

MANIERA DEVOTA/MANO DONNESCA
WOMEN, VIRTUE AND VISUAL IMAGERY DURING THE COUNTER-REFORMATION
IN THE PAPAL STATES, 1575-1675

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
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Abstract

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Patricia Rocco

Adviser: Professor James Saslow

The history of women's participation in religious movements during the Early Modern period in Europe has long been less commented upon in modern scholarship than that of their male counterparts. This project will enlarge our understanding of the participation of women in the visual program of the Counter-Reformation in the Papal State of Bologna.¹ The study focuses on Bologna since the city had an unprecedented large group of active women artists as well as being a crucial site of Catholic reform. Knowledge of Bologna's women is still incomplete; therefore this dissertation is structured as a series of interlinked case studies, some of which rescue forgotten artists, while others add a new dimension to better-known figures. This research thus takes a necessarily broad approach, combining aspects of iconography, patronage, gender studies, and reception studies; it also integrates media neglected in previous studies such as prints and embroidery. The goal is to insert these artists into the larger philosophical and theoretical context of the city's intellectual history, first by investigating the links between religion, science, and naturalism; and second, by unpacking critical terms from the historiography of style that came to bear on their work. Lastly, the project explores the city's concern with women's virtue, as it is a constant thread woven into visual imagery of all media,

¹ The Papal States in the sixteenth century: Rome, Bologna, Ravenna, Rimini, and Umbria.

from the sixteenth into the seventeenth century. The synthesis of all this material will produce a wider view of the still understudied and ill-documented relationship between women, religion and the visual arts in the complex period of the Counter-Reformation.

Acknowledgements

This labor of love is dedicated to the *mani donnesche*, cloistered in the *conservatori*, while sewing their way to virtue, as well as to those who guided and supported me throughout the long road of this journey: to my loving parents, Giovanni and Gilda, my friends and fellow students, especially Catherine, the Art History Department at the Graduate Center, and most of all to my life's companion Erik, without whose love and support this project would not have been completed. It is also dedicated to my inspiring professors: Professor Elinor Richter, Professor Barbara Lane, and to my outside reader, Professor Babette Bohn. Finally my greatest and unending gratitude goes to my adviser Professor James Saslow, who played Virgil to my Dante and guided me through the Inferno and the Purgatorio with his wisdom, to finally reach the Paradiso at the end of this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter 1. Bologna as Exemplum Counter-Reformation City: The Intellectual History of the City and Its Scholars	19
Chapter 2. Tridentine Visual Reform in Paleotti's <i>Discorso</i> : The Modes of the Artifice Cristiano in both Theory and Practice	43
Chapter 3. Stitching for Virtue: Women's Work in Embroidery for the <i>Conservatori</i> or Christian Houses of Reform in Bologna	100
Chapter 4. Felsina Pittrice: Elisabetta Sirani, Her Students and Circle, and the <i>Maniera Devota</i>	133
Chapter 5. Veronica Fontana and Giuseppe Maria Mitelli: Prints, Piety and Science in the Work of Sirani's Students and Colleagues	173
CONCLUSION	217
APPENDIX	224
BIBLIOGRAPHY	230
ILLUSTRATIONS	251

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Lavinia Fontana, *Self-Portrait*, 1577. Oil on canvas. Rome, Galleria dell'Accademia di S. Luca.

Figure 2. Elisabetta Sirani, *Self-Portrait*, 1658. Oil on canvas. Moscow, Pushkin Museum.

Figure 3. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli. *Interior view of the Museo Cospiano*. Etching. From Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677. New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Figure 4. Raphael, *Ecstasy of St. Cecilia*, 1515. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Church of San Giovanni in Monte.

Figure 5. Francesco Francia, *The Virgin and Child with St. Nicholas and St. Cecilia*, 1490s. Oil on canvas. London, Wernher Collection.

Figure 6. Perugino, *The Crucifixion (Galitzin Triptych)*, 1481-85. Oil on fabric transferred to wood. Washington, National Gallery of Art.

Figure 7a. Hans Memling, *Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove*, 1487. Oil on oak panel. Bruges, Memlingmuseum.

Figure 7b. Jan van Eyck, *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin*, circa 1434-5. Oil on panel. Louvre, Paris.

Figure 8. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Carlo Sigonio*, 1578. Oil on canvas. Modena, Museo Civico, Sala Armi.

Figure 9. Agostino Carracci, *Portrait of Ulisse Aldrovandi* (frame by Giovanni Valesio). Engraving. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII*, Bologna, 1599. London, British Museum.

Figure 10. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Fig Branch with Two Birds*. Tempera and watercolor. From *Tavole di Animale*, Bologna, 1600. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 11. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Bird of Paradise and Exotic Finch on Fig Branch*. Woodcut. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII*, Bologna, 1599. Washington, Library of Congress.

Figure 12. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Branch with Bird*. Tempera and watercolor. From *Tavole di animali*, Bologna, 1600, Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 13. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Branch with Bird*. Woodcut. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII*, Bologna, 1599. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 14. Frontispiece. Engraving. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XII*, Bologna, 1599. Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 15. Jacopo Ligozzi, *Self-Portrait*, engraving.

Figure 16. Cornelius Schwindt, Illustrations for Aldrovandi from *Tavole di Animali*, 1600.

Figure 17. *The Boncompagni Dragon*. Woodcut. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia*, Bologna, 1642. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 18. Lavinia Fontana, *Vision of Saint Hyacinth*, 1599. Oil on canvas. Rome, Church of Santa Sabina, Chapel of Saint Hyacinth.

Figure 19. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Agnes*, 1611-14. Oil on slate. Rome, Church of Santa Maria della Pace, Rivaldi Chapel.

Figure 20. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Cecilia*, 1611-14. Oil on slate. Rome, Church of Santa Maria della Pace, Rivaldi Chapel.

Figure 21. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Catherine of Siena*, 1611-14. Oil on slate. Rome, Church of Santa Maria della Pace, Rivaldi Chapel.

Figure 22. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Claire*, 1611-14. Oil on slate. Rome, Church of Santa Maria della Pace, Rivaldi Chapel.

Figure 23. Jacques Callot, engraved copy after Lavinia Fontana, *The Stoning of St. Stephen*, 1603-4. Original destroyed by fire in 1823. Oil on canvas. Previously Rome, San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

Figure 24. Lavinia Fontana, *Cleopatra*, 1604-14. Oil on canvas. Rome, Galleria Spada.

Figure 25. Mummified body of Caterina Vigri (1413-1463). Bologna, Santuario del Corpus Domini.

Figure 26. Properzia de' Rossi, *Joseph Fleeing Potiphar's Wife*, 1525. Marble. Bologna, Museo di San Petronio.

Figure 27a. Properzia de' Rossi, *Grassi family crest*, early 16th century. Filigreed silver and peach nuts. Bologna, Museo Civico Medievale.

Figure 27b. Previously attributed to Properzia de' Rossi, *Carved cherry stone with 100 heads*, early 16th century. Gold, diamonds, enamel, pearls and cherry stone. Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Museo degli Argenti.

Figure 28a. Diana Mantovana, *The Feast of the Gods* after Giulio Romano, 1575. Engraving. London, The British Museum, Prints and Drawings.

Figure 28b. Lavinia Fontana, *Minerva in the Act of Dressing*, 1613. Oil on canvas. Rome, Galleria Borghese, Deposito.

Figure 29. Lavinia Fontana, *The Penitent St. Jerome in a Landscape*, 1581. Oil on canvas. Rome, private collection.

Figure 30. Diana Mantovana, *St. Jerome*, 1575. Engraving. Florence, Uffizi.

Figure 31. Lavinia Fontana, *Madonna and Child with St. Catherine, Cosmos and Damian and Scipione Calcina*, 1589. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Chiesa di S. Giacomo Maggiore, Cappella Malvezzi-Ranuzzi.

Figure 32. Aurelio Bonelli, *The Martyrdom of St. Cordola*. 16th century. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Figure 33. Lavinia Fontana, *The Hairy Child* (Antonietta Gonsales), 1580s. Drawing. New York, Morgan Library & Museum.

Figure 34. G.B. Coriolani, *The Hairy Family*. Woodcut. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia*, Bologna, 1696. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 35. G.B. Coriolani, *The Hairy Family* (sister ?). Woodcut. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia*, Bologna, 1696. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 36. G.B. Coriolani, *The Hairy Family* (Antonietta's father and brother). Woodcut. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia*, Bologna, 1696. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 37. G.B. Coriolani. Frontispiece. Engraving. From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Monstrorum Historia*, Bologna, 1696. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 38. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of Antonietta Gonsales*, 1595. Oil on canvas. Chateau de Blois.

Figure 39. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Francis Adoring the Crucifix*, 1580. Oil on canvas. Milan, private collection.

Figure 40. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, 1579. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Seminario Diocesano, Villa Revedin.

Figure 41. Unknown after Lavinia Fontana, *Gabriele Paleotti*, 1580s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 42. Attributed to Lavinia Fontana, *San Petronio Blessing Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti*, 1580s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Monastero di Camaldoli.

Figure 43. Holy Shroud of Turin. Turin, Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

Figure 44. Albrecht Dürer, *The Sudarium of St. Veronica*, 1511. Woodcut. From the *Small Passion*. London, British Museum.

Figure 45. Michelangelo, *Christ and Mary*, detail from *The Last Judgment*, 1534-41. Fresco. Rome, Sistine Chapel.

Figure 46. Federico Barocci, *Annunciation*, 1592-96. Oil on canvas. Assisi, S. Maria degli Angeli.

Figure 47. Federico Barocci, *Loreto Annunciation*, 1582-84. Oil on canvas. Rome, Vatican Museum.

Figure 48. Lavinia Fontana, *The Annunciation*, 1576-7. Oil on copper. Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.

Figure 49. Lavinia Fontana, *Christ with the Symbols of the Passion*, 1576. Oil on canvas. El Paso, Texas, Museum of Art.

Figure 50. Lavinia Fontana, *Pietà*, lost, 1590. Oil on canvas.

Figure 51. Giulio Bonasone, *Pietà*, 1556. Engraving.

Figure 52. Agostino Carracci, *Pietà*, 1579. Engraving.

Figure 53. Lavinia Fontana, *Holy Family with the Sleeping Child and John the Baptist*, 1589. Oil on canvas. Madrid, Escorial Monastery.

Figure 54. Michelangelo, *Silentium*, 1540. Drawing. London, Duke of Portland.

Figure 55. Lavinia Fontana, *Assumption of the Madonna*, 1593. Oil on canvas. Pieve di Cento, Collegiata di Santa Maria Maggiore.

Figure 56. Albrecht Dürer, *Woman Clothed by the Sun and the Seven-Headed Dragon*, 1498. Woodcut. From the *Apocalypse*. Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle.

Figure 57. Albrecht Dürer, *Virgin and Child on the Crescent*, 1507. Engraving. Private collection.

Figure 58. Albrecht Dürer, *Virgin on the Crescent*, 1511. Woodcut. From *Life of the Virgin*. Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung.

Figure 59. Federico Barocci, *Madonna del Popolo*, 1575-9. Oil on canvas. Florence, Uffizi.

Figure 60. Lavinia Fontana, *Madonna of the Assumption of Ponte Santo with Saints Cassiano and Crisologo*, 1584. Oil on canvas. Imola, Pinacoteca Civica.

Figure 61. Lavinia Fontana, *Immacolata*, 1602. Oil on canvas. Sovere, Chiesa del Convento dei Cappuccini.

Figure 62. Ludovico Carracci, *Madonna degli Scalzi*, 1590s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca.

Figure 63. Lodovico Cigoli, *Immacolata*, 1610-12. Fresco. Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore.

Figure 64. Hieronymous Bosch, *Vision of the Afterlife*, circa 1500-03. Oil on panel. Venice, Palazzo Ducale.

Figure 65. Geertgen tot Sint Jans, *The Glorification of Mary*, 1480-90. Oil on panel. Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

Figure 66. Lavinia Fontana, *Noli me tangere*, 1581. Oil on canvas. Florence, Uffizi.

Figure 67. Correggio, *Noli me tangere*, 1534. Oil on canvas. Madrid, Prado.

Figure 68. Deny Calvaert, *Noli me tangere*, 1570s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 69. Albrecht Dürer, *Christ Appears to Mary Magdalene*, 1511. Woodcut. From the *Small Passion*. London, British Museum.

Figure 70. Lavinia Fontana, *Christ and the Canaanite Woman*, 1577. Oil on canvas. Venice, private collection.

Figure 71. Lavinia Fontana, *Christ and the Samaritan Woman*, 1607. Oil on canvas. Naples, Museo e Gallerie Nazionale di Capodimonte, inv. 84087.

Figure 72. Lavinia Fontana, *The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes*, 1583. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Church of Santa Maria della Pieta.

Figure 73. Lavinia Fontana, *Apparition of the Madonna and Child to the Five Saints*, 1601. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 74. Lavinia Fontana, *St. Francis di Paola Blessing the Child of Luisa of Savoy*, 1590. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 75. Lavinia Fontana, *Consecration to the Virgin and Child with Saints (Gnetti Altarpiece)*, 1599. Oil on canvas. Marseilles, Musée des Beaux Arts.

Figure 76. Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Baby in a Crib*, 1585. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 77. Lavinia Fontana, *Judith and Holofernes*, 1600. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Museo Davia Bargellini.

Figure 78. Lavinia Fontana, *Judith and Holofernes*, 1600. Oil on canvas. Parma, Pinacoteca Stuard.

Figure 79. Fontana, *Judith*, 1595. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Banca del Monte.

Figure 80. Lavinia Fontana, *Queen of Sheba Visits King Solomon*, 1599-1600. Oil on canvas. Dublin, National Museum.

Figure 81. *Madonna di San Luca*. Byzantine icon. Bologna, Santuario Monte della Guardia.

Figure 82. *Icon of the Virgin*, 6th century, Egypt, Byzantine period. Wool. Cleveland, Museum of Art.

Figure 83. Cesare Vecellio, *Vergognosi*. Woodcut. From *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri due ...*, Venice, 1598.

Figure 84. Lavinia Fontana, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, 1580. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Conservatorio di S. Marta, Opera Pia dei Poveri Vergognosi.

Figure 85. *Madonna and Child with St. Marta*, Embroidered paliotto, by Putte di S. Marta. 17th century, Bologna.

Figure 86. Elisabetta Sirani, *Madonna and Child with Saints Joseph and Teresa*, 1664. Oil on canvas. Modena, private collection.

Figure 87. Detail of Figure 85.

Figure 88. Veronica Fontana, Frontispiece. Woodcut. From *Il teatro dell' honore*, Parma, 1675. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Figure 89. Engraving after Ludovico Carracci, *Miracle of St. Benedict* from *Il Claustro di San Michele in Bosco...dipinto dal famoso Ludovigo Carracci...*, 1776, Dalla Volpe. Bologna.

Figure 90. Embroidery after Ludovico Carracci's *Miracle of Saint Benedict*, by Putte di S. Marta, 17th century, Bologna.

Figure 91. Embroidered liturgical vestment with biblical scenes, by Putte di S. Marta, 17th century, Bologna.

Figure 92. Embroidered liturgical vestment with biblical scenes, by Putte di S. Marta, 17th century, Bologna.

Figure 93. Amico Aspertini, *St. Nicholas Provides the Virgins' Dowries*, 17th century. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Baraccano Conservatorio.

Figure 94. Giovanni Andrea Sirani, *The Sewing Madonna*, 1650s. Oil on canvas. St. Petersburg, Hermitage.

Figure 95. Guido Reni, *The Sewing Madonna*, 17th century. Fresco. Rome, Quirinale.

Figure 96. Lavinia Fontana, *Birth of the Virgin*, 1590. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Chiesa della SS. Trinita.

Figure 97. Unknown, Statutes for the Conservatorio del Baraccano, 15th century. Bologna, Baraccano Conservatorio.

Figure 98. Unknown painter, *Madonna and Child with Saints and Putte*, 16th -17th century. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Baraccano Conservatorio.

Figure 99. Unknown painter, *Crucifixion with Putte*, 16th -17th century. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Baraccano Conservatorio.

Figure 100. Lavinia Fontana, *Sts. Cecilia and Sebastian*, 1590. Oil on copper. Corsham Court, Wiltshire, Collection Lord Methuen.

Figure 101. Papal Indulgence for Those Who Donate to the Opere Poveri Vergognosi, Gregory XIII. Bologna, Archivio dell'Opere dei Poveri Vergognosi.

Figure 102. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Mercato del Follicello (The Silk Market)*, 1690s. Engraving. Bologna, Biblioteca del Archiginnasio.

Figure 103. Unknown artist, *Bonifazio Dalle Balle with the Putte of the Conservatorio*. 17th century. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Baraccano Conservatorio.

Figure 104a. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *L'Arti di Bologna*, 1690s. Engraving. Bologna, Biblioteca del Archiginnasio.

Figure 104b. Caterina de Vigri, *Face of Christ*, Breviary, 1452. Tempera on parchment. Convent of the Corpus Domini, Bologna.

Figure 105. Elisabetta Sirani, *Baptism of Christ*, 1658. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Church of San Girolamo della Certosa.

Figure 106. Elisabetta Sirani, *The Ten Thousand Martyrs Crucified*, 1656. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Private collection.

Figure 107. Elisabetta Sirani, *Virgin Addolorata with the Symbols of the Passion*, 1678. Oil on copper. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 108. Elisabetta Sirani, *The Holy Family*, 1662. Oil on copper. Bologna, private collection.

Figure 109. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Francis Adoring the Crucifix*, 1664. Oil on canvas. Modena, Galleria Estense.

Figure 110. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Eustache*, 1657. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Figure 111. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Eustache*, 1657. Etching, second state. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 112. Guido Reni, *Penitent Mary Magdalene*, 1660s. Oil on copper. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 113. Elisabetta Sirani, *Mary Magdalene*, 1660. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 114. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Jerome*, 1660. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 115. Elisabetta Sirani, *Mary Magdalene*, 1664. Oil on canvas. Florence, Galleria Neri.

Figure 116. Attributed to Angela Teresa Muratori (Giuseppe Puglia ?), *Mary Magdalene*, 1670s. Oil on canvas. Potsdam, Palace of Sansouci.

Figure 117. Elisabetta Sirani, *Liberation of the Possessed Boy of Constantinople by the Icon of Christ (Mandylion)*, 1650s. Oil on canvas. Geneva, Church of St. Bartholomew of the Armenians.

Figure 118. Elisabetta Sirani, *Self-Portrait as a Nun*, 1658. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 119. Elisabetta Sirani, *Portrait of Signora Ortensia Leoni Cordini as Saint Dorothy*, 1661. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mr. Rojzman, Madison, Chazen Museum of Art.

Figure 120. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Margaret of Antioch*, 1661. Oil on canvas. Rome, Finarte.

Figure 121. Elisabetta Sirani, *Judith Showing the Head of Holofernes to the Israelites*, 1658. Oil on canvas. Stamford, UK, The Burghley House Collection.

Figure 122. Elisabetta Sirani, *Portia Wounding Her Thigh*, 1664. Oil on canvas. Houston, Stephen Warren Miles and Marilyn Ross Foundation.

Figure 123. Elisabetta Sirani, *Timoclea Tosses Alexander the Great's Captain into the Well*, 1659. Oil on canvas. Naples, Museo di Capodimonte.

Figure 124. Elisabetta Sirani, *Cleopatra*, 1650s. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Figure 125. Guido Reni, *Death of Cleopatra*, 1640. 17th century. Oil on canvas. Florence, Palazzo Pitti.

Figure 126. Guido Cagnacci, *The Death of Cleopatra*, 1658. Oil on canvas. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Figure 127. Elisabetta Sirani, *Circe*, 1657. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Antichita Il Leone.

Figure 128. Elisabetta Sirani, *Delilah*, 1657. Oil on canvas. Private collection.

Figure 129. Elisabetta Sirani, *Justice, Charity and Prudence*, 1664. Oil on canvas. Vignola (Modena), Comune di Vignola.

Figure 130. Anna Teresa Muratori, *Memory of Roberto Muratori*, 1680-90s. Fresco. Bologna, Archiginnasio di Bologna.

Figure 131. Anna Teresa Muratori, *Memory of Roberto Muratori*, 1680-90s. Drawing for fresco. Bologna, Collezione F. Giusti.

Figure 132. Barbara Sirani, *Portrait of Elisabetta Sirani*, 1660s. Oil on copper. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 133. Barbara Sirani, *Ecce Homo*, 1660s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Santa Maria de' Servi.

Figure 134. Anna Maria Sirani, *The Holy Trinity with St. Martin (Bishop)*, 1669. Oil on canvas. Medesano, Church of St. Martin.

Figure 135. Barbara Sirani, *Allegory*, 1665. Drawing. Florence, Prints and Drawings, Uffizi.

Figure 136. Barbara Sirani, *Allegory*, 1665. Drawing. Florence, Prints and Drawings, Uffizi.

Figure 137. Frontispiece. From Giovanni Luigi Picinardi, *Il pennello lagrimato: orazione*, Bologna, 1665. Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell' Archiginnasio.

Figure 138. Luigi Martelli, *Self-Portrait of Elisabetta Sirani Painting Her Father*, 1833. Engraved copy. Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell' Archiginnasio.

Figure 139. Ginevra Cantofoli, *Immaculate Virgin with the Christ Child (Madonna of the Rosary as the Immaculate Conception)*, 1650s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale (on loan to the Franciscan Institute of the Immaculate).

Figure 140. Elisabetta Sirani, *Immaculate Conception*, 1664. Oil on copper. Bologna, Church of Santa Maria di Galliera.

Figure 141. Anna Teresa Muratori, *Immaculate Conception*, 1680-90s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Santa Maria di Galliera.

Figure 142. Antonia Pinelli, *The Guardian Angel*, 1620s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, S. Giuseppe dei Cappuccini.

Figure 143. Francesco Romanelli, *Guardian Angel*, 1640-50. Oil on canvas. Borgo Panigale (Bologna), Santa Maria Assunta.

Figure 144. Anna Teresa Muratori, *The Annunciation*, 1700-1706. Oil on canvas. Bologna, SS. Trinita.

Figure 145. Anna Teresa Muratori, *The Annunciation*, 1700-1708. Oil on canvas. Bologna, S. Giovanni Battista dei Celestini.

Figure 146. Antonia Pinelli, *St. John the Evangelist Resuscitates the Earthquake Victims*, 1620s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 147. Anna Teresa Muratori, *The Miracle of St. Benedict*, 1690-1708. Oil on canvas. Bologna, S. Stefano.

Figure 148. Anna Teresa Muratori, *Apparition of the Madonna to St. Peter*, 1690s. Oil on canvas. Ferrara, San Domenico.

Figure 149. Antonia Pinelli, *The Birth of the Virgin*, 1620-40. Oil on canvas. Imola, Santa Maria in Regola.

Figure 150. Anna Teresa Muratori, *Incredulity of St. Thomas*, 1690s-early 1700s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Santa Maria di Galliera.

Figure 151. Attributed to Ginevra Cantofoli or Guido Reni, *Sybil (Portrait of Beatrice Cenci)*, 1650s. Oil on canvas. Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini.

Figure 152. Nicolo Fontani, *Guido Reni Painting the Portrait of Beatrice Cenci in Prison*, 19th century. Oil on canvas. Florence, private collection.

Figure 153. Guido Reni, *Sybil*, 1650s. Oil on canvas. London, collection of Sir Dennis Mahon, on loan to Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna.

Figure 154. Ginevra Cantofoli, *Young Girl with a Lamb*, 1660s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Museo Davia Bargellini.

Figure 155. Ginevra Cantofoli, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, 1660s. Oil on canvas. Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera.

Figure 156. Ginevra Cantofoli, *Self-Portrait at the Easel*, 1640s. Drawing. Venice, Fondazioni G. Cini.

Figure 157. Lucrezia Scarfaglia, *Self-Portrait Painting the Madonna and Child*, 1678. Oil on canvas. Rome, Galleria Pallavicini.

Figure 158. Attributed to Ginevra Cantofoli, *Portrait of Elisabetta Sirani*, 1650-1660s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, private collection.

Figure 159. Attributed to Ginevra Cantofoli, *Atropos (Delilah ?)*, 1660s. Oil on canvas. Rome, Galleria Borghese.

Figure 160. Attributed to Ginevra Cantofoli, *Portia*, 1660s. Oil on canvas. Bologna, private collection.

Figure 161. Attributed to Ginevra Cantofoli, *Marine Nymph (Galatea ?)*, 1660s. Oil on canvas. Milan, Luigi Koelliker collection.

Figure 162. Anna Teresa Muratori, *Mary Magdalene*, 1690-1708. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Church of San Giovanni in Monte.

Figure 163. Ginevra Cantofoli, *St. Thomas of Villanova*, 1658. Oil on canvas. Bologna, monastery of San Giacomo Maggiore.

Figure 164. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Thomas of Villanova with Saints*, 1663. Preparatory drawing. Private collection.

Figure 165. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Thomas of Villanova with Saints*, 1663. Oil on canvas. Castelfranco (Modena), Church of the Augustinian Fathers.

Figure 166. Veronica Fontana, Frontispiece. Woodcut. From *Quaresimale*, Bologna, 1679. Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Figure 167. Veronica Fontana, *Christ Addressing the Apostles*. Woodcut. From *Epistole et evangeli*, Bologna, 1682. New Haven, Yale Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Figure 168. Veronica Fontana and M. Odi, company emblem. Woodcut. From *Il teatro dell' honore*, Parma, 1675. Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France.

Figure 169. Veronica Fontana, Drawing for Masini's *Aggiunte (?)*. Bologna, 1680s? Biblioteca Comunale dell' Archiginnasio.

Figure 170. Veronica Fontana, Emblem for *gelati*. Bologna, 1680s? Biblioteca Comunale dell' Archiginnasio.

Figure 171. Veronica Fontana, *Family Tree of the Carracci*. Woodcut. From Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, Bologna, 1678.

Figure 172. Veronica Fontana, *Portrait of Francesco Brizio*. Woodcut. From Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, Bologna, 1678.

Figure 173. Veronica Fontana, Frontispiece. Woodcut. From Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677. New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Figure 174. Veronica Fontana, *Portrait of Ferdinand III*. Woodcut. From Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677. New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Figure 175. Detail of Figure 174.

Figure 176. Veronica Fontana, *Bronze oil lamp*. Woodcut. From Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677. New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Figure 177. Veronica Fontana, *Bacchante figure*. Woodcut. From Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677. New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Figure 178. Veronica Fontana, *Turkey*. Woodcut. From Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, Bologna, 1677. New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Figure 179. Elisabetta Sirani, *Galatea*, 1664. Oil on canvas. Modena, Private collection.

Figure 180. Lorenzo Tinti, *Portrait of Elisabetta Sirani* (copy after Sirani's *Self-Portrait at the Easel*), 1665. Engraving. Bologna, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio.

Figure 181. Lorenzo Loli, *Madonna and Child*, 1660s. Etching from Elisabetta Sirani's design. Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, Gabinetto delle Stampe.

Figure 182. Matteo Borboni, *Catafalque for Elisabetta Sirani's Funeral (Tempietto d'onore)*, 1665. Drawing. New York, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Figure 183. Annibale Carracci, *Butcher Shop*, 1580's. Oil on canvas. Oxford, Christ Church Picture Gallery.

Figure 184. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Shoemaker*. Etching. From *Arti per Via*, Bologna, 1660. Collezione d'Arte Casa di Risparmio di Bologna (CACRB).

Figure 185. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *St. Anthony of Padua Adoring the Christ Child*, 1660. Etching after Elisabetta Sirani's original. Bologna.

Figure 186. Elisabetta Sirani, *St. Anthony of Padua Adoring the Christ Child*, 1662. Oil on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Figure 187. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, Frontispiece. Engraving. From *Maria Vergine coronata. Descrizione, e dichiarazione della divota solennita fatta in Reggio, 13 maggio, 1674. Composta dall'Abbate Giacomo Certani*, Reggio, 1675. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 188. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Portrait of Francesco II D'Este*. Etching. From *Maria Vergine Coronata. Descrizione, e dichiarazione della divota solennita fatta in Reggio, 13 maggio, 1674. Composta dall'Abbate Giacomo Certani*, Reggio, 1675. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 189. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Madonna and Child*. Etching. From *Maria Vergine Coronata. Descrizione, e dichiarazione della divota solennita fatta in Reggio, 13 Maggio, 1674. Composta dall'Abbate Giacomo Certani*, Reggio, 1675. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 190. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Machina trionfale della venerabile confraternita di S. Domenico (the Mountain of Moses, closed)*. Etching. From *Maria Vergine Coronata. Descrizione, e dichiarazione della divota solennita fatta in Reggio, 13 maggio, 1674. Composta dall'Abbate Giacomo Certani*, Reggio, 1675. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 191. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Machina Trionfale della venerabile confraternita di S. Domenico (the Mountain of Moses, open)*. Etching. From *Maria Vergine Coronata. Descrizione, e dichiarazione della divota solennita fatta in Reggio, 13 maggio, 1674. Composta dall'Abbate Giacomo Certani*, Reggio, 1675. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 192. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, Frontispiece. From *Relazione e disegno della fiera per la solita festa popolare della porchetta fatta in Bologna, il di 24 agosto 1693*, Bologna, 1693. New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 193. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Festa della Porchetta*. Etching. From *Relazione e disegno della fiera per la solita festa popolare della porchetta fatta in Bologna, il di 24 agosto 1693*, Bologna, 1693. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Figure 194. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *La battaglia contro il tifone*, 1675. Tempera. Bologna, Archivio di Stato.

Figure 195. *Bando* against dice playing, printed by Paolo Blado, 1588. Bologna.

Figure 196. A. Brambilla, *Skin the Owl Game (pela il chiu)*, 16th century. Engraving. Rome, Museo nazionale delle arti e tradizioni e popolare.

Figure 197. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Game of Truth*, 1688. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 198. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Game of Husbands and Wives*, 1691. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 199. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Game of the Beloved with Her Lovers*, 1690s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 200. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Game of Women and Their Affairs*, 1690s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 201. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Game of Eyes and Mouths*, 1690s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 202. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Unhappy Life of the Meretrice or Prostitute in Twelve Months*, 1690s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 203. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The Conversion of the Meretrice of Todi*, 1690s. Fresco. Bologna, Chiesa di S. Maria dei Servi.

Figure 204. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Monache di Bologna*, 1680s-90s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 205. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Le donne spesse volte hanno lunga la veste e corto intelletto*, 1678. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 206. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli. *Donna Superba*, 1675. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 207. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Sad is that Home where the Chicken Crows and the Cock is Silent*, 1690s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 208. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli. *The Game of the Land of Cucagna (Cockaigne)*, 1691. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 209. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli. *Game of Professions*, 1698. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Figure 210. Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *The New Game of the Turk, the German and the Venetian*, 1690s. Etching. Bologna, CACRB.

Maniera Devota/Mano Donnesca: Women, Virtue, and Visual Imagery during the Counter-Reformation in the Papal States, 1575-1675

Introduction

The history of women's participation in religious movements during the Early Modern period in Europe has long been less commented upon in modern scholarship than that of their male counterparts. This project will enlarge our understanding of the participation of women in the visual program of the Counter-Reformation in the Papal State of Bologna.¹ The study focuses on Bologna since the city had an unprecedented large group of active women artists as well as being a crucial site of Catholic reform. Knowledge of Bologna's women is still incomplete; therefore this dissertation is structured as a series of interlinked case studies, some of which rescue forgotten artists, while others add a new dimension to better-known figures. This research thus takes a necessarily broad approach, combining aspects of iconography, patronage, gender studies, and reception studies; it also integrates media neglected in previous studies such as prints and embroidery. The goal is to insert these artists into the larger philosophical and theoretical context of the city's intellectual history, first by investigating the links between religion, science, and naturalism; and second, by unpacking critical terms from the historiography of style that came to bear on their work. Lastly, the project explores the city's concern with women's virtue, as it is a constant thread woven into visual imagery of all media from the sixteenth into the seventeenth century. The synthesis of all this material will produce a

¹ The Papal States in the sixteenth century: Rome, Bologna, Ravenna, Rimini, and Perugia.

wider view of the still understudied and ill-documented relationship between women, religion and the visual arts in the complex period of the Counter-Reformation.

Framing my argument is the dialectic between two critical terms: the *maniera devota* and the *mano donnesca*. *Maniera devota* was originally used to describe the style of Flemish art, especially that of Memling, as well as the work of some Italian artists of the fifteenth century, such as that of Perugino, which was considered naturalistic, pious, and inspiring of devotion in the viewer.² Although this style was in decline by the mid-sixteenth century, I posit that, following the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Counter-Reformation brought a renewed interest in the *maniera devota*, and that the women of Bologna were actively involved in its creation and reception. *Mano donnesca* derives from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art criticism regarding the gendered hand of the artist's style.³ *Mano donnesca* has traditionally been used in a negative sense, representing a style that was too labored, especially regarding minute surface detail, and thus appropriate to female artists who, in the gendered hierarchy of genres, were usually relegated to portraiture. However, this project problematizes such a reading of the term and seeks instead to show that the city's archbishop Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597) encouraged women to take an active role in Christian reform. Paleotti's approach created a dialogue between the *maniera devota* and the *mano donnesca*, in which gender both influenced the production of sacred visual culture and was, in turn, affected by it.

Early modern Bologna was unique in having several prodigious female artists, some of whom were lost to modern art criticism until very recently, despite the fame attained during their lifetimes. Lavinia Fontana's (1552-1614; Fig. 1) career marks the emergence of women artists

² Francisco de Hollanda, *Four Dialogues on Painting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 15-16. See the section below on "Definition of Terms" for a full explanation of the term. The term was reported by de Hollanda from a conversation between Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna regarding the devoutness of Flemish painting.

³ Fredrika Jacobs, *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 85-122.

during a complex period that is often misguidedly subsumed under the title of Mannerism by traditional scholarship.⁴ Her successor Elisabetta Sirani (1638-1665; Fig. 2) produced over 200 paintings, drawings, engravings, and etchings, and organized the first school for women artists. One of Sirani's many students, the engraver Veronica Fontana (1651-1694), is still largely unknown but was responsible for the illustrations in a diverse selection of books, from scientific tracts to religious manuals.⁵ The eighteenth-century biographer Luigi Crespi records 28 women painters, sculptors and graphic artists working in Bologna, but with few of their works extant or published, an accurate compendium of what remains is needed in order to assess further connections between the maestra and her students; this is included as appendix 1.⁶ Several factors contributed to the city's unique confluence of women with art, science, and religion, chief among them a flourishing university community and an archbishop whose goal as both patron and theorist was to reform visual imagery. University scholars such as the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) contributed to the intellectual vibrancy of the city, and at the same time, the need for scientific illustration fostered the well-known style of precise naturalism distinctive to Bologna in the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries.⁷ Aldrovandi kept one of the largest known

⁴ The exception to the above is the emergence of the Carracci and Caravaggio, which is recognized as a revolution in style and the beginning of the Baroque period; however, with this example we are speaking of the very end of the sixteenth-century (see Freedberg, *Circa 1600*). My comment refers rather to the earlier part of the sixteenth century, which is normally lumped under the label of Mannerism by traditional scholarship, as the only movement between the high Renaissance and Baroque. This remains an open debate.

⁵ Although sources indicate that there were more, we know of at least six different texts: five in various collections across the globe and one still unaccounted for; see the beginning of chapter 5. Veronica is not related to Lavinia Fontana.

⁶ Luigi Crespi, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori Bolognesi tomo terzo alla maesta de Carlo Emanuele Iii. re di Sardegna & C. & C.* (Bologna: Marco Pagliarini, 1769). Other primary sources include: Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi* (1678), ed. G.P. Zanotti (Bologna: Tip. Guida all'ancora, 1841); Marcello Oretti, *Notizie de' professori del disegno, cioe pittori, scultori et architetti bolognesi e de' forestieri di sua scuola, 1760-1780*. Ms. B 126, IV, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna. Microfiche; Antonio Pier Paolo Masini, *Bologna perlustrata, Edizione completamante riveduta e accresciuta dall'autore*. Bologna: L'erede di Vittorio Benacci, 1666 (see also his *Aggiunte* of 1690). The maestra also had male colleagues such as Lorenzo Tinti. Further details are in chapter 4 and appendix 1.

⁷ Giuseppe Olmi and Paolo Prodi, "Art, Science and Nature in Bologna Circa 1600," in *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 213-237.

collections of naturalia open to artists such as Lavinia Fontana for study, and he had the entire corpus illustrated.⁸ His collection was bequeathed to the city of Bologna and later combined with that of Ferdinando Cospi (1606-1683; Fig. 3), the Medici art agent, who continued this tradition for his own collection by creating a catalogue titled the Museo Cospiano, illustrated by Veronica Fontana.⁹ Figures such as Aldrovandi have not received much attention from art historians, but they are critical, since the Counter-Reformation's desired devout manner of painting could not be accomplished without naturalism.¹⁰ Paleotti wrote the definitive work on the reformation of images, the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, published in 1582. The *Discorso* was a mandate for the artist to create clear visual imagery with a didactic purpose, promoting naturalism in reaction to mannerist excesses. Paleotti also called for women's participation in religious reform, thus endowing women in Bologna with greater agency than elsewhere and producing opportunities for the first successful group of women artists.¹¹ This attitude was in marked contrast to cities such as Florence, the majority of whose visual imagery in the late sixteenth century bears the stamp of a more male-dominated ducal iconography. Paleotti's far-reaching reforms also included promoting charitable institutions for the religious education and reform of young girls and wayward women. In turn, these institutions required new religious images with specific iconography tailored to the site, its functions, and its audience, such as the embroidered copies of altarpieces by Fontana and Sirani created by the girls in these reform

⁸ Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 141. Aldrovandi published only four volumes of his vast collection of naturalia during his lifetime, with other volumes being published posthumously.

⁹ Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano annesso a quello del famoso Ulisse Aldrovandi e donato alla sua patria dall'illustrissimo signor Ferdinando Cospi ... march. di Petriolo ... Descrizione di Lorenzo Legati* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1677). Manuscripts and illustrations of Aldrovandi's collection remain part of the Cospi studio.

¹⁰ Olmi and Prodi, *The Age of Correggio*, 213-237. Olmi and Prodi have called for a closer look at the link between scientific work and the Emilian school. See also Anton Boschloo who mentions this, but only in reference to male artists, failing to recognize the connection between Aldrovandi and women artists. Anton W. A. Boschloo, *Annibale Carracci in Bologna: Visible Reality in Art after the Council of Trent* (New York: A. Schram, 1974).

¹¹ Ilaria Bianchi, *La politica delle immagini nell'età della Controriforma: Gabriele Paleotti, teorico e committente* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2008), 45,192.

houses.

Although women were producers, patrons, and consumers of a wide range of imagery in varied media, little work has been done on women and print media in Italy, including book illustration.¹² This project seeks to fill this gap by using resources that include printed *bandi* (a type of poster put up by the authorities to inform the citizens of new or modified laws),¹³ festival ephemera, scientific tracts, and popular prints in order to map women's participation in sites where secular politics, civic pride, artistic display, and communal devotion all combined in the performance of the theater of religion.

State of Research

In the 1970s, historian Joan Kelly Gadol first posed the question of whether women had a Renaissance, and Linda Nochlin asked, "Why have there been no great women artists?" Since that time, scholars have labored to answer them with considerable, but as yet incomplete, success. The National Museum of Women in the Arts presented a groundbreaking exhibit in 2007 of Renaissance and Baroque women artists, but the catalogue merely lists them in alphabetical order, as opposed to a more thematic approach.¹⁴ More specific to this project, feminist scholars have known since Laura Ragg's 1907 study that Bologna was unique in having so many women artists; however, they have not fully answered the question, "Why Bologna?"¹⁵

Modern scholars have expanded the canon for other artists as, for example, Mary Garrard did in her seminal iconographical study of the Roman painter Artemisia Gentileschi, and writers

¹² Except for the work on Diana Mantovana by Evelyn Lincoln, *The Invention of the Italian Renaissance Printmaker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

¹³ See below, chapter 5.

¹⁴ *Italian Women Artists from Renaissance to Baroque*, (exhibition catalog, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; Milan: Skira Editore., 2007).

¹⁵ Laura Maria Roberts Ragg, *The Women Artists of Bologna* (London: Methuen, 1907).

such as Griselda Pollock have added new dimensions to feminist scholarship by asking different questions.¹⁶ However, the current literature on the Bolognese remains fragmented and methodologically limited. Scholarship on Lavinia Fontana has focused mainly on secular paintings and patronage; a small exhibit in 1998 opened the subject of religious discourse in this artist's work, but more remains to be done. Sirani has been the subject of only one monograph and a few articles, and there is hardly anything on her students.¹⁷

This project builds on the existing scholarship by integrating iconography with social and intellectual history, as opposed to psychoanalysis, for example, which although useful in Gentileschi's case, would be much less productive for my inquiry. Women's production from this period needs to be considered in relation to the religious and stylistic discourses of the day, just as has been done for male artists, using a combination of iconographical, patronage, and reception studies.¹⁸ This analysis is still lacking for much of Lavinia Fontana's and Sirani's oeuvre, and Veronica Fontana's prints remain uncatalogued. In addition, the work of the prolific engraver Giuseppe Maria Mitelli has yet to receive much scholarly attention outside of Italy. Mitelli was a colleague and collaborator of both Sirani and Fontana; his work in popular prints

¹⁶ Space restrictions preclude complete citations for the considerable amount of literature on female artists: among the most comprehensive are: Mary Garrard and Norma Broude, *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1992); Griselda Pollock in *The Artemisia Files*, ed. Mieke Bal (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Whitney Chadwick, *Women, Art and Society* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996) and Mary Garrard, *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). Also, a source which was published too late to be considered in this study is Babette Bohn, "Patronizing *pittrici* in Early Modern Bologna," in *Bologna, Cultural Crossroads from the Medieval to the Baroque: Recent Anglo-American Scholarship*, ed. Gian Mario Anselmi, Angela De Benedictis, and Nicholas Terpstra (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2013), 113-126.

¹⁷ Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (London: Yale University Press, 2003); Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna, 1552-1614* (Milan: Electa, 1998); Adelina Modesti, *Elisabetta Sirani: Una virtuosa del seicento Bolognese* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004); Babette Bohn, "The Antique Heroines of Elisabetta Sirani," *Renaissance Studies* 16 (2002): 52-79. For a pioneering source, see Fiorella Frisoni, "La vera Sirani," *Paragone* 29, no. 1 & 2 (1978): 3-18. There is also a forthcoming volume as of the time of this study on Elisabetta Sirani by Adelina Modesti.

¹⁸ Charles Dempsey, "The Carracci and the Devout Style in Emilia," in *Sixteenth-Century Italian Art*, ed. Michael Cole (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 388-402. Dempsey discusses the *maniera devota* as related to Bolognese male artists such as Francesco Francia, but neglects to mention later painters such as Lavinia Fontana. This is an example of a gender-exclusionary approach to scholarship that should be updated.

invoked similar themes of women's virtue in concert with the *maniera devota* of the city.

Outline of Discussion

This study is divided into separate case studies in five chapters that traverse different centuries and media, yet are all connected by the thread of women, virtue, and visual imagery. Chapter one, "Bologna as Exemplary Counter-Reformation City: The Intellectual History of the City and Its Scholars," sets the stage by describing the social and historical background of Bologna during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. It outlines the contribution of the university to the Paleotti's formation. The archbishop's intellectual training was influenced by his close contact with individuals such as Aldrovandi, whom he consulted about his *Discorso*, and the impact of the scientific method on visual imagery to help form a devout style.¹⁹

The second chapter, "Tridentine Visual Reform in Paleotti's *Discorso*: The Modes of the Artefice Cristiano in both Theory and Practice," introduces the reader to the key issues that recur throughout the study. This chapter gives a detailed iconographical analysis of a selection of Fontana's religious paintings in light of a close reading of the *Discorso* itself. Certain elements emerge as dominant themes in her approach to sacred painting, which is aimed at creating a devout manner: the icon, the sacred narrative, and the religious historiated portrait. These modes which often intersect with science, are then correlated with themes found in Paleotti's writings, such as the "artefice cristiano" and a certain Christian humanism, further made manifest by his interest in Early Christian archaeology. This chapter also explores the links between women and icons.

¹⁹ Gabriele Paleotti, "Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane," in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), 119-509. E. g., the crypt in Paleotti's chapel was modeled on Roman martyriums in an attempt to associate the church with its early Christian roots and lend an air of scientific validity based on the discovery in Rome of the Catacombs.

Chapter three, “Stitching for Virtue: Women’s Work in Embroidery for the *Conservatori* or Christian Houses of Reform in Bologna,” serves as a bridge between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the artists Lavinia Fontana and Elisabetta Sirani, as well as connecting the different media of painting and embroidery. The chapter examines commissions for institutions such as the Conservatorio delle Putte di Santa Marta, a Christian home for wayward girls, in view of the important Counter-Reformation topos of women’s lost honor regained. In addition, it sheds light on an unexplored genre, the needlework pictures made by the girls of the reform institutions in imitation of these paintings, which were understood as the work of devoted hands. This chapter also explores the reception and use of these objects by their intended audience.

The fourth chapter, “Felsina Pittrice: Elisabetta Sirani, Her Students and Circle, and the *Maniera Devota*,” focuses fully on the seventeenth century by exploring the participation of a later generation of women artists in the church’s visual reform campaign. It analyzes the extant work by Sirani’s colleagues and students in order to assess both Fontana and Sirani’s role as an inspiration for later female artists, providing evidence for a continuation of the sixteenth-century modes of the *maniera devota* into the seventeenth century. This chapter provides a basis for further research into possible remains of other missing works by these women.

The final chapter, “Veronica Fontana and Giuseppe Maria Mitelli: Prints, Piety and Science in the Work of Sirani’s Students and Colleagues,” carries the discussion to the topic of popular prints and book illustration. This chapter provides the first complete list of Veronica Fontana’s work. It analyzes her illustrations for religious books such as *Epistole et Evangeli* as well as for Cospi’s printed catalog of his *Wunderkammer* (collection of curiosities), the *Museo Cospiano*, in order to clarify attribution and to demonstrate the ongoing links in Bologna

between religion, science, and naturalism. It also examines the work of her important colleague, the male artist Giuseppe Maria Mitelli (1634-1718), whose imagery engages the theme of women's virtue as seen through the lens of both church reform and popular prints. Mitelli's didactic prints displayed the continued emphasis on women's lost honor and redemption into the eighteenth century.

Definition of Terms: *maniera devota* and *mano donnesca*

Before proceeding to further chapters, a clarification of key terms is necessary. The two terms in the title of this work are intimately connected in the sixteenth-century discourses on style, but even more specifically intertwined with gender and visual imagery. *Maniera devota* is a term that came out of the artistic discourses of the 16th century when describing art of the 15th century, more specifically early Netherlandish art. The history of this term is quite complex but we have several recorded instances of its use. Our most important record remains the 16th-century conversation between Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo as reported by Francisco de Hollanda years after he supposedly heard it.²⁰ The discussion revolves around a description of Flemish painting, which Colonna describes as "cosa devota" or devout thing, and states: "I much wish to know ... what Flemish painting may be, ... for it seems to me more devout than that of the Italian manner." Michelangelo's famous response agrees with Colonna: "Flemish painting ... will ... please the devout better than any painting of Italy... It will appeal to women, ... and also to monks and nuns." In other words, it is an art that may cause the viewer to weep, and it appeals to a type of facile emotional sentimentality, as opposed to an art that is pious but also

²⁰ Hollanda, 15-16. See also n. 2. There is also some controversy as to the reliability of de Hollanda's statement; see Robert J. Clements, "The Authenticity of de Hollanda's Dialogos em Roma," *PMLA* 61, no. 4 (Dec. 1946): 1018-1028.

appeals to the intellect. Certainly with this comment Michelangelo intended to elevate his own work.

Nonetheless, in the fifteenth century it was well known that Flemish paintings carried great prestige and were found in some of the most important collections: for example, at the court of Federico da Montefeltro in Urbino and in the collection of the Medici, which included Flemish painting as well as Flemish tapestry.²¹ Alfonso IV of Naples owned both an *Annunciation* by van Eyck and a *Passion* by Rogier van der Weyden, and in the sixteenth century, Marc Antonio Michiel described seeing paintings by the Dutch painter Bosch in the collection of Cardinal Domenico Grimani in Venice.²² Yet this prestige was also linked directly to the piety of the image.

As early as 1449, Cyriac of Ancona recognized what the Counter-Reformation would later require in religious imagery by the sixteenth century: Cyriac described one of the Flemish paintings he saw in the collection belonging to the Este court in Ferrara as “a most devout image” (*pietissima agalma*).²³ Speaking of Rogier van der Weyden’s *Descent from the Cross*, he described the two elements that are linked within the *maniera devota*: naturalism and piety. Cyriac said that Rogier’s figures “seemed to cry with great grief, and breathe as though they

²¹ Paula Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting, 1400-1500* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 31-34; Keith Christiansen, “The View from Italy,” in *From Van Eyck to Breugel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Maryan Wynn Ainsworth and Keith Christiansen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 39-62; Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2009), 199-249.

²² Fazio records Alfonso IV’s collection; for Fazio see M. Baxandall, “Bartolomaeus Facius on Painting: A 15th-century Manuscript of the ‘De Viris Illustribus’,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964): 103; see also Nuttall, 31-34. Michiel supposedly saw Bosch’s *Paradiso* and *Inferno* panels, mistakenly described as canvases; these panels are discussed further in chapter 2; for Marc Antonio Michiel see T. von Frimmel, ed., *Der Anonimo Morellino (Marcanton Michiels ‘Notizia d’opere del disegno’)*, (Vienna: 1888), 102; for Bosch see also Lorne Campbell, “Notes of Netherlandish Pictures in the Veneto in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *The Burlington Magazine* 123, no. 941 (August 1981): 472-3; see also Christiansen, 45.

²³ F. Scalamonti, “Vita di Ciriaco Anconitano,” in *Delle Antichità picene*, ed. Giuseppe Colucci (Fermo: Dai Torchi dell’Autore, 1786-97) XV; A. Mottola Molfino and A. Natale, eds., *Le Muse e il Principe: Arte di corte nel rinascimento padano*, 2 vols. (exhibition catalogue, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan: Modena, 1991), II, 326-7.

were alive,” and he described the landscape as “not of human artifice, but of nature herself.”²⁴ According to Nuttall, the *maniera devota* was also a reaction to the humanism of fifteenth-century Florence, when the fiery preacher Savonarola delivered sermons calling for simple pious images (“simple and devout without any vanity.”)²⁵ By the mid-sixteenth century, when Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano wrote about Michelangelo’s infractions in the *Last Judgment*, he once again called for images that are true and modestly painted;²⁶ these are the precursors to Paleotti’s requests in his *Discorso* of 1582.

The *maniera devota* was thus intrinsically related to the Flemish manner. The Flemish manner can be described as a style that privileges realism by employing naturalistic details achieved through the virtuoso use of oil technique. In addition, the pious expression of the Flemish manner is what ties this style to the *maniera devota*; initially this was connected to Rogier van der Weyden’s images, which contained tears depicted as if they were real, according to the primary sources.²⁷ However, an important distinction is that other Flemish artists such as Memling propagated a more restrained version of the *maniera devota*, later imitated by artists

²⁴ Ibid. For Cyriac, see also Christiansen, 39, and Nuttall, 32-33.

²⁵ P. Ginori Conti, ed., *La Vita del Beato Ieronimo Savonarola scritta da un’anonimo del. sec. XVI e già attributa a Fra Pacifico Burlamacchi* (Florence: 1937), 51; Nuttall, 40.

²⁶ Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano, “Dialogo di M. Giovanni Andrea Gilio da Fabriano degli errori de pittori circa l’istorie,” in *Trattati d’arte del cinquecento: fra manierismo e controriforma*, edited by Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), vol. 2, 4-115. For more on Gilio, Vasari and devout painting, see Giovanni Previtali, *La fortuna critica dei primitivi dal Vasari ai neoclassici in Italia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1964), 16-21.

²⁷ For more on the *maniera devota* see n. 26 above; see also Nuttall, 31-40. Sources on Flemish painting in Italy include Cyriac (see n. 23), and Bartolommeo Fazio and Michiel (see n. 22). Fazio wrote in Naples in 1455 regarding the figures in Rogier van der Weyden’s painting that “their grief and tears so represented, you would not think them other than real.” M. Baxandall, 103. Another source was Alessandra Machinghi Strozzi, a Florentine matron who wrote to her son working in Bruges in 1460 regarding a Netherlandish holy face, and described it as: “una divota figura e bella.” C. Guasti, ed., *Alessandra Macinghi negli Strozzi: Lettere di una gentildonna fiorentina del secolo XV ai figliuoli esuli* (Florence, 1877), 231. See also Vasari’s discussion of Fra Angelico as an artist whose holy life allowed him to create the most devout works; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de’ piu eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori...* ed. G. Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence, 1878-85): vol. 2, 510, 520. See David Franklin regarding Fra Bartolomeo and the “Dominican style.” David Franklin, *Painting in Renaissance Florence, 1500-1550* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 81.

such as Perugino and Raphael.²⁸ I posit that it is this later Flemish manner that most appealed to Paleotti due to its combination of piety and decorum.

In Bologna, the attention to minute detail, luminous color and pious mood that Flemish painting was known for would have appealed greatly to someone like Paleotti, seeking truth and verisimilitude in the visual arts. The city had stylistic links to Flemish painting through local artists such as Francesco Francia and Denys Calvaert, as well as via the influence of Perugino's devout style on the work of Raphael, creator of an important altarpiece in Bologna. Already in the fifteenth century records tell us that Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, who was court painter in Urbino, was familiar with Flemish painters from that court and thought highly of their work. Santi wrote *La vita e le gesta di Federico di Montefeltro, Duca d' Urbino*, a poem in verse written at court, which exalts the talented painters of the day, among whom he includes the Early Netherlandish painters Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden: "*A Brugia fu, fra gli altri piu lodati, el gran Jannes e l'discepul Rugiero, cum tanti di excellentia chiar dotati ne la cui arte et alto magistero di colorir, son stati si eccellenti che han superati molte volte el vero.*"²⁹ Raphael had an important commission in Bologna, the *Ecstasy of Saint Cecilia* (Fig. 4), painted for the chapel of Elena Duglioli dell'Olio in 1515, in the Church of San Giovanni in Monte, which was seen as a model of devout and pious painting. This model was then followed by Bolognese painters such as Francesco Francia (Fig. 5), who created Madonnas with the same serene and sweet expression as Raphael's Cecilia, with a perfectly detailed, Flemish-style landscape in the background. Perugino, who was reputed to have been Raphael's teacher, was also heavily

²⁸ Nuttall, 31-40. See also Jeryldene M. Wood, "Perugino and the Influence of Northern Art on Devotional Pictures in the Late Quattrocento," in *Kunsthistorisk Tidskrift*, LVIII, 1989, 7-18; Lane, *Memling*, 230-1, 236.

²⁹ Giovanni Santi, *La vita e le gesta di Federico di Montefeltro, Duca d' Urbino, poema in terza rima*, vol. 2, 673. Translation: "In Bruges there was, among others most lauded, the great Jan [van Eyck] and his disciple Rogier [van der Weyden], with such excellence clearly gifted in the art and high majesty of coloring; they have been so excellent that they have many times surpassed reality." See also Christiansen, 14.

influenced by Flemish painting, as can be seen in his *Crucifixion (Galitzin Triptych, Fig. 6)*, due to its devout mood and meticulous manner; Perugino's *Madonnas* were equally as pious and sweet as Francia's, but Michelangelo called him "goffo" in art or "awkward," due to the little variation in facial expression and gestures, and Vasari reports the unlikely legend that Francia stopped painting after he saw the beauty of Raphael's *St. Cecilia*, since he despaired of ever competing with it.³⁰ We know, moreover, that there were successful Flemish artists such as Denys Calvaert painting in Bologna in Fontana's day, and that his landscapes were highly regarded, further indicating that Flemish work was valued.³¹ Fontana was familiar with Calvaert's work in addition to the work of her father Prospero, who had worked with Calvaert. Prospero Fontana's work was a combination of naturalistic details with a more intimate

³⁰ Dempsey, 388-89; For Vasari's claim regarding Francia's death see Vasari, III, 545-7. For Michelangelo's comment regarding Perugino as "goffo" (awkward or clumsy), see Vasari, III, 585. For more on Perugino and his devout style see Wood, 7, 16; Lane, *Memling*, 230; David Alan Brown, *Raphael and America*, (exhibition catalog, National Gallery of Art, Washington, January 9th – May 8th, 1983), 111; see also Gretchen Hirschauer, "Meditations on a Theme: Plants in Perugino's 'Crucifixion'," in *The Flowering of Florence: Botanical Art for the Medici*, exh. cat., edited by Lucia T. Thomas and Gretchen A. Hirschauer (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2002), 108-17. Hirschauer discusses the flower symbolism in the crucifixion as related to the type of religious symbolism found in Flemish painting; see Vasari, III, 574, where he describes Perugino's style as a "minuta maniera"; for more on the Galitzin Triptych; see also Sylvia Ferino, "A Master-painter and his Pupils: Pietro Perugino and his Umbrian Workshop," *Oxford Art Journal* 3, (1979): 9-14. Ferino discusses Perugino's oil technique as related to Flemish painters on p. 11. For more on the controversy of Raphael's training, see Lane, *Memling*, 230, 236; Tom Henry and Carol Plazzotta, "Raphael: From Urbino to Rome," in *Raphael from Urbino to Rome*. National Gallery, London, from 20 October 2004 to 16 January 2005, edited by Hugo Chapman, Tom Henry, and Carol Plazzotta with contributions from Arnold Nesselroth and Nicholas Penny (London, 2004), 14-65. See especially 16-18, 26, where the authors mention that Santi was influential in Raphael's training, but as more of a role model for a courtier; Luisa Becherucci, "Raphael and Painting," in *The Complete Works of Raphael* (New York: Harrison House, 1969), 9-196. Becherucci is of the opinion that he studied with Perugino, but in Florence; see also Vasari, III, 590, who describes Perugino as Raphael's "maestro". Vasari actually writes in his preface to the third section of the lives that both Francia and Perugino had a "new beauty" that had been missing in earlier artists: "una dolcezza ne'colori uniti, che la comincio ad usare il Francia Bolognese e Pietro Perugino, questa bellezza nuova e piu viva" ("a sweetness of color unity, that began to be used by Francia from Bologna and Pietro Perugino, this new beauty and more alive"), Vasari, IV, 11. See also Previtali, 16-21. Vasari describes the *St. Cecilia* by Raphael as "una Sta. Cecilia e si vede nella sua testa (viso) quella astrazione che si vede nel vivo di color che sono in estasi" ("a St. Cecilia and one could see on her face the abstraction (expression) of those who are in ecstasy"), Vasari, IV, 349-350.

³¹ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, I, 196.

knowledge of, or interest in, the mannerist forms of his colleague Vasari, with whom he worked on several projects such as the casino for Pope Pius.³²

In addition to being so proficient at representing the visible world, Flemish painting had a further value for the church: the ability to represent intangible things as truthful, such as visions from virtual pilgrimage and meditation. Since the medieval period, the apologia for painted images had been that they were meant to assist in reaching a more heavenly vision.³³ Yet for the faithful viewer, even in these images they saw the holy person actually appear in their midst, as a result of their pious prayers. Thus the holy figures were represented almost in flesh and blood via panel and paint, with a remarkable attention to detail, to increase the illusion that they were actually present. For example, in Memling's *Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove* and Jan van Eyck's *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin* (Figs. 7a and 7b), the two faithful patrons, van Nieuwenhove and Chancellor Rolin, take part in a private meeting with the divine, a live encounter with the Madonna, as a reward for their fervent prayers and belief.³⁴

However, scholars write that by the beginning of the sixteenth century there was a “reversal of tastes”³⁵ regarding the importance of Flemish painting in Italy, and that the *maniera fiammingha* is no longer emulated.³⁶ According to Nuttall, Michelangelo's work signaled a new approach to Netherlandish models, where “beauty overcame the details of Flemish painting.”³⁷ It

³² Ibid., 175.

³³ Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting* (Doornspijk, Netherlands: Davaco, 1984), 11-21; Matthew Botvinick, “The Painting as Pilgrimage: Traces of a Subtext in the Work of Campin and his Contemporaries,” *Art History* 15 (1992): 1-18.

³⁴ For more on spiritual pilgrimage, see Laura D. Gelfand and Walter S. Gibson, “Surrogate Selves: The Rolin Madonna and the Late-medieval Devotional Portrait,” *Simiolus* 29 (2002): 119-138; Craig Harbison, “Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting,” *Simiolus* 15 (1985): 87-118; Lane, *Memling*, 147-174; see also n. 33 above, Botvinick. For more on Van Eyck's *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin* see Micheline Comblen-Sonkes and Philippe Lorentz, *Musée du Louvre II (Corpus de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas méridonaux et de la principauté de Liege au quinzième siècle, 17)* (Brussels: Centre international d'étude de la peinture médiévale des Bassins de l'escaut et de la Meuse, 1995). More will be said on spiritual pilgrimage in chapters 2,3 and 4.

³⁵ Christiansen, 57.

³⁶ Nuttall, 239-46.

³⁷ Ibid., 240, 57-8.

was not until the third quarter of the sixteenth century that the simple and devout qualities of the *maniera devota* as expressed by Perugino and Memling were revived by Paleotti in Bologna, where the prestige of the devout style remained the ideal. These qualities were an echo of the words of Savonarola, and a contrast to the excess beauty of Michelangelo's figures, which would eventually contribute to the style of Mannerism.³⁸ Therefore, by the late-sixteenth century, the *maniera devota* had traveled from the Netherlands to the Papal State of Bologna, from the brush of Memling, Perugino, and Francia to the *mani donne* of Lavinia Fontana and her successors.

Lavinia Fontana's work fits into this schema because she worked for a patron who required the utmost in biblical truth, decorum, and piety from his artists' paintings, i.e., a true *maniera devota*. Charles Dempsey is one of the few scholars to discuss this concept of *maniera devota* as related to Italian painting in Bologna.³⁹ More specifically, however, he relates it to Francesco Francia, in a derogatory sense, and does not mention later artists such as Prospero or women artists at all, even though we know there were several at work in Bologna at the time of the Carracci and beyond. Federico Barocci is another candidate for the *maniera devota* and it is no mere coincidence that Fontana was chosen to replace Barocci for the commission for the altarpiece in Paleotti's own chapel.⁴⁰ Dempsey also does not mention the crucial link between the *maniera devota* and science, i.e. the verisimilitude and naturalism made possible by the city's strong ties with scientific research, which will be discussed in chapter 1.

³⁸ See chapter 1 for further details on Paleotti's writings and Michelangelo. See also on Michelangelo, Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo* (New York: Harper and Row., 1974), 204. See also on Mannerism, Marcia B. Hall, *After Raphael: Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5. One of Paleotti's preferred artists was Dürer, since the German artist combined both an intellectual approach to biblical stories with the naturalism and decorum required to appeal to the pious. See chapter 2 for further discussion of Paleotti and Dürer.

³⁹ For Dempsey see n. 18; see also Boschloo, who links the Carracci style to devout painting, but does not discuss the role of women artists in this development.

⁴⁰ Bianchi, 192.

Like *maniera devota*, the term *mano donnesca* came out of the long history of style from sixteenth-century art treatises and other writings. Thanks to the seminal article by Philip Sohm on style and the pioneering work by Frederika Jacobs on women artists and art criticism, we know that style was gendered in the sixteenth century.⁴¹ Artists' activity was compared with the power of creation and procreation, resulting in loaded terms. Vasari describes Sofonisba Anguissola's talent thus: "*Ma se le donne si bene sanno fare gli uomini vivi, che meraviglia che quelle che vogliono sappiano anco fargli si bene dipinti?*"⁴² Although at times also ascribed to males, since it was believed that males gave the active seed for procreation to the more passive female vessel, the terms for creation still recalled the female and/or divine in terms of aesthetic criticism of the day.⁴³ One of the earliest direct instances of the use of the term *mano donnesca* is in the seventeenth-century Florentine art critic Filippo Baldinucci's comments regarding Lavinia Fontana's painting of *St Hyacinth* (to be discussed further in chapter 1):

un suo quadro in S. Sabina ... in esso avea rappresentato Maria Vergine con Gesu e S. Iacinto... avea guadagnato a Lavinia gran credito, e parte per la Meraviglia che portavan con seco le sue pitture... per uscire da mano donnesca, e parte per la stima che n'era fatta per lo gran parlare della gente;

in addition, Vasari uses gendered terms with negative overtones when describing the life of the Bolognese sculptor Properzia de' Rossi: "mani si delicate," hands so delicate, in other words, too delicate to be doing such manly work as carving.⁴⁴ Artists, both male and female, were described as having a masculine/virile style or brush or, at times, a feminine style. Both Michelangelo and

⁴¹ Philip Sohm, "Gendered Style in Italian Art Criticism from Michelangelo to Malvasia," *Renaissance Quarterly* 48, 4 (Winter 1995): 759-808; Jacobs, 85.

⁴² Vasari, VI, 502. "If women know so well how to make living men, what marvel is it that those who wish are also so well able to make them in painting?" ; Jacobs, 94.

⁴³ Jacobs, 49-53; see also Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁴⁴ Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, V (Florence: Tip. Tartini e Franchi, 1681-1728), 96-97; Vasari, V, 76-7; see also Jacobs, 68-69 and Cantaro, 325. Translation: "Her painting in Santa Sabina in which she represented the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child and Saint Hyacinth, has earned Lavinia great credit, in part for the wonder it carried, for having come from a womanly hand, and in part for the esteem that resulted from the grand words of the public."

Malvasia applied certain terms denoting a feminine style to Flemish painting: Michelangelo called it “appropriate for women and old men” since its *devoto* aspect moved one to tears, and Malvasia used the terms *troppo finito, leccato*, i.e. licked or slick, even *affiamingato* (“Flemish-ized”).⁴⁵ These latter terms were due to the fact that Flemish painting contained a wealth of minutia and detail and often had a highly finished surface, never a rough finish, such as that found in Titian’s late work, or Michelangelo’s virile style. Originally this aspect of the debate also came from the Venetian/Florentine debate of *colore* versus *disegno*, in which *disegno* (drawing) is masculine/Florentine, the solid foundation of all art and the domain of virile artists like Michelangelo, and *colore* is feminine/Venetian, the style of Titian and his school, in which color dominates the work.⁴⁶

For our purposes, the term *mano donnesca* denotes both the style and the hand of the artist, the conflation of the term for *maniera* with *mano*, the gendered hand of the female artist. Some male artists also participated in this *maniera devota*; Guido Reni, who was, ironically, the sinner/saint gambling painter of the most pious *Madonnas* of the seventeenth century, was said to have a woman’s style: “*da donna, fiamingha, slavata, senza forza*” (womanly, Flemish, washed-out, without force).⁴⁷ This style was appropriate to his sweet *Madonnas*, but too feminizing for his male saints, who could then be criticized as too soft or unmanly. Yet it appears that the women artists of Bologna were particularly active in this style, beginning with Lavinia and continuing on to Elisabetta Sirani and her students as well. These artists were involved in a

⁴⁵ Malvasia uses these terms in comparing Calvaert’s work to Prospero’s, using the prevailing aesthetic of the 17th century; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 196.

⁴⁶ For more on the historical debate between Michelangelo as the hero of *disegno*, and Titian as the proponent of *colore*, see Rona Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 316, 338.

⁴⁷ Sohm, 4; this quote comes from Malvasia, who reports Ferrante Carli’s words describing Reni’s style. Malvasia, despite his praise of Reni, admits that there are those who find fault with Reni’s second style: “*commune opinio, di languida troppo, sua seconda maniera*” (of common opinion, too languid, his second style): Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 53, 58. For more on Reni see also Richard E. Spear, *The “Divine” Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 51.

pious naturalism that was formed from constant contact with the scientific community, for example, Veronica Fontana and her illustrations of Cospi's collection. The term *mano donnesca* becomes especially relevant regarding embroidery, as we know that delicate hands were required for this delicate work – a connection explored further in chapter 3. This research combines these two key words as they became deeply intertwined in Counter-Reformation Bologna with the production of visual imagery and church propaganda. It seems that the *mano donnesca* was especially proficient at, and was especially selected to be put to use in, creating the *maniera devota* required by the Council of Trent, thus creating unique opportunities for women artists in the Papal States.

Chapter 1

Bologna as Exemplary Counter-Reformation City: The Intellectual History of the City and Its Scholars

From the sixteenth into the seventeenth centuries, Bologna was famous as a center of Counter-Reformation zeal. This reputation was due to many factors, not least of which was the reformatory zeal of its archbishop Gabriele Paleotti, appointed as such in 1582 when Bologna became an archbishopric and author of a revolutionary post-Tridentine manual for artists, the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (1582).⁴⁸ At this time, Bologna became second only to Rome as the most important city in the Papal States. Reasons for this increased status include the prominence of its university and the community of scholars that surrounded it, such as the naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi and the historian Carlo Sigonio (Fig. 8).⁴⁹ In addition to being well known for its faculties of law and theology, the university became one of the first to have a faculty in history and was one of the most active in the sciences at the time. Furthermore, and most interesting for the present research, the university apparently awarded degrees to female students as early as the thirteenth century.⁵⁰ These reasons all contributed to the great flowering of female artists, as mentioned in the introduction, during the late sixteenth and seventeenth

⁴⁸ Paolo Prodi, *Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597)* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1959); Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* (Bologna, 1582), in *Trattati d'arte del cinquecento, fra manierismo e controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi, vol. 2 (Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1961), 119-509.

⁴⁹ William McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). Sigonio was originally from Padua. He became the first to occupy the chair in history at the University of Bologna. He is shown in Fontana's portrait as a scholar in his studio, with books and inkwell on the desk. The background view shows us a perspective diagonal with his students in the room behind him. At the time of this dissertation, an English translation of Paleotti's *Discorso* was forthcoming by William McQuaig and Paolo Prodi.

⁵⁰ Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race: The Fortunes of Women Painters and Their Work* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1979), 280, 226. Bitizia Gozzadini supposedly lectured for the university in the thirteenth century. However, we have very little in the way of secure records concerning her life; for more on the legend of Gozzadini, see also Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna*, 154.

centuries. Their work will be the subject of later chapters. First, in order to understand the unique role that Bolognese intellectual life played in the exceptional opportunities available for women there, we must take a closer look at the university scholars and men of science who were an important part of the archbishop's circle. The final part of this chapter gives a brief introduction to Lavinia Fontana and the possible influence of the city's intellectual milieu on her style.

One scholar in particular, Ulisse Aldrovandi, best represented the university's tireless quest for scientific knowledge. He is shown here (Fig. 9) in an engraved portrait by Agostino Carracci for the frontispiece of his *Ornithologiae* of 1599. Aldrovandi was a naturalist who maintained an immense collection of naturalia for his own study and that of other scholars (Figs. 10-13). His collection is rumored to have contained over 7,000 specimens of flowers and plants pasted into books, as well as paintings and woodcuts.⁵¹ What is most significant about his collection, however, and is often not remarked upon, is his insistence on having each and every sample illustrated as accurately as possible. Aldrovandi believed that only with a combination of both text and image could one arrive at a complete description of an object. This philosophy stems from his scientific background rooted in empirical observation, as well as the Bolognese interest in emblems. The combination of text and image was a popular pastime for the aristocracy, and represented a local paradigm for the representation of knowledge in pictures. These patrons created compilations of their emblems as a mark of their taste and education in Bologna: "The use of emblems and insignia of noble origins was so diffuse in the social and cultural realm, that it must have held a particular importance due to its all-pervasive presence."⁵²

⁵¹ Giuseppe Olmi, "Science-Honour-Metaphor: Italian Cabinets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London: House of Stratus, 1985), 4.

⁵² Silvia Volterrani, "Al dolorosa albergo. Imprese, insegne e osterie fra cinquecento e seicento," in *Con parola breve e con figura: Emblemi e imprese fra antico e moderno*, ed. Lina Bolzoni and Silvia Volterrani (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2008), 263. "Imprese e incize di nobili origini nella realta culturale e sociale, quale pratica diffusa a tutti i livelli sociali, dovevano rivestire, grazie alla loro pervasiva presenza, una particolare importanza." Paleotti

One of the most popular books on emblems, the *Symbolicarum quaestionum*, was published by a Bolognese writer, Achille Bocchi, in 1555. In addition, it was illustrated with engravings by Giulio Bonasone based on Prospero Fontana's drawings. As proof of his interest, Aldrovandi himself had an image on the wall in his studio of a particular emblem that referred to the myth of Narcissus. The emblem consisted of a man looking at his reflection in the mirror, beneath which rested a harpy and a chimera.⁵³ The interpretation is meant to be a departure from the traditional concept of "knowing oneself" through one's own reflection, as Narcissus would. However, the harpy and chimera represent the obstacles and pitfalls of Narcissus's path. Aldrovandi preferred instead to be known through his collection, the true representation of his wisdom, to which he attached his own identity and prestige.⁵⁴ In fact, his collection was also categorized with 37 emblems, all illustrated on the walls of the three rooms of his studio.⁵⁵

Thus when Paleotti decided to reform the city's religious imagery by writing his *Discorso*, he openly sought advice from both painters and scientists in addition to clerics. This might seem controversial at first, since the church had often had a difficult time accepting the advance of a science that would have questioned its dogmatic truths, truths that were meant to be taken solely on faith, not empirical experiment. And yet, Paleotti was aware that the prestige of science was not lost on the church; science was merely another branch of knowledge that the church could claim as its own, or at least this is how the archbishop thought. We can deduce this attitude from Paleotti's overall support of scientists such as Aldrovandi, as well as controversial

also gives evidence of this in the fifth book of his *Discorso*, Chapter 16, 27, with a section on decorating the home and the importance of emblems. See also Elisabeth See Watson, *Achille Bocchi and the Emblem Book as Symbolic Form* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

⁵³ Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 302; see also Lina Bolzoni, "Parole e immagini per il ritratto di un nuovo Ulisse: l' 'invenzione' dell' Aldrovandi per la sua villa di campagna," in Elisabeth Cropper, ed. *Documentary Culture: Florence and Rome from Grand Duke Ferdinando I to Pope Alexander VII*, Villa Spelman Colloquia 3 (Bologna: La Nuova Alfa, 1992), 317-348.

⁵⁴ Findlen, 311. Findlen also connects the naturalist's search for categorization with the Bolognese love of emblems.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 302.

scholars such as Sigonio, whom he had asked to write a history of the church that was eventually rejected by the papacy.⁵⁶

Aldrovandi was somewhat of an enigma, and he has been described as “one of the last Renaissance philosophers and yet also one of the first modern scientists.”⁵⁷ The scientist had prestigious backers in the Medici dukes; however, although Aldrovandi’s relations with Francesco I de’ Medici were very good, apparently after Francesco died, Ferdinand I was less amenable to Aldrovandi’s work. Aldrovandi left behind over 300 manuscripts and a “data bank” of illustrations of nature. When he returned to Florence from Rome in 1577, the scientist met the Veronese painter Jacopo Ligozzi (Fig. 15). Aldrovandi created a visual theater of nature using Ligozzi as his favorite artist, whose work he described as full of “*vaghezza e utilita*.”⁵⁸ One of the few works by Aldrovandi published during his lifetime was the *Ornithologiae* in 1599 (Fig. 14). The frontispiece includes an engraving of his portrait (Fig. 9), as well as the dedicatory page to Pope Clement VIII.⁵⁹ In this center illustration he presents his text to the pope and thus likens himself to Aristotle with Alexander the Great or Pliny the Elder with Emperor Vespasian (both illustrated flanking Aldrovandi’s self-portrait), inserting himself (literally) into this illustrious lineage of scholars and their patrons.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 162.

⁵⁷ Alessandro Tosi, *Ulisse Aldrovandi e la Toscana: carteggio e testimonianze documentarie* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1989), 34.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁹ The portrait is an engraving by Agostino Carracci; see Diane DeGrazia Bohlin, *Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family: a Catalogue Raisonné* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1979), 334-5. Bohlin attributes the framework of the portrait not to Brizio, but to Giovanni Valesio.

We are fortunate enough to have a record of Aldrovandi's instructions to Paleotti regarding the use of visual imagery to represent nature.⁶⁰ One thing that is quite clear from this text is that Aldrovandi advocated that a painter create imagery as close as possible to nature: "*Bisogna che il pittore molto bene conosca particolarmente tutte le cose sopra dette, o siano inanimate o vegetabili, accio le possa dipingere con suoi appropriati colori, e non conoscendole, debba consultare quelli che n'hanno cognizione.*"⁶¹ In order to do this the painter would need to be extremely knowledgeable about many areas, including science. This is perhaps an echo of Leonardo's advice to artists in both his treatise on painting and in his own practice: "You cannot be a good painter unless you are a universal master capable of imitating with your art all the qualities of the forms which nature produces," "but it seems to me that those sciences are vain and full of error which do not spring from experiment, the source of all certainty."⁶² What Paleotti added to this tradition in his *Discorso* is the idea of a naturalism combined with decorum, at the service of the church as the bible of the illiterate. For Paleotti, the purpose of all painting is to illustrate the sacred narratives in a truthful manner, to *ammaestrare* or teach, to *delectare* or delight, and to *movere* or move, as indicated in the chapters of his *Discorso*: "Della dilettaazione che apportano le imagini cristiane"; "Che le imagini cristiane servono grandemente per ammaestrare il popolo al ben vivere"; "Che le imagini cristiane servono molto a muovere gli

⁶⁰ Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti del dottore Aldrovandi, in Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), 925-930. Aldrovandi apparently wrote at least twice to Paleotti regarding indications for the *Discorso*, once on Jan. 5, 1581, and then again on Nov. 4, 1582. This quote is from his 1582 letter, reproduced in Barocchi, 925-930. The 1581 letter is on pages 511-517 of the same source.

⁶¹ Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti*, 924. "The painter must know the particulars of all the above-mentioned things, be they inanimate or vegetable, so that one can paint them with the appropriate colors, and not knowing them, must consult those who know of them."

⁶² Leonardo, quoted in Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 25, 37. On Leonardo and experience see also Martin Kemp, *Leonardo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 94, 133, 157.

affetti delle persone.”⁶³ Regarding decorum, if nudity is not called for in a biblical story, then it should not be used. If, on the other hand, a sacred history calls for nudity, for example, in a martyrdom scene, then the artist must create a scene with verisimilitude and truth in order to tell the Christian story without anything superfluous added.⁶⁴ The artist must avoid mannerist artifice and seek instead the Christian content to be not a poet, as in *ut pictura poesis*, but a Christian orator, *ut pictura retorica divina*, as Paleotti writes: “dell’officio e fine del pittore Christiano a similitudine degli oratori.”⁶⁵ Thus Paleotti combined a scientific naturalism with his call for a *maniera devota*; his text will be analyzed in further detail in chapter 2, while here the focus is on Aldrovandi.

Aldrovandi and Paleotti: “Non ha l’ottimo artista alcun concetto”

Aldrovandi tried to classify all living plants and animals, as well as man-made curiosities.

He states however, that of all the natural things, man is the most difficult to represent:

L’ultima causa sara dell’uomo...; nel quale si affaticano tanto li pittori e meritamente, ma pochi riusciscono eccellentissimi pittori, essendo veramente l’uomo un picciol mondo, nel quale il pittore ha d’avere infinite considerazioni, essendo cosa veramente degna di grandissima meraviglia....⁶⁶

These thoughts on representation are reminiscent of Michelangelo’s words in the sonnet he had written, “Non ha l’ottimo artista alcun concetto”:⁶⁷ “Not even the best of artists has any conception that a single marble block does not contain within its excess, and that is only attained

⁶³ Gabriele Paleotti, “Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane,” in *Trattati d’arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), 214, 216, 221, 224.

⁶⁴ The subject of nudity in Paleotti’s *Discorso* will be examined in detail in chapter 2.

⁶⁵ *Ut pictura poesis* refers to painting as mute poetry, whereas *ut pictura retorica* is painting as rhetoric. www.oxfordartonline.com, “*Ut pictura poesis*.”

⁶⁶ Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti*, 928-9. “The last point shall be man...; a subject at which many painters toil, with good reason, but few succeed as excellent painters, since man is truly a small world, for which the painter must have infinite consideration, being a subject truly worthy of great wonder...”

⁶⁷ James M. Saslow, *The Poetry of Michelangelo: An Annotated Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), no. 151. “Not even the best of artists has any conception that a single marble block does not contain within its excess, and *that* is only attained by the hand that obeys the intellect.”

by the hand that obeys the intellect.” This conceit was also commented on by Benedetto Varchi. The poem is a Neoplatonic reflection on the process of artistic creation. It is the hand of the artist that gives final life to the sculpture, but only when the hand obeys the intellect. Paleotti would most probably have agreed with this process, but he would have specified a *mano* more devoted to the spiritual realm (as opposed to the realm of art) than Michelangelo’s was, in the case of the Sistine Chapel. One can deduce Michelangelo’s dedication to art and the classical form of the male nude from the complaints regarding the naked saints in his Last Judgment; some, such as Biagio da Cesena, stated that the naked saints would be more appropriate to a bathhouse than to the house of God.⁶⁸ As for Paleotti, he may have found his *mano devota* in the *mano donnesca* of Bologna.

In order to depict things, Aldrovandi states that the artist must know everything firsthand; if he does not, he may on rare occasions refer to experts such as Aristotle. Aldrovandi thus advocates a realism that is perfectly in step with Paleotti’s version of a naturalism that has the veracity of history painting. An artist must, for example, know the right plants for the right seasons in order to accurately depict a sacred narrative: “Bisogna che il pittore abbia considerazione della stagione ... per esempio nelle piante ... per il freddo le piante perdono il suo decoro.”⁶⁹ Aldrovandi writes, in line with Vitruvius and later both Gilio da Fabriano and Paleotti, that grotesques are refused by the said author (himself) since they exist only in the imagination: “*Laonde le grottesche, per esser chimerice e fondato solo nel nudo intelletto, non essendo conformi alla natura, sono refutate dal sudetto autore.*”⁷⁰ Following this argument, it is clear that everything that is represented in sacred narrative also “exists” since the artist is asked

⁶⁸ Blunt, 118.

⁶⁹ Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti*, 929. “The painter must take the season into consideration, for example, with plants... in the cold plants lose their decorousness...”

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 925. “Moreover, the grotesques, for being chimerical and founded only in the naked intellect, not conforming to nature, are refused by the said author.”

to paint it. This concurs with Paleotti's desire to depict sacred narrative as history painting, in addition to contemplative icon. One must paint only "*le cose che sono*" (the things that are); within this category then, the artist is responsible for researching that which he does not know.⁷¹ Aldrovandi states that the Bolognese artists Lorenzo Sabbatini and Orazio Sammachini came to him to learn how to paint certain plants.⁷² The artist must also know biology, for example, in order to depict the organs for a successful martyrdom scene: "*bisogna che abbia conversazione con gli anatomici eccellentissimi e vegga con diligenza tutta la sezione del corpo umano... a fine che possa conoscere di qual figura sia e il cuore, il fegato, ... etc, occorendo a dipingere qualche martirologio, ... lo sapia dipingere.*"⁷³

Aldrovandi was in agreement with Michelangelo and Varchi that man was the most difficult thing to represent. However, in contrast to Michelangelo, for whom man was also the most worthy, Aldrovandi gives as much significance to the accurate depiction of a flower as Michelangelo did to the human torso. Aldrovandi advocates a very close relationship between artist and scientist such as he himself had with his illustrator, Jacopo Ligozzi. He also advocates that the artist give the subject spirit, not simply create the description of a dead plant or animal, but more of a living image; the artist must give the subject vivacity and life.⁷⁴ Regarding this idea of the living image, his ideas were in perfect concert with Paleotti's directives for painting: *muovere, delectare, docere*: to move, to enjoy, and to teach.⁷⁵ Only this type of image that comes alive can actually move the viewer to both enjoyment and, ultimately, to Christian edification, thus accomplishing Paleotti's goal of the Christian painter.

⁷¹ Ibid., 923, 929.

⁷² Ibid., 925.

⁷³ Ibid., 929. "The artist must be in conversation with excellent anatomists and look with diligence at all the sections of the human body... so that he can know of what form is the heart, liver, ... etc. needing to depict some martyrdom, ... to know how to depict it."

⁷⁴ Ibid., 925.

⁷⁵ Paleotti, I, 214-226.

Apparently Aldrovandi was interested in the Bible not only from a pious, but also from a scientific point of view. One of the other tracts on which he was working included a scientific catalogue of all the significant aspects of nature encountered in the Bible, a *theatrum naturae* of the biblical world, an unprecedented project.⁷⁶ In addition, he was working on a treatise on wood, more specifically the natural or scientific properties of the wood of the true cross itself. His illustrations were done mostly by Ligozzi and engraved by a team of northern artists such as Cornelius Schwindt (Figs. 15-16).⁷⁷ Ligozzi was from Verona but lived in Florence while working for the Medici. The artist was both interested and involved in the latest scientific discoveries, such as the invention of the telescope, which was to have an impact on the painting of the day.⁷⁸ One can conclude that both Aldrovandi and Paleotti felt that the representation of scientific reality should not lessen the devotional impact of an image, but rather, it should enhance it, as if one were to combine the physicality of the relic with the spirituality of an icon to produce the final result.

Unfortunately, we have no record of any women artists working on Aldrovandi's scientific illustrations. However, we do have examples of a later Bolognese seventeenth-century female artist, Veronica Fontana, creating the illustrations for the collection of Ferdinando Cospi, the seventeenth-century noble who inherited Aldrovandi's collection (which Aldrovandi left to the city of Bologna), as we will see below. We also know that at least one female artist of Aldrovandi's day, Lavinia Fontana, was greatly influenced by his scientific work, and her paintings are the focus of chapter 2. Fontana's father, the mannerist artist Prospero Fontana, was also consulted by Paleotti on his *Discorso*. However, the archive that contained the letters

⁷⁶ Findlen, 66.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁷⁸ Eileen Reeves, *Painting the Heavens: Art and Science in the Age of Galileo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 5.

exchanged between the artists and Paleotti was burned in a fire. Ilaria Bianchi was able to salvage some information from the fragments left behind by the fire, which we will examine in closer detail in the next chapter.⁷⁹

It is reasonable to conclude that Lavinia Fontana probably visited Aldrovandi's collection, although her name is not in the visitor's book kept by the scientist. There are only two women listed: Ippolita Paleotti and Christina of Sweden; however, there may have been some who visited and did not leave their signatures behind.⁸⁰ The reason for this lacuna may be that the visitor's book was more about the prestige of Aldrovandi's collection, and as such it was important for him to display the signatures of his most illustrious visitors, mostly males of course.⁸¹ Aldrovandi tells us that his collection was for the enjoyment of all, but mostly for the use of artists, scientists, and scholars. In addition, he states that his collection is specifically for the use of all *Christian* (my italics) scholars; thus piety is always present, even in the natural history museum.

In truth, Aldrovandi's collection was a combination of natural history and man-made curiosities, an aesthetic combination that greatly increased in popularity in the seventeenth century. This combination can especially be seen in Cospi's collection, which was truly more of a *wunderkammer*, or collection of curiosities, popular during the Early Modern period. Aldrovandi saw himself as a type of Christopher Columbus who wanted to visit the New World and collect rare, unusual specimens, but never managed the trip.⁸² Instead, he relied mostly on specimens that were sent to him by others. He did, however, engage in his own field trips closer to home, even visiting the volcanos of Etna and Vesuvius while preparing a treatise on

⁷⁹ Ilaria Bianchi, *La politica delle immagini nell'età della Controriforma: Gabriele Paleotti, teorico e committente* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2008), 15.

⁸⁰ Findlen, 143.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 314.

volcanoes. Volcanoes too were transformed from scientific phenomena to religious symbols, as we will see in chapter 5; the theme of volcanoes was picked up by the seventeenth-century engraver Giuseppe Maria Mitelli and recycled in popular prints of religious festivals.

Despite his claims, in some ways Aldrovandi does retain some superstitious elements in his scientific tracts. His scientific method can be characterized as a combination of Aristotelian method and scientific observation, but certainly not a complete discounting of ancient knowledge for new scientific observation.⁸³ An example of this type of combined knowledge is his work on the *Monstrorum*; the original manuscripts for this work were published posthumously in 1642 by a later scholar, Nicolai Tebaldini. The *Monstrorum* was a collection of all the aberrations in nature such as two-headed individuals, hairy humans, and the like; some of these were plausible accidents of nature, while others, purely mythological, were remnants of a moralistic and ancient scientific tradition. One of the omens for the Buoncompagni pope, the Bolognese Gregory XIII (1585-1592), that dealt with “monsters” was the arrival of a “real” dragon found in Bologna, in all probability a type of reptile (Fig. 17). As the dragon was Gregory XIII’s emblem, its appearance near the city was initially the cause of panic and doomsday predictions. Eventually, the dragon was taken as a positive sign for the cardinal, but only after Aldrovandi was given the task of neutralizing and de-mystifying the captured creature as part of nature’s wonders for the interests of powerful patrons such as the Pope.⁸⁴ Aldrovandi immediately set about writing a multi-volume treatise on dragons, *Dracologia*, now that he felt he had an actual live specimen to work with; he described the creature as a type of snake with feet. However, in other areas, Aldrovandi did make great strides in scientific categorization, including many items from the New World. Only four of his treatises were published while the scientist was alive. After his

⁸³ Olmi in Impey and MacGregor, 4; Findlen, 354.

⁸⁴ Findlen, 19.

death, other scholars made an attempt to publish some of his remaining work by appending their own thoughts to a section of his and publishing the entire corpus under their own names.⁸⁵

Aldrovandi's research was disseminated through his collection, which was a museum of natural history, but above all, a pious one. This reminds us that religion and science were constantly intertwined in Counter-Reformation Bologna. Despite being questioned by the Inquisition at one point, he was backed by Paleotti and the charges were eventually dismissed.⁸⁶ One of the reasons he aroused the ire of the Inquisition was his support of the other important scholar in this group, Carlo Sigonio. Sigonio was a historian originally from Padua who took up the University of Bologna's first chair in this discipline; he too was in contact with Paleotti. The archbishop engaged Sigonio to write a history of the Catholic Church, one that was revolutionary in scope, starting from the Old Testament and including a re-evaluation of the Jewish tradition. This project he dutifully executed, although the ecclesiastical authorities were not very pleased with the final product.⁸⁷ Sigonio's self-avowed method was to press for objectivity, a type of historical method with scientific overtones, in concert with that of Aldrovandi. Unfortunately, Sigonio applied this method to his history of the Church and described the donation of the papal lands to the Church by Charlemagne as an event that was not securely documented.⁸⁸ Due to this and other infractions his work did not receive the praise he was expecting.

Returning to a consideration of the ties between these scholars, it would seem that Paleotti, although known as a passionate religious reformer, was also very interested in scientific inquiry and advancing the knowledge of the known physical world, all the while documenting the history of man as a reflection of God's greatness. Paleotti desired to appropriate this

⁸⁵ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 162.

⁸⁷ McCuaig, 78.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 82.

knowledge for the church just as Pope Julius II had done with the frescoes in the Vatican Stanze. The pope had commissioned Raphael to create frescoes representing all the branches of human knowledge, now in the service of the glory of God and papacy. In this program he would have seen eye-to-eye with Aldrovandi, who saw no conflict between his Catholic faith and his scientific pursuits. Paleotti even upheld Sigonio's cause until it was no longer tenable to do so. Sigonio was also unfortunately accused of fabricating a newly found treatise by Cicero.⁸⁹ This charge further discredited the historian at the end of his career despite his early achievements such as the compilation of a learned history of ancient Rome.

Paleotti was also involved in other academic endeavors with the scholars of his day. For example, while he was still only bishop of Bologna, he promoted the typographical society and the publishing of all manner of scientific and religious texts. This trend would prove significant for later artists such as Veronica Fontana and Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, who, we will see, were both prolific engravers of textual illustrations and popular prints. Sigonio was the scholar originally entrusted with finishing a complete history of Bologna. Many of the scholars in Paleotti's circle--Aldrovandi, Sigonio, and Prospero--all supported the idea that the acquisition of knowledge across all fields was an essential requirement for the artist, if he/she was to be successful as a painter. The artist was expected to familiarize himself with all fields and "not to be merely a mechanic" ("*non solo operaio*") in order to succeed at his task, which was the transcription of reality into pictures to be read by the faithful.⁹⁰

Perhaps Paleotti realized something that is still little commented upon, i.e., the fact that a tradition of scientific inquiry could lead to a more objective and truthful mode of storytelling by

⁸⁹ Ibid., 291.

⁹⁰ Bianchi, 43. Paleotti's brother Camillo was a senator, and also friends with Sigonio and Aldrovandi.

artists engaged in producing visual imagery for the church, as Trent required.⁹¹ Paleotti truly believed in images as the Bible of the illiterate, a type of new and improved *biblia pauperum*, a long tradition, but one which weakened through the mannerist period of the sixteenth century.⁹² The archbishop's *Discorso* sought to rectify this situation, and for its contents he drew upon not only his theological training, but also the expertise of his university colleagues in science and history and the advice of his artist friends regarding painting.

Paleotti was eventually appointed archbishop of Bologna and began writing his *Discorso* to be published in 1582. In the meantime, he kept a notebook of material for his later books on imagery called the *Addendum de picturis*.⁹³ As for spiritual guidance, both Bocchi and Aldrovandi followed the Jesuit Francesco Palmio, who was also the *consigliere*, or spiritual advisor to Paleotti.⁹⁴ Paleotti must have appreciated the Jesuits, who were well known for their intellectual approach to religion, one that often combined science with faith, a path close to his own heart. We will take a closer look at the details of the *Discorso*, a unique document in its time, in the next chapter, after a brief introduction to our first artist, Lavinia Fontana.

Lavinia Fontana from Bologna to Rome: A Brief Introduction

Lavinia Fontana is a rare example of a successful woman artist in the late sixteenth century, a critical time for the fate of all religious imagery, but especially so in the Papal States. Fontana's artistic production and career allow us to analyze the intersection of women with art,

⁹¹ Olmi is the only scholar to really address this issue; see above n. 10.

⁹² For the *Biblia Pauperum*, see Albert C. Labriola and John W. Smeltz, trans. *The Bible of the Poor (Biblia Pauperum). A Facsimile and Edition of the British Library Blockbook C.9 d.2.* (Pittsburgh, 1990); Avril Henry, "The Iconography of the Forty-page Blockbook *Biblia pauperum*: Form and Meaning," in *Blockbücher des Mittelalters, Bilderfolgen als Lektüre.* (Gutenberg-Museum, Mainz, 22. Juni 1991 bis 1. September 1991) (Mainz, 1991), 263-88.

⁹³ Paolo Prodi, *Ricerca sulla teorica delle arti figurative nella Riforma Cattolica* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1984), 74.

⁹⁴ Prodi, *Il Cardinale*, 311. His attention to dogmatic detail included trying to make certain that there was only one consistent message communicated in the religious texts, without any confusion between Old and New Testament.

science, and religion in this crucial period, thanks to the unique influence on her work of university scholars in Bologna such as Aldrovandi and the religious fervor of the reformer Paleotti. Lavinia Fontana was born to an artist father, Prospero, who spent many years working in Rome with Vasari and was also a close confidante of Paleotti. Although her father's painting is closer to Vasari's manneristic style, it still contains elements of Bolognese naturalism that Lavinia would take further. Lavinia Fontana's period is closer to the time of the Carracci reform, in which she played an active part in her own right. In 1599, her father even sent one of her drawings to the Medici sculptor Giambologna in Florence for comment, in an attempt to promote his daughter's talent. The original letter from Prospero to Giambologna survives and it is clear from this letter that her work was appreciated by the older artist:

quando penso alla sua tavola considero se ella si fosse a sorte trovata presente a quel santissimo misterio; poi che l'ha si naturalmente et devotamente in si picciol quadro dipinto et con tanta maesta, il che non ho possuto mancare ralegrarmene seco et insieme avisarli che in Fiorenza non e restato pictore grande ne picciole che non sia stato a vederla et a tutti ha portato gran stupore et Meraviglia.⁹⁵

This incident recalls how Sofonisba Anguissola's father sent her drawings to Michelangelo for comment, following the trope of the female artist seeking approval from the master and male artist.⁹⁶ In 1577 Lavinia was married to Gian Paolo Zappi of Imola. Explicit in her marriage contract was a clause that stated that she would be the breadwinner and continue to paint after her marriage, as opposed to withdrawing into a more domestic role as wife and mother.⁹⁷ This is not to say that she shirked her wifely duties; Lavinia gave birth to no fewer than 11 children, all the while actively painting. She remained in Bologna for most of her life

⁹⁵ Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana bolognese: "pittora singolare" 1552-1614* (Milan: Jandi Sapi Editori, 1989), 15. "When I think of her painting, I wonder if she was accidentally present during that holy mystery; because she painted it, in that small panel, so naturally and in such a devout manner and with such majesty that I could not fail to cheer myself up and also notify her that in Florence there has been no painter neither great nor small that hasn't seen it, and it has brought great surprise and wonder to all."

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁹⁷ See Cantaro for a transcription of the letter, 302; Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and her Patrons in Sixteenth-Century Bologna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 40.

until her father passed away in 1597.⁹⁸ Then she made plans to go to the Eternal City and lived in Rome from 1604 until her death in 1614, in what must have been an exciting time there for the Bolognese artist.

Fontana's residence in Rome coincided with the period immediately after the time in which Paleotti had been called to Rome; he was in Rome as archbishop of Albano and Sabina from 1589 until 1597, although he always kept close ties with his native city until the end of his life in 1597.⁹⁹ This was also the same time that other famous Bolognese artists were in Rome, such as Annibale Carracci and later Reni, Albani, and Domenichino, promoting their new brand of classical naturalism in opposition to Caravaggio's more controversial hyperrealism. Perhaps before Paleotti passed away, he was able to put in a good word for his favorite Christian artefice, Lavinia, since she had already received a commission for the *Vision of St. Hyacinth* for the Church of Santa Sabina in Rome (Fig. 18).¹⁰⁰ The commission was obtained while she was still in Bologna, thus lending credence to the possibility that her fame preceded her. The cleric Alfonso Ciaconio may have been involved in this commission. Ciaconio, a prelate living in Rome, had requested a portrait of Fontana for his collection of famous individuals. Both he and Cardinal Berniero (the patron of the St. Hyacinth) were Dominicans. Ciaconio had also invited Paleotti to Rome to see a recently discovered ancient Christian catacomb, and the two remained in close contact due to a mutual interest in early Christian archaeology in Rome.¹⁰¹ These early Christian ruins would have been important evidence for Paleotti's insistence on the historicity of the saints, necessary for his *maniera devota*. Fontana brought this style with her to Rome, and is responsible for four panels of female saints (Saints Agnes, Cecilia, Catherine of Siena and

⁹⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁹⁹ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 73.

¹⁰⁰ Cantaro, 194; Murphy, 195,197.

¹⁰¹ Bianchi, 97. More will be said on this topic in chapter 2.

Claire, Figs. 19-22). In addition, she painted portrait roundels of the two patrons, the Rivaldi, in a chapel of this recently finished Church of Santa Maria della Pace in Rome, which was designed by the Baroque architect Carlo Maderno.¹⁰²

Fontana's final important public commission in Rome was for the church of San Paolo Fuori le Mura. The commission for the *Stoning of St. Stephen* required Fontana to paint numerous figures in a large-scale painting. Unfortunately, the original painting was destroyed in 1823 and all that remains is an engraving by Jacques Callot (Fig. 23).¹⁰³ The Roman critic and artist Giovanni Baglione, although praising Fontana's portraits, complained that this large-scale commission was a public failure for the artist; however, we should bear in mind that his opinion may be tainted by the fact that he had wanted this commission for himself.¹⁰⁴ Apparently, despite Baglione's comment regarding her failure, Fontana did many other works (especially portraits) while in Rome, most of which have unfortunately vanished without a trace. For example, she is said to have done a portrait of no less than the pope himself, for a visiting ambassador from Persia, as well as a portrait of this ambassador, who, rumor has it, fell madly in love with her (according to Mancini).¹⁰⁵ A painting of Cleopatra (Fig. 24) attributed to Fontana also dates from this period. This painting has an almost medievalizing style, flat and with the emphasis on the decorative surface. Perhaps Fontana was attempting to incorporate an oriental style of portrait, in the tradition of Gentile Bellini's portrait of Mehmed II, if the commission was truly related to the Persian ambassador.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Cantaro, 216.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 208.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 208.

¹⁰⁵ Angela Ghirardi, "Una pittrice bolognese nella Roma del primo seicento: Lavinia Fontana," *Il Carrobbio* 10 (1984): 159.

¹⁰⁶ Federico Zeri, *Pittura e Controriforma: L'arte senza tempo di Scipione da Gaeta* (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1970), 44. See also Romeo De Maio, *Donna e Rinascimento: L'inizio della rivoluzione* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1995).

Fontana was also registered in the prestigious Academy of St. Luke, the artistic association of Rome, however, still under her husband's name. It was not until the time of Artemisia Gentileschi that a female registered in her own name at the academy. Fontana was following in the long tradition of Bolognese women associated with visual imagery and faith. The first of this line was Caterina Vigri (Fig. 25), the fifteenth-century Clarissan nun who also illustrated her spiritual texts with devotional images and self-portraits.¹⁰⁷ Following Vigri was Properzia de' Rossi, a female sculptor who is actually mentioned by Vasari, although her life is depicted in unfavorable moral terms. Vasari accuses Properzia of creating the *Joseph Fleeing Potiphar's Wife* (Fig. 26) as a way of expiating the pain of an unrequited love.¹⁰⁸ Properzia was also famous for carving in miniature on peach and cherry pits, such as the Grassi family *stemma* (crest, Fig. 27a) which is securely attributed to Properzia (the Florence gem, with its one hundred heads, has now been attributed to an anonymous sixteenth-century German carver (Fig. 27b).¹⁰⁹ In another such carving, now lost, she is said to have carved an entire Last Supper. In a certain sense, the difficulty of this miniature work increased its sense of the *devoto*, where *meraviglia* (wonder) approaches the miraculous. Vasari's tone is a result of the fact that these earlier women artists were still seen as oddities or wonders in the art criticism of the day, often in a negative sense. However, by the time of Elisabetta Sirani, Fontana's seventeenth-century successor, Bologna's women artists were publicly praised and valued. We can see this change in the

¹⁰⁷ Vera Fortunati, *Imago Virginis: Donne artiste e sacro fra passato e presente* (Bologna: Provincia di Bologna, 1996), 7. See also Vera Fortunati and Irene Graziani, ed., *Properzia de' Rossi: Una scultrice a Bologna nell'età di Carlo V* (Bologna: Compositori, 2008). Babette Bohn, "Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 2 (2004): 239-86.

¹⁰⁸ Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri*. Ed. Gaetano Milanesi, 9 vols. (Florence: 1878-1885) 5: 76; Jacobs, 68-9.

¹⁰⁹ See Fortunati Pietrantonio and Graziani, *Properzia de' Rossi*, 49, for further discussion of the attribution of these objects to Properzia.

splendor of Elisabetta Sirani's funeral, complete with elaborate catafalque, humanistic eulogies, and burial near the immortal Guido Reni.¹¹⁰

Collaboration Between Women Artists: Lavinia Fontana and Diana Mantovana

Judging from Fontana's interactions with the scholars of Bologna and the spread of her success to the Papal city of Rome, the intellectual environment in Bologna in the sixteenth century was a very fruitful one for women artists. This became even more true in the seventeenth century, when the number of active women painters in Bologna increased to as many as between fourteen and twenty-three. Yet, one of the fascinating and still understudied questions regarding women artists of the period revolves around whether or not there was any contact or influence between them. References are somewhat scarce, but certainly within the city of Bologna, the heritage of women artists was well known from the time of Caterina Vigri to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only to be lost later in modern times.¹¹¹ The continuity between Bolognese women artists of the later seventeenth century will be the topic of chapter 4. However, outside of the city, there may have been links between Lavinia Fontana and Artemisia Gentileschi, perhaps from Fontana's period in Rome. Gentileschi would have been 21 when Fontana died in Rome in 1614. It is reasonable to assume that there may have been some contact between the two women artists.¹¹² This possible contact through travel would not have applied to Sirani, who never left the city of Bologna during her short lifetime.

There also seems to have been a link between the work of Fontana and the engraver Diana Mantovana. Fontana may have copied an image of Venus from the *The Feast of the Gods*

¹¹⁰ This is discussed further in chapters 4 and 5; Sirani was buried in the same tomb as Reni.

¹¹¹ Except for Laura Ragg's 1907 publication, the first "modern" (albeit Victorian) monograph on the women artists of Bologna in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; see above n. 12.

¹¹² Ann Sutherland Harris, "Artemisia Gentileschi and Elisabetta Sirani: Rivals or Strangers?," *Women's Art Journal* 31, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2010): 3-10.

in the Palazzo del Te in Mantua. The original by Giulio Romano was known to her through the engraving by Mantovana (Fig. 28a), and perhaps she used it as a model for her nude figure of the goddess in *Minerva in the Act of Dressing* (Fig. 28b).¹¹³ The soft curves of Minerva's body in Fontana's version, and the specific pose of the figure with her back turned to us, echo Mantovana's figure of the goddess. A collection of Mantovana's engravings had just been re-issued in 1613 after her death and in the same year as Fontana's painting of *Minerva*.¹¹⁴ In addition, *Fontana's Penitent St. Jerome in a Landscape* was inspired by an engraving by Mantovana based on a painting by Daniele da Volterra (Figs. 29-30).¹¹⁵ Fontana's version faithfully reproduces the engraving, with St. Jerome shown kneeling in prayer and adoring a crucifix, the lion at his feet. However, the landscape details are further developed by Fontana, as one would expect considering her botanical knowledge. This is a rare instance of a female engraver influencing another female artist. Fontana's letter to the Spanish cleric living in Rome, Alfonso Ciaconio, acknowledges his comparison of her to the female artist from Cremona, Sofonisba Anguissola, of whom he already had a portrait; the letter also bears witness to Fontana's recognition of herself as part of a history of women artists¹¹⁶. Ciaconio had requested a self-portrait of Fontana to add to his portrait collection of famous people, thus acquiring a double wonder, both a portrait of and a work by a woman artist.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Silvia Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna 'incisore' nella storia del libro illustrato," in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. Gabriela Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1996), 372. See also Evelyn Lincoln. *The Invention of the Italian Renaissance Printmaker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 129.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 372. There must have been some contact between Annibale Carracci and Lavinia Fontana since both were in Rome around the same time. It would be very unusual for two foreign (non-Roman) artists from the same city living in Rome not to bump into each other through some mutual Bolognese acquaintance. As of now there is no specific evidence, except perhaps a certain sense of the monumentality of her figures in a painting such as *Christ and the Samaritan Woman*, which we know was painted while the artist was in Rome.

¹¹⁵ Cantaro, 104; Lincoln, 128.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 86; Murphy, 74.

¹¹⁷ Cantaro, 86; see also Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998).

Regarding other known collaboration between artists and across genders, Fontana is alleged to have had a male student named Aurelio Bonelli, who may have been the same as the composer (1569-1620?).¹¹⁸ I know of only two works traceable to Bonelli as of the time of this research: a *Madonna and Child with Saints Cosmas and Damian*, and a *Martyrdom of St. Cordola*. Bonelli is notated in the guild records as having painted an altarpiece for one of the Arte guilds, the above *Madonna and Child*, now presumed lost; a version of this painting is attributed to Fontana by Cantaro and Murphy (Fig. 31).¹¹⁹ Apparently, Bonelli also created *The Martyrdom of Saint Cordola* for San Giovanni in Monte, found in an auction catalog, which is the only source of information on this picture (Fig. 32).¹²⁰ It remains challenging to analyze his stylistic debt to Fontana based on this sole illustration. There is a certain sense of Bolognese naturalism in the figures and landscape, although proportions remain awkward compared to those in works by the maestra. St. Cordola was one of the martyred companions of St. Ursula. In a reversal of the typical trope of the female artist with a male teacher, or even a female artist with a female teacher, we have possibly the first known example of a female artist with a male pupil.

Science and the *Mano Donnesca*

Several of Fontana's early paintings betray her intense interest in a naturalism that was obviously fostered by her contact with Aldrovandi and the scientific culture of Bologna. This quality derived ultimately from a combination of Flemish influence and native Bolognese interest in genre-like verisimilitude, and it underlies all of her paintings. For example, Fontana drew a portrait of a hirsute girl, *Antonietta Gonzalez* (Fig. 33), also called "the hairy girl." The

¹¹⁸ Maurizio Armaroli, *La Mercanzia di Bologna* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1995), 97. He may be the same Aurelio as the musician, as the dates fit.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Arte Antica.eu, "Aurelio Bonelli," http://www.arteantica.eu/artisti/bonelli-aurelio_00033728.html (accessed August 7th, 2012).

portrait of Antonietta may have been commissioned by Aldrovandi, as we know that he was studying this phenomenon. The Gonzalez family had sojourned in Bologna at Aldrovandi's request. The image is truthful and yet sympathetic, humanizing the young girl using feminine details such as the hair tie, despite the detailed accuracy in the portrayal of her particular condition.¹²¹ One can see this relative sympathy in a comparison of Fontana's version with the one in Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum* catalog (Figs. 34-37), where the same girl is shown in a full-length image, with the cold detachment of a botanical illustration. She is placed among the catalogue's monsters, both real and imagined, such as exotic fish and three-headed humans. Some of these creatures must have been real, while others were culled from descriptions in ancient sources and added to his scientific catalog. Fontana's painting of *Antonietta Gonzalez* (1594, Blois; Fig. 38) on the other hand, for which the drawing may be a preparatory study, also displays an interest in scientific observation, but again combined with a human warmth that is reminiscent of Bolognese naturalism.

Other examples of Fontana's early work that were obviously deeply influenced by this theory of naturalism are her two signed paintings of *St. Francis* (Figs. 39-40). The saint was famous for preaching that the natural world of plants and animals is an important part of God's kingdom, as well as for his great Marian devotion. Both of Fontana's paintings of St. Francis display a detailed rendering of flora and fauna, a thick, dense forest in which St. Francis almost plays a secondary role, lost in and overwhelmed by the immensity of God's nature. These images go far beyond the fifteenth-century Venetian painter Giovanni Bellini's version (Frick Collection, New York), the *Ecstasy of St. Francis*, which is normally considered an icon of Franciscan values about nature and the divine.¹²² In the Venetian painting, the saint is shown in a

¹²¹ Cantaro, 27. Aldrovandi was quite interested in this phenomenon and discussed such things in his *Monstrorum*.

¹²² For more information on Bellini's St. Francis see Augusto Gentile, "Bellini and Landscape," in *The Cambridge*

rocky landscape, communing with the divine. However, Fontana's painting contains an element of a nature-mysticism that is closer to Albrecht Altdorfer's pantheistic images of nature as an all-encompassing expression of God's wonder.¹²³ These two examples are fairly uncommon in Italian painting of the sixteenth century, while some examples of this type of landscape can be found in northern painting of the period, most probably influenced by Flemish painters. Fontana had access to other artists from the North, such as Dürer, through engravings that traveled widely when the paintings could not.¹²⁴ Fontana had also worked with Denys Calvaert, a Flemish artist who lived and worked in Bologna. Calvaert apparently had a selection of Dürer's engravings that he may have used with his students (including Guido Reni for a brief time, as well as Prospero Fontana, Lavinia's father).¹²⁵ We know that Paleotti approved of Calvaert's depiction of nature, since Malvasia reports this.¹²⁶ Unfortunately we have no patron information for Fontana's two paintings of St. Francis, but they are signed and dated by the artist. Her skillful depiction of the minutia of trees and dense forest reflects the scientific precision and categorization of Aldrovandi's collection of naturalia, with which Fontana would surely have been familiar. Both paintings display a technique of close scientific observation of plant life, which the artist also employed in order to convey the symbolic teachings of St. Francis. In these two paintings we can see how Fontana's style has perfectly adapted form to function, if we consider the writings

Companion to Giovanni Bellini, ed. Peter Humfrey (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 167-181; Mauro Lucco, "Bellini and Flemish Painting," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, ed. Peter Humfrey (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 75-94. See also *Frick Collection: an Illustrated Catalogue II* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1968), 203-209.

¹²³ For further information on Altdorfer see Christopher S. Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

¹²⁴ Jane Campbell Hutchison, *Albrecht Dürer: A Biography* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 188. We have evidence from the *Discorso* itself that Paleotti appreciated Dürer's work (see chapter 2, "The Artefice Cristiano or Devout Painter"); Hutchison confirms this.

¹²⁵ Hutchison, 188.

¹²⁶ Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi* (1678), ed. G.P. Zanotti (Bologna: Tipografia Guidi all'Ancora, 1841), I, 196.

of St. Francis such as his Canticle to the Sun.¹²⁷ The viewer can observe St. Francis literally communing with nature, a nature that serves as an expression of the divine. Fontana's painting style in these two examples can thus be considered a type of scientific *maniera devota*.

What was the end result of such a communion of science and art? We know that artists were not immune to the progress of science, despite the Counter-Reformation climate. In addition to Fontana, there were other artists involved in these developments, both in and outside of Bologna. For example, the Florentine Cigoli even included Galilean sympathies in an *Immacolata*.¹²⁸ However, in contrast to the mannerist styles of the day, a scientific realism developed in Bologna that was well suited to the demands of post-Tridentine art, when practiced by artists who could add the necessary dose of decorum. These demands included creating images that could function as both legible sacred narratives and living icons for prayer and devotion. The next chapter further analyzes the links between naturalism and religion by relating several examples of Fontana's religious paintings to the content of Paleotti's *Discorso*. The answer may lie within the iconic power of these images, which, when combined with the veracity of a historic realism and tempered by decorum, resulted in the *devota* style that was tirelessly pursued by Paleotti as the goal for his artists' work.

¹²⁷ Ugolino di Monte Santa Maria, *The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi*, ed. William Heywood (New York: Vintage Books, 1998).

¹²⁸ Reeves, 172. This idea will be explained further in chapter 2.

Chapter 2

Tridentine Visual Reform in Paleotti's *Discorso*: The Modes of the *Artefice Cristiano* in both Theory and Practice

This chapter introduces Cardinal Paleotti's work on visual reform, the *Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane* of 1582, in further detail. It presents biographical information from the Cardinal's life as relevant to the eventual formation of his theories on art as expressed in this treatise, as well as highlighting the uniqueness of the book. It also closely examines the surviving fragments of the index of his remaining three unfinished volumes of the *Discorso*, as a further source of valuable information regarding his opinions on art. It then gives a detailed iconographical analysis of a selection of Fontana's religious paintings in light of a close reading of the *Discorso*.¹²⁹ Three elements emerge as dominant modes in Fontana's approach to sacred painting aimed at creating a devout manner: the iconic, the sacred narrative, and the religious historiated portrait. In addition, the influence of science often intersects with these three modes. They in turn correlate to certain key issues found in Paleotti's writings regarding his search for the perfect *maniera devota*: Christian humanism, further made manifest by his interest in Early Christian archaeology, the link between portraiture and *virtù*, the need for an *artefice cristiano* or devout painter, and a discussion of sacred versus profane elements in Christian narrative. The section ends by positing women as the guardians of the icon, as seen in the example of Bologna's miracle-working icon, the Madonna of the Monte della Guardia, also known as the Madonna of Saint Luca.

¹²⁹ The quotes from the *Discorso* are from the original text as reproduced in Barocchi. Ilaria Bianchi's *Gabriele Paleotti: Teorico e committente*, however, provided the text of some of the letters remaining in the Archivio Isolani between Paleotti and individuals such as Prospero.

The Theory: Paleotti's Desires for Art and the Uniqueness of the *Discorso*

Cardinal Paleotti's *Discorso* was written in 1582 in Bologna to address the topic of the creation of visual imagery for the church that would conform to Tridentine dictates on decorum. Compared to other treatises of the day on visual reform, Paleotti's was as unique in many ways as was the cleric's formation. Four important aspects of its uniqueness are:

1. The *Discorso* addressed the artists directly and these exchanges reveal Paleotti's aesthetic sensibility.
2. It was the result of the advice he had taken from a variety of university scholars, artists, and scientists (not merely clerics), regarding questions where scientific and historical methods were useful for the *maniera devota*, as discussed above.
3. It was meant to be illustrated and would have created a type of index of devotional imagery, both the approved and prohibited versions.
4. Finally, part of Paleotti's formation had included a heavily humanistic education, which, despite being wary of it for his flock, he apparently still valued, always seeking a type of Christian humanism.

In an attempt to map Fontana's participation in this reform, this study analyzes a selection of her many extant religious paintings through the lens of Paleotti's *Discorso*, for which a new conceptual framework is necessary. Many scholars have mentioned Paleotti's work; however, until recently, only Paolo Prodi had done a close reading of the text (his biography in 1959 and his work on the *Discorso* and visual imagery in the 1980s), in contrast to other scholars who have often dismissed the Counter-Reformatory writings as simply "repressive" to the visual

arts, without fully reading the text itself and noting the very high value that Paleotti ascribes to art.¹³⁰ For example, Paleotti gives a history of images from antiquity to the present day, and discusses man's innate quest to see an image of the divine.¹³¹ He means to prove the importance and necessity of images for mankind, going so far as to salvage these images from their pagan roots and reinvent them in the service of the church as the *biblia pauperum*.

Paleotti's text is not the first Counter-Reformation treatise on visual imagery, but as mentioned above, it is unique due to several important factors. The first version was written in Italian as opposed to Latin so that it might be better understood by artists as well as clerics. Aldrovandi had suggested that Paleotti write it in Latin, but he refused until he published a version in 1594.¹³² Paleotti's intense interest in creating a dialogue between artists and clerics is unique to his treatise, compared for example to that of Molanus, the Flemish cleric, whose treatise (1570) was not specifically addressed to artists. However, one of the most unusual aspects of Paleotti's *Discorso* is that he asked for advice from such a diverse range of scholars, artists, and scientists, in addition to the clerics one would have expected him to ask. For example, Aldrovandi's scientific mode of inquiry and Sigonio's historical method were the keys to Paleotti's desired *maniera devota*, as discussed in chapter one.

As evidence of this cooperation among scholars, artists, and clerics, in addition to the text of the *Discorso* itself, we have letters that Paleotti wrote to his many colleagues that can be found in the Isolani Archives but survive only in partially burned fragments, as noted by

¹³⁰ Prodi's work is still the only complete biography on the Cardinal. Paolo Prodi, *Ricerca sulla teorica delle arti figurative nella Riforma Cattolica* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1984); idem., *Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597)* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1959).

¹³¹ Gabriele Paleotti, "Discorso intorno alle immagini sacre e profane," in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), 139.

¹³² Ilaria Bianchi, *La politica delle immagini nell'età della Controriforma: Gabriele Paleotti, teorico e committente* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2008), 214.

Prodi.¹³³ They were not examined until Bianchi's recent work on Paleotti as art patron, in which she analyzes all of the remaining letters and fragments of Paleotti's other written works on reform and pastoral life.¹³⁴ Bianchi's analysis seeks to recreate his activity as art patron in general, going so far as recreating his lost chapel with its altarpiece by Fontana and a crypt that focused on the early Christian martyrs. Her work is therefore directly related to the present inquiry, as she is the only scholar to have gone through those letters recently. Instead, my research focuses on the effect of his reforms as visible in the many religious paintings by Fontana in particular, and other women artists in general (see chapter 4), through a close reading of the primary source, the *Discorso*. From this text, certain key points relevant to the *maniera devota* will be identified and discussed here.

This analysis also takes into consideration the additional evidence present in the extant index for the final three books of the first version, which were never completed. The index contains vital clues to what was left unsaid, and reveals points such as Paleotti's site-specific instructions on visual imagery for all classes of people and for all manner of different sites, both religious and secular. In book five of the index, Paleotti emphasizes Marian imagery, as well as the stories of the saints and their martyrdoms, as manifested in his chapel and crypt.¹³⁵ Furthermore, Paleotti's interest in early Christian archaeology leads him to analyze images such as the Veronica veil and other icons, which are closely aligned with women, since women can be seen as the champions of icons since the Byzantine days. His choice of Fontana as the hand to create his icon of the Assumption in his own chapel indicates an openness to the feminine

¹³³ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 1980.

¹³⁴ Bianchi mentions in her introduction that an edited version of these documents is forthcoming (as of the completion of this dissertation).

¹³⁵ Paleotti, V, 509.

element in devotional practice.¹³⁶ In addition, this work documents his encouragement of an environment open to the participation of women in the creation of sacred visual imagery. In order to uncover all these previously neglected elements, this research will examine the sites of women's piety and visual culture such as the conservatorio (chapter 3), which was the intended destination of many of these religious paintings. We will also look at the artistic legacies of these women artists in various types of media in the later chapters.

Christian Humanism and the Cardinal's Formation

One of the themes that becomes evident when examining Paleotti's youthful training is his exposure to a classical humanist education. Paleotti's reforms were marked by his intellectual training; during his education he was involved in all manner of humanistic and artistic enterprises.¹³⁷ As a youth he was friends with the future Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, with whom he shared a great interest in antiquity and the classics. Paleotti was also involved in the creation of Achille Bocchi's emblem book, *Symbolicarum quaestionum* (1574), together with Prospero Fontana, who created the designs, and Giulio Bonasone, who was responsible for the engraving.¹³⁸ He was also involved in the Accademia degli Affumati ("smoked ones," perhaps relating to volcanoes and the idea of creative genius as an intellect that is smoking with activity) along with Prospero Fontana, who created the sets for the Accademia's commedia during Lent.¹³⁹ Prospero created perspective views for these events in the manner of the three-dimensional drawings by the architect Sebastiano Serlio. Prospero also created scientific images

¹³⁶ Fontana's *Assumption* will be analyzed in the second half of this chapter, fig. 55.

¹³⁷ Bianchi, 36. Paleotti had direct experience with the Council of Trent, some sessions of which were held in Bologna from 1547-9. He had always had reformatory tendencies and mystical teachers; he had his moment of conversion after a childhood accident.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

such as the volcano of Etna, which related back to the Academy's name, derived from the *fumo* or smoke of the volcano.¹⁴⁰ This theme was later picked up also by the engraver Giuseppe Maria Mitelli in his rendering of the mythological volcano god, Tifone, created for one of the city's many street festivals.¹⁴¹ Tifone was a type of chaos god who is let loose to wreak havoc, and who gets captured and defeated by the end of the play. The subject can be construed as a moral allegory for the constant battle between good and evil, and so in a neoplatonic sense can be applied to Christian values.

The only documents that remain for the Accademia's Lenten comedy are some burned fragments of the original contract. Despite the pious post-Tridentine climate of the city, the commedia contained pagan mythological themes reminiscent of earlier humanistic endeavors. The themes of the play were as follows: the second intermezzo depicted the contest between Neptune and Pallas, the third told the story of Adonis and Venus, the fourth was the story of Orpheus playing his lyre while being followed by five animals, and the fifth was the moralistic tale of human pride toward the gods gone wrong, Apollo and Marsyas.¹⁴² By the time he was archbishop in 1582, in a display of changing values, Paleotti forbade the playing of comedies during the Lenten period. It seems that in the end, he was more concerned about the possible dangers of pagan mythology to his Christian flock than of science, which conversely, he found useful to his cause.

Portraiture: Ritratti and Virtù

An important subject for Paleotti's visual reform was portraiture. Bologna, being a papal state, had a large aristocratic noble class that wanted and valued portraits. We have ample

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 37.

¹⁴¹ Mitelli's print will be discussed further in chapter 5; see Fig. 170.

¹⁴² Bianchi, 37.

evidence of this desire through the many portraits created by Lavinia Fontana. However, Paleotti felt that portraits should only be allowed if they inspire virtue, as in the case of the portrait of an important person. We can assume that the latter was the case with two portraits of the cardinal himself (Figs. 41-42). The first is a copy of a portrait originally by Fontana, and the second is a portrait of Paleotti with the city's patron saint, San Petronio, which Bianchi attributes to Fontana. The first example is similar to Fontana's portrait of Sigonio (Fig. 8), which shows the humanist scholar seated at his desk with some documents and an inkwell to indicate his important scholarly work. There is a slice of the back room visible behind Sigonio, where we also see his students; the portrait displays the symbols of education and status. The portrait of Paleotti is similarly arranged, showing the cleric in his studio surrounded simply by divine light and the image of a cross. The artist has also added the necessary attributes to turn scholarly activity into spiritual meditation, creating a Christian humanist portrait. The cross implies Paleotti's directives to the faithful gleaned from his index, in which he writes that all should have their own altars over which should be hung an image of the cross for prayer. The second portrait of Paleotti was of an even more devotional nature, with the Cardinal shown kneeling in front of his patron saint San Petronio; this painting was created for his monastery, Il Sacro Eremo at Camaldoli.¹⁴³ There are no surviving documents for the Camaldoli portrait, but we know that in order to depict the image of a saint, Paleotti had always attempted to investigate the "reality" of a saint's portrait. His fourth book was to contain specific instructions on how to portray the various saints, based on information available such as hagiography. Paleotti felt that even the image of Christ is only there as a pale reminder of the original, but that it is still necessary to focus the meditation of the faithful. This belief will be discussed further in the section on Paleotti and early Christian archaeology below.

¹⁴³ Bianchi, 45-46.

Fontana is responsible for many portraits of Bolognese scholars and clerics in the local naturalistic style, including the scientist Francesco Panigarola, 1585 (Palazzo Pitti, Florence), the physician Girolamo Mercuriale, 1590 (Pinacoteca Nazionale Bologna), and the mathematician Ignazio Danti and senator Fulvio Orsini, 1579 (Bordeaux). Each of these scholars contributed to the rich and fertile environment of Bologna as an intellectual center, so we can assume that their portraits represent Paleotti's exception to the rule. Normally, Paleotti writes, portraits of living individuals could be seen as a sign of vanity; however, in this case, these individuals are there as exempla of virtue, to be used as role models to incite others to a virtuous life and to meaningful scholarly pursuits.¹⁴⁴

Paleotti often asked his Milanese counterpart, the reforming Archbishop Carlo Borromeo, for advice regarding his *Discorso*. They agreed on most points of doctrine, especially the reform of Christian imagery. Paleotti sent Borromeo a copy of his draft in 1581, as well as requesting a copy of Molanus's work on the subject; however, according to Prodi, neither Borromeo nor the Flemish reformer Molanus had the aesthetic sensibility that Paleotti possessed.¹⁴⁵ Paleotti did appreciate beauty in addition to decorum, but only in its proper place. All the details of Tridentine rules were well represented in Paleotti's final version; for example, artists were prohibited from creating or inserting images of popular folklore in accurate biblical stories.¹⁴⁶ It is in his other work, the *Addenda de picturis, Avvertimenti ai curati*, that Paleotti gives us details regarding church decor: "Upon entering the church the first image should be a large cross over the altar with angels on the sides as well as a Madonna and Child and God the father."¹⁴⁷ We know that the altar in Paleotti's chapel did have such a statuary group. It thus affirmed some of

¹⁴⁴ Paleotti, II, 332-352.

¹⁴⁵ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 23.

¹⁴⁶ Paleotti, II, 285.

¹⁴⁷ Bianchi, 57.

the central tenets of the Tridentine Council, which upheld the presence of Christ in the Eucharist with the Crucifixion as symbolic host, as well as reinforcing Marian imagery in the face of Protestant doubt.¹⁴⁸ The Crucifixion, the site of Christ's sacrifice, is embodied in the host in the Catholic mass. The host itself is a metaphor for the body of Christ, a tangible reminder of Christ's sacrifice to redeem mankind.

The Artefice Cristiano or Devout Painter

One of the most important topoi that arises out of the *Discorso* is the concept of the *artefice cristiano*, or the devout painter. For Paleotti, the devout painter must naturally have a devout style or *maniera devota*. Paleotti used sources such as the Church Fathers, but also treatises on art and artists such as those by Alberti and Vasari, where the idea of a devout painter had already been in circulation.¹⁴⁹ Paleotti attempted to equate terms taken from biblical psalms with aesthetic art criticism: *confessio* is likened to the art of *disegno*; *pulchritudo* is likened to beauty and color; *sanctimonia* is for the *spirituali*, and *magnificentia* is for the *literati*.¹⁵⁰

Based on archival letters, the other people whom Paleotti asked for advice regarding religious imagery included the abbot of San Procolo, Don Egidio da Matelica; the Jesuit Francesco Palmio; the philosopher Federico Pendasio; the architect Domenico Tibaldi; the scientist Ulisse Aldrovandi; the artist Prospero Fontana; and the historian Carlo Sigonio. Among these, it was Don Egidio who suggested the exclusive use of official artists who had led a devout life, in the tradition of Vasari's comments on Fra Angelico that correlate his personal holiness

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Leon Battista Alberti. *On Painting*, translated by John R. Spencer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966); for Vasari on the subject of the devout painter see n. 26 and n. 27 in the introduction.

¹⁵⁰ Paleotti, II, 498.

with pious images.¹⁵¹ It required a saintly hand to create an effective image of religious devotion; in other words, if the creator were not devout, neither would his creations be. According to Vasari, Fra Angelico's *Madonnas* were to be considered all the more devout, due to the purity and saintliness of the hand that created them.¹⁵² Egidio also gives examples of bad images, such as a Virgin Mary where the patron had used his mistress as the model. Paleotti was very clear that the image of the Virgin Mary or a saint should never be a known or common face.¹⁵³

One might ask at this point, who was Paleotti's choice for most devout artist? Although he mentions that there are several notable pious examples in Bologna, he does not give their names. He does, however, mention one later in his *Discorso*, a name which is surprising in some ways and yet a natural choice in others. The power of the Madonna as a miracle-working icon increased in proportion to the saintliness of the artist himself, and thus Paleotti was investigating the tradition of what I would call active images, or in other words, the miracle-working Madonna. He singles out one at San Procolo by the artist Dalmasio, whom even the painter Guido Reni considered a "santo artefice."¹⁵⁴ Reni himself was known as the sinner/saint artist, the slightly corrupt but still somehow pure painter with a fear of women, who, nonetheless, earned his living by painting heavenly things. Yet, it was Dürer whom the archbishop considered one of the most devout painters: "Di Alberto Dürer, pittore e geometra germano, e reso nella vita sua chiaro testimonio, quando egli nelle opere sue fosse osservante della santità e onestà."¹⁵⁵ Scholars of Italian art have not commented on this preference, although it adds further proof of the Northern connections with the *maniera devota*, even this late into the sixteenth century

¹⁵¹ Bianchi, 60.

¹⁵² For Vasari on Fra Angelico as devout painter see n. 27.

¹⁵³ Paleotti, II, 348.

¹⁵⁴ Bianchi, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Paleotti, I, 167. "Of Albrecht Dürer, German painter and mathematician, he who gave clear testimony of how much, in his work, he was observant of sanctity and honesty."

(1582).¹⁵⁶ This is a true testament to Dürer's *maniera devota*, since the artist was also known for having Protestant sympathies, and yet his sacred narratives and icons are all done with the utmost regard for textual accuracy. Apparently this is also one of the characteristics that must have satisfied Paleotti's requirements, as Dürer was a highly literate and intellectual painter, intimately acquainted with the writings of holy scripture. Dürer writes in his notes that the purpose of painting is to show the suffering of Christ, as well as to serve the church, a purpose of which Paleotti would certainly have approved.¹⁵⁷

Other research indicates yet another possible source for the trope of the saintly artist/image, one which emerges from the Byzantine icon tradition and the Stoglav.¹⁵⁸ The Stoglav was a church council held in Russia in 1551 to protect the church from those who wanted to abolish feudalism and clerical rights. It was a dialogue between the Tsar and the Orthodox Church, which resulted in the standardization of dogma and practice, including rules for the visual representation of the icon. Coincidentally, it happened in 1551, in the middle of the Council of Trent in the West (1543-1565); it also accords well with Paleotti's desire for images as icons, his passion for early Christian archaeology as the key to a tangible proof of Christianity, and his emphasis on the need for a saintly artist to create these icons.

Paleotti went so far as to define different types of sacred images in the *Discorso*, of which the Sindone, or Shroud of Turin, and the Veil of Veronica are two of the most important (Figs. 43-44). The archbishop had an entire dossier on the holy face of Christ in the Sindone. He considered it a holy relic and empirical proof of the existence of Christ. He even went to Torino to see it along with Borromeo, and he requested information regarding the relic from both

¹⁵⁶ Jane Campbell Hutchison, *Albrecht Dürer: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 188. Hutchison briefly mentions Dürer in context with Paleotti, but gives no source/citation for this claim.

¹⁵⁷ Hans Rupprich, *Dürer: Schriftlicher Nachlass II* (Berlin: Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, 1956-1969), 133. See also Angela Haas, 170-206.

¹⁵⁸ Giovanna Perini, *Arte in Europa 1550-1650: L'età dei conflitti religiosi* (Turin: UTET, 2007), 93.

Sigonio and Aldrovandi.¹⁵⁹ He also saw the Veil of Veronica in the Vatican, which was sometimes conflated with the Shroud of Turin.¹⁶⁰ This erroneous identification exemplifies the tendency throughout history for icons to be closely associated with women. The most holy portrait of Christ was created, in some fashion then, by a woman, on a piece of cloth. Paleotti writes of her in the *Discorso* as “quello santa donna” of the Veronica – linking the icons with textiles and women.¹⁶¹ Dürer also gives great prominence in the series to the legend of the Veronica; the artist’s woodcut version of this image from his *Small Passion* (Fig. 44) is in the form of an *andachtsbild*, a picture solely for contemplation.¹⁶² In the discussion of embroidery in the conservatori in chapter 3, we will see how a piece of cloth can restore young women’s virtue, due to its sacred image.

Although Dürer’s pious style explains why Paleotti so approved of him, the two men also seemed to have shared an interest in the important female figures of the Bible and the redemption of female virtue. There are as many as five scenes with the Magdelene in Dürer’s *Small Passion* woodcut series, leading to the thought that the series may have been aimed at a female audience, according to Angela Haas.¹⁶³ The scenes include Mary Magdelene at the foot of the cross embracing Christ’s feet as well as the *Noli Me Tangere* (Fig. 69). However, rather than depicting the Magdalen far from Christ’s touch in the *Noli*, a more traditional iconography, Dürer covers

¹⁵⁹ Paleotti, I, 197-205.

¹⁶⁰ Saverio Gaetano, *L’Altra Sindone: La vera storia del volto di Gesù* (Milan: Mondadori, 2005), 23,49. However, according to contemporary accounts, the Santo Volto went missing during the sack of Rome and then miraculously appeared again later.

¹⁶¹ Paleotti, I, 197-205; Angela Haas, “Two Devotional Manuals by Albrecht Dürer: The ‘Small Passion’ and the ‘Engraved Passion,’” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 63, no. 2 (2000): 169-230. See Haas for a full discussion of Dürer’s woodcuts for the Passion cycle.

¹⁶² For more on the *andachtsbild*, see Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting* (Doornspijk, Netherlands: Davaco, 1984).

¹⁶³ Haas, 170, 205-6.

her head and has Christ make a gesture of blessing toward the Magdelene, a sign of physical touching meant to evoke spiritual renewal.¹⁶⁴

The Nude in Religious Imagery: In Dialogue with the Artist

Among Paleotti's main directives to devout artists was the call to avoid gratuitous nudity or lascivious pictures. During his research for these topics in the *Discorso*, Paleotti most certainly consulted the artists of the day with whom he had collaborated, even borrowing Prospero Fontana's copy of the *Lives of the Artists*. Prospero was the artist most in dialogue with Paleotti, as testified by the remaining letters. The Isolani archives contain letters from Prospero to Paleotti regarding advice for his *Discorso*. In these letters, Prospero follows Vasari in discussing the decline of art after the barbarian invasions. Prospero defends the need to study both the nude and antiquity to create figures; however, he reminds Paleotti that it is also the responsibility of the patron not to ask for pagan or lascivious pictures, for the artist must always do whatever the patron requires in order to survive.¹⁶⁵ Prospero is quite blunt here, but he offers the novel solution of using a confessor, who could discourage the patron from requesting lascivious nudes; this would shift the responsibility to the patron instead of leaving it solely to the artist. This is reminiscent of those who came to Michelangelo's defense regarding the *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel (Fig. 45) after Giovanni Andrea Gilio's condemnation, which sparked the fire of the Counter-Reformation regarding visual imagery.¹⁶⁶ In the case of Michelangelo's defenders, it is the viewer who is given the responsibility of seeing only the beauty of God's creation when gazing upon the artist's nudes in the chapel. Those who see

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. More will be said on the subject of the *Noli Me Tangere* below when discussing Lavinia Fontana's painting, fig. 66 in the second section of this chapter on "Practice".

¹⁶⁵ Bianchi, 73.

¹⁶⁶ Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 111. For Gilio as primary source, see n. 26

otherwise are at fault for their own lewd thoughts. Regarding Prospero's opinion, it is the patron who is at fault for requesting profane images. Thus in both examples, albeit for different reasons, the artist is exonerated from blame.

It is clear that Paleotti appreciated beauty and well-formed figures, since he acknowledged that study of the nude was still necessary for an artist's training, as Prospero had claimed. However, Paleotti declared that nudes should exist in religious painting only when history requires it, for example, in a martyrdom scene such as those in his family crypt in San Pietro, whose iconography he strictly controlled.¹⁶⁷ At times, the Bible dictates nudity, such as Christ's suffering on the cross and other martyrdoms, but all must be done with "*ratio, ordo, dignitas and pietas.*"¹⁶⁸ It may even be excused for Adam and Eve, but only because they were unconscious of their nudity. And yet it is in this climate that Lavinia Fontana produced her *Minerva in the Act of Dressing* (1613) for Cardinal Scipione Borghese in Rome (Fig. 28b).¹⁶⁹ Technically, such secular subjects were not subject to the church ban on nudity, though this powerful patron's high religious position made them problematic; the nudity here was most probably at his request, just as Prospero Fontana had warned Paleotti in his letters.

Fontana's final work while living in Rome, the *Minerva*, was a fairly erotic portrayal of the goddess without armor or clothing, with the church of St. Peter's in the background. The depiction of Minerva as a naked woman is an interesting choice in light of Paleotti's directives on the nude. However, it recalls Prospero's advice above, that the patron is the one truly responsible, as the artist must strive to please the patron in order to find work. In this case, the patron was none other than Cardinal Scipione Borghese.¹⁷⁰ Of course the figure of Minerva also

¹⁶⁷ Bianchi, 95.

¹⁶⁸ Paleotti, III, 220.

¹⁶⁹ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 69.

¹⁷⁰ We know that Borghese's collection included other mythological works, such as Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne*, to

references virtue and chastity, yet we will never know in what spirit it was desired by the Cardinal, for Minerva could certainly have done as much with her armor on. Perhaps the figure also speaks to Prodi's incisive comment regarding the Carraccis' time in Rome, since the Minerva was created while Fontana was in the Eternal City; according to him, Rome had corrupted Annibale's naturalism, overwhelming it with the unavoidable presence of classical antiquity in the city. Rome had somehow rejected true Bolognese naturalism, and displayed a clear preference for the continued primacy of the classical pagan world as seen in Annibale's "profane" frescoes for the Farnese, despite stylistic modifications to the representation of the ancient gods themselves.¹⁷¹ Perhaps the Bolognese artists in Rome had simply infused Apollo with the flesh and blood of the man in the street. The figure of Minerva also declares Fontana's proficiency in depicting profane or classical subjects when required. As previously mentioned, the nude figure of Minerva herself may have been based on Giulio Romano and/or Raphael's figure of Venus or Psyche from Mantua in the Palazzo del Te, ultimately via Diana Mantovana's engraving of the same subject.¹⁷² Again, the classical antiquity of Rome infiltrates the otherwise devout painter.

which the cardinal added moralistic verses regarding the fleeting nature of material pleasures. For more on Bernini, see Howard Hibbard, *Bernini* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1965). Also, while still in Bologna, Fontana did paint an erotic portrait of Isabella Ruini as Venus, but this was probably commissioned by her husband, and furthermore, this paragraph is concerned with establishing her work as it related to the clerical patrons of her Roman sojourn. On Fontana's *Minerva* and *Venus*, see also Cantaro, 222 and 102 respectively. Despite being a secular work, the Minerva was commissioned for a cleric, and as such, Paleotti would certainly have disapproved of the patrons's request for a sensual and disrobed version of the goddess of chastity.

¹⁷¹ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 69.

¹⁷² Silvia Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna 'incisore' nella storia del libro illustrato," in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Studi e testi a stampa*, ed. Gabriela Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1996), 372. See chapter 1 for the *Minerva*.

An Illustrated Index of Images

Originally Paleotti's *Discorso* was meant to be illustrated, a unique feature of great importance for its legibility by artists;¹⁷³ thus the artists could see for themselves the “do’s and don’t’s” of Counter-Reformation visual imagery. Only two of the five books of the original version were ever published, but the second version of six books done in Latin was to be much larger in size due to all the illustrated examples, underlining the importance of the visual to the project. Paleotti was in the process of creating an illustrated index of iconography that would serve the same purpose as the *Index of Prohibited Books*. He would have known the Index well, since he helped work on it during the Council of Trent.¹⁷⁴ In this way, he created a link between text and image, reminiscent of the Bolognese tradition of emblems. Paleotti went beyond Gilio in saying that there should never be a mix of sacred and profane art, yet he found science a necessary tool for naturalism, as classical models alone would not suffice for the *maniera devota*.¹⁷⁵ Paleotti feared the contamination of Christian imagery with classical prototypes, despite all of his humanistic tendencies. To be more specific, Prospero wrote that if saints must be rendered in the nude for martyrdom scenes, then their proportions must be taken not from Giove but from nature; Paleotti reiterates this attitude by emphasizing in his *Addenda Avvertimenti de Picturis* that Christ should not be an Apollo.¹⁷⁶ This comment is obviously directed at Michelangelo, as the figure of Christ in his *Last Judgment* is rendered as a type of classical Apollo.¹⁷⁷ We can compare Michelangelo’s version of Christ (Fig. 45) with Lavinia Fontana’s in her iconic image of *Christ with the Symbols of the Passion* (Fig. 49) in which she

¹⁷³ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 23.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷⁵ Paleotti, I, 197; II, 353. Gilio was the writer who complained about Michelangelo’s nudes in the Sistine Chapel, discussed above.

¹⁷⁶ Bianchi, 73.

¹⁷⁷ Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis, “Sun-Symbolism and Cosmology in Michelangelo’s Last Judgment,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 607.

certainly used the more natural proportions of the human body, rather than those of an ancient pagan god.

Sacred and Profane: Genre Details in Religious Narrative

One of the errors that disturbed Paleotti the most was to have superfluous details in religious paintings, for example, the addition of a cat in the Annunciation scene. He was especially interested in the iconography of the Annunciation, as there was an artistic debate swirling around this issue in the period. He complained about the version of the *Missale Romanum* printed in Antwerp in 1574 by Christopher Plantin with an illustration of the *Annunciation* by Peter van Arst, containing the said cat.¹⁷⁸ Would such an animal have been present at this holy event? Paleotti's answer would surely have been "no." In general, however, this feature was normally included by most northern artists; even his favorite Italian, Barocci, included genre-like details such as a cat in two versions of his *Annunciation* (1582 and 1592, Figs. 46-47). However, we can only speculate on whether Paleotti closed an eye to this, since he did ask Barocci to paint the altarpiece for his chapel. We do know that he usually gave strict and precise instructions to his artists. If we take one of Fontana's very early paintings as a comparison, an *Annunciation* on copper from 1579 (Fig. 48), probably created for private devotion due to its size, we can see that there was nothing superfluous, especially not a cat. Certain details were added, such as the abandoned sewing basket on the ground. However, these details were an important part of the religious narrative, a type of aide-memoire justified by tradition: the Virgin was caught unawares by the angel Gabriel while sewing. The sewing basket is an appropriate indication of the Virgin's virtue; sewing was considered one of the most pious

¹⁷⁸ Bianchi, 68. Although the Plantin is not illustrated here, the example by Barocci can serve as a similar type of *Annunciation* with a cat, for the reader's comparison.

tasks for women, especially in Bologna with its many Christian reform houses for women filled with young hands to keep busy. The basket is a type of symbol in the great tradition of early Netherlandish discourses of the sacred and profane: a profane or everyday object tied to a religious meaning.¹⁷⁹ The cat, by contrast, had no such sacred purpose confirmed in the official biblical sources, other than a folk legend that tells of a litter of kittens born at the same time as Christ. This concern for dogmatic accuracy would have been especially important since some of these small paintings may have been created as gifts for young girls who learned their catechisms especially well; thus correct dogma would have been critical.¹⁸⁰

Therefore, we can safely say that Paleotti was not objecting to all details (knowing that Bologna was famous for its naturalism), only the superfluous ones. In other examples of Fontana's work, such as her versions of St Francis (see chapter 1), Paleotti would surely have approved of her dense forest meant to suggest the nature-mysticism of St. Francis and God's creation. Fontana was the one commissioned to create the altarpiece for Paleotti's own family chapel in the metropolitan church of San Pietro in Bologna, in place of Barocci, who was working for the Duke of Urbino, among other patrons; one can surmise that Paleotti considered Fontana to be one of the city's Christian artefici par excellence. Paleotti had great interest in the Bolognese "*realismo naturalistico storico*," perhaps a last attempt at uniting humanism with scriptures,¹⁸¹ using the scriptures and holy relics as tangible evidence of Christ's existence and the martyrdom of the saints. He was attempting to create an accurate history of Christianity in which religious painting would take on the characteristic of history painting: veracity. This

¹⁷⁹ Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971); Barbara G. Lane, "Sacred versus Profane in Early Netherlandish Painting," *Simiolus* 18 (1988):107-115.

¹⁸⁰ Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (London: Yale University Press, 2003), 191. The topic of young girls and religious education is discussed further in chapter three here. Although there are several articles on Lavinia Fontana by Murphy, her monograph covers most of the information in the articles.

¹⁸¹ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 68-69.

interest will be treated further when we examine the martyr frescoes in the crypt of San Pietro that Paleotti commissioned.

Interior Decorating for the Counter-Reformation Home, or “Every abode shall have a cappella”: The Index for the Uncompleted Books, Three, Four and Five

Only two volumes of the *Discorso* exist today, although Paleotti had originally planned to write a total of five; of the final three, only the index was completed. Although often passed over as of little value to the discussion of visual reform (even Bianchi says there is very little other than a discussion of how to represent the Trinity and the Saints), the index for Paleotti’s three remaining chapters is filled with much more. It contains pearls of information that can be explored for their potential impact on artists and visual imagery, as well as being an invaluable key to the full scope of Paleotti’s thought on the value and utility of art. What remains of the index contains the seeds of key discussions about visual reform, many of which are revolutionary compared to other such tracts. Among the issues covered are the influence of classical antiquity on the devout artist, an emphasis on the place of individual prayer in the home that can be linked to the *devotio moderna*, and advice on the proper site-specific religious imagery for all locales, including secular sites, as well as specific details on how to represent holy figures. This section also discusses the conditions under which the index was written and certain influences on Paleotti during his time in Rome.

Paleotti developed his ideas for the final three books while he was in much closer contact with classical antiquity. He was sent to Rome in 1590 and remained there until his death in 1597, except for two brief trips to Bologna. Once in the papal capital, Paleotti continued his passion for visual imagery reform. He was elected as a reformer to the Academy of St. Luke, the painter’s

guild in Rome, of which Fontana was a member through her husband. Paleotti's Latin version of the *Discorso* that came out in 1595 was doubled in size, due to the number of iconographic examples included. According to Prodi, Paleotti was discouraged by the end of his life and felt that his reform had not been successful; he must have felt that more work was still needed on the topic, since he wrote a final work on imagery while in Rome, *De tollendis imaginum abusibus novissima consideratio*.¹⁸² However, the present study posits that Paleotti and his artists, at least in his home town of Bologna, had achieved a high degree of fidelity to Trent's guidelines for religious imagery.

Even so, pagan trends continued in Rome, despite Paleotti's struggles. One wonders what Paleotti would have thought of the Farnese ceiling by Annibale, or Caravaggio's vanitas paintings of Bacchus, owned by Cardinal Francesco del Monte, with whom Paleotti shared the responsibility for the visual reform of the Academy of St Luke. Paleotti himself had recently become the protector of the Academy.¹⁸³ According to some, it was the influence of Rome itself, the ever-present power of the classical world, that inspired Annibale to explore the pagan forms of the Farnese ceiling. There were mythological ceilings in Palazzo Fava in Bologna, but in the Farnese, the figures fully incorporate the forms of classical antiquity, overwhelming Annibale's homegrown naturalism. Sermons were being given even in the Academy of St. Luke against lascivious art. Therefore, most artists of the day could not have failed to be aware of and involved in this movement, no matter which side of the fence they were on.

Paleotti's ideas were shared by others in Rome; another notable influence during his years in Rome was his fellow reformer, Filippo Neri. Paleotti has been linked to the rigor,

¹⁸² Ibid., 79. Bianchi is preparing a forthcoming critical edition of these remaining unpublished texts by Paleotti, i.e. what remains of books III and IV. In her present work, she also has included the Latin texts between Prospero and Paleotti that survived the fire of the Isolani archives, and his other letters in the appendix.

¹⁸³ Bianchi, 214.

decorum, and spirituality of Neri's *Oratorio*. Neri was a spiritual reformer interested in the discalced life and in creating images of Christianity that would appeal to the common man of the street, such as those produced by Caravaggio. Paleotti's realism, however, stopped short of this extreme. We can see this connection to Neri and the barefoot orders in a work that Paleotti owned in his residence in Rome, the *Washing of the Feet*.¹⁸⁴ In addition to connections with the *Oratorio*, this painting would be appropriate to the Eternal City, as its theme of the barefoot follower also relates to pilgrimage, which was encouraged for visits to relics and catacombs. The link with the followers of Neri, the Filippini, stretches to our later female artists, as the legacy of Neri's oratorio continued with Angela Teresa Muratori. Muratori not only painted religious pictures, but was also responsible for writing sacred oratorios to be performed in the churches of Bologna.¹⁸⁵

The *Devotio Moderna* in Italy

In addition to Neri, Paleotti may also have been influenced by the fifteenth-century goals and methods of the *devotio moderna*. By the sixteenth century, the idea of projecting oneself into a biblical scene and communing with a sacred personage was seen as a type of spiritual meditation that would be conducive to piety. Although these virtual pilgrimages are also part of the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, they began as far back as the fifteenth century, i.e., before the Reformation, with the spiritual reform movement called the *devotio moderna*. That movement was started as a response to corrupt clergy and urban poverty by Gerard Groote

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 215.

¹⁸⁵ Stefania Biancani, "Angela Teresa Muratori: Uno studio attraverso le fonte," *Annuario della Scuola di specializzazione in storia dell'arte dell'Università di Bologna* 3 (2002): 165-95. For more on this see below, chapter four, which discusses Elisabetta Sirani and her students.

(1409-1443), a monk from Windesheim.¹⁸⁶ Groote began his work by turning his family home into a shelter for poor women. He formed a monastic group called the Brethren of the Common Life; eventually a Sisterhood of the Common Life was also formed. Groote and his followers were especially interested in serving the needs of female poverty, a concept with which Paleotti would have agreed. The movement was also associated with a form of Christian humanism. Although certain scholars have implied that the movement was a substitute for church attendance, that certainly was not the case in Italy, especially for Paleotti. The idea of home prayer *in place of* (my italics) liturgical participation is not the aspect of the *devotio moderna* that would have inspired Paleotti, who was only interested in their systematic methods of meditation and visualization, and their ideas of reform. For example, his book five makes suggestions about individual prayer at home that recall those practices, meant to supplement the mass. The movement spread in Italy through Luigi Barbo, who reformed sixteen monasteries, including San Paolo Fuori le Mura in Rome.¹⁸⁷

A detailed analysis of the Index begins with book three, where Paleotti actually devoted a whole section to lascivious imagery.¹⁸⁸ However, he only does so after having discussed the history and use of these pagan images in their proper context, in book two.¹⁸⁹ There he explains exactly in what mode/spirit or “maniera” one should view pagan antiquity. Other reformers of the period may have simply dismissed pagan imagery as a wholesale evil, yet Paleotti acknowledges that there is a history to pagan images that should not be ignored. Pagan images were born of a specific time and place, i.e. the time before Christ, and that is how they should be

¹⁸⁶ Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 162-177. See also Albert Hyma, *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the Devotio Moderna* (New York: The Century Co., 1924); Regnerus Richardus Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

¹⁸⁸ Paleotti, III-V, 504-511; what follows is a detailed analysis of the index from my own reading of the text itself as reprinted in Barocchi.

¹⁸⁹ Paleotti, II, 289.

seen, as remnants and even relics of a pagan past that has now been superseded by Christianity. Along with his discussion of the nude, one can consider Paleotti's description of the eye as "infected" with lascivious images, for which faith is the medicine. Book three was to include a discussion of why we tolerate the "meretrice" or prostitute, and do not tolerate dishonest paintings. (More will be said on the meretrice in tandem with prints and piety in chapter 5.) Paleotti went so far as to explain exactly how an artist can show off his skill even in clothed images, an indirect reference to the art of Michelangelo, who needed the nude human form to show off his mastery of human anatomy. This type of advice is another reason why women artists could flourish in Bologna: with clothed figures, female artists would not suffer as much of a disadvantage compared with male artists, since they were not allowed to study the nude male figure from life, but only from casts and drawings.

Book four contains instructions on how to depict the Trinity and the saints, but also many other important dogmatic issues, such as how to paint heaven and purgatory, using the writings of St. Augustine and the church fathers. The doctrine of the Trinity was very important to Tridentine reformers, and Paleotti chose to follow the conventions which depict it as the elderly God, Christ on the cross, and the dove of the Holy Spirit. This image was quite popular in Northern iconography, and is known as the throne of grace. He takes a scientific approach to piety, attempting to add the relics themselves as part of the verification process. He also gives directions on how to paint Hell, the Last Judgment, and even Satan himself. This chapter was to contain details on Marian imagery, for example, the Assumption and the "Death" of the Virgin Mary, on the Magdalene: "whose tears bathed his feet," and on how to depict the Sudario and the Sindone, both of which he had taken great pains to see in person. This chapter would have been invaluable for images of women's virtue.

Paleotti felt that the iconography had first to be proven accurate in order to be effective. Rather than exaggerating a certain sentiment for piety's sake, he strove for a decorous and historically accurate representation whenever possible: a unique combination of the devotional power of the icon and the truth of verisimilitude comprised his desired *maniera devota*. For this reason he was extremely interested in the archaeology of early Christianity and its martyrs. In this way, he felt he could represent the historical accuracy of the Christian faith. He sought to make tangible that which is not, and his preferred artists were the vehicles for this transformation. Paleotti also advised the use of gold as appropriate for precious images, such as icons, again reinforcing the link with the Byzantine past of Christianity.

Book five is among the most interesting, as it also gives evidence of his possible sympathies for the *devotio moderna*. This book had a chapter dedicated to the idea that “every abode shall have a cappella or oratorio, if it fits, for the family's service.” This directive implies a type of attitude toward personal prayer and meditation that has links with both the *devotio moderna* and the spiritual exercises of Loyola, as mentioned above, thus reflecting Paleotti's ideas on two key movements of Christian spirituality. As the roots of the sixteenth-century *maniera devota* are to be found in the fifteenth century (and earlier), it follows logically that these practices are rooted in such early movements.

Of special interest are Paleotti's recommendations for site-specific art, important for our later discussion of the imagery in the conservatorio for young girls. His index gives advice for all media, including decorative arts, displaying his diverse approach to sacred imagery. In it, Paleotti tells the artist to consult all the specialist authors necessary (not just clerics). We know that this advice was heeded: for example, in commenting on Paleotti's *Discorso*, Aldrovandi agrees with this idea and writes that the painter Orazio Sammachini came to him for advice on

how to paint certain plants in his landscape.¹⁹⁰ Paleotti also gives advice for the devout painter in general, and for others: secular patrons, princes, etc. Paleotti became a type of interior decorator of the sacred, for all patrons, all sites, and in all media. In book five, he also mentions a section on how (in what spirit) to view ancient art, displaying a continued sense of Christian humanism by not entirely dismissing ancient art, but simply qualifying its use. Finally, he goes so far as to add punishment for those who harm images, for example the iconoclasts. This shows in what high regard he places imagery in general, and the *pittore cristiano* in particular: good religious painting was akin to performing Christian charity.

This section has provided an analysis of Paleotti's theories, their origin, and the fine points of the crucial debates regarding visual imagery in the post-Tridentine era as well as an introduction to one woman artist's work in this paradigm. Fontana's work in religious imagery certainly answered Paleotti's call for the Christian *pittora*, as we shall see below in further detail. At this point we pass from theory to practice by examining the specific iconography in other examples of her religious paintings within the framework of the *Discorso's* modes.

The Practice:

Lavinia's Religious Paintings where Aesthetic Theory meets Religious Dogma

Paleotti's directions were not lost on Fontana, who executed the largest number of religious paintings of any woman artist before Artemisia Gentileschi. If we take a closer look at a representative selection of her less studied paintings, we will see the creation of three modes of painting that roughly correspond to Paleotti's main themes in the *Discorso* regarding the production of sacred visual imagery: the iconic, which corresponds to the idea of the devout

¹⁹⁰ Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti del dottore Aldrovandi*, in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), 925-930.

painter (necessary to create an effective icon); the religious narrative, which deals with the fine line between sacred and profane details in a historical genre of a sacred nature; and the historiated portrait, which intersects the concept of *virtù*, a key theme in Christian humanism. In addition, these modes also incorporate the knowledge newly available from early Christian archaeology in Rome, an aspect directly tied to the *maniera devota*.

This study places Fontana's religious paintings into these three categories, which only occasionally overlap, but do have a common element: science. The merging of sacred imagery with a scientific sense of verism is especially noteworthy when applied to her more iconic images. Paleotti's goal had always been to merge the two -- piety and verism, history and religion, icon and narrative. He used science as the link between them, to demonstrate that devotion was due to Christ, Mary, and the saints since the stories of the bible were "real." The *raison d'être* of the iconic image is that it is meant to be used as an aid to contemplation, in the manner of the Jesuit Spiritual Exercises by Loyola, where one is urged to identify with Christ's suffering on the cross, for example, by evoking a deep meditative empathy with the image of the Crucifixion. The historical religious narrative, in contrast, is meant to communicate a sacred story by means of historical detail and accuracy, in as simple and direct a manner as possible, without any embellishments or unnecessary details. The religious historiated portrait is a category that included the traditional donor portrait, where the donor is placed somewhere in the image, although at times only on the fringe of the space shared by the religious figure. In Fontana's paintings, however, this genre takes on the more active role of placing the individual in the scene, in the manner of the early Flemish painters such as Rogier van der Weyden and Jan van Eyck, implying a virtual pilgrimage.

An example of virtual pilgrimage is van Eyck's *Madonna of Canon van der Paele*.¹⁹¹ In this painting the elderly canon is in the presence of the Madonna and Child, conjured up by his intense prayers, as he was perhaps too ill and frail to attend mass, and so van Eyck's painting functioned as a type of spiritual pilgrimage.¹⁹² The painting was kept in his home, thus bringing the sanctity of the church into his abode, where he could kneel in the presence of the sacred personages without leaving his home. Although it is painted in a domestic interior, it is an elaborately furnished one, indicating the formality of a church setting where the chair is really a celestial throne for the mother and child. At times it is the sacred personage who comes to the home of the donor; in other examples, the viewer is on a mental pilgrimage to the sacred site; still other examples contain a domestic site conflated with a heavenly palace. In general, these images function as what Gelfand and Gibson call "surrogate selves," images that identify, proclaim and memorialize the donor's generosity, while at the same time, fixing the donor as a surrogate who will continue to pray for his own soul (*pro remedio et anima sua*) for eternity.¹⁹³

Iconic Images

Historically, although this is rarely discussed, women have had a special rapport with icons. In Paleotti's Bologna, iconic images were those whose purpose was to encourage meditation and virtue, often combining a scientific verism with religious piety. Fontana's style both lent itself to and simultaneously helped to construct the type of religious imagery that interested the Council of Trent and Paleotti: historically accurate (in the mind of Paleotti),

¹⁹¹ For more on virtual pilgrimage see Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2009), 147-164. For other sources on this topic see also n. 34 in the introduction.

¹⁹² Barbara G. Lane, "The Case of Canon van der Paele," *Notes in the History of Art* 9, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 1-6.

¹⁹³ Gelfand and Gibson, 119-138; 122, 126. Lane, "The Case," 6. When the image is placed in a church, it also acts as a reminder for the priests to pray for the donor's soul.

scientifically provable religious narratives, which also contained the power of Byzantine icons to move the faithful. Paleotti's own words were "teach, move, delight" (*docere, muovere, delectare*). He wanted an active image, which is perhaps why he based his terms for painting on sermon vocabulary, trying to liken those terms to the words of a religious orator. Paleotti knew that active images required beautiful color and design to persuade, not with falsity, but with the beauty of the truth as contained in sacred scripture. Paleotti shared with Filippo Neri the belief that the image helps contemplation and aids in human contact with the divine.¹⁹⁴

Above all, Fontana's minimal use of superfluous detail or exaggeration of form, despite having come out of a mannerist background, allowed her to infuse some of her more contemplative subjects with the necessary icon-like quality, such as her painting of *Christ with the Symbols of the Passion* (1576, Fig. 49). This idea of the icon also comes out of Paleotti's interest in early Christianity and relics, as the icon is the ultimate proof of the history of Christianity. *Christ with the Symbols of the Passion* was based on Taddeo Zuccari's version of the subject, through Calvaert's engraving.¹⁹⁵ Fortunati describes it as neo-Correggesque due to its feminine gracefulness compared with Michelangelo's version. However, Fontana included a detailed landscape, which one would not find in a Michelangelo. For Fontana, this was a combination of Flemish fastidiousness with a mystical sense of nature, a landscape as part of God's *theatrum mundi*. This painting reflects that strain of Fontana's work that can be called contemplative icons, a type of meditative image that is meant to move the viewer to pious thought, while contemplating the image of Christ's suffering, as in the exercises of St. Ignatius.

Fontana's lost *Pietà* was based on Michelangelo's original image, as seen through the eyes of Giulio Bonasone and Agostino Carracci's engravings (1546, 1579 respectively), no doubt

¹⁹⁴ Paleotti, I, 209.

¹⁹⁵ Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna, 1552-1614* (Milan: Electa, 1998), 14.

based on the drawing that Michelangelo had done for Vittoria Colonna (Figs. 50-52).¹⁹⁶ This image remains part of the iconic tradition in Bologna, an image meant to be a direct aid to meditation. The Virgin Mary looks up at the skies in grief with open arms, and two angels hold up Christ's limp arms as his body begins to slump toward the grave. The viewer is meant to participate in the holy event through virtual pilgrimage, in the manner of both the *devotio moderna* and the spiritual exercises.

Although there is a narrative strain to the tale of St. Francis and the stigmata, Fontana's image is treated as more of an icon of a nature-mysticism, a Franciscan approach to Christian piety and devotional imagery. The artist employed a Flemish attention to detail that allowed her to participate in Paleotti's ideas of visual verism assisted by the use of scientific phenomena, such as botanical studies in religious narratives. The previously mentioned example of *St. Francis Receives the Stigmata* (1579, Fig. 40) has been described by Fortunati as having a mythological landscape reminiscent of Tasso.¹⁹⁷ However, I would stress instead the religious and scientific associations, especially regarding the mystical landscape and the adoration of the holy cross by St. Francis. Apparently the story of St. Francis was important to the city of Bologna since the saint and his order were closely associated with a preference for Marian imagery in accordance with Paleotti's reforms.

Fontana's talent at creating iconic images of saints was known as far away as Rome. Her painting of *The Vision of St. Hyacinth* (1599, Fig. 18) was commissioned for the church of Santa Sabina in Rome, as previously mentioned, for the Polish Cardinal Bernerio.¹⁹⁸ Clement VIII had just canonized St. Hyacinth in 1599. Although based on other versions of similar works by Ludovico Carracci and Guido Reni, Fontana's version is less formal in composition, as the space

¹⁹⁶ Cantaro, 166; Murphy, 70.

¹⁹⁷ Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana*, 18.

¹⁹⁸ Cantaro, 194. See quote in chapter one.

between the saint and the sacred figure is minimal, thus creating a sense of immediacy. The golden light breaks through the mundane and takes the viewer from the profane or everyday world, to the moment of the divine encounter. At the same time, the picture satisfied the Tridentine emphasis on devotion, based on the saint's facial expression of piety and humble gesture. It was well received and commented on by Baldinucci.¹⁹⁹ This painting combines elements of both iconic and narrative modes, but in the end is more related to Netherlandish devotional imagery of virtual pilgrimage, as it creates a direct encounter between the patron and the sacred personage.

The *Holy Family with the Sleeping Child* (1589, Fig. 53) was created for Philip II; the Dominican cleric Ciaconio may have assisted with this commission.²⁰⁰ The subject is ultimately based on Michelangelo's drawing for Victoria Colonna, the *Silentium* (Fig. 54), through versions by Sebastiano del Piombo, via Bonasone's engraving. There is also a version of the subject by Sammacchini.²⁰¹ Fontana's version had an inscription calling for silence, truth, and piety (*Cor Meum Vigilat*), but there are also other versions created for domestic use (Galleria Borghese, Rome and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston). As a non-narrative image, the *Silentium* represents an icon for deep contemplation, a moment when the sleeping Christ child alludes to his future sacrifice and death while his mother looks on.

Marian Icons and the Woman Artist: The Immaculate Conception and the Assumption

In the late-sixteenth century, a controversy raged over the iconographic details of Marian dogmas such as the Assumption of the Virgin and the Immaculate Conception, and Fontana's version of the *Assumption* (1593, Fig. 55), done for the chapel of Paleotti himself in the cathedral

¹⁹⁹ Fredrika Jacobs, *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 95.

²⁰⁰ Cantaro, 146; Murphy, 167-171.

²⁰¹ Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana*, 20.

of San Pietro in Bologna, could not help but be influenced by this religious climate. Fontana had been asked to step in when Paleotti's first choice, Federico Barocci, was no longer available because he was working for the Duke of Urbino, among other patrons. However, despite her being the second choice, it was an extremely prestigious commission and one that was key to the display of Paleotti's Counter-Reformatory dictates. This section also discusses other examples of these Marian themes by various artists, illustrating different approaches to the problem of representing this important iconographic tradition.

One iconographic debate regarding the Assumption centered around whether the apostles could have been present to witness this event, which would have been anachronistic. Sigonio's opinion was that they would only have been able to witness the event because it was revealed to them by the divine spirit, as if in a vision.²⁰² In this case, Fontana does not represent the Apostles as present, but uses the city of Bologna in their stead, a symbolic representation of the Christian community as witness to the sacred event. This must have been satisfactory to Paleotti since we know that he praised Fontana's work in his *Archiepiscopale Bononensis*.²⁰³

At an early point in the history of Christianity (fourth century), the question arose of whether the Madonna herself was born immaculate, free from original sin, so that she could in turn give birth to Christ without the stain of original sin. Apparently, this belief was accepted by

²⁰² Bianchi, 194.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 198. We have records of payments made to Fontana from 1591-3 for her *Assumption*. One of the most important recent discoveries in her oeuvre has been the recovery of what it is believed to be the painting created for Paleotti's personal chapel at San Pietro in Bologna. Through an examination of some of the burned letters from the Isolani Archives, Bianchi identified the *Assumption of the Virgin* displayed in Pieve di Cento as the possible altarpiece for Paleotti's chapel. Fontana's altarpiece is mentioned as being in the church of San Pietro in the first edition of Malvasia, but we lose track of it after 1755. According to Bianchi's research, in 1753 the Bentivoglio heirs moved the painting, despite Paleotti's will specifying that it remain there undisturbed. In addition, we are always contending in Bologna with the archival havoc wreaked by the Napoleonic Suppression. The situation was much worse for the work of women artists, since later scholars were more interested in recovering the work of famous male artists. At present, this painting is in Pieve di Cento at the Collegiata di Santa Maria Maggiore (1593).

the faithful in popular piety long before it ever became dogma (1854).²⁰⁴ The key Marian dogmas were the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin, as well as her own Immaculate Conception. Officially, the church encouraged the acceptance of Christ's Immaculate Birth; the dogmas that were still being debated were the Assumption of the Virgin and her Immaculate Conception. In the fifteenth century, Sixtus IV approved indulgences for the Immaculate Conception without, however, officially condemning those who rejected it.²⁰⁵ This amounted to a "sitting on the fence" policy. Divisions arose between the orders regarding this point and the Dominicans remained typically more conservative, whereas the Franciscans were often closer to the ideas of popular piety, being one of the orders deeply involved in outreach to help the poor.

In order to understand the changing iconography of the Immaculate Conception we need to look at the historical events of the period, in addition to the dogma, and most importantly, at the images themselves. The first litany to the Virgin goes as far back as the twelfth century, but it was not until 1587 that Sixtus IV officially approved it. The artists became automatically involved in this debate, since the altarpiece itself became a visual manifesto of dogma. Northern heresy caused much controversy, and by the sixteenth century there were great debates concerning the veracity of the Immaculate Conception within the Catholic Church itself. By this time, however, the image of the *Immacolata* had become entrenched in the imagination of the faithful. The debate raged on and for a while there was a stalemate. The image of the *Immacolata* was greatly revived, according to Spada, after the battle of Lepanto, where the Christian forces had appealed to the Virgin Mary for help against the Turks and were

²⁰⁴ Caterina Spada, " 'Bella come la luna splendida come il sole': L'immacolata concezione di Maria nella produzione figurativa emiliano-romagnola tra Riforma e Controriforma," in Vera Fortunati, ed. , *Imago Virginis: Donne artiste e sacro fra passato e presente* (Bologna: Provincia di Bologna, 1996), 17.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 18.

subsequently victorious.²⁰⁶ After this victory, the half-moon under Mary's feet came to stand for the victory of the Christian church over the infidel.²⁰⁷ More will be said on this in chapter four, as part of the discussion of Fontana's seventeenth-century successors.

The *Immacolata* also has northern roots, which point to Dürer (Figs. 56-58). As we have seen, Dürer was one of Paleotti's favorite artists in terms of decorum, despite his origins in the land of heresy and any Lutheran sympathies he may have shown near the end of his life. The Madonna of the Apocalypse comes from the book of Revelations (12:1-6): she is the woman clothed by the sun, with the moon underfoot and a crown with twelve stars, who defeats the seven-headed dragon.²⁰⁸ Copies of Dürer's famous woodcut images of the *Woman Clothed by the Sun and the Seven-Headed Dragon* (1498, from the *Apocalypse*), and the *Virgin on the Crescent* (1511, from the *Life of the Virgin*) would have been dispersed in Italy.²⁰⁹ The twelve stars on her crown symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel, the sun and moon symbolize illumination, and the crown stands for the triumph of the church.

The religious climate of the sixteenth century encouraged some unusual and interesting examples of the *Immacolata* in Italian painting. At a certain point the two dogmas become conflated and the *Immacolata* took on aspects of the Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin. Garofalo's version (1528-36), for example, includes, along with the saints who were in favor of the dogma, floating symbols which Fortunati states are in sympathy with the interest in Bologna

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 18, 26. According to Spada, the following examples inspired by Dürer's work are found mostly in Emilia and fringe areas such as the Este court. The author states that Luther had used Dürer's drawings in his *Sacrament of the Last Supper* published in 1519 in Leipzig, before being excommunicated. Luther had also recognized the Immaculate Conception, but by then he was ousted from the church so it remained an unpopular reference. This is ironic since it seems that in this case, even the taint of heresy could be cleansed from an icon by its popularity with the faithful.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. See also Eileen Reeves, *Painting the Heavens: Art and Science in the Age of Galileo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 172. Later in the seventeenth century, the moon transformed again, this time becoming more of the pock-marked rock of science, according to Reeves.

²⁰⁸ Revelations. New Advent: Catholic Encyclopedia. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15464b.htm> (accessed November 18, 2012).

²⁰⁹ Spada, 24, 29. For more on Dürer's woodcuts, see Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 137-138.

in emblems.²¹⁰ These particulars may also relate to the commission, as this painting was for a convent of cloistered nuns. Female communities had a special devotion to the Immacolata, even forming confraternities named after it. The altarpiece became an integral part of their Marian rituals; it was decorated with flowers, which were imbued with religious symbolism based on their colors, such as white for Mary's purity.²¹¹ There are other examples of the Immacolata from this period which display the special relationship between the Marian iconography and the paintings' donors. Barocci's altarpiece the *Madonna del Popolo* (1575-9, Fig. 59), includes the female patrons and according to Spada has an air of the "*devotio moderna*."²¹² Scipione Pulzone's *Immacolata with Angels, Saints, and a Donor* (1581) is a combination of the Immacolata and the Assumption, as Mary is shown floating up into the heavens over the donor. Giovan Battista Bagnacavallo created an Immacolata for a convent of nuns from noble families (1575), whose unusual iconography may be explained by their high rank. The painting was for the nuns of Santa Maria della Consolazione, eventually renamed Concezione after 1547, patrons for whom the artist adds the animula (child-like soul) of Mary.²¹³ This rare iconography was meant to show that the idea of an immaculate Mary free from sin was already in God's mind. Paleotti advises painters to avoid subjects that are "temeraria," or contested.²¹⁴ The Immacolata was one of the dogmas that were still unresolved by the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. Lavinia Fontana's *Madonna of the Assumption of Ponte Santo with Saints Cassiano and Crisologo* (1584, Fig. 60) for the city of Imola may have been considered temerarious, but certainly not heretical. The church had not outlawed the subject; it had merely not yet confirmed

²¹⁰ Ibid., 27; I have also mentioned in chapter 1 of this study that Bologna's interest in emblems greatly affected the forms of visual imagery in the city.

²¹¹ The importance of color symbolism in religious iconography is discussed further in chapter three in relation to embroidery.

²¹² Spada, 29.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Paleotti, II, 270.

it, and meanwhile the faithful had already accepted it as true. The painting depicts Mary with her veil and at the correct age for the event, when she would have been an older woman. However, Fontana also includes the crown and the moon of the Immaculate Conception as well as a mandorla. Originally the commission was meant to be simply an apparition of the Madonna to the faithful, related to the miracle of Ponte Santo, a Bolognese legend stating that the Madonna appeared to the faithful on this bridge.²¹⁵ Apparently the Immacolata was already part of the collective imagination of the faithful in Imola. In Fontana's version, the image became a performative icon activating the faithful, exactly what Paleotti wanted in his descriptions of the power of religious imagery to *delectare, movere, and docere*: the truth with the power of an icon.²¹⁶

A comparison of Fontana's *Pieve di Cento Assumption* (Fig. 55) with her Imola version (Fig. 60) gives further proof of her Northern connections and the importance of Paleotti's dictates. For example, there is no moon depicted in the Pieve version, no crown of stars, none of the things that might confuse the faithful between the two stories. It is not as much of a blending of the two dogmas as we find in the Imola version, most likely because the *Pieve di Cento Assumption* was created for Paleotti's own chapel. Therefore it needed to display the most accurate iconography, as opposed to the Imola *Assumption*, which still displayed aspects of popular piety. In yet another example, Fontana created a unique *Immacolata* (1602, Fig. 61) for a Capuchin monastery.²¹⁷ In this painting, Mary wears the crown, carries the Christ child, and stands upon a sliver of half-moon. This version seems to refer back to Dürer's versions. The mixing of the two scenes may have been a request of the patrons at the monastery for a more mystical version than the Tridentine standard.

²¹⁵ Cantaro, 125; Murphy, 45-46.

²¹⁶ Paleotti, I, 214, 221, 227.

²¹⁷ Cantaro, 205.

Other Bolognese artists participated in this iconographic debate as well, such as Ludovico Carracci and Guido Reni. Ludovico created an unusual *Madonna degli Scalzi* (1590s, Fig. 62) using part of Dürer's iconography. The large figure of the Madonna dominates the canvas, standing on a huge sliver of moon while holding the Christ child. We can see twelve faint stars around her head, reminiscent of the Madonna of the Apocalypse, and she is accompanied by Saints Jerome and Francis. The Madonna gazes out at the spectator, seeking contact with the viewer, perhaps indicating her intervention in our salvation. Ludovico had always been the Carracci family member most drawn to mystical interpretation of biblical narratives.²¹⁸

Spain, arch-conservative in reform and influential land of the Inquisition, was, however, very much in favor of the Immaculate Conception. Guido Reni created an altarpiece of the *Immacolata* in 1627, originally for the royal family of Spain, to be located in the cathedral of Seville.²¹⁹ The painting is a combination of the iconography of the Assumption together with the Immacolata, continuing the iconographic blurring of the two scenes well into the seventeenth century. Philip IV seems to have decided for himself that the Immacolata was sacred truth, and thus wished to have it immediately illustrated by another devout artist, Reni.

The doctrine of the Virgin's Assumption into heaven was central to the Counter-Reformation, together with that of the Immacolata, despite the fact that the latter was still under debate, if only among the clerics and not the faithful. Images of these doctrines served as a type of icon for feminine virtue, a sacred vision of womanhood. The Assumption tells the story of Mary, who could not expire in the normal fashion of any ordinary woman, and was instead taken up into the heavens to join her son. The Immaculate Conception is the prequel to this theme,

²¹⁸ Perini, *Arte in Europa*, 103,135,161,171.

²¹⁹ Spada, 39. On Reni, see also Richard E. Spear, *The "Divine" Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

proof that Mary was not conceived through original sin in the manner of the rest of humanity, but only through the intervention of God. Thus the Virgin becomes a second Eve who redeems mankind through the birth of her son and his ultimate sacrifice, as well as through her intercession in heaven for us. As a result, the iconography of the two images became porous during the sixteenth century, resulting in hybrid forms. We do know that Paleotti preferred the apocalyptic version of the Immacolata, with the sun and moon underfoot and crowned by 12 stars, humble but also of incomparable beauty.²²⁰

Fontana's painting falls squarely within this tradition of the Virgin as exemplar of women's virtue. It was created for a chapel whose design was meant to bring Christianity back to its earliest roots using the veneration of the relics of the first bishops of Bologna, which would reinforce the Counter-Reformation's support of the saints. In addition, it encourages the appeal to the Virgin as intercessor for mankind, something which was perhaps lost in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*, where the Virgin cowers under her veils, powerless to help those lost souls destined for the fires of hell. The relics of St. Vitale and St. Agricola, the first bishops of Bologna, were given to Paleotti by Pope Gregory XIII, and they were put in place after a ceremonial procession through the streets of the city. Alfonso Paleotti, Gabriele's cousin and successor, had also had a copy made of the thirteenth-century *Madonna of the Immaculate Conception* for the reliquary cabinet behind Fontana's altarpiece; the painting had been arranged so that it could be moved, and behind it were kept the holy relics of the saints, thus confirming that Christ was approached through Mary and the Saints.²²¹

²²⁰ Bianchi, 158.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 173; Paleotti was interested in the spiritual exercises of the Jesuits, so these scenes may have functioned as a type of memory theater, *vedute* to contemplate and meditate on. Paleotti shared with Filippo Neri the belief that the image helps contemplation and aids in human contact with the divine.

In addition to her father's version and the work of the Carracci, Fontana's sources for the *Pieve di Cento Assumption* included Dürer and his model of the Apocalyptic Woman, as well as Aldrovandi's scientific studies of the day. Fontana created a clear distinction between the two realms as Counter-Reformation dogma would have maintained. However, she updated her father's manneristic style, always adding the pious *maniera devota* required by Paleotti, influenced by her exposure to Northern artists' work, as well as assimilating knowledge and ideas that circulated due to the great presence of university scholars. For example, the heavenly realm also contains some unique characteristics. The heavens open up to a cone of divine light, which can be described as an almost scientific depiction of the phenomenon of light. We know that Aldrovandi was engaged in scientific studies of biblical nature, without fear of combining the two fields, despite this being a moment of conflict between religion and science. One of his favorite artists (mentioned above in chapter one), Jacopo Ligozzi of Florence, had links with Galileo and the telescope, and wanted to learn how to view the celestial bodies through this controversial instrument.²²² Other artists were also involved in the scientific debates of the day and some seem to have supported the cause of science, such as Ludovico Cigoli, even in his religious paintings. Cigoli added a more realistic solid sphere to his fresco of the *Immacolata* (1610-12, Fig. 63), rather than the symbolically pure white sliver of a moon traditionally used to signify the Virgin's purity. The evidence for this is the apparent shadow that the moon casts and the irregular surface of the moon, an indication of Cigoli's sympathies for Galilean discoveries.²²³ Even the great Michelangelo apparently had Copernican allegiances, which may be seen in the cosmological mapping of his *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel (Rome), where a

²²² Reeves, 5.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 167-172. Reeves analyzes the new iconography of the Immaculate Conception, which here includes the crannies of the solid moon, as opposed to the translucent sliver of moon that had previously represented Mary's purity.

solar Christ is the centerpiece of a circle of clockwise bodies that rise and fall around him as they either descend into hell, or rise up into heaven.²²⁴ For Michelangelo's critics, though, the *Last Judgment* came to be viewed as rife with problems of decorum, mostly involving his nude figures, as opposed to any scientific modifications.

Another possible source for Fontana's version is a painting by the Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch. The cone of the light of heaven into which Fontana's Madonna is being lifted is similar to that in Bosch's painting of the *Vision of the Afterlife* (Fig. 64). This painting is a representation of the supernatural as a realm of divine light, which bears closer inspection as a unique representation of the afterlife. Bosch's *Vision* was commissioned for Domenico Grimani of Venice circa 1500-1503.²²⁵ These two unusual panels depict the artist's vision of the afterlife, focusing on the entrance into heaven of the faithful. One of these depicts the faithful being taken up into heaven by a cone of light, as in Fontana's *Pieve Assumption*. This strange, tunnel-shaped cone is a combination of both the scientific and supernatural, and as such it parallels similar iconography in Fontana's *Assumption*. It is conceivable that engravings of Bosch's paintings were in the collection of Fontana's colleague, the Fleming Calvaert.²²⁶ As previously mentioned, Fontana was familiar with Northern painting through Calvaert, who was renowned for his landscapes, and even Paleotti commented on his representation of nature in the background of a painting on which he cooperated with Prospero Fontana.²²⁷ Bianchi notes that the cone of light

²²⁴ Shrimplin-Evangelidis, 607.

²²⁵ It was bequeathed to the Palazzo Ducale and has been in Venice ever since, although not always on view except for an exhibition in 2011. Vittorio Sgarbi, ed., *Bosch a Palazzo Grimani* (Milan: Skira, 2010), 26. See also n. 22.

²²⁶ Travelers to Venice, as well as residents such as Marcantonio Michiel, wrote about the paintings they found in noblemen's collections, describing the highlights of the galleries. For more on Bosch, as well as other Northern works in Italian collections, see Keith Christiansen, "The View from Italy," in *From Van Eyck to Breugel: Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Maryan Wynn Ainsworth and Keith Christiansen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 45. See also nn. 21-22.

²²⁷ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, I, 196, 199; Bianchi, 195. According to Malvasia there was a disagreement between Prospero and Calvaert, and Calvaert eventually left Prospero's bottega for Sabbatini's in the Rome of Gregory XIII. Calvaert had worked on Prospero's landscapes using his Flemish style; however, Malvasia reports that this style was

points towards an infinity not perceptible to man; however, in the tradition of the scientific studies in Bologna, it more likely relates to a scientific vision of light as a tangible force of salvation.²²⁸ The idea of the cone of light may also stem from the Franciscan Francesco Panigarola's study of lumen. Panigarola was a Milanese, who spoke of a silent lumen that covered the Madonna and Child in his sermons given in Bologna while a *lettore* there.²²⁹

Other sources for Fontana's painting include Michelangelo, as the Virgin's hand gesture is based on Bonasone's engraving of Michelangelo's drawing of the *Deposition* as copied by Carracci (Figs. 51-52), which Fontana could have known.²³⁰ She also depicts the Virgin as an older woman here, an accurate detail which Paleotti had covered in his treatise: the Virgin must be beautiful, but can still show her age, which would have been 62 at the time of her Assumption, because she would have preserved her beauty due to her piety. This would make the image both truthful and decorous at the same time.

In the previously mentioned version of this theme for the city of Imola (Fig. 60),²³¹ Fontana had also made certain necessary Counter-Reformation adjustments: for example, the Madonna is in a mandorla, recalling earlier Dutch painting, where the holy realm is separated from the human one. The most elaborate Dutch example of this motif is in a work by Geertgen Tot Sint Jans, *The Glorification of Mary* (1480-90, Fig. 65), in which the mandorla takes on an almost cosmic golden glow, completely surrounding the Virgin and Child. Thus, in Fontana's work, it is a deliberate archaizing element relating to early Christian spirituality. She infuses the

too *leccato* (overly smooth and filled with too many trivial details), at least as far as Malvasia was concerned by the seventeenth century, whereas in the late sixteenth century, Paleotti appreciated this mode of naturalism, when compared to mannerist excess, as can be seen in the tone of the *Discorso*.

²²⁸ Bianchi, 196.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Cantaro, 166.

²³¹ Ibid., 125. For figure 65 see *Van Eyck to Bruegel, 1400-1550: Dutch and Flemish Painting in the Collection of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* (Rotterdam: The Museum, 1994).

painting with divine light, adding a small cityscape at the bottom and music-making angels, always related to the idea of harmony, but in this case denoting a spiritual one.

To conclude, Fontana's Pieve di Cento *Assumption* was in perfect accord with the latest debates regarding the iconography of the *maniera devota*. Yet she was versatile enough to create other versions such as the Imola *Assumption*, which could accommodate concepts of popular piety such as the Immaculate Conception. However, when called upon to create an altarpiece for Paleotti's chapel, her work was the epitome of the *artefice cristiano* (Fig. 55). It was no surprise then, that Fontana, the first female painter of the Papal States, found herself in Rome at the beginning of the Seicento, considering her status as pious painter and her relations with Paleotti, who had spent the final years of his life there as well. Adding to her prestige was the patronage of no less than two Bolognese popes, Clement VIII and Gregory XIII.

The *Maniera Devota* and Early Christian Archaeology

After a discussion of the iconic mode, a further investigation into the roots of this mode and its connections to the *maniera devota* is necessary. The ideal *maniera devota* image is a combination of a Byzantine icon and Bolognese naturalism. Paleotti was seeking visual imagery that could harness the power of an icon to move the faithful, with the added verisimilitude of the historical truth to inspire the average churchgoer. This type of image would not have lapsed into what Paleotti would have seen as the hyperrealism of Caravaggio, which ultimately lacked the strict decorum sought by the Counter-Reformation. The answer to his prayers came in the form of early Christian archaeology, which provided the scientific proof he needed for the veracity of his sermons. Women were to play an active role in this schema of pious imagery and icons, as both artists and saintly models of Christian virtue.

During this period, the church was experiencing the birth of early Christian archaeology. Paleotti was very interested in this field because he wanted to convince the faithful that events such as the martyrdoms of the saints were true. In this campaign to prove the history of the church, relics were to become the most sought-after and tangible evidence. Far from simply representing an idea of medieval mysticism, they were meant to provide a kind of scientific assurance of a saint's existence. To encourage this favorable policy towards relics and rituals, Gregory XIII gave many indulgences to altars with relics in Bolognese churches; in 1575 he conceded a total of 11, including San Pietro.²³² Cardinal Borromeo of Milan also encouraged Paleotti to use relics, so he added processions to highlight these sacred objects; this created a combination of reliquary and ritual that became a frequent performance of faith in the city, fostering civic and religious unity.

There were guides written about pilgrimage to relic sites, but in Bologna scholars were writing more scientific tracts such as the *Sindone* and *De ritu sepeliendi apud diverses nationes* by Aldrovandi.²³³ Both of these were written in response to Paleotti's searching quest for the historical accuracy of the Shroud of Turin, Veronica's Veil, and the history of the early saints via the catacomb remains. Cesare Baronio, the scholar selected to replace Sigonio in writing a history of the Church, wrote about the history of the beginning of holy pilgrimage in Rome; Filippo Neri was also interested in and encouraged tourism to the catacombs, to reconstruct the history of the church.²³⁴

The catacombs were also important proof of the church's Christian roots and biblical truths. The Spanish Dominican Alfonso Ciaconio alerted Paleotti to the discovery of the Roman

²³² Bianchi, 95.

²³³ Prodi, *Ricerca*, 62.

²³⁴ Bianchi, 46; The oratorio of Filippo Neri was important to Bolognese seventeenth-century female artists; see below, chapter 4.

catacombs of Saint Priscilla on Via Salaria in 1578, which Paleotti hastened to visit.²³⁵ That same year, the pope had donated to Bologna the relics of Saint Vitale and Saint Agricola, the first bishops of Bologna. These were transferred to the crypt in the church of San Pietro by Paleotti, as previously mentioned, with a great procession. Finally, here was more evidence to counter the Protestants' disbelief in the Catholic cult of saints. Paleotti was especially influenced, though, by the frescoes that represented the martyrdoms of the saints in the Jesuit-inspired program of the church of the Hungarian college, Santo Stefano Rotondo. This was the model for his lost fresco cycle in the crypt of San Pietro in Bologna.²³⁶ Paleotti especially appreciated the realism used in depicting the scenes of martyrdom and the fact that each was accompanied by both text and image. Paleotti was in close contact with the Order of the Society of Jesus and was very interested in the church of the Jesuits, the Gesù, as another visual model of piety; in 1578 he even sent a draft of his *Discorso* to the Jesuit, Francesco Palmio.

These concerns and artistic sources can best be seen in Paleotti's crypt in San Pietro, with its altar to Saints Vitale and Agricola as the culmination of his program. The following description is based on Bianchi's recreation.²³⁷ Originally, Paleotti's altar contained only a sculptural crucifixion group by Alfonso Lombardi. The two altarpieces were by Prospero Fontana and Bartolomeo Passerotti: Prospero created the *Madonna and Child with Saints Peter and Paul* and Passerotti created the *Adoration of the Magi*. The two altarpieces were opposite each other, combined with images of both the male and female saints on the wall. Thus the program displays the historical proof of the martyrs, who also represent the church itself, combined with religious narration. Paleotti made sure to include both male and female saints in the crypt; the female saints were in the chapel of the Madonna and the male saints were in the

²³⁵ Ibid., 45.

²³⁶ Ibid., 95.

²³⁷ Ibid., 100.

chapel of the Magi. Paleotti had written that artists should always follow history and convention in creating the portraits of the saints. However, Paleotti was always willing to consider new evidence, such as Ciaconio's insistence that he had found the real portrait of Saint Peter in the early Roman frescoes that had been recently discovered in the Lateran Church.²³⁸

The crypt has been described as a sacred theater of martyrdoms, whose frescos were executed by Camillo Procaccini and Bartolomeo Cesi, inspired by the engravings of G.B. Cavalieri, *Ecclesia militantis triumphis* (1585, Modena).²³⁹ These frescoes were meant to be examples for the faithful, and each image of a saint was accompanied by his or her hagiography, verses from the scripture, and information on each one's feast days. This resulted in a combination of text and imagery that remains a leitmotif of the city's visual imagery, whether it be in pious imagery or scientific illustration. Both Baronio and Molanus wrote a life of the martyrs, while Paleotti had tried to verify all the historical details of their lives.²⁴⁰

There was an urge for encyclopedic compendiums of knowledge across all fields, and religion was no exception in Bologna; the crypt is a good example of this tendency. Parallel to Aldrovandi's cataloguing approach, Christian dogma was verified and categorized with the precision of scientific descriptions, in order to help prove its truth and thus its relevance to the faithful. Paleotti wanted to have a chapter in his *Discorso* specifically explaining how to represent the saints and their icons.²⁴¹ He wanted the images to be in color, so they would more efficiently move the faithful to piety. This chapter would have been a type of illustrated encyclopedic classification of the saints, akin to Aldrovandi's work with samples of naturalia, and the Bolognese interest in emblems. As seen in chapter 1, Aldrovandi added his own advice

²³⁸ Paleotti, II, 348 and see Bianchi, 45 for Ciaconio's letter.

²³⁹ Bianchi, 102. The frescoes have not survived, unfortunately, but Bianchi gives us as complete as possible a description based on the writings by Paleotti in the Isolani archives.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 107

to Paleotti's *Discorso* on how to represent things.²⁴² The crypt would have had a verbal description of each saint, accompanied by his or her physical relics and an illustration. Knowledge was a weapon of the church, and the plethora of *maniera devota* imagery was its ammunition.

Paleotti's interest in early Christianity served two seemingly contradictory ends. On the one hand, it infused his visual imagery with the power of the Byzantine icon, in all its mysticism and aura. Yet, on the other, it simultaneously presented the Early Christian tradition as a type of scientific proof that the stories of the saints and martyrs were objective truth, thus attempting to give Christianity a solid scientific foundation. For this, he needed to add the naturalism so typical of his native city and its artists, including and often especially, the women artists of the city.

Sacred and Profane: The Use or Abuse of Genre Details in Historical Religious Narratives

Having come to understand the reasons why Paleotti desired the iconic mode, and how Fontana provided it, we can now better analyze the distinctive ways in which Fontana treated the second of the three modes we are tracing here, the narrative mode. An important distinction to be made is that normally the two modes are separated: Ringbom defines the early *andachtsbild* or icon/contemplative image as separate from the narrative, as was traditionally done, yet here we have the exact opposite. Paleotti wanted to combine icon and narrative, because he wanted both in one image.²⁴³ Two techniques that Fontana employed to accomplish this *maniera devota* are an avoidance of superfluous detail and the use of simultaneous narrative, both of which contribute to the narrative clarity of the scene and thus the power of the sacred image.

²⁴² Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti*, 925.

²⁴³ Ringbom, 36.

Fontana's avoidance of superfluous details was important to both her iconic and her narrative paintings; in the latter, she only included the details that would be necessary to get the Christian message across to its viewers, as Paleotti had required. An example of this method is her previously mentioned early *Annunciation* (1579, Fig. 48).²⁴⁴ This very early painting on copper is a good example of Fontana's *maniera devota*. The painting combines naturalistic effects in the figures of the angel and the Virgin Mary with just the few genre details that are pertinent to the story, for example the knitting basket of the Virgin. This detail unites the sacred and profane, but only for the purpose of displaying the virtuous and industrious character of the Virgin. Knitting or weaving was considered the most pious work for female hands; thus it is not merely a trivializing detail of a genre scene.²⁴⁵

Fontana was especially effective at creating representations of biblical narratives that include a direct confrontation between Christ and a female figure, such as the following three examples: Christ with the Magdalene in the *Noli Me Tangere*, *Christ and the Canaanite Woman*, and *Christ and the Samaritan Woman*. The *Noli Me Tangere* (1581; Fig. 66) has already been discussed by Cantaro, Fortunati, and Murphy and has even shown up in some survey books. It is normally taken to be based on Correggio's model (1522-5; Fig. 67); however, it is more closely aligned with Calvaert's version (Fig. 68), which is probably originally based on Dürer's woodcut of this theme in his *Small Passion*, 1511 (Fig. 69).²⁴⁶ Once again, Fontana provides a Flemish attention to the landscape and genre details such as the gardener's hoe and hat. These are included solely for the purpose of clarifying the narrative, and such details are not normally found in the Italian versions. The artist also includes the scene where those who show up at the tomb find it empty since Christ has risen, thus combining two moments of the story in one scene.

²⁴⁴ Cantaro, 66.

²⁴⁵ Embroidery is discussed in detail below, chapter 3.

²⁴⁶ Cantaro, 102. See also n. 163.

The technique of simultaneous narrative shows several scenes in one frame, so as to encode the entire sacred history in one image to be read as text, where beholding the image becomes akin to reading the Bible. The format is meant to be readable for all, creating a narrative clarity with only the most essential details. In order to accomplish a *maniera devota*, Fontana's work makes use of techniques such as simultaneous narratives.

Christ and the Canaanite Woman (1577, Fig. 70) was probably commissioned by Ferdinando de' Medici; the architecture may have been done by Fontana's father because he had worked in Rome and would have known the Roman palazzi well.²⁴⁷ Fontana's early work demonstrates a great interest in landscape, especially in her religious paintings. The Canaanite woman's gesture of humility at Christ's feet is a powerful expression of female piety by a devout artist, as well as a convincing part of the narrative device.

Christ and the Samaritan Woman (1607; Fig. 71) is considered a late work from her Roman period, since it includes the Aurelian walls in the background.²⁴⁸ The jug and well feature prominently, and they function as key visual elements of narration, emblems to help tell the story. Here the jug represents the kindness of the Samaritan woman to Christ, who had stopped and asked for a drink of water from the well when he was thirsty. The figures are close to the foreground and more monumental in size, displaying both a Roman influence and inspiration from the Carracci. Fontana's simple but direct gestures are different from her father's more mannered figures. There is a close intimacy between the two figures and a sense of humanity in their expressions. As usual for Fontana, there is a virtuoso display of fabric in the costumes, especially the diaphanous veil of the woman.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 68.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 215.

The *Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes* (1583, Fig. 72) is now located in Santa Maria della Pietà, detta della Misericordia. This painting was found at the altar of the patron church of the Arte dei Barbieri and originally belonged to the Arte della Seta.²⁴⁹ It is one of her attempts at a multi-figure, grand narrative composition. Notably, through a dramatic diagonal, the eye is drawn to the small child in the lower foreground, a key figure in this story of miracles and Christian charity. It also sets the stage for the seventeenth-century category of miracle paintings, set against a background of Baroque theater and piety, which was to become an important part of the Bolognese female artist's repertoire and is discussed further in chapter four.

Religious-Historiated Portraiture

The purpose of this section is not to analyze Fontana's many secular portraits in detail, but to focus instead on her religious examples, since they represent a problem to be solved.²⁵⁰ Fontana was famous for her ability in portraiture, as was common for women artists. However, she added to this skill by utilizing portraits in her narratives, including religious ones; there is an interesting contradiction to resolve on this issue. Ironically, Paleotti's directives were that religious narratives should never contain recognizable faces. He notes in his *Addenda* that the Virgin is usually represented with the Christ child in her arms, *alla greca*, so as to never be confused with any other portrait.²⁵¹ Paleotti did not want a Madonna of the streets such as Caravaggio's versions, which breached all decorum, and were not "true" by his standards of scriptural truth. However, the solution to this dilemma can be found in certain exceptions to this rule, in which the subject of virtue entered into the picture (literally).

²⁴⁹ Maurizio Armaroli, *La Mercanzia di Bologna* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1995), 154.

²⁵⁰ For further information on her secular portraits see Murphy.

²⁵¹ Paleotti, I, 179; Bianchi, 171.

For example, in Fontana's painting of the *Apparition of the Madonna and Child to the Five Saints* (1601, Fig. 73), the women are related to the virtuous examples of the saints. The legacy of this trend for women artists in the seventeenth century was that many of them came to specialize in historiated portraits, where they could encode an entire narrative in a single portrait. One example is Elisabetta Sirani's portrait of *Delilah*, shown without any other details of the story except for her shears in hand.²⁵² Fontana's *Apparition of the Madonna*, originally in the refectory of San Michele in Bosco apparently contains more than meets the eye. Malvasia reports that St. Barbara is a self-portrait; revealingly, she holds not a bible but a drawing book.²⁵³ Due to the rich clothing and portrait-like appearance of the saints, it has been speculated that they represent the noblewomen of Bologna. Fontana has also created the necessary separation between the heavenly and earthly realms, in proper Counter-Reformation style. What of the recognizable portraits of women as saints, something which Paleotti would most certainly not have condoned? He wrote that portraits were only allowed if they represented an important role model, but he specifically forbade recognizable portraits of contemporary people in the guise of saints or other religious figures.²⁵⁴ Perhaps these were especially important or virtuous noblewomen of Bologna, and dressed as saints they would reinforce the image of female virtue, a combination of the devotional quality of a Byzantine icon with the naturalism of Flemish portraiture. Rather than a complete violation of his rules, this seems to be an exception that Paleotti would have permitted.

In the painting of *St. Francis di Paola Blessing the Child of Luisa of Savoy* (1590, Fig. 74), the saint blesses the child carried by a woman identified as Luisa of Savoy. Perhaps this painting was created as an ex-voto for the safe delivery of the child-king Louis, as suggested by

²⁵² *Delilah* is discussed below, chapter 4.

²⁵³ Cantaro, 198; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, I, 21.

²⁵⁴ Paleotti, II, 348.

Cantaro, and commissioned by someone in the service of the family.²⁵⁵ The figure of St Francis dominates the space with his large stature while blessing the child.²⁵⁶ The deep diagonal of the architecture focuses the viewer on the gesture of the woman, who is given pride of place in the foreground as she kneels and presents her child to the saint.

An unusual altarpiece in Fontana's oeuvre is the *Gnetti Pala* or *Altarpiece*, also known as the *Consecration to the Virgin and Child with Saints* (1599, Figs. 75-76). This painting includes four patrons, all of them children: two boys and two girls with their patron saints.²⁵⁷ This is a very unusual depiction of a votive painting in that it shows only the children sharing the same sacred space in the heavenly clouds as the saints. Children had been present in altarpieces before, but normally their parents were included as well. This type of altarpiece would have taken on special importance in relation to the Christian institutes of charitable reform for girls that proliferated in Bologna in the sixteenth century.²⁵⁸

A further category of religious portraiture includes those paintings that deal with apocryphal biblical and historical heroines. Figures such as the virtuous Judith and the legendary Queen of Sheba are characters that would have been familiar to their audience as examples of female role models, and they were often part of the religious sermons of the day. Even Cleopatra was included in this coterie, albeit as an example of the exotic other, the eastern queen in all of her finery; her story was used to teach a moral lesson through her errors.

²⁵⁵ Cantaro, 150, 192; Murphy, 171.

²⁵⁶ The figure of St. Francis is very similar to that of St. Benedict by Angela Teresa Muratori (Fig. 147) in her painting, *The Miracle of St. Benedict*. In Muratori's work the saint also towers over the other figures and the architecture is a dramatic part of the composition. Muratori was certainly influenced by Fontana, as well as by the Carracci, Reni, and Sirani, and she will be discussed further in chapter four, along with the other seventeenth-century female successors of Fontana.

²⁵⁷ Cantaro, 192, 162, 175, 197; Murphy, 191-3.

²⁵⁸ Fontana herself created many tender paintings of children, including a portrait of a small child still in its crib, fig. 76. She depicted the luxuriously detailed crib perhaps as a commemoration of the child's birth for a wealthy family, judging from the quality of the crib.

Fontana created several versions of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (1595, Figs. 77-79). These three paintings all deal with the trope of the virtuous woman, the virgin/virago heroine that remained an important theme in the Papal States throughout the Counter-Reformation period, since Judith is associated with the triumphant church.²⁵⁹ Fontana's characterization does not present Judith as the femme fatale but the pious heroine. This reading is based on her modest dress and lack of emphasis on the bloody act, which would otherwise invoke the idea of the dangerous female virago who can overcome the masculine, in a reversal of the "natural" roles where males are expected to conquer.²⁶⁰ For example, there is something of the icon in this image (Fig. 77), which is also meant to be a self-portrait. Much of the canvas is left in darkness, yet the focus is on the light reflecting off Judith's triumphant face. There is also an almost temporary flash of light that illuminates Holofernes's severed head from the shadows. The mood was created for the contemplation of a woman's righteous virtue.

Fontana was skillful in depicting all the luxuries of court environments. *The Queen of Sheba Visits King Solomon* (1600, Fig. 80) is a true court-style painting containing all the details of fine costumes and jewelry; however, there is a moralistic message to the tale. It is theorized that the women in Sheba's retinue are portraits of local noblewomen, that the Queen represents the Duchess Eleonora Gonzaga of Mantua, and that Solomon is the Duke.²⁶¹ As such, they would fall under the rule of portraits that display virtuous women. There is evidence for the identification of Sheba as Eleonora Gonzaga, since she possessed an onyx vase believed to have

²⁵⁹ See n. 260 below.

²⁶⁰ Elena Ciletti, "Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith," in *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 40. The author discusses the idea of Judith as femme fatale. One of Fontana's versions was created for the widow Bargellini (Fig. 77), and still remains in that collection today.

²⁶¹ Cantaro, 189. See also Murphy, 52-54.

come from the Temple of Solomon. In addition, poetic verses had been composed in her honor that compare her to Sheba.²⁶²

The painting of *Cleopatra* (1604-14, Fig. 24) mentioned earlier also falls under this category.²⁶³ The painting is in a somewhat archaizing mode, and its orientalism may be related to Fontana's period in Rome when she met the Persian ambassador to the Vatican. The portrait emphasizes Cleopatra's exotic appearance and costume, rather than her famously violent act of suicide. Compare Fontana's decorous version to a typical male artist's version of the theme, such as Guido Cagnacci's (1658, Fig. 126) voyeuristic and sensual image of Cleopatra's nude body.²⁶⁴ Cagnacci, born in Rimini but considered part of the Bolognese school, presents Cleopatra in her moment of abandon to the sleep of death. The figure of Cleopatra is turned into a luxurious display of female flesh for male consumption. Whether or not Fontana's work was influenced by meeting the Persian ambassador, he also commissioned her to paint portraits of Pope Sixtus V and himself.²⁶⁵ It seems that portraits of important individuals were acceptable at the papal court and were not considered violations of Tridentine rules, at least in Rome.

Finally, we can begin to tie together some of the many strands of the *maniera devota* and the *mano donnesca*. As mentioned earlier, Charles Dempsey discusses the *maniera devota* as stemming from the paintings of Francesco Francia and Raphael.²⁶⁶ However, one must add to this genealogy the influence of the Northern painters, from whom the style originates, such as Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, and Hans Memling, as well as Dürer. In addition, the examples discussed so far have inserted women into this picture, a topic which continues in

²⁶² Cantaro, 189.

²⁶³ Ibid., 264.

²⁶⁴ See chapter 4 for other examples of Cleopatra relevant to this discussion, including Guido Reni's.

²⁶⁵ Angela Ghirardi, "Una pittrice bolognese nella Roma del primo seicento: Lavinia Fontana," *Il Carrobbio* 10 (1984): 159.

²⁶⁶ Charles Dempsey, "The Carracci and the Devout Style in Emilia," in *Sixteenth-Century Italian Art*, ed. Michael Cole (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 388.

chapter 3 via an analysis of imagery created both by and for women in the Christian houses of reform, beginning with Fontana's work. The three modes of painting, the iconic, the sacred narrative, and the religious historiated portrait, which at times overlap with each other and with science, allowed Fontana to satisfy the demands of Paleotti for reformed visual imagery. The contemplative air of the icon merges with the veracity of a history painting using a northern sense of piety and local trends of naturalism to arrive at the *maniera devota*. In his writings, Paleotti defends the use of images in part to resurrect the mores of primitive Christianity in Rome. Since Dempsey cites the Bolognese painter Francia as an example of the Italian *maniera devota*, one should note that Francia's altarpiece in the church of San Vitale and Agricola has been described as "icon-like."²⁶⁷ Furthermore, Fontana's *Assumption* for San Pietro includes the actual relics of those early Christian saints that are located behind the painting.²⁶⁸ This evidence supports the conclusion that the roots of the *maniera devota* partly stemmed from the non-Italian elements of a Byzantine past, from the icon.²⁶⁹ However, even the piety of a Byzantine icon subsequently needed to be translated into the idiom of a scientific document using Bolognese naturalism, in order to move the faithful to worship.

The *mano donnesca* and the *maniera devota*: Women as Guardians of the Icon and the Madonna di San Luca in Bologna

It is fitting that Paleotti should have entrusted a part of his visual campaign to Fontana, since historically, it was women who were seen as the guardians of the icons and the iconic

²⁶⁷ Bianchi, 103.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 103.

²⁶⁹ Perini, *Arte in Europa*, 103,155,161,171.

tradition.²⁷⁰ It was Empress Theodora who reversed her husband Theodosius's decisions to ban icons in the eighth to ninth century.²⁷¹ Also, since icons were often used for private devotion, and the domestic area was a site of female influence, icons became associated with the feminine in Byzantine culture. Although the very first icons were of the face of Christ, many of the other surviving icons are of the Virgin Mary. They have spread Marian devotion since Byzantine times, and it is the icon of Mary that is directly related to the image of the first artist: St. Luke painting the Virgin. What could be more devout than the hand of the woman artist that takes up the brush of St. Luke, as some of the self-portraits by our women artists show?

Bologna has long had a very special relationship with icons, because it is the home of the miracle-working icon of the Madonna of St. Luke on the Monte della Guardia (Fig. 81). Legend tells us that the first sanctuary on the Monte della Guardia in Bologna was created in 1087 when a young girl named Angela went to the mountain to become a hermit.²⁷² Female hermits were rare, except for the Magdalene, and yet in Bologna one of the most famous shrines was started, as the story goes, by a young girl of about sixteen. Following this, by 1160, legend continues, a pilgrim from the eastern city of Constantinople brought the true icon of the Madonna to Bologna.²⁷³ This was the icon of Byzantine tradition, said to be painted by the hand of St. Luke himself and then installed on the Monte della Guardia. The installation was seen as a unification of civic, political, and religious tradition, a highly symbolic performance of piety in the presence of the bishop of Bologna. Of even more interest for this study of the role of women and the sacred in Bologna is that the image was given into the care of female hermits, the *eremetisse* of

²⁷⁰ Thomas F. Matthews, *Byzantium: From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 56.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Mario Fanti, *La Madonna di San Luca in Bologna: Otto secoli di storia, di arte e di fede* (Bologna: Silvana Editoriale, 1993), 69. See also, which this researcher was unable to consult, Diodata Malvasia, *La venuta e i progressi miracolosi della SS. Madonna di S. Luca posta sul monte dalla Guardia dall'anno che si venne 1160 sin dall'anno 1617 ...* (Bologna, 1617). Thanks to Prof. Babette Bohn via email communication for this latter source.

²⁷³ Fanti, 69-101.

Bologna, the congregation of nuns that developed on the Monte after Angela's death. This story was told by Graziolo Accarisi in the fifteenth century and even the historian Sigonio repeated the main points of the story, although he had doubted the authenticity of the icon.²⁷⁴ Ironically, today the Byzantine origin of the icon has definitely been proven by using modern technology and stylistic attribution. Miraculous icons would automatically have granted a certain status of piety to the city that possessed one. The icon was from the city of the mythic eastern tradition, Constantinople, also thought of as the second Rome and heir of early Christianity. In this genealogy, Bologna now inserted itself as the third Rome; Bologna was already the second city of the Papal States by the sixteenth century. In terms of prestige, the icon could also be related to the proceedings of the Council of Ferrara in 1438, where the eastern patriarch sought protection from the Turks and the faithful prayed to their icon for deliverance.

The story of the Madonna della Monte also provides evidence for the important rapport between women, piety, and icons in the city. There is a printed account from 1539 which described the site as existing as far back as 992 as a place for holy hermits, and relates that in later years even noblewomen were said to be living there as eremitesse.²⁷⁵ In later centuries, women writers also got involved in the story: in 1603, Lucrezia Marinelli wrote a play on the origin of the icon and named the pilgrim who brought the icon back from Constantinople, Eutimio.²⁷⁶ It seems that the story of icons and devotion is constantly interwoven with that of women in Bologna.

The icon had been a crucial part of the performance of piety since the time of early Christianity, a tangible reminder of the intangible. The image was even seen as superior to the word after the second Nicaean Council, which reinforced the power of images to propagate the

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 80,109.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 109.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 49-69.

faith.²⁷⁷ These ideas were all in line with Paleotti's Tridentine directives of visual reform. Pilgrimage became one aspect of the icon's function, and served to activate its power. In order to protect the image for such activities, the icon itself was richly framed within an elaborate silver screen. Many seventeenth-century woodcut prints attest to similar types of performances of faith that continued in later recreations long after the departure of the Byzantine Council of 1438, due to the afterlife of the icon.²⁷⁸ Pilgrimages included those coming to Bologna to visit the Monte, as well as the icon itself traveling down into the city during sacred processions. These visits have left traces of group pilgrimage to the site by confraternities, during which the faithful came bearing donations and ex-votos in times of trouble.²⁷⁹ The pilgrimage up the Monte was arduous, and not everyone could make the climb. Therefore, in lieu of the original, many ceramic icons reproducing the Monte image were set up in places of borders, i.e., street corners, bridges, or sites marking dangerous conflicts. In turn, these liminal spaces became sites of the manifestation of popular piety.²⁸⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the underpinnings of the *maniera devota* via an examination of both theory and practice. After having analyzed Paleotti's *Discorso*, it is clear that in addition to Counter-Reformation dogma, his humanist background, and his interest in scientific and historical studies, contributed greatly to his ideas on visual imagery. The chapter further elucidated the connections between Paleotti's theories and the practice of one woman artist,

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 101.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 111, 121.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 222. Today, the sanctuary contains mostly eighteenth- and nineteenth-century painting and sculpture, as well as some sixteenth-century works such as Reni's *Madonna and Child with the Fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary* in roundels (1593); there is also an eighteenth-century sculpture of an Immacolata, displaying the continuing popularity of the theme before its ratification in the nineteenth century.

Lavinia Fontana, through an in-depth look at specific examples of iconography in her religious work that exhibit the modes of painting gleaned from the *Discorso*. Finally, Paleotti's interest in early Christian archaeology served as a catalyst for the consideration of the special relationship between women artists and icons, a reflection of the ties that bind the feminine to the *maniera devota*. In addition, it is important to note in this discussion of women and icons that many early icons from the sixth century were actually done in embroidery, not just tempera, and were considered as precious as those on panels despite the fact that the medium of embroidery was associated with women's work.²⁸¹ The embroidered icon of the Virgin from Egypt, ca. 500's AD (Fig. 82), is a perfect example of this trend and was most likely woven by women. The most holy image in Christendom other than the Sindone, the Veil of Veronica, was created by a woman on fabric. By the seventeenth century, much of the embroidery based on religious paintings was produced in the conservatorio, or Christian reform house for young girls, of which more will be said in the following chapter.

²⁸¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4, 142.

Chapter 3

Stitching for Virtue: Women's Work in Embroidery for the Conservatori of Bologna

This chapter explores the social history of the *conservatori*, or Christian reform houses for young girls, as well as the site-specific iconography of the visual imagery that developed therein, in both painting and textiles, for a very particular audience. Patronage is another important aspect covered in this chapter, since the iconography was often related to the patron, be it a Bolognese noblewoman or wealthy silk merchants. This chapter ends with an analysis of the reception history of these images and their makers and viewers. Bologna had a thriving industry of embroidery, most of which was produced by women in convents and *conservatori*, who often copied famous paintings of local artists, including women. This practice bears witness to the collaboration and influence among *mani donne* that is found in various media within the sacred visual culture of the city, including textiles. In particular, this chapter analyzes two works by Lavinia Fontana and her seventeenth-century successor, Elisabetta Sirani, which were reproduced in embroidery for the *conservatorio* sites.

The *conservatori* are important sites of religious imagery, often displaying the specific iconography of Counter-Reformation models of virtue as adapted for the women living and working there. The girls at the *conservatori* were taught that their virtue could be both maintained and restored through their prayers and pious handiwork. The institutions varied in their founding statutes regarding whom they could assist, with some accepting the daughters of prostitutes, but others accepting only the children of nobility who had now fallen on hard times and were thus the victims of “honorable” shame. This chapter focuses on two places of the latter

category: the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi and the Baraccano. In such an environment, the act of embroidery itself became a vehicle for meditation, in line with its function as a virtuous task for pious women's hands. The making of embroidery thus also recalled the meditative practices of the *devotio moderna* as discussed in chapter 2, concepts closely involved in the reception and use of these objects. However, the final product was often “lavoro di pregio per mani spreggiate”: precious work by undervalued hands, due to the fact that the girls were often exploited in terms of the financial value of their work. Finally, this undervaluing of textiles continues to the present day, since textiles are not often given their due importance in art history. They are relegated to the field of decorative arts, and as such, are not analyzed in terms of religious iconography and reception studies.²⁸² This chapter seeks to address that lacuna.

Conserving Virtue: Embroidery and the Social History of the *Conservatori*

The story of embroidery in Bologna is inseparable from the institution of the charitable house of reform, the *conservatorio*. The very name of these institutions comes from the city's need to preserve the girls' honor.²⁸³ A virtuous form of work, embroidery was considered the ideal way to occupy idle young hands in a pious fashion, as well as a way for the girls to earn their keep, and more importantly, a dowry. Often, the girls earned much more than that in terms of labor, but the profits went to others. For example, the girls, or Putte di Santa Marta, specialized in *punto pittura*, which is the technical term for a particular type of embroidery that copied famous paintings. *Punto pittura* was very much in demand for church and *conservatori*

²⁸² Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 12. “The iconography of women's work is rarely given the serious consideration it deserves... embroidery is all too often treated only in terms of technical developments.” As mentioned above, although some work has recently come out on textiles and trade, much still remains to be done regarding iconographical analysis.

²⁸³ Luisa Ciammitti, “Quanto costa essere normali: la dote nel conservatorio femminile di Santa Maria del Baraccano (1630-1680),” *Quaderni storici. Sistemi di carità* (1983): 469.

décor, especially when it depicted themes of women's virtue.²⁸⁴ The *conservatori* utilized these didactic religious paintings created by women for women in a continuous visual display of female virtue and decorum. The particular iconography of the two examples of religious paintings by Fontana and Sirani that exist in embroidered copies will be discussed below, but first a closer look at the institutions that displayed them is necessary, as well as some brief background on the textile industry itself.

Although male artists were also involved in textile production, there was a preponderance of female artists who are not as well known or studied and who greatly contributed to this art form. This situation is especially due to the fact that embroidery was the occupation of choice for young women cloistered in religious institutions. There were also professional associations of silk weavers and spinners in Bologna, which did include males.²⁸⁵ The field apparently enjoyed a dramatic expansion after the invention in the fifteenth century of the *filatoio idraulico*, or hydraulic spinner, a water-powered machine that allowed production to go much faster.²⁸⁶ However, most of the embroidery destined for the local liturgical and private devotional market was created by the girls in these *conservatori*. In a display of gender-specific roles, the boys in similar institutions were instead employed in different work, such as professional mourning. For this task, young boys were employed from charitable institutions to accompany the public funeral procession and weep for the departed. This maintained the traditional gender stereotypes

²⁸⁴ *Arte e pietà: i patrimoni culturali delle opere pie*, Istituti per i beni artistici, culturali naturali della Regione Emilia-Romagna (Exh. cat. , Bologna: CLUEB, 1980), 216-219. They were even able to create chromatic effects without the use of gold or silver. Entire texts exist from the sixteenth century with designs for embroidery such as the one by Elisabetta Parasole Cattaneo of Rome, but this was only for simpler geometric designs, not for punto pittura, which was based on complete paintings and engravings. Elisabetta Catanea Parasole, *Pretiosa gemma delle virtuose donne: dove si vedono bellissimi lavori di punto in aria, reticella, di maglia, e piombini / disegnati da Isabella Catanea Parasole* (Venice: F. Ongania, 1879).

²⁸⁵ Celide Masini, *Gli splendori della Vergogna: la collezione dei dipinti dell'Opera Pia dei Poveri Vergognosi* (Bologna: Nuova alfa, 1995), 97.

²⁸⁶ Maurizio Armaroli, *La Mercanzia di Bologna* (Bologna: Nuova Alfa, 1995), 150. For more information on the silk industry in Florence, see also Judith C. Brown and Jordan Goodman, "Women and Industry in Florence," *The Journal of Economic History* 40, no. 1 (March, 1980): 73-80. Brown states that by the seventeenth century, 84% of the production of silk was done by women in Florence.

of women in the domestic interior, and males out in the public sphere, since mourning was a very public task, while embroidery was meant for the cloistered female.²⁸⁷

Recent research has uncovered evidence that in some orphanages the children (both boys and girls) actually died within a short time of being admitted; apparently this was especially true in Florence.²⁸⁸ In his case study comparing Florence and Bologna, Nicholas Terpstra discovered that the children were in fact treated much better in Bologna than in Florence. The reason for this discrepancy is that Bologna had a separate institution for the children of ex-upper classes, i.e., those who had once been part of the aristocratic class, but had fallen on hard times (the *Opere dei Povere Vergognosi*, discussed below). Thus, it seems that they were kept in a slightly better condition than the general orphanages for the children of the poor or those who had been abandoned.²⁸⁹ In Florence, there was no such distinction and therefore the mortality rates were very high for young girls working in these general orphanages. Why the discrepancy? Poverty had become more of a concern in Counter-Reformation times in the Papal States, as it could lead to other sins, especially, for young women, the dreaded sin of prostitution. However, in the Papal State of Bologna, it appears that there was a better administered system of care for the poor and disenfranchised, since the institutions were divided into different types and classes. Perhaps due to Paleotti's zealous approach to his pastoral care and tending of the flock, there was a much stronger presence of the church in that system, as opposed to the system in a ducal city such as Florence, which was much more subject instead to the whims of its Medici rulers.

The *Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi* was started as far back as 1495 and was dedicated to St. Nicholas, patron of wayward girls, on the Feast of the Annunciation. He was known as the

²⁸⁷ Nicholas Terpstra, "Making a Living, Making a Life: Work in the Orphanages of Florence and Bologna," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 4 (2000): 1063-1079. The majority of Terpstra's early research had focused on males in the brotherhood, although his forthcoming research is on women.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1069.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1070.

protector of fallen women, in line with Paleotti's declared interest in helping prostitutes recover their honor and virtue.²⁹⁰ By 1554, another charitable group especially for women was annexed to the Opere, the Putte di Santa Marta. The resulting institution was a *conservatorio* for the daughters of Bolognese nobility who had lost their fortunes, but being of noble blood could not beg without incurring shame and loss of face. The statutes for the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi had been created in 1507 and were written by Pope Julius II himself, who gave the first official permission for the institution.²⁹¹ The archives of the Opere inform us that only the "belle e vistose" or "beautiful and showy ones" were taken in, since they were most at risk for the sin of prostitution due to their beauty.²⁹² Older women members were assigned the task of performing inspections of the girls, and we are fortunate that a record of these survives from later periods. The girls' honor was not necessarily their own: it belonged to the city of Bologna and the city took great care in protecting it. Other such institutions included Santa Croce and San Giuseppe, which specialized in taking in the daughters of prostitutes.²⁹³

Another one of these institutions in Bologna for the Christian reform of young girls for which we have some extant documentation is the *conservatorio* at the Baraccano. This institution was associated with the Madonna of the Baraccano, a miraculous image of the Virgin that was located on a low wall that had once encircled that part of the city. According to the records, the girls at the Baraccano were examined upon entry since they were being groomed for either marriage or the nunnery, and they would have needed a dowry for either one.²⁹⁴ The dowry was something they could accumulate with their own work; thus their appearance, health, good

²⁹⁰ Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960), 506.

²⁹¹ *Opera pia dei poveri vergognosi (Bologna, Italy) Copia de Statuti dei poveri vergognosi e putte di Santa Marta*, Ms. Codex 1483, University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Henry Charles Lea Collection, 126.

²⁹² *Arte e pietà*, 464.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 464.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 477.

behavior, and manual skills were all of great importance to the *conservatorio*. Women's hands were considered most appropriate for the delicate work of embroidery.²⁹⁵ However, as previously mentioned, the girls were somewhat exploited in this system in terms of the amount of work that they did relative to the profits they received. They were made to work extremely long 12-hour days for which they were paid very little. The work itself, although crucial to the city's economy, was very tedious, with the owners of the fabric rights making quite a profit from the girls' work.²⁹⁶ The girls had very specific rules of behavior and dress: for example, they were to dress in blue, like the Madonna – a visual manifestation of their piety in a textile. However, only after having been there for six months were they allowed to don the blue clothes.²⁹⁷ It seems that it took that long to ascertain their virtue. The women's holy seclusion had another material manifestation in the *conservatorio*, the *spioncino*. The *spioncino* was a small wooden panel with a tiny opening in the doorway that allowed a person on the inside to see who was at the gate on the outside. It tells the poignant story of the aspect of confinement in these women's lives, since they were not permitted to circulate on their own; only their embroidery destined for altars or ecclesiastical garments would leave the institution.²⁹⁸

There were four churches associated with collecting alms for the poor: San Pietro, San Petronio, San Giovanni in Monte, and San Domenico. They each collected for their respective neighborhoods and had the responsibility of dispersing the alms for those poor who requested assistance. These requests took the form of little slips of paper (*scriptarini*) which were inserted into a special box; each of the four churches had its own box.²⁹⁹ This box had been created to

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 481.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 477.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 484.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 235-480.

²⁹⁹ *Archivio dell'Opera pia dei poveri vergognosi in Bologna : inventario-regesto delle serie: strumenti, verbali di congregazione, sommari e repertori, miscellanea, appendice*, edited by Anna Accarrino (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna Opera pia dei, 1999), 31.

insure that the assistance was dispersed in a discreet manner, in order to avoid embarrassment. The requests were then verified to make certain that those asking for assistance were God-fearing and “*persone da bene.*”³⁰⁰ In other words, this assistance was reserved for those who were once of the genteel class but had fallen on hard times, since, as noted, these people could not beg. In the illustration from Vecellio’s sixteenth-century text on costume, a poverty-stricken soul of this class is shown with his identity covered up by a cloak and hood (Fig. 83) in order to avoid the shame of being seen begging.³⁰¹

In general, only the daughters of ex-nobility and rich merchants who fell into financial or personal ruin were considered honorable enough to obtain the Vergognosi’s assistance. There were other institutions set up specifically for the lower classes of poor and sick, such as the Mendicanti, but this study does not consider these sites. Interestingly, however, exceptions were made for painters, sculptors, and surgeons, who were considered worthy of the Vergognosi charities by the seventeenth century. In terms of prestige, painters were equal to surgeons and wealthy merchants in the eyes of the church. On the other hand, merchants of *bestiame* (livestock) were considered too lowly. By 1682 the category of *poveri vergognosi* had to be confirmed; those requesting assistance had to be of the right status. By the 1700s, even some daughters of senators in dire straits received assistance and dowries. In the eighteenth century, certain patrons, however, actually began to specify that those requesting assistance not be of noble birth.³⁰² This shift reflects the changing attitudes toward nobility, labor, and poverty on the cusp of the enlightenment. In other words, the laborer could now be noble and the unemployed nobleman could be a lazy ne’r-do-well by comparison (however, the details of this shift are

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 31.

³⁰¹ Giovanni Ricci, *Povert , vergogna, superbia: i declassati tra Medioevo e Et  moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996), 81-95.

³⁰² *Archivio dell’Opera pia*, 36.

beyond the scope of the current discussion). In order to truly understand the imagery created at and for the *conservatori*, one must analyze the iconography more closely.

The Iconography of Women's Virtue

The iconography of the religious imagery created for these sites was intrinsically related to the function of these images in the *conservatorio*. Subjects such as Martha and Mary, St. Nicholas, the Sewing Madonna, and other holy mother and child imagery had special resonance with the audience of these images. In addition, the iconography was also indicative of convent reform, with an emphasis on certain female saints as role models, an important part of the salvation of women's virtue. The Conservatorio of the Putte di Santa Marta needed religious imagery that would illustrate the appropriate Christian behavior for the virgins living therein. Two of these images, Lavinia Fontana's *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (Fig. 84), and her seventeenth-century successor Elisabetta Sirani's *Madonna and Child with St. Joseph and Teresa* (Fig. 86), are the focus of this section.³⁰³ Fontana's painting was done for the chapel of the Putte di Santa Marta, and is miraculously still in its original location. Sirani's painting, done for the silk merchant Rizzardi, and translated into embroidery by the putte with some modifications, is now in a private collection. Unfortunately, many of the paintings for these institutions have been moved from their original locations due to the tragic disruption of religious life caused by Napoleon's suppression of the orders in the 1790s; we will revisit this theme in regard to the students of Elisabetta Sirani in chapter 4.³⁰⁴ The importance of these

³⁰³ For Fontana's painting see also Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and her Patrons in Sixteenth-Century Bologna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 189-90 and Cantaro, 97; for Sirani's painting see Adelina Modesti, *Elisabetta Sirani: Una virtuosa del seicento Bolognese* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 85 and the catalogue entry in Jadranka Bentini and Vera Fortunati, ed. *Elisabetta Sirani: Pitttrice eroina, 1638-1665* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004).

³⁰⁴ Daniela Camurri, *L'arte perduta: le requisizioni di opere d'arte a Bologna in età napoleonica (1796-1815)* (Bologna: Minerva, 2003).

particular paintings for the study of women and the Counter-Reformation is that they were re-created in embroidery by the virgins themselves. In the cases of the two examples by Fontana and Sirani, there is an unbroken chain of female virtue that goes from the original painting by a female artist, itself used as a role model for the girls, to the embroidered copy, made by the girls themselves as the embodiment and material display of their virtue.

The biographer Malvasia confirms that Fontana's painting of *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* was used as the model for the embroidered copy at Santa Marta.³⁰⁵ The painting is unique as a document that carries traces of collaboration between generations of women and the manifestation of their piety. The work is partly influenced by the style of her father, Prospero Fontana, who may even have executed the figure of Christ and the architecture in the background, leaving Lavinia the female figures.³⁰⁶ Lavinia goes beyond her father's characterizations, however, when it comes to the female figures. Martha and Mary are shown as two young girls, who may have been intended as role models for the viewers of this painting. In Counter-Reformation iconography, Martha and Mary respectively represent the active and contemplative life, a perfect set of role models for young women in the *conservatorio* whose lives would have mirrored these two spheres of devotion: pious work and pious thought.

These types of site-specific works for conserving women's virtue continued to be made in the seventeenth century, by and for women. Lavinia's heir was the seventeenth-century Bolognese painter Elisabetta Sirani. Sirani painted for only a short ten years or so, yet produced over 200 paintings, drawings and etchings.³⁰⁷ She was noted for her pious *Madonnas* in the style

³⁰⁵ Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi* (1678), ed. G.P. Zanotti (Bologna: Tipografia Guidi all'Ancora, 1841), I, 179.

³⁰⁶ Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana bolognese: "pittora singolare" 1552-1614* (Milan: Jandi Sapi Editori, 1989), 97; Murphy, 189-90.

³⁰⁷ Fortunately, since the time of Jacobs' work on the *Renaissance Virtuosa* in which she mentions the lack of surviving drawings by women artists in general, scholars have been able to analyze the substantial number of drawings left by Sirani and Fontana; drawings were important because they were related to the *concetto* of a

of Guido Reni, with whom her father had worked, and she represents the Bolognese classicism of the early modern period. Sirani was also famous for her school of painting, one of the first of its kind to be attended by many young women of Bologna, whose work will be the subject of chapter 4. Sirani's work continued the rapport between the women of the city, visual imagery, and the convents and houses of reform. She created a *Madonna and Child with Saints Joseph and Teresa* for the silk merchant Gabriele Rizzardi.³⁰⁸ This painting was then also copied in embroidery (Figs. 85-87).³⁰⁹

However, rather than create a straight copy, the institution appropriated Sirani's image with a few relevant changes. St. Joseph was eliminated and St. Martha, who was the patron saint of the reform institution, was substituted for St. Teresa. Thus the girls in the institution personalized the artist's painting, creating a site-specific version using their patron in an example of textual and iconographic appropriation. St. Joseph was considered extraneous to their needs, and thus St. Teresa, who had been given money to found her own convent and promoted a cult dedicated to Joseph, would not have been as appropriate. St. Martha was considered a role model for the girls, as was Mary Magdalene, and there are several paintings of St. Martha by other female artists of Sirani's school.³¹⁰

A closer examination of the embroidered copy of Sirani's painting of the *Madonna and Child with Saints Joseph and Teresa* (Figs. 85-87) rewards us with further insights into the hybridity of this artwork and its ties to the visual culture of the city. First, as previously mentioned, the girls replaced St. Teresa with their patron, St. Martha, and removed St. Joseph,

painting. See also Babette Bohn, "Drawing Practices in Early Modern Bologna," *Master Drawings* 42, no. 3 (2004): 207-36.

³⁰⁸ Jadranka Bentini, ed., *Elisabetta Sirani: Pittrice eroina, 1638-1665* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 148; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 397-8.

³⁰⁹ *Arte e pietà*, 219, cat. nos. 181,189; illustration received via email communication with Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi.

³¹⁰ For further discussion of paintings of the Magdalene, see below, chapter 4.

creating a more intimate *sacra conversazione* between the Madonna and Child and their patron saint. Second, the framing device used to set off the scene is very similar to that used in the frontispieces of book illustration. More specifically, the embroidery of Sirani's painting is framed in an almost identical fashion to the frontispiece for the *Teatro dell'honore* (Fig. 88) from Parma by Veronica Fontana, one of Sirani's students discussed further in chapter 5. The image is set within a border created by the same type of decorative scroll device. Since the girls often worked from a print copy of the original painting, this addition is a further level of appropriation. Their repetition of this framing motif, originally found in books, in the medium of embroidery gives evidence of the close connection between these different media during the seventeenth century (which will become more apparent through the analysis of Veronica Fontana's prints in chapter 5).

The demarcation here between frontispiece, painting, and embroidery was quite porous. Thus the embroidered version created a real hybrid combining visual motifs drawn not only from book illustration in the emblematic Bolognese tradition, but also from painting, print, and fabric. The prints would have been convenient to work from because they were widely dispersed throughout the seventeenth century. By using prints, the girls would not even have had to leave the institution to view the original painting. It would usually have been impossible for them to see the original, unless it happened to be in their own church, as is the case with Fontana's *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* in the chapel of the *conservatorio*.

As proof of the skill of these women artists in textiles, several other embroideries after famous artists are still extant in the collections of the *conservatori*. One of these is an embroidered copy of Ludovico Carracci's painting from San Michele in Bosco, the *Miracle of*

Saint Benedict (Fig. 90).³¹¹ From a comparison of the embroidery with an engraved version of the painting (Fig. 89), it is evident that these girls were extremely skilled at replicating a painting, since they made a perfect copy. The scene illustrated is St. Benedict removing a stone which a demon had made immovable; as in this example, these girls often had to work from prints, as opposed to the original painting. Other surviving examples include creation scenes from Genesis, on a liturgical vestment or cope, perhaps influenced by Raphael's designs for the Vatican Loggie.³¹² These examples were all the work of the girls of the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi who specialized in this very complex process of translating pictorial compositions into embroidery (Figs. 91-92).³¹³

In addition to the embroidered example of St. Martha, paintings of other saints related to women's virtue are often found in these institutes of reform, such as St. Nicholas of Bari. St. Nicholas is associated with fallen women, as he is known for having procured a dowry for three poor young girls so that they would not fall into the sin of prostitution.³¹⁴ The iconography of St. Nicholas became specifically elaborated in Bologna to focus on this part of his task. The saint is often shown with the three gold balls that represent his gift, but in some of these Bolognese examples, he is also shown with the three young ladies themselves. These figures may function as stand-ins for the girls enrolled at the casa, as for example in the painting by Amico Aspertini of this subject, *St. Nicholas Provides the Virgins' Dowries* (Fig. 93).³¹⁵ St. Nicholas is shown with three lovely women to emphasize the beneficiaries of his assistance; the three gold balls are also included. The saint and young women are all shown in the presence of the Madonna and

³¹¹ Amelia Cicatelli, "Sete ricamate della Manifattura di Santa Marta in Bologna," *Musei ferraresi: bollettino annuale* 12-14 (1983-1984): 209-14; Marina Carmignani, *Tessuti, ricami e merletti in Italia: dal Rinascimento al liberty* (Milan: Electa, 2005), 166.

³¹² For the Loggie, see Nicole Dacos, *Le logge di Raffaello: Maestro e bottega di fronte all'antico* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello stato, 1986), 153-154.

³¹³ *Arte e pietà*, 216-217, 219.

³¹⁴ Masini, *Gli splendori*, 54-55.

³¹⁵ *Arte e pietà*, 486.

Child, who blesses all those present and approves St. Nicholas's act of charity towards women's virtue.

The *Madonna del Cucito*, or the *Sewing Madonna* is an additional iconographical theme of paintings normally found in these reform institutions; certainly the girls would have identified with this image. Of two important extant versions, the first is Andrea Sirani's *Sewing Madonna* (Fig. 94) and the second is another version of the same subject by Guido Reni (Fig. 95).³¹⁶ In these two paintings, once again, young girls are present with the holy figure and the Madonna herself is sewing, mirroring an activity that the girls would have been all too familiar with. These paintings reinforce proper decorous behavior and would have been displayed in places where the young women living in these institutions would certainly not fail to get the message. Thus the paintings functioned similarly to the embroidered examples described above. The paintings fall into the category of site-specific genre scenes with a didactic purpose geared toward saving women's virtue. These images are a combination of the sacred and the genre scene, in the pious tradition of early Netherlandish works such as Robert Campin's *Merode Triptych*.³¹⁷

There are still extant examples of religious scenes which include the young girls of the *conservatori* in the presence of the sacred personage. Among the specific iconography of the *conservatori*, an archetypal example of mother and child images such as Fontana's *Birth of the Virgin* (1590; Fig. 96) demonstrates a special relationship between the young females of its intended audience and its subject matter. The painting is now at Santa Trinita, having been moved there at the time of Napoleon's invasions, but it was originally created for San Biagio.³¹⁸ The Church of San Biagio has since been destroyed, but we know that there was a Christian

³¹⁶ Ibid., 470.

³¹⁷ See n. 354 for more on the *Merode Triptych*.

³¹⁸ Cantaro, 152.

school for girls there.³¹⁹ In such a context, the painting would have been particularly appropriate for its audience. The *Birth of the Virgin* includes genre-like details, but it is more specifically geared towards the young ladies of reform houses. For example, the artist depicts a little girl warming the linens in which to swaddle the newborn by the fire. These images would have unique resonance to the girls, whether they were to be spiritual or earthly mothers. The spiritual life of children was also of great importance to Paleotti's campaign, and visual imagery was key to the success of these reforms. Other examples include the anonymous *Madonna and Child with Saints and Putte*, and the *Crucifixion with Putte*, both at the Baraccano (Figs. 98-99).³²⁰ These images were meant for prayer and contemplation and would have brought the girls directly into the pious mood of the painting. Although the statutes for the Baraccano date back to the fifteenth century, these paintings display a unique devout style with the direct participation of the *putte*, far into the seventeenth century (Fig. 97).

Paleotti stressed the importance of both parents in the child's education, but especially exhorted women to become involved with the religious teaching of young girls held at churches and *conservatori*. These schools for young women were taught by the laity, mostly by noblewomen of the city. For example, Fontana's *Birth of the Virgin* was commissioned by the Ghelli family, and Dorotea Ghelli became a teacher at one of these conservatories.³²¹ Paleotti had left specific instructions for the education of children in religious dogma. His work was titled *Ordine delle scuole delle putte che vanno ad imperare la dottrine christiana le domeniche e feste nella citta di Bologna*, or "the order of the schools for girls who go to learn Christian doctrine on

³¹⁹ Murphy, 186-7.

³²⁰ *Arte e pietà*, 156. Female patrons present at the Crucifixion can also be found in a work attributed to Lavinia Fontana; Cantaro, 140. For a discussion of the historiated portrait, refer to chapter 2.

³²¹ Murphy, 90, 96.

Sundays and feast days in the city of Bologna.”³²² For example, he encouraged a Jesuit Sunday school for children, the Congregation of the Virgin of Christian Doctrine. Children were also to be given prizes for remembering their prayers; these prizes would consist of small images of saints, thus reinforcing the connection between word, image and prayer. An example of this type of image is Lavinia Fontana’s *Sts. Cecilia and Sebastian* (Fig. 100), a small work on copper, an appropriate format for the task. The religious teaching was to be dedicated to a different saint each month, such as Anna, Catherine, or the Magdalene, assuring the girls of proper Christian behavioral models.

Paleotti specifically emphasized the importance of role models such as St. Anne, who is often depicted teaching the Virgin how to read, especially in the context of the houses of reform, and Pope Gregory XV gave indulgences to those who celebrated her feast. Both Sirani and Angela Teresa Muratori created religious works of art for the Madonna di Galliera church, a site of education for Christian girls that functioned as both a Sunday school and a meeting place for *conservatori* officials.³²³ For the rector, Father Ghisilieri, Sirani painted a *St. Anne with the Madonna and Child* for the chapel of the Oratory of San Filippo Neri in the Galliera church.³²⁴ This painting was later copied by Lorenzo Tinti, one of Sirani’s colleagues, in an engraving.³²⁵ Apparently, the school was dedicated to St. Francis de Sales.³²⁶ St. Francis was known as a saint who championed women and preached to the noblewomen of France, and he was thus an appealing figure to the circle of the devout and charitable ladies of Paleotti’s Bologna.

³²² Ibid., 185, 215.

³²³ See chapter 4 for more information on Muratori.

³²⁴ For more on the patron Ghisilieri, see Raffaella Morselli, *Collezionisti e quadre nella Bologna del Seicento: inventari 1640-1707* (Turin: Fondazione dell’Istituto bancario San Paolo di Torino, 1998), I, 239; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400.

³²⁵ Modesti, 87. See chapter 4 for more information on Sirani and Ghisilieri; see chapter 5 for more on Tinti; for Tinti’s engraving, see Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà, ed., *Incisori bolognesi ed emiliani del sec. XVII*. (Bologna: Associazione per l’arti Francesco Francia, 1973), n.931.

³²⁶ Ibid., 87.

The choice of themes such as St. Anne teaching the Virgin how to read -- in other words, women helping women -- was also influenced by new aspects of convent reform. In addition to performing charitable work as a noblewoman by teaching in a *conservatorio* or becoming a nun, there was a third state for women in which they could assist the religious campaign for young women's virtue, that of the unenclosed nuns or tertiaries.³²⁷ These women lived in lay communities and performed charitable works. Zarri also mentions a fourth state, that of the stay-at-home virgin. These were young girls who dedicated their lives to service and prayer but neither married nor entered the convent and continued to live with their families. After Gabriele, his successor Alfonso Paleotti agreed with these other options for young girls.³²⁸ The category of the stay-at-home virgin became simply another manifestation of the conservation of women's virtue for the city's well-being and posterity, in tandem with the images of saintly females displayed in the *conservatori*. By the seventeenth century, part of Tridentine reform also included new rules for girls entering the convent. The most important of these were to inquire if they had a true vocation, to establish a minimum age for entering the convent, and to mandate the presence of the bishop at the ceremony.³²⁹ The goal of these reforms was to establish a true piety in the convents, and, as will be demonstrated, embroidery played an important part in this endeavor.

Pious Patrons and the Iconography of the Silk Trade

In addition to the considerations of intended audience of these works, the history of these institutions and the imagery produced by their occupants is also closely tied to the story of their patronage. The donors were mostly wealthy silk merchants and noblemen and women involved

³²⁷ Gabriella Zarri, *Donne e fede: santità e vita religiosa in Italia* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1994), 107.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

in the salvation of these girls' virtue. The dowry, which the girls could earn with their labor, was an essential part of this salvation operation, since it could assure that these young women entered one of the two states necessary for the preservation of honor: i.e., marriage or the convent. The patrons helped the *conservatori* acquire the necessary funds for the girls' dowries, and in turn, often included special provisions for the funds' disbursement. Thus the images the patrons commissioned were directly linked to this particular function regarding the girls' honor, as discussed above. Many patrons left money in their wills for the Opere del Poveri Vergognosi and the Putte of Santa Marta. For example, the Negri family left 400 lira for girls who were to marry and left 800 lira for those wishing to enter the nunnery.³³⁰ Apparently some patrons preferred to leave behind more money for the girls to take the veil of the convent; perhaps it was more desirable for the young women to become brides of Christ rather than earthly brides. An important consideration in this choice was that the marriage dowry could return to the *conservatorio* if the girl died childless, whereas if she joined the convent, it would remain there.³³¹ Some funds came from Rome, and in 1578 Pope Gregory XIII conceded a special indulgence to those who gave to the Vergognosi and the orphanages, which encouraged communal piety and economic assistance to those less fortunate (Fig. 101). Records indicate that in 1586 Cardinal Salviati, the pontifical legate in Bologna, assigned 100 *corbe* (barrels) of wine to the Vergognosi and 20 *carra* (carts) of wood for the Putte.³³² The company operated with 12 governors "of good fame and condition and honest riches" in order to ensure proper accounting of the charitable funds.³³³

³³⁰ *Archivio dell'Opera pia*, 35.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³³² *Ibid.*, 32.

³³³ Much of this information is to be found in the Libro Bianco (the white book), which survives in a copy from 1720. See n. 291.

Special attention was paid to the poverty of women, and female patrons were very active in charitable donations to the *conservatori*. According to the records, many of the donations were dedicated to charities for women since women's honor and virtue was considered by the church to be in more constant peril and more at risk for corruption than that of males. According to the statistics, 17 out of 57 donors addressed their gifts directly to the *fanciulle*. For example, Virginia Cospi donated a *mulino* and any revenues that the mill generated to the Putte of Santa Croce. Girolamo Negri (whose family was mentioned above) stipulated in 1616 that after his demise his money was to be invested for 20 years, the proceeds of which were to be specifically set aside to provide dowries for 40 girls from the parish of San Tommaso del Mercato to be able to join the Putte; controls were set in place to make certain that Negri's inheritance went to its destined targets.³³⁴ Without the honor of their virgins intact, the honor of the city would also suffer, and the city took great pains to avoid this.

The city's sites of pious patronage by the women of Bologna often intersected. Originally, the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi met in the Church of San Domenico, and they later moved to the Church of Santa Maria di Galliera.³³⁵ This shift is of interest, since several of the religious works done by Sirani and her students were commissioned for Sta. Maria. In addition, the musical oratorios of Angela Teresa Muratori (one of Sirani's students) were composed for that same church and, together with the paintings that will be discussed in chapter 4, reinforce the ties between these women artists and the charitable organizations of Christian reform for young women. Ginevra Sampieri left a painting of the *Madonna with St. Joseph* to the Baraccano.³³⁶ Many of these paintings had a new emphasis on including children as donors, even

³³⁴ *Archivio dell'Opera pia*, 35.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 28-30. After 1621 they had a rotating *sede*, and by the early 1700s they met in the house of Giovanni Francesco Rossi Poggi Marsigli.

³³⁶ Murphy, 190.

at times presenting children without their parents. For example, Fontana's Gnetti altarpiece, discussed previously, was created for Santa Maria dei Servi and contained portraits of the four Gnetti children with their patron saints but without their parents (Fig. 75). A school for Christian doctrine for children was held at Santa Maria dei Servi, which may partially explain the reasons for the unconventional image.³³⁷ The altarpiece would have taken on new significance in such a context, where the children could play an important role, depicted in direct contact with the saints, as the patrons would have wished.

The silk trade and its wealthy merchant patrons were also intimately embroiled with the history of institutions for women, since the merchants depended heavily on these girls for their industry. Even Bologna's other institutions for the poor, such as St. Ursula and San Gregorio, which were located outside the city walls along the southwest, were conveniently near the silk merchants.³³⁸ The silk industry was among the most important of the *arte* guilds. It was such a necessary part of the economy of the city that important and well-attended fairs were held in Bologna regularly, as we can see in Mitelli's seventeenth-century etching of the silk market or *Mercato del Follicello* (Fig. 102). This image depicts the main piazza filled with merchants and crammed with all manner of stalls that display wares dealing with the silk industry. In some ways due to the silk trade, one could say that "honore" could be bought and virtue could be embroidered.

Most of the liturgical vestments and decor in use throughout the city were embroidered by women in the *conservatori* and convents. One example is the Baldacchino for the Madonna of San Luca, the important miracle-working icon of Bologna and one of the city's most revered

³³⁷ Ibid., 193-194.

³³⁸ *Arte e pietà*, 471.

religious treasures, said to be woven by the girls at Santa Marta.³³⁹ This would have been a very prestigious commission, entrusted only to the *mani devote* of these pious girls. Weaving was the highest-paying job, and the more robust girls were put on the loom. From the sixteenth century on, veils, or *pizzi*, were also an important part of the girls' work, as these embroidered objects were very expensive. The embroidery and silk were sold at a very good price, as mentioned earlier, but the workers kept very little of this themselves, except, hopefully, as a dowry.

Certain merchants received very profitable monopolies on the girls' labor. One man, the silk merchant Gabriele Rizzardi, acquired the rights to the work of 90 girls at the Baraccano for a full ten years.³⁴⁰ Most certainly, Rizzardi would have commissioned some religious work of art to memorialize his investment and to expiate any sins from the profitability of his enterprise, as was common for the merchant class.³⁴¹ If one considers a similar case, Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel, Scrovegni was trying to expiate his family's sin of usury by commissioning Giotto's frescoes. Apparently, Rizzardi did the same thing: according to the records, he commissioned the original painting from Sirani, the *Holy Family with St. Teresa* that the embroidery is based on, as well as, most probably, the embroidered version in silk.³⁴² This subject would be a logical choice; what more pious gift could a silk merchant give, than to commission images with the power to help save the virtue of the very same young girls who worked in the *conservatorio* creating these artworks? In fact, Fontana's *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* was found in the chapel of Saint Martha, reinforcing the message of women's virtue.³⁴³

³³⁹ Carmignani, 66.

³⁴⁰ *Arte e pietà*, 478.

³⁴¹ Rodolfo Vittori, "La pietà di un mercante bolognese del tardo Cinquecento: Bonifacio dalle Balle e le putte di Santa Croce," *Il Carobbio* 12 (1986): 328-50.

³⁴² Modesti, 85, n. 94; see also Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400.

³⁴³ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, 397-8.

Not all merchants were as capitalistic as Rizzardi. One Bonifacio dalle Balle created a house of reform specifically to help the daughters of prostitutes. There is an anonymous painting that depicts dalle Balle kneeling in prayer surrounded by the *putte* whose virtue he had helped save (Fig. 103).³⁴⁴ For this endeavor, he utilized his share of family wealth that had been accumulated, ironically, through the silk trade. Dalle Balle's name even comes from his family's industry, i.e. the balls of silk used in the Arte emblem, an example of which is in Mitelli's illustration of trades (Fig. 104a).³⁴⁵ He had a special devotion to St. Francis, which comes as no surprise if we realize that the Franciscans were the most devoted to both the Marian cult and to helping the poor, thus closely related to women's poverty. Fontana's paintings of the saint, in all his nature theism, may be considered as a completion of the link between St. Francis and the women of the city. These commissions also continued the tradition of expiating merchant guilt for acquiring wealth through religious commissions. In this case, it was not dalle Balle's own, but instead his family's guilt, because they continued to operate the family business.

The Embroidery and the Ecstasy: The Production and Reception of Embroidery as a Performance of Piety

For the last piece of the puzzle, having uncovered the social history of these institutions as sites of religious imagery, and analyzed their iconography and patronage, this section analyzes the reception of the embroidered imagery, including its use as a meditative tool in the daily rituals of the *mani donnesche* of the city. One must consider the production of these embroideries and their reception and use as part of a performance of piety, both in the making and in the final product. The writings of nuns from the period provide written evidence for these practices. The

³⁴⁴ Vittori, 324.

³⁴⁵ Franca Varignana, ed., *Le collezioni d'arte della Cassa di risparmio in Bologna: le incisioni* (Bologna: Alfa, 1978), 406.

post-Tridentine climate had required an examination of convent life, and subsequently, measures and reforms were enacted to correct certain problems that had arisen during the years, such as illiteracy and boredom. The communal pious work of embroidery, choral practice, and private prayer were just some of the practices that Trent encouraged in order to rectify these issues. These practices, in turn, resulted in specific sites, both actual and virtual, that required rituals, images, and iconography tailored to their use.³⁴⁶ One of the most important of these activities was embroidery and connecting it to the *stanza dell'anima*, or the room of the soul, which resulted in visions of the sacred and a type of virtual pilgrimage.

It should be noted, however, that in Italy this practice did not in any way diminish the importance of the liturgical devotions or attendance at mass, a diminishing that has been claimed by some modern scholars to have occurred in the North.³⁴⁷ According to Harbison, there was a problematic relationship between the image and private devotion; he states that the *devotio moderna* did not encourage the visual arts. However, quite the opposite was true in Bologna in the sixteenth century thanks to Paleotti's reforms. Spiritual visions and meditation during the making of embroidery was merely an additional mode of prayer, stemming from the earlier practices of the *devotio moderna*.

³⁴⁶ See also Silvia Evangelisti, *Nuns: A History of Convent Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8. Evangelisti is also of the mindset that the convent was fruitful for the creation of women's imagery despite Tridentine repression: "When we look at works of the nuns who wrote, painted, sculpted, organized performances, and played music, the convent appears to have been more of a catalyst for female cultural production than an impediment."

³⁴⁷ Craig Harbison, "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting," *Simiolus* 15 (1985): 113, 115. See also Laura D. Gelfand and S. Gibson, "Surrogate Selves: The Rolin Madonna and the Late-medieval Devotional Portrait," *Simiolus* 29 (2002): 119-138; Matthew Botvinick, "The Painting as Pilgrimage: Traces of a Subtext in the Work of Campin and his Contemporaries," *Art History* 15 (1992): 1-18; Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2009), 147-174. Harbison's article mostly concerns itself with personal piety and also discusses Memling's *Diptych of Maarten van Nieuwenhove* and van Eyck's *Madonna of Canon Van der Paele*. Spiritual pilgrimage is also discussed in chapter 2 and the introduction of the present study. See n. 34.

Boredom and illiteracy were seen as particularly dangerous for the nuns. Boredom could be relieved with work such as embroidery and singing.³⁴⁸ Increasing literacy among the nuns was achieved through communal prayer, which also encouraged piety.³⁴⁹ The fact that many novice nuns were illiterate prohibited them from participating in the choral exercises of the mass; this was seen as a situation in need of remedy.³⁵⁰ The goal was to have all members of the convent active in communal prayer, which would encourage a virtuous piety and productive collaboration. The members of the convent were also to be trained to become teachers of song and embroidery, since these were seen as virtuous and pious activities for nuns, or ways to keep devoted hands occupied in pious tasks. In addition to communal work, they practiced the technique of mental oration and private meditation. These two techniques are reminiscent of sentiments related to the *devotio moderna* and were more popular in the North, although echoes of this practice persisted in Italy in *conservatori* and convents where the *maniera devota* was practiced not only in visual imagery but also in daily life.

Following these reforms in the sixteenth century, special rooms were set up for the communal work of embroidery for those in the convents and *conservatori*; in the end, this practice became highly symbolic.³⁵¹ In Counter-Reformation imagery, the *stanza del lavoro*, or the room of work, is also seen as the *stanza dell'anima*, or the room of the soul. This directly

³⁴⁸ See Craig Monson, *Disembodied Voices: Music and Culture in an Early Modern Italian Convent* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995) for a slightly different viewpoint, i.e. that the Counter-Reformation rules were repressive to female creativity in the convents (at least as far as music was concerned), but that several nuns nonetheless managed to beat the system and fight their restrictions re: convent music in Bologna in the seventeenth century (one of these nuns was Lucrezia Vizzani at Santa Cristina). For more on women artists in Bologna and music in the later seventeenth century, see the discussion of Muratori and her surviving oratorios below, chapter 4, as an example of a successful female composer of sacred music. My argument in this study however, has been that the Counter-Reformation was *fruitful* for women's work in terms of *visual* production, as opposed to repressive to it; thus the large group of working women artists in Bologna (my italics).

³⁴⁹ Alberto Vecchi, *Con mano devota: mostra delle immaginette spirituali manufatte* (Padua: Edizioni Messaggero, 1985), 18. There were other constant dangers such as infractions of the clausura law, as well as the possibility of bad administration.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 17-20.

correlates to the practice of Marian devotion in the *devotio moderna*,³⁵² which speaks of the room of the heart, since the heart is also tied to the soul, for example, as in a reading of Memling's Nieuwenhove Diptych.³⁵³ The patron, Maartin van Nieuwenhove, is rewarded for his piety with a vision of the Madonna in his own home, which stands in for his heart and soul. The image of a room for Mary implies a space for Mary housed in one's own heart, a place that is pure and filled with pious thoughts, a worthy abode for the Virgin herself; thus one is asked to clear out one's heart to make room for the Virgin. Mystical writings speak of both the heart and soul as places of purity, to be decorated with the flowers of piety in preparation for being occupied by the Virgin.³⁵⁴ This imagery can also be associated with the devices of other meditative practices such as memory theater, the *devotio moderna*, and the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola. In addition to an apparition, or visit from a sacred personage, such an exercise would also include picturing oneself in the scene of a sacred narrative in the presence of the Virgin or Christ. One would engage in this exercise while actually still in a room in which pious work is being done, be it religious embroidery, choral song, or meditation upon the Virgin Mary or the mysteries of Christ's passion.

Many of the convents and *conservatori* in Bologna in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included schools for crafts such as painting and music. These schools produced all manner of visual imagery including sculpture and textiles. Artists such as the Florentine nun Caterina de' Ricci were known for having hands of exceptional ability; the work of these

³⁵² Jordan Aumann, *Christian Spirituality in the Catholic Tradition* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 162-177.

³⁵³ Reindert L. Falkenburg, "Hans Memling's Van Nieuwenhove Diptych: The Place of Prayer in Early Netherlandish Devotional Painting," in *Essays in Context: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, ed. John Oliver Hand and Ron Spronk (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Art Museums; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 92-109.

³⁵⁴ Reindert L. Falkenburg, "The Household of the Soul: Conformity in the Merode Triptych," in *Early Netherlandish Painting at the Crossroads: A Critical Look at Current Methodologies*, ed. Maryan W. Ainsworth (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 2-17.

virtuous artists was greatly sought after outside of the convent.³⁵⁵ In addition to coming from local churches and patrons, commissions for the nuns' work often came from noble courts such as the Este.³⁵⁶ One would have needed talented hands indeed to create some of these complex embroideries in which entire paintings were perfectly copied in wool and silk in all their painterly details. There are several talented nun artists from this period whose names or work survives, such as the fifteenth century Clarissan nun from Bologna, Caterina Vigri, and Jacopo Tintoretto's two daughters, who apparently worked for years on the embroidered altarpiece for the Convent of St. Anna in Venice.³⁵⁷ Vigri created small illustrations for her breviary that included the image of Christ and the Christ child, as well as some self-portraits. Her work contains an emphasis on the face of Christ that has been related to the Veronica, with which a female audience would have had a special rapport as the beloved divine bridegroom, thus giving the image particular potency in the convent.³⁵⁸ However, Vigri chose to depict the face of Christ in three-quarter view, as opposed to the fully frontal image. Vigri had also worked in Ferrara before becoming head of the Corpus Domini convent in Bologna, and it seems that the city of Ferrara had links with the *devotio moderna*.³⁵⁹ This background may have influenced her choice of combining the potency of the icon in terms of its simplistic features, plus the more realistic view of the portrait, a combination of modes that Paleotti would require by the Counter-Reformation period. These personalized images would be ideal compliments to work and prayer, defined above all by their use.

³⁵⁵ Vecchi, 17-21.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 20-21.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.; supposedly based on their father's painting, but now lost.

³⁵⁸ Vera Fortunati Pietrantonio and Claudio Leonardi, *Pregare con le immagini: il breviario di Caterina Vigri* (Bologna: Compositori, 2004), 59-71. See figure 104b, Caterina Vigri, *Face of Christ*.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

In the *stanza del lavoro*, a direct relationship developed between work and prayer in the task of embroidery. Working together encouraged spiritual meditation and productive labor efforts, an antidote to *ozio* (boredom). At the convent of Santa Caterina di Soncino, sources write in 1601 that all the nuns would retire to the same room to work with “l’ago overo filare” (“the needle or to spool wool”); there is even a record of a nun, Diomira del Verbo, from the convent of Fanano, who supposedly went into religious ecstasy while working on the loom.³⁶⁰ She stated that “questo lavoro per la sua bellezza e nobilita levava il mio spirito a contemplare le bellezze del mio dio” (“This work, with its beauty and nobility, raised up my spirit to contemplate the beauties of my God”). It was thought at the time that spiritual readings ennobled manual labor, which, in the case of embroidery, was especially true, since it was considered a very refined type of work. Thus an inherent connection was created between embroidery and spiritual meditation.³⁶¹

The nun-writer Arcangela Tarabotti, located in the convent of St. Anna in Venice, left a detailed personal record of life in the convents. In Tarabotti’s book *Paradiso monacale* (the Paradise of Nuns, 1643), she discusses embroidery as it relates to spiritual meditation and color; she imagines “a beautiful work of embroidery in which one admires the turquoise of celestial love, the purple of ardent affections, the green of hope, the white of pure intentions, and the gold of the Immacolata.”³⁶² Apparently the colors of embroidery had great spiritual symbolism, especially after Trent. The Council of Trent established the importance of textiles for liturgical use and the aspect of color was highly symbolic, depending on the time of year and/or event.

³⁶⁰ Vecchi, 21. See also Cesare Pini, *Life of the Venerable Maria Diomira del Verbo Incarnato*, translated by Rev. E. Bononcini (Freiburg: B. Herder, 1907).

³⁶¹ Vecchi, 21.

³⁶² *Ibid.* This researcher has only been able to access her volume on Paternal Tyranny, but not the *Paradiso* manuscript, which is held in the Biblioteca Diocesana Tridentina in Trent. Arcangela Tarabotti, *L’Inferno monacale*, edited by Francesca Mediolì (Turin: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1990).

The sumptuousness of the textile was meant to evoke heavenly splendors on earth in order to transport the faithful. Ornamental designs, such as flowers, were taken directly from nature, as one would expect from the Bolognese tradition of naturalism. Designs often combined different materials for their light effects. The city of Bologna had a very strong protectionist attitude towards its textile sector, indicating the great importance of the medium to the city in both a civic and religious sense. Bologna's shrine to the Madonna of the Monte, discussed in chapter 2, is even said to have contained a piece of the cloak of the Madonna itself.³⁶³ The work of embroidery thus became the catalyst for a type of *devoto* meditation also, at times, associated with a religious ecstasy that emerges from the constant relationship between work and prayer.³⁶⁴ Regarding embroidery and prayer, more specifically, the link with the *devotio moderna* becomes more explicit if we examine the words of Gertrude ter Venne, part of the Sisterhood of Gerard Groote, who states that: "I never knew whether I was more in ecstasy at prayer or at the loom."³⁶⁵

Mental oration was practiced by these women both in private and communally. The nuns used a particular method in which one imagined participating in a religious scene while reflecting on the sacred mysteries, thus involving both one's heart and mind. This practice was greatly aided by the provision of a small personal altar in every private room or cell. We may recall that Paleotti had recommended such a personal altar in his *Discorso*, calling forth echoes of the *devotio moderna*. Most importantly, all of these altars would have needed specific imagery. This space may have been known as the *stanza dei santini*, or room of the saints, and examples were often found in the homes of noble families. Paleotti himself had required, above

³⁶³ Mario Fanti, *La Madonna di San Luca in Bologna: Otto secoli di storia, di arte e di fede* (Bologna: Silvana Editoriale, 1993), 238. Most of the liturgical textiles in the Monte collection are from the 18th century.

³⁶⁴ Vecchi, 21.

³⁶⁵ Regnerus Richardus Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 498.

all, a crucifix over the altar for prayer, as mentioned earlier. Using the faculty of sight was necessary for the *anima devota*, in order to impress pious images upon the fantasy of the mind, in the manner of Alberti's explanation of the reception of images in the function of sight.³⁶⁶ The room could then become a type of diorama of the concept of the *biblia pauperum*, resulting in unique sites for religious imagery. Paleotti had attempted this with his crypt of martyrs, discussed in chapter 2. Although some of these practices were already in use in Rome by the thirteenth century, they continued to the eighteenth century and beyond. The nun Caterina de' Ricci writes in 1542 that there was a small crucifix in her room upon which she meditated, that at times came to life during her prayers.³⁶⁷ Paleotti would certainly have been pleased with the intensity of her devotion.

The *devota* image then, was an active icon, beyond the *andachtsbild*, capable of inducing the state of virtual pilgrimage. During meditation the image comes alive and becomes internalized in the soul by the faithful. The religious image can also inspire sacred oratory, as we will see with one of Sirani's students in the following chapter. During the recitation of chorales in Latin, the empty spaces in the phrasing could be filled in by the nuns with private oration. We have evidence of this type of virtual pilgrimage from many nuns' writings, for example Maria Muratori, a seventeenth-century Benedictine nun from Bologna.³⁶⁸ Muratori describes her mental oration as a pilgrimage of the scenes from the passion of Christ. There are also extant texts that were written to address specifically prayer and meditation for women. As late as 1609, St. Francis de Sales wrote the *Introduction to the Vita Devota*, in which he describes the six interior

³⁶⁶ Leon Battista Alberti. *On Painting*, translated by John R. Spencer. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966); Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy 1450-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940), 14-15.

³⁶⁷ Vecchi, 26. See also Caterina de' Ricci, *Le lettere spirituali e familiari di S. Caterina de' Ricci*, edited by Cesare Guasti (Prato: Ranieri Guasti, 1861), xxxviii; D.M. Sandrini, *Vita di santa Caterina de' Ricci* (Florence, 1747), 4-5.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 28. It is unknown whether Maria Muratori is any relation to Angela Teresa Muratori.

actions. This text was meant to aid the nuns in seeking a better way to approach the liturgy of the mass.³⁶⁹

1. Present yourself and ask God's pardon
2. Meditate on the life of Christ
3. Reflect on Christ's words to live and die with the faith
4. Apply your heart to the sacrifice and passion of Christ
5. Contemplate the one thousand desires to unite with Christ
6. Thank Christ for his sacrifice

Meditation then, in tandem with active visual imagery and rituals of pious work, became the key to creating a room in one's soul as a worthy domicile for Christ and Mary, conflating both the soul and heart into a single motif together with the *stanza del lavoro*. These practices culminated in episodes of spiritual pilgrimage and ecstasy, with many of the nuns having mystical visions. The visions, in turn, often found their way into the visual imagery of the convent. For example, Caterina de' Ricci had a *Face of Christ* and a piece of silk with the Virgin Mary's image, which were later copied for engraving and popular prints. In 1561, de' Ricci recommends to "always keep your heart full of Christ, keeping ornaments of peace and quiet and finding these real ornaments in your heart, and Christ will come live there."³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 28. There is a series of 18th-century images of saints that illustrate St. Francis's six interior actions. Through practices such as this, oration also became more individualistic, because it was done privately. Regarding nuns and their meditations see also the fifteenth-century Bolognese nun Caterina Vigri's writings in Cecilia Foletti ed., *Le Sette armi spirituali* (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1985). Vigri was certainly a role model for later women artists in terms of piety and artistic production in Bologna, since she also created illustrations for some of her sacred writings. See Fortunati, *Caterina Vigri*.

³⁷⁰ Zarri, *Donne e fede*, 89.

Eventually, the room of the soul became part of canonical practice, in terms of church-sanctioned imagery that appropriated the visual topos of the heart as pious domicile for the sacred.³⁷¹

A final powerful symbol was the image of the heart of Christ with the wounds of the cross. In the Jesuit Tommaso Auriemma's work, *The Room of the Soul in the Wounds of Christ*, published in Venice in 1673, one of the meditations required the faithful to imagine entering into Christ's wounds to feel his pain; in 1541, Caterina de' Ricci writes that, one day, after taking communion, she had a vision of Christ taking out her heart and replacing it with his own instead.³⁷² Thus many of the smaller embroideries and ex-votos of the period or later show a heart with wounds and/or pierced by swords.³⁷³ What greater image of the performance of piety and charity could there be than that of the bleeding heart of Christ, literally inserted into the chest of a pious nun, as a reward for her meditations?

³⁷¹ For a related methodological discussion of the use of visual imagery in the convent targeted to women, but from a different geographical and temporal standpoint, see also Jeffrey Hamburger. His insightful analysis of nuns and the reception and creation of sacred imagery for the convents looks at this topic in pre-Reformation Germany at the convent of St Walburg in Eichstatt in 1450; Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997), 105, 137, 181. Hamburger has also called for a serious consideration of these images, normally categorized as *Nonnenarbeiten*, or nun's work, and dismissed by traditional art history. In addition to Hamburger's rich study on German nuns, more research is needed on the reception of sacred imagery specifically targeted to a female audience in Italy in the sixteenth century, post-Reformation, which a part of this study has attempted to address.

³⁷² Vecchi, 28. Despite encouraging such practices, however, the church was also still wary of female mystics, and preferred that they be under the supervision of male superiors. See, e.g., Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). This sister claimed that spiritual visions required her to have sex with other nuns; she was put under the control of a male cleric and imprisoned for faking visions, not for sexual acts.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 28; See also Ricci in n. 364; Hamburger, 101. Images survive from Germany that are a visceral reminder of the nun's visual and physical relationship to the wounds of Christ, wherein the nun is shown as literally entering a space shaped as a heart in which Christ dwells. However, to reach a unity with Christ, she must actually enter into his wounds. In a complex and fascinating gender-bending moment, Hamburger describes these nuns as reversing roles, since it is *they* who now penetrate the body of Christ, which has become feminized through its wounds.

Conclusion: Expressions of Female Sanctity

The great religious crisis of the sixteenth century, ironically, had allowed women a chance for greater participation in the Catholic world,³⁷⁴ especially in Bologna. Convents and *conservatori* became talismans against evil and sacred spaces of miracles, but they were simultaneously real places; all of these roles were reflected in their visual imagery and rituals. By that time, an increase in literacy for nuns coincided with an increase in interest in hagiography and the use of saints' relics to verify the details of their lives and existence.³⁷⁵ There was ample evidence of this already, in Paleotti's interest in early Christian archaeology as an integral part of his reform campaign, as shown in chapter 2. As the importance of music in convents and the mass grew, opportunities opened up for both nuns and laywomen in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; they could contribute to the church campaign as artists and teachers. In addition, noblewomen could also be heavily involved in religious education for young girls, particularly as patrons of didactic imagery. As discussed in this chapter, there was an expansion of charitable organizations for the protection of young women's honor in the sixteenth century. These institutions, patronized by the noblewomen of the city, were in line with the reform efforts of the Council of Trent. In Bologna, institutions like the Conservatorio of the Putte and the Baraccano were created to shelter women from the risk of sin, specifically the loss of honor that could only afflict women. The silk industry of Bologna, in turn, employed large numbers of these young *putte* in creating embroidered objects of beauty and devotion, often with a didactic purpose. These virgins had an enormous impact on the sanctity of the city, since women's honor was now inherently tied to the virtue of their city.

³⁷⁴ Zarri, *Donne e fede*, 89.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

This was also a period of the spread of popular piety (as an addition to the attendance at mass), which was echoed in the ideas of the *devotio moderna* and virtual pilgrimage, both in and out of the convents. A well-known example of this is the sanctuary at Monte Varallo, a type of virtual pilgrimage to Jerusalem that was actually in the north of Italy.³⁷⁶ The site is a three-dimensional stage set of the stories of the passion of Christ for pilgrims to experience or read pictorially, since many couldn't read the text of the Bible. The stories were depicted as realistically as possible in polychrome sculpture. At the same time, the Monte was a real place for the faithful to visit so that their meditations on the passion, for example, could be connected to everyday tactile experience. In the *conservatorio* and convents, communal tasks encouraged a similar type of spiritual meditation where interior visions of piety interacted with the sacred surroundings. Private meditation was, as discussed, also prevalent in the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century. It helped nuns reach a "*devoto*" sense of spirituality in which many experienced visions as a result of focused prayer.³⁷⁷ At times even virginity could be conceived of in a virtual sense, to be recovered through intense prayer, Christian good works, and above all, a focus on the right images and role models.³⁷⁸

Women's work, both literally and figuratively, offered new models of sanctity, such as the image of *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* in which Martha represents the active and Mary the contemplative life. In addition, with the expansion of women's activities within the church, more importance was given to Marian themes, as we have seen in chapter 2. Together with *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, these paintings served as virtuous role models for

³⁷⁶ A detailed analysis of this site is beyond the scope of this study and the site is used merely as an example of a trend of realism and meditation. Alessandro Nova, "'Popular' Art in Renaissance Italy: Early Response to the Holy Mountain at Varallo," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 127-139.

³⁷⁷ Zarri, *Donne e fede*, 94. It bears mentioning though, that despite the expansion of their role, women who became female mystics such as the Bolognese nun Angela Mellini were still eyed with suspicion and in need of being controlled by male members of the clergy.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 94, 109.

young Christian women. In other words, the *conservatori* were places where women could take care of other women, weaving a sacred tapestry of feminine virtue, with the assistance of a specific visual *imaginaire* of their own. The next chapter continues to explore these themes as they unfolded in Bologna in the century after Trent, when female artists carried on the legacies of piety and visual display begun by their sixteenth-century predecessors.

Chapter 4

Felsina Pittrice: Elisabetta Sirani, Her Students and Circle, and the *Maniera Devota*

It is ironic but fitting that Carlo Cesare Malvasia titled his lives of the artists *Felsina pittrice*, considering the large number of active women artists working in Bologna in the seventeenth century. Felsina was the Etruscan name for Bologna and the term is feminine in gender, thus appropriate for a city of women artists. The tradition that linked women with piety and visual imagery in the seventeenth century continued to flourish in Bologna, through the heirs of Lavinia Fontana and the students and colleagues of Elisabetta Sirani. The discussion begins with the *maestra* Sirani and her modes of religious paintings, which follow those of Fontana and Paleotti as discussed in chapter 2, then adds the category of miracle paintings. This chapter also looks at representations of virtuous (and not) women from history, as well as the intersection of theater and religion against the backdrop of the noblewomen patrons of the city. It then analyzes the work of a selection of Sirani's "students" in an attempt to create an artistic genealogy for the *mani donne*. Although normally subsumed under the category of students, some were actually precursors, while others lived too late to have been direct students, and two others are her sisters Anna and Barbara Sirani. The seventeenth-century sources Malvasia and Masini mention fewer names, but eighteenth-century primary sources such as Marcello Oretti and Luigi Crespi mention far greater numbers; Crespi mentions up to 28 women artists working in Bologna in the seventeenth century. Of the total mentioned by these writers, some remain only names, with most of their work still lost or missing.³⁷⁹ Therefore, this study does not intend to continue

³⁷⁹ See Appendix I for list of names; the main primary sources on these women are: Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi* (1678), ed. G.P. Zanotti (Bologna: Tipografia Guidi all' Ancora, 1841), II, 407; Luigi Crespi, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori Bolognesi tomo terzo alla maesta de Carlo Emanuele Iii. re di*

down the path of simply repeating the long list of names without extant paintings attached, since this information has already been reported in previous sources; rather, it focuses on what this author considers a more fruitful path, that of analyzing the concrete examples of the *surviving* works and what they can tell us about women's production in early modern Bologna.³⁸⁰ In addition to Sirani's two sisters, four of the listed women have left enough extant work that one can attempt a comparative visual analysis of the iconographic themes and stylistic influences among them; other works still remain to be found, located, or attributed.³⁸¹ One of these four, the engraver Veronica Fontana, will be the subject of chapter 5, but this chapter will explore the works of the other three painters: Antonia Pinelli, Ginevra Cantofoli, and Angela Teresa Muratori, as well as Barbara and Anna Maria Sirani. Most of their works continued the *maniera devota* into the next generations of the city's *mano donnesca*, and one even expanded into other media such as fresco and music.

The mystery of the disappearance of Sirani's students from history can be explained by various factors. The most important reason is Napoleon's suppression of the convents in Bologna in 1799.³⁸² This is especially relevant since many of these women's paintings dealt with religious

Sardegna & C. & C. (Bologna: Marco Pagliarini, 1769); Crespi's total of 23 goes up to 26 if one adds embroiderers, more than other writers; Masini lists far fewer in his 1666 work, but adds to the number for his 1690 edition; Antonio Masini, *Bologna perlustrata, Edizione completamente riveduta e accresciuta dall'autore* (Bologna: L'erede di Vittorio Benacci, 1666); However, Oretti gives the highest total of 26 painters, sculptors and graphic artists, plus six embroiderers for a grand total of 33; Marcello Oretti, *Notizie de' professori del disegno, cioe pittori, scultori et architetti bolognesi e de' forestieri di sua scuola, 1760-1780*, ms. B 123-135, IV, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna. Microfilm. Bohn gives a total of 22 in her 2002 article, but later amends this number to 23 in her most recent work, based on the Morselli inventories (email communication).

³⁸⁰ See Greer for such a list of many lost works, see Modesti for a more reliable and detailed account of primary sources, and see Bohn's article "Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 2 (2004): 239-86, in which she mentions Sirani's students as well.

³⁸¹ Thanks to the recent critical archival research done by Anna Maria degli Angeli, Ilaria Bianchi, Stefania Biancani, Massimo Pulini, Vera Fortunati (as prolific editor and mentor to a generation of students at the University of Bologna who have taken on her mantle to advance the knowledge of these women artists through successful research and publications), Adelina Modesti, Babette Bohn, Stefania Sabbatini and others, we are slowly reconstructing the lives and works of these female artists so that they can once more enjoy the recognition they deserve, after languishing for centuries in the dust. See bibliography for full references to these authors.

³⁸² See Daniela Camurri, *L'arte perduta: le requisizioni di opere d'arte a Bologna in età napoleonica (1796-1815)* (Bologna: Minerva, 2003) for further discussion on the Napoleonic suppression.

subjects, and thus were to be found in convents and churches that were dismantled, converted into barracks, or suffered similar atrocious fates. This treatment dispersed and destroyed, often forever, these precious artifacts and their archives.³⁸³ This upheaval has complicated the recovery and reinstatement of these women and their work. Patron and commission information is often missing; moreover, the paintings themselves, except for a few cases, have been moved from their original locations, and without archival documentation it is no longer possible to recover their original sites and patrons.

The *Maestra* and the Modes of Religious Painting of the *Maniera Devota*: Sacred Narratives, Miracle-Working Icons, Historiated Portraits, and Female Role Models

Elisabetta Sirani is the only female artist of the early modern period who started a school for painting that was mostly for women. In her very short career she left behind a record of her work in her *taccuino*, or notebook, of almost 200 paintings, drawings and etchings.³⁸⁴ Sirani was quite famous, a local celebrity of sorts, and anyone who was anyone stopped by her studio when passing through Bologna. In general, Sirani's oeuvre consists of portraits, as well as history painting, religious painting, and even mythological subjects. Her religious paintings are in the *devoto* style. However, many of her other paintings take traditional subjects, such as women's role models, and present them with innovative compositions and/or iconography. These paintings represent an expansion beyond the more typical portraits of religious role models to portraits of historical and literary female figures encoded with messages regarding women's virtue, as new models of sanctity. More specifically, Sirani's work incorporates the three Counter-Reformatory

³⁸³ This process of erasure was made much more severe for women artists since most of their works were devotional panels in churches, and they were not as actively sought out for repatriation as those of their more famous male colleagues, due to the gender-biased opinions of nineteenth-century scholars.

³⁸⁴ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400.

modes of her predecessor Fontana: sacred narratives, iconic paintings, and historiated portraits, arising out of Paleotti's sixteenth-century sermons and discussed in chapter 2. However, Sirani and her students also added a further dimension to the sacred narrative with their versions of miracle paintings, a documentation of a type of virtual pilgrimage in reverse, where the sacred personage appears in the patron's space. This category emerged as a natural continuation of Paleotti's quest to prove to the faithful the authentic history and truth of Christianity in visual form.

The first mode of sacred narrative is well represented in Sirani's oeuvre. The artist was responsible for full-scale religious narratives, such as her *Baptism of Christ* for San Gerolamo della Certosa of Bologna in 1657-8, one of her early public commissions (Fig. 105).³⁸⁵ The scene is a multi-figure composition focusing on the central figures of Christ and John the Baptist. There are, however, many ancillary figures, resulting in a crowded but ambitious composition. The artist included a female figure in the foreground that may represent the allegorical figure of Charity, as well as two angels flanking Christ that look as though they were painted from life, perhaps modeled on two of the young acolytes of the monastery. In this scene, the extra figures are placed there to bear witness to the sacred event, as opposed to being superfluous figures such as Veronese's Germans at the Last Supper, in his painting *Feast in the House of Levi* (Venice, 1573), for which the artist had aroused the ire of the Inquisition. Sirani also includes genre details such as the linens hanging out to dry on the branches, linens that may be both liturgical symbols and references to Bologna's cloth trade.

³⁸⁵ See catalogue entry in Jadranka Bentini, ed., *Elisabetta Sirani: Pittrice eroina, 1638-1665* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 251; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 394. This painting is also discussed by Bohn in "Female Self-Portraiture in Early Modern Bologna," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 2 (2004): 239-86.

Sirani's *Ten Thousand Martyrs* (1656) is a much smaller but no less ambitious painting in terms of anatomical draftsmanship, due to the number of male nudes required by the scene.³⁸⁶ The painting was commissioned for the Duchess of Mantua and is based on her father's composition of the same subject (Fig. 106).³⁸⁷ The story of the Ten Thousand Martyrs tells the tale of Roman soldiers during the period of the Antonines who converted to Christianity after a victorious battle, and were crucified by the Roman emperor for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods. Sirani includes exotic turbaned figures and a menacing sky, depicting the heart of the dramatic moment of their agony. She boldly attacks the challenge of depicting male anatomy, with the body of the crucified figure as the focus of the composition. Sirani would have studied male anatomy from casts of classical sculpture in her father's studio, as was the case for most women artists since they still could not study the male nude directly. There is evidence that Sirani's father had collected casts of Michelangelo's work, which Sirani may have used as models for this work.³⁸⁸ However, although she uses the master's models, she does not fall into the error of turning Christ into an Apollo, as Paleotti and Prospero Fontana had warned a century earlier. That lesson, it seems, had been learned.

In proceeding to the second mode, we come to Sirani's iconic paintings, whose subjects include Marian images for private devotion, as well as depictions of important Counter-Reformation saints such as St. Francis and the Magdalene. One of these iconic paintings was a small yet powerful image of the *Virgin Addolorata with the Symbols of the Passion* (1657, Fig. 107). This small devotional painting was for Father Ettore Ghisilieri, the Filippini cleric who had

³⁸⁶ Women artists were not allowed to study the nude, so they often had to make do with casts, as in Sirani's case. See discussion below.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

³⁸⁸ Adelina Modesti, *Elisabetta Sirani: Una virtuosa del seicento Bolognese* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 114. This information comes from the documented inventory of the Sirani household: Raffaella Morselli, *Collezionisti e quadriere nella Bologna del Seicento: inventari 1640-1707* (Turin: Fondazione dell'Istituto bancario San Paolo di Torino, 1998), II, 413.

run a small art academy out of his own house.³⁸⁹ The Virgin wears an expression of extreme suffering on her countenance; even the cupids are mourning. Sirani made an etching of this painting, which allowed the image to be widely disseminated, thus propagating an important aspect of Marian devotion for personal piety and meditation. This painting can be compared with Fontana's version of a similar theme, *Christ with the Symbols of the Passion* (Fig. 49).³⁹⁰ Sirani focuses instead on Marian imagery, but she may have been aware of her predecessor's example. The iconic intensity of the image remains the same, although Fontana depicts Christ in a naturalistic landscape in the Flemish tradition; Sirani, however, adopts a more austere background, using it instead almost as a stage set for the Virgin's grief, a seventeenth-century version of the *andachtsbild*.

In another iconic work, Sirani creates a representation of the *Holy Family* (1662, Fig. 108) in the tradition of genre painting turned sacred, where the sacred and profane commingle.³⁹¹ Sirani depicts Mary as a pious young "girl next door" in the role of a domestic and virtuous mother, seated next to Joseph as he holds the Christ child in his lap in a domestic moment. This Virgin is also reminiscent of Fontana's depiction of Mary as a humble young girl in the Annunciation (Fig. 48), since Sirani has set the holy family in an ambiguous yet bare setting, as opposed to an elaborate ecclesiastical interior. However, despite the naturalism of a genre painting, Sirani has chosen to use the profile view of the Madonna, which reinforces the idea of the Madonna as icon, especially given the painting's small size and medium. This type of painting would have served as a contemplative image for private devotion and spiritual

³⁸⁹ See catalogue entry in Bentini, 250; see also Bohn, "Elisabetta Sirani and Drawing Practices in Early Modern Bologna," *Master Drawings* 42, no. 3 (2004): 207-36; see Morselli, *Collezionisti*, I, 239, for more information on Ghisilieri.

³⁹⁰ See chapter 2 for a further discussion of this image.

³⁹¹ See catalogue entry in Bentini by Bohn, 184; see also Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400. The work is signed and dated.

meditation, especially for a female audience, as it focuses on the role of Mary as a simple young mother.

St. Francis was an important saint for Christian reform and women's issues since the Franciscans were so closely related to tending to the poor. Sirani's *St. Francis Adoring the Crucifix* (1664, Fig. 109) is depicted in the same attitude of rapt attention as Fontana's version (Fig. 39), adoring the crucifix.³⁹² However, in Sirani's case, she has once again eliminated Fontana's verdant background and given viewers a bust-length representation of Francis that focuses on his facial expression as he venerates the cross and meditates on Christ's sacrifice, becoming himself an icon of meditation. Lest one assume that the scientific naturalism of the sixteenth century is no more, Sirani's painting and etching of the *Vision of St. Eustache* (1657, Figs. 110-111)³⁹³ do contain the lush northern-style background that she inherited from the Bolognese tradition of naturalism in the form of Fontana and the Carracci. In this case, the verdant background is relevant to the story, as it is the moment in which St. Eustache, an ex-Roman general, sees a vision of a stag with the crucifix on its head, which converts the saint to Christianity.

Another saint with special meaning to women was Mary Magdalene, whose repentance served as a role model for women in Bologna active in the religious community. Depictions of her survive in great number from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by both male and female artists, and her image was often treated differently by women artists compared to their male colleagues. The Magdalene had often been utilized as a vehicle of sensuous display by male artists, including local proponents of Bolognese classicism such as Guido Reni (Fig. 112).³⁹⁴

³⁹² Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 393-401. This painting is signed and dated, and is a companion piece to the *St. Anthony*, created for the nobleman Paolo Poggi.

³⁹³ For more on Sirani's etchings see also Paolo Bellini, "Elisabetta Sirani," *Nouvelles de l'estampe* 30 (1976): 7-12.

³⁹⁴ Bohn, "Drawing Practices", 207-36; idem, "The Antique Heroines of Elisabetta Sirani," *Renaissance Studies* 16,

However, in the work of Sirani and her students, there is a special emphasis on this subject, in a contrastingly *devoto* tone. For example, Sirani's iconic version of *Mary Magdalene* (1660, Fig. 113) does not follow this pattern, but instead engages the image of the Magdalene as an icon of the female hermit living in the desert, the embodiment of penitence. This painting was one of two pendants, the second being a *St. Jerome* (Fig. 114).³⁹⁵ Sirani depicts the saints as hermits, yet both are shown with books, even the Magdalene. The Magdalene is wearing a simple, toga-like masculine version of the hair shirt which does expose her breasts; however, she is depicted as very thin and not full-figured, so as to neutralize any eroticism of her body. She is shown with objects that symbolize the meaning of her life: the cross, the skull, and the sacred texts. This iconography stresses the importance of the aspect of literacy and education, while the skull is a *memento mori*, a reminder of the vanity of fleeting earthly pleasures. This theme may have held special importance to the patron who was a jeweler, perhaps as a symbol of his piety and of the futility of earthly wealth.³⁹⁶ The crucifix is meant to inspire devotion to the cross and spiritual meditation; Paleotti had recommended that everyone have a crucifix over their altars.³⁹⁷ Sirani also created other examples of the Magdalene that are closer to Reni's more sensual style (1664, Fig. 115), exceptions perhaps due to a patron's request, but fig. 113 emphasizes instead the hermit saint's sacrifice and austerity, in tune with Counter-Reformation dogma.

Sirani's female students and circle (of whom more will be said in the following section) also participated in this characterization of the saint, such as an example by Angela Teresa

no. 1 (2002): 52-79; see also Frisoni regarding the Magdalene, "Una Sirani ancora piu 'Vera'," in *Elisabetta Sirani: Pittrice eroina, 1638-1665*, edited by Jadranka Bentini and Vera Fortunati (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 85. Irrespective of his own possibly homoerotic tastes, Reni would have created such images of the Magdalene for the pleasure of his heterosexual patrons.

³⁹⁵ Modesti, 126; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 393-401.

³⁹⁶ The patron was Giovanni Battista, Cremonese; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 395; Bohn email communication.

³⁹⁷ See above, chapter 2.

Muratori (1670s, Fig. 116);³⁹⁸ although this *Magdalene* (in the Sans Souci Palace in Potsdam) is partly based on Reni's version, it is closer to Sirani's depiction, especially since the Magdalene's long hair covers any sensual nudity of the exposed breasts. However, Muratori created two versions of the penitent Magdalene, and the second example, located in San Giovanni in Monte, Bologna, is more sensual (Fig. 162).³⁹⁹ Here the Magdalene looks away from us and one breast is left provocatively bare, echoing a more sensual style and a less hermit-like or devout image of the saint. Again, this may have been a request of the patron, as mentioned by Prospero Fontana's warnings in the sixteenth century.⁴⁰⁰

The third category, that of miracle paintings, is a particular seventeenth-century development of the depiction of religious narratives. The miracle paintings can be seen as the fruit of Paleotti's Tridentine desire to prove the stories of the lives of the saints to the faithful through image and text, in other words the image as text, or the miracle as narrative. Sirani's painting of *Liberation of the Possessed Boy of Constantinople by the Icon of Christ (Mandylion)* (late 1650s, Fig. 117) falls into this category. It is also a rare example of a painting that illustrates the importance of icons and the Byzantine tradition to the Counter-Reformation dogma, and the prestige shown to the Bolognese artists chosen to depict this important narrative of faith; Bologna had its own miracle-working icon, the Madonna of San Luca, as previously discussed. Paleotti had established the importance of icons such as the Shroud of Turin and Veronica's Veil in the sixteenth century. His personal visits to these icons had confirmed their use as visible proof of Christianity and as a stimulus to devotion.⁴⁰¹ Here, the painting refers to the mandylion,

³⁹⁸ Muratori will be discussed further in the next section on Sirani's students, but the comparison with Sirani's Magdalene is made here for emphasis. Figure 116 is also attributed to Giuseppe Puglia. See also Fig. 162.

³⁹⁹ Anna Maria Degli Angeli, "Il mito della donna artista nella Bologna del Seicento," *Il Carobbio* 13 (1987): 126. See below for further sources on these women.

⁴⁰⁰ See chapter 2 for this discussion.

⁴⁰¹ Gaeta, 23. A version of the Veronica, the face of Christ, is said to have existed in St Peter's; however, it is related that the original of this icon was lost during the sack of Rome in 1527 and replaced with the one there today. At

the icon from Edessa. The biblical legend relates that an image of Christ was created by an artist from the court of Edessa, whose king had requested Christ's presence. Unable to go, Christ sent the king his image instead. In Sirani's painting, the possessed child is pressed against the foreground and the viewer is placed in the position of being cured by the vision of the face of Christ.

Paleotti's plan to prove the efficacy of Christianity's relics and icons continued into the seventeenth century, and the *Icon of the Face of Christ* was a manifestation of this reform. The mandylion painting was commissioned for a church in Genoa, San Bartolomeo degli Armeni, by the Barnabite Father Marchelli.⁴⁰² It was one of a series of six paintings; Sirani's colleague, Lorenzo Loli (of whom more will be said in chapter 5) also executed a related painting that is now lost. A book had just been published by A. Calcagnino in 1639 telling the story of the icon of Edessa and its travels from Constantinople to Genoa in 1388.⁴⁰³ The painting's role as an active image was to prove the biblical truth on two different levels: one, as documentation of the miracles produced by this relic from the east and two, as proof of the authenticity of the historical relic and its transfer to the city of Genoa. Therefore the painting operates on both planes, that of faith and miracles as well as that of history and reality. Sirani also includes Margaret of Austria as one of the witnesses to the sacred event; such a prestigious attendee underscores the importance of the miracle.⁴⁰⁴

The fourth mode, historiated portraiture, was popular with both Sirani and her circle. Sirani created historiated religious portraits of herself and her patrons, for example, her *Self-*

times, the Veronica has been conflated with the Sindone, or Shroud of Turin. The mandylion is the icon with the face of Christ said to have been created for the King of Edessa by one of his court artists who had gone to see Jesus in the hope of bringing him back to court to heal the sick King. Instead, Jesus sent the artist back with his portrait.

⁴⁰² Bentini, 50; Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 393-401.

⁴⁰³ Bentini, 50.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*; Margaret of Austria had traveled there to see the icon, on her way to Spain. Colette Dufour Bozzo, *Il Sacro Volto di Genova* (Rome: Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, 1974), 71.

Portrait as a Nun (1658, Fig. 118).⁴⁰⁵ In this image, the nun's head is surrounded by a golden aura of sacred light, a visual symbol of sainthood and an apt identity for the virginal artist; this self-portrait thus harkens back to Lavinia Fontana's self-portrait as St. Barbara (Fig. 73). Sirani also created a portrait of *Signora Ortensia Leoni Cordini as Saint Dorothy* (1661, Fig. 119),⁴⁰⁶ including only the necessary attributes in the portrait. Dorothy is holding a basket with roses and apples; an angel sent these to her mocker Theophilus, who was thus converted to Christianity. Certainly her chastity is part of the message of this historiated religious portrait, similarly to the example of St. Margaret. Sirani's painting of *St Margaret of Antioch* (1661, Fig. 120) is given a realism that can only be called portrait-like, although the subject is of a sacred personage, inherited from the previous century's emphasis on hagiography and the work of Fontana in the era of Paleotti's reforms. These types of religious paintings of saints and female role models combine history painting and portraiture, allowing female artists and patrons, to participate in the male-dominated genre of history painting.⁴⁰⁷

The Good, the Bad, and the Sorceress: Counter-Reformation Role Models and Anti-Heroines

A subdivision of the mode of historiated religious portraiture is biblical heroines. The seventeenth century continued the Counter-Reformation theme of virtuous women as role

⁴⁰⁵ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 394; Bohn, "Self-Portraiture," 2004.

⁴⁰⁶ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400; see catalogue entry by Bohn in Bentini, 202; see also Bohn, "Elisabetta Sirani's Portrait of Signora Ortensia Leoni Cordini as St. Dorothy," *Chazen Museum of Art Bulletin University of Wisconsin-Madison* (2010): 6-10. This researcher has not been able to access this latter article.

⁴⁰⁷ Bohn, "The Antique Heroines," 82-84. Babette Bohn has stated that Sirani was the greater history painter, compared to Lavinia Fontana, who was more of a portrait painter. I would also posit Fontana as a history painter, based on her numerous compositions of sacred narratives, as discussed in chapter 2, as well as her historiated portraits. Religious paintings, when illustrating a particular biblical narrative, were considered to be of the same importance as history paintings in the hierarchy of genres at the time. However, via email, Prof. Bohn has recently specified that Fontana's *reputation* was as more of a portrait painter, and that it was also a sign of the times that Sirani was more famous as a history painter. See her latest article, "Patronizing Pittrici."

models, begun already by the time of Fontana. These models were both saintly and secular, with examples such as the apocryphal heroine Judith, but the list was now extended to cover less well-known and complex figures of female virtue such as Timoclea and Portia.⁴⁰⁸ In addition, figures such as Cleopatra and Circe represented a type of Tridentine anti-heroine.⁴⁰⁹ However, unlike men, most females treated them as more than merely a vehicle for the female eroticism of a suicide scene, for example, as men had done in earlier pictures typically geared towards a heterosexual male audience. These female artists often created a more complex and subtly nuanced characterization of these subjects.

The figure of Judith was a perfect vehicle for the propagation of female virtue, despite the overtones of the trope of dangerous female. A comparison here between both Sirani's and Fontana's earlier version helps to illustrate the Counter-Reformation tradition of presenting Judith as a pious heroine. The idea of a female subduing a male had, during the early modern period, connotations of unnatural murder, or the world upside down and woman on top.⁴¹⁰ However, these connotations could be subdued by presenting a fully dressed Judith and focusing on her manly deed, rather than on the use of her feminine wiles. Fontana's *Judith and Holofernes*, for example, discussed in chap. 2, was commissioned for the virtuous widow Bargellini as a model of female fortitude in fine decorous dress (Fig. 77).⁴¹¹ Sirani's *Judith Showing the Head of Holofernes to the Israelites* (1658) is also shown fully robed and triumphant, returning to her people of Bethulia with her prize head (Fig. 121); this version

⁴⁰⁸ Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 2002. See below for individual pages on each heroine.

⁴⁰⁹ Modesti, 261. See also Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 2002.

⁴¹⁰ Elena Ciletti, "Patriarchal Ideology in the Renaissance Iconography of Judith," In *Refiguring Woman: Perspectives on Gender and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Marilyn Migiel and Juliana Schiesari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 40.

⁴¹¹ Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana bolognese: "pittora singolare" 1552-1614* (Milan: Jandi Sapi Editori, 1989), 197. See also Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and her Patrons in Sixteenth-Century Bologna* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 152-4.

emphasizes the moment when Judith's deed is publicly revealed to her people, thus saving the Israelites from their Assyrian oppressor. Her decorous clothing emphasizes the fact that her virtue was not compromised in order to accomplish this victory, thus still conforming to Tridentine preferences. Fontana's Judith does not include the townscape but merely Judith with Holofernes's severed head and her maidservant. Fontana's painting has also been considered a self-portrait of the artist, a historiated portrait of a model of Counter-Reformation female virtue that would have been appropriate for its patron, the widow Bargellini. In Sirani's painting of Judith, the heroine wears on her breast the image of Minerva, the exemplum of the virgin warrior.⁴¹² Sirani's *Judith* was commissioned for the banker Andrea Cattalani, also the patron of the Timoclea.⁴¹³

The Roman Portia, wife of Brutus, was meant to stand for female bravery and marital fidelity. Since Sirani's painting *Portia Wounding Her Thigh* (1664, Fig. 122) was commissioned for Simone Tassi, the silk merchant,⁴¹⁴ the artist included a virtuoso depiction of the luxurious silk fabric. The protagonist is shown in the act of cutting her thigh with a knife in order to prove her bravery to her husband Brutus, who is plotting to kill Caesar to save the Roman Republic. As Modesti and Bohn note, the scene in the foreground is contrasted with the domestic work of women in the background.⁴¹⁵ Portia wishes to prove to her husband that she is made of harder stuff and can share in her husband's political ambitions. Her virtue is that of a faithful warrior queen, a virtuous Minerva.

In the story of Timoclea (1659, Fig. 123), painted for the banker Andrea Cattalani, the heroine tricks her assailant, one of Alexander's generals, into looking down a well for her

⁴¹² Modesti, 240.

⁴¹³ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 393-401; Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 2002, 65

⁴¹⁴ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 393-401; Bentini, 217; Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 66-8.

⁴¹⁵ Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 66-8; Modesti, 248. According to Bohn the instrument is a spinning needle.

treasure when he attempts to ravish her.⁴¹⁶ She then proceeds to push him in, reclaiming her honor. This is a very rare subject and Sirani's version depicts the most crucial moment and the most challenging to achieve in terms of composition, with the general's limbs flailing in all directions as he falls into the well. Sirani also adds a sign of her knowledge of antiquity to authenticate the scene, adding classical reliefs of a battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs on the side of the well, traditionally a comment on misguided passion. Timoclea represented female bravery in the face of wartime rape and pillage. Modesti points out that in most illustrations of the story of Timoclea, the moment chosen is the rape, focusing on the effects of war on women as victims. However, Sirani has chosen a more empowered moment when Timoclea takes revenge;⁴¹⁷ her focus is on the agency of women as opposed to representing them as passive victims. This subject was probably taken from Plutarch's *Life of Alexander the Great*, which Sirani would have found in her father's substantial library, and the description therein may have inspired her attention to the exotic dress.

Cleopatra, in contrast, is more of an anti-heroine in terms of female behavior (1660s, Fig. 124).⁴¹⁸ As with Judith, a comparison of Sirani's version of Cleopatra with the earlier work of Fontana is instructive (Fig. 24). Fontana's version of Cleopatra is elaborately dressed, with the artist focusing more on costume detail; it may have been done for the Persian ambassador⁴¹⁹ and as such is a display of her skill in depicting realistic surface detail as well as exotic Oriental costume. Sirani's version, however, shows the whole narrative encoded in a sole figure with a simple attribute; she depicts Cleopatra in the moment of her rash and wasteful act of dissolving a large pearl in a cup of vinegar to win her bet with Marc Anthony. Cleopatra had bet him that she

⁴¹⁶ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 393-401; Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 63-4.

⁴¹⁷ Modesti, 243.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 269; Bohn, "Antique Heroines," 70-74.

⁴¹⁹ Cantaro, 210-211.

could spend ten thousand cisterces in one single night. She wins her bet but also represents, perhaps, what not to do as a virtuous woman. Both Fontana and Sirani adopted the decorously clothed version of the queen of Egypt, with none of the wanton sexuality of versions such as Reni's and Guido Cagnacci's *Death of Cleopatra* (1640, 1658 respectively, Figs. 125-126), which show Cleopatra as a passive piece of erotic flesh for male consumption. Fontana's Cleopatra is depicted in a more conservative, almost medievalizing tone, with much focus on her lavish, exotic eastern dress rather than her foolish, capricious act.

Sirani's painting of Circe, once thought to be lost, is an example of how the artist transforms the image by playing with the boundaries of the character's persona (1657, Fig. 127). The evil sorceress is certainly not meant to be a role model, yet she is imbued with certain positive traits. Despite the fact that she turns Odysseus's men into swine, an anti-heroine if there ever was one, she is also quite clever and learned. In her hand she holds several magical charts, and she holds a pen (or a wand) in the manner in which an artist would hold a brush. This may imply a certain positive aspect, perhaps even a semblance of self-portraiture in the character, who represents a type of magical creativity akin to that of the artist and her ability to create something from nothing. In this case, Circe is involved in the performance of magic, in the same sense that a painter such as Sirani performs her creative magic for important visitors.

The subject of Delilah (1657, Fig. 128) as a role model also invites comment: could it be a type of talisman image, where to confront evil is to appropriate its powers? Delilah represents another anti-heroine: the biblical woman whose seduction caused the destruction of Samson, the brave warrior. She represents cunning, since she obtained her victory over Samson by using her female charms for evil deeds, one of the "don't's" so often embodied in Counter-Reformation females. Judith had also availed herself of her beauty to lure Holofernes, but the story makes a

point of reminding the reader that she slew him before her virtue could be compromised, and she murdered him to save her people. This painting of Delilah is an abbreviated history painting, a format that Sirani used often, where all that is needed to cue the story for the viewer, in good emblematic fashion, is a single figure with one attribute, the pair of shears with which she chopped off the hair that gave Samson his strength.

As a final, but somewhat different, example of the embodiment of female virtue, Sirani created an allegorical depiction of *Justice, Charity, and Prudence* (1664, Fig. 129). Although not a historiated portrait, this painting was an extremely prestigious commission, as it was created for the Medici Prince Leopoldo. Sirani records the work in her *taccuino*, and notes that the Cardinal rewarded her with a piece of gem-studded jewelry (56 diamonds), a very public mark of his pleasure with the artist and her work.⁴²⁰ The symbolism of the painting concerns the virtues most needed for a wise and just ruler: justice, prudence, and charity. However, they are also a feminine embodiment of virtue that accords well with the city's continued fascination with women's honor. Sirani's source for the iconography would probably have been Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*, as her father owned a copy, and Ripa describes the attributes of each figure: the sword and scales for justice, the mirror for prudence, and the little children at the breast of charity.⁴²¹

Female Patrons and the Sacred

After viewing these examples of Sirani's work, one can explore further aspects of her patronage. Fortunately, Sirani left a detailed record of her patrons and commissions in both her

⁴²⁰ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 399; see the inventory of Sirani's household in Morselli, *Collezionisti*, II, 413, also discussed in Bohn, "Antique Heroines," and idem, "Self-Portraiture."

⁴²¹ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 399; Morselli, *Collezionisti*, II, 413. See also Cesare Ripa and George Richardson, *Iconologia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979).

taccuino and in the records of her biographer, Conte Carlo Cesare Malvasia. From his *Felsina pittrice*, the Bolognese *Lives of the Artists*, written in the seventeenth century, readers learn that when important visitors came to Bologna, they often stopped to see the *virtuosa* paint. These visitors could then be asked to donate to women's charitable causes; in addition to Leopoldo de' Medici, other prominent visitors to Sirani's studio included the Duchess of Brunswick.⁴²² Sirani also had important patrons from among the best families of Bologna: the Cospi, the Malvezzi, and the Bentivoglio, and also had contact with the Medici through Cospi. It was more often than not the women in these families who were the custodians of the sacred.

The women of Bologna were greatly involved in patronage, as we can see from the following examples. This patronage expanded in the seventeenth century, thanks to the growth of private collecting; Modesti uses the word "matronage" to describe this phenomenon.⁴²³ As far back as 1513, it was the pious noblewoman Elena Duglioli who was the patron for Raphael's *Ecstasy of St. Cecilia* (Fig. 4), painted for the Bolognese church of San Giovanni in Monte. The St. Cecilia is probably the most famous model of a painting in the *maniera devota* style, since the time of its installation. This painting was so successful that Vasari states that Francesco Francia decided to abandon painting out of despair after he saw it, another one of Vasari's probable exaggerations. Coincidentally, the descendant of Elena, the Marchesa Christiana Duglioli Angelelli, acquired certain special relics for Bologna: the veil of the blessed Virgin and the cloak of St. Joseph from Rome in 1647.⁴²⁴ She was also responsible for the annual celebration of the feast of the Madonna della Neve in her family chapel. This passion for relics has been a

⁴²² Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 386-87; Modesti, 71; see also Bohn, "Self-Portraiture."

⁴²³ Modesti, 79. This term was first used by Carolyn Valone in "Matrons as Patrons of Architecture in Rome"; thanks to email communication with Bohn for this reference.

⁴²⁴ Modesti, 79. See also Gabriella Zarri, "L'altra Cecilia: Elena Duglioli dall' Olio," in *La Santa Cecilia di Raffaello: indagini per un dipinto*, ed. Andrea Emiliani (Bologna: Alfa, 1983), 83-118.

continual development in the city, which began in earnest with Paleotti's interest in early Christian archaeology. This trend continued into the seventeenth century, especially through the participation of the women of Bologna as the guardians of the icons. It was women who guarded the most sacred image in the city, the miracle-working Madonna of San Luca on the Monte, as discussed previously. These women were in charge of most religious arrangements and artistic commissions for both civic and social affairs, as well as, by extension, the virtue of the city's women. For example, the Patarazzi family commissioned from Sirani an altarpiece for their chapel in the church of San Biagio, the same church for which Fontana had painted the Birth of the Virgin.⁴²⁵ The women of the city also encouraged charity for institutions such as the Baraccano and the Putte di Santa Marta, as we have seen in the previous chapter. The Madonna of the Rosario in the Guidotti chapel in the church of San Domenico was maintained by a noblewoman from the Malvezzi family, who was also the rector of the Confraternity of the Rose.⁴²⁶ Both Sirani and Reni are buried in this chapel, perhaps suggesting that the artists were both admired for their *devoto* style and its associations with women's virtue.

To conclude this section, one should note that the religious climate in Bologna continued to support Tridentine reform in visual imagery throughout the seventeenth century and that Sirani's students and colleagues were greatly involved in this visual manifestation of the city's religious life, creating religious paintings in line with the requirements handed down from the sixteenth century. These paintings reflect both the city's continuing obsession with women's virtue and the original modes of painting that had emerged out of Paleotti's guidelines for visual reform from the previous century, as manifested in Lavinia Fontana's work.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 83; Caterina Patarazzi commissioned an altarpiece for the Confraternity of the Madonna delle Neve for a church of the same name and their hospital for pilgrims. The Madonna delle Neve was the protector of slaves and converts in the new world.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 75.

The Mani Donnesche of the Felsina pittrice: Sirani's Circle

Sirani's school of painting was, as mentioned, the first for women, with at least 14 female students mentioned by the primary sources.⁴²⁷ A great deal of misunderstanding exists regarding the fragmentary information on these women. To summarize, three painters, considered to be Sirani's students (or rather, colleagues, followers, and precursors in some cases), have left the most extant traceable and/or securely attributed work at the moment of this study.⁴²⁸ The three painters are Antonia Pinelli, Ginevra Cantofoli, and Angela Teresa Muratori; the engraver Veronica Fontana will be the subject of chapter five.⁴²⁹ The three painters' biographies are still somewhat incomplete, and some of the attributions continue to be contested, but by looking at Sirani's circle one can begin to unravel the tangled threads of their stylistic ties to one another. Of the many women painters in Bologna in the seventeenth century, this study focuses on these three because they have the most demonstrably secure stylistic links to the city's tradition of *maniera devota*, from Fontana down to Sirani and beyond, even if all three were not officially students of Sirani. In addition, this discussion introduces the work of Sirani's sisters, Barbara and Anna Maria, of which very little survives.⁴³⁰ What follows is a brief introduction to this artistic coterie, and subsequently, an iconographical and stylistic examination of the extant works of the three main characters of this chapter, as they relate to each other's work and to the *maniera*

⁴²⁷ Refer back to n. 379 for a full bibliographic listing of the primary sources for these women; more specifically: Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400, 411 on Elisabetta, Barbara and Anna Maria Sirani, Cantofoli and Muratori; II, 106 for Veronica Fontana; Masini's 1666 edition on Elisabetta and Ginevra Cantofoli, 631, 637 (also Properzia, 619 and Vigri, 618, and Lavinia Fontana, 625; he later added Angela Pinelli and the Sirani sisters in 1690); Crespi on Anna Maria and Barbara Sirani, 74-75, Cantofoli, 75, Pinelli, 26, Muratori, 155 and Veronica Fontana, 244-50 (in the life of Giuseppe Maria Moretti). See also Oretti; unfortunately, the microfiche copy used by this reader had the page numbers cut off.

⁴²⁸ This is a reminder to the reader that the lasting consequences of the process of erasure due to the Napoleonic suppression was much more severe for women artists. See n. 383.

⁴²⁹ Sirani's two sisters will also be discussed below.

⁴³⁰ There are two other female artists for whom at least one painting is extant: Lucrezia Scarfaglia and Maria Orianna Galli Bibbiena. See appendix 1. See n. 442 for a list of works mentioned in the primary sources for Anna Maria Sirani and Barbara Sirani.

devota. The end of this section touches upon another facet of religious artistic expression by these women, music, because Muratori also wrote sacred oratorios whose themes were related to the Counter-Reformatory modes of painting that these women practiced.

The first of the three, Antonia Pinelli, should be considered the closest female heir to Lavinia Fontana's style.⁴³¹ She is the missing link between Lavinia and her seventeenth-century successor, Elisabetta Sirani. Pinelli died in 1644, so she could not have been a direct student of Sirani (as Malvasia maintains in his biography of Sirani), since Sirani would have been only six years old at the time of Pinelli's death;⁴³² Pinelli was actually a student of Ludovico Carracci.⁴³³ There is very little left of biography for Pinelli, except for mentions by Masini as well as Malvasia.

The second of these women artists is Ginevra Cantofoli (1618-1672), who was discussed by both Malvasia and Masini.⁴³⁴ Malvasia tells us that she is a student of Sirani's, but in actuality she was already painting by the 1640s, at which time Sirani was still a small child. Cantofoli's output is still mostly undocumented and uncertain; Massimo Pulini has attributed up to 40 paintings to the artist, but only a few of these are generally accepted by other scholars.⁴³⁵ It seems that her production consists mostly of portraits, sometimes historiated, quite similar to Sirani's work.

Finally, the third artist, Angela Teresa Muratori (1672-1708), was one of the most active female painters at the time in Bologna, if one judges by the number of surviving paintings.

⁴³¹ This is in addition to the influence of Ludovico Carracci, who is recorded as her teacher; see primary sources in n. 427. See also Bohn, "Self-Portraiture," 244.

⁴³² Arfelli, 127. Malvasia mentions that Pinelli created a Last Supper, but that it was a "cattiva tavola" compared to the drawings by Elisabetta Sirani, the greater artist in his eyes.

⁴³³ Degli Angeli, 120-28. The illustrations of Pinelli's and Muratori's works here are thanks to her article.

⁴³⁴ See n. 427; see also Bohn, "Self-Portraiture," 247 and idem, "Drawing Practices," her note 85.

⁴³⁵ Massimo Pulini, *Ginevra Cantofoli: La nuova nascita di una pittrice nella Bologna del Seicento* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2006). In addition to this monograph, see also an earlier article by Pulini in the Bentini catalogue; however, the information on Cantofoli in the article is greatly expanded upon in his monograph.

However, it may also be that she is simply the one with the most paintings that survived the Napoleonic suppression. There are quite a few religious paintings by Muratori still extant, although not as many as the total number on record from an inventory taken of her father's house including copies of paintings by the famous artists of the Bolognese school such as Reni and the Carracci (5); however, a few are of her own invention. Muratori is mentioned by Luigi Crespi, an eighteenth-century biographer, and is said to have been a student first of Emilio Taruffi, then Lorenzo Pasinelli from 1696-1700, and finally Giovanni Gioseffo dal Sole from 1700-1708.⁴³⁶

Muratori is also notable for having worked in the normally male-only medium of fresco. She created a fresco in honor of her father, *Memory of Roberto Muratori*, still in the Bologna Archiginnasio, although quite ruined by now (1680s-90s, Fig. 130).⁴³⁷ The fresco is an allegory of Aesculapius, the Greek god of medicine. Aesculapius was the son of Apollo and Coronis; his mother supposedly either died in childbirth or was killed for an infidelity, and his six daughters were all named after aspects of health. Aesculapius would thus have been a perfect vehicle for the eulogization of Muratori's father, a doctor and professor of medicine at the University. The fresco displays the artist's talent in creating a large multi-figure allegorical composition with images of Fame and other figures (Fig. 131).⁴³⁸ In order to immortalize Muratori, the fresco shows Aesculapius seated in the act of healing a sick man, together with the allegory of Fame, a skeleton, and Father Time. Her father's title as a university professor may have helped Muratori's status as an artist, since his own prestigious position would naturally have brought his

⁴³⁶ Degli Angeli, 124. See n. 379 and n. 427.

⁴³⁷ Stefania Biancani, "Angela Teresa Muratori: Uno studio attraverso le fonte," *Annuario della Scuola di specializzazione in storia dell'arte dell'Università di Bologna* 3 (2002): 165-95; see also Donatella Biagi Maino, "La gratitudine e la memoria: I monumenti affrescati d'eata barocca," in *Il Palazzo l'Università I*, edited by Giancarlo Roversi (Bologna: Credito Romagnolo, 1987); Christel Thiem, *Disegni di artisti bolognesi dal Seicento all'Ottocento della Collezione Schloss Fachsenfeld e della Graphische Sammlung Staatsgalerie Stuttgart* (exh. cat. Bologna, 1983), 120-21.

⁴³⁸ Thiem, 124. A drawing from the F. Giusti Collection illustrated in Degli Angeli's article and discussed in Thiem helps to visualize the original composition. See footnote above.

daughter's career more into the limelight. Muratori is also famous for creating sacred oratorios for the liturgy, but these will be discussed separately below.

In addition to artists who trained with Sirani in her school, two other artists were tied to her circle by blood as well as education: Anna Maria and Barbara Sirani. There is precious little left of their careers, yet both were known as painters by the time of Elisabetta's death in 1665.⁴³⁹ There is a portrait of Sirani said to be by Barbara, as well as an *Ecce Homo*. Anna Maria produced a *St. Martin* and some allegorical drawings of still-contested attribution.⁴⁴⁰ *The Portrait of Elisabetta Sirani* (1660s, Fig. 132) by Barbara was originally attributed to Sirani herself, although it is clearly the work of an artist with less experience than Sirani in terms of its realism.⁴⁴¹ On the other hand, Barbara's *Ecce Homo* (1660s, Fig. 133) is an icon in true *maniera devota* style. Usually a northern subject, the face of Christ betrays the pain and suffering of the final hours of the Passion.⁴⁴² Anna's *The Holy Trinity with St. Martin (Bishop)* (1669, Fig. 134) depicts the bishop with eyes glazed over in a pious expression, and rolled up to glance at the heavens. These visual clues to the figure's piety were used by both Sirani and Reni, and are being recycled here through Sirani's students. The allegorical drawings attributed to Barbara Sirani mentioned above refer to the trope of fame at the time of Sirani's death (1665, Fig. 135-

⁴³⁹ Malvasia; see also Sabbatini; however, I have not been able to access this source myself: Stefania Sabbatini, "Per una storia delle donne pittrici bolognesi: A.M. Sirani e G. Cantofoli," *Schede umanistiche, Rivista semestrale dell'Archivio Umanistica Rinascimentale Bolognese* (University of Bologna, n.s. 1992), 2, 85-101.

⁴⁴⁰ Crespi, 72-75.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.; see n. 379 and n. 427 in this chapter for the other primary sources on these artists. See also Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, ed. *Women Artists: 1550-1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 148 for the portrait of Sirani by Barbara in the 1976 exhibition catalogue, as well as Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 411.

⁴⁴² For further information on the *Ecce Homo*, see Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting* (Doornspijk, Netherlands: Davaco, 1984), 142. Both Anna Maria and Barbara are recorded by Crespi as having painted other altarpieces: in addition to the *San Martino*, Anna Maria produced three other altarpieces outside Bologna which are lost, as well as three in San Vitale in Granarolo, one of which still exists but is in bad condition, a *Madonna di San Luca e Santi*. According to Masini, Barbara also painted three other altarpieces, now lost, and a *Madonna col Bambino e San Giovannino* in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, originally attributed to Elisabetta Sirani. Bentini, 120-126.

136).⁴⁴³ Figure 135 depicts the figure of a crowned young woman standing next to a skeleton, who is trampling on symbols of the arts and holding on to the crown of fame on the young lady's head. Figure 136 contains an image of a young woman sitting near another skeleton, who this time carries a scythe, ready for his morbid reaping. Although typical of allegorical representations of death and fame, as they are dated to around the time of Sirani's death, both of these drawings may also reveal some of the adulation that Barbara and Anna must have felt towards Elisabetta.

Sirani must have left some very large shoes for her sisters to fill in terms of her artistic reputation. These allegories of Fame cut down in her prime by a cruel and premature death speak volumes about her sisters' opinions of their famous sibling. They are also an eloquent comment on the legend of the great Sirani, the gem of Europe, which was propagated by Malvasia after the death of Elisabetta Sirani, the *maestra* of this group, under mysterious circumstances in 1665. Giovanni Luigi Picinardi composed a eulogy for her, *Il pennello lagrimato: orazione* (The Crying Brush) (Fig. 137). In this eulogy, Picinardi praises her virtues and calls her "the gem of Europe" and "splendid like the sun."⁴⁴⁴ Sirani's fame continued into the nineteenth century, romanticized through the story of her possible poisoning by her maidservant, or even her dying from unrequited love, although it is more probable that she died of an ulcer due to overwork. One of her important paintings is still missing, but is reflected in nineteenth-century engraved copies: Sirani's *Self-Portrait Painting Her Father* (Fig. 138).⁴⁴⁵ This painting participated in the

⁴⁴³ Graziani in Bentini, 120. A final artist for whom an altarpiece is extant from this coterie is Maria Orianna Galli Bibbiena. Bibbiena was the daughter of a successful engraver, and is mentioned by period sources; her altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with Saints actually contains the icon of the Madonna/relic within the painting itself. What better way to link the altarpiece with its ancient Christian devotions, as Paleotti had done in his own chapel the previous century? Thus Bibbiena, along with Sirani's other colleagues and students, continues this tradition of the *mano donnesca/maniera devota* in the city's churches and sacred sites. Bibbiena also came from an artistic family of celebrated theater designers.

⁴⁴⁴ Modesti, 336; see also Bohn, "Self-Portraiture," 245, fig. 14.

⁴⁴⁵ Ghirardi in Bentini, "Con gli occhi al cielo: Elisabetta Sirani e il Ritratto," in *Elisabetta Sirani: Pittrice eroina*,

illustrious history of the female artist painting her “master,” in this case, her father. The tradition was started in the sixteenth century by Sofonisba Anguissola, who painted her mentor, Bernardino Campi, in the act of painting an image of herself.⁴⁴⁶ These paintings represent a comment on the nature of the many levels of representation, in the manner of Velasquez’s *Las Meninas* (Madrid, 1656). However, these paintings are from the point of view of the female artist, who is “created” in some sense by her male teacher, but then in turn, is herself the creator. In addition, these artists have attempted to rise above the gender-specific bias of the woman artist as product of the male artist’s genius; in Sirani’s case, she was the breadwinner of the family after her father began to experience health problems. Her self-portrait is a manifestation of the agency of the female artist, as seen already in the work of Anguissola and carried on through the seventeenth century by Sirani and her circle. Sirani was cast by Malvasia as the virgin heroine, her death more of an apotheosis, whereby she was deified as a great prodigy cut down in her youth, overshadowing all of her female pupils and colleagues, to whom Malvasia only devotes a paragraph.

Felsina’s Modes of Painting in the Seventeenth Century: Icons of Devotion, New and Old

Although this chapter is focused on the seventeenth century, the modes of painting by these women still reflect those of Lavinia Fontana: the iconic, the sacred narratives, and historiated and religious portraiture. However, one can add to this list the specific category of miracle paintings, as seen in the work of the women artists’ maestra, Sirani. The following is an analysis of the extant paintings by this circle, categorized by the four Counter-Reformatory modes of the sixteenth century outlined above.

1638-1665, edited by Jadranka Bentini and Vera Fortunati (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 91-106, 168.

⁴⁴⁶ For further information on this subject see Mary Garrard, cited in the introduction, n. 16.

The first mode to consider is the iconic, examples of which are the many versions of the Immaculate Conception. The theme of the Immaculate Conception as icon seen in sixteenth-century examples remained popular with women artists and patrons through the seventeenth century. It is instructive to compare those early versions with those by Sirani and her students. As mentioned previously, certain examples had come to be a mix of both the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception. For example, we have seen that Fontana created a unique *Immacolata* for a Capuchin monastery (Fig. 61), despite the dogma's uncertain fate at that time, but apparently to the satisfaction of her monastic patrons. Also, her *Assumption* at Imola (Fig. 50) does contain a mix of both episodes in the life of the Virgin. However, Fontana's *Assumption* for Paleotti was not so risky (Fig. 55).

A century later, Cantofoli's *Immaculate Virgin with the Christ Child* (1650s, Fig. 139) also includes the crown (referring to the Virgin's Assumption and Coronation) and moon, whereas Sirani (1664, Fig. 140) and Muratori (1680s-90s, Fig. 141) eliminate the crown in their versions, but retain the stars and the moon. Both Sirani's and Muratori's *Conceptions* have a sweet-faced, youthful Madonna standing on a sliver of the moon holding both hands on her heart, recalling the pose of the Madonna of Humility. Sirani's *Immaculate Conception* for Father Ghisilieri, rector of Santa Maria di Galliera, also refers to the Virgin as *stella maris* (star of the sea), since there is a tiny slice of seascape in the background.⁴⁴⁷ Muratori's painting can be found in the same church of Santa Maria, one of the locales for the reform schools, underscoring the importance of the subject and the *devoto* tone of the image. The moons in these paintings, however, remain in the tradition of the sliver of a white orb from the woman of the Apocalypse, representing Mary's purity and triumph over evil. Disregarding the intermediate phase of scientifically accurate moons discussed above, chapter 2, these women artists created

⁴⁴⁷ Bentini, 259; see also Morselli, *Collezionisti*, I, 239 for more on Ghisilieri's collection.

Immaculate Conceptions in line with the Tridentine view of the moon and in contrast with such works as Ludovico Cigoli's version (1610-12, Fig. 63). Recalling Reeves's discussion of Cigoli's maculate *Immacolata*,⁴⁴⁸ she pointed out his scientific depictions of the moon as a solid orb capable of casting shadows, and how this resulted from his connections to Galileo's explanation of the moon as a craterous rock. His transformation of the symbolic lunette shape into a ball of actual rock is especially ironic in view of the earlier discussion of the half-moon as a symbol of Mary's triumph over the infidel Turks. This infidel reference was no longer apparent in Cigoli's moon, once he made it an orb, and was replaced by the dragon underfoot as the manifestation of Satan over which the Virgin triumphs. Perhaps science had briefly trumped religion in Florence during the early seventeenth century, whereas in later Bologna, science was utilized for naturalism, but decorum remained essential. One wonders if Paleotti could have accepted this much scientific progress, but on the other hand, it may have been his emphasis on the utilization of the scientific method in art that helped sow the seeds for this progress.

Another example of the iconic mode is Pinelli's *Guardian Angel* (1620s, Fig. 142), painted in the 1620s for San Giuseppe dei Cappuccini in Bologna.⁴⁴⁹ The subject is rare, but very appropriate to its location, since San Giuseppe had a Christian school for children.⁴⁵⁰ The image of a small child accompanied by the large figure of a guardian angel with wings is obviously the type of image that could be found in these Christian houses of reform or orphanages. The iconography of the guardian angel is often associated with personal piety and charity. Pinelli depicts the child as a small and poorly dressed soul, surely in need of protection. It brings to

⁴⁴⁸ See chapter 2.

⁴⁴⁹ *Degli Angeli*, 120.

⁴⁵⁰ I have seen only one similar example from the period of this type of image, by Francesco Romanelli (Fig. 143). However, it is less naturalistic and devout in tone than Pinelli's version.

mind the many unique images and portraits of children created by Fontana such as the *Child in a Cradle* (Fig. 76).

The Annunciation also falls under the category of iconic paintings for contemplation. Muratori apparently painted two different versions of this theme, one in Santissima Trinita (1700-06, Fig. 144) and one in San Giovanni dei Celestini (1700-08, Fig. 145).⁴⁵¹ Both versions contain elements reminiscent of Lavinia Fontana's painting of the same subject (Fig. 48). The overall shading is more *tenebroso* in the San Giovanni version; also here the Virgin has been interrupted while reading the scriptures, whereas the Trinita version depicts the Virgin as more of a Madonna of Humility with one hand on her heart and the other in open acceptance. In both paintings the angel holds the lily in one hand while pointing to the heavens with the other, simple gestures meant to narrate as clearly as possible. In the Trinita version, the Virgin is depicted in the tradition of the *maniera devota*, humbly accepting Gabriel's message; also, there is a clearer distinction between a domestic interior and a heavenly realm, indicated by the flash of white divine light where the heavenly realm resides. The flash of light recalls Lavinia Fontana's *Assumption* (Fig. 55) with its cone of light based on scientific studies of lumen. In the San Giovanni version, the coloring is much darker and there is no supernatural separation of realms.

Miracle Paintings

Having examined the iconic mode, the second mode of the *maniera devota* evident in the religious paintings by women artists of the seventeenth century is miracle paintings, a mode that contains within it both the iconic and the narrative. The witnessing of a miracle also leads to another dimension, that of virtual pilgrimage. Virtual pilgrimage in visual imagery is not new; it harkens back to fifteenth-century Flemish painters (as discussed previously in chapters 2 and 3)

⁴⁵¹ Degli Angeli, 127.

and their images of donors witnessing sacred events or in the presence of a visit from the divine (a virtual pilgrimage in reverse). As such, virtual pilgrimage is an appropriate part of the *maniera devota*. There is also an inherent aspect of the theatrical in the witnessing of a miracle. The idea of religious theater and performance was prevalent in Baroque imagery in general, as for example in Bernini's *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, but in Bologna, the theatrical was always tempered with a devout naturalism.⁴⁵² The result was more akin to that of the active icon, adding the proper decorum and dimension of reality. This style was a tempering of Bernini's full-blown and self-conscious theatricality to a more Tridentine expression, in line with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. In the *Exercises*, the focus is on the viewer's comprehension of the miracle's narrative, as opposed to a display of the supernatural special effects of the event.⁴⁵³

Pinelli, the generational link between Lavinia Fontana and Elisabetta Sirani, created miracle paintings such as *St. John the Evangelist Resuscitates the Earthquake Victims* (1614, Fig. 146). The work is recorded as having been based on a drawing of the same subject by her teacher, Ludovico Carracci.⁴⁵⁴ This painting is an uncommon scene, a rare eyewitness type of narrative, as well as a votive painting at the same time. It is an icon or votive image of faith giving thanks for divine intervention during a disaster, while at the same time being almost a piece of journalistic reportage, like Sirani's *Liberation of the Possessed Boy of Constantinople by the Icon of Christ (Mandyllion)* (late 1650s, Fig. 117). There is reason to believe that Pinelli

⁴⁵² Rome, Church of Sta. Maria della Vittoria; on Bernini's *St. Teresa*, see Howard Hibbard, *Bernini* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1965), 128-31.

⁴⁵³ This was in some ways similar to Caravaggio's realism, but with much more restrained decorum. The theatricality of miracle paintings can also be linked with St. Filippo Neri's congregation, since religious performance was also important to the Filippini and their school of devotion. Coincidentally, Caravaggio also had links with the Filippini as patrons of his religious work. For more on Loyola and Neri in relation to painting see Giovanni Sale, ed., *Ignazio e l'arte dei gesuiti* (Milan: Jaca, 2003); *La regola e la fama: San Filippo Neri e l'arte*, exhibition catalog, Venice: Museo nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia (Milan: Electa, 1995).

⁴⁵⁴ Crespi, 26. Thanks to Prof. Bohn for alerting me to the drawing by Ludovico Carracci, *Miracle of St. John*, on which Pinelli's painting is based. Babette Bohn, *Ludovico Carracci and the Art of Drawing* (Turnhout, Belgium: Harvey Miller, 2004), n. 281; see also idem, "Self-Portraiture," 245.

included her self-portrait in this image, something she may have seen in works by Fontana.⁴⁵⁵ For example, Fontana's biographer tells us that she included a self-portrait in her painting of *The Appearance of the Madonna and Child to the Five Saints* (Fig. 73). Perhaps, judging from the sumptuousness of the other four female saints' clothing, the artist may also have included four noblewomen of Bologna, memorializing them forever in this religious painting.⁴⁵⁶ Pinelli was most certainly influenced by Fontana in portraiture, since one of Fontana's great strengths was the ability to capture the image of her sitters with an exactitude and attention to detail regarding their costumes, i.e., the surface of silk, pearls, velvets, etc., as well as their physiognomy and a sense of the interior identity, always with a sense of the decorum required by Paleotti's post-Tridentine guidelines. However, as we saw in chapter 2, Paleotti says that portraits in religious paintings are not appropriate, i.e., that one should not make a saint or religious figure with a recognizable likeness of a contemporary person. Although this practice thus remained problematic in theory, somehow artists from Fontana to Pinelli circumvented this rule in their work; perhaps portraiture of nobility or artists themselves was too much in demand to refuse.

Muratori's painting of the *Miracle of Saint Benedict* (1690-1708, Fig. 147) can be found in the church of Santo Stefano in Bologna.⁴⁵⁷ In the painting's composition, Muratori displays an interest in Baroque diagonals and architecture, while the figure of the saint is reminiscent of Fontana's *St. Francis di Paola Blessing the Child of Luisa of Savoy* (Fig. 74). In Muratori's painting, the image of the Madonna and Child appears in the sky above the figures, as the architecture recedes to a dramatic diagonal. The architecture may also have been influenced by Ludovico Carracci's version (Fig. 90), though in Muratori's version the figures take up the

⁴⁵⁵ Degli Angeli, 121.

⁴⁵⁶ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, I, 364-66.

⁴⁵⁷ Degli Angeli, 127; illustration thanks to the rector at Santo Stefano via email communication; the subject is thought by him to be Saint Mauro.

majority of the foreground. The embroidered version of this scene, mentioned previously (Fig. 89), is based on Ludovico's version, but it is tempting to think that Muratori's version is part of this chain of a pious image created by women for women.

A final example of the mode of miracle painting is the *Apparition of the Madonna to St. Peter* (1690s, Fig. 148) by Muratori, at the Church of San Domenico in Ferrara.⁴⁵⁸ This painting recalls both Sirani's version of *St. Anthony of Padua Adoring the Christ Child* (Fig. 186) and Fontana's *St. Hyacinth* (Fig. 18) in composition. St. Peter faces the Madonna and Child with a pious expression, while a cherub holds a scroll to which the Madonna points. There is a hint of a triumphal arch in the background, and the artist has added the customary *putti* flying overhead. The focus is on the saint's perception of the miraculous event, the presence of the Madonna and Child as they come down from the heavens to inhabit the same earthly space as the saint.

Sacred Narrative: The Biblia Pauperum Lives On

The third mode, that of sacred narrative, comes directly out of the sixteenth-century examples discussed in chapter 2, which present biblical narratives using a decorous form of realism without any superfluous details. For example, Pinelli's *Birth of the Virgin* (1620s-40s, Fig. 149) was created for the Chiesa di Santa Maria in Regola, Imola, and it is the closest to Lavinia Fontana's style compared with various local examples of this scene, which include those by Prospero Fontana and Orazio Sammachini; Prospero's version tends more towards a mannerism that is gone in Pinelli's version.⁴⁵⁹ Pinelli depicts St. Anne resting on the bed in the background with the two large figures of midwives in the lower foreground and two helpers; one comes forward bearing a jug of water, while another holds fresh linens for the child, probably

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 126. The author describes this painting as influenced by Veronese.

⁴⁵⁹ Murphy, 186.

warming them by the fire, very similar to the same detail in Lavinia's version. These motifs are not superfluous, but may refer also to the idea of the spiritual nourishment that the Virgin will be to the world. Pinelli uses the same vertical composition that Lavinia employed, as opposed to a more horizontal one used by artists such as Sammachini.⁴⁶⁰ Angels arrive at the top bearing a crown of flowers to inaugurate the sacred birth. The figures are lifelike, and the artist has added small details of genre painting in the Northern tradition: for example, the water jug could refer to baptism. This painting is still located in the church in Regola, but there is no record of the original commission. Lavinia had ties to Imola through her husband, who was from that city, and she received an important commission for the *Madonna of Imola* (Fig. 60) shortly after her marriage to Zappi. Thus there was already a tradition in place in Imola of commissioning paintings from talented Bolognese female artists. This example is evidence of Pinelli's close links to the style of Lavinia Fontana, especially that Bolognese naturalism derived from genre elements in Northern religious paintings.

In addition to works by Pinelli and Sirani in the Church of Santa Maria di Galliera, Muratori's *Incredulity of St. Thomas* (1690s-1700, Fig. 150) is also located there (the painting is noted by Oretti as "in collaboration with Gian Gioseffo dal Sole, one of Muratori's teachers").⁴⁶¹ It may have been influenced by the work of Simone Cantarini and Flaminio Torri, but the composition and architecture also look very Venetian. For example, there are three large columns in the background, a heavily draped figure, two *putti* flying above, a temple interior with a deeply angled perspective, and an open sky above, all reminiscent of Titian's famous *Pesaro Madonna*, especially in the use of the columns to set the composition in the

⁴⁶⁰ Degli Angeli, 121.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 125.

background.⁴⁶² In this scene, the apostles crowd around Christ, while Thomas puts his hand in Christ's wound, so that he may believe. All eyes are focused on Christ's torso, while Thomas is only seen from the back. The focus is on Christ's confrontation with the viewer, so he is placed between the two columns for effect, so that the viewer's eye immediately falls on the sacred figure. The implication is that viewers as believers should not do as Thomas has done, but should believe based on faith.

Cantofoli's Role Models and Portraits of Female Virtue

Proceeding to the final mode of historiated portraiture, the extant work of Ginevra Cantofoli supports the idea that she was best known for this mode, in terms of the number and the high quality of these portraits.⁴⁶³ As mentioned earlier, Tridentine models of female sanctity included portraits of both biblical and historical heroines, which became a tradition for the women painters of Bologna. For example, Cantofoli's documented work includes a number of enigmatic portraits across various sub-genres such as the *Beatrice Cenci* (1650s, Fig. 151), a painting long attributed to Guido Reni (and at one point, also to Sirani). Cenci was a patricide who, however just her reasons (her father violently abused his wife and children), was nonetheless punished with decapitation in 1599, an event that may have been witnessed by several artists including Caravaggio.⁴⁶⁴ She is a perfect, if complex heroine, a type of martyr figure for the injustice done to women. Unfortunately the papacy did not uphold her cause, choosing instead to reinforce paternal authority. Cantofoli's sympathetic portrait of Cenci may

⁴⁶² For Titian's Pesaro Madonna in the Frari, Venice, see David Rosand, *Painting in Cinquecento Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto* (London: Yale University Press, 1982), 65-69. See also Bruce Cole, *Titian and Venetian Painting* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 82-3.

⁴⁶³ See also n. 379 and n. 427 for further primary sources on Cantofoli; see n. above re Cantofoli's *Last Supper*, which Malvasia judged as "una cattiva tavola" (a bad painting, basically). Malvasia in Arfelli, 127.

⁴⁶⁴ Pulini, *Ginevra Cantofoli*, 21; Catherine Puglisi, *Caravaggio* (London: Phaidon, 1998), 45.

be a vindication for a virtuous woman, a type of secular martyr. Eventually, the story arose that Reni had visited Cenci's cell to paint her portrait before her execution, as illustrated in a nineteenth-century painting (Fig. 152).⁴⁶⁵ The portrait is certainly in the style of Guido Reni: with the figure's upturned gaze, luminous eyes, and elegant turban, she would normally be considered a sibyl (1650s, Fig. 153). The identification of this figure as Beatrice Cenci is endorsed, however, by Pulini, the authority on Cantofoli. The depiction of Cenci here offers a sympathetic view of a young girl who was wronged by a system of law that cruelly punished a woman for a justifiable crime, simply because it was committed by a woman against a man, thus upsetting the natural order of the cosmos.

Cantofoli's portrait of *Fanciulla con pecorella*, or *Young Girl with a Lamb* (1660s, Fig. 154), has been described as genre painting. However, another view is that, considering the continuing Counter-Reformatory climate of the city, it may also be a representation of St. Agnes with her attribute, the lamb. The painting is done in the style of a realistic portrait, and as such, it may also have been a historiated portrait, although no further archival evidence exists for this theory. The figure is depicted against a turbulent night sky, in a costume painted with rich tones of blue and red, holding the innocent lamb at her waist. In a tender gesture, the young girl holds one of its legs in her hand, possibly a religious reference to Christ as the lamb of God.

The sub-genre of self-portraits in Cantofoli's work draws on a long tradition of such images from Fontana to Sirani. Among the examples attributed to Cantofoli are two self-portraits and one portrait of Sirani.⁴⁶⁶ The *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* (1660s, Fig. 155) is an example of the female artist as the embodiment of painting, a tradition followed by others such

⁴⁶⁵ Pulini, *Ginevra Cantofoli*, 21.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 100, 130; Bohn, "Self-Portraiture," 249; see also Angela Ghirardi, "Women Artists of Bologna: The Self-Portrait and the Legend from Caterina Vigri to Anna Maria Manzolini (1413-1774)," in *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna, 1552-1614* (exhibition catalog, Washington, DC: National Museum of Women in the Arts; Milan: Electa, 1998).

as Lavinia Fontana and Artemisia Gentileschi. Another possible identification of the subject is *Self-Portrait Painting the Virgin*; in that case, the painting would harken back to the tradition of St. Luke painting the Virgin, the original Marian icon, and as such participates in the *devota* tradition par excellence. Second, there is a drawing, *Self-Portrait at the Easel*, by Cantofoli from the Fondazione Cini (1640s, Fig. 156).⁴⁶⁷ Both Fontana and Sirani painted self-portraits that, like these later examples, display their status as artists. The self-portrait at the easel has a long and noble tradition among male artists, but the female variations exhibit slight differences. For example, the portrait of Fontana discussed in the introduction (Fig. 1), was created for her marriage in 1577; it emphasizes her sophisticated talents of music making, but does not omit her easel in the background. Fontana's marriage contract included a clause that she would continue her career as a painter, thus earning the family a sustainable living.⁴⁶⁸ Sirani also created a self-portrait (Fig. 2) that emphasizes her learning and sophistication, choosing in this case to display erudite texts and dress herself in the splendor appropriate to a maestra. The portrait of Sirani attributed to Cantofoli by Pulini (1650s-60s, Fig. 158) is related to an engraved copy by Lorenzo Tinti (one of Sirani's students discussed in chapter 5) of a lost self-portrait of Sirani in the act of painting her father.⁴⁶⁹ In Cantofoli's version, however, the subject on the canvas is the infant John the Baptist. In this case, one female artist becomes a type of professional role model for the other, a position propagated through the use of self-portraiture.

Cantofoli's oeuvre also contains several portraits of powerful females, such as *Atropos* (1660s, Fig. 159) and *Portia* (1660s, Fig. 160), which may be historiated self-portraits, although

⁴⁶⁷ Pulini, *Ginevra Cantofoli*, 100, 130. Another female artist with an extant painting in this tradition is Lucrezia Scarfaglia. However, she remains only a name on the list of women working in Bologna, with no other known works, as of the time of this study, except for one painting, *Self-Portrait Painting the Madonna and Child* (1678, Fig. 157).

⁴⁶⁸ See Cantaro and Murphy on Lavinia's marriage contract, cited in chapter 1.

⁴⁶⁹ The portrait is discussed in Pulini, 133-5; for the engraving see Bentini, 168 (the engraving is also reproduced as such in Bohn, "Self-Portraiture," 249).

these are recent attributions by Pulini and not yet generally accepted by all scholars of the period. The painting of *Atropos* is very similar in facial type and composition to Cantofoli's other attributed work of *Marine Nymph* (1660s, Fig. 161), except for the costume and scissors; the nymph is all dressed in conch shells as a type of Galatea. Atropos is the mythological figure responsible for ending human life by cutting the strings of eternity. The title is Pulini's and so the subject is also still contested. However, it could also represent *Delilah* with her shears, which would be in tune with the rest of the Counter-Reformation anti-heroines. Cantofoli's *Portia* is identified as such, again by Pulini, based mostly on her costume and headpiece, which resemble those in earlier medieval representations of this heroine. Based on the similarity of the facial features among these paintings, they may also represent historiated self-portraits of Cantofoli herself. Finally, these paintings participate in the *maniera devota* style, which continued throughout the careers of both Lavinia Fontana and Elisabetta Sirani despite, and/or along with, the expansion of secular and theatrical Baroque subject matter. In the context of most of these examples of historiated self-portraiture, the *maniera devota* maintains its link with piety, and adds a further dimension of the role models of women's virtue.

The Performance of Virtue and the Sound of Angels: Theater, Music, and the *Maniera Devota*

Women, religion, and theater (both religious and secular) were intimately tied together in Bologna. The concept of virtuous female heroines was so entrenched in Bolognese society that there were also frequent theatrical productions given about women such as Judith in the seventeenth century. Most of the noblewomen of the city of Bologna were involved in the production of these representations, and at times they were presented in the homes of said

ladies.⁴⁷⁰ In addition, music was yet another category of female artistic production; Angela Teresa Muratori apparently wrote sacred oratorios to be sung in the churches of Bologna, as a further manifestation of the performance of piety.⁴⁷¹

Most theatrical productions in Bologna had strict ties with the church. For example, a play was presented on the life of Alexander the Great, in order to show support of Pope Alexander VII (r. 1655-67); even the local pastor at times gave sermons centered on the examples of Timoclea, the brave widow pardoned by Alexander, and Judith.⁴⁷² An allegorical play was staged in Piazza Maggiore in which both men and women acted, witnessed by the pontifical legate.⁴⁷³ Some of the plays were dedicated to the noblewomen of the city, many of whom were Sirani's patrons. For example, Panina Malvezzi Bentivoglio produced the *Barriera di Carnevale* in 1656, in Palazzo Bentivoglio.⁴⁷⁴ Theatrical productions were co-ordinated with religious festivals, so there seems to have been no prohibitory attitude towards theater by the Church in the seventeenth century, at least not in Bologna. On the contrary, theater was used as another form for the performance of religion, to reinforce Counter-Reformatory models of behavior. One of the biggest feasts in Bologna, the *Festa della Porchetta* (feast of the pork), was held on the day of St. Bartholomew in August. Sirani was recorded as having attended this feast in August 1665, the year of her death, shortly before she became ill. More will be said on this feast in the next chapter, as Sirani's colleague Giuseppe Maria Mitelli was responsible for

⁴⁷⁰ Modesti, 238.

⁴⁷¹ Biancani, 188; Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio Volume I: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 39, 283. See also Craig Monson for a different opinion; he discusses the Counter-Reformation as repressive to women and the production of music, and tells the story of how several nuns in Bologna at Santa Cristina (such as Lucrezia Vizzani) bravely battled the restrictions on music at their convent. See also n. 348 in chapter 3.

⁴⁷² Biancani, 240.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

several engravings depicting the theatrical representations put on during the feast, such as the moralistic battle of the forces of good versus the evil Tifone.

This atmosphere of theatricality and performance must have rubbed off on Sirani and her students, and the paintings themselves serve as evidence for this situation as recounted in the primary sources. Sirani's paintings were often imbued with theatrical effects, especially her *Judith* (Fig. 121), discussed earlier, who seems to be standing on a stage set with her prized severed head. At times, the paintings themselves, such as Sirani's *Baptism of Christ* for the church of the Certosa (1657-8 Fig.105), were carried aloft in procession, enacting the city's theater of religion. Collaboration between Sirani and her students is difficult to assess; however, there is evidence for one instance of such an exchange in reference to a procession. Cantofoli's *St. Thomas of Villanova* (1659, Fig. 163) bears some similarities to one of Sirani's drawings for the saint for her own painting of 1663 (Figs. 164-165).⁴⁷⁵ St. Thomas of Villanova was a Spanish saint who died in 1555 and was canonized in 1658 by Alexander VII. The saint was famous for his sacred oratories, which contemporaries say were so effective that they could even move rocks to devotion and prayer. St. Thomas lived during the heart of the Counter-Reformation period and was very interested in helping the poor; thus he was a perfect role model for a *maniera devota* painting. In addition, he was known for having a special devotion to the Virgin; he compared the Virgin's heart to a burning bush that would never be consumed. In both paintings, in the true tradition of the *maniera devota*, Thomas is shown in rapt religious fervor. In Cantofoli's version, the saint is shown frontally, whereas in Sirani's work the saint is glancing back at the viewer;

⁴⁷⁵ Cantofoli's painting of *St. Thomas of Villanova* was also a victim of Napoleon's armies. Its history includes Pulini's recent discovery of the work in the basement of the church where Cantofoli's canvas had been replaced with a painting by another artist; Pulini, 64, 90. Since Sirani's painting is dated after Cantofoli's, it is interesting to speculate on who influenced whom; could the *maestra* Sirani have been influenced by her older colleague, Cantofoli? See also Babette Bohn who discusses Sirani's drawing in "Elisabetta Sirani and Drawing Practices in Early Modern Bologna," *Master Drawings* 42, no. 3 (2004): 207-36, 215, 217.

both images attempt to communicate the saint's piety to the faithful. In turn, Cantofoli's painting also participated in the city's collective performance of piety in the streets. According to Malvasia, Cantofoli's *St. Thomas* was carried aloft in a triumphant religious procession to its destined church, San Giacomo Maggiore, for installation on the altar.⁴⁷⁶ The details of its commission may account for its *devota* style; by comparison, Sirani's version was for the church of the Madonna of Loreto and includes San Bernardino, San Loreto, San Francesco, and San Pellegrini.

In addition to continuing the themes that were already prevalent in the paintings of the *maniera devota*, one of these female artists, Muratori, extended these modes across other media such as music.⁴⁷⁷ Music was an important part of women's virtuous work, another facet of the performance of piety, which "added dignity to the liturgy."⁴⁷⁸ Music making was an important part of the models of sanctity in the convents, and as an artist, Muratori was able to participate in the trope of the sacred feminine: music and song pertained to the angelic quality of the female saints and martyrs, yet were also skills that could be taught. It has already been explained that between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, women were made increasingly responsible for the religious education of girls, including music lessons. In this case, there are documented ties between the painting modes, sacred theater, the women painters in Bologna, and the Oratory of Neri.⁴⁷⁹ It is significant that three of Muratori's oratorios are for the Church of Santa Maria di Galliera, since it seems that the Muratori family had a special relationship with the Oratorio of Filippo Neri.⁴⁸⁰ Muratori's sacred oratorios were commissioned by the Filippini; Neri himself

⁴⁷⁶ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 407; Modesti, 77.

⁴⁷⁷ Biancani, 188. See also Monson as mentioned in chapter 3, n. 346.

⁴⁷⁸ Zarri, *Donne e fede*, 107-108.

⁴⁷⁹ Biancani, 193-195. For more on the Oratory of Neri, see Smither, 39; for Muratori, 283 of the same volume.

⁴⁸⁰ The Madonna di Galliera church had an important community of Filippini, the followers of Saint Philip Neri, and also hosted the meetings of the Opere dei Poveri Vergognosi.

was dedicated to helping fallen women in Rome, a complement to Paleotti's efforts in Bologna, so he was a perfect role model for a confraternity dedicated to St. Nicholas, the Putte di Santa Marta at the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi, and an appropriate saint to reinforce the theme of women's virtue.

Muratori's four extant oratorios are the following: *The Martyrdom of St. Colomba*, *The Games of Samson*, and *Esther* for Santa Maria di Galliera, and the *Cristo morto* for Santa Maria della Morte. All four of these subjects can be related to the modes of painting of the *maniera devota*, as it was expressed visually by the women artists of Bologna. *The Martyrdom of St. Colomba* tells the story of a male saint from Ireland associated with divine love, prophetic revelations, miracles, and apparitions. The story of *The Games of Samson* recalls the image of the evil female, Delilah, as a negative example of feminine behavior, who cuts Samson's strength by cropping his locks, using her feminine wiles for deception. In addition, Delilah was a subject already found in Sirani's work (Fig. 128, above). In direct contrast to Delilah, Esther is a positive role model, the woman who saved her people by telling Ahasuerus of Haman's plot against the Jews. She would fit in perfectly with the other more familiar biblical female role models of virtue or *femmes fortes*, previously discussed. The *Cristo morto* (Dead Christ) is a meditation on the death of Christ. This oratory would have been an appropriate iconic theme for this particular church and the confraternity named after Santa Maria della Morte, since it was a musical version of the image of the Man of Sorrows.⁴⁸¹ In this fashion, the female artist has added yet another dimension in which to activate the icon, where Muratori's oratorio becomes a musical *andachtsbild*.

⁴⁸¹ For more on the man of sorrows as *andachtsbild*, see Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close-up in Fifteenth-Century Devotional Painting* (Doornspijk, Netherlands: Davaco, 1984), 142.

Conclusion

We have seen that, among women artists, the three modes of the *maniera devota* (the iconic, the sacred narrative, and the historiated portrait) continued and spread in the seventeenth century, from the *maestra* Sirani, the gem of Europe, and her older contemporaries to her female students and colleagues. An additional mode was also added: the visual narration of miracles became another important strand in the fabric of belief. This type of painting rewarded the believer with a type of virtual pilgrimage, an encounter with the sacred personage as an apparition in an actual space. At the same time, it was meant to be imagery with the force of a realistic narrative; as such, it completed the list of the modes of visual storytelling necessary for the propaganda of the church in its struggle for visual reform in Bologna. The next chapter illustrates how this campaign further expanded among female artists and their colleagues to the use of the medium of print, appropriating discourses of science and popular culture along the way. This development will be demonstrated in the work of Sirani's student Veronica Fontana, as well as her colleague Giuseppe Maria Mitelli.

Chapter 5

Veronica Fontana and Giuseppe Maria Mitelli: Prints, Piety, and Science in the Work of Sirani's Students and Colleagues

The medium of prints played a significant role in the visual program of the Counter-Reformation in Bologna, and Sirani's students and colleagues, both male and female, were greatly involved in this endeavor through book illustration and popular prints. Their production covered areas of religious, scientific, and cultural significance, many specific to the intellectual history of the city. This chapter focuses on another of Sirani's students, or at the very least, a follower greatly influenced by her work, the prolific engraver Veronica Fontana (1651-1694; no relation to Lavinia Fontana has been discovered). Fontana specialized in woodcut illustrations for all manner of texts, religious, scientific, and courtly.⁴⁸² She would have been about fourteen

⁴⁸² Veronica Fontana is mentioned by both Oretti and Malvasia as being one of Sirani's students; see below in text for further discussion. For primary sources on her, see Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori bolognesi* (1678), ed. G.P. Zanotti (Bologna: Tipografia Guidi all'Ancora, 1841), II, 407, II, 106; Luigi Crespi, *Felsina pittrice: Vite de' pittori Bolognesi tomo terzo alla maesta de Carlo Emanuele Iii. re di Sardegna &C. &C.* (Bologna: Marco Pagliarini, 1769), 249-50, in the life of Giuseppe Maria Moretti; Marcello Oretti, *Notizie de' Professori del Disegno, cioe Pittori, Scultori et Architetti bolognesi e de' forestieri di sua scuola, 1760-1780* (Ms. B 126, IV, Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna; microfiche).

Although Babette Bohn maintains that Fontana created wood engravings ("Self-Portraiture," 247, and via email communication), this is unlikely, since Fontana is listed by both the primary and secondary sources as creating woodcuts, not wood engravings, which were not invented until the end of the eighteenth century: Bamber Gascogne, *How to Identify Prints: A Complete Guide to Manual and Mechanical Processes from Woodcut to Inkjet*, second edition (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 5-6. The terminology is confusingly ambiguous, since "engraver" is rendered, at times, as both *intagliatore* and *incisore* in Italian primary sources (Malvasia calls Fontana an *intagliatore*, but Crespi calls her an *incisore*). *Intaglio* in Italian generally refers to woodcut (relief) techniques, whereas *incisione* usually refers to the processes of engraving and etching on metal (which, more confusingly, are called "intaglio" techniques in English). The principal source dedicated solely to Veronica Fontana as a woman "engraver" is Silvia Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna 'incisore' nella storia del libro illustrato," in *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo: studi e testi a stampa*, ed. Gabriela Zarri (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1996), 367-391; see also her shorter catalogue entry in Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna, 1552-1614* (exhibition catalog, Washington, DC: National Museum of Women in the Arts; Milan: Electa, 1998), 148. There Urbini clearly states that Fontana's illustrations are in the "woodcut" (xilografie) medium.

at the time of Sirani's death, and so could conceivably have trained with her for a short while, in addition to training with her own father, the engraver Domenico Fontana.⁴⁸³ Veronica was quite well known for her remarkable diversity of book illustration, and she worked for some of the city's most important patrons. She also collaborated with other male artists of Sirani's circle on important volumes such as the illustrations for Cospi's *Wunderkammer*. No catalogue for her work exists as yet; this chapter seeks to offer the germ of one. Three of Sirani's male colleagues are also treated here, as examples of the collaboration between male and female artists in Bologna in the graphic arts. The second half of this chapter focuses on one of these men, Giuseppe Maria Mitelli (1634-1718), a colleague of both Sirani and Fontana, who continued the intertwining of women, religion, and science in his prolific engraving career. His collaboration on the *Museo Cospiano* with Veronica Fontana is only one facet of his output. He was known for his many festival prints, both courtly and religious. In addition, although he has received little credit for these, his game sheets are a unique representation of the post-Tridentine city, a true *theatrum mundi* of Bologna, with special attention paid to subjects such as women's virtue.

Veronica Fontana: The *mano donnesca* and the Jesuits, the Court at Parma, and Ferdinando Cospi's Wunderkammer

Adolescentula coelatrice praestantissima, ob incisum affabre in legno Gynoeceum
Regis Turcarum, Structa ad Opus Veneris Turcarum Claustra Tyranni, virginea
incidi no meruere manu. De Eadem additur una stylo 'Claustris' castissima raro,
non Venus orta Mari, sed Venus orta Manu.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸³ Urbini in Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana*, 148.

⁴⁸⁴ This epigram is by Bonaventura De Rossi, written in 1686; see Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna incisore," 372. "A young lady engraver, very attractive, (known) for skillfully cutting in wood the ladies' quarters of the Turk king, instructed about feminine charms in the closed quarters of the Turk tyrant, undeserving of such a fine engraver hand. About her one can add that she had acquired the secrets of the purest form and rare style, a Venus/woman birthed not from the sea, but a woman birthed out of her own hand." See below for further discussion.

Beyond this intriguing epigram, the story of Veronica Fontana's life and work can be reconstructed briefly from the fragmentary comments by the Bolognese writers Malvasia, Masini, and Oretti. According to Oretti, her works were to be found in Bologna and many other cities. The agreed-upon dates for her birth and early death are 1651-1694.⁴⁸⁵ She was a master cutter and was certainly influenced by Sirani's work in etching. However, for most of the texts that she illustrated, she used the woodcut technique since this best accommodated the incorporation of illustrations with text. One curious comment that survives comes from Gandellini, who recounts the tale of a young male artist who took up the graphic arts with the hope of impressing Fontana and winning her affections, but to no avail.⁴⁸⁶ One of the only other remnants of written records that refer directly to her is the short encomium in the Latin epigram above, which was dedicated to the artist by Bonaventura De Rossi in 1686. The trope of the female artist's hand is nowhere more evident than in this epigram written in her honor. Fontana achieved her fame by the virtue of her own hand, i.e. the *mano donnesca*, using "the purest form and rare style." Rather than a Venus who is birthed from the sea, Fontana was the agent of her own fame. The Bolognese artist may even have traveled to the faraway Ottoman court, as other artists such as Bellini had done.⁴⁸⁷ Of even more interest to this study on women and visual

⁴⁸⁵ Silvia Urbini's work is the only contemporary source solely on Veronica Fontana to the knowledge of this author; however, it is still incomplete. The study presented here adds to Urbini's list of Fontana's works, such as the artist's book illustrations for the nobility of Parma.

⁴⁸⁶ Giovanni Gori Gandellini, *Notizie storiche degli intagliatori* (Siena: Torchj d'O. Porri, 1808), 141. Also reported by Crespi, 249.

⁴⁸⁷ De Rossi is the only source for this claim, according to Urbini, who reports the Latin text without a translation; thus it remains a mysterious reference. Despite the fact that it would have been very difficult for a woman to make such a journey on her own during this time period, and the lack of other firm evidence, the possibility remains a tantalizing one, due to the existence of at least this one primary source, with interesting implications regarding collaboration between women artists and the East. See also John Freely, *Inside the Seraglio: Private Lives of the Sultans in Istanbul* (New York: Penguin Group, 2007), 185; Julian Raby, "The Serenissima and the Sublime Porte: Art in the Art of Diplomacy 1453-1600," in *Venice and the Islamic World 828-1797*, ed. by Stefano Carboni (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 114. Despite the difficulties, according to Freely, one Englishwoman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, did travel to Constantinople in 1716 and was granted access to the Sultan's harem.

imagery, the subject of her commission there seems to have been the harem itself, the traditional mysterious enclave of the exotic image of the eastern woman, the sensual “other.” The space of the harem was a segregated and gendered space, normally closed off to all outside western men. These exotic views of the eastern female were often created for the delectation of the male western viewer, as in the later nineteenth-century tradition of the odalisque. Yet according to this record, Veronica Fontana was somehow allowed access into this world, “instructed about feminine charms,” while working for the infidel tyrant, “undeserving of such a fine engraver *hand*.”⁴⁸⁸ Again it seems as if the hand of the woman artist has vanquished the infidel (like Judith and Holofernes) and used the virtue of the *maniera devota* to illuminate the mysteries of the harem.

Veronica Fontana was prolific in her woodcuts and remarkable in the range and diversity of her subject matter. In line with the *maniera devota* of the other *mani donne* in Bologna, heirs of Lavinia Fontana and Elisabetta Sirani, together with certain male artists of the city, she created the illustrations for many important religious tracts, such as the *Quaresimale* (Lenten reader) for the Jesuit Paolo Segneri.⁴⁸⁹ She was also responsible for the prestigious commission of the illustrations for the printed version of Ferdinando Cospi’s *wunderkammer* collection, the *Museo Cospiano* (1677).⁴⁹⁰ In addition, she was involved in illustrating the collection of emblems and knightly exercises for the Collegio of Parma. Her visual imagery thus participated in all three areas central to Bolognese life during this period: religion, nobility, and science. In so doing, Fontana worked for some of the most illustrious and important patrons of the day: the Medici, the Jesuits, the Farnese, and the nobility of Bologna such as Cospi.

For more on books and prints with images of the Turkish world available to Westerners, see Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 70.

⁴⁸⁸ See note above.

⁴⁸⁹ Urbini, “Sul ruolo della donna incisore,” 374.

⁴⁹⁰ Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 407.

Fontana worked closely with the Jesuits on several different religious texts including *Il Cristiano istruito nella sua Legge* (the Christian educated in his law) by Paolo Segneri, for which she was given the responsibility to create the Jesuit emblem based on her own designs, and the *Quaresimale* of 1679 (Fig. 166), also by Segneri, with the same emblem.⁴⁹¹ She also illustrated scenes in the *Epistole et evangeli* (1682; Fig. 167); unfortunately, no other information is available regarding this work or the illustrations.⁴⁹² One important piece of information not noted by previous scholars is that there are several initials as signatures throughout the text, including those of Veronica Fontana. She is responsible for two scenes: *Christ Addressing the Apostles* (Fig. 167), and *Christ on the Way to Jerusalem*. In addition, she is responsible for some of the images of the evangelists throughout the text. These scenes display a style of woodcut that is very similar to her *Museo* illustrations, especially in the cupids used on the side borders of the scenes with the evangelists, which also recall those on her courtly frontispieces discussed below.

Of these various works, first we will examine the emblem from Segneri's *Quaresimale* of 1679, published by Jacopo Sabatini, in which several details are important. The frontispiece (Fig. 166) has a ring or a crown of flowers with cupids carrying the six Medici *palle* signifying Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, to whom the volume is dedicated. In addition to the crown at the top, there is the sacred heart symbol of the Jesuits, a heart with three protruding arrows. This image may also be a symbol for the Madonna of the Sette Dolori, at times conflated with *the bacio del divino amore*. The kiss of divine love referred to receiving the wounds of Christ,

⁴⁹¹ Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna incisore," 374. We know that she did the Jesuit emblem for Segneri because there is a copy in the Bologna archives, but I have not been able to access an original text of the 1679 edition. There are, however, many reprints in later years and other languages, since it was such a popular religious tract. The copy of this Jesuit emblem in Fig. 166 is taken from Oretti's manuscript.

⁴⁹² *Epistole et evangeli, che si leggono tutto l'anno alle messe: con aggiunta di tutti i santi nuoui, secondo lordine del messale riformato & uso della Santa Romana chiesa*, translated by M.R.P.M. Remigio Fiorentino (Venice: Nicolo Pezzana, 1682). This text is not mentioned by Urbini, but was identified by this reader at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

often illustrated in the form of a pierced heart.⁴⁹³ This wounded heart represented the sorrows of the Virgin over the suffering and death of Christ. Eventually this iconography became especially popular in the seventeenth century in images of pious females and saints, such as Suor Cecilia of Nocera and St. Teresa of Avila. The *bacio del divino amore* was illustrated by another female artist, Suor Isabella Piccini (1646-1734), in the *Poetica anatomia* by Giovanni Maria Ziletti (1675).⁴⁹⁴ Another *mano donnesca* with a *maniera devota*, Piccini was a Venetian nun and artist who was also very active in book illustration. Piccini used the iconography of the pierced heart for the Madonna of the Sette Dolori in the *Anatomia*. This volume contains the illustration of Sister Cecilia of Nocera, whose heart suffered the pains of the Passion and was burned by the kiss of *divino amore*. The legend says that her body was autopsied and found to have these marks on her heart.⁴⁹⁵

But religion alone does not cover all of Fontana's work, which was an integral part of the larger fabric of the city, in a specific time and place, as expressed in a unified concept of virtue, piety, and prestige. Prestige is the guiding theme of the other two texts she illustrated that concern knightly exercises and courtly emblems: *Il Teatro dell'honore*, Parma, 1675 (Fig. 88), and the *Convictorium collegii nobelium Parmae nomenclatura*, Parma, 1675.⁴⁹⁶ Both of these texts were created for the court of Parma; they are examples of the treatises that descend from Castiglione's *Courtier* regarding learned societies and ideal knightly behavior at the court, and

⁴⁹³ See also Jeffrey Hamburger for similar themes as presented by the nuns of Germany in the fifteenth century: *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); as well as Caterina Vigri, *Le Sette armi spirituali*, ed. Cecilia Foletti (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1985). Both are also mentioned in chapter 3.

⁴⁹⁴ Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna incisore," 380.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁴⁹⁶ We know that she created the frontispiece for this work but lack other information. These two works are not mentioned by Urbini. *Il Teatro dell'honore. Academia mista d'essercitii letterari, e cavalereschi solita celebrarsi su'l fine dell'anno scuolastico in Collegio de'nobili di Parma* (Parma: Mario Vigna, 1675); *Convictorium collegii nobilium Parmae nomenclatura* (Parma: Mario Vigna, 1675), both at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. See also n. 545.

that would have been of interest to families like the Farnese. The *Teatro dell'honore* (Fig. 88) is a work containing exercises appropriate for knights; it was dedicated to Ranuccio Farnese, as indicated by the coat of arms. The frontispiece consists of two *putti* framing a scene that shows a beehive, referring to the bee that was a family symbol. Surrounded by garlands of flowers, there is a bee in the center. The scroll-shaped frame is surmounted by a crown, a symbol of Farnese dominion over their territory. Fontana was responsible for both the creation and execution of this emblem, whereas her other work for this text (Fig. 168) bears the name of M. Odi as designer and Fontana as engraver (*del[ineavit]* and *sculp[sit]*, respectively). The designs are very similar to the framing elements used in embroidery designs, themselves ultimately descended from printed frontispieces such as this. Her cupids elegantly cross their legs as they stand, reminiscent of the *putti* behind the sibyls in Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling. However, despite the similarity in the design of a central open area framed by an angel on either side, there is a formality in Odi's design that is not found in Fontana's version. The angels are full-grown females, whereas Fontana used *putti* in the other example. Also, Odi uses the mannerist trope of the mask at the bottom of his frame, similar to that used by artists such as Zuccaro, from which Fontana abstains in her version. The two female figures in Odi's version are allegories of fame with their trumpets in hand. The coat of arms includes the papal keys in the center, indicating a dedication to the Pope. In addition, the emblem displays the fleur-de-lis and stripes for the ruling House of Farnese in Parma, as well as their connections with the House of Savoy through marriage. Finally, the same crown is present in both versions of the emblem.

In the *Convictorium collegii nobelium Parmae nomenclatura*, Fontana once again created the emblem of the Collegio di Parma for the frontispiece. This work is a collection of emblems for the society of learned men from Parma; each member had his own unique emblem.

Emblems were essential to courtly and learned societies because they represented the ideals of the society as well as the particular characteristics of its members in a concise visual form, and as such were a type of members' signature. Emblems had long been popular in Bologna; as we saw in chapter 1, Bocchi's sixteenth-century text, *Symbolicarum quaestionum*, was illustrated by Prospero Fontana and engraved by Bonasone.⁴⁹⁷ In addition to Bocchi, Fontana's other possible precursors include later compendia such as the famous set of allegorical symbols for the use of artists by Cesare Ripa, the *Iconologia* (1611).⁴⁹⁸

In addition to the above-mentioned works, according to Oretti many other extant works by Fontana's hand could be seen in Bologna and in other cities; her work for noble patrons included *imprese* and portraits. What is extant and attributed at the moment includes two of Fontana's designs for *imprese* included by Oretti in his manuscript.⁴⁹⁹ The first design for a frontispiece (Fig. 169) is a drawing with two heraldic lions holding up the coat of arms with the name Antonio di Paolo Masini e Comp (Compania). The design is very similar to those found in women's embroidery, i.e., a framed border with scrolls. This is most probably the title page for Masini's *Aggiunte* as mentioned by Oretti.⁵⁰⁰ A second image, *impresa per gelati*, is the emblem for a learned Bolognese society (Fig. 170). Once again there is the typical border framed with a scroll like those Fontana used in her other designs. It is clear that Fontana worked with academies since she engraved the frontispiece for the Academy in Parma as well, as discussed earlier.⁵⁰¹ She may have been influenced by the emblem of the *Incamminati* by Agostino Carracci, or that of the *Ardenti*, for the Bolognese Academy. She also created the illustration for

⁴⁹⁷ Achille Bocchi, *Symbolicarum quaestionum de universo genere: Bologna, 1574*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New York: Garland, 1979).

⁴⁹⁸ See n. 388 and n. 421 re: the Sirani inventory in Morselli, *Collezionisti*.

⁴⁹⁹ Urbini, "Sul ruolo della donna incisore," 373.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ See n. 496. Veronica Fontana may also have been influenced by Agostino Carracci's version of the emblem for the Accademia dei Gelati.

the family tree of the Carracci (Fig. 171) for Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice*, as well as a portrait of the artist Francesco Brizio (Fig. 172) for the same volume, 1678. These commissions were an indication of the prestige of her work, due to the illustrious patrons involved.

Cospi, Science, and the *Wunderkammer*

Perhaps the most important commission for Veronica involves the aspect of science and the city, the illustration of Ferdinando Cospi's *Museo Cospiano* (Figs. 173-174). Cospi was a Medici art agent who had been a page in the Medici household as a child.⁵⁰² He was also *gonfaloniere* of Bologna in his later years. The *Museo* was a combination of text and illustration that completely described Cospi's collection of naturalia and artificialia. As discussed in chapter 1, his collection was inherited from the sixteenth-century naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi, who left it to the city of Bologna. However, the nature of the collection had changed by the seventeenth century. Originally it was mostly composed of natural items, with some examples of man-made curiosities; by the seventeenth century, the collection increasingly incorporated any items meant to elicit wonder in the viewer, making it more of a *wunderkammer*.⁵⁰³ Cospi's collection contained examples of both natural and artificial phenomena, i.e., coins, medals, arms, and the like. According to Olmi, the collection actually had much in common with the literature of the Baroque period, in its rich and eclectic composition.⁵⁰⁴ One could say that the arrangement was meant to provoke *meraviglia* in a similar way that a religious miracle could elicit wonder from the faithful. Both collections represented the three spheres of influence in post Counter-

⁵⁰² Treccani: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ricerca/ferdinando-cospi/Dizionario_Biografico (June 5, 2012).

⁵⁰³ See Findlen for more on the *wunderkammer* in general; Lorenzo Legati, *Museo Cospiano annesso a quello del famoso Ulisse Aldrovandi e donato alla sua patria dall'illustrissimo signor Ferdinando Cospi ...march. di Petriolo ... Descrizione di Lorenzo Legati* (Bologna: Giacomo Monti, 1677), index pages.

⁵⁰⁴ Giuseppe Olmi, "Science-Honour-Metaphor: Italian Cabinets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London: House of Stratus, 2001), 4.

Reformation Bologna, i.e., clerics, scientists, and nobility.⁵⁰⁵ The artificial wonders were necessary to the nobility as a mark of good taste, while the natural wonders were indicative of erudition for both the nobility and the scientists; the clerics could utilize both artificial and man-made curiosities as examples of God's wonders, since man himself was God's greatest wonder.

Aldrovandi's collection began with a scientific approach, with more than 4,000 specimens categorized. When Cospi recorded his collection in the *Museo*, the text took its scientific information from Aldrovandi's notes, often wholesale.⁵⁰⁶ Although some of this information was, by the seventeenth century, scientifically inaccurate, this deficiency did not perturb the author, who was the scholar Lorenzo Legati, not Cospi himself. Furthermore, the objects themselves were not organized in the didactic fashion set forth by Legati's text.⁵⁰⁷ They were arranged in an aesthetically pleasing fashion, rather than by rigorous scientific categorization. One can glimpse this aesthetic type of organization in the book's frontispiece, created by Fontana's colleague, Giuseppe Maria Mitelli (Fig. 3). His illustration depicts the collection arranged with the smaller objects in the cabinets and the larger objects such as shields and swords attached to the wall and ceiling in an artfully arranged display of wonder. In addition to what appears to be a self-portrait of the artist, there is the figure of the dwarf who was the curator and guide for the collection, himself displayed as an integral part of the *meraviglia*. Mitelli's work was involved in the same three areas that constantly intertwine in our female artists' visual production: science, religion, and virtue, in this case, the virtue of the nobility, by way of prestige; his other work will be discussed below. Cospi and Legati were still pursuing the same path followed by Aldrovandi wherein as many objects as possible should be illustrated as

⁵⁰⁵ Laura Laurencich Minelli, "Museography and Ethnographical Collections in Bologna during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds. *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (London: House of Stratus, 2001), 19-29.

⁵⁰⁶ Olmi in Impey and MacGregor, 2.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 7,12.

accurately as possible. The book is divided into five separate sections: 1. nature, 2. man-made wonders, 3. ancient coins, 4. armor, 5. epigrams and inscriptions.⁵⁰⁸ The text and image constantly reinforce one another in description.

Although Mitelli created the frontispiece for this text, Fontana presumably created all of the other illustrations, since she signed it “VF Fecit Omnia” at the beginning of the text’s dedication. There she also created a portrait of Ferdinand de’ Medici (Fig. 175), to whom the volume was dedicated.⁵⁰⁹ Apparently the circulation was quite wide, if sources are to be believed; Comelli, writing in the eighteenth century, states that 800 copies were printed.⁵¹⁰ In a certain sense, the publication of this text was also a bid for the honor that nobles always seek, and public knowledge of the possession of such a fine collection would surely have added to Cospi’s prestige. However, what is most specific about his catalogue is his desire to illustrate as much of the corpus as possible, and to advertise it to such an extent. Perhaps this is because he was heir to Aldrovandi’s collection and original methodology regarding the combination of the visual and textual for a full description of the object. Aldrovandi also insisted on having his work illustrated as accurately as possible. In this he was aided by the naturalism of the Bolognese school of artists, despite the fact that Aldrovandi’s head engravers were Jacopo Ligozzi, a Florentine, and Cornelius Schwindt, a Fleming.⁵¹¹ As stated earlier, the Flemish had also been noted for the proficiency and exactitude necessary for this scientific style of representation since the days of van Eyck and Memling, and the Bolognese had inherited this interest and combined it with their own traditions of naturalism such as in the work of Francia

⁵⁰⁸ Legati, *Museo Cospiano*, 1.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Giambattista Comelli, “Ferdinando Cospi e le origini del Museo Civico di Bologna,” *Atti e memorie - Deputazione di storia patria per le provincie di Romagna* (Bologna, 1889), 121.

⁵¹¹ Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 243.

and Lavinia Fontana. In a certain sense, the text was itself a type of *wunderkammer* in the form of a book that contained an encyclopedic microcosm of the universe.

Cospi inherited two tendencies from Aldrovandi: one, a desire for accurate illustrations and two, a Tridentine sense of piety in the tone of the objects' textual descriptions. Some other texts of *wunderkammers* from the period are only partially illustrated, relying mostly on text, yet the *Museo* has 87 illustrations by Fontana, showing all manner of things and creatures. Perhaps even more noteworthy are the descriptions; some contain a moralizing tone, very much in concert with the counter-reformatory zeal that remained in Bologna long after Trent.⁵¹² For example, the illustration of an Etruscan oil lamp (Fig. 176) is accompanied by an explanation that goes into the details of the social and cultural history and context of the object. In this case, the figure is posed in a rather obscene position, which Legati attributes to a type of punishment meted out in certain Middle Eastern cultures for adultery.⁵¹³ Thus, in addition to the accurate physical description of the object, the reader is given a moralistic judgment and an explanation of cultural anthropology and practice. Legati also describes how it could be the pose of acrobats or gymnasts in certain cultures, and after this "objective" description, he ventures into the moralistic one.

Other important examples of Fontana's work in the *Museo* include the *Bacchante* (Fig. 177), which she signed separately, indicating that perhaps this image may have been used in a separate composition, or considered a finished work in itself, outside of the text. It displays Fontana's sense of classical antiquity and her ability to reproduce not only naturalia, but also works of man-made art. The description of the object includes a discussion of the figure of

⁵¹² A case in point is Christina of Sweden's visit in 1655, when, apparently, city officials decided to drape the loins of Giovanni Bologna's nude statue of Neptune in the piazza to avoid offending her sense of decorum; Comelli, 89.

⁵¹³ Legati, 332 (lamp), 43 (turkey), and 499 (bacchante)..

bacchantes in ancient mythology, to reinforce the history of the image. Regarding naturalia, one of the examples that might be more familiar today is the *Turkey* (Fig. 178). The turkey, native to the Americas, was proof of both Aldrovandi and Cospi's interest in the latest exploratory discoveries. Aldrovandi had been very interested in New World discoveries, despite not having been able to travel there, and his collection even included a Pre-columbian text; Cospi's collection continued this fascination.

In Bologna, there was a constant exchange between artists, scholars, and collectors, and Cospi's collection (both the objects and the illustrated text) was as important a source for the artists of the day, regarding the naturalistic depiction of the world around them, as Aldrovandi's had been a century earlier. This importance is evident in Sirani's painting of *Galatea* (Fig. 179), for which she probably used Cospi's shells from the *Museo* as a source for the elaborate conch shell upon which Galatea rides.⁵¹⁴ Although used in a mythological painting and enlarged to fit its rider, Sirani's shell is otherwise scientifically very accurate. Thus, her painting takes part in the continual give-and-take between the women artists, patrons, and scholars of the city that characterized the artistic life of Bologna.

Finally, Cospi's *Museo* is a unique record of a *wunderkammer* in that it attempts to add even more than what may be seen at first glance, i.e., the cultural background and moralistic judgments, as an integral part of the interpretation and comprehension of the object's meaning and purpose in context. As such, the *Museo* becomes a document of its place and time, representing cultural values present in Bologna. For example, it mirrors the encyclopedic urge of the seventeenth century to categorize its surroundings, including all the new discoveries of the New World, but often places them in the old categories. This is evidenced by the type of

⁵¹⁴ *Museo Cospiano*, 95; Adelina Modesti, *Elisabetta Sirani: Una virtuosa del seicento Bolognese* (Bologna:Editrice Compositori, 2004), 135.

judgments in the description of the Etruscan lamp in the *Museo Cospiano*, most likely a leftover from Aristotle combined with the post-Tridentine climate, as already seen in Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum*. Therefore, the commission for the *Museo* was a crucial one for Fontana's career, considering the widespread diffusion of the text and the importance of the erudite subject matter and its noble patron. Added to her other work for the Jesuits and the court of Parma, it indicates the high level of prestige that was accorded to the female engraver. This chapter is but a beginning toward a catalogue of her oeuvre, and surely more of her works still remain to be discovered. Only then can scholars fully assess the role of Fontana and her fellow women artists in this period, and their contribution to the cultural life of the city and to the history of art as a whole.⁵¹⁵

Virtù Virile: Sirani's Male Colleagues and Collaborators in Engraving and Etching

As Sirani was also an excellent etcher, she was an inspiration to her circle in this medium, both male and female. Although this study has been focusing on her female students, Sirani also had several male collaborators and colleagues,⁵¹⁶ who continued the tradition of being involved in the major printing fields of the day: scientific, courtly, and religious. Although these artists were considerably older than Sirani, the extant works from three of her male colleagues, (who were also active with her father, in the case of the first two), Lorenzo Tinti, Lorenzo Loli, and Matteo Borbone, demonstrate the diversity of their production. Based on the surviving

⁵¹⁵ The only other female engraver on whom there is significant scholarship is Diana Mantovana; for further information on Mantovana see Evelyn Lincoln, *The Invention of the Italian Renaissance Printmaker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 128.

⁵¹⁶ Primary sources include: Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 395, 411 and Crespi, 73-4. Malvasia reports Elisabetta's remark that she created a painting for Lorenzo Tinti, "intagliatore" II, 395, and Malvasia himself records that Tinti reproduced Agostino Carracci's work in engraving, II, 294 (see also Bertela for this) and that Loli reproduced Giovanni Andrea Sirani's work in "rami all'aquaforte" (copper etchings). Crespi categorizes Tinti's work as "incisioni" and one painting, and for Loli, one "incisione" and two paintings. Masini calls both of them "intagliatore," 632. See also n. 482 for more on the complex/confusing print terminology.

number of works, it seems that Tinti was the most active in textual illustration. Both Tinti and Loli created, respectively, engraved and etched versions of Sirani's work (as well as the work of other Bolognese artists such as Agostino Carracci), whereas Borbone is mostly remembered as the sculptor who created the funerary catafalque for Sirani, inspired by her brief yet shining career.⁵¹⁷ The following is a partial list of what remains of Tinti's oeuvre, although more work needs to be done on it.

Teatro anatomica di Bologna, 1668; *La spada d'onore*, 1672 in Venice for Paolo Balioni; *Pompe funebre nell'essequie dell'illustrissimi signor Berlingiero Gessi*, 1672; *Ulisse Aldrovandi, dendrologiae naturalis*, 1668; *Astronomiae reformatae*, 1665, Bologna; *Il pennello lagrimato*, 1665 (the frontispiece for the eulogy for Sirani by Picinardi); *Memoriae, imprese e ritratti dei signori accademici Gelati di Bologna*, 1672.⁵¹⁸

As this list of titles shows, Tinti was active in the same range of work as both Veronica Fontana and Mitelli: religious volumes, scientific tomes, and courtly treatises. For such a range of work in illustration, he would have needed similar skills to the artists of the *Felsina pittrice*: a decorous sense of realism and a pious style. He also created an engraved copy of Sirani's *Self-portrait at the Easel* (Fig. 180), a painting which was in the Hercolani collection until about 1835, and subsequently lost;⁵¹⁹ this same painting, which shows Sirani seated at the easel painting a portrait of her father, may also have been copied by Ginevra Cantofoli (see chapter 4).

⁵¹⁷ See n. 516 above. Also, for more on Sirani's eulogy, see Giovanni Luigi Picinardi, *Il pennello lagrimato* (Bologna, 1665).

⁵¹⁸ All the above titles attributed to Tinti contain examples of his engravings and are catalogued as such. At least four other works with engravings by Tinti exist, although space restrictions do not allow for a full catalogue here.

⁵¹⁹ See the catalogue entry in Jadranka Bentini, ed., *Elisabetta Sirani: Pittrice eroina, 1638-1665* (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2004), 169. Tinti also engraved a copy of Sirani's *Madonna Adoring the Child*; for this print, as well as one of an allegory, see Giovanna Gaeta Bertela, ed., *Incisori bolognesi ed emiliani del sec. XVII* (Bologna: Associazione per l'arti Francesco Francia, 1973), nos. 931, 932.

These examples reinforce the idea of cooperation between the female artists of Bologna and their male colleagues.

Lorenzo Loli is the second of Sirani's male colleagues, whom we know about from a few comments in the primary sources, as well as his extant prints.⁵²⁰ He created several etchings of Elisabetta's work such as the *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 181). Finally, Matteo Borbone is remembered as the creator of the *tempietto d'onore* (temple of honor), the funerary monument or catafalque for Elisabetta's funeral (Fig. 182), as well as a map of Bologna marking all the churches and houses of reform. The catafalque consisted of a life-size effigy of Sirani surrounded by the columns of a classical temple and seated at the easel, frozen forever in the act of painting. The *tempietto* was thus part of the construction of Sirani's legend as the great *pittrice* after her death. In another example of interchange among the artists being studied here, Borbone's design for the catafalque was copied by Veronica Fontana for the woodcut in Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice* illustrating the biography of Sirani.⁵²¹

Sirani and Fontana's Male Colleagues: Giuseppe Maria Mitelli and Images of Women in Virtue and Vice

Social commentary, local culture, and Lombard naturalism (as shown in Carracci's genre painting of a butcher shop) (Fig. 183) are all critical parts of Mitelli's oeuvre.⁵²² A prolific artist, Mitelli engraved Annibale Carracci's compendium of tradespeople, his version of the *Cris de Paris* (Fig. 184). He also engraved copies of religious paintings by famous Bolognese artists,

⁵²⁰ Bertela, n. 744, 744a, 745. See also Andrea Emiliani, *La Raccolta delle stampe di Benedetto XIV Lambertini, nella Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna* (Bologna: Alfa, 1970), for an example of a cupid with a cornucopia based on a design by her father.

⁵²¹ Bentini, 169.

⁵²² Lombard naturalism can also be found in the work of Caravaggio, such as his *Buona ventura*, or Fortune Teller. Ironically, however, this truthful depiction of the lower classes is taken to more of an extreme in Annibale's *The Butcher's Shop*, as opposed to Caravaggio's dramatic figures, who seem more to be actors on a theatrical stage set.

such as Elisabetta Sirani: for example, *St. Anthony of Padua Adoring the Christ Child* (1660s, Figs. 185-186).⁵²³ In addition, Mitelli engraved various scientific manuals, some in collaboration with women artists. However, he is best known for his myriad illustrations of the human condition in the Bologna of the late seventeenth century. Mitelli's production thus intersects with the main themes discussed throughout this work and shared by the women artists of Bologna: scientific (e.g., the *Museo Cospiano*), courtly (e.g., his representations of allegorical festival theater), and religious (e.g., didactic games and proverbs, religious processions and sacred theater). The remainder of this chapter looks at four main areas of his production: his festival prints; his proverbs; his didactic games, some of which were descended from courtly treatises but employed as propaganda for the Catholic church, especially regarding women and virtue; and finally, his site-specific games, whose themes are inseparable from the cultural and historical context of contemporary Bologna. It also examines this imagery in relation to the social history of gambling and the church's position about it, as well as the possible origins of some of these games in the courtly treatises of the period.

Volcanoes, Piety and Pork: Mitelli's Festival Prints and the Performance of Religion

Religious festivals, which Mitelli often illustrated in his prints, were sites of elaborate theatrical display in the form of *macchine*, or floats. These floats were imbued with complex sacred iconography; one such example was the mountain of Moses sponsored by the Compagnia of San Domenico (Figs. 187-191). The following description of the *macchina* is taken from the printed account of the *Festa della Maria Vergine Coronata* held in Reggio, a city in Emilia, in 1674, which was written by the abbot Giacomo Certani and dedicated to Francesco II d'Este,

⁵²³ See the catalogue entry in Bentini, 256. The original painting was for the silk merchant Tassi, but destined for the nuns of St. Leonard, thus the devoto style of the work. See also Sirani's *taccuino* pages, Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice*, II, 392-400.

Duke of Modena and Reggio (Fig. 187,188).⁵²⁴ This float was composed of a large mountain with the figure of Moses at the bottom. The mountain breaks up after Moses hits it with his staff. Fountains emerge out of the mound with rivers, shells, masks of bronze, and representations of the four parts of the world complete with a religious inscription in Latin from the book of Ecclesiastes. Also included are four statues of the evangelists, four harpies, a garden with a religious inscription, and the image of the Virgin of the Ghiara at the top bearing the quote “I am your fountain.” The focus is on Marian worship using the symbolism of water, in which the Virgin is the pure *fons vitae* from whom all virtues flow forth. She is the image of the sacred feminine, a life-giving fountain of purity and virtue. Part of the inscription calls her “a mountain blooming with virtues, enriched with a fountain from whence flows the oil of merciful grace... who will not drink at the bosom of Mary, the fountain of the savior? The wave of the virgin catches the dragon of the inferno. Her fountain comes from the rock and she crushes the serpent.” This image of the Virgin catching the dragon and crushing the serpent recalls the Woman of the Apocalypse from the Book of Revelation, who crushes Satan beneath her feet and thus brings about man’s salvation.

In order for the miracle to be convincing, the audience must suspend disbelief and allow itself to be convinced of the veracity of the mountain. Thus the float is represented in the conical shape of a real mountain, complete with shrubbery along its slopes. Only in this way, when the mountain opens and the Virgin emerges from within, will the faithful be certain of having witnessed a true miracle. In the festival of *Maria Vergine coronata* held at Reggio in Emilia, scientific knowledge of an accurate volcano is appropriated for pietistic intent. The naturalistic mountain opens as it would during an eruption but instead here it is transformed into the biblical

⁵²⁴ Abbate Giacomo Certani, *Maria Vergine coronata: Descrizione, e dichiarazione della divota solennita fatta in Reggio Li 13. Maggio 1674...* (Reggio: Prospero Vedrotti, 1675), 72-77.

mountain of Moses, from which emerges the bucolic paradise of the fountain of the Virgin, after Moses activates the power of the float with his gesture. This piece is represented as an active image, both real and iconic. In a scene which blends both Old and New Testaments, the ultimate goal is the glorification of the Virgin; science is co-opted in the service of Marian devotion.

A second example of Mitelli's festival prints is from one of the most popular and long-lived of the feasts in Bologna: the *festa della Porchetta*, or feast of the pork (Figs. 192-193), still enacted today, sans the traditional bulls. The following is from a written description of the feast from August 24th, 1693,⁵²⁵ the day of St. Bartholomew; there may be a relation between roasted pork and the flaying of the saint. The feast consisted of the spectacle of a bullfight with 40 armed hunters and dogs chasing two bulls that had been loosed in the piazza. The city's ladies and gentlemen dressed in their finery for the event, which was sponsored by both the local *gonfaloniere* and the papal legate. They ended the feast by throwing pieces of roasted pork and coins of silver to the needy over the main railing of the Palazzo degli Anziani. The *raison d'être* for these feasts was to "avoid the dangers of boredom." The writer of this account relates that some version of the feast was started as far back as the time of the ancient Romans and was recreated by the thirteenth century. The illustration depicts the piazza filled with knights on horseback and surmounted by the coats of arms that belonged to the Gonfalonieri Casalini and to eight other noble families, the Malvezzi, Mariani, Orsi, Ercolani, Angelelli, Pepoli, Fontana, and Bentivoglio-Patarazzi.

The third example of Mitelli's festival prints is the depiction of an allegorical play, the *Battaglia contro Tifone* (Fig. 194), that was held in Bologna as part of the *festa della Porchetta* of 1665. The scenery required a volcano to be built from which the angry god Tifone would

⁵²⁵ Antonio Maria degli Antonii and Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, *Relazione e disegno della fiera per la solita festa popolare delle porchetta fatta in Bologna Il di 24. Agosto 1693* (Bologna: Manolessi, 1693).

emerge. The volcano was created with the utmost attention to scientific detail; science was utilized in the elaboration of allegory and myth, and yet even this mythology had as its final end the triumph of virtue, of good over evil, which is what the allegorical story of Tifone represents. Tifone is the god of chaos who must be subdued, and in Bologna his defeat is accomplished via faith. Tifone was the son of Gaia and Tartarus; Gaia set him against Zeus to punish Zeus for having defeated the Titans. Tifone was described as a horrible and formidable monster, but Zeus finally won the day. Zeus then buried Tifone under Mt. Etna to make sure that, except for the occasional eruption, he would remain underground and in check. The natural function of the volcano is transformed into a perfect Christian allegory.

Virtuous Vices: The Social Mapping of Leisure in Bologna Through Mitelli's Game Prints

Mitelli's second category of work was his didactic game sheets and proverbs. As equipment for a type of virtuous vice, these game prints allow scholars to engage in the social mapping of leisure in post-Tridentine Bologna, as the prints cover important religious and social issues of the period. They are a treasure trove of the panorama of local urban life, both reflecting and contributing to the social fabric of the city. The topics often involve didactic images of women because, as we have seen, in the eyes of the Church the city's well-being was directly tied to the virtue of its women. Gambling itself is part of the subject of these prints, despite the Church's prohibition; some of the illustrations even include figures of people in the act of gambling, and show that it usually leads to a tragic end. Ironically, in all of Mitelli's game prints, the morally correct position is arrived at through gambling, i.e., by throwing the dice and using the print as a game board, the player arrives at the conclusion that gambling is a moral hazard. Before examining several key examples of these virtuous vices, in order to better

understand how Mitelli's prints functioned among their users, a closer look at gambling in Bologna and the Papal States during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is needed.

Despite the city's pious reputation, the Church was forced to engage in an aggressive prohibitory campaign against the social evil of gambling, using a strategy of surveillance and penalty. Surviving prints bear witness to, on the one hand, the papal *bandi* or posters that banned the use of dice and on the other, a vast collection of Mitelli's engraving for printed game sheets. It is accepted that the games were meant to be played with dice, since the illustrations included both numerical equivalents for each scene and directions on how much to pay or take from the pot depending on where the dice landed the player on the board. How did Mitelli's prints function as evidence for the encounter between the conflicting discourses of Catholic prohibition and the daily life of early modern Bologna? As will be shown, the artist created a hybrid form.

By the time of the first *bando* in 1588 (Fig. 195), certain forms of games had come to be seen by the church as an evil habit. These printed edicts were posted to inform the public of restrictions and prohibitions on gambling in the Papal States of Rome, Bologna, and Perugia. Examples range in date from 1588 into the twentieth century.⁵²⁶ Their proliferation throughout the centuries attests to the fact that gambling was actually alive and well in the Papal States, since there was a need to continually emphasize its prohibition. For instance, the *bando* in figure 195 uses words such as "scandalous" and "pernicious" to indicate the moral dangers of the game of dice: "essendosi gia per ordine della sanctica di N.S. proibito il gioco tanto scandaloso e pernicioso de Dadi..." (having been prohibited by the order of His Holiness, the game of dice, so scandalous and pernicious...)⁵²⁷

During religious festivals such as Christmas and Holy Week, gambling was expressly

⁵²⁶ Editori Umbri Associati, *Costume e società nel seicento barocco* (Perugia: Electa, 1988), 74.

⁵²⁷ See Fig. 195.

forbidden, as it would interfere with religious devotion. The perils of gambling, in addition to distracting players from religious purpose, are stated as morally dangerous. Gambling is seen as a pernicious vice that will bring about the ruin of one's family through the loss of one's private possessions and thus lead to economic, moral, and social ruin.⁵²⁸ By contrast, in other cities such as Venice, some scholars believe that gambling was actually used by the noble classes as a way to retain a certain amount of the gentlemanly dignity associated with a class of society whose powers were dying out.⁵²⁹

Mitelli's game prints are unique in many ways. Examples of more historically well-known games include the *Giuoco dell'oca* (the game of the swan) and *Pela il chiu* (skin the owl game, Fig. 196), which were played with a traditional game board and dice. In these games, one would follow a circular path, which led to the center by way of passes or setbacks. Mitelli, however, created a hybrid form of game sheet with a moralistic twist. Encoded in his games are proverbs and archetypes of folk wisdom, which contain messages in concert with the Church's position on, for example, women. Ironically, however, these messages must be arrived at through gambling, something which the Church wished to eradicate. Mitelli's choice of this hybrid perhaps reveals an ambiguous position. He may have been caught between his relationship to the Church and to his society, an artist who, in the words of De Certeau, was using everyday tactics to counter religious strategies; in other words, he employed the game sheet as "la perruque," or the wig, a tactic of resistance and evasion that the reader/player can appropriate for himself.⁵³⁰

The format of these games is usually a broadsheet, and all are played with a number of dice ranging from one to three. The artist uses P for *pagare*, or payment, and T for *tirare*, or take from the pot. In the games' directions, he often suggests *un quattrino* as a forfeit, but then leaves

⁵²⁸ Editori Umbri, 72.

⁵²⁹ Jonathan Walker, "Gambling and Venetian Noblemen c. 1500-1700," *Past and Present* 162 (1999): 56.

⁵³⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 24.

the players the option of whatever they agree upon. If one rolls three of a kind, for example, one usually takes half the pot. Also significant is that many of Mitelli's prints contain verses in Bolognese dialect, reinforcing the moralistic message of his games and creating a complex interweaving of image, text, and morality.

Regarding the diverse subject matter, female virtue was often an important topic in both games and proverbs. The first two games under consideration, the *Game of Truth* and the *Game of Husbands and Wives*, touch upon the city's fear of loose women and the moral hazards of gambling by showing dire consequences for both the male and female characters on the game boards. These examples are specifically related to the city and the church's fight to restore women's lost honor. The typical format is most evident in the *Game of Truth* (Fig. 197). The game is divided into six squares, in two rows of three squares each. The squares are arranged from left to right, top to bottom, except for the top central square, the winning number. The numerical order mimics the gravity of the moral infraction until one reaches the winning number 6, which ironically is the most pious scene. Each square contains an illustration, a number, a direction, and a line of text. This game is closely related to the tradition of moralizing broadsheets such as the miserable end of the courtesan, a theme especially popular in Venice.⁵³¹ The top center square, number 6, dominates the board with its illustration of the well-behaved family. This square is further emphasized by being depicted on a type of tapestry to distinguish it from the other squares and draw one's eyes to it. The most ironic is square number 3 (lower left), in that it tells the player that "he who plays, loses, and he who doesn't play, wins." This is a clear message against gambling, reminding one of its possible dire consequences, and yet in order to play this game one must take up the dice and gamble. The sexual suggestiveness of the two players' feet touching under the table refers to promiscuity as a vice that would accompany, or

⁵³¹ David Kunzle, *History of the Comic Strip* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 292.

be a consequence of, gambling. That form of contact could also refer to cheating at cards, but sexual promiscuity is more in concert with the rest of the game's moralistic message.

Square number 4 (lower center) tells us that "by dancing, you lose more than you believe," perhaps implying once more a loss of virtue. It is interesting to note that as the number increases, so do the vice and its penalty. For example, one square says, "outside of the home, one always loses." The illustration shows two female figures about to get into trouble with a strange male suitor outside, giving a very direct reminder that a woman's place is in the home. The dog, usually a symbol of marital fidelity, is barking at the unknown suitor, signifying danger. Square number 2 (upper right) represents perhaps a lesser vice, but one that could lead to others: "talking on the doorstep, one loses." Again this encounter is used to imply promiscuity. One can see a tradesman in the background, similar to the stock representations of tradesmen in the *Arti di Bologna*.⁵³² Most of the admonitions to stay indoors seem to be addressed to women, although in square 1, the penalty is based on the vice of vanity, with both sexes preening themselves in that age-old trope of vanity, the mirror. The characters are dressed in fancy seventeenth-century costume with a background resembling an interior stage set, perhaps implying performance of identity through use of the mirror. Although literacy is implied, the family is depicted as being of modest means, and not in rich costume. One could even argue that there is a slight suggestion that the vices are associated with the upper classes. In square 2, the worker in the background who is simply doing his job in order to earn a living contrasts with the foppish suitor who represents infidelity.

The winning image is in the upper center, so as to be easily spotted, and the added use of the tapestry highlights the proper choice of behavior that one must perform with a theatrical flourish. The inclusion of the child implies family, as opposed to simply lovers. Note that the

⁵³² Alessandro Pradelli, *Gli antichi mestieri di Bologna* (Rome: Newton Compton Editori, 1984), 16.

woman's hair is neatly kept in and restrained, signifying a parallel with moral restraint. In addition, the woman is engaged in that most pious of activities for Christian women, as seen in chapter 3: embroidery.

Another game related to the moralizing broadsheet tradition is the *Game of Husbands and Wives* (Fig. 198). This game has a narrative progression, composed of four rows with the top and bottom containing six squares and images each; it describes the slow decline of a married couple, similar to the “decline of the courtesan” broadsheets. (Mitelli also took up the theme of the fall of the *meretrice*, or prostitutes, in his *lunario*, or calendar, to be discussed below, Fig. 202).⁵³³ The winning combination of 18, or 3 sixes, is symbolized by the handing over of the dowry to the husband by the wife in the first square. The first two rows are taking squares and the last two are paying squares. One might assume, then, that there is a positive implication to the images and actions in the first 2 rows, even though one of these images is reminiscent of the woman on top (number 9) and another is a man in woman's clothing (*il mondo rovesciato*, or the world upside down, number 6). These two squares echo themes that were already a part of life in seventeenth-century Bologna, as there were numerous prints of the woman in breeches circulating, and she was both a feared and celebrated figure.⁵³⁴ The man dressed as a woman is the inverse: having lost his masculinity, he becomes an unnatural image (connected to cross-dressing rituals that were part of carnival celebrations) and thus a reflection of the world upside down, another widely circulating theme of the day. Bologna was especially familiar with these themes through the satiric yet empathetic verses of Giulio Cesare Croce, a sixteenth-century poet

⁵³³ Kunzle, 292. mistakenly identified this print with the Venetian example, as simply another broadsheet with an arbitrary assignation of months.

⁵³⁴ Natalie Zemon Davis, “Women on Top,” in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 130.

of the piazza.⁵³⁵

The husband going gambling can be seen as the beginning of the decline, or the turning point in the couple's story. It is interesting to note that when the wife complains, there is a penalty, but if the husband is angry, one takes from the pot. The implications of this system are quite clear, as gender roles give primacy to the man. It may also imply the idea of woman as lunatic and less emotionally stable than man, then a widespread notion: women were often represented as melancholy, though without the benefit of its creative fire.⁵³⁶ The number of the final square is nil: no penalty paid, no forfeit taken. The illustration in this final square depicts the couple's complete economic and spiritual ruin, shown, ironically, as a result of gambling. The other message in this game was that women's place was in the home or the convent: the Counter-Reformation continued.

Players are thus reminded in these two games (while in the very act of gambling) of the church's position on gambling and women. To gamble was to put one's faith passively in Chance, and Chance was considered the opposite of Divine Providence, especially because Providence also operated through active good works on the part of the faithful. Therefore dice were to be completely eliminated: "piu danosi e detestibili... interdetto e estinto" (more ruinous and detestible... forbidden and extinguished), whereas cards would be tolerated: "con qualche peso imposto ai giocatori" (with some burden imposed upon the players), i.e., a tax.⁵³⁷ The Camera Apostolica still hoped to eliminate them eventually: "con la speranza di annicular questo delle carte a suo tempo e luogo" (with the hope of annihilating this (vice) of cards in its own time and place).⁵³⁸ Although they decided to ban dice, on a somewhat contradictory yet perhaps

⁵³⁵ Elide Casali, *La festa del mondo rovesciato; Giulio Cesare Croce e il carnevalesco* (Bologna: Mulino, 2002), 9.

⁵³⁶ Fredrika Jacobs, *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 49-53.

⁵³⁷ Editori Umbri, 73.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

financially profitable note, cards would be tolerated with the minor penalty of an imposed tax. This was to be accomplished through the branding of card decks with a papal stamp, so that they might be identified as legal decks, and tax upon them for the stamp would be collected at the time of purchase. Could the more obvious reason that cards were tolerated be the fact that they were a tangible source of revenue? The papacy of Sixtus V apparently needed money for growing city expenses and to curb the towering debt left by the lavish personal spending of previous popes.⁵³⁹

A special commissioner was appointed to enforce the legal stamping of card decks and to collect fines on those who broke the law.⁵⁴⁰ The card tax was “un giulio di moneta Romana,” and if caught with cards that were unstamped or illegally stamped, one would pay a ducat per deck (including, naturally, the confiscation of the deck). If caught gambling with dice, one was fined the punitive sum of a gold scudo, and if the criminal were unable to pay, a prison sentence would be imposed. Anyone with illegal card decks was commanded to come forward and declare them in order to rectify the situation, no later than 10 days from the posting of the *bando*.⁵⁴¹ As previously mentioned, gambling in general was expressly forbidden during religious festivals. However, the idea of allowing the specific game of card-playing outside of religious festivals implies a temporal aspect to morality. For example, cards were morally tolerated, yet during a religious festival they were transformed into a greater social evil, a sign of papal and religious disrespect: “sara lecito giochare, purchè si porti ... honore e reverenza alle santissime feste”

⁵³⁹ Ibid., 64. The materiality of card decks made them easier to brand and control compared to dice. In addition, since manufacture of cards involved use of the printing press, a major economic enterprise during this period, the Camera Apostolica was obviously more intimately involved. One cannot help but wonder how sincere was the actual desire to also eliminate playing cards eventually, if they presented such a source of revenue.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid., 140. For the record, Mitelli also designed decks of cards; one was specifically dedicated to Prospero Bentivoglio, with a treatise on card playing attached to it. These cards, however, contained iconographical images of virtues and vices, or astrological personifications. They were thus classified as tarot cards, and were excluded from the *bando*.

("gambling will be accepted, so long as honor and reverence is shown to the holy feasts").⁵⁴² In this context they become a distraction, but perhaps in actuality, gambling with cards during festivals represented more of a resistance to the total discipline of the Catholic regime, or a tactic of carving out personal space against the papal and religious order. In the case of card-playing, the players were asked to come forward and declare their card decks so that they may be taxed. As in a Foucauldian world, the first step towards discipline and punishment is surveillance. Unfortunately, the taxes did not necessarily achieve their prohibitive function; more *bandi* were continually created to try to stop the proliferation of evasion of the card tax. Another interesting aspect to the tax is that it was destined for "charitable works," to help support the "Ospizio dei poveri mendicanti di San Sisto" erected by Sixtus V in 1587. It had been started by the Bolognese pope, the Buoncompagni Gregory XIII, to "togliere i mendicanti dalla citta" -- perhaps also to visually order the city by ridding it of its more obvious socially marginalized groups.⁵⁴³ Thus gambling, in a circuitous fashion, was prohibited to the public, yet then the profits from its taxes were utilized to "benefit" society and clean up the homeless from the streets.⁵⁴⁴

Games of a Courtly Origin

But were games always considered to be such a social evil? A more positive view of the history of games can be found in courtly literature, as a pastime for the bored members of the nobility and the rich classes. From mentions in period literature to behavioral treatises such as

⁵⁴² Ibid., 73.

⁵⁴³ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., 64. In a strategic countermove, the pope then decided to dedicate not only the tax money, but also a part of the penalties paid for transgressing these laws, to his charitable cause. A quarter of the fines were to go to the ospizio, with the rest divided among the lawyer, the accuser and the judge. These fines would also target the owners of houses or botteghe (storefronts/taverns) where illegal cards were played, as well as spacciatori, or vendors of the illegal cards, especially when another tactic of vendors became the invention of fake stamps.

Castiglione's *Cortegiano* and even more elaborate tracts written specifically on games, their pedigree is long and complex.⁵⁴⁵ The next few examples of Mitelli's games, such as the *Game of Professions*, the *Game of the Beloved with her Lovers*, and the *Game of Eyes and Mouths*, are directly descended from courtly prototypes.⁵⁴⁶ These games involved various activities from the miming of professions to discussions of the true meaning of love. As such, their roots in courtly treatises on game-playing merit further investigation. In the history of games before their prohibition in the early modern period, their most remote origins go back to antiquity, and due to this heritage, they were seen as a respectable pastime. Bakhtin states that games still preserved this philosophical meaning reminiscent of antiquity during the time of Rabelais in 1542.⁵⁴⁷

According to Peter Burke, associated with the courtly concept of leisure were the academies, such as the Intronati of Siena, whose partial function was to create absorbing games to avoid boredom.⁵⁴⁸ Out of these institutions would come the published parlor games of the Bargagli brothers of Siena, and the "Cento Giuochi" from their Bolognese counterpart, Innocentio Ringhieri. These institutions used leisure for intellectual games involving philosophy and knowledge. They also delineated the concept of *ozio onesto* vs. *ozio disonesto*.⁵⁴⁹ *Ozio onesto*, or honest leisure, was considered to consist of courtly parlor games associated with the academies, whereas *ozio disonesto*, or dishonest leisure, as described previously, was represented by dice-playing in the local taverns. Although these academies were mostly for elites, the flurry of how-to books published during the sixteenth century most probably pervaded other classes. This social crossing gives evidence for the lack of a "pure" popular culture; rather, these forms

⁵⁴⁵ Thomas F. Crane, *Italian Social Customs of the Sixteenth Century and their Influence on the Literatures of Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920), 263; see also Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1986). See below for other treatises: Bargagli and Ringhieri.

⁵⁴⁶ These games will be discussed fully below.

⁵⁴⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Role of Games in Rabelais," *Yale French Studies* 41 (1968): 129

⁵⁴⁸ Peter Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past and Present* 146 (1995): 142

⁵⁴⁹ Burke, 143.

are all interpenetrated and thus transformed.⁵⁵⁰ Leisure developed an emphasis on agency through the publication of treatises such as these. Certain examples of Mitelli's games (discussed below) thus serve as a reminder to the reader, that although these game prints are considered part of so-called popular print culture, they are also partially derived from courtly parlor games and as such are hybrid high/low forms of visual imagery that transcend simple categorization.

Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogo dei giuochi che nelle veghe sanesi si usino di fare* was published in Siena in 1572.⁵⁵¹ He divides games into games of wit and *ingegno*, games of jest, and games of pleasure. A master of revels is elected and must wear a laurel upon his head to signify his status, and a pestle (*mestola*) is used as a prop for the game. There is also a prescriptive section on the etiquette of playing these games. For example, the author clearly states that the *Game of Weights* is to be avoided, as it puts undue physical discomfort upon a player by piling heavy objects on the player's back. Other games to be avoided included games where religion is treated as sport, as well as the *Game of the Temple of Love*. Time and place are also considered, with serious games destined for the hours before the evening meal, and lighter games being prescribed for after dinner. The author includes advice to the players on manners, dress, disposition, and a specific admonition to always praise women. Poetic verses are suggested as a mode to create this praise. There is even a *Game of Proverbs* included in the work. Other games include the *Game of the Love*, in which the participants must answer philosophical questions regarding love, for example, "What would be the most appropriate gift to a lady love?"

Girolamo's brother also wrote a treatise on games. Scipione Bargagli's *I Trattenimenti di Scipion Bargagli; Dove da vaghe donne e da giovani huomini rappresentati sono honesti, e*

⁵⁵⁰ Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," in *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge, 1981), 228.

⁵⁵¹ Crane, 263.

dilettevol giuochi: narrate novelle; e cantate alcune amoroze canzonette was published in Venice in 1587, as he belonged to both the Venetian and Siense academies.⁵⁵² The scene for his work is the siege of Siena by Florence in 1554; it is modeled on Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in that the speakers in both tell various stories to avoid boredom during forced idleness.⁵⁵³ The games are similar to previously mentioned examples, including questions on the nature of love, as well as a *paragone* on which is superior, art or nature, the mind or the body? There is also a *Game of Devices*, a *Game of the Gardener*, and a pastoral play. Curiously, this particular group plays the *Game of the Temple of Love*, the very one that Scipione's brother Girolamo so disapproved of; perhaps Girolamo was the more pious of the two.

Innocentio Ringhieri, a member of the Academy of the *Ritrouvati*, published his *Cento giuochi liberali e d'ingegno* in Bologna in 1551.⁵⁵⁴ His book predates the Siense versions, but no mention of his work is made by the others; in fact the Siense volumes insist that these games were invented in Siena. However, if one were to take the dates as evidence, it could seem that some of these games may have been invented in Bologna. Ringhieri's *Cento Giuochi* was also translated into French, and he dedicated it to Catherine de' Medici of France. The work is introduced by a didactic letter specifically addressed to the ladies, followed by questions. It is divided into ten books with ten games in each, such as the *Game of Love* and the *Game of the Gods*. The *Game of Love* includes blindfolding a player who must guess who he or she is touched by. Upon failing, the blindfolded player must then answer questions such as "why is love blind?" If the player fails to answer the question, he or she must pay a forfeit. The second book contains encyclopedic games such as the *Game of Fountains and Rivers* and the *Game of Cities*. By the fifth book, the subject matter becomes more serious, such as the *Game of Life* and

⁵⁵² Ibid., 297.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 285.

the *Game of Death*; the fifth book also deals with themes such as madness, jealousy, chastity, and beauty. Other games include the *Game of the Philosopher* and the *Game of Poets*. An example of one of Ringhieri's games is the *Game of Wild Beasts*, where the company is divided and each is assigned an animal and a trait. When the name of the animal is called, the person must respond with its trait, and then to a question regarding, for example, the habits of the animal.⁵⁵⁵ This type of game falls into the category of educational games, through the teaching of scientific knowledge.

These parlor-game books usually contained no images but were based instead on riddles, stories, charades, and philosophical questions with the inclusion of token forfeits as the symbolic link to the aspect of gambling. Among most game prints of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in contrast, one can find similar subject matter translated into visual images. Appropriating courtly themes for gambling, the prints became the gambler's version of philosophical questions of love and beauty, a shared practice of "text, object, and act that grasps it," or game, illustration, and the act of playing.⁵⁵⁶ Two examples of Mitelli's games which most closely reveal their courtly origins regarding love and chivalry are the *Game of the Beloved with Her Lovers*, and the *Game of Eyes and Mouths*.

The *Game of the Beloved with Her Lovers* (Fig. 199) is one single vignette played with the dice. The lady representing the beloved beauty is at the center of the game and is the winning combination that takes all. Her various lovers are arranged in three rows of figures across the page but without being framed in squares. The figures represent stock types already seen in Mitelli's other engravings, such as the fool from his images of the land of Cockaigne. The subject of this game could easily be related to the various courtly parlor games surrounding the

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., 290.

⁵⁵⁶ Roger Chartier, "Texts, Prints, Readings," in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 161.

Game of Love, which came in many different formats, including questions regarding value judgments about what type of lover a lady would prefer: handsome, honest, brave, etc. The highest numbers are given to the knowledgeable and rich lover, whereas the poor lover and the foolish one neither take nor pay. Perhaps the hunchback is again a sign of good luck as his number allows the player to take four *quattrini*. This game seems to assert the pragmatic view that women always choose the lover with the most money. Other like-minded games include *Women and Their Affairs* (Fig. 200). The winning numbers in this game illustrate women attending to their domestic chores. The iconography of this game neatly places women in the moral pigeonhole of good homemaker and virtuous wife.

The *Game of Eyes and Mouths* (Fig. 201) is once again in broadsheet format with four rows of five squares, and played with three dice. This game brings to mind the prevalence in the sixteenth century of physiognomy treatises, which continued to be of interest in the seventeenth century although scholars were moving towards a more scientific system of classification. The top middle image is the winning combination, composed of two lovely eyes in an oval, which take all. This premise of the beautiful eyes also calls to mind the supremacy of sight and Domenico Bruni's verses regarding beauty.⁵⁵⁷ The eyes are seen as the supreme expression of a woman's beauty, with a beautiful mouth as second place. This game is not one of progression, and the numbers are not placed in order. Although as obviously as in some of Mitelli's other games, this example also contains moralistic messages encoded within its illustrations and text. In the last square to the right in the second row, the text indicates that a tight mouth is silent and will always win. This is another way of referring to one of Mitelli's proverbs, which states the importance of not always speaking, and of knowing when to be prudently silent, especially for

⁵⁵⁷ Jacobs, 84. Domenico Bruni wrote *Defese delle donne* (Milan, 1559), in which he mentions beautiful eyes as the ideal feature of feminine perfection.

women.⁵⁵⁸ The last illustration on the lower right also tells us that the ready eye guards itself against falling, a message that can easily be translated into Christian morality as not falling victim to sin, based on the sensuality of what the eye sees.

Vanity and Virtue: Mitelli's Moralistic Prints of Women in Proverb and Calendar Format

In addition to courtly manuals and parlor games, other sources for Mitelli's game imagery are local proverbs and didactic broadsheets, of which he created many himself. In this tradition, he translated the story of the fall of the meretrice or prostitute into the *lunario* format, a sort of moralizing calendar, which describes in detailed monthly installments the moral and physical disintegration of a young lady. The *lunario* is similar to the broadsheet and offered a convenient visual format for the telling of a multi-vignette story, with a clear temporal beginning and end. Mitelli also created many collections of proverbs that draw on centuries of old local sayings and folk wisdom, combined with his own image of Bologna and its customs. As can be expected in Paleotti's Bologna, women's virtue remains a key theme.

The *lunario* of the *Unhappy Life of the Meretrice* (Fig. 202) is a type of calendar with a different scene for each month. This image is akin to the broadsheet of the prostitute, which was a tradition already common in Venice and the North. However, Mitelli reinterprets it with a calendar, adding the important temporal aspect for a post-Tridentine sense of morality. The calendar expands time and shows how the prostitute's decline progresses over time, from one wrong decision to another, until it is too late to save her life, though perhaps still her soul, if she repents. The viewer is privy to the whole saga; he or she has the chance to meditate on the woman's fall from grace and to observe the point at which she might have saved herself, if she had looked to faith for help and had given up her sinful ways. In this example, one can witness

⁵⁵⁸ These proverbs will be discussed fully below, Figs. 205-206.

the slow decline from a fair young maiden at the beginning to the pawn of an old procuress as the young lady falls prey to her first suitor. Then the inevitable fight erupts between rival suitors and one ends up in jail, after which the wronged suitor slashes her face in anger. No longer able to attract the best suitor as protector, she goes down a miserable and unholy path and ends up in a hospital run by nuns for diseases such as syphilis, which is represented by the marks on her diseased body. This is a realistic image; the archives reveal that Bologna had many such Christian houses of reform created to save, if not their bodies, then what was more important, the lost women's souls. Mitelli's moralizing messages seem to have existed in other media as well; a fresco attributed to him of the *Conversion of the Meretrice of Todi by San Filippo* still exists in the Archiginnasio (Fig. 203).⁵⁵⁹ Unfortunately, it is not in a good state of preservation. Mitelli also illustrated the nun, the inverse of the *meretrice* as the example for women (Fig. 204). This image is a visual catalogue of all the orders of nuns in Bologna, in which the figures of pious women are slotted into a chart of virtue.

Two images can represent Mitelli's extensive collection of prints on proverbs regarding images of women. Like many others in his collections, these examples continue the city's obsession with women's lost virtue. In Figure 205, the proverb reads "*le donne spesse volte hanno lunga la veste e corte l'intelletto*" ("women often have long dresses and short intellects"). In this surreal example, a woman has had the top of her head removed, a symbolically lobotomized version of female gender. These proverbs are a type of *memento mori*, an established convention in seventeenth-century visual imagery, into which Mitelli inserts himself. Once again, the extra verses at the bottom of the image reinforce the negative stereotype of women:

⁵⁵⁹ Franca Varignana, ed., *Le collezioni d'arte della Cassa di risparmio in Bologna: le incisioni* (Bologna: Alfa, 1978), 69.

Femina o tu che vuoi de saggia il vanto
Non offetar ne gli ornamenti il fasto
Poco senno tal hor scopre un gran manto.

Woman, O you who want of wisdom to brag,
Do not put your faith in ornaments, for
Little wisdom is sometimes unmasked by a great cloak.

The second print example (Fig. 206) contains the image of woman as the embodiment of vanity and pride: “*donna superba.*” Here is the allegorical image of woman as pride itself. The artist has included the peacock as a symbolic parody of the woman as she preens in front of the mirror in fancy costume. The mirror is a constant reminder of *vanitas* and the uselessness of attachment to temporal beauty as opposed to faith. Once again the verses that accompany the image reinforce the moralistic message, where Death itself responds to the woman’s vanity:

Donna Superba

Quanto bella son io! Quanti consuma
Per me l’amor l’inestinguibil foco!
M’incensano i sospiri in ogni loco,
Onde non e stupor, se la mi fuma

Morte

Vana: lo specchio tuo frangi che tanto
Nel consigliarti a la ragion prevale,
Meglio potrai di tua bellezza il frale
Espresso contemplar nel vetro infranto⁵⁶⁰

Prideful Woman

How beautiful I am! How much
Does love’s inextinguishable fire burn for me!
I am filled with sighs in every locale,
Therefore, be not surprised, if there is smoke there

Death

Vain one: break your mirror,
In order that reason may prevail,
In counseling you,
For better will you be able to contemplate
Your beauty, its frail expression,

⁵⁶⁰ Author’s own translation.

In a broken mirror

Finally, the topos of the world upside down is also illustrated in terms of gender, as in Mitelli's "*Triste è quella casa dove la gallina canta e il gallo tace*" (Fig. 207).⁵⁶¹ This image is a clear reversal of gender roles, a dangerous thing (as the verses below it emphasize), where the woman "wears the pants," so to speak. These games display the artist's unique grasp of the world around him, in visual terms.

Mitelli and the *Imaginaire* of Bologna in the Seventeenth Century

In addition to the intersection with religious prohibition and courtly origins, some of Mitelli's games are very site-specific and local in nature, because he weaves in the cultural and historical fabric of the city.⁵⁶² By additionally drawing on the popular literature of the day, including local poets of the piazza such as Giulio Cesare Croce, the artist truly maps the city's intellectual history in visual game form.⁵⁶³ This section will examine two other games, including the *Game of Professions: for whom they go well and for whom they go badly* (Fig. 209), which is an almost autobiographical account of Bologna's professions of the day, with the artist's own profession added and rather critically commented upon. The third example, *The New Game of the Turk, the German and the Venetian* (Fig. 210), shows contemporary politics as another source of inspiration for Mitelli. In this game, the Turk, being the infidel, always loses of course, as the church would wish.

A key concept in the *imaginaire* of early modern Bologna is the *World Upside Down*, or land of the Cuccagna, where all is not as it should be. *The Game of the Land of Cockaigne*,

⁵⁶¹ "Sad is that home where the chicken crows and the cock is silent," from *I proverbi figurati*; Varignana, 268.

⁵⁶² Chartier, "Texts, Prints, Readings," 169.

⁵⁶³ Giuseppe Cocchiara, *Il paese della cuccagnana e altri studi di folklore* (Turin: Editore Borghieri, 1980), 159.

where one never loses but always earns (Fig. 208) is part of the iconography of the world upside down, in which one does not work, but nonetheless has everything one needs.⁵⁶⁴ This theme was already suggested in the *Game of Husbands and Wives* with their cross-dressing. This particular example creates an ingeniously site-specific game. The central figure is the winning combination set into a type of oval which seems to imply a portrait painting. This oval is set on a pedestal within which the rules of the game are written. Each figure is labeled with the name of a food and the city of which it is representative. In these images Mitelli has represented a vast selection of figure types of various classes (as indicated by costume), including both male and female figures, a panorama of humanity. Their gestures are emphatic, as each figure either points to his or her food, or is in the process of eating or drinking it.

The translation of the theme of Cockaigne into a game of regional foods seems to be a creation of Mitelli's, where the local flavor as the winning combination represents a bit of *campanilismo*, or rooting for your own town, regarding Bologna's celebrated local sausage, mortadella. This would obviously be a theme of central importance to Mitelli's audience. Looking closely at the print, one notices that staple foods such as bread and fish are represented by members of the lower classes, whereas a liquor from Torino is represented by the third figure in the top row, who is directed to only sniff his liquor. Perhaps this high-class fop is not in need of the sustenance of hearty food, but desires only the appearance of wealth, such as fancy liquor, to correspond with his fancy clothing. In a certain fashion this game is still related to the encyclopedic types of parlor games, yet the theme and variety of illustrations point to a deeper meaning. It also seems that the figure holding the bread (second figure in the bottom row) is a bit larger in size than the others, perhaps a hint to the primacy of that staple food. The first figure

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 159. The trope of the world upside down also existed in Northern prints of the period, as well as painting. See Kunzle.

also contains a comment that the food he carries is expensive for him. Perhaps, for those who could not afford these foods in reality, the game provided a means for them to appropriate them visually, thus offering some temporary respite from poverty.

The *Game of Professions* (Fig. 209) is partly an autobiographical statement by Mitelli. The subject matter for this game also exists in courtly parlor games, such as the *Game of Trades*, where one is asked to mime a particular trade. This game is a combination of lower-ranking trades with high-ranking skilled professions, including the artist's own profession in the final square on the lower right. The format is again his standard rectangular broad sheet with four rows, each with five squares. The winning combination is held by the first square of musicians and players. The illustrations are lively and active, including several figures displaying the actions of the profession. Graphically, this has a very different effect when compared to the iconic images of the trades in Brambilla's game of *Pela il chiu* (Fig. 196). The artist has contrived to create a more engaging scene for each profession.

What is perhaps more interesting, and very site-specific, is that in addition to labeling the profession above each illustration, the artist has included a phrase in local Bolognese dialect below the image that comments on how economically successful that particular profession is. The integration of this text would also serve to help the players memorize the numerical combinations, so as to eventually permit playing even without Mitelli's sheet. Textuality, including visual text, and orality are intimately connected here; each reinforces the other.⁵⁶⁵ Each player can thus appropriate the "text" for himself. It seems that to Mitelli, musicians were earning the most, whereas painters, sculptors, and engravers were earning the least, perhaps a tantalizing autobiographical comment on the plight of the artist himself. Further research would be required to substantiate this, since Mitelli was extremely prolific and thus may have had a

⁵⁶⁵ Chartier, "Texts, Prints, Readings," 159, 174.

good income.⁵⁶⁶ Despite the prominence of women as artists in Mitelli's milieu, there is no mention in these games of women artists and their plight or successes.

The New Game of the Turk, the German and the Venetian (Fig. 210) is a political satire composed of a single vignette and is played with two dice. It is described as a new game, thus implying improvisation on the artist's part. Caricatures of Turks were quite common, a result of the Catholic Church's war against the infidels. When portrayed in games, the Turk was always the loser, in a sort of sympathetic magic, which the Church wished to believe was always the case, even if at times this was not so. In this game in particular, the text at the top announces the intentions of the German and the Venetian to skin the Turk as much as possible and divide the winnings, as well as to take back from him what he has usurped (referring to the Ottoman Empire's attempts to take over Christian lands, which were then reconquered by the church). The combinations are listed at the bottom, with the German and Venetian as having the best numbers and the Turk representing the loser. The artist made use of the tablecloth as a place for displaying the rules of the game. He also paid particular attention to physiognomic types and gestures as seen in the Turk's despairing gesture of loss, as compared to the aggressive Venetian and finely-clothed German.

Gambling for Virtue and the Hand of Piety

Finally, one of the tantalizing questions that remain for further research concerns the audience for Mitelli's games. There is very little evidence of who the readers might have been, apart from any visual clues in the illustrations themselves. One notes a variety of physiognomic types, ages, and classes of male and female characters, as well as various themes both high and

⁵⁶⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Academies of Art* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), 69. Until 1598, the painters in Bologna still belonged to the calico guild, since calico was associated with canvas.

low, implying a vast and diverse audience, but most likely male and Catholic, as it would have been unheard of to find women gambling in public taverns. The games would most probably have been played in local taverns, since taverns are depicted in some of the games themselves and were normally frequented by a certain class of males.⁵⁶⁷ The prints were portable and inexpensive, and thus they could be widely circulated. These hybrids also raise questions of authorship, as in Stallybrass and White's discussion of the marketplace as an intersection of high and low, center and periphery.⁵⁶⁸ It is in this light that Mitelli's games should be seen. If one takes them as text, they are an intersection of high and low, sacred and profane, an example of the constant re-surfacing of that which is suppressed, and a recycling of appropriated themes in original ways that each reader/player can also make his own.

Although Bakhtin states that before Rabelais (apart from antiquity), games were essentially linked to the popular marketplace aspect of feasts, he finds that their more "noble" aspects survived in important episodes from literature, such as *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. For example, the philosopher's riddle (related to the enigmatic sphinx) and the dice casting (as used to settle judicial disputes) are seen as noble remnants of practices from antiquity that often dealt with prophecy.⁵⁶⁹ Play and prophecy are thus intimately connected here, with games often seen as a condensed form of life's historic process, and according to Bakhtin, games also freed the players from the bounds of everyday life, liberating them from the laws of nature.⁵⁷⁰ Seen in this light, it is obvious why the Catholic Church would reject them. However, I would argue that this "noble" aspect also survives in the courtly origins of Mitelli's didactic hybrid games,

⁵⁶⁷ For more on the social discourse of gambling, see Peter Burke and Thomas Crane. Some of these examples may include images of women gambling, but the implication is usually that they are of dubious moral character. This opinion is borne out by the rest of the scene, where the woman normally comes to a bad end.

⁵⁶⁸ Peter Stallybrass and Allison White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 27.

⁵⁶⁹ Bakhtin, "The Role of Games in Rabelais," 125.

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

transformed by their encounter with religion and daily life. The intervention of the church is partly responsible for Mitelli's hybrid form. By prohibiting gambling, it thus became the abject that the church desired to flush out of society, but which constantly returned (albeit transformed) in the form of Mitelli's prints. Gambling was the socially peripheral which then became symbolically central, especially to the Church.⁵⁷¹

As we have seen, Mitelli created illustrations for playing with dice that were didactically moralistic, yet were arrived at through gambling. His *Game of Truth* clearly illustrates its Catholic moral by associating the winning number with the ideal Christian family. Not surprisingly, due to the city's reputation as a Counter-Reformation stronghold and to Paleotti's politics, the struggle for women's virtue was one of the most prominent themes in these virtuous vices. Mitelli's other games, such as the *Land of Cockaigne*, are tied to his interests in naturalism and caricature, while still others, such as the *Game of Professions*, are closer to courtly parlor games. However, although some of the themes, such as in the *Game of the Lovers*, are similar to those of Bargagli and Ringhieri, the majority of Mitelli's games are involved in social commentary while playing dice, transcending their progenitor genre of courtly games. Thus, despite *bandi* constantly prohibiting the playing of dice games, the artist's ironic solution is to create games that cross boundaries and end up in the interstices, a hybrid place, a site of resistance which allows the artist to express the world of Bologna through his eyes, while responding to the didactic demands of the church. In these images, print became practice, an ambiguous site of both compliance with and resistance to the church's disciplinary strategy, with Mitelli's games as its tactics.⁵⁷² Along with some of the city's talented women artists such as Elisabetta Sirani, whose paintings he copied, and Veronica Fontana, with whom he collaborated

⁵⁷¹ Stallybrass and White, 20.

⁵⁷² De Certeau, 35.

on the *Museo Cospiano*, that microcosm of God's *theatrum mundi*, Mitelli worked to promote the values of the Catholic church, even when creating visual imagery destined for the dice.

Several concluding points can bring this chapter to a close. In examining the work of Veronica Fontana alongside that of other students and colleagues of Elisabetta Sirani, a picture emerges of the versatility of the female artist in seventeenth-century Bologna when one considers the many different arenas for which Fontana produced her illustrations. From Jesuit tracts to courtly manuals and scientific collections, her scientifically accurate and *devoto* style was in great demand, as were her skills in creating elegant emblems for the court of Parma. Both sets of skills can be said to descend from the work of the sixteenth-century artist Lavinia Fontana, as discussed in chapter two, regarding scientific naturalism and a Flemish attention to details. Not to leave male artists totally out of the picture, so to speak, evidence of the engraving work of Sirani's male students also reinforces these three areas of patronage: courtly, religious, and scientific. Finally, the work of Fontana's colleague Mitelli expands the discourse of the intellectual history of the city to include motifs from popular prints and proverbs, such as the world upside down. In the process, Mitelli's prints speak to both high and low audiences and employ a sense of local Bolognese naturalism to persuade the viewer of their message. The message, however, was often tied to themes of women's virtue, another effect of Paleotti's sixteenth-century reforms in the continuation of the Counter-Reformation's visual campaign in Bologna.

The thread that combines visual imagery with women, religion, and science runs deeply through the Bologna of the late sixteenth and into the seventeenth century, creating a unique environment in which women artists flourished in all media and genres, alongside their male colleagues. Thus one can now begin to map women's participation in sites where church reform,

naturalism, artistic display, and communal devotion all combine to weave a visual culture of the sacred. In Counter-Reformation Bologna, thanks to Paleotti's zealous reform, the *maniera devota* was alive and well, and the *mano donnesca* had a great "hand" in its creation.

Conclusion

Mapping the Feminine onto the Visual Culture of the Counter-Reformation

The development of a *maniera devota* in Bologna was inextricably tied to Cardinal Paleotti and his quest for visual reform in the wake of Trent. In his advice to artists, Paleotti managed to combine a preference for Christian humanism with the austere piety demanded by the Counter-Reformation, as evidenced in the visual production of his city. In doing so, he inspired pious modes of visual culture that would continue long into the seventeenth century. He accomplished this by combining science and history with religion, while engaging in discourses on naturalism and piety. Most importantly for this research, he appreciated the virtue and talent of the *mano donnesca* enough to employ women in his campaign. Thus Bologna became a city in which women's participation in visual imagery flourished throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries across the media of painting, prints, and textiles, creating a true *Felsina pittrice*.

Paleotti was a ground-breaking cleric who maintained a close link between science and religion despite, or perhaps, ironically, because of the Counter-Reformation climate. In such a climate he could not afford to ignore any knowledge that might have been advantageous in the church's campaign for visual reform. In the end, the scientific background of the university's scholars proved to be just that: beneficial, if not essential to creating the *maniera devota* required by Trent. Aldrovandi's botanical collections later became models of a nature to be emulated by the city's artists in order to avoid the mannerist excesses then fashionable; this role continued into the seventeenth century with the collection of Cospi's *wunderkammer*.

This sense of naturalism was already inherent in both the Bolognese and Lombard schools, beginning with Leonardo and continuing on with Caravaggio and the Carracci. However, Paleotti's requirements were quite precise: naturalism but with decorum. Decorum was a dictate that an artist such as Caravaggio had no wish to be constrained by. Yet in Bologna, this Lombard naturalism was combined with the influence of Northern examples such as Dürer and Memling, known for their devout style, and the city in turn produced the early local example of this style par excellence, Francesco Francia. In addition, the example of, and interest in botanical illustration had exposed the city's artists to an analytical approach, as shown in examples such as Lavinia Fontana's *Hairy Girl*. Some artists in the city lost no time in applying this style to religious painting, as we have seen in Fontana's *St. Francis*.

Paleotti also recognized the importance of using history to authenticate the church, for example, by validating and verifying the lives of the saints through the use of their relics and hagiography. By combining images with the tangible evidence that relics provided of the existence and history of early Christianity, he inspired spiritually communicative modes of painting in the artists of his day, especially Lavinia Fontana. These modes corresponded to liturgical sermons and to Paleotti's Tridentine dictates of decorum. Many of Fontana's paintings, as well as those of her seventeenth-century successors, participated in these modes, such as the iconic power of her *Madonna with the Sleeping Child* for the Escorial and the clarity of her sacred narratives, as in the *Noli Me Tangere*.

Paleotti felt so strongly about visual reform that he wrote the ultimate guide for artists in a post-Tridentine world, his *Discorso sopra gli imagini sacre e profane*. Although the work has been mentioned by many scholars, outside of Bologna few have taken the time to read it thoroughly and to examine whether or not the artists of Paleotti's city put his rules into practice;

and none have attempted to draw links between many of the lesser-known women artists and the *Discorso*. By examining many of Fontana's religious paintings, this study has made clear that his rules were observed by one of the most successful Bolognese artists of her time, male or female. Lavinia Fontana took Flemish painting, Northern prints, Raphael, and Francesco Francia as her models, in addition to and at times in contrast to her father's more Mannerist work. Despite any personal frustrations regarding its success, Paleotti's *Discorso* remains a landmark document of Tridentine reform. This document is unique in that it was addressed to artists as well as others and, from the evidence examined here, it appears that the artists were listening, at least in Bologna.

Just as Paleotti had realized the worth of scientific and historical study to his campaign, so he was discriminating enough to put the city's talented women to work for the same cause. This pattern is evident in his employment of Fontana as the creator of the altarpiece of the *Assumption* for his own chapel. Furthermore, the bishop encouraged not only women artists, but women in general, to be a part of the church's program. The work produced in the *conservatori* has demonstrated that the legacy of the *mani devote* flowed across the generations and involved various media, some of which will still require more study. The religious paintings by these women artists for the *conservatori*, such as Fontana's *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, became models for the girls themselves and for the handiwork they created in these institutions. This work was strictly tied to ideas of women's virtue and piety that began in the early sixteenth century with the founding of the Opere Poveri Vergognosi and the later Putte di Santa Marta, and continued on into the late seventeenth century and beyond. Despite being an important source of visual culture, these embroideries have been largely ignored by modern art historians. However, the embroideries speak volumes about the artistic legacy between women artists of all types and

the search for women's virtue, continuing the link between women and the iconic. Women had been the guardians of the icon tradition from early Christianity and Byzantine times, throughout the iconoclastic clashes. Perhaps this connection is something that Paleotti, with his special interest in Early Christian relics, was more aware of than other reformers of the period. These gendered hands could create a devout style with both the convincing clarity of a naturalistic tradition, and the power of an icon to move the faithful: *delectare, muovere, docere*. The extant paintings from the *conservatori* are proof that these institutions developed site-specific iconography, appropriate for the needs of their female audience. For example, there began to appear versions of St. Nicholas that emphasized images of the three gold balls to be used as a dowry to save the young girls from prostitution. In addition, the *Madonna del cucito* symbolized the pious task of embroidery undertaken by all the girls in these reform houses; even the Virgin herself is shown as a role model engaged in this task. Eventually, the very act of embroidery became a way of promoting spiritual meditation and ecstasy, invoking echoes of the *devotio moderna*.

In addition to artists such as Fontana and Sirani, who have left quite a bit of extant work, are the many other women artists of the *Felsina pittrice* named by Crespi, Malvasia and others. For the first time, this study has attempted to map a stylistic genesis of modes between the lesser-known female artists. Their paintings all carry distinct marks of a *maniera devota*, in the tradition of Paleotti's reforms. Examples such as the *Birth of the Virgin* by Pinelli, a direct descendant of Lavinia Fontana's version, and the many decorous images of Mary Magdalene and the iconic *Immaculate Conception* all show a common preoccupation with women's virtue and the *devoto* far into the seventeenth century. The Marian ideal is the exemplum of women's virtue, often extended to more unorthodox historical female role models such as Portia; women

artists' work also includes examples of the more ambiguous female characters or anti-heroines, Cleopatra and Circe. Often the women artists of Bologna even transformed themselves into *la pittura*, thus visually conflating the virtues of the allegory with the devout *mano donnesca*, as in the example of Ginevra Cantofoli's allegorical *Self-Portrait*.

As shown by the embroidery examples from the *conservatori*, collaboration between these women continued as several of them created religious works for some of the same sites of display. For example, several women created paintings for the church of Santa Maria di Galliera, and most of the artists participated in the category of miracle painting in the devout style. One of Sirani's students in particular, Angela Teresa Muratori, cut across many lines of artistic media. Her painting of *The Appearance of the Madonna and Child to St. Peter* invoked a theme similar to virtual pilgrimage, in which spiritual meditation resulted in direct and personal contact with the divine (in this case in the form of an apparition where the holy figure comes to the viewer's abode or the viewer is transported to the heavenly realm), but Muratori also wrote sacred music or oratories for the same church of Santa Maria.

Because of its great importance to the campaign for visual reform, the production of prints, both as book illustration and popular prints, was the pulse of devotional piety and practices. By the sixteenth century, Bologna was a great printing center, thanks to the University scholars and Paleotti's encouragement. As one of Sirani's students and colleagues, Veronica Fontana's work ran toward both the sacred and profane. The work of this female engraver for the *Museo Cospiano* demonstrates that science continued to be linked to religion, long into the seventeenth century. The result of this collaboration is a coming together of the two terms, *miracolo* and *meraviglia*. A miracle, in the religious sense, is something to wonder at, something that defies belief, and a wonder (as from the *wunderkammer* collections this text has examined)

is one of the miracles of God's creation. The wonders of God's universe were catalogued and displayed as proof of their existence, from the time of Aldrovandi in the sixteenth century, and Paleotti wanted his *artefice cristiano* to narrate and illustrate the miracles of the Catholic faith as proof of God's work on earth.

These trends continued in the work of the male colleagues of these women artists, such as Giuseppe Maria Mitelli, who also worked on the *Museo*, but was most prolific with his popular game prints. Examples such as the *Game of Truth* or the *Lunario of the Meretrice* were still didactically concerned with women's honor and virtue. Although the zenith of the Counter-Reformation was in the sixteenth century, by the end of the seventeenth the Bolognese fusion of women with religion and virtue continued in the city's leisure activities, as seen in game prints and festivals. Mitelli's work also demonstrates continued connections between male artists and the women artists of the city, as his engraved copy of Sirani's *Vision of St. Anthony* attests. In addition, Mitelli's proverbs represent the full spectrum of the Bolognese *imaginaire*, covering all topics with a Counter-Reformation sense of morality and a good dose of irony. Although there is room for expansion, what this study has outlined about Sirani's school has opened up a dialogue on the intricate relationship between these women artists, their male colleagues, and their work in the second city of the Papal States.

To enrich and deepen the scenario presented here, more research could be done along several lines. For example, more attention is needed in the area of decorative arts such as textiles since, as has been demonstrated, they are important sites of transference between various media and generations of artists. Finally, more paintings by these women artists may one day be found, and such discoveries would create a more complete picture of attributions, stylistic influence, and iconography. Even so, it is clear now that the ties that bind women and the sacred together in

Bologna interweave many different strands such as science, virtue, popular piety, and even music.

With so much disparate information available piecemeal from scholars working on single aspects of the total tapestry of visual imagery, women, and religion in Bologna during the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth century, a consolidation of the “bigger picture” was both possible and needed. The concepts elaborated in the previous chapters are all individual strands, yet they are intrinsically related to one another, and together they help answer the question with which this work began, regarding the uniquely high number of active women artists in the city: Why Bologna? The answer is somewhat paradoxical. Although the Counter-Reformation is usually associated with repression, in Bologna it produced, at least in terms of women’s creative output for the church, a *maniera devota* that was shaped by the *mani donnesche* of its female artists, as well as being a crucial factor in these artists’ own stylistic formation and the visual presentation of the city: the *Felsina pittrice*.

Appendix 1

Including Elisabetta Sirani, there were apparently 28 female artists working in Bologna between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, according to **Luigi Crespi's** *Notizie*, the 1769 version of the *Felsina Pittrice*.¹ A total of 15 of these women were named by three other sources: **Carlo Cesare Malvasia's** *Felsina Pittrice* in 1678, **Pier Paolo Masini's** *Bologna Perlustrata* in 1666 and 1690, and **Marcello Oretti's** *Notizie dei Professori* in 1760-80 (see bibliography for full reference).² Of these 15 women, 9 of them have identifiable paintings extant, to this researcher's knowledge at this time, and this study has focused on only the first 6, as the other 3 have so little extant work. Numbers 16-26 are still mostly names without extant works attached, and 27 and 28 are eighteenth-century artists with extant work.

- 1.) **Antonia Pinelli (Bertusio)** (active 1620's, died 1644)
- 2.) **Ginevra Cantofoli** (1618-1672)
- 3.) **Anna Teresa Muratori** (1662-1708)
- 4.) **Barbara Sirani** (1641-1692)
- 5.) **Anna Maria Sirani** (1645-1715)
- 6.) **Veronica Fontana** (1651-1694)
- 7.) **Lucrezia Scarfaglia** – *Self Portrait Painting the Madonna and Child* extant. Active 1670's.
- 8.) **Maria Galli Bibbiena** – (1656-1749) - studied with Cignani and Franceschini, altarpiece of the *Santissima Trinita with Saints* extant in Fossombrone.
- 9.) **Elena Maria Panzacchi (Landi)** – (1658 – 1737) - 3 portraits remaining of the Boschi family.
- 10.) **Veronica Franchi**
- 11.) **Teresa Coriolani**
- 12.) **Caterina Mongardi**
- 13.) **Camilla Lauteri**
- 14.) **Lucrezia Bianchi**
- 15.) **Vincenza Fabri**

¹ If we exclude one foreigner, Angiola Agnese Pakman.

² Oretti adds 5 other names not found in Crespi : Claudia Felice Missiroli, Teresa Claudia Missiroli, Angela Granata, Ippolita Posent and Paola Casanova, for a total of 33. These women artists remain mostly names without traceable works, as of the time of this study, to my knowledge.

- 16.) **Giulia Canuti Bonaveri**
- 17.) **Caterina Canossa**
- 18.) **Angiola Cavazza Cantelli**
- 19.) **Maria Caterina Lucatelli**
- 20.) **Erisilia Creti**
- 21.) **Bianca Giovannini**
- 22.) **Cassia pittrice**
- 23.) **Francesca Fantoni**
- 24.) **Anna Teresa Messieri**
- 25.) **Eleonora Monti**
- 26.) **Clarice Vasini** – eighteenth century.
- 27.) **Lucia Casalini Torelli** – (1677-1762) of whom there are several surviving works, but she is much later than the time frame of this study, and is thus mentioned only in passing.
- 28.) **Anna Manzolini Morandi** – created anatomical sculptures in wax and whose work does survive, but is also more of an eighteenth-century artist.

Appendix 2:

Letter from Julius II, July 18, 1511 regarding the statutes of the Opera dei Poveri Vergognosi.

The Putte di Santa Marta were joined to the Opera by 1554 and their statutes are found in the pages following Julius II's letter (28-69) in the Libro Bianco, but are not reproduced here due to space restrictions.

nesso Statuti Penitentiali per l'Anima sua, et quando el
Corpo sano entrato alla sepultura debbiano tuorli Compagni
accompagnar el corpo per huius uerghino denordella Chiesa
dove sarò portato el corpo, et che si levano adiano a por
tare quatro doggià uno per ciascuno con lo suo lappo l'eso
indro uero flumè trache in spà della terra, e spàcio a
una delle huomini de dicto Compagnia, et non di fuori.

Cap XVII. ¶ Dobbio della vita. ¶

V. hmo. v. exhortano tutti li Compagni, e ciascuno, che se
giaccio serua non sia obliato ne tenere se stesso in ogni
qualche cosa menualmente tanto quanto parerà a sua
Consciencia, accio non solo parca, uita, et opera, aiutano
etia con qualche elemo. sia qui menoria, e parca a Dio, e
che el Dio qui era sempre uno, exhorto li Compagni ad esser
sempre a dicto Compagnia, e di exhortari nullo cosa pulso
o quant'alt da iudici e da Compagni scandalesi, e da zochi, e
dalle, e che no s'horino manerli buona fama per se, e per
lo Compagnia, e laude dell' Obnegatione Dio. Amen.

Giulio Lapa II

Alli diletti Figlii Saluo, et apostolica Benediz

La Bona di diuisione sincera, quale uoi mostrate di portate
a noi, et alla Chiesa Romana, merito deprimone, che quan
to potiamo nel Sig. accenniamo fauoreuolmente in modo par
ticulare a quei de fideli, mediano i quali popo prouidera alla
Salute dell'Anima.

Laeste profeta egone a noi, come d'oltri Condini Nobili Bologna
se, prouidamene confiderando essere nullo nostra Casa di Bologna
m'infirmita Condini anco Nobili pure Bolognesi grauari in
famiglia, e l'esseri a tal Condina, che non genuano restenar
li loro Figlioli, e figliuole, e quelle, e questi Manerare, et che si
uengnanano di andar Mendicando, come anchora loro misfor
bita, e honore Animo, lo quale haueuano bisogno dell' elemo.
de fedeli, e diuisione, et infirmita una Compagnia ad cuore
de il Nostro, et a tale di Dio, sotto dicto nominati Statuti, et Or
nazioni, non conueni ad Sogni Canonici, per andar pariterlar
mentre per la dicta Casa, e de lei Chiesa chiedendo elemo, per
li honori de tal Compagnia, e distribuidolo fra medemi, e

e ancora concedendo loro che le proprie spoglie, e donari. Facete
 pertanto supplicare humilmente, cioè in supplex genibus
 la forza, e vigore della Confermazione Apostolica alle predette
 legazioni, e Institutioni per più stabile sussistenza loro, e pro-
 cedete opportunamente con Apostolica (autorità) alle usque prelati-
 on. Noi pigliati ad una tal supplica, con autorità Apostolica col te-
 nore delle presenti, approviamo, e confermiamo le Divisioni,
 e Institutioni predette, e tutte, e ognuna delle cose contenute nell
 Instrumento sopra ciò fatto, per quanto sono concernenti alle mae-
 stord Institutioni, e Divisioni, e supiamo a tutti, e ciascuno
 de' vescovi, e alcuni per consuevano in episcopio incurrere. E così
 è mandati di una tale Compravincio, che saranno per sempre, e
 ancora si altri vecchi Christiani, che nel tempo della Quaresima fa-
 ranno a noi, per elemosine, o uero usfireranno il luogo di simile Com-
 pagnia da legarsi da noi, e recitaranno il Paternoster, et oratio
 Maria, conseguire tutte, e ciascuno delle Indulgenze, e Remissioni
 de peccati, che conseguivano, e usfirano, e usfirano le Chiese
 de loro, e fuori di loro a tempi delle Stagioni de purgare.
 Come ancora concediamo a noi, e alle Anzelle, che per sempre
 saranno in detta Compagnia, che possino, et ogni uno de' suoi possino
 eleggere per suo Confessore uno Dono, o uno Presbitero, o di quali usque
 Preb.

Oratio Episcopi, di quale morore uenero, adus diligentemend
 la usque Confessione, e impostati una saluata Dispensa, et quod
 un' uocati seponari alto Sede Apostolica, eccitati i delitti
 de offesa della libertà Ecclesiastica, di Curia, Rebellioni, o conti-
 nua contra la persona, e Stato del Romano Pontefice, o uero con-
 tra Apostolica, e Institutioni de' beati, e uero Apostoliche, et in-
 iustione, sacchiamiento, occupazione, e destructione delle Chie-
 se, e Mani, murtura, o immediatamente offesi alla Sede
 Apostolica, de' offesi Pontefice conuo del Vesouo, o altro Prebitero
 Archidiacono, de' destructione de' causi, alla Curia Romana, e
 de' delazione de' crimini, et altro cose prohibita, et altri della
 Infeseli, una ueltra solo in uita, e negli altri quonuo ueltra
 sarai bisogno. Come anche possino commutari qual si sia Voto
 in altro genere de' Voti, eccitati per i quelli della tra Religio-
 nationi, de' Gerusalemme, de' Roma, et del Giacomo di Compou-
 nita, et altri de' Castina, e Religioni. Et qual Confessione, che
 uoi giudicherete, o ciascuno de' uoi giudicherai donque il leg-
 gero, possino con autorità Apostolica una ueltra in uita, e nel
 punto della ueltra morte concedere la piena Remissioni de
 tutti i uostri peccati, de' quali ui confessoro con contrizione
 di cuore, purchè possino uero nulla simonia della Sede, e

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