett.

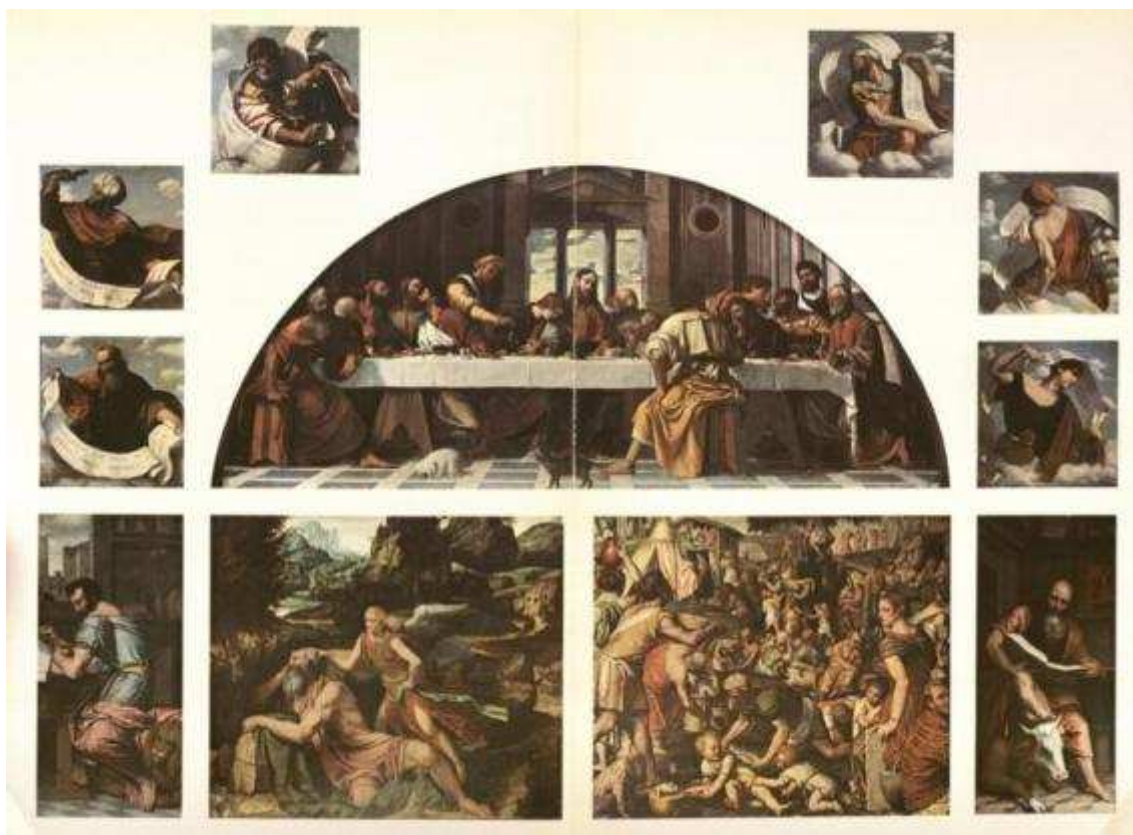


Figure 82. Moretto, 1521-24 and ca. 1543-45. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.

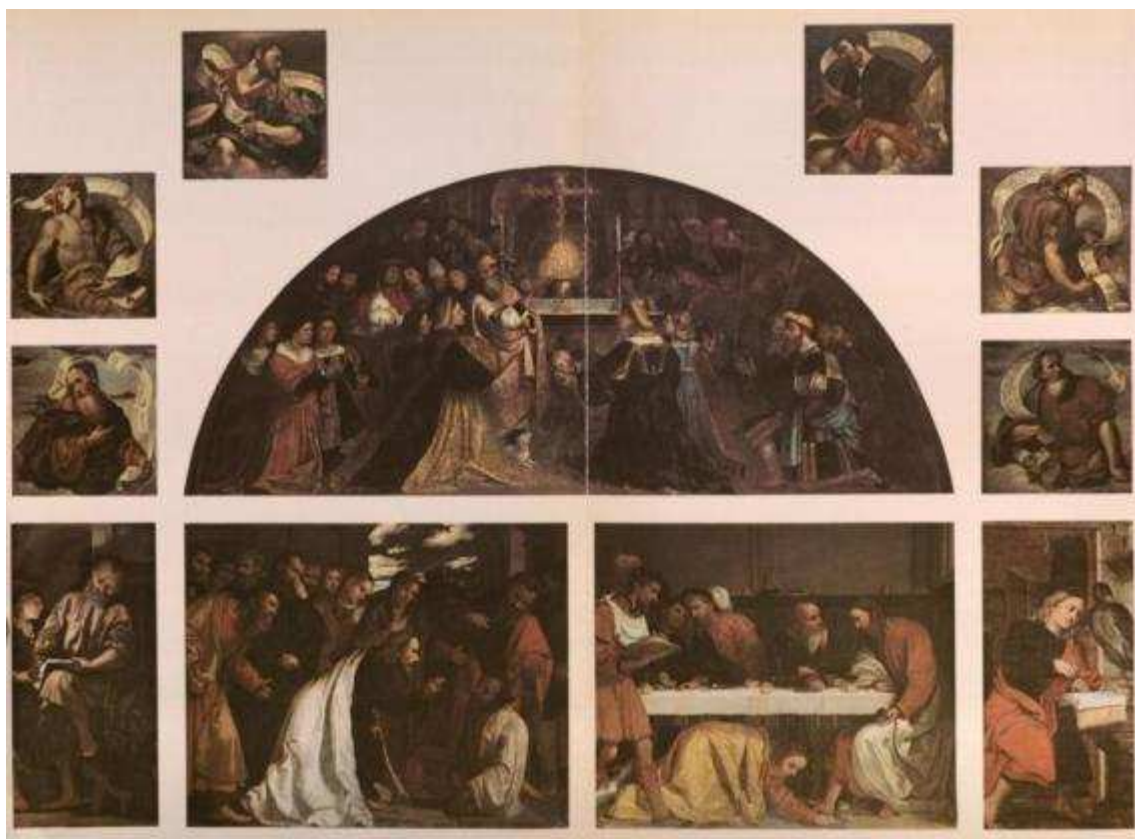


Figure 83. Romanino, 1521-24 and ca. 1543-45. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Figure 84. Moretto, *Elijah and the Angel*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Figure 85. Moretto, *Gathering of Manna*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Figure 86. Romanino, *The Raising of Lazarus*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.





Figure 87. Romanino, *Feast in the House of Levi*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Figure 88. Romanino, detail of *Saint Matthew*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.

Figure 89. Romanino, detail of *Saint John*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.

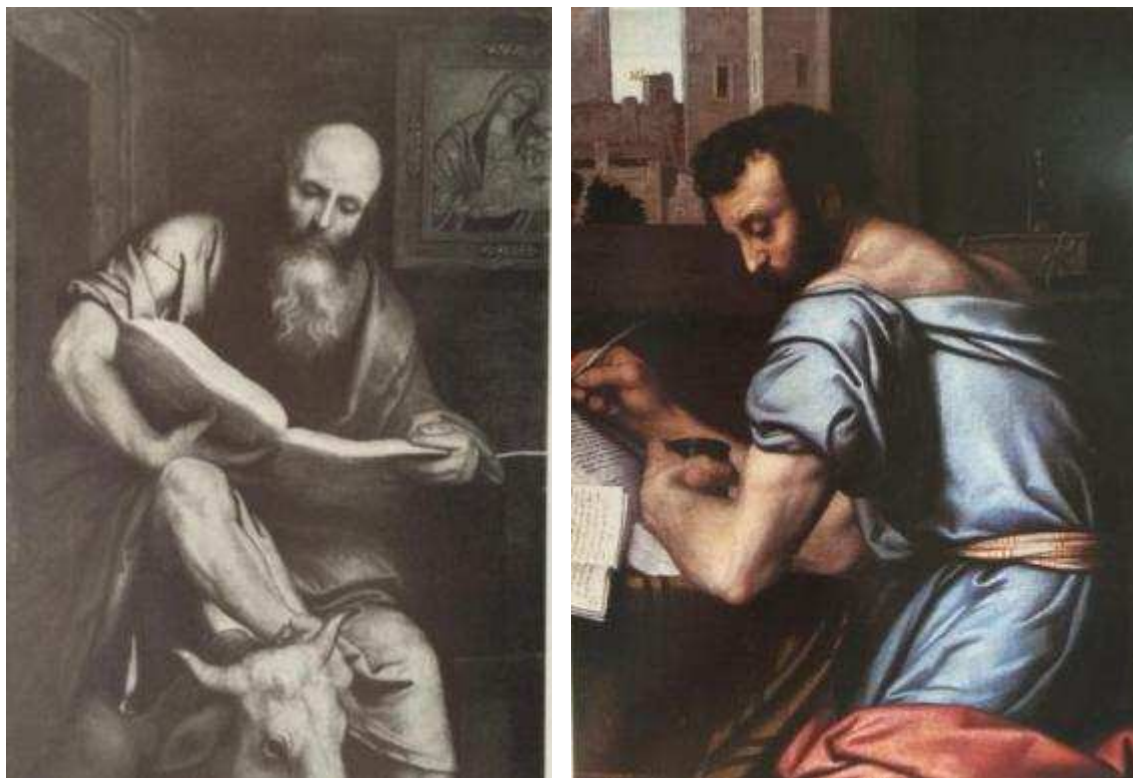


Figure 90. Moretto, detail of *Saint Luke*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.

Figure 91. Moretto, detail of *Saint Mark*, ca. 1543-1545. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Figure 92. Moretto, *Elijah and the Angel*, ca. 1534. Oil on canvas, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, Santa Maria de Dom (formerly San Pietro de Dom), Brescia.



Figure 93. Moretto, *Saint Roch Attended by an Angel*, ca. 1545. Oil on canvas, Szepmuveszeti Muzeum, Budapest.



Figure 94. Moretto, detail of *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints*, late 1520s. Oil on panel, SS. Nazaro e Celso, Brescia.



Figure 95. Donatello, *Judith and Holofernes*, ca. 1460. Bronze, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

Figure 96. Baccio Bandinelli, *Hercules and Cacus*, 1534. Marble, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.



Figure 97. Michelangelo, *Victory*, ca. 1534. Marble, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

Figure 98. Michelangelo, *Samson and Philistine*, ca. 1530. Clay, Casa Buonarroti, Florence.





Figure 99. Michelangelo, *David Beheading Goliath*, 1509. Fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.



Figure 100. Representation of Michelangelo in Sigismondo Fanti's *Triumpho della Fortuna*. Venice, Agostino Zani for Giacomo Giunta, 1526.



Figure 101. Detail of figure 84.

Figure 102. Detail of figure 84.



Figure 103. Giorgio Vasari (after a cartoon by Michelangelo), *Venus and Cupid*, ca. 1543. Oil on canvas, Kensington Palace.



Figure 104. After Michelangelo, *Leda and the Swan*, after 1530. Oil on canvas, National Gallery, London.



Figure 105. Moretto and workshop, *Venus and Cupid*, 1540s. Oil on canvas, formerly Tempini Collection, Brescia.

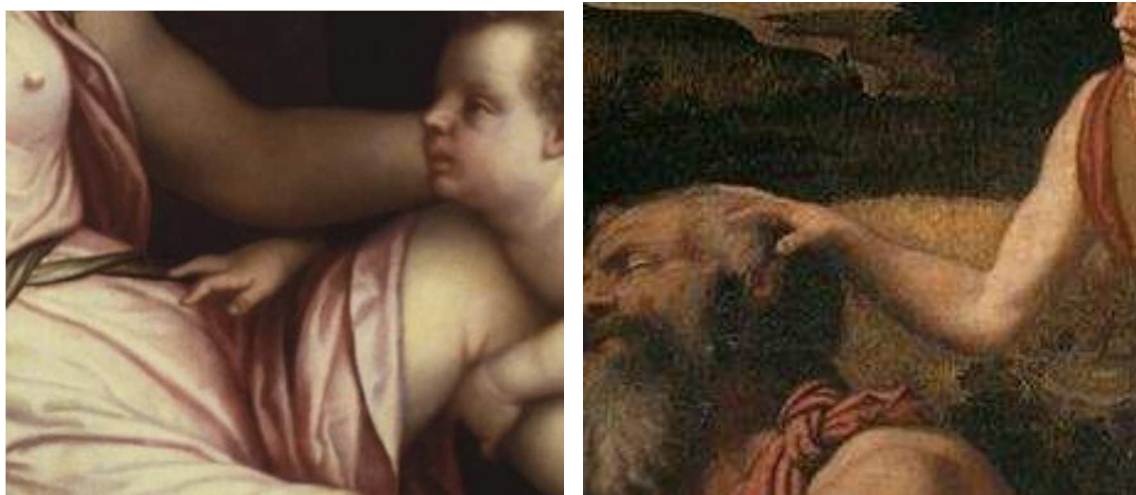


Figure 106. Details of figures 105 and 84.



Figure 107. Marcantonio Raimondi (design by Raphael), detail of *The Judgment of Paris*, ca. 1510-18. Engraving.



Figure 108. Agostino Veneziano(?) after a design by Raphael, *Gathering of Manna*, c. 1515-35. Engraving.





Figure 109. Details of figures 85 and 108.



Figure 110. Details of figures 85 and 108.



Figure 111. Details of figures 85 and 108.



Figure 112. Details of figures 85 and 108.



Figure 113. Details of figures 85 and 108.



Figure 114. Master of the Die, *The Power of Cupid*, after ca. 1530. Engraving.

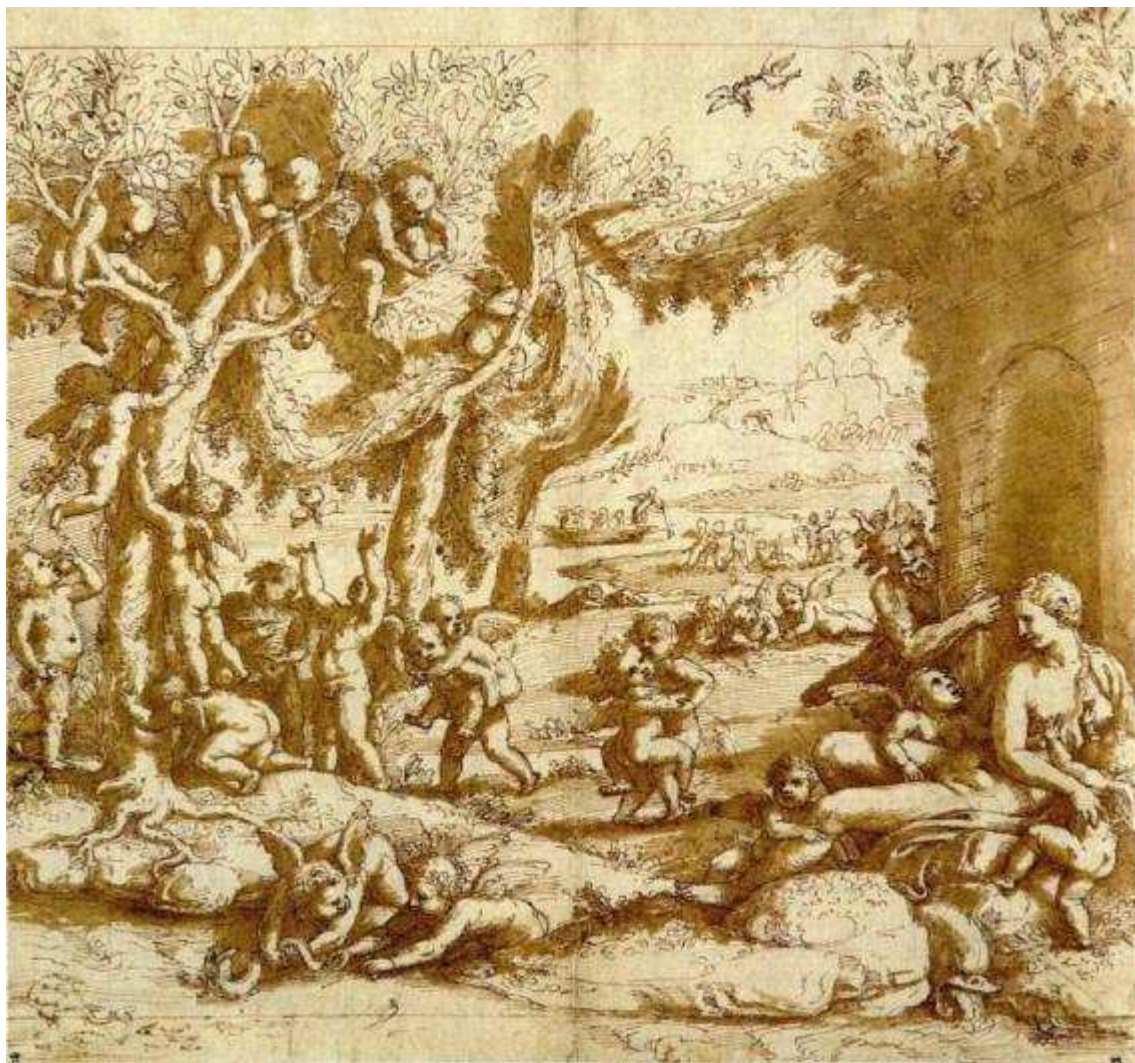


Figure 115. Giulio Romano, *Erotes of Philostratus*, 1539. Pen and ink with wash on paper, Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth.

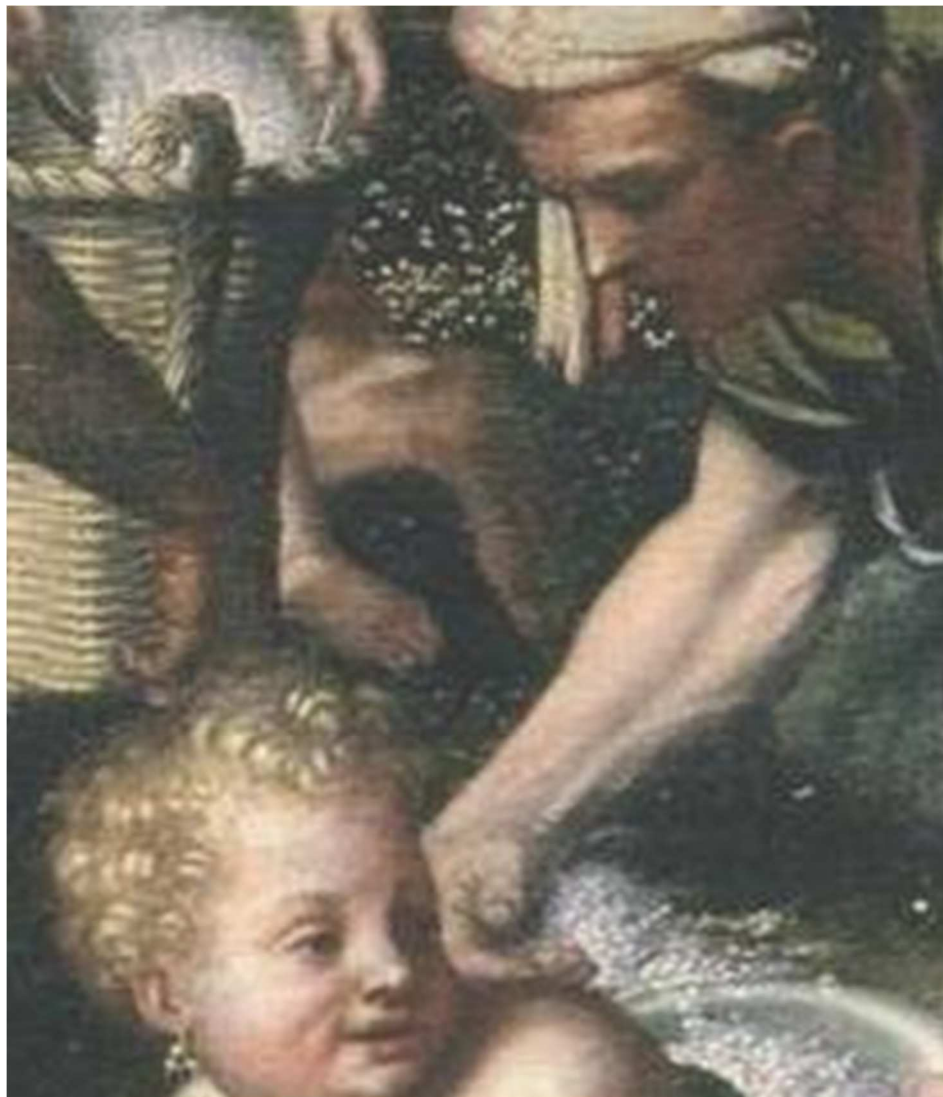


Figure 116. Detail of figure 85.

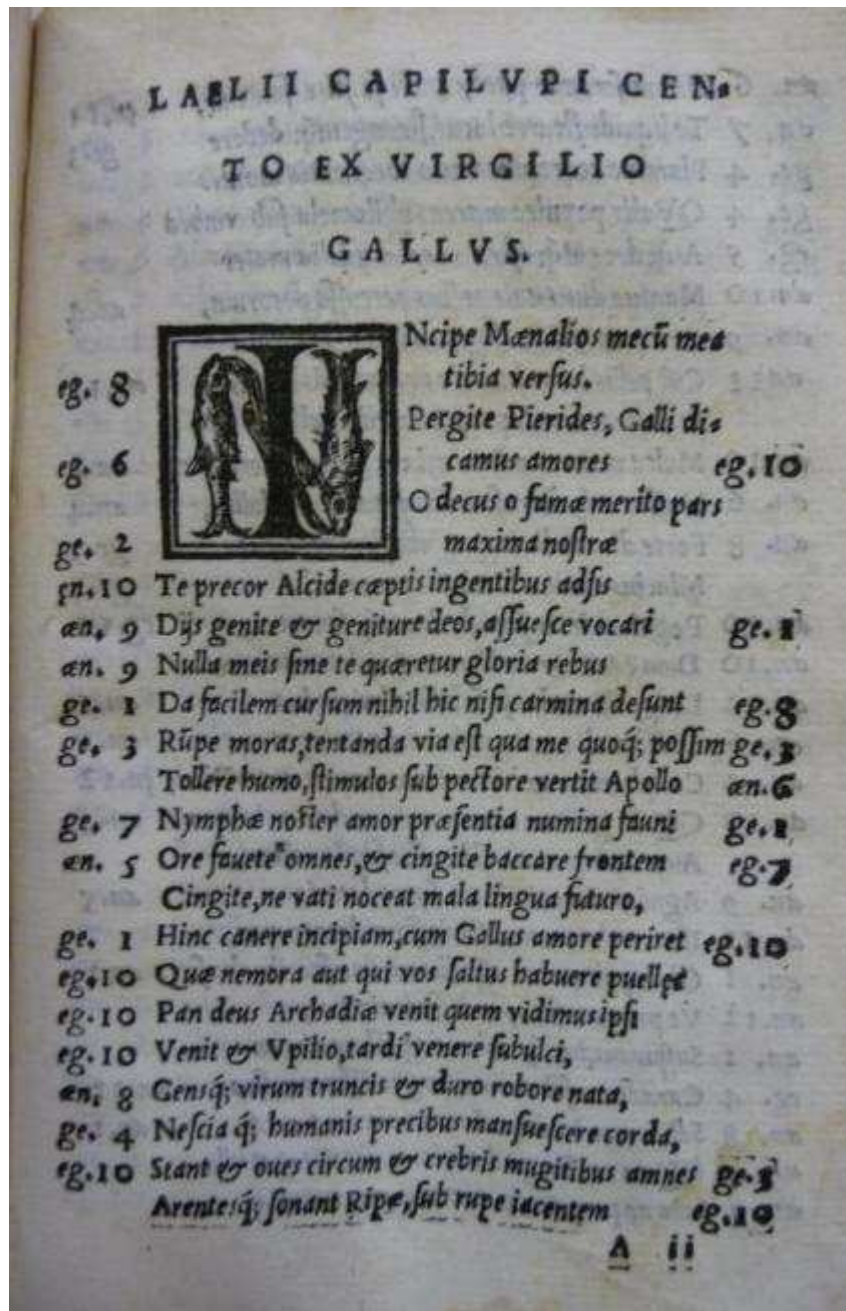


Figure 117. First page of Lelio Capilupi's "Gallus," published by Paolo Gherardo, Venice, 1543.

'uoi spara le mani, et tenersi in buona gratia fin de li gatte, a la Ferrarise,  
 et pontigol che vi corrono per casa. ma non de li uccelli, poi che elle sono  
 tanto nemiche d'ogni uro CONTE.

l'amonuoliss. uostro scudo.  
 Io uro Affettionato fr. <sup>llo</sup>  
Io ogni cosa di l' suo

La presente lra fu scritta a la S. Barbera soarda per accompagnar  
 una lra del Prevosto Trotti, per soprannome detto Disiderio d'essa signora  
 et furono presenti mentre tal lra si scriveva, Mess. Quintilio Furga  
 per leanza chiamato fratello de la P. S. et Mess. Aless<sup>o</sup> Buonvicino  
nominato per ogni cosa de la Tramontana. nell'anno parimenti.  
 MDXXXV.

Figure 118. “La presente lettera fu scritta a la S.a Barbera Soarda per accompagnare una lettera del Prevosto Trotti, per soprannome detto Disiderio d’essa signora et furono presente mentre tal lettera si scriveva, Mess. Quintilio Furga per leanza chiamato fratello de la P.a S.a et Mess. Aless[andr]o Buonvicino nominato per ogni cosa de la Tramontana. Nell’anno parimenti. MDXXXV.”

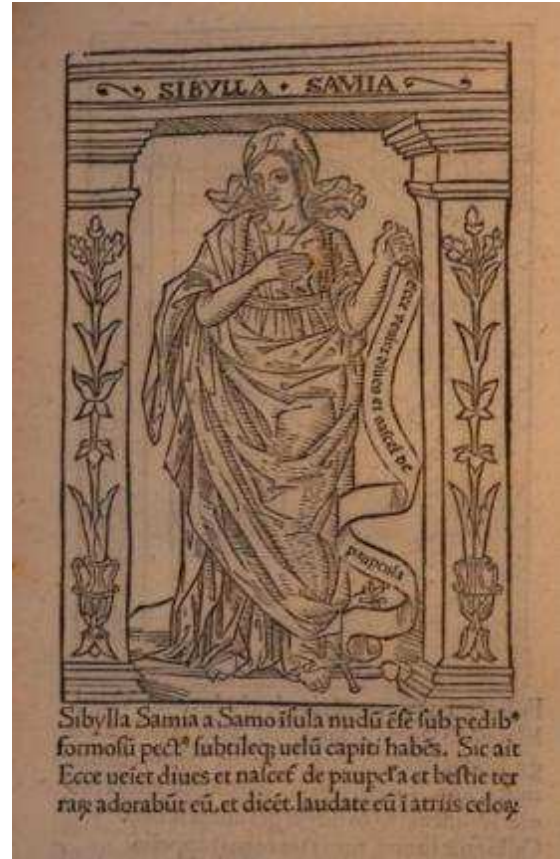


Figure 119. Proba (18v) in miscellany ....Filippo Barbieri, ed., *Tractatus sollemnis et utilis per religiosum virum magistrum Philippus Syculum Ordinis predicatorum Sacre theologie professorem integerrimus in quo infrascripta per pulchre compilavit*. Rome: Georg Herolt e Sixtus Reissinger, ca. 1482.

Figure 120. Samian Sibyl (8r) in miscellany ....Filippo Barbieri, ed., *Tractatus sollemnis et utilis per religiosum virum...* Rome: Georg Herolt e Sixtus Reissinger, ca. 1482.



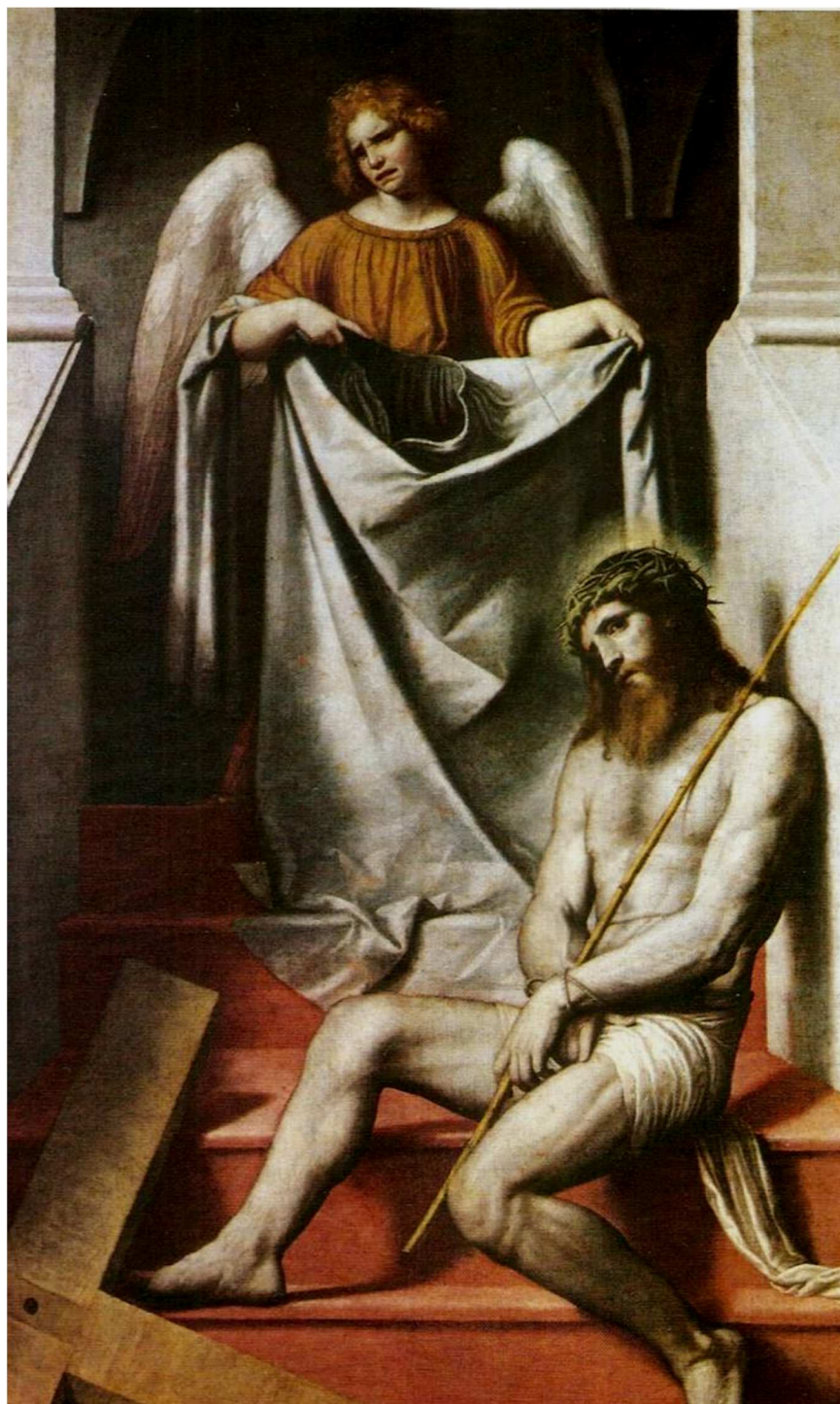


Figure 121. Moretto, *Christ in Passion with an Angel*, ca. 1550. Oil on canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.

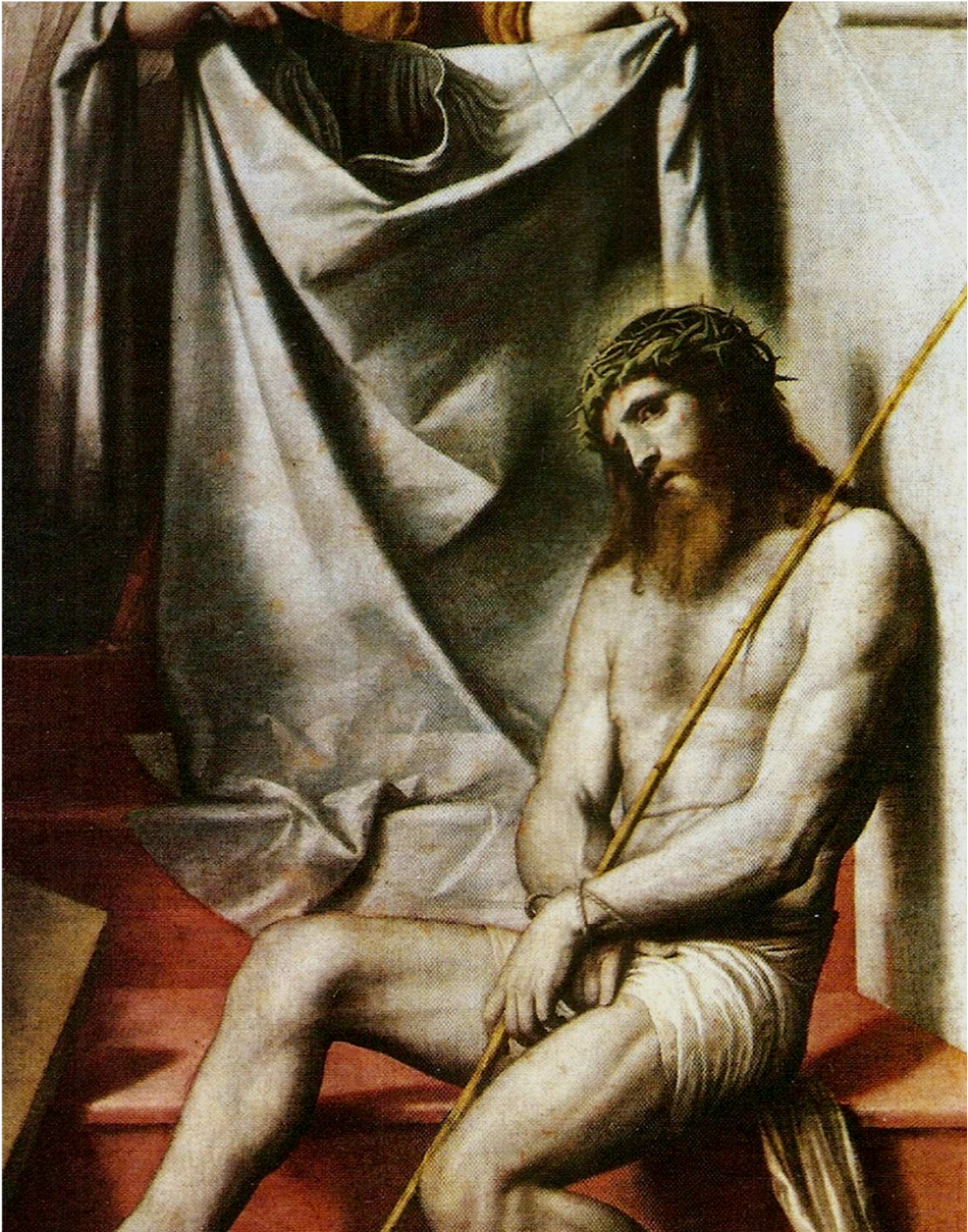


Figure 122. Detail of figure 121.



Figure 123. Moretto, *Entombment*, 1554. Oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 124. Moretto, *Pietà*, 1520s. Oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington.



Figure 125. Vincenzo Civerchio, *Lamentation*, 1504. Oil on panel, Sant' Alessandro, Brescia.



Figure 126. Bernardo Zenale, *Lamentation*, ca. 1505-09. Oil on panel, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia.



Figure 127. Gerolamo Romanino, *Lamentation*, 1510. Oil on canvas, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

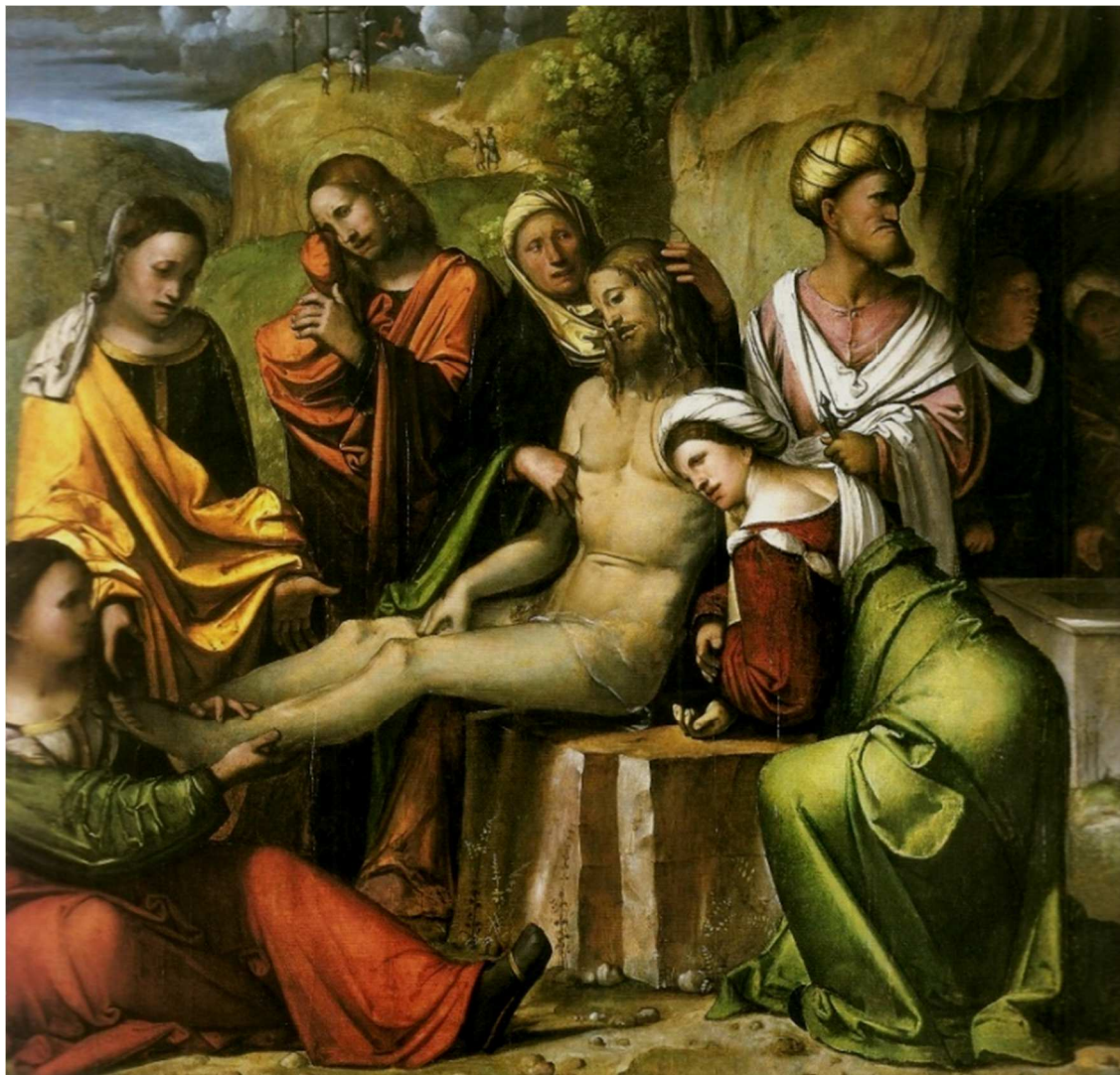


Figure 128. Altobello Melone, *Lamentation*, c. 1512. Oil on canvas, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.



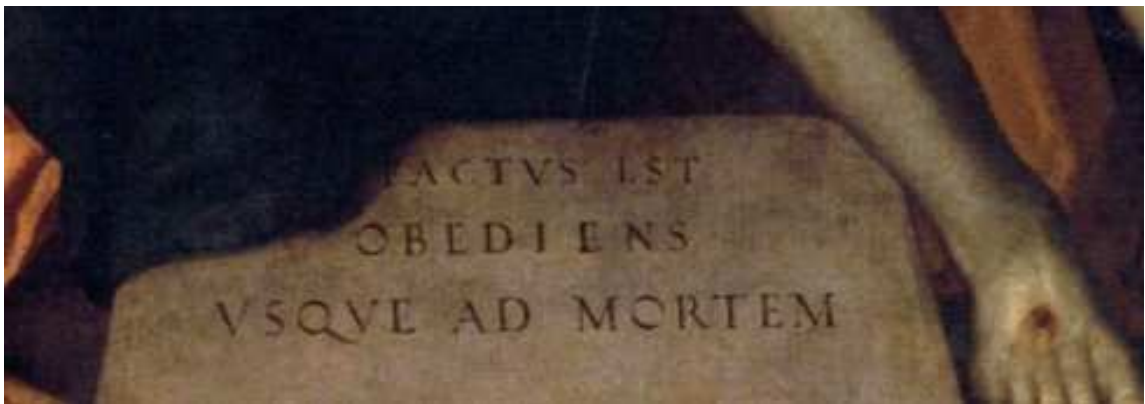


Figure 129. Detail of figure 123.



Figure 130. Romanino, two *ignudi*, 1531-32. Fresco, Loggia, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trent.



Figure 131. Dosso Dossi, images of fragmented statuary, 1531-32. Fresco, Stua de la famea, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trent.

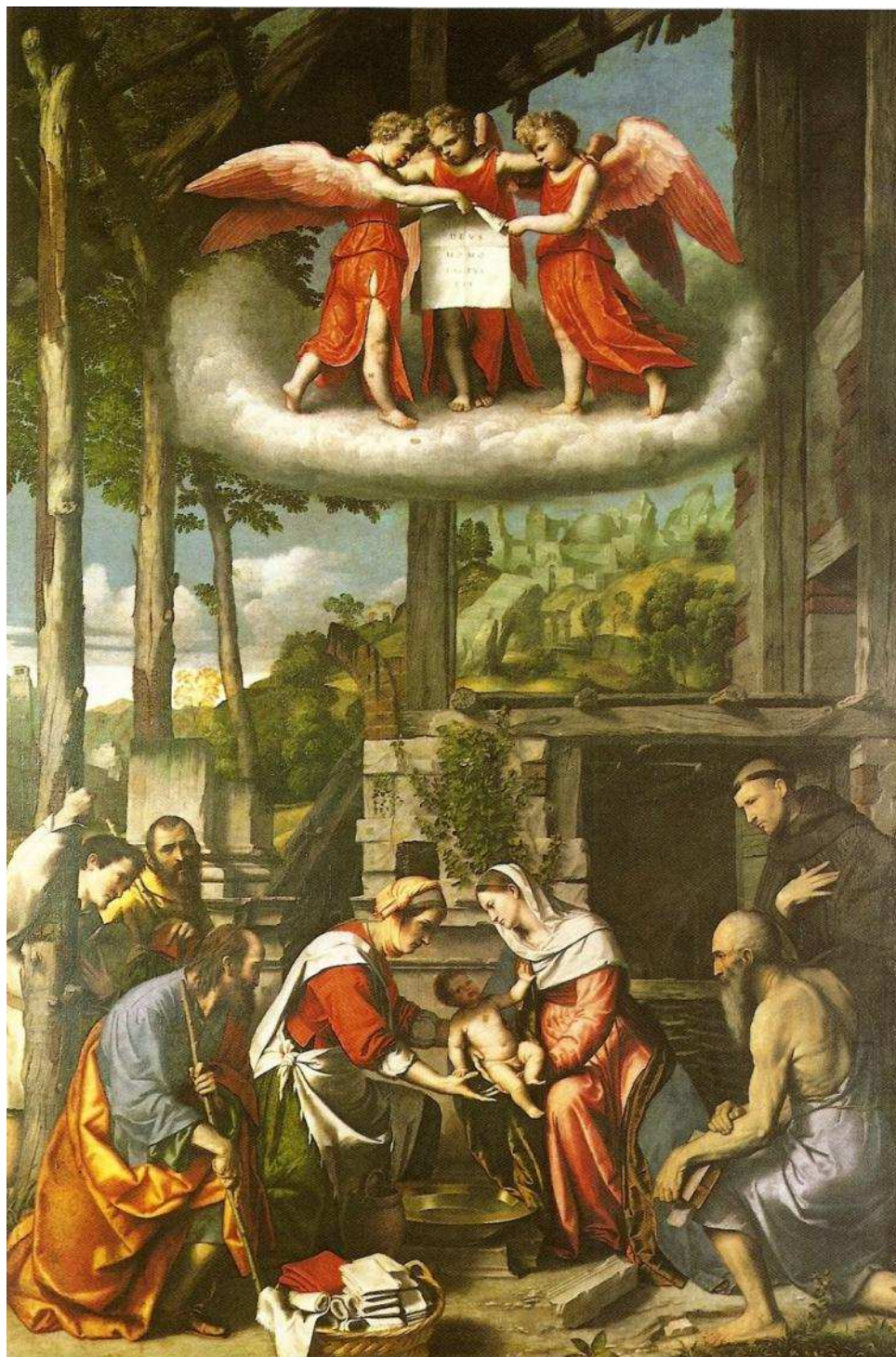


Figure 132. Moretto, *Nativity*, ca. 1550. Oil on canvas, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo, Brescia.



Figure 133. Moretto, *Madonna and Child with Saints Hippolytus and Catherine of Alexandria*, ca. 1540. Oil on canvas, National Gallery, London.

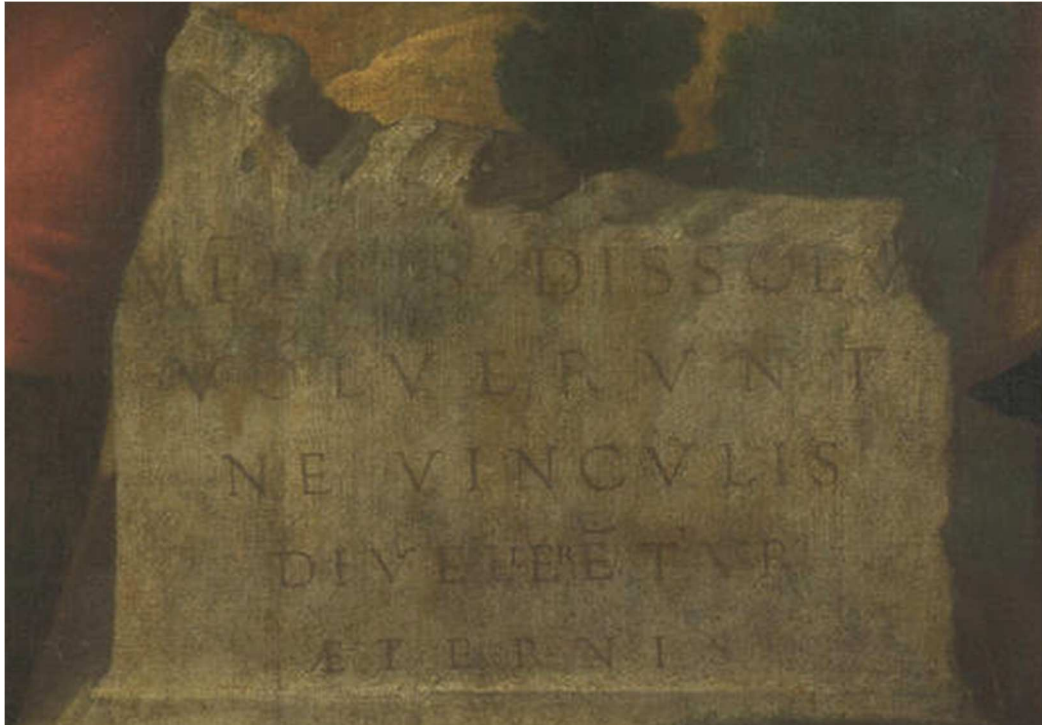


Figure 134. Detail of figure 133.



Figure 135. Detail of figure 133.



Figure 136. Detail of figure 126.





Figure 137. Zenale, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, ca. 1511. Oil on panel, Denver Art Museum.



Figure 138. Detail of figure 137.



Figure 139. Andrea Mantegna, detail of *Pallas and the Vices*, ca. 1500-02. Distemper on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 140. Detail of figure 126.



Figure 141. Moretto, *Saints Peter and Paul Supporting the Church*, ca. 1550. Tempera on cloth, Seminario diocesano, Brescia.



Figure 142. Michelangelo, detail of *ignudi* flanking *Creation of Eve*, 1508-12. Fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.



Figure 143. Moretto, *Flight of Simon Magus*, ca. 1550. Tempera on cloth, Seminario diocesano, Brescia.

Figure 144. Moretto, *Fall of Simon Magus*, ca. 1550. Tempera on cloth, Seminario diocesano, Brescia.



Figure 145. Michelangelo, *Creation of Eve*, 1508-12. Fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.





Figure 146. Michelangelo, *Last Judgment*, completed 1541. Fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.



Figure 147. Tintoretto, *Miracle of the Slave*, 1548. Oil on canvas, Gallerie dell'Accademia (originally Scuola Grande di San Marco), Venice.

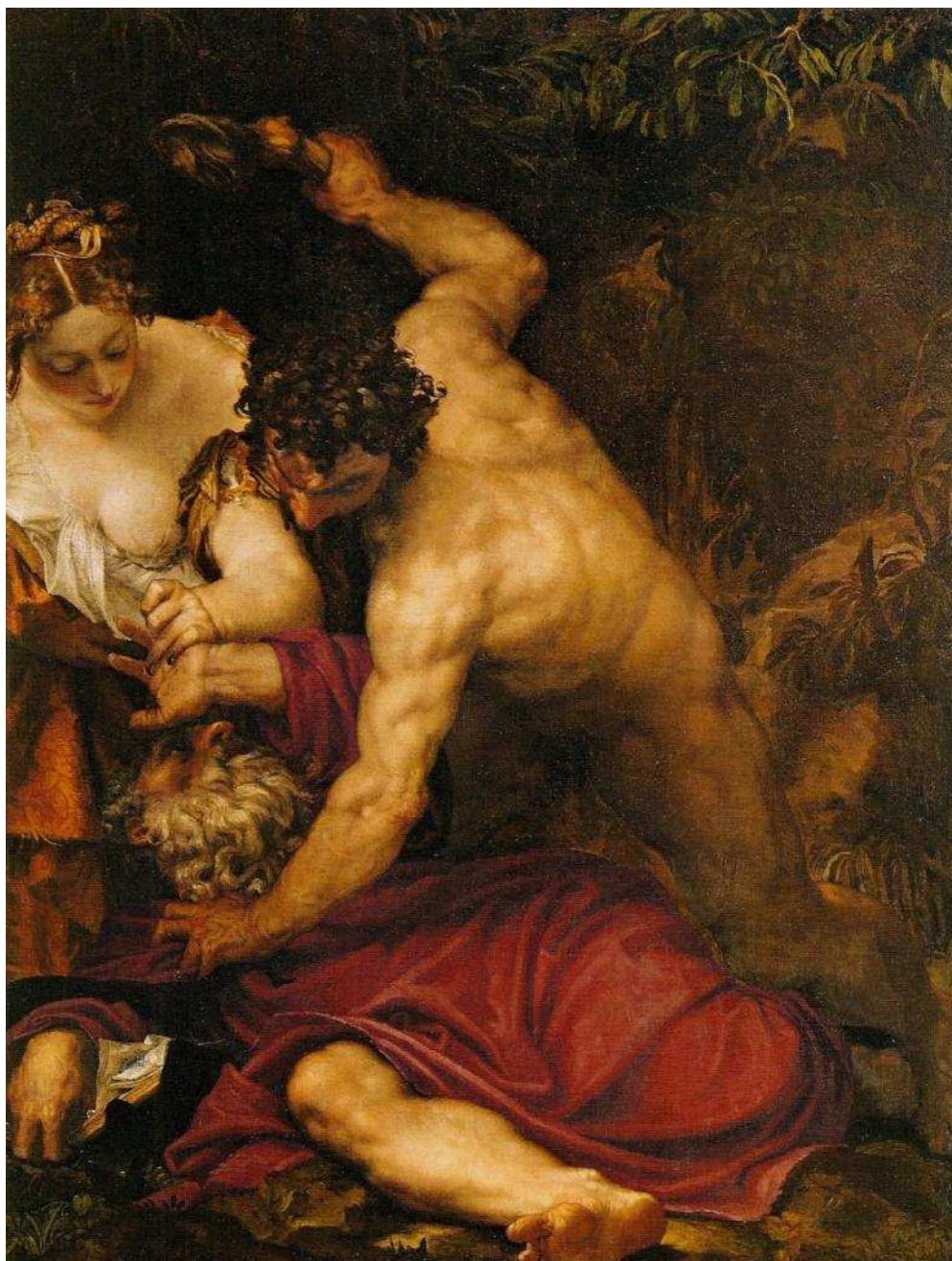


Figure 148. Veronese, *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, 1552-53. Oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen.



Figure 149. Detail of figure 146.