

Lorenzo Costa's 'Triumphs' in the Bentivoglio Chapel. The Journey of the Soul and Artistic
Invention in Renaissance Bologna

Gloria de Liberali

A dissertation

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2021

Reading Committee:

Stuart Lingo, Chair

Estelle Lingo

Sonal Khullar

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

School of Art + Art History + Design, Division of Art History

©Copyright 2021
Gloria de Liberali

University of Washington

Abstract

Lorenzo Costa's 'Triumphs' in the Bentivoglio Chapel.
The Journey of the Soul and Artistic Invention in Renaissance Bologna.

Gloria de Liberali

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Stuart Lingo

Division of Art History

This dissertation examines the pictorial decoration of the Bentivoglio chapel in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore, a space under the patronage of the de-facto ruling family of Bologna in fifteenth-century Italy. Specifically, my research offers the first, detailed analysis of two previously overlooked, albeit striking pictures, the so-called *Triumph of Fame* and *Triumph of Death*. These two paintings, realized by the Ferrarese artist Lorenzo Costa in 1490, draw their subject matter from the homonymous work by Italian poet Petrarch (*Triumphs*, or the *Triumphs*), and feature triumphal chariots, allegorical personifications, celestial visions, ancient characters, and portraits of Bentivoglio family members past and present. By conflating Christian and biblical iconographies with imagery drawn from vernacular poetry, classical mythology, history, and moral philosophy, these images disrupt our expectations about chapel decoration in Quattrocento Italy and resist traditional categories of artistic genres. Through a combination of close visual and textual analysis and the study of art criticism and theory, of the history of literature, and of the reception of the classical and medieval traditions, this dissertation situates Costa's *Triumphs* in the lively cultural milieu of fifteenth-century Bologna, at the intersection of seignorial court, university, and artistic practice.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1 “An invasion of grasshoppers.” Space and Form of the <i>Triumphs</i> in the Bentivoglio chapel	7
2 “Under graceful and wondrous poetic veil.” Petrarch’s <i>Triumphs</i> and the Journey of the Soul in the Bentivoglio Chapel	30
3 Dante’s <i>Comedy</i> in the Bentivoglio Chapel	62
4 Under Clio’s Gaze. Fame, Fortune, and History in the Bentivoglio Chapel-<i>Studiolo</i>	87
5 Creation and Invention. Picturing Genesis in the Bentivoglio <i>Triumphs</i> and the God-like Power of the Renaissance Artist	113
Conclusions	140
Appendix I	149
Appendix II	150
Appendix III	151
Appendix IV	154
Bibliography	158
Illustrations	169

Introduction

“The left wall of the chapel is occupied by two large canvases, where in four compartments Lorenzo Costa painted a poem. Sublime, if we discerned it correctly, was the subject matter which he treated: humankind.”¹ With these words, the nineteenth-century Bolognese scholar Giovanni Gozzadini, who dedicated his life to the study of local history, archeology, and politics, eloquently captured the literary nature and interpretive complexity of the so-called *Triumph of Fame* and *Triumph of Death* (figs. 1-2). These two striking canvases were completed in 1490 by the painter Lorenzo Costa for the princely chapel of the ruler of Bologna Giovanni II Bentivoglio in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore (Bologna, Italy). In these images, portraits of members of the Bentivoglio house can be seen parading around two triumphal chariots among allegorical personifications and heroes from antiquity. The paintings’ subject matter is inspired by the *Triumphs* (the *Triumphs*), a celebrated fourteenth-century poem by Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), while the backgrounds host scenes from the imaginary journey in the underworld as described by Trecento poet Dante Alighieri in the *Divine Comedy*, and the skies are filled with historical narratives and celestial visions. By conflating religious themes with imagery drawn from medieval poetry, classical mythology, ancient history, theology, and moral philosophy, Costa’s *Triumphs* disrupt our expectations about chapel decoration in fifteenth-century Italy, and resist traditional categories of space and artistic genres.

Because of their complex iconographies, the multiplicity of their references, and the mixed nature of the space to which they were destined, these haunting images demand a cross-

¹ “La parete a destra dell’altare è occupata da due gran tele, ove in quattro spartimenti il ricordato Lorenzo Costa figurò, non dubiteremo d’asserir troppo, un poema. Sublime, se il vero discernemmo, fu l’argomento che imprese trattare: l’uomo.” Gozzadini 1839, 80. The translation to the English is mine.

disciplinary approach that investigations of Bentivoglio patronage produced to this day have lacked, having so far treated these paintings as derivative illustrations of the Petrarchan theme and limited their significance to clever tools of political propaganda or dynastic legitimization.² This has resulted in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* being misunderstood and underappreciated in modern scholarship, and nearly absent from the larger discourse on the art of the Renaissance.³ The destruction of much of the material culture produced at the court of Giovanni II Bentivoglio following his expulsion from Bologna in 1506 further contributed to the removal of the artistic achievements of his patronage from the collective memory of the city and in subsequent historiography, even leading some scholars to question Giovanni's appreciation for the visual arts and the very existence of a distinctive Bentivoglio cultural politics.⁴ In this dissertation – the first in-depth analysis of these two paintings – I dispute these assumptions by presenting the Bentivoglio chapel and its pictorial decoration therein created by Costa as undeniable evidence of Giovanni's humanistic interests as well as of the exceptional artistic achievements made possible under his patronage.

Chapter one situates Costa's diptych within the physical setting of the Bentivoglio chapel and in the broader context of Quattrocento Bolognese art by utilizing the interpretive framework

² For an overview of the interpretations of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* put forth in the literature, see chapter 1 of this dissertation.

³ No mention of Lorenzo Costa nor of the Bentivoglio is made in the standard American textbook on the history of art, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages* (here consulted in its fifteenth edition; see Kleiner 2016). A survey text with a narrower focus, *Italian Renaissance Art* by Stephen J. Campbell and Michael W. Cole, discusses the decoration of the Bentivoglio chapel in a section of chapter 11 titled "From the Margins to the Center"; while the authors recognize the "innovative character" of the paintings, they ultimately consider them emblematic "of the improvisatory character of Giovanni's regime" (Campbell and Cole 2012, 312). More surprisingly still, the latest collection of essays on art and humanism in Renaissance Bologna (Benati and Calogero 2019) disregards the Bentivoglio chapel entirely.

⁴ See, for instance, De Benedictis 1984. On the loss of the Bentivoglio urban palace, see Wallace 1979; for an assessment of the content of the Bentivoglio archive preserved in Ferrara (Archivio di Stato), where all records before 1507 are missing and currently considered lost, see Clough 1965.

devised by David Summers for a post-formalist global art history.⁵ This offers new analytic terms to describe space according to categories of real and virtual and reconsiders form and formats as “culturally-specific conditions of presentation,” allowing me to place Costa’s *Triumphs* within their artistic, cultural, and material milieu.⁶ A thorough reexamination of the artistic techniques utilized in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* ultimately makes a deeper understanding of the complex internal relations that govern the paintings possible, informs my analysis of their content in the following chapters, and begins to illuminate some of Costa’s artistic goals. Chapters two and three analyze the literary subject matter of Costa’s images in order to reassess the overarching meaning of this diptych, its relation to the written word, and its function within the Bentivoglio chapel. The problematic relation of the Bentivoglio pictures to Petrarch’s and Dante’s poems – from which Costa’s images depart significantly and originally transform – is here reconfigured through the lens of the religious syncretism that characterized humanist culture in Quattrocento Italy. By calling attention to the exegetical activity of two commentators with significant ties to Bologna – Iacomo della Lana and Bernardo Lapini of Montalcino, known as Illicino – who produced influential allegorical readings of those canonical texts, I bring the reception of the *Triumphs* and of the *Comedy* in Costa’s time to bear on the interpretation of the Bentivoglio diptych for the first time in the literature on these paintings. Chapter four centers on the original iconography that Costa devised for the female allegory seated on the chariot of the so-called *Triumph of Fame* to show that this personification is endowed with more than one possible identity. Her polyvalence ultimately blurs the boundaries between pagan wisdom and Christian doctrine and complicates the nature of this space, exemplifying the contribution of the humanist movement to Renaissance culture. Finally, in chapter five, I reflect on Costa’s status as

⁵ Summers 2003.

⁶ Ibidem 2003, 18.

a Renaissance artist by analyzing his claims to authoriality in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* through the employment of the Plinian signature and the use of an atypical iconography for the scene of the *Creation of Adam*; these engages period tropes about the mythical origins of art and the artist's God-like powers. Ultimately, these often-overlooked pictures emerge as uniquely rich expressions of the multi-faceted Italian Renaissance, exemplifying the religious syncretism and artistic ingenuity that characterize the art of this period.

This dissertation combines close visual and textual analysis with the study of art criticism and theory, of the history of literature, and of the reception of the classical and medieval traditions to situate Costa's Bentivoglio *Triumphs* in the lively cultural milieu of fifteenth-century Bologna at the intersection of princely patronage, university learning, and artistic practice. In this respect, my research has benefitted greatly from the increased attention that the city of Bologna has received in recent decades as a 'crossroad' of civic institutions, seignorial power, and academic studies during the early-modern period.⁷ Additionally, a growing corpus of scholarship in the fields of literature, linguistics, and philology has been shedding new light on the rise of the commentary as a literary genre and on the ways that Renaissance commentators (and their readers) understood and reinterpreted earlier texts. In particular, investigations of the early commentaries to Petrarch's *Triumphs* and to Dante's *Comedy* critically informed my reading of Costa's diptych in relation to the poems' reception in fifteenth-century Bologna.⁸

⁷ For instance, see the special issue of *Renaissance Studies* journal devoted to "Civic Self-Fashioning in Renaissance Bologna" (Renaissance Studies 1999) and the rich volume of essays by multinational scholars titled *Bologna: Cultural Crossroads from the Medieval to the Baroque: Recent Anglo-American Scholarship* (Anselmi, De Benedictis, and Terpstra 2013). The upcoming special exhibition, *Medieval Bologna. Art for a University City*, organized by the Frist Art Museum (November 5, 2021 – January 30, 2022), holds promise of great interest, although its chronological focus falls right before the period here under consideration.

⁸ Literature on the commentary tradition to these two poems is vast and long-standing; for the purposes of this dissertation, I was interested more in the interpretations put forth by fourteenth and fifteenth-century commentators than in questions of dating, dependency, and attribution of the commentaries themselves.

Because my primary goal is to attain a fuller understanding of the meaning that the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* held for their patron and the artist – a meaning that has so far eluded scholars – I approach these images as products of artistic invention originated within a specific cultural context. Thus, I focus on the paintings’ material and formal characteristics as a first step toward the analysis of their cultural references in order to arrive at an interpretation of their significance as a whole. This process broadly corresponds to the method for reading works of art established by Erwin Panofsky in the tradition initiated by Aby Warburg at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁹ Although a “post-Panofsky” era has been invoked by some scholars since the end of the last century in order to account for less linear and positivist narratives around the relationship between images and their presumed literary sources, others have reasserted the relevance of iconology in the study of art history for its capacity to look at the work of art as a “cultural totality” while also recognizing the need to nuance and adapt this method.¹⁰ In this regard, I embrace the less literal way in which Eugenio Marino, a Dominican friar of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, frames the Panofskian relationship between image and text in terms

To this end, I relied especially on D.D. Carnicelli’s analysis of Lapini’s allegorical reading of Petrarch’s *Triumphs* (Carnicelli 1969; see also Tateo 1999 and Cracolici 1999) and on the analysis of Iacomo della Lana’s commentary to Dante’s *Comedy* offered by Spencer Pierce (Pierce 2013) and Rosa Affatato (Affatato 2014).

⁹ Influenced by Warburg’s lifelong investigation into the afterlife of antiquity in Renaissance art (*Nachleben*) through the study of interactions between words and images, Panofsky distinguished three levels in his art historical analysis: the preiconographic, concerned with the formal aspects of an image; the iconographic, which identifies its subject matter or content; and finally, the iconological, where images are explained in their cultural significance (Panofsky 1962 and Panofsky 1972). For a critical edition of Warburg’s work, see Warburg 1999. For a critical comparison of Warburg’s and Panofsky’s approaches and methods, see Didi-Huberman 2003.

¹⁰ Eugenio Marino, for instance, has argued for the necessity of an ‘icon-theology’ to adequately interpret religious art (Marino 1990). For the citation above, see Marino 1990, 577, 580. For a lively methodological debate on how to best tackle the problem of the presence of the ancient past in the art of the Renaissance, see Nagel and Wood 2005a followed by the responses by Charles Dempsey (Dempsey 2005), Michael Cole (Cole 2005), and Claire Farago (Farago 2005), and the two authors’ final reply (Nagel and Wood 2005b).

of “inspiration” rather than “translation” in order to better account for the creative process of artists as well as for the demands of patrons.¹¹

Finally, my research also builds on the influential work of Stephen J. Campbell, who moved beyond traditional iconographic studies to complicate our understanding of the ways in which ancient myths were consciously appropriated and creatively utilized in the court-cities of Ferrara and Mantua as figurative systems of self-representation and self-fashioning.¹² In this respect, my analysis of Costa’s *Triumphs* constitutes a prehistory to the work that the artist would go on to accomplish for the Marchioness of Mantua Isabella D’Este after the fall of the Bentivoglio. Her *studiolo*, which is at the center of Campbell’s investigation in *The Cabinet of Eros*, is understood by the scholar as “a ‘profane’ version of a private chapel” where images of mythological subject matter created by some of the most sought-after artists of the time (including Costa) embodied a range of meanings and actively engaged viewers in their interpretation.¹³ Conversely, the Bentivoglio chapel is a sacred space whose pictorial decoration is only seemingly concerned with secular matters, but nevertheless employs the language of poetic commentary to generate meaning and absorb viewers in a way that is comparable to the mechanisms at play in Isabella’s *studiolo*.

¹¹ “I believe that the ‘literary source’ should not be understood as a precise text (ad litteram), of which the pictorial form is then the translation, but only as the original (...) stimulus that set the artist’s generative creative process and technical skills in motion. (...) In other words, the literary source and, I would add, the circumstances of commission of the artwork stand in a relationship of ‘vision’ or ‘intuition’ to the artist. They do not influence the work of art except as ‘inspiration,’ which takes concrete shape in the artist’s expressive interpretation of them.” Marino 1990, 589-590, note 28.

¹² Campbell 1997; Campbell 2004.

¹³ Quoted from Campbell and Cole 2012, 287. See also Campbell 2006.

1. “An invasion of grasshoppers.” Space and Form of the *Triumphs* in the Bentivoglio chapel

No period document survives relative to the commission to Lorenzo Costa (about 1460 – 1535) of the two Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, which, to this this day, can be admired on the north wall of the Bentivoglio chapel for which they were originally created (figs. 1-2). The artist’s signature and the date inscribed on the earliest painting that Costa produced for that space, the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* (August 1488, fig. 3), as well as on the two triumphal scenes (June 1490), suggest that this phase of the decoration was carried out swiftly by the artist in the intervening two years.

A native of Ferrara, a city some 30 miles north of Bologna dominated by the Este family, at the beginning of that decade Costa had joined the ranks of other sought-after artists who took their services from Ferrara to Bologna. Cosmè Tura (c. 1433–1495), Francesco del Cossa (c. 1436–1477/1478), and Ercole de’ Roberti (c. 1455/1456–1496), three painters who have been sometimes referred to as the “Ferrarese triumvirate,” had been working in Bologna since about 1470 (although Cossa’s presence in the city is documented already in the 1460s) after having collaboratively completed a celebrated fresco cycle for the Duke Borso d’Este in the Schifanoia palace near Ferrara, as well as other individually authored public commissions in that city. Their style bridged the formal elegance of the international Gothic, represented in Bologna by artists such as Giovanni da Modena and Jacopo di Paolo, the expressionistic vocabulary of Donatello that imbued the Po Valley, and the central-Italian penchant for geometrical abstractions disseminated by the passage through the region of Piero della Francesca, to create a distinctive courtly idiom that flourished and declined in one short but unforgettable season spanning the last two quarters of the Quattrocento.

Lorenzo Costa, who was nearly thirty years younger than Tura and at least four years younger than de Roberti, was born in Ferrara to a family of artists who by 1483 had relocated to Bologna.¹⁴ At that time, Lorenzo would have been old enough to be an independent master, and his father, the painter Giovanni Battista, could have provided him with the initial training throughout his teens, which Lorenzo could have enhanced through the study of the many important artworks left in the city by Tura and de Roberti.¹⁵ However, scholars have rarely been satisfied with this explanation of the painter's beginnings, and in the absence of securely attributed and dated works before the 1488 Bentivoglio Sacred Conversation, Costa's artistic formation remains a matter of speculation to this day.¹⁶

Shortly after the artist's arrival in Bologna (1483), a sixteenth-century account composed by Augustinian friar and historian Cherubino Ghirardacci – a source generally accepted as trustworthy – establishes Costa's first employment under Giovanni II Bentivoglio in what would have been one of the most prestigious artistic commissions of the city at the time.¹⁷ The project in which he was involved, the decoration of the Bentivoglio urban palace, did not survive the violent acts of *damnatio memoriae* at the hands of the supporters of Pope Julius II that followed the expulsion of the family from the city in 1506.¹⁸ Together with the partial collapse and subsequent demolition of the Garganelli chapel in San Pietro – whose fresco decoration, in

¹⁴ The relocation of the Costa family to Bologna can be inferred from a document dated April 4, 1483, which records its members among the city residents (Filippini 1917, 57, note 2. The document is held at the Archivio di Stato di Bologna, Ufficio delle presentazioni dei forestieri, vol. 1 dal 1473-1601, 4 aprile 1483).

¹⁵ Based on Costa's obituary, stating that he died at seventy-five years old in 1535, Lorenzo was likely born in or around 1460. D'Arco 1857, 62. This means he might have arrived in Bologna in his early twenties, an age at which usually artists were fully trained and ready to set up their own workshop.

¹⁶ Different scholars have held different and often diverging opinions about the relationships of apprenticeship between the young Lorenzo Costa and Cosmè Tura, Francesco del Cossa, and Francesco Francia. See Longhi 1968; Brown 1966; Varese 1967; Tosetti Grandi 1984; Negro and Roio 2001.

¹⁷ Quoted in Bacchi 1984, 315.

¹⁸ For a discussion of the destroyed palace, see Wallace 1979.

Michelangelo's words, was "worth half of Rome" – the destruction of the Bentivoglio *domus* represents one of the great artistic losses of the Bolognese Quattrocento, whose removal has led to a gap in the study of Bologna's early Renaissance that scholars have begun to address only in recent decades.¹⁹ Despite the lack of visual documentation of what would have certainly been a splendid monument, we know from Ghirardacci's testimony that the subjects depicted by Costa in the palace of Giovanni II included the Fall of Troy, located in one of the courtyards loggias, in addition to other historical and mythological scenes realized by Francesco Francia and other artists.²⁰ Thus, when he was called to operate in the chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore, a church that the family considered an extension of their urban residence, Costa had already earned an important place at the court of Giovanni and had participated in a decorative enterprise whose program made ample use of literary and classical themes.

In the 1480s, the Bentivoglio chapel was a newly renovated space designed by an architect of Florentine culture, likely Pagno di Lapo Portigiani (1408–1470), who visibly sought inspiration in Filippo Brunelleschi's square plans, arched walls, and entablatures featuring lunettes and pendentives supporting an umbrella dome, as seen in San Lorenzo's Old Sacristy in Florence (figs. 4-5). Like the latter, the Bentivoglio chapel was the designated burial site of the city's dominant family while serving as the primary place of daily worship in their lifetime. Although the sudden removal of Giovanni II from Bologna in 1506 thwarted the ruler's plans for a family

¹⁹ The 1988 exhibition *Bologna e l'Umanesimo 1490–1510*, which examined a group of engravings of mythological subject produced in Bologna in the light of renewed interest in classical literature among local intellectuals, for instance, was not concerned with the artistic production before the last decade of the fifteenth century (Faietti, Oberhuber, and Anselmi 1988). Most recently, the international conference *Arte e umanesimo a Bologna. Materiali e nuove prospettive*, has attested to the many venues of inquiry still open in the field (the conference proceedings are partially published in Benati and Calogero 2019). For a reconstruction and analysis of the Garganelli chapel, whose decoration was begun by Francesco del Cossa and completed by Ercole de Roberti with scenes of the Dormition of the Virgin and the Crucifixion, see Ciammitti 1985 and Manca 1986. For Michelangelo's quote, see Manca 1986, note 1.

²⁰ Wallace 1979.

sepulcher in the church of San Giacomo, his wish to be buried and memorialized in that chapel was clearly voiced in his testament, denoting his desire to continue a tradition initiated by his forefathers.²¹ In fact, the church of San Giacomo was already the final resting place of Giovanni I Bentivoglio (c. 1358–1402), the first of his family to have formally held the title of *signore* (lord) of Bologna, and whose remains were laid to rest there after his assassination at the hands of Milanese troops.²² Two generations later, Annibale I Bentivoglio (1415–1445), who had acquired the rights to the chapel in San Giacomo shortly before his own murder, had moved the remains of his father Anton Galeazzo (c. 1385–1435) into a sepulchral monument that he had installed on the ambulatory wall across from the entrance of the chapel.²³ According to the sources, Annibale was also buried inside the family chapel, where an equestrian relief immortalizes him as a *condottiero*, or military leader, and an inscription celebrates him as a liberator of his homeland from tyranny.²⁴

In addition to those ritual and memorial functions, we know from early documentary sources that between 1483 and 1499 the Bentivoglio chapel was also the setting for the explication of Giovanni's princely prerogatives, including the making of knights, the reception of dignitaries and visitors, and the inauguration of tenured professors of the Studium, Bologna's prestigious

²¹ The lengthy document, dated 17 December 1501, at one point reads: “voluit a quocumque suo herede inviolabiter observari, quam sepulturam suam de qua supradictum est, voluit ipse testator fieri et esse debere in dicta ecclesia sancti Jacobi in capella dicti domini testatoris.” The full transcription is found in Pellegrini 1894, 331.

²² Ghirardacci, 535.

²³ A work by Jacopo della Quercia initially created for the Vari family of Ferrara sometime in the 1430s, the monument was later acquired and repurposed by Annibale between 1443 and 1445. For its history and for a convincing interpretation of the significance of adopting the type of the ‘professor’s tomb’ for the tomb of the Bentivoglio, see chapters 1 and 2 of Drogin 2003.

²⁴ This unsigned cenotaph, accompanied by a lengthy inscription and dated 1458, was likely executed under the patronage of Sante Bentivoglio, but only installed in its present location on the south wall of the Bentivoglio chapel sometime after 1488, where according to Ghirardacci, it would have replaced a fourth painting by Lorenzo Costa portraying the ancestors of Giovanni II that was lost to damage. On this monument, see Drogin 2003, especially chapter 3.

university.²⁵ This space was thus interchangeably attended by members of the family, the court, and the university, in addition to the Augustinian friars who resided in the convent of San Giacomo Maggiore, and occasionally by visiting royalty and political allies – all of whom constituted an audience for Costa’s images. However, these well-documented, extra-religious uses of the Bentivoglio chapel have led scholars of this monument to sometimes overemphasize, in my opinion, the secular aspects of its pictorial decoration.²⁶ On the contrary, this dissertation demonstrates that it was the funerary function of this space to have ultimately provided the theme underscored in Lorenzo Costa’s three paintings, and particularly in the two triumphal canvases, which in truth carry deep spiritual meanings and reflect the Bentivoglios’ deep concern with the salvation of the soul.²⁷

Featuring historical, allegorical, and contemporary personages blended in a unified setting connected to the real space of the chapel and of the city through a fictive architectural framing, the *Triumphs* entail multiple levels of virtuality that are activated through the artist’s carefully planned recourse to pictorial artifice. Two archways open on two triumphal scenes, which are set in a rocky landscape, are supported by three white square pillars against which three columns of multicolored marble are juxtaposed. These painted structural elements, which exist only in two dimensions, are presented as continuations of the real structural components of the church within which the chapel rises: they echo the arches and classical columns that support the external *portico* situated along the north side of the building (the same wall on which the *Triumphs* are mounted), as well as the real columns and semi-columns that separate the presbyterium from the

²⁵ For a discussion of these records, see Nieuwenhuizen 1996.

²⁶ Paul Nieuwenhuizen, for instance, has written that “Costa’s paintings are remarkably secular, transcending even the religious meaning of the images,” and that the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* resembles more a “group portrait” rather than a devotional image (Nieuwenhuizen 1996, 187).

²⁷ See in particular chapter 2 of this dissertation.

rest of the nave within the Bentivoglio chapel itself.²⁸ The painted middle pillar that functions as a divider between the *Triumph of Fame* from the *Triumph of Death* is the ideal point of view from which to observe the two scenes, as the artist posited a viewer positioned at the center of the chapel floor. This is suggested chiefly by the perspective that governs the two archways and by the way the four fictive medallions above them are foreshortened: a larger portion of the two outer ones is hidden by the moldings of the arch, as if these were seen from a sharper angle compared to the two middle ones, which are almost entirely visible because approached frontally by the viewer.

Beyond this architectural threshold is the pictorial space where the triumphal visions unravel. At left, the scene is dominated by a female figure seated in the center, who is traditionally identified with the allegory of Fame.²⁹ She overlooks a crowd of parade participants from her elevated seat on a triumphal chariot, which is pulled by two black elephants and barely visible behind the crowd that surrounds it on foot; most notably among them, are Giovanni II Bentivoglio and his firstborn Annibale, portrayed in the foreground at left, while the group of women standing in front of the chariot includes Giovanni's consort Ginevra Sforza.³⁰ The foreground in front of the chariot is left empty, forming a negative space that complements the same semi-circular void seen in the right-hand canvas, drawing the viewer further into the scene. The right-hand composition is dominated by three skeletal beings, one of whom is a personification of Death, who holds a scythe and is shown on top of a chariot pulled by two black oxen facing the opposing party; members of the Bentivoglio house and court can be

²⁸ The portico, which runs along the north side of the church in what is today via Zamboni (formerly Strada San Donato), was also erected under the patronage of Giovanni II Bentivoglio, together with Virgilio Malvezzi, another prominent Bolognese citizen, between 1478 and 1481 (Brown 1968, 305)

²⁹ For a discussion of her complex identity, see chapter 4 of this dissertation.

³⁰ For the identification of all the recognizable members of the Bentivoglio family present in the diptych, see Negro and Roio 2001, 91-93, entries 12b-c.

recognized here as well, along with more figures in ancient and modern costumes who are gathered in groupings that loosely mirror those seen in the painting's left pendant, contributing to a sense of orderly symmetry between the two scenes. Another layer of virtuality, twice removed from the viewer because set in a distinct space that is separate from the main narrative and is governed by a different scale and perspective system, is constituted by the large circular field in the left-hand canvas that fills the sky with eight independent historical narratives and three Biblical scenes, which are all situated within a unified rocky landscape and lack direct ties to the triumphal procession; similarly, the skyborne vision in the right-hand canvas shows God the Father, the Virgin Mary, and Christ surrounded by cherubs, angels, and the twelve apostles, all in a reduced size and arranged in concentric *mandorla* shapes that set them apart from the scene below.

The effect of unity permeating Costa's diptych is further enhanced by the inscription through which the artist dates and claims authorship over the paintings, entrusting it to the same fictive architectural elements that frame the triumphal scenes. The inscription, written in elegant block letters, originally read: "MCCCCLXXXX / ZU[G]NO / [LAVRENT]IUS / CO[STA] / FACIEBAT" (1490 / June / Lorenzo / Costa / was making [this]). This is striking for at least two reasons: first, because it makes use of a verbal form in the imperfect tense (*faciebat*), which makes this the earliest instance of what is known in Renaissance studies as the Plinian signature; secondly, because through its ingenious placement, the artist appears to be trying to control the viewing experience of the paintings.³¹ In fact, the sentence is broken in three lines of text and spread out over four points across the base of the three marble pillars that support the two

³¹ Although the text is damaged today to the extent that some letters are entirely missing, the content of the inscription has been recorded in the literature since an early date and is thus fully preserved. The intellectual implications and historic significance of the particular formula chosen by Costa to sign the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* are explored further in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

archways, so that a viewer would have to step back from the paintings to take it in with one glance, moving back and forth between the two canvases and essentially treating them as one whole scene (figs. 1-2).

With his undisputed capacity to evoke striking mental images and clever metaphors, Roberto Longhi, one of the most influential art historians of the twentieth century, wrote of Costa's *Triumphs* in San Giacomo: "they always make me think of an invasion of grasshoppers."³² Grounded in the radical formalism of Heinrich Wölfflin and heavily influenced by the aesthetic idealism of Benedetto Croce, Longhi remained largely uninterested in integrating the contributions of iconology and social history in his academic and professional practice throughout his career, which remained firmly anchored in his brilliant qualities of eloquent critic and fine connoisseur. In *Officina ferrarese* (1934), a work that opened the way to a new understanding of Renaissance painting in the Po Valley, Longhi was especially critical of the early production of Costa, whom he saw as a weak emulator of de Roberti, whose intellectual gravitas and dynamic traits – according to the critic – Costa could not have helped but misinterpret. A demonstration of those shortcomings, in the connoisseur's eyes the *Triumphs* displayed a crowd of frail-looking figures with nervous contour lines amassed across the

³² Translation from the Italian is mine. The full passage reads: "Procede Ercole, per dir così, manovrando a massa forme largamente sagomate, quasi murarie, non già incrocicchiando o incavicchiando fra loro figurette a birillo e a stecco sur un fondo i cui ritagli occupan troppo spazio, ma non giocano attivamente nell'opera, fungendo semmai da base neutrale. Questa maniera è una cattiva e indebita interpretazione dei divertimenti e, dicemmo, quasi balletti grammaticali, che Ercole aveva ben presto, con sottile senso di convenienza, posti in sottordine, confinandoli nelle parti ornamentali dei suoi dipinti, oppure nei lontani dove l'interposizione atmosferica giustificava la riduzione delle figure a tracce di animule stecchite e flagranti. Ora, proprio tale indebita interpretazione è quella che si ritrova in uno spirito più limitato, come fu il Costa, almeno fino al 1490; è, per esempio, ancora questo metodo a reggere quele due tempere allegoriche di San Giacomo Maggiore, che mi fan sempre pensare a un'invasione di cavallette." Longhi 1968, 51.

pictorial field that produced an effect comparable to a cloud of the thin, tapering-bodied insects. Longhi's criticism of Costa, and particularly of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, cast a long and persistent shadow on the artist, whose role in the multifaceted Bolognese Renaissance has yet to be fully unearthed as a result.

In his 1966 doctoral dissertation, which to this day remains the only monographic study dedicated to Costa in the English language, Clifford Malcom Brown described the artist's early figures as "wooden and nerveless", "arid," and as "enfeebled versions of [de] Roberti's monumental forms."³³ With these words, Brown not only carried on Longhi's aesthetic judgement, but perhaps more surprisingly, he repeated some of the objections raised against Costa's style (and the style of other painters active in Northern Italy in the same years) by the 'founder' of art history and sixteenth-century critic Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), who championed a central-Italian style where *colore* (color) and *disegno* (design) were more gently fused.³⁴ At the same time, Brown was the first among Costa's modern critics to have recognized and celebrated this artist's inventiveness and the imaginative capabilities he displayed throughout his long career – an argument that this dissertation contributes to advance, although Brown's understanding of the *Triumphs* as having been commissioned "to glorify the ruler of Bologna, whose family triumphs over death by being immortalized by fame" appears reductive and even outright inaccurate in light of the findings presented in this research.³⁵

³³ Brown 1966, 100, 104, 139.

³⁴ For instance, Vasari wrote that Costa "ebbe la maniera un poco secca e tagliente" (Vasari, I, 793) – a criticism similar to the one he reserved to Andrea Mantegna, which will be discussed again later in this chapter.

³⁵ For instance, Brown wrote about the "liveliness" of Costa's imagination (Brown 1966, 81), arguing that he "showed promise of importance and originality" since the outset of his career (Brown 1966, 100). For the contribution made by this dissertation in favor of a re-evaluation of Costa's overlooked standing among Renaissance artists see especially chapter 5. For Brown's overarching reading of the *Triumphs* see Brown 1966, 58.

With the rise of contextual approaches, introduced in art history throughout the twentieth century to move the field beyond the limitations of formalism, efforts were made that paved the way to an understanding of Costa's *Triumphs* within the artistic and cultural production of fifteenth-century Italy. In particular, scholars began to relate the Bentivoglio diptych to the early-Renaissance fascination with the theme of the *trionfo all'antica* (the triumph in the ancient Roman manner), especially popular among the Italian élites as an expression of their political and military dominance.³⁶ However, Costa's unorthodox iconographies in the Bentivoglio diptych always puzzled art historians, who have struggled to understand the paintings' relation to Petrarch's immensely popular poem the *Triumphs* (the *Triumphs*), traditionally recognized as the primary literary source for much of the triumphal imagery produced during the first half of the 1400s. These incongruities – which in this dissertation I partly attribute to Costa's mission to utilize the spiritual meaning attributed to the *Triumphs* in early humanistic commentaries on the poem rather than to illustrate the original text itself – have led some scholars to suggest that the Bentivoglio diptych should be divorced from its Petrarchan associations altogether.³⁷ Despite promising intuitions that these images demonstrated literary influences and moralizing aspirations deserving of further investigation, scholarly interest in pursuing a satisfying reconciliation between Petrarch's poem and the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* ultimately faded.³⁸

³⁶ Early surveys of the use of triumphal imagery in the Renaissance include Masséna and Müntz 1902; Carandente 1963; Pinelli 1985. For a more recent overview, see Zaho 2004.

³⁷ This argument was first advanced by Ranieri Varese, who preferred to think about a source from classical antiquity (Varese 1967, 20), and substantially accepted in subsequent scholarship, particularly in Italy (Ottani Cavina 1967; Venturoli 1969; Bacchi 1984).

³⁸ Brown, for instance, was the first to identify the figures of Dante and Virgil in Costa's *Triumphs* and recognized that multiple literary themes intertwine in this the complex iconographic program (Brown 1968, see especially note 15); shortly after, Venturoli reflected on Brown's findings suggesting that Costa's images reflected the spiritual climate of Quattrocento Bologna without, however, (Venturoli 1969, 164). Although Andrea Bacchi later speculated that the iconographic program of the Bentivoglio chapel could have been formulated by someone like the humanist and doctor of medicine Giovanni Garzoni, he also concluded that the paintings constitute "lambiccate allegorie" (excessively factitious

Subsequent discussions of the paintings have since shifted their focus toward an analysis of patronage, emphasizing their secular character and emulative nature, and reinforcing their role in supporting Giovanni's political and dynastic agenda through established literary topoi.³⁹ While there is no denying that these images are about the Bentivoglios for the Bentivoglios and reflect the position of privilege and power of this dominant family in fifteenth-century Bologna, considering Costa's diptych as little more than unoriginal tools of propaganda has ultimately limited the lens through which these paintings have been understood, and has done little to unearth their distinctiveness and artistic interest.

Among the few scholars who have sought to engage in a close observation of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, Hidehiro Ikegami has chosen to focus on the unorthodox spatial constructions devised by Costa and proposed to distinguish three different types of space within the diptych, each governed by different laws of perspective and related to their respective content and temporality. According to Ikegami's interpretive diagram, the Renaissance linear perspective dominates the foreground in which the triumphal parades take place; this space imitates reality and is set in the present. Conversely, a space that negates linear perspective is employed in the right-hand

allegories) of too difficult interpretation, and to this day this line of research has remained unpursued (Bacchi 1984, 318-320).

³⁹ Wendy Wegener, for instance, argued that the pictorial decoration of the Bentivoglio chapel chiefly reflects Giovanni's desire to be memorialized as a *condottiere* and compared the ancient narratives in the upper half of the left-hand canvas to the medieval iconography of the Wheel of Fortune (Wegener 1989). Nieuwenhuizen's emphasis on the lay character of the decoration and of the activities documented in the Bentivoglio chapel has been discussed earlier in this chapter (see note 26 above). The latest, thorough analysis of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* has been offered by David J. Drogin in his dissertation on "Representations of Bentivoglio Authority" (Drogin 2003). While he demonstrates his awareness of the multivalence of the so-called *Triumph of Fame* (which he calls the *Triumph of Fame and Fortune*, see Drogin 2003, 200) and even his familiarity with early editions of Petrarch's *Triumphs* accompanied by the commentary of Bernardo Lapini (Ibidem, 212), Drogin's reading of Costa's diptych ultimately relegated to the secular sphere: "Discussion of these paintings revealed how patron and artist (and potentially an artistic advisor) used the framework of allegorical triumphal processions and Petrarchan literature to articulate Bentivoglio magnificence, their transcendence of mortality through fame, and their success and promotion of Bologna through Fame and Fortune's aegis." (Ibidem, 248).

mandorla to signify the domain of the divine, where the artist offers a wishful vision of the future. Finally, an irregular, ‘medieval’ type of perspective is at work in the circular field at left, where distinct narrative scenes are set in the same continuous landscape, and the figures, natural and architectural landmarks, are unrealistically scaled; to Ikegami, this signals that the events depicted in this portion of the picture are relegated in a distant past.⁴⁰ While Ikegami made important distinctions between the historical and the celestial circles hanging over the two triumphal scenes, here I would like to show how the analysis of Costa’s ingenious manipulation of space and form in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* can be further expanded to consider the broader relations that these paintings would have established with their visible and invisible surroundings.

In his post-formalist approach to art history, David Summers has proposed to replace the notion of the visual arts with that of the “*spatial arts*” in a shift that aims to recapture the corporeal conditions of existence of an art object beyond the visual or formal aspects of its appearance.⁴¹ In Summers’s theoretical framework, painting is classified as an art of the “*virtual space*,” that is, a representation of space on a surface that makes the encounter with the virtual image possible and stands in contrast to the “*real space*” of the observer, which is measured in relation to the finite spatio-temporal qualities of the body.⁴² A third category utilized by Summers to discuss the meaning and significance of art objects is the “*social space*,” the culturally-specific circumstances in which images are made, viewed, and utilized.⁴³ By analyzing Costa’s *Triumphs* in terms of the virtual, real, and social spaces that these paintings articulate, we can begin to understand them not just in terms of the different kinds of geometric perspectives

⁴⁰ Ikegami 2010, 17.

⁴¹ Summers 2003, 41.

⁴² Ibidem 2003, 43-45.

⁴³ Ibidem 2003, 23.

according to which their content is organized, but more broadly as representations of mental images with varying degrees of spatial and social relations to the chapel, to the city of Bologna, and to the audience that they were created for at a particular moment in time.

In front of these paintings, a fifteenth-century viewer would have been presented with an image that they would have recognized as a construction of the imagination, alternative to or separate from their reality rather than a continuation or imitation of the latter – a scene only possible in the realm of the mind, despite the presence of familiar and recognizable elements from the real world like the portraits of the Bentivoglio family and court members, and Bologna’s distinctive landscape of clay and sandstone rock formations.⁴⁴ Although these elements are rendered according to the technique of optical illusionism, which reflects the latest developments of the centuries-long quest of Western art to imitate the visible world through shape and color, and although the complex system of fictive architectural framing described earlier in this chapter strives to erase the boundaries between the virtual space of the paintings and the real space of the chapel, those pictorial devices can never completely negate the paintings’ status as fantasies nor obscure their materiality.

While the complex network of references and meanings that make these highly cerebral images an intellectual construct will be explored in the next chapters of this dissertation, the present discussion will focus on what Summers terms as the “real spatial circumstances,” or “formats” of a work of art, and on their cultural specificity.⁴⁵ Formats include the conditions of presentation of artworks (specifically paintings), such as the surfaces and techniques that enable their existence and determine their distinctive physical characteristics. The Bentivoglio *Triumphs*

⁴⁴ I will return on the fantastic character of these visions later in this dissertation. For an identification of the geological elements that characterize Bologna’s territory in the landscape of the *Triumphs* see Ceregato and Vai 2017.

⁴⁵ Summers 2003.

were painted with tempera (a medium consisting of ground pigment tempered with a binding substance, such as egg yolk or animal glue) on a canvas support (a woven fabric of great strength and versatility, typically made from a mix of cotton and linen stretched over a wooden frame) and are physically embedded into the structure of the chapel, literally mounted in a shallow niche built into the north wall. This way, they appear as an integral part of the vertical surface on which they appear above eye level, their size and position determining a fixed mode of viewing for the observer who must engage with them from a distance to fully take them in in their near-monumental size.⁴⁶ The continuity – both real and virtual – between the paintings and the chapel wall is further reinforced by having the painted architectural structure originally devised by Costa to frame the triumphal scenes extend beyond the confines of the canvas and onto the wall surface, where a fictive marble molding decorated with egg and darts motifs runs across the wall's width (and throughout the three contiguous walls) to simulate a balustrade beyond which the triumphal visions take place.⁴⁷ This area of the parietal decoration was perhaps executed *a fresco*, or more likely with a mixed technique, for its conservation state is much more degraded than that of the paintings. Finally, below the molding, alternating vertical bands of red, blue, and green (the Bentivoglio and Sforza colors) imitate a luxurious fabric covering the rest of the wall down to the floor (which would have been paved with maiolica tiles displaying the combined coat of arms of the two families), effectively tying up an all-encompassing parietal decoration.⁴⁸

Turning to the culturally specific qualities carried by Costa's choice of format, Summers's framework will be useful in my investigation of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* to situate the paintings

⁴⁶ The *Triumphs* measure 413 x 357 centimeters each (Negro and Roio 2001, 91, cat.n.12b-c)

⁴⁷ The portion of this balustrade that can be seen today on the back wall is likely the result of later reworkings in occasion of the decoration of the

⁴⁸ On the beautiful maiolica floor, only partially preserved onsite, see Ballardini 1929.

within the artistic and material milieu of their time beyond the stylistic and aesthetic judgements that have weighted on their critical fortune over the past century. On one hand, Costa's images follow contemporary artistic trends that can be observed in Bologna during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, when painters increasingly embraced large decorative enterprises comprising multiple components and media, and often blended the boundaries between fictive and real architecture by employing architectural motifs integrating pictorial and real spaces. The destroyed Garganelli chapel in Bologna's San Pietro cathedral (c. 1475–1485) and the Vaselli chapel in the civic temple of San Petronio (1487–1489) constitute a case in point: their decorative apparatuses were characterized by a close connection between the altarpiece and the surrounding architectural and decorative elements thanks to the connective role of the frame and to its capacity to suggest spatial unity. At the same time, Costa's use of the tempera medium on a canvas support sets the *Triumphs* apart from both the genre of the altarpiece as it had existed in Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (that is, commonly executed on wood panels, and toward the mid-1400s, moving toward the classicizing square format), as well as from the parietal decorations of courtly and domestic spaces, which were usually executed *a fresco* or *a secco* and extended over several contiguous walls, as in the case of Andrea Mantegna's *Camera Picta*.

Instead, Costa's choice of support and format evokes more closely the processional banners used by lay confraternities, or the ephemeral apparatuses created for special religious or civic celebrations where the need to carry these images around the city or to display them on special occasions and in changing contexts required lightweight materials and a flexible construction. This tradition of tempera paintings on cloth was particularly ingrained in the Bolognese artistic production during the early modern period, which today is attested by a relatively conspicuous

number of surviving examples dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The earliest of them is a sophisticated processional banner depicting *Saint Helen in Adoration of the Cross* painted by Simone di Filippo, later known as Simone dei Crocifissi (c. 1370s, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, acc. no. 220, fig. 6), who was also the author of a canvas with the *Coronation of the Virgin* now in the Museo Civico in Pesaro; two more compositions in tempera on canvas, signed by Lippo di Dalmasio and dating from the last decade of the century, represent the *Madonna of Humility* and are now housed in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna and in the National Gallery in London (acc. no. NG752, fig. 7).⁴⁹ Period documents further attest to this type of production in Bologna by recording payments for monumental works on cloth that have not survived to our day (or have yet to be identified) such as the temporary altarpiece destined to the high altar in San Petronio, commissioned to Lippo di Dalmasio and Giovanni di Ottonello in 1393 while the basilica was still under construction.⁵⁰

The production of devotional paintings on canvas in Bologna did not decline during the fifteenth century. Instead, this tradition continued to evolve through the adaptation of traditional formats to new pictorial languages, as demonstrated in two examples today housed in the Pinacoteca Nazionale: the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints* (fig. 8), a work attributed to Pietro Lianori around 1420 and perhaps destined to adorn the front of a church altar (*paliotto*), and the altarpiece with *Saint Bernardino of Siena and Stories of his Life* created in 1451 by Giovanni da Modena for the chapel dedicated to that saint in the church of Saint Francis in Bologna.⁵¹ Formally, these two canvases have been seen as precedents for two types of pictures that continued to be commissioned profusely in the city through the rest of the century: one is the

⁴⁹ D'Amico 1988.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 139.

⁵¹ Acc. nos. 7102 and 937 respectively.

sacred conversation of horizontal format and frontal presentation that performed a votive or commemorative function, exemplified for instance by Tommaso Garelli's *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints* of 1466 for the Compagnia dei Lombardi and Francesco del Cossa's grand *Altarpiece of Merchants* created in 1474 for the Bologna Merchants' Forum (Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale, acc. no. 580, fig. 9); the other is an adaptation of the Late-Medieval Franciscan icon that combines the full-length portrait of a saint with scenes of their lives and miracles in the antiquarian idiom popularized in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, as seen in the *Saint Apollonia* by the so-called Maestro di Ambrogio Saraceno formerly in the church of San Giuseppe di Galliera (1488/1490, Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale, acc. no. 553, fig. 10).

That Lorenzo Costa was aware of Bologna's tradition of religious pictures on fabric when he approached the decorative enterprise in San Giacomo Maggiore can be demonstrated most eloquently by comparing his *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* to the aforementioned precedents by Pietro Lianori and Francesco del Cossa. Like those two pictures, whose original use and collocation can be reasonably conjectured from their format and some documentary evidence, Costa's Sacred Conversation is painted with tempera on canvas, and despite the devotional subject, it was never intended to serve as an altarpiece proper. In fact, in its original placement on the south wall of the Bentivoglio chapel, the painting was in no direct relation to the altar, which stands on the north wall and was eventually endowed with its own altarpiece. This was completed during the following decade by Francesco Francia (1447–1517), an artist from an older generation with whom Costa shared the spotlight at the court of the Bentivoglio.⁵² Francia's *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints* was realized on a traditional

⁵² The dating of Francia's altarpiece is problematic. Signed by the artist but not dated, it has been considered prior to 1494 by Anna Ottani Cavina on the base of two facts: the absence of the imperial insignia, which the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II conferred on Giovanni II Bentivoglio in the October of that year, and the change in the dedication of the chapel from Christ the Redeemer and Saint

wood panel support, its square format reflecting the classicizing trend of the time. From the iconographic point of view, *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* also advanced Lianori's and Cossa's quest for an increased closeness to the deity. In the earlier picture, the foot of Saint John the Baptist on the marble step of the Virgin's throne is a first, timid breach into the physical space of the holy group that signals the intimate exchange between the Christ Child and the Baptizer. Taking a further step in that direction, Cossa's 1474 picture shows Alberto de' Cattanei, the judge memorialized in profile with his hands clasped in prayer, kneeling behind the two monumental saints that flank Mary to consign his plead directly to the ears of the Infant Jesus – his hands and words effectively trespassing the marble threshold of the throne to reach the baby's ears. Finally, in the Bentivoglio picture, Giovanni II and his spouse Ginevra Sforza no longer need intermediaries to address the divine group as they kneel directly below the seat of the Virgin, with Giovanni's elbow coming so close to her mantle as to almost touch it.

In addition to the three *tele* that Costa left in the Bentivoglio chapel, the artist continued to adopt the fabric support in at least one subsequent commission, demonstrating his active participation in this local tradition. The existence of a picture representing the Crucifixion and destined to the chapter house of the Dominicans in Bologna is attested to by two payments recorded to the artist in 1493, although that work is lost today.⁵³ However, the two Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, while part of this production on canvas, stand out from all the precedents so far considered in one significant way: their subject matter is not immediately recognizable as

John the Evangelist to the Virgin and the Evangelist, and event which was believed until relatively recently to have also occurred in 1494 (Ottani Cavina 1967). However, the publication of a seventeenth-century document containing the transcriptions of many inscriptions found inside the chapel and today no longer readable has moved that event to the year 1499 (see Perazzini 1999).

⁵³ Cavigli 2005, 17.

religious, and their function cannot be conclusively assimilated to the various ritual uses associated with the examples discussed above. Ultimately, the use of the canvas support in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* reinforces their hybrid nature, evident in their materiality as much as in their subject matter.⁵⁴

In early modern Italy, the use of a cloth support for paintings might have also carried religious or cultural meaning for the communities that utilized these works of art, or even for the artists themselves. For instance, canvas might have embodied a patron's vote of poverty in the case of a group of four paintings realized for a Franciscan community in Naples around 1336 by the still nameless Master of the Tempere Francescane, which are among the earliest surviving examples of tempera on linen in Italy.⁵⁵ A similar motive has been adduced for some of Sandro Botticelli's (c. 1445–1510) late works, such the 1500 *Mystic Nativity* (tempera on canvas) today at the National Gallery, London, created in the years of the artist's religious fervor toward the end of his career. For Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506), perhaps the most admired artist of his time, the use of the canvas support and the tempera technique have been indicated by scholars as evidence of the painter's commitment to construct his persona as a modern heir to Apelles, the most celebrated artist of antiquity, and to display his humanistic erudition. Mantegna is not only the first artist by whom more paintings on canvas survive than on panel; his use of the fabric support increased steadily during his long career, becoming the (almost exclusive) medium of choice in his maturity.⁵⁶ He also employed canvas in a broad range of artistic genres: religious altarpieces, private devotional works, portraits, literary allegories, monochromes, and faux bas-

⁵⁴ It is a core argument of this dissertation that the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* possess underlying religious meaning despite their apparently purely secular subject matter, as demonstrated in the following chapters.

⁵⁵ Bologna 1969, 168, 177, notes 135-140; 235-57; 282-3, notes 1-47. Some scholars have related the use of linen support with the Franciscan habit.

⁵⁶ Cavigli 2005, 90-91.

reliefs of historical subject, suggesting that his technical choices were rarely dependent on the circumstances around a particular commission and rather dictated by his personal preference and circumstantial agenda.⁵⁷

It is amply recognized that Mantegna's artistic objectives, which he developed during his formative years in Padua, the seat of one of the oldest universities in Europe and a major humanistic center of Northern Italy, and during his maturity at the service of three generations of Gonzaga marquises at the Mantuan court, coincided with an ardent desire to rival the artists of antiquity, especially the Greek Apelles and Praxiteles. Their achievements, celebrated in the Renaissance as more perfect than nature itself, were known to Mantegna through his familiarity with foundational texts like Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* (*Natural History*) and Leon Battista Alberti's *De pictura* (*On Painting*), as well as with the ideas of influential scholars that contributed significantly to the advancement of Padua's tradition of *studia humanitatis*, like Giovanni Marcanova, Michele Savonarola, and Felice Feliciano, as well as with a growing number of antiquarian collectors in the north-eastern Italian region that could offer him authentic models to study and incorporate in his work.⁵⁸ In this context, Rosella Cavigli has recently pointed out, Mantegna's commitment to the use of tempera on canvas technique was instrumental to achieving specific aesthetic results that were traditionally associated with ancient art (pictorial illusionism, extreme foreshortening, three-dimensional modelling, and a close relation to sculptural models) and to showcase a technical virtuosity that would have elevated his work to that same level of excellence.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Cavigli 2005, 91.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem* 2005, 92-129.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem* 2005, 3 and 130-132, especially 130.

Mantegna's attitude toward the use of canvas is particularly relevant to the present discussion and can help illuminate Costa's own distinctive choice of support and technique in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, offering additional reasons beyond Bologna's distinctive production of devotional paintings on canvas. The reputation of the elder artist certainly resonated strongly in Bologna through the close personal and political ties between the Bentivoglio and the Gonzaga families.⁶⁰ The fact that Costa was called to Mantua to succeed Mantegna as a court painter after that master's death in 1506 also attests to a perceived affinity of artistic objectives and poetics between the two painters already in their own time, despite the fact that the production of these two artistic personalities has seldom been put in conversation in the literature.

Interestingly enough, in the same years – the late 1480s – both Mantegna and Costa were engaged in the creation of monumental canvas paintings featuring a triumphal subject for their respective patrons, Francesco II Gonzaga and Giovanni II Bentivoglio. Celebrating the figure of Julius Caesar, one of the most admired ancient-Roman military leaders in the Renaissance, the nine canvases known as *The Triumphs of Caesar* were likely commissioned to Mantegna shortly after Francesco II's appointment as the fourth Marquis of Mantua in 1484, and were realized by the master and his workshop between 1486 and 1492.⁶¹ Because we know with certainty that the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* were carried out between 1488 and 1490, it is usually assumed that the conception of the Mantuan cycle predates the Bolognese diptych, even though its precedence cannot be established with certainty. Regardless of the paintings' chronology and despite some fundamental differences in the use of the triumphal theme, these two enterprises share significant iconographic and material traits that point to the shared artistic ideals and models circulating

⁶⁰ See, for instance, the correspondence between Isabella d'Este and Anton Galeazzo Bentivoglio (Brown 1968, 321-324).

⁶¹ The series was acquired by King of England Charles I in 1629 and have since hung in the Hampton Court Palace, where they now have a dedicated gallery in the Royal Collection.

simultaneously at these two North-Italian courts. Whereas Mantegna offers a fantastic reconstruction of an ancient triumphal parade with no explicit ties to the contemporary world, Costa's images purposefully combine past and present, history and allegory, secular literature, and Christian theology to make these images present and relevant for their patron.⁶² At the same time, both artists opt for a lateral presentation of the triumphal chariots and devote great attention to the description of their corteges; most importantly, they both chose to utilize the tempera medium and the canvas support for their respective set of images, which by the very nature of their subject matter already possessed strong associations with antiquity.⁶³ In this regard, the first canvas in Mantegna's series, depicting *The Picture Bearers* (fig. 11) exemplifies one way that Renaissance artists imagined paintings looked like and were utilized in antiquity: horizontal strips of canvas displaying continuous horizontal narratives, which could be mounted on rods and paraded in a public procession.

In conclusion, considered in their spatial and material conditions of presentation, the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* emerge as virtual images within a real and social space with which these pictures entertain varying degrees of relationships. While the multiple perspectival systems within them signal their status as symbolic constructions, the fictive architectural elements that frame the triumphal vision place them in continuity with the real architecture of the chapel, of the church, and of the city, and suggest a privileged viewpoint located at the center of the shrine. At the same time, Costa's *Triumphs* are culturally specific in terms of both the materials they employed and the artistic results they pursued: as works executed with the tempera technique on a canvas support, they participated in Bologna's rich tradition of devotional and ephemeral

⁶² For the relation of Mantegna's series with antiquity, see Campbell 2004.

⁶³ Each one of Mantegna's canvases measures around 270 x 280 cm.

artifacts painted on fabric while also demonstrating strong associations with the celebrated artworks of classical antiquity, signaling the artist's erudition and displaying his technical virtuosity. Their choice of medium and subject matter also points to similarities with contemporary works by Mantegna, providing further evidence that Costa's choice of material and technique in this diptych was indeed culturally and intellectually charged to demonstrate the artist's alignment to the heritage of the classical tradition. It is this heritage that will continue to be explored in the next chapters with regard to the subject matter of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*.

2. “Under graceful and wondrous poetic veil.” Petrarch’s *Triumphs* and the Journey of the Soul in the Bentivoglio Chapel.

The subject matter of Costa’s diptych for the Bentivoglio is anchored in Francesco Petrarca’s *Triumphs* (the *Triumphs*), an unfinished poem composed in the Italian vernacular between 1352 and the writer’s death in 1374, describing the poet’s dreamlike vision of a procession formed by six allegorical figures triumphing over one another. The first is Love, followed by Chastity, which is overcome by Death, conquered in turn by Fame; this then succumbs to Time, and eventually Eternity triumphs over all. In the paintings created for the Bentivoglio chapel, Costa breaks this sequence to focus primarily on the two central subjects in the series – Death and Fame – through which he shapes the ultimate message of this decorative program: the harmonization of a syncretic belief system in which ancient wisdom, medieval poetry, and Christian theology tell the history of humanity while memorializing the Bentivoglio rulers in their intended burial place.

Although scholars have long pointed out Costa’s numerous departures from traditional triumphal iconography, which by the first half of the fifteenth century was fairly consolidated in the visual arts – albeit with significant regional variants – Costa’s motivations for the original imagery exhibited in the Bentivoglio chapel have remained largely unexplained and unexplored in the literature on this monument. In addition to clarifying the ultimate meaning of the images and the cultural references that shaped them, I suggest that the creativity and ingenuity with which the painter approached Petrarch’s text is comparable to the ways in which Quattrocento humanists and scholars had been engaging with the poem, interpreting and expanding its meaning and scope for the early modern reader. Above all, their approach was characterized by

the attempt to allegorize the secular subject matter of the *Triumphs* and inscribe it within a universalizing Christian view of human history, from men's first appearance into the world to the return to an initial spiritual substance at the end of his earthly life. This comparison will ultimately prove that through his paintings Costa actively participated in the efforts under way in the literary field to reconcile secular and religious culture by adopting a literary subject matter imbued with sacred meanings; in so doing, he effectively contributed to elevating the status of the visual arts (and of artists) to equal that of poetry and religious exegesis.

In 1475, the city of Bologna saw the first appearance in print of the *editio princeps* of Petrarch's two best-known works, the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (*Fragments of Common Things*, later known simply as the *Canzoniere*) and the *Triumphs*. The edition, printed by Bolognese professor of medicine and philosophy Annibale Maplighi, brought together two commentaries independently produced by two prominent Quattrocento humanists: Francesco Filelfo, who in the 1440s had annotated the *Fragments*, and Bernardo Lapini of Montalcino, also known as Ilicino, who composed his commentary to the *Triumphs* in the late 1460s.⁶⁴ Lapini's text quickly established itself as the most important and influential of the early editions of Petrarch's poem, inaugurating and disseminating the allegorical interpretation that became standard in subsequent editions of the text from the Renaissance onward. In fact, in Lapini's reading, the *Triumphs* were an allegory of the progress of the human soul growing through the stages of life, from the subjugation to the flesh to the spiritual release and salvation through the Christian faith.⁶⁵ While the majority of the illustrations of Petrarch's poem in artifacts created between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries were endowed with prominent military and

⁶⁴ On Lapini, see Corso 1957 and Vasoli 1967; on his Petrarchan commentary, see especially Dionisotti 1974; Cracolici 1999; and Tateo 1999.

⁶⁵ For an analysis of Lapini's commentary that illuminates this interpretation of the poem, see Carnicelli 1969.

nuptial overtones (particularly in the instance of depictions of the *Triumph of Fame* and of the *Triumph of Chastity*), I argue that Costa's paintings represent the first instance in the visual arts where the spiritual interpretation of the poem's subject matter disseminated through Lapini's commentary prevailed instead.⁶⁶

Lapini's *Commentary* had a surprisingly wide diffusion in a relatively short period of time. Between its first impression, in 1475, and the last one in 1522, the text was published twenty-four times, even receiving translations in French and in Catalan that survive in numerous manuscripts and printed editions produced within the first half of the sixteenth century that attest to its international success.⁶⁷ Because in the prologue Lapini dedicated his commentary to Borso d'Este, scholars have long believed that the work was composed sometime between 1469 and 1471, when the humanist was a guest at the court of that lord and patron of the arts in Ferrara. More recently, however, a newly-discovered document has allowed scholars to anticipate the date of the composition before 1469, when a note records the loan of a book containing an edition of Petrarch's *Triumphs* curated by Lapini to a member of the Ferrarese court in the April of that year.⁶⁸ Despite a dedication to the Ferrarese ruler, the work was thus likely conceived and carried out for the most part in Siena, where it grew out of the culture of scholasticism that dominated the European university system throughout the fifteenth century.⁶⁹ Within this earlier chronology, which now falls between 1468 and 1469, Lapini's effort is thus seen as a herald, rather than a product, of the cultural shift that sprang from the courts of Italy between the 1460s and the 1470s, when literary production in the Italian vernacular received unprecedented support and legitimization from the ruling class and the intellectual elites. In this climate, humanists and

⁶⁶ For such use of this imagery in the Renaissance, see especially Gilday 1996 and Zaho 2004.

⁶⁷ Francalanci 2006; Francalanci 2008.

⁶⁸ Cracolici 1999, 407.

⁶⁹ For a discussion of the work's debated dating, see Cracolici 1999, especially 407-409.

poets were encouraged to study, interpret, and imitate works of literature written in the spoken language over the previous century such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Petrarch's *Triumphs*. At the same time, these texts were also quickly elevated from admired literary examples to authoritative sources on historical, mythological, philosophical, theological, and even scientific matters. Their diffuse adoption as university textbooks throughout the peninsula during the early fifteenth-century is one symptom of their consideration as repositories of encyclopedic knowledge.⁷⁰ With a similar educational use in mind, the critical edition of the *Triumphs* curated by Lapini treated Petrarch's text as a point of departure to provide the reader with a compendium of information necessary to a thorough understanding of its content. While lacking the poetic ambition of the original text, Lapini's expansive commentary offered an expert guide to the histories, personages, and ideas from the Greco Roman world to the present day that make an appearance in the *Triumphs*, making this wealth of knowledge accessible to a broader audience of readers while demonstrating his own erudition. However, Lapini's greatest contribution to the reception of the *Triumphs* is undoubtedly the allegorical interpretation of Petrarch's poem first established in his commentary, which the present chapter intends to discuss in relation to the Bentivoglio diptych for the first time with the aims of illuminating the role of this imagery in the funerary chapel of a Renaissance prince.

“Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus considered there to be no greater victory or single triumph than when one is able to win over those things that their own sensual appetite desired.”⁷¹

Lapini opens his exposition of the *Triumphs* with an idea attributed to one of the most celebrated

⁷⁰ Dionisotti 1974, 76-77.

⁷¹ “Publio Cornelio Scipione Illustrissimo P. Nisuna maggiore victoria o più singulare triumpho essere diffiniva che se medesimo vincere in quelle cose le quali da lo appetito sensitivo erano desiderate.” Petrarch 1475, 5r. Translation from the original Italian is mine.

military commanders of ancient Rome, Scipio Africanus, through which the commentator establishes the theme of dominance of sensual appetites as central to the entire poem. In order to conduct a life that is led by purposeful reason rather than irrational desire, Lapini admonishes his readers, nothing is more advantageous to men than knowing themselves and their journey in this world. The ancient aphorism *Nosce te ipsum* (*know thyself*), which had prompted humankind for centuries from the pronaos of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, demonstrates for the writer that such principle had been true since the dawn of Western civilization. It was precisely with the intent of facilitating this process of discovery for those eager to learn about themselves, Lapini argues, that renowned poet Petrarch had chosen to illustrate this very subject matter under the “graceful and wondrous veil” that is poetic language (“sotto ligiadro & mirifico velamento poetico”).⁷² Here, Lapini’s recourse to the metaphor of poetry as a veil concealing higher religious and philosophical truths draws directly from the thought of fourteenth-century humanist Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), who in his encyclopedic work titled *Genealogy of the Gentile Gods* (*Genealogia Deorum Gentilium*, 1350–1362) had offered a passionate defense of poetic expression as a unique art form embedded with the capacity to both delight and educate readers by presenting divine mysteries under fictional form.⁷³ In doing so, the fifteenth-century commentator began his own literary enterprise by positioning himself in a rich tradition of re-reading and interpreting authoritative works of literature from the classical past and the medieval past under Christian lenses. Hoping to provide material that is both useful and inspirational,

⁷² “Volsse lo excellentissimo et preclarissimo poeta Francesco Petrarca sotto ligiadro & mirifico velamento poetico lo adito preparare & polire a chi con sincero animo voleva intrare ad intendere se stesso (...) Così ligiadramente introduce il nostro poeta sei gloriosi triumphi, l’uno all’altro como superior e dominatore designando nelli li quali la clarissima intelligentia d’ogni stato degli uomini è collocate e aperta.” Petrarch 1475, 5r.

⁷³ “[Poetry] is an art or skill, not empty, but full of the sap of natural vigor for those who would through fiction subdue the senses through the mind.” Osgood 1956, 39.

Lapini proposes to explain the purpose of (“la intentione explanare”) and bring to light the admirable doctrine (“admiranda doctrina”) contained in Petrarch’s *Triumphs*.⁷⁴ Following in the exemplary exegetical method of the ancients (“Cosi pare che ne insigni Servio Onorato al principio della opera e delucidazione di Virgilio,” “As taught by Maurus Servius Honoratus at the beginning of his work on Virgil”), Lapini plans to focus his exposition on four important aspects of the poem: its subject matter (“subgetto e materia”); its purpose (“la utilità”); its title and author (“il nome del libro & auctore”), and finally, its structure (“la sua divisione”).⁷⁵

The first category – the subject matter of the poem – is identified by Lapini as the human soul itself, its earthly journey (“transito”), as well as its shifting state in the afterlife (these, called “varietà” by Lapini, include the remembrance of soul’s earthly deeds and accomplishments and the judgement given to it by its fellow men, as we will see shortly).⁷⁶ In the lengthy paragraphs that follow, Lapini summarizes the stages of the soul’s evolution for the reader, starting with the two qualities that, according to the speculations of Greek philosopher Aristotle (in his *De Anima*) and Roman orator Cicero (in his *De Officiis*), can be distinguished within it at different stages of its earthly existence: these are the sensual appetite, which dominates men in youth, and the intellect or reason, which emerges in old age.⁷⁷ In the next stage of the journey, Lapini continues, the union of the soul with the body eventually comes to an end and their separation occurs, which is known as death in ancient philosophies as well as in Christian doctrine. However,

⁷⁴ “Spero che tale exemplo e tale opera forse accenderà qualche ingegno” Petrarch 1475, 5r.

⁷⁵ Petrarch 1475, 5v. These sections reflect the structure typically found in medieval commentaries and known as *accessus*.

⁷⁶ “Dico la intentione & subgeto essere l’anima umana sotto considerazione di transito & varietà per rispetto & relatione alle humane opere & al giudicio di quelle dato dagli huomini” Petrarch 1475, 14.

⁷⁷ “Per la qual cosa morali filosofi & Aristotile al fine del primo della Etica & Cicerone in primo officio due principii di operazione essere diffiniscono cioè appetito sensitivo e intellecto overo ragione. (...) La donde essendo quello [lo animo] divisi in due generali parti cioe gioventu e vecchiezza per questo i nella prima parte giovenili in ne la seconda senili operazioni ne derivano delle quale le prime meritatamente allo appetito le siconde alla ragione per gli huomini se attribuiscono.” Petrarch 1475, 14.

Lapini observes, historically there has been much disagreement about the destiny of the soul after this stage, as the existence of many different theories put forth since antiquity demonstrates.⁷⁸ According to the writer, while all the doctrines conceived before the Christian revelation incurred in some degree of error compared to the word of the Bible, almost all of them correctly posited a somewhat extensive period of time between the moment when the soul is separated from the body and their eventual reunion – an interval during which, continues Lapini, two “qualities” pertain to the soul: the first one is the memory of the virtuous deeds accomplished in life, which bring praise and fame upon men; the second is the passing of time, slowly consuming said memories and the reputation they produced.⁷⁹ Finally, concludes Lapini, from a measurable state the soul passes on to an eternal and infinite dimension where the individual conscience of the intellect is no longer individually recognizable.⁸⁰ This, according to the modern commentator, is the journey that Petrarch intended to narrate metaphorically in his book of triumphs, with the first allegory, Love, representing the sensual appetite dominating men in youth; the second, Chastity, symbolized by Madonna Laura, standing for reason emerging in adulthood and old age; the third, Death, symbolizing the passing of Laura – that is, human reason – and corresponding to the moment of the separation of the soul from the body; the fourth

⁷⁸ For instance, details Lapini, Epicureans believed in its complete destruction while others, like Plato, posited its immediate ascension to the heavens; coming closer to the truth, Pythagoras subjected the soul to a purging time in the infernal regions before it could access the Elysian fields and eventually return to the earth in a different body. Aristotle and the philosophers of the Peripatetic school rejected this vision, conceiving the soul as one universal, incorruptible intellect, and similarly the stoics believed in its immortality. Petrarch 1475, 15.

⁷⁹ “...la donde in tal stato pare che due qualità se le convengano. L’una cioè che delle opere virtuose esercitate nella vita mentre era col corpo se le attribuisca & laude & fama. L’altra è che corrompendosi per lunghezza di tempo qualunque effetto e producto in nel mondo pare che etiamdio tale laude e fama si abbi a denigrare secondo la sententia di Salomone...” Petrarch 1475, 15.

⁸⁰ “Passa etiamdio da questo stato l’anima quale è misura finita essendo ogni movimento finito & il tempo sua misura come in nel quarto della Phisica Aristotele dimostra a una sempiterna e distantia infinita alla quale poichè è condotta non puo più lo intelletto nostro per non esserne capace suo stato considerare.” Petrarch 1475, 16.

allegory is the triumph of Fame after Death, the stage at which the virtuous deeds of past men are remembered and celebrated to inspire others to follow in their example; the fifth corresponds to the dissolution of worldly Fame caused by the passing of Time; lastly, the sixth is the triumph of Eternity that follows the divine Last Judgement.⁸¹

Continuing his analysis of the *Triumphs* according to the four categories of traditional exegesis, Lapini identifies the purpose (“la utilità”) of the poem with its virtuous and righteous content, pointing out how its moralizing quality allowed the poem to inspire readers and lead them toward a good life.⁸² After tracing back the origin of the poem’s title to the tradition of triumphal parades held in ancient Rome to celebrate the military victories of their leaders and their army, the commentator’s focus shifts onto the historical figure of Petrarch (“il nome del libro & auctore”), whose life and career Lapini retraces in detail from the poet’s Tuscan origins and upbringing at the papal court in the French city of Avignon to the formative years in Bologna, the encounter with the beloved Laura, the friendships with members of the most

⁸¹ “Considerando adunque il più clarissimo nostro poeta questo dell’anima transito cum artificiosa leggiadria et erudito velamento poetico statui & compose sey Triumphs. El primo pertinente all’anima qual era per la forte inclinazione del corpo condescende sicondo il dominio di sentimenti operare fingendo amore per lo quale intende lo appetito sensitivo triumphare degli huomini nel tempo della gioventù. El sicondo introduce la ragione triumphare d’amore: la quale intende sotto il velame de Madonna Laura la qual cosa naturalmente interviene al tempo della virilità e vecchizza e quando le sensitive dilettaçioni insieme col caldo naturale di quelle istrumento sono declinate. El terzo songiunge la morte triumphare di Laura cioè della ragione operare. Nel quarto luogo triumpha la fama di morte poiche quantunque non piu per se operi lu huomo sforza niente di meno & commuove per suo esempio gli altri virtuosamente operare onde continuo si celebra in laude continuo il suo nome ne diventa piu chiaro. Triumphs & quinto el tempo della fama cunciosiacosa che sua longheza corrumpe ogni cosa mortale. Triumphs ultimamente la eternita del tempo la quale nui non potendo distintamente comprendere ma dovendo quella seguitare al giudicio universale per lo suo principio il glorioso poeta ce la dimostra nel sexto triumpho” Petrarch 1475, 16.

⁸² “Si vera è la sententia di tutti i morali che le operatione virtuose overo essa virtu sia sommo bene & quello si diffinisce essere utile che per destra via ci conduce alla possessione di tal bene certamente niuna cosa a noi puo dimostrarsi piu utile che la presente doctrina” Petrarch 1475, 16.

prominent families of Italy, and finally the coronation as poet laureate in Rome and the late years spent composing the unfinished poem in his retreat near Padua.⁸³

Lastly, the commentator analyzes the poem's structure ("la sua divisione"), essentially offering a restatement of the subject matter previously identified. Lapini sees the work as organized in six parts (which correspond to the chapters originally planned by Petrarch), one for each variation in the state of the soul: the first centers on the sensual appetite, which in the poetic fiction is symbolized by Cupid (*Triumphus Cupinidis*, or *Triumph of Love*); the second shows the dominion of reason, personified by Laura (*Triumphus Pudicitiae*, or *Triumph of Chastity*); the third part describes death (*Triumphus Mortis*, or *Triumph of Death*); the fourth centers on fame attributed by men after death (*Triumphus Famae*, or *Triumph of Fame*); the fifth deals with time obscuring fame (*Triumphus Temporis*, or *Triumph of Time*); and finally the sixth part shows the last judgement followed by eternity (*Triumphus Eternitatis*, or *Triumph of Eternity*).⁸⁴

Making use of D. D. Carnicelli's analysis of Lapini's commentary, which has demonstrated the role of the humanist from Siena in establishing a tradition of allegorical exegesis of Petrarch's poem that accompanied its reception throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, it will be my intent now to uncover the deep affinities that exist between Lapini's approach to Petrarch's poem and Costa's Bentivoglio *Triumphs*.⁸⁵ Ultimately, I suggest

⁸³ Petrarch 1475, 17-18.

⁸⁴ "Dividesi adunque principalmente la presente opera in sei parte si come dinanza è dimostrato essere le variationi che all'anima nostra generalmente secondo il mondano intendere si attribuiscono delle quali nella prima determina messer Francesco [Petrarca] del dominio dello appetito sensitivo il quale secondo la poetica fantasia simula nella persona di cupido. Nella seconda tracta il principato della ragione la quale finge per la persona di Madonna Laura. Nella terza parte describe della morte terza varieta all'anima attribuita. Nella quarta si giunge della fama all'animo doppo la morte referita dagli huomini. Nella quinta adduce la longecia del tempo predetta fama obscurare. Nella sexta e ultima dimostra al giudizio universale divino seguire la eternita." Petrarch 1475, 18.

⁸⁵ Carnicelli 1969, 57-64 and especially 63-64.

that the Christianized interpretation put forward in the former lies at the heart of the selection of this subject matter for the pictorial decoration of Giovanni II's chapel and can account for some of the iconographic anomalies registered in the images.

In his ideation of the scenes, Costa made some unique compositional choices that differentiate the Bentivoglio diptych from iterations of this Petrarchan subject found in the visual arts up to that time. A Florentine *cassone* (marriage chest) from the 1450s, for instance, exemplifies the most common way of illustrating this subject matter in Renaissance Italy, that is, following a horizontal format that easily allowed artists to display the succession of triumphal chariots and their corteges (figs. 12-13). In that example by Francesco Pesellino (1422-1457), the six chariots are lined up in sequence from left to right and set within a continuous landscape, the rectangular shape of the panel reinforcing the progression of the poem's narrative. In contrast, Costa organized his scenes around two sole chariots – those of Fame and Death – and their converging groups of followers, with no other entities preceding or following. This way, the diptych appears to be self-contained, and although the orientation of the two chariots seems to suggest that their eventual clash is inevitable, their march has come to a stable halt as the groups face each other from afar and the figures (and animals) pose motionless, hardly suggesting an imminent confrontation. If each entity in Petrarch's *Triumphs* stands for a different 'state' in the earthly journey of the soul, as Renaissance readers understood the poem from Lapini's commentary, the interconnected nature of two of entities is conveyed ingeniously by Costa by presenting them as complementary rather than exclusive to each other.

The symmetry of the compositional elements and the sense of stasis lent to the figures encourages a reading of the diptych that is circular rather than linear and serves the aims of more effectively expressing the allegorical meaning of the poetic subject matter. I suggest that a

reading of these images begins in the upper left canvas, where the history of humanity begins with the *Creation of the First Man and Woman* at the center of the circular field and continues with the eight narratives unravelling along the edges; the exemplary value of those ancient histories, immortalized through the presence of the figure of Fame below, is passed down onto the rulers of yesterday (the portraits of Bentivoglio ancestors scattered among the cortege) as well as of today and tomorrow (Giovanni II and Annibale in the forefront).⁸⁶ Continuing into the next canvas, the equalizing experience of Death sanctions the separation of the body from the soul, which can be seen ascending to the heavens above escorted by two angels. Reading from top left to top right, the mode of presentation devised by Costa for the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* thus bears little resemblance to the way artists illustrated Petrarch's poem in fifteenth century Italy; instead, these images rely on symmetrical composition and semi-circular narration to express a comprehensive belief system visualized through the literary metaphor of the triumph.

In addition to these compositional clues, the influence of Lapini's Cristianizing reading of the *Triumphs* on the Bentivoglio diptych is signaled most prominently by the inclusion in the paintings of a representation of a human soul, which is placed in the center of the bright mandorla demarcating the heavenly vision in the upper half of the right-hand canvas (fig. 14). This element, which is absent from other known illustrations of Petrarch's poem, only makes sense in the light of the allegorical interpretation of the *Triumphs* put forth by Lapini, according to whom the human soul is the ultimate symbolic protagonist of Petrarch's literary fiction. This is depicted here as a small figure in the nude, an iconography which the artist also adopts in the Dantean scene in the backdrop of the *Triumph of Fame* (see chapter 3 of this dissertation) and

⁸⁶ For their identification in the crowd, see Negro and Roio 2001.

which points back to medieval precedents while also echoing Lapini's description as "simple and naked after its separation from the body."⁸⁷

Depictions of Christian souls are a fairly rare occurrence in Western art, where the representation of mankind's spiritual component has been closely connected to ever-changing religious beliefs about the soul's relationship to the body and its fate in the afterlife; as those beliefs evolved over the centuries, the images adapted. Borrowing from an iconography already in use in Roman and Greek art, early Christian images initially showed the human soul as a full-length orant (an upright figure with outstretched arms), a figure denoting prayer throughout the ancient world. These figures usually appeared in funerary contexts such as the catacombs and depicted specific individuals who had passed away, effectively offering a portrait of the deceased in the afterlife.⁸⁸ However, starting in the sixth century, this iconography was slowly abandoned in favor of the small nude figure, signaling a shift in Christian attitudes toward death and ongoing debates around the origin and nature of the soul. According to Deborah Markow, who first investigated the development of this iconography in medieval art, such shift was caused by the increased need for Christian art to differentiate itself from pagan imagery, and a new Christian outlook toward the function of images.⁸⁹ Once immortality was framed as achievable only through spiritual reunion with God, the perpetuation of someone's likeness was no longer regarded as a sufficient condition to grant their immortality in the afterlife and depictions of the deceased could no longer fulfill salvific functions. In this respect, a major actor indirectly reshaping the way the human soul came to be depicted in the visual arts was Saint Gregory the Great (540–604). This Pope established that all souls – with the exception of those of saints,

⁸⁷ "Ma perchè questa sia non più oltre dimostra il terzo stato dell'anima qual è per se sola rimanere semplice e nuda dopo la sua separazione dal corpo" Petrarch 1475, 102r. Translation is mine.

⁸⁸ Markow 1983, chapter 1, 5-31.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

martyrs, and apostles – needed to spend varying amounts of time in Purgatory atoning their sins before they could be admitted into Heaven.⁹⁰ This meant that the triumphant figure of the orant, sprung out of an early-Christian optimistic view of bodily death as a moment of direct passage to a glorious afterlife, came soon to be perceived as too jubilant for a soul that must await judgement and has yet to earn its place in the presence of God.

Beginning in the sixth century, the Roman Church also began to clarify the problem of the origin of the soul and its place in the creation, which informed where and how this was depicted in the visual arts. Up until that moment in fact, the theories of early-Christian theologian Origen of Alexandria, who held that souls had existed since before the beginning of time as angelic beings and thus preceded the physical bodies that they animated, had dominated the Byzantine Empire in the East; in contrast, in the West, the prevalent belief came to be that souls are created and implanted by God at the moment of the creation of each individual.

Although a major figure like Saint Augustine contributed to maintaining some ambiguity around this debate by affirming, for instance, that Adam's soul was created both in the beginning of time and on the sixth day of the creation, the fathers of the church Saint Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine himself affirmed the principle of the *ex-nihilo* creation of the soul, that is to say, its creation had taken place 'from nothing' as opposed to having always existed.⁹¹ For Markow, this creed found an original visualization in the now-destroyed Genesis cycle formerly in the basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome, whose decorations have survived only in the pages of the seventeenth-century Barberini codex (see figs. 47-49).⁹² In the very first scene of that biblical cycle, which Markow proposed to recognize as *The Creation of the Souls of Adam and Eve*, the

⁹⁰ Markow 1983, 21

⁹¹ O'Connor 1921, 68-69

⁹² For a discussion of this work, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

spiritual components of the two ancestors are represented as two nude figures of reduced-size floating inside two mandorlas – a visual device intended to dematerialize the corporeal bodies enclosed within and convey their impalpable spiritual quality.⁹³ Although accusations of ‘creationism’ could have been made against an image like this, whose placement preceding the scenes that illustrate the creation of the physical world and of the two ancestors might have potentially suggested to Medieval viewers the preexistence of the souls over the bodies, the San Paolo mural ultimately remains faithful to the scriptures without contradicting the *ex-nihilo* principle.⁹⁴

The widespread adoption of this iconography in the Genesis cycles of important Medieval basilicas in central Italy (including at the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi, fig. 15) confirms its favorable reception among church officials and churchgoers alike, and this medieval iconography of the human soul as a small, floating figure in the nude might have ultimately supplied Costa with an inspiring precedent.⁹⁵ Even the creative use of the mandorla, a shape evoked numerous times through the arrangement of figures in the upper half of the right-hand Bentivoglio canvas, denotes the artist’s attention to medieval forms and symbols that carried on into the Renaissance. However, the gesture of supplication in which the Bentivoglio soul is depicted, with the hands clasped in front of the chest, suggests associations with another category of images of the soul found in depictions of the Last Judgement as well as of the particular judgment. The latter, intended as the assessment of a soul immediate after death for the provisional allocation of a reward or a punishment in the afterlife, is not an event described in the

⁹³ Markow 1983, 34, 43. On the symbolism of the mandorla see Brendel 1944, especially 18 and note 50.

⁹⁴ For more on the development of the iconography of the Creation, see chapter 5 of this dissertation.

⁹⁵ Additional illustrious examples of depictions of souls as small human figures that Costa might have known are Giovanni Pisano’s *Crucifixion* relief on the pulpit of the Pisa cathedral (1302-1310); Francesco Traini’s fresco of the *Triumph of Death* at the Pisa Camposanto (c. 1350); and Vitale da Bologna’s frescos of the *Last Judgement* in the Pomposa Abbey, not far from Bologna (1351).

Bible, but rather one theorized by the fathers of the church (and chiefly by Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great), who distinguished it from the former in several critical ways: firstly, whereas the Last Judgement is a universal event affecting all humankind simultaneously, the particular judgement occurs upon the death of each individual, who is singularly affected; secondly, the particular judgement is an evaluation of the soul and does not concern the body, which will not be resurrected until the end of days; finally, while Christ is the ultimate judge on the Last Day, the particular judgment is often performed by Saint Michael shown in the act of weighing souls, or otherwise evoked through the presence of symbolic elements such as scales or balances.⁹⁶

While these distinctions may have been clear to theologians, iconographic differences in the artistic depictions of the soul remained “fluid and unfixed for many centuries.”⁹⁷ Beginning in the ninth or tenth century, psalters (books of Psalms or prayers owned by Christian devotees who utilized them in their daily practices) show an increasing number of depictions of the particular judgement, reflecting growing anxieties among medieval Christians concerning the immediate destiny of their soul in the afterlife.⁹⁸ Although many medieval psalters contain numerous representations of human souls, they also display surprisingly little consistency in their iconographic solutions. The illuminations in the richly decorated Carolingian manuscripts of Utrecht and Stuttgart, for instance, include many representations of souls as both reduced or regularly sized human figures, clad in tunics or in the nude, in the supplicant pose or otherwise gesturing. However, one image from the Stuttgart example resonates especially with what will be

⁹⁶ Markow 1983, 57ff.

⁹⁷ Markow 1983, 58.

⁹⁸ As Old Testament texts, psalms do not contain explicit references to the particular judgement, which as a concept is absent from the Bible and derives instead from subsequent interpretations of the fathers of the church; thus, Markow sees the illustrations found in medieval psalters as reflection of those later expositions. Markow 1983, 68-69.

said later in this chapter about connections between music and the soul articulated in the Bentivoglio chapel. This is the scene painted on fol. 55r to illustrate Psalm 43:5, where the soul – a figure in a classical dress literally identified as “anima” by an inscription in capital letters – sits pensive on the top of a mountain while a psalmist plays a string instrument to accompany his wishful prayer (fig. 16).⁹⁹ As I will demonstrate later in this dissertation, Costa alludes to the salvific function of poetry and music through the inclusion in the foreground of his *Triumph of Death* of the figure of Orpheus in visual (and symbolic) alignment with that of the human soul in the center of the celestial vision. Rather than suggesting hard-to-prove, direct links between medieval psalters and the Bentivoglio picture, it is my intention here to draw attention to the personal character that those artifacts share with Costa’s diptych, having both a patron’s concern for the destiny of their soul at their core. In the Bentivoglio canvas, this is made all the more evident by the soul’s appearance (fig. 17), and particularly its shoulder-length hair, which is a recognizable feature of many Bentivoglio family members (and particularly Giovanni II) as recorded in their portraits disseminated throughout the chapel. This important detail, so far gone unnoticed in the literature, seems to suggest that this figure stands not only for the universal human soul that is the protagonist of Lapini’s allegorical reading of the *Triumph*, but it is also an embodiment of Giovanni himself, who through this pictorial decoration expresses the wish for his own the spiritual salvation and that of his ancestors who are memorialized in the chapel.

Finally, Markow’s investigation has shown that in early-Christian imagery, reduced-size figures in the nude are also found in Baptism scenes, where they represent neophytes (new

⁹⁹ In the King James version, the Psalm reads: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

converts) who have received the Holy Spirit through the first sacrament of initiation.¹⁰⁰ In thinking about renowned Quattrocento depictions of Christ's *Baptism*, I could not help but be reminded of Piero della Francesca's earliest surviving work, the altarpiece destined to the chapel dedicated to Saint John the Baptist in the Camaldolese abbey of the Tuscan town of Sansepolcro, today in the National Gallery in London (after 1437, fig. 18). A Renaissance picture *par excellence*, Piero's *Baptism*, constructed around an invisible grid of harmonious geometrical forms, centers on the column-like figure of Christ, whose graceful contrapposto pose and praying hands are echoed in the stance and gesture of the minute Bentivoglio soul. This small figure in the *Triumph of Death* thus encapsulates a nexus of meanings and references that build on the Christian interpretation of Petrarch's *Triumph* proposed by Lapini while also evoking period preoccupations with judgement after death and spiritual salvation.

A closer look at the celestial assembly to which the Bentivoglio soul appears to be completing its ascension toward will now be necessary in order to contribute to a fuller understanding of this area of the composition as well as of the meaning of this canvas as a whole. At the top of the luminous mandorla populated with angelic hosts that fills the upper half of the right-hand *Triumph*, Costa depicted an unusual group of three divine figures (fig. 19). At the center is God the Father, a bearded elder comparable to the figure engaged in the *Creation of Adam and Eve* in the left-hand canvas (fig. 50), who can be seen sitting with open arms as if to bless the two figures below; these are Christ, at his left, pointing his index fingers toward the Virgin Mary, who is seated at God's right and modestly averts her gaze from her Son. While the identity of the holy personages is easily recognizable, the grouping constitutes an iconographic

¹⁰⁰ Markow 1983, 76-77. As an important means to guarantee deliverance from death, Baptism was regarded as an essential condition for salvation throughout the early modern period (especially in a day and age when this might have occurred suddenly and at an early age).

anomaly both in itself and within the program of the diptych. We know from Petrarch's poem and from Lapini's commentary that the sixth and last triumph, or state of the soul, is that of Eternity, a dimension of either perpetual bliss or endless damnation that follows the event of the Last Judgement.¹⁰¹ While fifteenth-century illustrations of the poem tended to render the *Triumph of Eternity* as a vision of either Christ dominating the heavens and the earth, as in Pesellino's example (fig. 13), or as the Trinity with the Father, the Son (often depicted as the Crucified Christ), and the Holy Spirit aligned as one entity (fig. 20), Costa departs from that tradition by omitting the Holy Spirit and including the figure of the Virgin Mary instead.

In Christian art, when the mother of Jesus is depicted alongside God the Father and the adult Christ, it is often to illustrate the episode of her Coronation as the Queen of Heaven; this subject appeared as early as in the twelfth century in Northern Europe and travelled south where, by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it had become one of the most common scenes represented in Italian art in church decorations, altarpiece, and private devotional panels. Another instance where the Virgin Mary appears by the side of her adult son is the Last Judgement, where she can usually be found at the right of the throne advocating in favor of humankind. Thirteenth-century Gothic cathedrals at Chartres, Amiens, and Paris in France constitute the earliest instances where these two distinct iconographies were juxtaposed in European Christian art, with Mary's Coronation often being paired with the depiction of the Last

¹⁰¹ Lapini's introductory words on this last chapter of the poem read: "daremo principio alla expositione di questo degno mirabile e glorioso triumpho dal nostro poeta nel sexto luogo e ultimo collocato l'anima umana la quale gia di sopra è stata notificata variarsi in cinque stati e quali la relazione di lei a questo mondo puo porgere poiche al corpo unita e lo principio dello appetito e della ragione ha appetito ind' separata per morte celebrata per fama & infine obscurata dalla longheza del tempo terminandosi quello al di del giudizio divino al quale poi segue la omimoda eternita gia si adduce allo stato sexto della invariabilita nel quale essendosi lei per volontà divina riunita al corpo è necessario o che per li preceduti meriti in sempiterno si ralleghi nel cielo o che per le colpe passate perpetuamente sia cruciata in inferno." Petrarch 1475, 223v.

Judgement in the sculptural programs of adjacent portals. As the closest human to God and in her double role as Mother of Christ and Queen of Heaven, Mary offered renewed hopes to concerned medieval Christians who could now plead for their spiritual salvation through her intercession with Christ at the time of Judgement.

Originated in the context of the enduring struggle for independence from the church of Rome and of an upsurge in Marian devotion, a fifteenth-century Bolognese monument is believed to have pushed the connection between the iconography of the Coronation and of the Last Judgement first introduced by the French precedents even further. This is the Bolognini chapel in the Bolognese church of S. Petronio decorated in fresco by Emilian painter Giovanni da Modena (1379–1455) in 1408-12. Specifically, the south wall features the *Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity in Paradise and Hell* (fig. 21), a scene that occupies the entire surface – an arched wall that reaches a height of sixty feet – and constitutes a fascinating iconographic anomaly in the Italian artistic landscape.¹⁰² While the Last Judgement itself is not depicted in this decoration, which was ordered by Bartolomeo Bolognini for his funerary chapel before passing away in 1411, the richness of detail with which Giovanni da Modena describes the horrendous punishments suffered by the damned in Hell and the orderly beauty of the angelic hosts filling the ranks of Paradise draws from the tradition of the Day of Judgement and suggest that the scene presented here is a vision of a moment subsequent to the end of days.¹⁰³ The depiction of Mary's regal crowning among the blessed, never before represented in this context, has been

¹⁰² For the fresco, here I use the title established by Marnie Anjenette Leist in Leist 2005.

¹⁰³ Comparable depictions of Hell that might have influenced Giovanni da Modena are found in the Strozzi chapel in the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella, where between 1354 and 1357 Andrea di Cione, known as Orcagna, had painted the ranks of the blessed on the south wall and the Dantean hell on the north wall of the private chapel in addition to the Judgement scene on the altar wall, and in the Pisa Camposanto, where Buonamico Buffalmacco executed a monumental fresco cycle that included the *Triumph of Death* and the *Last Judgement*.

explained as an attempt to elicit her active intervention on behalf of Bolognini's soul by wielding her power as humankind's advocate, *Mediatrice*, and *Co-Redemptrix*.¹⁰⁴

In the footsteps of a small, but illustrious Italian tradition of private funerary chapels whose pictorial programs evoke (more or less directly) the Judgement and celebrate the Virgin's powerful role in it – from Giotto's Scrovegni chapel in Padua, to the Strozzi and the Bolognini chapels in Florence and Bologna – for the Bentivoglio *Triumph of Death* Costa imagined a divine assembly that possesses elements from the iconographies of the Triumph of Eternity, the Last Judgement, and the Coronation of the Virgin but ultimately depicts neither. Instead, this might be understood as a wishful vision of what the soul hopes to see at the time of its admittance into God's eternal presence. While drawing from different iconographic traditions, Costa's solution represents a *unicum* that concludes the *Triumphs'* allegorical narrative constructed through the artistic vocabulary of the Petrarchan theme to fulfill the eschatological needs of the funerary space that the paintings occupy.

After all, Mary's prominent inclusion along the two holy persons of the Trinity is further explained by Giovanni's special devotion toward the Virgin, as the canvas on the opposite wall of the Bentivoglio chapel also attests. The *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* (fig. 3), which Costa completed right before the triumphal diptych, seems to complement the meaning of the scene it sits across from by featuring two inscriptions that are formulated as if they were voiced directly by the patriarch and his fellow citizens and addressed to the Virgin: "ME / PATRIAM ET DULCES / CARA CUM CONIUGE / NATOS / COMENDO PRECIBUS / VIRGO BEATA / TUIS. MCCCCLXXXVIII AGVSTI. LAVRENTIVS COSTA FACIEBAT" ("Oh Blessed Virgin, I entrust to your intercession myself, the motherland, the sweet children

¹⁰⁴ See Leist 2005, Chapter Three: Direct Precedents, 71-94, and especially 76ff.

and the beloved spouse. August 1488. Lorenzo Costa was making [this]”), and “ASPICE NOS. NOS ALMA FOVE. NOS DIVA TUERE” (“Look upon us. Comfort us. Preserve us”).¹⁰⁵

So far, this chapter has shown that although the subject matter represented by Costa in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* originates in Petrarch’s homonymous poem, the iconographic departures from consolidated Petrarchan imagery observed in this diptych are connected to the painting’s reconfiguration as an allegorical vision in a religious space. In the second part of this chapter, I would like to take a step back and ask why Costa used a poetic subject matter to articulate an artistic program centered on the journey of the human soul. In order to do so, I shall return to Lapini’s introduction to his edition of the *Triumphs*, where the commentator refers back to Boccaccio’s defense of poetry and the metaphor as a veil for divine truths. Attempting to identify the origins of poetry, Boccaccio refers that this art “arose with the holy rites of the Ancients,” but explains that no consensus existed among scholars about the specific time and place where that happened.¹⁰⁶ While some attributed its invention to the Hebrew people, particularly to Moses, whom they credited with having established the rituals and holy practices of the Israelites, Boccaccio declares himself inclined to follow the opinion of Aristotle and Leontius, who believed that poetry was born with the Greeks instead.¹⁰⁷ Although they had not received the Christian revelation, which in the eyes of the humanist made it impossible for them to have known the one true God, Boccaccio recognizes that the Greeks had nevertheless understood that the world as they knew it was created by a superior being and they had erected temples and

¹⁰⁵ The first inscription, in elegant block letters, is placed on a fictive marble slab positioned strategically at the base of the Virgin’s throne, in the space that opens up between the two groups in which the Bentivoglio children are divided; the second inscription is painted in golden letters on the arch behind the throne of the Virgin.

¹⁰⁶ Osgood 1956, 42.

¹⁰⁷ Osgood 1956, 43.

established rituals to honor the deities that they venerated. To this end, some especially gifted men, animated by divine inspiration, composed hymns and sacred songs capable of conveying holy truths through words and music, thus sanctioning the birth of poetry, or beautiful speech:

And since it would appear inappropriate to address a Deity as you would a farmhand, an underling, or a familiar friend, the wiser among them wanted a polished and artistic manner of speech devised, and they committed this task to the priest. Some of these – and among the, it is thought, were Musaeus, Linus, and Orpheus – under the prompting stimulus of the Divine Mind, invented strange songs in regular time and measure, designed for the praise of God. To strengthen the authority of these songs, they enclosed the high mysteries of things divine in a covering of words, with the intention that the adorable majesty of such things should not become an object of too common knowledge, and thus fall into contempt. Now since the art thus discovered seemed wonderful and wholly new, they named it, as I have said, from its *effect*, and called it poetry or *poetes*, that is, in Latin *exquisita locutio*; and they who had composed the songs were named poets. And, as the name favors the effect, the belief is that both the musical accompaniment of poetry and all its other accoutrements arose among the Greeks.¹⁰⁸

Although Boccaccio was certainly not the first to draw a connection between the origin of poetry and that of sacred song or prayer (for one, Augustine, in the *De Civitate Dei*, 18.14, had also mentioned Orpheus, Musaeus, and Linus as exemplary poets and ‘theologues’ of antiquity), the articulation of the affinities between these two forms of artistic expression in his *Genealogy* and its resonance in the Renaissance cannot be overlooked.¹⁰⁹ It is my aim here to demonstrate that

¹⁰⁸ Osgood 1956, 44.

¹⁰⁹ “During the same time arose the poets, who were also called theologues, because they made hymns about the gods.” Osgood 1956, 62 n. 12.

by utilizing poetic subject matters – Dante’s *Comedia* and Petrarch’s *Triumphs* – to articulate a message about the destiny of the human soul in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, Costa intentionally elicited the traditionally recognized potential of poetic imagination to access spiritual spheres of knowledge in order to transform the secular subject matter of his images into a bearer of divine truths. In light of Boccaccio’s words on the early history of poetry and its forefathers, the presence of one figure in the right-hand canvas is particularly revealing of these intentions. This is the man in the exquisite violet tunic seated on a rock formation with his back to the viewer who appears to be playing a corded musical instrument for a small crowd gathered around him in the lower right corner of the *Triumph of Death* (fig. 22).

In the catalogue that accompanied the important exhibition dedicated to Bolognese humanist culture, Marzia Faietti identified Costa’s figure of a musician as an influential visual source for an engraving known as *Orpheus Charming the Animals* (c. 1506) by Marcantonio Raimondi, a renowned and prolific engraver and printmaker active in Northern Italy over the first three decades of the sixteenth century (fig. 23).¹¹⁰ Orpheus of Thrace was the mythic son of Apollo, the god of poetry and music, and of Calliope, the muse of song and epic poetry.¹¹¹ In antiquity, Orpheus was best known for the charm of his song and lyre playing, capable of taming wild animals and pacifying men, as well as for his tragic love story with Euridice, which was recounted most memorably by the Roman poets Virgil and Ovid. Raimondi’s print shows what is perhaps the most popular moment of this myth in the visual arts since antiquity, that of Orpheus enchanting the animals with his music. In her catalogue entry on Raimondi’s engraving, Faietti rightly observed that the presentation of this figure, seen in profile and from behind, constituted a novelty and a peculiar departure from the best-known images of Orpheus circulating in Italy at

¹¹⁰ Faietti, Oberhuber, and Anselmi 1988, 142-143, cat. no. 27.

¹¹¹ Graf 2012.

this time, including in Bologna (fig. 24). But while she recognized Costa's invention as a direct precedent for Raimondi's image, Faietti did not identify the Bentivoglio figure as the mythic Orpheus, instead considering the latter as a generic depiction of 'musicò' (musician).¹¹² After all, beside the presence of the Renaissance *lira da braccio*, at this time commonly associated with the Thracian, Costa's figure does not appear to possess the traits that characterize Orpheus's appearance around the turn of the century, such as the Apollonian beauty and the athletic physique seen for instance in the plaques attributed to the Master of the Orpheus Legend or in another iterations of the mythical figure created by Raimondi himself at a later date (figs. 25-26). In contrast to those classicizing nudes, inspired by ancient models, the figure imagined by Costa is fully and heavily draped, further reinforcing the sense of mystery around this man's identity that his withdrawing pose conveys. However, an overlooked but important clue can help us make sense of his identity, and of his role within the decorative program of the Bentivoglio chapel. This is the style of his exoticizing dress and particularly the attribute of the turban, a customary head covering among many people in Asia and Africa, which in this case consists of a braided white headband wrapped around a ribbed Prussian-blue cone. In the eyes of Italian period viewers, the shape and color of this headdress would have suggested a central-Asian origin for its wearer, whom I will demonstrate, was intended by Costa to be recognized as the mythic poet Orpheus.¹¹³

Although less common in Western art, representations of Orpheus in 'eastern' dress were not unheard of (or unseen) in the Italian Quattrocento. Depictions like Luca della Robbia's *Orpheus* in the cycle dedicated to the liberal arts on Giotto's *Campanile*, a page from the illuminated manuscript known as *Le Nozze di Pesaro* ('The Pesaro Wedding'), or the decorative

¹¹² Faietti, Oberhuber, and Anselmi 1988, 142.

¹¹³ Kubiski 2001.

spalliere by Jacopo del Sellaio now dispersed across three European collections, exemplify the diffusion of this type in a variety of contexts – sacred, worldly, and domestic (figs. 27-30).¹¹⁴ In all these instances, the depiction of Orpheus fits significantly, if not fully, what Henri Stern first described as the Phrygian iconographic type, defined by the scholar as displaying a characteristic cap (“bonnet phrygien”), a long-sleeve tunic, “persian culottes” (Persian pants), and a mantle clasped on one shoulder.¹¹⁵ These ‘orientalizing’ fashion choices could certainly be considered attempts, by the aforementioned artists, to imagine the appearance of a mythological character as accurately as possible based on their presumed geographic origins. After all, according to tradition, Orpheus was born in Thrace, a region that encompassed parts of present-day Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey, but which by the fifteenth century was part of the Ottoman Empire after having experienced the dominion of the Persian and Roman empires as well as of Germanic tribes. However, more profound reasons exist at this time for Orpheus’s exotic characterization

¹¹⁴ Della Robbia’s five relief panels, once located on the north-side wall of the Campanile, the bell tower attached to the Florence Cathedral church of Santa Maria del Fiore, were moved to the Museum of the Opera del Duomo in 1964-1967 together with the rest of the *formelle* to protect them from atmospheric agents and were replaced by copies. They date to 1437-39 and include *Grammar*, represented by Priscian or Donatus teaching two young boys; *Logic and Dialectic*, or *Philosophy*, personified by Plato and Aristotle; and *Geometry and Arithmetic*, with Euclid and Pythagoras, in addition to Orpheus standing for *Music and Poetry*. See Montrésor 2000, 78, 86-87. *Le Nozze di Pesaro* refers to an incunabula, printed in 1475 and known in seven copies, that describes the spectacular celebrations that took place in Pesaro for the marriage of Costanzo Sforza, Lord of Pesaro, and Camilla d’Aragona of Naples. Perhaps at the same time, or in 1480, a presentation manuscript was also produced which is today in the Vatican Library (MS Vat. Urb. Lat. 899) and features miniatures by Nicolò d’Antonio degli Agli depicting the chariots and costumed figures that animated the streets and palaces of the city for four days, including the one referenced here that shows Orpheus. See Bordignon 2018, fig. 15, and Bridgeman 2013, 144, fig. 20. Three *spalliere* panels created by Jacopo del Sellaio in the mid-1480s have been identified as part of the same decorative ensemble and depict different episodes from the myth of Orpheus. These are now held in the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko National Museum of Arts (Kiev, Ukraine), in the Wawel Royal Castle (Krakow, Poland), and in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam, the Netherlands). For their identification and thorough interpretation, and for previous literature, see Miziołek 2009.

¹¹⁵ Stern 1955, 56. While Stern’s examination focused on mosaic floors from the ancient Mediterranean world, the two iconographic types he identified, the “Orphée phrygien” and the “Orphée grec” (the latter he described as wearing a chiton and mantel, or oftentimes just a mantel over his naked body, his head crowned with laurel), present the same dichotomy that I have observed between Greek and West-Asian connotations of Orpheus in Italian Renaissance art.

in the work of fifteenth-century Italian artists, including in Costa's *Triumph of Death* in the Bentivoglio chapel.

In his analysis of Sellaio's three *spalliere* panels, likely destined to the home of a yet unidentified newly wedded couple, Jerzy Miziołek convincingly restated and expanded the argument for a relation between these intriguing images and the revival of Orpheus's myth and of Orphic poetry in the Neoplatonist circles of Quattrocento Florence that was first established in early twentieth-century scholarship. Because Sellaio's images include several details that do not find a close correspondence with the traditional textual sources for Orpheus's story (Virgil's *Georgics* and Ovid's *Metamorphosis*), Aby Warburg and Paul Schubring suggested that those iconographic liberties may have reflected renditions of the myth seen in the staging of Angelo Poliziano's *Fabula di Orfeo* ('Orpheus's Fable'), a play composed for theatrical performance in Mantua in 1480 that reinforced the allegorical meaning of the fable.¹¹⁶ However, Poliziano's play does not satisfactorily account for all the iconographic anomalies of Sellaio's images, and other factors must be taken into consideration to fully account for the images' eccentricities.

One of the most original passages, perhaps the most significant for the purpose of the present discussion, has to do with the way Sellaio chose to conclude his narrative in the upper right corner of Kraków panel (fig. 31). Instead of showing Orpheus's violent death by the hands of the furious Maenads, a scene which other Renaissance artists had been intrigued by for the possibilities offered by the dynamism of the bodies in the midst of a violent fight, Sellaio pictures the Thracian poet, dressed in recognizably eastern clothes, as he spends his old age in loneliness and contemplation singing hymns accompanied by his *lira* while sitting inside a circular domed structure supported by columns that resembles a *tempietto all'antica*. In other

¹¹⁶ Warburg 1999, 447; Schubring 1923, II, 304.

words, this depiction appears to point to Orpheus's identity as the poet-theologian that was formed in late antiquity and was revived during the Renaissance.¹¹⁷ This conclusion, advanced by Miziołek, has illuminated the larger context in which Sellaio's images should be understood by uncovering the central role of Orpheus in the thought and philosophy of Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and of other prominent intellectuals of the Italian Quattrocento who reinterpreted and made that ancient figure relevant again in their time.¹¹⁸

In Florentine Neoplatonist philosophy, Orpheus came to be regarded as the initiator of all pre-Christian esoteric cults, and the enchanting powers of his poetry were interpreted as evidence of his supernatural inspiration and considered a form of divine revelation.¹¹⁹ A corpus of heterogeneous hymns and fragmentary poems of theogonical subject (relative to the origin of the gods), known as Orphic hymns and ascribed to Orpheus since antiquity, were partly translated by Ficino into Latin in the second half of the fifteenth-century.¹²⁰ The father of Florentine Neoplatonism even performed some of these hymns himself, accompanied by a *lira da braccio*, a practice that he considered conducive to philosophical and spiritual contemplation.¹²¹ His disciple, Pico della Mirandola, wrote of Orphic hymns that "nothing is more effective in natural magic than the hymns of Orpheus, provided that the correct music, disposition of the soul, and other circumstances are employed, as is known to the wise."¹²² Ultimately, Orphic literature, like many other texts produced in late antiquity taken to be classical by early Renaissance humanists and read allegorically, was regarded by the Florentine Neoplatonists as a vehicle for the

¹¹⁷ Miziołek 2009, 143-146.

¹¹⁸ Walker 1953; Chastel 1961, 272-274; Buck 1961, 19-22; Warden 1982. Another important work on the afterlife of the myth of Orpheus in the Christian world, although focused on an earlier period than the one I examine here, is Friedman 1970.

¹¹⁹ Voss 2002.

¹²⁰ Walker 1953, 103ff, and Graf 2012.

¹²¹ Walker 1953, 102-103.

¹²² Quoted from the original Latin in Warden 1982, 91. Translation is mine.

Christian message that had been transmitted through the centuries under a poetic veil meant to preserve the divine mysteries until the time of their revelation through Christ. Ficino and his followers were particularly adamant about the fact that Orpheus held a fundamental place in the line of pagan theologians whose monotheistic doctrines foreshadowed the advent of Christianity, considering him the intermediary link between Hebrew and Greek spirituality.¹²³ These liaison-figures were the Greek prophet Zoroaster; Hermes Trismegistus, a legendary figure originated from the combination of Greek and Egyptian gods; Aglaophemus, who came after Orpheus and initiated his successor, Pitagoras, to his rites; and finally, Plato, the ultimate foreshadower of Christian truth in Neoplatonic thought.

In Costa's triumphal diptych, the figure of Orpheus is placed strategically in the foreground of the lower right corner – almost a mediator between viewer and vision – and holds a key role in virtue of the continuity between ancient wisdom and Christian doctrine that the Thracian man symbolized in fifteenth-century Italy. Clearly more than a simple *musicus*, the poet-theologian sits at the threshold between real and painted space to attest that the art form he elevated to spiritual exercise is key to a full understanding of divine truths. Although Orpheus himself is unable to gaze directly into the celestial vision above (after all, he is a figure historically confined to antiquity and excluded from the Christian revelation) to fifteenth-century viewers his presence would have signaled that the Dantean and Petrarchan subject matter of this diptych was a poetic conduit to be interpreted allegorically, in line with the commentaries of Jacopo della Lana and Bernardo Lapini circulating at the time.

¹²³ On this theory, known as *prisca theologia*, see Idel 2002.

André Chastel wrote that for the Renaissance Neoplatonists no ancient fable was more appealing to represent the ‘life’ of the human soul than the story of Orpheus.¹²⁴ This observation, which rests on the numerous writings of Ficino and Pico, is all the more striking when considering that, as this chapter has intended to show, the entire triumphal subject matter of Costa’s Bentivoglio diptych was to be understood allegorically as representing the journey of the human soul in the various stages of its existence. In this sense, the figure of Orpheus, so cleverly integrated within the composition, not only points to the presence of a higher meaning concealed under the veil of poetic language that is the Petrarchan literary source, but it is also a symbol of the human soul in virtue of its Neoplatonic interpretation.

Renaissance Neoplatonists were certainly not the first ones to have attached Christian meanings to pagan stories and texts from ancient literature. One of the most prominent instances of this phenomenon is the allegorizing reading of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in medieval Europe, which first originated in France in the twelfth century with the work of Arnulf of Orléans.¹²⁵ This grammarian was the author of two texts that would strongly influence the reception of the *Metamorphoses* in Europe for the following two centuries: the glosses, which analyze the classical text from the point of view of grammar and offer a compendium on its content including on matters of history, geography, mythology, astronomy, and science; and the *Allegoriae*, which interpret the stories morally and allegorically. The latter prepared the way for Pierre Bersuire’s *Ovidius moralizatus* (1340-2),¹²⁶ the first complete adaptation of the classic poem in Christian terms, where the French humanist and friend of Petrarch first recounts the Ovidian fable according to the original source, and then offers the following reflection:

¹²⁴ Chastel 1961, 272.

¹²⁵ Ghisalberti 1932.

¹²⁶ Ghisalberti 1933.

Say allegorically that Orpheus the son of the sun is Christ the son of God the Father who wed Eurydice -- that is the human soul -- through charity and love and through his own special choice joined her to himself. A serpent -- the devil -- bit this new -- that is created anew -- bride while she was collecting flowers -- that is desiring the forbidden apple through temptation, killed her through sin, and finally sent her to hell. When Orpheus -- Christ -- saw this he wished to descend to hell personally and thus regained his wife -- that is human nature, snatched her from the kingdom of darkness, and led her with him to the upper regions, saying Canticle of Canticles 2:10: 'Arise, make haste, my love, and come'.¹²⁷

In Bersuire's words, the journey to rescue Eurydice from Hades undertaken by Orpheus could be understood as that of Christ redeeming humanity from the death of sin. This interpretation is strongly evocative of images of Christ rescuing the good souls from the Limbo such as Mantegna's popular composition that circulated widely in drawings and prints in the 1480s-90s (fig. 32). While I do not intend to suggest any direct relation in terms of artistic influence, looking at Sellaio's Orpheus next to Mantegna's *Christ* one cannot deny the similarities in the way the two contemporary artists imagined their respective figures standing at the thresholds of the underworld at the outset of their respective missions. These visual similarities would have likely encouraged period viewer, even implicitly, to find the parallels between these stories and personages. Subtly, Costa's Orpheus is also in dialogue with this network of references: turning his back on the viewer while locked in the gesture of holding the lira on his shoulder like in Sellaio's panel, he is still able to channel some of the potency of Mantegna's Christ whose forward motion and sculptural presence are rendered through the deep folds of his tunic. While

¹²⁷ This translation is given in Reynolds 1972, 347.

appearing more serene and less wind struck than the Savior figure by the North Italian master, the poet-musician in the Bentivoglio scene further echoes his Christological associations in virtue of its placement below the mandorla that contains the divine figures discussed earlier in this chapter.

The literary tradition of the *Ovide moralisé* was introduced in Italy by the Bolognese native and Studium professor Giovanni del Virgilio, who between 1322 and 1323 taught classes on classical Roman poets and chiefly on Virgil, whose name he adopted as a homage. However, his most important work to have survived is arguably the *Book of Allegories*, which offered a reinterpretation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* under Christian lenses by incorporating some of the allegorical readings previously advanced by his French predecessors and integrating them with his own explanations where the former were not deemed sufficient.¹²⁸ In this book, Giovanni identified Orpheus as the wise and eloquent son of Apollo and Calliope, and interpreted Eurydice as the good judgement that he was betrothed to, but whom he lost to the temptation of sin in a deadly attack carried out by the devil (the snake that had bitten Eurydice, sending her to Hades, or Hell). Recognizing his loss, Orpheus had prayed humbly to god for the recovery of his companion, which he obtained at the condition that he would not give in to temptations again. But breaking that promise he lost her again, at which point Orpheus decided to consecrate the remainder of his life to God and to reject women (temptations), living life as a dead person in the world.¹²⁹

Before the end of the fourteenth century, Giovanni del Virgilio's allegorical book, originally written in Latin, was disseminated to a broader audience thanks to Giovanni

¹²⁸ Giovanni composed the *Allegoriae librorum Ovidii Metamorphoseos* in addition to his commentary, or paraphrasis, on Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. The *Allegoriae* have been known to scholars through several manuscripts and were published in the twentieth century in Ghisalberti 1931.

¹²⁹ For Giovanni del Virgilio's interpretation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, see Appendix I.

Bonsignori da Città di Castello, who in 1377 completed the *Ovidio metamorphoseos vulgare*, a version of del Virgilio's text in the Italian vernacular that circulated widely in manuscript copies and reprints between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries.¹³⁰ In a section titled *Allegory and First Exposition of Orpheus*, Bonsignori offers del Virgilio's text in translation, which he concludes with the addition of a sentence that pushes his predecessor's allegorical reading of Ovid's fable even further, comparing Orpheus and Eurydice to the mind and soul that are reunited after death: "and so [Orpheus] found Eurydice's spirit again, that is to say, upon lifting the veil off the body, the soul finds the mind again, and everything is clear again" ("e così [Orfeo] trovò lo spirito de Euridice, cioè che, levato el velamento del corpo, l'anima ritrova la mente, cioè allora è d'ogni cosa chiara").¹³¹ Such evocative words are particularly striking when looking at Costa's *Triumph of Death*, where this chapter has demonstrated that Orpheus is portrayed with the aims of reinforcing the eschatological and theological powers attributed to the art of poetry in Neoplatonic thought. Additional associations of this mythic figure with the human soul itself and readings of his love story with Eurydice as a metaphor for man's spiritual wholeness circulating in Bologna throughout the fourteenth century further demonstrate the great extent to which religious concerns with the afterlife permeate the Bentivoglio diptych.

¹³⁰ This was first printed in Venice in 1497. Ardissino 1993.

¹³¹ The English translation of this passage is mine. Original from Bonsignori 2001, 475-476 (see the full passage in Appendix II).

3. Dante's *Comedy* in the Bentivoglio chapel

The backgrounds of the *Triumph of Fame* and of the *Triumph of Death* host two scenes that are apparently unrelated to Petrarch's *Triumphs* as much as to the court life at the time of Giovanni II Bentivoglio. These are the Trecento Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and his guide in the underworld, the ancient Roman poet Virgil (70–19 BCE), recognizable by their tunics in the complementary colors red and blue portrayed as they approach the gates of Hell and Purgatory (figs. 33-34).¹³² In the left-hand painting, Costa has given the Inferno the appearance of Bologna, whose distinctive skyline of medieval towers is wrapped in blasting flames. The city is lapped by a river, which is being crossed by Charon, the boatman of Hades, and separates it from the shores where Dante and Virgil can be standing in front of a classical-Roman arch, whose tympanum bears an inscription with the famous verse from *Inferno* 3.9: “Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’entrate” (“Abandon every hope, who enter here”), leaving to doubt as to which realm of Dante's otherworldly journey is being referenced in this portion of the painting.¹³³ Mirroring this scene in the right-hand painting, the two poets can be seen debating in front of a monumental archway which, in accord with the *Comedy*, is guarded by an angel armed with a sword. Beyond this group arises Mount Purgatory, where figures of penitents can be seen slowly ascending along the crest to the top of the mountain, where their sins will be purged before they can access Heaven. Despite taking some artistic liberties, such as shaping the *Inferno* after Bologna, Costa's rendition of these two literary places reflects the Dantean text quite faithfully,

¹³² The two figures were first identified by Clifford Malcom Brown in Brown 1968, 306 note 15.

¹³³ In this dissertation, I will be referencing the *Divine Comedy* in the Petrocchi edition for the original Italian and the Mandelbaum translation as featured in the *Digital Dante edition with Commento Baroliniano* published through the Columbia University Libraries (<https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/>; accessed August 2021).

specifically the third canto of *Inferno* and the ninth of *Purgatorio*, where these are described vividly. But what warranted Costa's inclusion of these visual citations of a secular poem – although one exploring a religious subject matter – inside the funerary chapel of the Bentivoglio family? What can this choice suggest about the reception of Dante's *Comedy* at the Bentivoglio court, and more broadly in Quattrocento Bologna?

The city of Bologna is evoked repeatedly in the *Comedy*, though never in a very flattering light. The first time, it is through the figure of Francesco D'Accorso, a Bolognese lawyer and professor of law whom Dante meets in Canto 15 of *Inferno* among the sodomites. Although Francesco's birthplace is not explicitly mentioned in the poem, his reputation and ties to the Bolognese Studium were known to early modern readers, and the sin for which Dante condemned him would have likely reflected negatively on the entire city as a place of carnal instincts and avidity. Although it has been suggested that the poet's target in this case was a particular professional category – that of university professors – the city's close associations with the Studium would have likely tainted the reputation of all of its citizens. In particular, Dante targeted professors of law, who according to the poet were guilty of commodifying knowledge through the exercise of their lucrative profession rather than pursuing knowledge for its intrinsic value, as true philosophers would.

However, an explicit, generalized critique against the Bolognese in the *Comedia* is not late coming. These are voiced in the *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* through two figures who interact with Dante directly and in addition to confessing their sins they express concern and condemnation for the moral drift of their homeland and fellow citizens. The first voice is Venedico Caccianemici, leader of the Bolognese Guelf faction, whom Dante meets in the circle

of Inferno dedicated to fraudulent sinners (known as “Malebolge,” or evil trenches), and specifically in the ditch of pimps and seducers.¹³⁴ In the dialogue, Caccianemici shamefully admits to a rumor about himself that had been circulating widely in Dante’s time: he had been guilty of having prostituted his sister Ghisolabella to the Marquis of Ferrara, Obizzo II d’Este, in order to obtain political favors for himself.¹³⁵ Before being shut down by a devil, Venedico also reveals that he shares his sins with a multitude of his fellow citizens, affirming that more Bolognese can be found in his same ditch of Hell than alive in the region, which he disparagingly calls “il nostro avaro seno” (“our avaricious hearts”).¹³⁶ The use of the adjective ‘avaricious’ here constitutes a particularly serious accusation, since Christian thinkers considered avarice as one of the seven vices – that is, not simply an evil act, but rather a “disposition of the soul” that causes one to commit sinful actions.¹³⁷ But it is in Inferno 23, in the *bolgia* (or ditch) of hypocrites, that Bologna is called out directly for the first time and it rhymes with “menzogna” (“lie”), confirming a negative judgement on the entire city that would soon be reasserted even more forcefully. This time the words come out of the mouth of Catalano Malvolti, a member of the Order of the Blessed Virgin, a military and conventual order also known as Frati Gaudenti (the Jovial Friars).¹³⁸ Malvolti reveals to Virgil and Dante that the two poet travelers were

¹³⁴ *Inferno* 18.50.

¹³⁵ *Inferno* 18.55-57.

¹³⁶ “I’m not the only Bolognese who weeps here; indeed, this place is so crammed full of us that not so many tongues have learned to say sipa between the Savena and Reno; if you want faith and testament of that, just call to mind our avaricious hearts.” *Inferno* 18.58-63.

¹³⁷ The important distinction between sin and vice is discussed by Dante in *Inferno* 6.74-5. On this point see also “Inferno 6: The City,” 14-18, in Barolini 2018 (<https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/inferno/inferno-6/>; accessed August 2021).

¹³⁸ Toynebee 1968, “Frati Godenti” (https://dante.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/dante/DispToynebeeByTitOrId.pl?INP_ID=212720; accessed August 2021).

deceived by the devil Malacoda in believing that they could have escaped the sixth *bolgia* through a bridge, and mocks Virgil's naiveté for having given credit to the directions he had offered them: "In Bologna, I once heard about the devil's many vices—they said he was a liar and father of lies."¹³⁹

Finally, in *Purgatorio* 14, the spirit of Guido del Duca, a gentleman from the Romagna region whose sin in life had been envy, voices a melancholic lament about the moral decadence of his homeland, the geographical confines of which he describes by verbally retracing the course of the river Arno through the Apennine mountains and valleys, an area adjacent to the Po valley that comprised Bologna.¹⁴⁰ The talking soul regrets having to witness how viciousness, evil habits, and envy are now so prevalent among the inhabitants of those lands that they have become similar to beasts due to their moral decadence.¹⁴¹ Guido also laments how the new generations of leaders of what once were the great noble families of Romagna now lacked the honor and the chivalric virtues that distinguished them in the past, and voicing a belief firmly shared by Dante, he concludes his speech by reasoning that those qualities cannot be simply inherited. A proof of that is the story of his companion in Purgatory, Rinieri da Calboli:

This is Rinieri, this is he—the glory,
the honor of the house of Calboli;
but no one has inherited his worth.

¹³⁹ *Inferno* 23.142-44. The subtle irony here is in the fact that such a platitude (that devils are liars) was learned in Bologna, a city renowned at the time for its erudition and advanced studies.

¹⁴⁰ *Purgatorio* 14.16-18. For an analysis of the themes present in this canto, see "Purgatorio 14: Valley of the Beasts" in Barolini 2014 (<https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/purgatorio/purgatorio-14/>; accessed August 2021).

¹⁴¹ *Purgatorio* 14.40-51.

It's not his kin alone, between the Po
and mountains, and the Reno and the coast,
who've lost the truth's grave good and lost the good.¹⁴²

Born into a well-respected family, Rinieri is called out in the first tercet of this passage to exemplify the issue of how virtue is inherited, that is, whether it is passed down naturally from father to son or, at the contrary, it is a gift of God that must be cultivated through habit.¹⁴³

Despite the qualities demonstrated by Rinieri in his illustrious career as *podesta* (chief magistrate) in various cities of Romagna, one of his descendants, Fulcieri da Calboli, turned out to be a ferocious leader who committed numerous brutalities against his political enemies – the White Guelfs – during his office as *podesta* of Florence in 1303.¹⁴⁴

While the direct and less direct mentions of Bologna in the *Comedy* so far examined would appear to warrant its depiction as Hell, as it appears in the background of Costa's *Triumph of Fame*, the fact that this happens in a painting destined to the private chapel of the city's own political leader is at first puzzling, and certainly deserving of further investigation. The first avenue of inquiry can be offered by surveying the reception of the *Comedy* in fifteenth-century Bologna, a phenomenon rooted in over one hundred years of unique interest in and engagement with Dante's literary production. For instance, sparse verses of the *Inferno* annotated in a Bolognese registry of criminal acts dated 1317 constitutes the only piece of evidence to date of the circulation of Dante's *Comedy* in the poet's lifetime. The fortune of Dante's work in Bologna dates back to his youthful sojourn in the city, where according to a long-standing (although

¹⁴² *Purgatorio* 14.88-93.

¹⁴³ Dante returned to this issue several times in the *Comedy*, suggesting that he believed the former circumstance to be exceptionally rare. See for example *Purgatorio* 7.121-123 and 8.130.

¹⁴⁴ Dante had been exiled from Florence the previous year, in 1302, as part of the same wave of political persecutions.

undocumented) tradition he attended the Studium as a law student, and where the earliest known transcriptions of his verses survive in private documents belonging to prominent local professionals who partially annotated them in their notes out of personal interest. These include the famous sonnet dedicated to a distinctive architectural landmark of the city's medieval skyline, the Garisenda tower, transcribed in the *Memoriale* 69 (a diary, or book of memories) by the Bolognese notary Enrichetto delle Quercie in 1287, and part of the song *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*, penned in the *Memoriale* 82 belonging to notary Pietro Allegranza.¹⁴⁵ The presence from an early date of Dante's autobiographical work, the *Vita Nova*, is also attested in the Emilian city where the theft of a copy of such book was reported to the authorities in 1306.¹⁴⁶

More interesting still, for the scope of this research, is the fact that the earliest, full-scale commentary to Dante's *Comedy* in the Italian vernacular was composed by a Bolognese writer, the licentiate in arts and theology Iacomo della Lana (after 1278–after 1328) between 1324 and 1328.¹⁴⁷ While at least two other authors before him had offered short summaries or partial glosses of the *Comedy*, Lana's text can lay claim to a critical primacy that determined its immediate, vast, and lasting fortune in the Italian peninsula, influencing subsequent commentators and determining the way the poem would be understood from the early Renaissance onward. But before proceeding with a closer look at Lana's commentary, it will be worth considering some critical literature on the *Comedy* that preceded Lana's full-length work that also has significant connections to Bologna. In fact, right after Dante's death (1321), his third son Iacopo issued the very first form of commentary on the *Comedy*, a summary of the poem in 51 tercets (or 50, according to other codes) written in the vernacular and known as

¹⁴⁵ Forti 1970, 664.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁷ Biographical information on this figure is scarce. See Mazzoni 1970, and Volpi 2011.

Divisione.¹⁴⁸ Its goal was to offer an outline of the structure of the poem to prepare the reader to better grasp its complex content and subject matter; this was followed by the so-called *Chiose*, an exposition of the Dantean *Inferno* in which the author demonstrates a meticulous reading of the first canticle of the poem in an allegorical direction. In 1322 the *Divisione*, accompanied by a sonnet, was dedicated to Guido Novello da Polenta, who that year had taken the title of Capitano del Popolo (captain of the people) of Bologna, where a compendium to Dante's masterwork was certainly received with great interest by many. Sent as a congratulatory gift in occasion of this important public appointment, Iacopo's text was also intended as a heartfelt expression of gratitude for the patronage and hospitality that Guido had offered to his father Dante in the final years of his life, which he had spent in exile in Ravenna. The second-earliest partial commentary on the *Comedy* by a known author after Iacopo Alighieri's *Divisione* and *Chiose* was composed by the Bolognese notary Graziolo Bambaglioli (c.1290–1343) in 1324.¹⁴⁹ His prologue to the poem and glosses, limited to the *Inferno*, was originally composed in Latin, but soon a translated version in the Italian vernacular, likely curated by the author himself, was published in a demonstration of the immediate and widespread interest in Dante's *Comedy* among Bolognese audiences beyond official culture.¹⁵⁰

Documentary clues, linguistic elements, and various considerations on the political climate in Bologna during the 1320s have led scholars to believe that Lana could not have produced his commentary in his hometown, where Dante's opposition to the policies of Pope Boniface VIII made his voice and work unwelcome in the city, which was controlled by Guelph

¹⁴⁸ See Bellomo 2004, 62-77.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem, 112-124.

¹⁵⁰ On anti-dantism in Bolognese official culture see Bambaglioli 1998, XXVII.

forces until 1334.¹⁵¹ Instead, it is likely that he composed it in Venice, where other members of his family are documented in 1323 and where the purchase of a glossed volume of the *Comedy*, likely identifiable with Lana's, was recorded in 1331.¹⁵² There is little doubt, however, that Lana's intended audience was primarily Bolognese, and that the cultural milieu in which his commentary was conceived is intimately connected to the university culture of the Emilian city and its tradition of scholastic teaching and theological studies. This is suggested already by the language of choice of Lana's commentary, an Italian vernacular with distinctive Bolognese inflections that attest to the author's commitment to exalt his regional identity and appropriate the poem's Florentine subject matter.

Nidobeato, the literary name of the humanist Martino Paolo Nibia from Novara (early 1400s–1483), was the first to comment upon the significance of Lana's linguistic choice when presenting the sources he utilized in his edition of the *Comedy*, published in Milan in 1478. In the prefatory letter to his work, in fact, he mentions Lana's commentary among seven others that were useful to him, speculating that the author had employed the "Bononiensi lingua" (Bolognese language) because this was understood broadly in the Italian territory due to the city's position as "the belly button of Italy" and in virtue of the commercial ties that the city had historically entertained across the peninsula; furthermore, the inherent elegance and dignity of that language had enabled its reputation to spread beyond Italy, finding recognition even in Greece.¹⁵³ After all, a similar argument relating Bologna's geographic location – at the crossroad

¹⁵¹ Because of his open support for autonomous, secular forms of rulership, Dante's work was particularly criticized in Bologna while the city was under the rule of the papal legate Bertrando del Poggetto, who during his tenure (1328-1334) banned the poet's most political work, *De Monarchia*, and ordered the burning of the copies existing in the city.

¹⁵² Volpi 2011, 292.

¹⁵³ "sed Iacobus Lanaeus materna eadem et Bononiensi lingua superare est visus, cum sit illa urbs ita in umbilico Italiae posita ut assiduo commertio non tersa solum vocabula, sed provintiis omnibus etiam

of north and south, east and west – to its linguistic pleasantness, had already been advanced by Dante himself, who in his *De vulgari eloquentia* (*On Eloquence in the Vernacular*) had celebrated the Bolognese vernacular as one of the noblest and most illustrious forms of spoken language in the Italian peninsula. In this unfinished treaty, the poet had also praised Bologna's dimension as a metropolis and the linguistic diversity deriving from it, which allowed for recognizable differences between dialects spoken in the center and in the suburbs. Dante identified the distinctive aesthetic value of the Bolognese dialect in its *suavitas*, a melodic pleasantness that resulting from its condition as a combination of opposites: the *lenitas* (softness, weakness) of the language spoken by the people of Romagna, the territories laying south-east of Bologna, and the *garrulitas* (asperity, as in guttural) of that of the inhabitants of Ferrara and Modena, north and north-west of the city.¹⁵⁴

Just a handful of years after Nidobeato's edition of the *Comedy*, the Florentine humanist Cristoforo Landino (1424–1498) gave to the press an edition of Dante's poem accompanied by his own commentary (*Comento sopra la Comedia*, 1481), which quickly became “one of the most republished and widely read vernacular books in Renaissance Italy.”¹⁵⁵ In his foreword, Landino pays particular attention to the different languages and dialects employed by the various writers who preceded him in the arduous endeavor of interpreting the words of Dante, including Lana, whose work he relied on for his own edition and who had “commented it [the *Comedy*] in his native language.”¹⁵⁶ That overview – which also comprises the names of Benvenuto da

communia habeat, nec minore gratia dignitateque sit in Italia bononiensis sermo quam laconicus olim in Graecia fuit.” Rossi 1997.

¹⁵⁴ Mengaldo 1970, 664.

¹⁵⁵ Gilson 2018, 23.

¹⁵⁶ “Comentarono il nostro poeta due suoi figlioli, Francesco, e Piero. Coméntollo Benvenuto da Imola, ma in lingua Latina. Coméntollo Iacopo Bolognese nella sua patria lingua. Lo comentò Ricardo teologo Frate Carmelitano. Coméntollo Andrea Napolitano, e Guiniforte Giuriconsulto Bergamasco. Principiò di

Imola, a native of the Emilia-Romagna region who worked as a lecturer in Bologna and Ferrara between 1369 and the 1380s and utilized Latin for his commentary to Dante's *Inferno*, of jurist Guiniforte Barzizza from Bergamo, who employed his native vernacular for his exposition on the first Dantean book, as well as others who have been not been identified with certainty – was clearly aimed by Landino at demonstrating to his readers as well as to the political authorities sponsoring his work the necessity to finally reclaim Dante as authentically Florentine with a modern commentary written in the Tuscan dialect.¹⁵⁷ This was precisely how Landino intended to present and promote his own literary effort as a gesture of civic pride that attempted to offset over a century of misfortune of Dantean appreciation and studies, which begun in 1302 with the poet's perpetual exile from his homeland. Because of that event, the fame and success of Dante's work had flourished in other Italian cities, where the poem had been appropriated by scholars like Lana before it could be reclaimed by a Tuscan author – a circumstance evidently regretted by Landino but nevertheless acknowledged by his contemporaries.

Although Lana's early commentary only received its first printed edition in Venice in 1477 – albeit with a mistaken attribution to Benvenuto da Imola – his text had long been regarded as a cornerstone in the history of the *Comedy*'s exegesis. Transcriptions of this commentary were circulating already in the 1330s, like the manuscript penned by Galvano da Bologna, a master copyist of university textbooks whose production attests to the lively interest that the *Comedy* and its interpreters arose very early on in the Emilian city. The primacy recognized to the Bolognese interpreters of Dante is further attested to by the Neapolitan

comentarlo il nostro Giovanni Boccaccio (...). Coméntollo finalmente Francesco da Buti in lingua Pisana.” Landino 1578. Translation from the original Italian is mine.

¹⁵⁷ “Ora avendo io ridotto questo volume alla sua sana e vera lettura, è paruto mio officio l'appresentarlo a voi Signori Illustrissimi, accioche per le mani di quel Magistrato, ch'è supremo nella Repubblica Fiorentina, sia dopo lungo esilio restituito nella sua patria, e riconosciuto non essere né Romagnolo, né Lombardo, né de gli idiomi di coloro che lo hanno comentato, ma puro Fiorentino.” Ibidem.

Guglielmo Maramauro, who writing between 1369 and 1371, traced the first historiography of this genre by declaring to have studied the writings of both Lana and Bambaglioli, relying on their authority before venturing to expound the poem himself.¹⁵⁸ When Bartolomeo Ceffoni compiled a list of the authors who had offered commentaries on the *Comedy* in the early 1430s, however, the memory of Lana's name had somehow gotten lost, although the writer could still remember "one from Bologna" in his index of Dantean commentaries, who could be identified with either Lana or Bambaglioli.¹⁵⁹

Lana's approach to the Dantean text would have appealed to an audience of university students for many reasons, so much that scholars have argued that his commentary "marks the encounter between the *Comedy* and the culture of the Bolognese Studium."¹⁶⁰ This is demonstrated in the first place by the fact that the author addresses the reader repeatedly in his text as "studente" (student), showing that he regarded his activity of commentator as the equivalent of his role as a university educator, and considered *Comedy* as a repository of encyclopedic learning comparable to a textbook comprising many different fields of knowledge, from grammar and rhetoric to astronomy, science, history, philosophy, and theology.¹⁶¹ While the *Comedy* had been presented as a *summa* of universal wisdom and Dante as an all-knowing poet-philosopher since the earliest stages of his works' reception, it is apparent that Lana was eager to capitalize on the pedagogical aspect of the poem by investing the operation of glossing with a didactic function. His commentary ultimately translates the experience of a fourteenth-century university lecture in the format of the book by selecting one authoritative text (usually chosen from classical literature or the scriptures) and taking it as the starting point to explore a

¹⁵⁸ Bellomo 2004, 1.

¹⁵⁹ Idem.

¹⁶⁰ Ibidem, 282-3. Translation mine.

¹⁶¹ Volpi 2011, 295-6.

broad range of areas of human knowledge. Methodologically, too, Lana's commentary is strongly influenced by the scholastic approach that dominated university teaching between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Following in this tradition, his exposition proceeds dialectically, exploring opposite points of view of a given problem before reaching a conclusion of conceptual soundness.

While Lana's glosses to single lines and tercets usually offer a literal interpretation of Dante's verses, remaining close enough to the original text to fill in the reader with the necessary information on the people, places, facts, and ideas mentioned in passing or only alluded to in the poem, the introductory notes that preface each canto are an opportunity for the writer to expound the theological and philosophical problems raised by Dante and draw from Lana's encyclopedic culture. The texts most often cited include the works of St. Thomas Aquinas (especially the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*), and more generally the writings of the fathers of the church and the sacred scriptures, but also the ancient philosophers, and particularly Aristotle, thus fully reflecting the cultural formation of the writer, who is said to have been "licentiatus in artibus et theologia."¹⁶² Because of this approach, which lends a somewhat fragmented character to Lana's commentary, often straying from the Dantean text to explore collateral issues and topics only alluded to by the poet, some critics have accused Iacomo's text of representing a moment of "crisis" in the interpretation of the *Comedy*, while others have recognized its pedagogic quality as distinctive in the panorama of the poem's early commentaries.¹⁶³ This broad and all-encompassing approach, however, is likely what determined the success and persistence of Lana's interpretation in subsequent critical editions of the *Comedy*, as well as, I argue, the success that the poem enjoyed in fifteenth-century Bologna. In

¹⁶² Volpi 2011, 291.

¹⁶³ Mazzoni 1970.

particular, the allegorical reading of Dante's *Comedy* as a universal story about the earthly journey of the human soul and its eventual ascension to the heavens, which was offered by Lana for the first time as an overarching interpretive key that has since become canonical, would have appealed to Giovanni II Bentivoglio and his circle of humanists, and made it especially fit to be incorporated in the artistic program of his family funerary chapel.

In Lana's analysis, Dante's character stands for the entire human species, and the *Comedy* entails multiple contents, levels of meaning, and purposes. According to the author of this exegesis, the subject matter of the poem is the "state of souls after death," as they find themselves in three conditions: damnation (as encountered in *Inferno*), purification (as found in *Purgatorio*), and salvation (*Paradiso*).¹⁶⁴ Another, equally valid level of interpretation, according to Lana, is to understand the poem to be about humankind and its endowment with free will, which allows mortals the freedom to choose to follow either virtue or sin, thus determining their own future in the afterlife.¹⁶⁵ Because in the *Comedy* the literal, allegorical, moral, and spiritual sense coexist, Lana sees Dante's journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise as standing for the entire arc of human life, from the innocence of childhood, to the encounter with sin and the subjugation to the senses that dominate adulthood, to repentance through God's gift of faith and

¹⁶⁴ "La prima cosa com'è detto è da notare la materia ovvero subietto della presente opera la quale è lo stato delle anime dopo la morte; lo quale universalmente, siccome ello parte lo suo volume, è di tre condizioni. La prima condizione è quelle anime le quali sono dannate e sono in pene e senza speranza d'uscire di quelle. La seconda condizione è quelle anime le quali sono in pene ma hanno speranza dopo sua purgazione d'uscire di quelle e andare in vita eterna; e questa parte è appellata Purgatorio. La terza condizione è quelle anime le quali sono in gloria eternale pasciute, piene e contente di suo stato. E questa apella Paradiso. Or questa è la materia della presente opera ovvero subietto." Iacomo della Lana, *Inferno, proemio*. In this dissertation, I will be referencing Lana's commentary in the transcription available through the Dartmouth Dante Project, which is based on the edition curated by Luciano Scarabelli in 1866-67 (from here on referenced as Scarabelli 1866-67).

¹⁶⁵ "Un altro modo può esser considerando la materia ovvero subietto d'essa: cioè lo uomo lo quale per lo libero arbitrio può meritare ovvero peccare; per lo quale merito ovvero colpa ello li è attribuito gloria ovvero punito all'altro mondo." Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno, proemio*.

eventual salvation.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, Virgil's role as Dante's guide through *Inferno* and *Purgatory* stands for the guiding principles of human reason and scientific knowledge, while Beatrice represents the higher truth that cannot be understood through logic and senses, which is theology.¹⁶⁷ Thus, not only does the distinctiveness of the literary production of commentators active in Bologna in the thirteenth century and the prominence of the Bolognese vernacular language they utilized contribute to justify the persistence of the fascination with the Dantean text in fifteenth-century Bologna, but the success of the allegorical interpretation of the poem formulated for the first time by a Bolognese commentator made the Dantean subject matter particularly appropriate for a pictorial decoration that was ultimately concerned with constructing a discourse about the journey of the human soul, as it is found in Costa's Bentivoglio *Triumphs*.

Turning back to the Bentivoglio diptych with a deeper understanding of the history of the interpretation and reception of the *Comedy* in Bologna, the presence and placement of the Dantean visual citations in the *Triumphs* – the *Inferno* in the background of the *Triumph of Fame* and *Purgatory* in the *Triumph of Death* – deserve a much more careful consideration than it has so far received in the literature. If it is through passage into *Purgatory* after death that humankind can gain access to the heavens to reach eternal salvation, as Dante's visionary poem exemplified, Costa places the Mount of *Purgatory* halfway between the personification of death and the celestial vision that fills the upper half of the canvas, subtly directing the eye of the viewer

¹⁶⁶ “Or questo figura che la specie umana nel suo principio, cioè in puerizia, si è netta, buona e diritta; poi quando viene circa a mezzo della vita ella è sì lassiva e poco ferma che cade in peccato avendo diletto delle sensitive cose, le quali dilettazioni li conducono in vizii e poi a perdizione, salvo se per dono o grazia del sommo Creatore lo detto difetto non è soccorso e aiutato.” Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno*, 1.3.

¹⁶⁷ “Ancora è da sapere che in tutta questa opera per allegoria s'intende Virgilio per la ragione e discrezione umana.” Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno*, 1.112. “l'altro ti mostrerà una anima santa alla quale havoluto lo Signore rivelarlo. E intende questa anima Beatrice, la quale per allegoria s'intende la scienza di teologia.” Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno*, 1.123.

upward with Death's skeletal hand. This points up to the skies with the index finger, which is placed just below the base of the mountain, while the tip of Death's scythe points right to its top.

As for the choice to depict the *Inferno* as the backdrop to the scene of the *Triumph of Fame*, several elements offer reasons for this association. First, the initial verses of *Inferno* 3 – the same canto that opens with the two poets walking through the gates of Hell under the famous inscription “Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch’entrate” (“Abandon every hope, who enter here,” see page 63 above) – have Virgil reveal to Dante the identity of the very first group of souls encountered in their travels, and explain the reason for their anguishing laments: these are the souls of those who in life were guilty of pusillanimity, or moral neutrality – “the sorry souls of those who lived without disgrace and without praise.”¹⁶⁸ Such incapability (or rather unwillingness) to commit to any cause, particularly in the political realm, was an especially detestable attitude in the eyes of Dante, who composed the *Comedy* while paying the ultimate price for upholding his own beliefs – exile. Not evil enough to be in Hell proper and barred from Heaven for not having sided with God, these souls are forever trapped in a liminal space between the shores of the Acheron and the first circle of the *Inferno*. In accordance with the principle of *contrappasso* that governs infernal punishments in the *Comedy*, their destiny is now to embrace a futile cause – the compensation for the commitment that they refused to make in life – by forever chasing a meaningless banner.¹⁶⁹ Looking back closely to the scene painted by Costa in the

¹⁶⁸ *Inferno*, 3.35-36.

¹⁶⁹ “Those who are here can place no hope in death,
and their blind life is so abject that they
are envious of every other fate.
The world will let no fame of theirs endure;
both justice and compassion must disdain them;
let us not talk of them, but look and pass.
And I, looking more closely, saw a banner
that, as it wheeled about, raced on—so quick
that any respite seemed unsuited to it.

background of the *Triumph of Fame*, I believe that we can recognize this group of sinners caught in their endless retribution depicted at far right, where a white banner flutters on top of a pole next to the figure of Charon and right below the towers of Bologna's flame-engulfed skyline. A loss in the painting's surface immediately below the banner sadly disrupts our reading of this small portion of the composition, but I believe that the ghostly figures seemingly queued along the slopes of a hill at the edge of the picture can be taken to be the souls described as racing behind a banner in shocking numbers by Dante.¹⁷⁰ Another group of figures in the nude, gathered in small numbers or sitting pensive between the shores of the Acheron and the portal of Hell, are likely the weeping souls that caught Dante's attention as soon as the traveling poets approached that threshold. In his exegesis of *Inferno* 3, Iacomo della Lana emphasizes a distinction between two areas of the entrance to Hell, which he describes as a "pianezza" – a flatland on one side of which are the souls of those who perpetually chase a banner; on the other side, which he calls "Limbo," are the souls afflicted by the constant longing for God, for they are aware of the existence of Paradise and of eternal glory but knowing that they have no hope of ever achieving that state they are left in anguish and grief for eternity.¹⁷¹ Costa's rendition of these figures' hopelessness is especially effective in the lonely individual at right, whose head-in-hand pose appears to express despondency. Finally, all the souls of the morally coward (or pusillanimous)

Behind that banner trailed so long a file
of people—I should never have believed
that death could have unmade so many souls.”
Inferno, 3.46-57.

¹⁷⁰ Ibidem, especially verses 55-57.

¹⁷¹ “Or come elli entra in lo predetto foro, cioè in lo primo grado, elli imagina in la bocca di quello una pianezza, in la quale stanno le anime, le quali non hanno nè merito nè peccato; e questo da una parte è apellato Limbo; da un'altra parte anzi che si entri purga anime, le quali sono state cattive e triste al mondo e di nessuno valore, e immerite di nominanza; le quali per opposto, si come sono state triste e pigre, così sono stimulate da animaletti, li quali continuo le tegnono in esercizio, e fannole doglia e pena, e sempre corrono. Or quelle, che sono dalla parte del Limbo in lo primo grado, non sono da alcuna cosa stimulate, ma dal disio, che, da che le sanno che al mondo è gloria, che è paradiso, e non hanno d'andarvi speranza mai, nè di vederlo, da ciò ricevono angosciosa pena;” Scarabelli 1866-67, 14-16.

are also condemned to eternal oblivion in Dante's *Inferno*, where their names are purposefully omitted in order to deny them the opportunity to be memorialized through the poem's pages.¹⁷² This way, these souls are denied the kind of immortality that is bestowed on the worthy by Fame – the personification of which is at the center of the scene in the left-hand Bentivoglio triumph.¹⁷³ Perhaps for this reason Costa depicted these infernal souls as a crowd of faceless anonymities and placed them diametrically opposite to the sight line of the figure of Fame, who instead looks down to her right to bless Giovanni Bentivoglio and his firstborn Annibale with her benevolent gaze; nobody in the foreground seems to interact with them or even acknowledge their presence, which is confined to the background of the scene where it is physically separated from the rest of the composition.

In the ever-changing scenario of shifting alliances that animated the constant power struggles among the many forms of independent potentates that made up fifteenth-century Italy, the importance of militancy and commitment to a political cause in defense of local sovereignty and as a means to achieve international recognition was paramount to Giovanni II Bentivoglio; by following a cautious path in foreign affairs, he was able to make Bologna a strategic player in the Italic League and successfully entertained advantageous relationships with the papacy and with the Holy Roman Emperor, as well as with other city-states for over forty years. In this sense, the condemnation of neutrality as a sign of cowardice and moral failure that leads to erasure from history and from collective memory voiced by Dante in the *Comedy* has a rightful place in the *Triumph of Fame* devised by Costa for the Bentivoglio chapel, where it contributes to articulate the patron's beliefs by utilizing a literary tradition with strong ties to local intellectual circles.

¹⁷² See note 169 above, especially verse 49: "The world will let no fame of theirs endure". Lana comments this passage, explaining: "Mostra che 'l mondo temporale li disprezia, che non vuole che in esso sia memoria di loro." Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno*, 3.49.

¹⁷³ For the identity of this figure, see chapter 2 of this dissertation.

In the seventh circle of the *Inferno*, Dante's encounter with the prodigal and the miserly (wasters and hoarders) offers the poet the opportunity to discuss humankind's relation to riches and material goods, and the circumstances in which excess in holding on or letting go of wealth equally result in vice and sinful actions. Watching the punishment inflicted on these sinners, condemned to eternally push great weights toward one another as they shout insults at each other, Virgil is reminded of the way possessions and goods pass constantly from person to person at the will of Fortune, at which point Dante asks his guide to tell him more about the identity of this mysterious entity.¹⁷⁴ Thus, through the literary character Virgil, Dante the author pens his personal definition of *Fortuna* as "mistress and guide" appointed by God ("He whose wisdom transcends everything") to administer and distribute earthly possessions and material goods among all people ("from nation unto nation, clan to clan") in a manner that escapes human reason and control ("in ways that human reason can't prevent").¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ "Now you can see, my son, how brief's the sport
of all those goods that are in Fortune's care,
for which the tribe of men contend and brawl;
for all the gold that is or ever was
beneath the moon could never offer rest
to even one of these exhausted spirits."

Inferno 7.61-9.

¹⁷⁵ Who made the heavens and who gave them guides
was He whose wisdom transcends everything;
that every part may shine unto the other,
He had the light apportioned equally;
similarly, for worldly splendors, He
ordained a general minister and guide
to shift, from time to time, those empty goods
from nation unto nation, clan to clan,
in ways that human reason can't prevent;
just so, one people rules, one languishes,
obeying the decision she has given,
which, like a serpent in the grass, is hidden.
Your knowledge cannot stand against her force;
for she foresees and judges and maintains

These verses, however, raised serious concerns of heterodoxy among Dante's contemporaries and commentators. The poet's most vocal critic was perhaps the astrologer and medical doctor Cecco d'Ascoli (circa 1269-1327), who accused Dante of holding deterministic views – the belief that human actions and events are dictated by forces that are beyond human control – and undermining the role of free will as a fundamental tenet of Christian orthodoxy. In a chapter titled “On Fortune” of his encyclopedic poem *Acerba*, Cecco openly lashed out against the author of the *Comedy*, taking particular issue with verse 89 in *Inferno* 7, where Dante would be guilty of suggesting that the effects of Fortune are determined by ‘necessity,’ the principle that something must be the way it is by logic or natural law:

In this you sinned, Florentine poet, positing that the goods of fortune are assigned by necessity. There is no fortune that reason does not conquer. (...) Fortune is nothing but the disposition of the heavens that dispose the living thing. (...) Happiness is not brought about by necessity. The soul having been created in liberty, fortune has no power over it that could contradict its will.¹⁷⁶

That Dante's words in the seventh canto could have lent themselves to erroneous readings was soon recognized even by the poet's most faithful advocates, so that early commentators felt compelled to promptly intervene to clarify his intentions.¹⁷⁷ Benvenuto da Imola, a humanist

her kingdom as the other gods do theirs.
The changes that she brings are without respite:
it is necessity that makes her swift;
and for this reason, men change state so often.
Inferno 7.73-85.

¹⁷⁶ For this debate see “Inferno 7: Aristotle and Wealth Management, with a Note on Cecco d'Ascoli” In Barolini 2018 (<https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/inferno/inferno-7/>; accessed August 2021).

¹⁷⁷ Boccaccio: “These are words that, if misunderstood, could lead one to fall into an error” Papio 2009, 344.

native of the Emilia-Romagna region who worked as a lecturer in Bologna and Ferrara between 1369 and the 1380s, made explicit reference to the heated debate sparked by conflicting interpretations of *Inferno* 7.89 and called out Cecco d'Ascoli for his trenchant attacks on Dante.¹⁷⁸ In his *Comentum*, a commentary to the *Comedy* based on the lectures on the poem he held in Bologna in 1375-6, Benvenuto defended Dante's verses on the ground of poetic license, suggesting that Cecco's misreading was due to the scientist's poor understanding of the language of poetry ("if he [Cecco d'Ascoli] were as good a poet as he was an astrologer, he would not have inveighed so boldly against the author").¹⁷⁹ On the matter of free will, in fact, Benvenuto showed that Dante's ideas were indeed canonical by pointing to a passage in the *Comedy* (*Purgatorio* 16) where the poet clearly stated the precedence of the former over the "movements of the heavens."¹⁸⁰

This issue – the relation between Fortune and free will – had already been the subject of a thorough gloss on *Inferno* 7 composed by Graziolo Bambaglioli, who was active in Bologna around the same years in which Lana was beginning to work on his own commentary. Excerpts from the vernacular version of Bambaglioli's glosses were partially transcribed in a later, anonymous commentary to the *Comedy* known as *L'Ottimo commento*, a text composed in 1333-4 that also provides the earliest evidence of the very existence of Bambaglioli's glosses, where this is reverentially referred to by the anonymous author as "Il Cancelliere di Bologna Ser

¹⁷⁸ "Therefore many have said many things, some on behalf of the author, others against the author, like Cecco d'Ascoli who quite recklessly condemns the author's word exclaiming: In ciò fallasti [sic] fiorentin poeta." The whole passage is quoted and translated in "Inferno 7: Aristotle and Wealth Management, with a Note on Cecco d'Ascoli," in Barolini 2018, 56.

¹⁷⁹ Ibidem, 57.

¹⁸⁰ "For he ought to imagine that the author clearly did not contradict himself, who says in chapter XVI of *Purgatorio*: The heavens initiate your movements; I don't say all of them, but, were I to say it, you have been given light to discern good and evil." Ibidem, 57.

Graziuolo.”¹⁸¹ According to the *Ottimo*’s transcription, Bambaglioli’s gloss to *Inferno* 7.85-90 begins with a declaration of the author’s intention to defend the honor and fame of Dante from the attacks of his critics.¹⁸² After establishing God as the primary cause and origin of the universe from whom the movements of the heavens that exercise their influence on humankind derive, the Bolognese notary made an important distinction between necessities and dispositions: while the former are inescapable constraints, the latter – inclinations toward certain behaviors, desires, and pursuits – are transmitted to mortals through the movements of the celestial spheres without constituting binding conditions, and because in the perfection of his act of creation God endowed humankind with reason and free will, individuals are able to choose whether they want to follow their natural dispositions or act against them.¹⁸³

The delicate issue of the nature of Fortune, its relation to an all-powerful Christian God and to human free will was evidently regarded as a pressing matter by the authors of the earliest commentaries of the poem, who dedicated lengthy sections of their texts to articulate a proper vision in line with Christian orthodoxy. In his preface to the seventh *canto* of *Inferno*, Lana explains to his readers that, for Dante, Fortune is an “intelligence” that God the Father has put in charge to distribute worldly riches and material possessions on earth (“dice che fortuna è una

¹⁸¹ Recently, the author of the *Ottimo commento* has been proposed to be the Florentine notary Andrea Lancia. Bambaglioli 1998, XLI, note 2.

¹⁸² “nientemeno sicondo la discrezione della mia giovanezza io dichiarerò alcuna cosa sopra questa materia per difensione, e conservazione dell’onore, e della fama di questo venerabile Autore, acciò che per la infamia delli male parlanti, e invidiosi non si possa ditrarre, nè dirogare alla sua vera scienza, e virtude.” L’*Ottimo Commento* 1333, *Inferno* 7.88-90. For a full transcription of the passage on Fortune, see Appendix IV of this dissertation.

¹⁸³ “Da vedere, e da sapere è, che Dio, ch’è la prima causa della quale tutte le cose hanno a causarsi per le influenze e delle spere, e circuli del Cielo, sì come per cause secundarie, in queste cose di sotto adopera, e fa influenze alcuna volta per necessità, alcuna volta per disposizione e qualitate. (...) E che per la influenza del Cielo non si causi necessitate nelli uomini, questa è la ragione: la incessabile sapienza dell’onnipotente nostro Creatore in operazione, e somma perfezione di tutti li beni opera nelle creature, e nelle sue operazioni perfettissimamente; lo quale quando perfettamente ebbe creato l’uomo, diede e spiròe in lui tre cose: ragione, volo[n]tà, e libero arbitrio.” Idem. In this respect, Bambaglioli demonstrates to share St. Augustine’s views on free will.

intelligenza la quale ha a dispensare li beni mondani, cioè le cose commutative”), just like he assigned different entities to each of the seven celestial spheres to exercise their influence on human existence (“sì come lo cielo della Luna c’hae a reggere l’acque e li umidi; quel di Saturno, secondo astrologia, le sette e li reami; quel di Marte le battaglie, etcetera”).¹⁸⁴ Citing classical ancient sources such as Aristotle’s *Physics* and Ptolemy’s *Centiloquium*, as well as the fathers of the church Saint Gregory the Great and Saint Thomas Aquinas, Lana affirms that Dante correctly intended Fortune as a force whose course cannot be contrasted by human free will, since the latter can only act upon what can be known and understood through reason and science, both of which Fortune evades.¹⁸⁵ However, like every other intelligence – Lana continues – Fortune was ordained by God, and though its effects may appear purely accidental in the eyes of mortals, in truth it fulfills a divinely sanctioned purpose.¹⁸⁶ In this sense, Lana’s concept of Fortune closely resembles the notion of divine providence as presented by Saint Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*, a passage of which is quoted directly in Lana’s gloss: “We must therefore say that what happens here by accident, both in natural things and in human affairs, is reduced to a preordaining cause, which is Divine Providence.”¹⁸⁷ For Dante to have placed Fortune within the realm of things ordained by God constituted a significant departure from the classical image of the ancient goddess, whose traditional attribute of blindness symbolized the fickle and capricious character of her activity. Following the poet,

¹⁸⁴ Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno* 7.Nota. For a full transcription of Lana’s passage on Fortune, see Appendix III of this dissertation.

¹⁸⁵ Idem.

¹⁸⁶ Idem.

¹⁸⁷ “e però dice in la detta questione fra Tommaso: *quoniam ea quae per accidens hic aguntur, sive in rebus naturalibus sive humanis, reduntur in aliquam causam praeordinantem quae est providentia divina* etc.” Idem. For Aquinas, divine providence is the God-given order towards an end that all existing things within the universe are subject to.

Lana's exegesis went instead in the direction of re-inscribing Fortune within a Christian vision of the world, ultimately aligning its effects with God's universal plan.

In addition to the work of the Bolognese author, the *Expositions on Dante's Comedy*, a collection of public lectures held in Florence between 1373 and 1375 by writer and humanist Giovanni Boccaccio, contributed significantly to popularize this view among intellectuals in fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Italy. In his verse-by-verse discussion of the seventh canto of *Inferno*, Boccaccio effectively sanctioned a re-evaluation of ancient culture in Christian terms by explaining that Dante's Fortuna was ultimately a minister of God who through her actions enforced his divine plans.¹⁸⁸ Finally, Boccaccio's *Expositions* also captured well the contemporary political implications of the idea of Fortune shifting, suggesting that this force was responsible for triggering the rise and fall of the great kingdoms and empires of antiquity as well as the alternation to power of different ruling families and city leaders taking place in Boccaccio's own time.¹⁸⁹

In 1999, Pier Luigi Perazzini transcribed and published a document found in the Bentivoglio family archive in Ferrara that contains a detailed record of the inscriptions once visible in their chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore, including some that have since partially or completely vanished.¹⁹⁰ According to that document, the style of handwriting of which suggested to Perazzini a dating to the first half of the seventeenth century, the following sentence appeared on the north wall of the chapel: "Fortuna extollit, calcat, dat gaudia luctus, post obitum fulgente vohat te Gloria curru" ("Fortune elevates, tramples, gives joys and griefs, [and] after death [it]

¹⁸⁸ "It appears that this minister, through unique and hidden decision-making, puts into effect what seems already to have been decided by God" Papio 2009, 331-53, 343.

¹⁸⁹ Ibidem, 60-63.

¹⁹⁰ Perazzini 1999, 351-72. The document in question is in the Archivio di Stato di Ferrara, Fondo Bentivoglio, Patrimoniale, lib. 17, n. 32.

carries you to Glory in a gleaming chariot”).¹⁹¹ Today, a blank band runs halfway up across that wall, right below Costa’s canvases; the fragmentary letters still visible therein suggest that the aforementioned inscription would have originally appeared right under the fictive molding framing the two triumphal scenes (“Nelli Cornicioni à basso à mano sinistra”), where it offered a commentary on the images intended to clarify their subject matter and ultimate meaning for the viewer.¹⁹² The inscription was probably already unavailable at the time of Gozzadini’s discussion of the paintings in his *Memorie per la vita di Giovanni II Bentivoglio* (1859), where the left-hand scene is described for the first time in the literature as a *Triumph of Fame*, a denomination that has remained unchallenged until relatively recently.¹⁹³ While the iconographic complexity of the female personification who presides to this triumphal parade points to a number of visual and literary precedents related to ideas of fame and history that will be explored in the next chapter of this dissertation (see chapter 4), the inscription that would have accompanied the paintings’ viewing posits Fortune as its subject, suggesting that this complex concept would have had leading role in the interpretation of the two scenes.¹⁹⁴

In his composition, Costa visually aligns the allegorical figure at the center of the left-hand canvas with that of God, who is depicted in the act of creating the world and humankind at the center of the circular field in the upper half of the canvas of the *Triumph of Fame*. In doing so, the painter effectively suggests an interpretation of Fortune’s role that is in line with the Christianized identity that Dante and his commentators had envisioned for her in the fourteenth century: a minister of God and an emanation of Providence whose actions ultimately contribute

¹⁹¹ Translation is mine.

¹⁹² Perazzini 1999, 361.

¹⁹³ Wegener 1989; Drogin 2003. However, every modern reading has failed to take into account the content of the inscription recovered by Perazzini that originally accompanied the paintings’ viewing.

¹⁹⁴ See chapter 2 of this dissertation.

to the fulfillment of a divine plan. The predominance of this view is especially warranted in the city of Bologna, where Dante himself, as well as erudite scholars who contributed to disseminate that view – such as Jacopo della Lana, Graziolo Bambaglioli, and Benvenuto da Imola – had been active and were widely read in their own time and beyond. As observed elsewhere in this dissertation (see especially chapters 2 and 4), the process of Christianization of classical culture that is apparent in the selection and treatment of certain figures in Costa's Bentivoglio *Triumphs* (as is the case with the incorporation of the concept of Fortune discussed in this chapter) reflects the syncretic belief system under construction in early Renaissance culture.

4. Under Clio's Gaze. Fame, Fortune, and History in the Bentivoglio chapel-studiolo

The female figure leading the chariot in the left-hand canvas on the north wall of the Bentivoglio chapel, the so-called *Triumph of Fame*, is clothed *all'antica* and can be seen wearing a golden breastplate with a blue cloak covering her legs (fig. 35). She holds a long metal rod in her right hand and a horn or trumpet in her left as she turns her benevolent gaze backward and downward at Giovanni II and Annibale Bentivoglio, who stand below her in the foreground. Unlike her skeletal counterpart in the adjacent painting, whose aspect and attribute of the scythe allow us to easily recognize it as the personification of death, the identity of this female figure is far less obvious to infer, despite the majority of modern literature on the Bentivoglio chapel has been referring to her unproblematically as an allegory of *Fame*.

This identification was initiated in 1839 by Giovanni Gozzadini, who in his *Memories for the Life of Giovanni II Bentivoglio* offered the earliest and most thorough reading of Costa's diptych up to that moment. Recognizing the trumpet and the presence of elephants pulling her cart as established attributes of this personification, Gozzadini called the figure the "goddess of Fame," and read her presence as symbolizing that "second life" that men acquire after death.¹⁹⁵ Reinforcing Gozzadini's inference is the long and robust fifteenth-century visual tradition of the Petrarchan triumphs, where Fame is closely associated with Death as the entity overcoming and following the latter before she in turn succumbed to Time. The depiction of the *Triumph of Fame* as a pendant and an opposing force to the *Triumph of Death*, as it appears in the Bentivoglio chapel, is thus not entirely surprising nor unique. As a matter of fact, the choice to extrapolate these two subjects from the Petrarchan series and use them as an independent pair is documented

¹⁹⁵ Gozzadini 1839, 80.

in at least one other artistic commission from the period, which, although not linked to any surviving object today, was created for Giovanni de' Medici, the second son of Cosimo the Elder of Florence. This is a tapestry produced in Bruges from a cartoon by an Italian artist, which in a letter written around 1460 is said to have depicted the *Triumphs of Death and of Fame* after Petrarch, hence demonstrating the suitability of this subject for a Quattrocento prince.¹⁹⁶

Despite the persistence of the identification as a *Triumph of Fame* in the modern literature, the iconography of Costa's figure proves to be problematic when compared to other representations of the Petrarchan Fame as it appears in the graphic and decorative arts of fifteenth-century Italy. As one of the liveliest centers producing manuscript illuminations and engravings, as well as pieces of domestic furniture such as *cassoni*, *spalliere*, and *deschi da parto* that often featured triumphal imagery, the city of Florence counted numerous workshops where stable iconographic conventions for the representation of each Petrarchan triumph were soon established.¹⁹⁷ In this tradition, Fame was commonly depicted as a female figure holding a sword and a globe, which is sometimes replaced with a little cupid statue.¹⁹⁸ She is usually encircled by or sitting on a sphere, which represents her sovereignty over the world, and her chariot is pulled by elegant white horses, though these are sometimes replaced with exotic elephants.¹⁹⁹ A panel attributed to the Florentine painter and miniaturist Zanobi Strozzi, today in the Pinacoteca Nazionale of Bologna, may serve as an example of this broad artistic tradition (fig. 36). Here Fame, enthroned like a *maesta*, sits atop a chariot pulled by two white stallions;

¹⁹⁶ Warburg 1999, 281 and 298, note 3.

¹⁹⁷ For a broad perspective on the artistic representations of Petrarch's *Triumphs* see Masséna and Müntz 1902, and Carandente 1963.

¹⁹⁸ Schorr 1938, see later discussion. Rejecting Schorr's theory, Gilday argues that Fame's attributes of the sword and cupid represent a choice between virtue and vice that the goddess presents to aspiring leaders. Gilday 1996, 36-43.

¹⁹⁹ Both these animals were commonly associated with public celebrations of military victory, thus endowing the figure of Fame with tones of regality and supremacy. Gilday 1996, 67-9.

she is endowed with a sword and a tiny figure of Cupid, and backed by a circular field of waters that signifies her earthly dominion; surrounding her is an entourage of worthy men on horses who seek to be immortalized by her – soldiers, rulers, churchmen, scholars, poets, and ancient heroes whose various identities and origins are suggested by the diverse style of their clothes and headdresses.

As virtually every scholar who has taken an interest in the figurative fortune of the *Triumph* has recognized, the iconographic elements outlined above were not derived from Petrarch's verses, which contain no detailed description for any of the personifications that could have served as instructions for artists.²⁰⁰ Instead, the origins of this imagery have been traced back to other pre-existing traditions, both visual and literary. The first is a depiction of *Vanagloria* ("worldly Glory", also known as *Gloria mundi*) that was famously painted along great men of the past by Giotto in 1335 in a lost fresco cycle in the palace of Azzone Visconti in Milan. Scholars have speculated that a group of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century frontispieces from Padua may reflect that celebrated model, showing the *Gloria mundi* as a female figure sitting on a chariot, surrounded by cherubs blowing their trumpets, and handing out laurel crowns to a crowd of knights saluting her appearance (fig. 37).²⁰¹ The other source, which some scholars believe may have been in turn inspired by Giotto's fresco, is Boccaccio's description of Glory in his 1342 poem *Amorosa Visione*, where the character Boccaccio offers a wonder-filled description of his visit to an imaginary palace whose halls are decorated with

²⁰⁰ See Berra 1999.

²⁰¹ The frontispieces decorate volumes of Petrarch's *De viris illustribus*; although it doesn't describe any triumphs, it centers on the immortalization of great warriors of antiquity who have achieved eternal fame through their deeds.

painted triumphs of Wisdom, Glory, Wealth, Love, and Fortune.²⁰² In the thirtieth canto of the poem, Glory appears to Boccaccio as a beautiful lady in imperial attire who sits on a triumphal chariot decorated with laurels and pulled by white stallions.²⁰³ She is said to menacingly hold a shining sword in one hand and a globe in the other to symbolize her power. These attributes, and the “perfect circle” rotating around her figure, make it easy to see why scholars have suggested Boccaccio’s *Amorosa Visione* as a direct literary source for the iconography of Renaissance scenes of the *Triumph of Fame* such as the one by Zanobi Strozzi examined above.²⁰⁴ The

²⁰² This belongs to the genre of dream-vision poetry with roots in the tradition of Plato’s *Republic* and Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis*, two ancient Greek and Latin texts that had become canonical in high-Medieval culture upon having received a new Christian interpretation.

²⁰³ “a lady appeared, lovely beyond measure.

She truly excelled all others,
crowned with precious jewels and with gold,
in her countenance great-souled and powerful.
Bold and valorous among them,
she sat on a triumphal chariot,
which was entirely decorated with laurel fronds.
Regarding this crowd, she held in her hand
a shining sword, with which
it seemed to me she menaced the world.
Her clothing had an imperial appearance;
she held in her left hand
a golden apple of astral splendor.
Then immediately appeared four white steeds,
whiter than alpine snow, each of which urgently
burns to draw the golden chariot by its labor.
And among the other things which I noticed there
around about this supreme
lady, in her magnanimous breast
the enemy of death, was a perfect circle
rotating lofty and round,
from beneath her feet and over her head.
I do not believe there can be anything
in the whole world, town or country, domestic or foreign,
which would not appear within that circle.
Over the lady, in pure gold, there was
a verse written which said when one read it:
‘I am the Glory of the worldly folk’.”

Boccaccio 1986, 29.

²⁰⁴ Schorr 1938, 104.

pervasive diffusion of these Florentine and North-Italian examples during the fifteenth century is demonstrated by their influence on the illustrations that accompany some of the earliest printed editions of Petrarch's works that were published in Venice in the 1470s. For instance, the anonymous engravings included in two different volumes containing the *Triumphs*, today in the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna, follow those models in presenting Fame frontally, seated on her chariot and inscribed within a circle, displaying a sword and a Cupid statuette as her attributes and elephants as her animal companions (fig. 38). Costa's personification of *Fame* in the Bentivoglio chapel, however, seems only loosely connected to this kind of imagery. Like her Tuscan counterparts, she is seated on a chariot dragged by elephants, but the objects that she bears are of different kind and the crowd that surrounds her is not seeking her attention nor soliciting any honor from her. Their arrangement does not spread from the centralized, frontal chariot; instead, some of the paraders are gathered in small groups and engage in conversation with each other while others follow the chariot silently and look out of the picture into the space of the chapel. Even Giovanni and Annibale, who stand in the foreground, give their backs to her and face the viewer, receiving her protective gaze from afar.

If the visual tradition of Petrarchan Fame does not offer a satisfactory precedent for Costa's figure, the characterization of this abstract concept in the ancient sources is removed even further from the Bentivoglio image. For instance, the first literary description of fame is offered in Virgil's epic poem the *Aeneid*, where this is imagined as a monstrous, winged woman whose body is covered in feathers, eyes, ears, and tongues, with which she spreads news and rumors (both false and true) throughout the earth.²⁰⁵ Her rapid and uncontrollable movements, and the

²⁰⁵ "Out in a flash through Libya's cities Rumor is blazing.
No other evil is swifter than she. Rumor's being is fuelled
By her mobility, gaining additional strength as she travels.
Not very fearsome at first, she's soon puffs large on the breezes,

multitude of receptive organs on her body, reflect the aerial qualities of words as well as her capacity to travel quickly in time and space while gathering and disseminating pieces of information among people.²⁰⁶ While no depiction of fame is attested in antiquity, a growing interest in giving visual form to Virgil's invention began to emerge in the second half of the fifteenth century, continuing well into the sixteenth. Some notable examples from these periods include two illuminated editions of the *Aeneid* produced at the Aragonese court of Naples and an engraving contained in the 1502 edition of Virgil's works published in Strasburg, where Fame is imagined as a menacing bird-like creature whose body and wings are covered by rows of tongues, eyes, and ears, underscoring the deliberate malevolence of her powers.

In some instances, however, some of the monstrous traits of Virgil's Fame-Rumor were nuanced and recombined with characters borrowed from the Petrarchan Fame-Glory to communicate the positive aspects of celebrity. This is how the image of Fame that illustrates some late-sixteenth-century editions of *Le imagini de i dei de gli Antichi (Images of the Gods)*, a guide to the symbols and allegories of classical mythology compiled by the Italian mythographer Vincenzo Cartari, came to be (fig. 39). The author of this image, the printer and publisher Bolognino Zaltieri, imagined Fame as a woman in ancient attire, who is endowed with wings and whose body is disseminated with small eyes and ears as she is seen blowing through a trumpet

Striding the ground, but thrusting her head up high into cloud-caps.
(...) Fast on her feet, and provided with wings of astonishing power,
Huge and horrendous, a monster whose body conceals beneath feathers,
Just the same number of spying eyes (a remarkable feature),
Just the same number of tongues, and of mouths, and of ears pricked to eavesdrop.
Flying at night between heaven and earth, she screeches through darkness,
Nor does she grant any sweetness of sleep to her eyes ever searching.
(...) Clinging to fiction and falsehood as often as telling the plain truth.”
Virgil 2007, book 4, lines 173-177, 180-185, 188.

²⁰⁶ The etymology of the word 'fama', after all, is close to the Latin 'fari', 'to speak.'

that gives further resonance to her voice.²⁰⁷ The trumpet, borrowed from the Petrarchan figure of Fame-Glory, would ultimately be identified as Fame's defining attribute in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia (Iconology)*, the most important artists' book of instructions for the portrayal of allegories and all kinds of abstract concepts, first published in Italy in 1593. The dual nature of the personification of Fame, formed from the fusion of Virgilian and Petrarchan features, is clearly exemplified in the figured frontispiece of the second edition of Ripa's manual, dated 1603. Here, on the right, Fame is a winged woman holding a trumpet while her tunic bears her many communicative organs. While this had become Fame's canonical form by the end of the sixteenth century, a bronze medal coined in Bologna in 1479 constitutes another instance of the ongoing amalgamation of different iconographic models over the fifteenth century (fig. 40).²⁰⁸ The medal commemorates the jurist and law professor Andrea Barbazza, whose portrait in profile appears on the obverse together with a dedicatory inscription. The reverse displays a female figure endowed with three sets of wings and a feathered body, who holds two books in her hands while standing on one of many volumes scattered on the ground. The inscription that surrounds the figure, "Fama Super Aethera Notus" ("famous above the heavens") points back to the Virgilian origin of the figure and celebrates Barbazza's renown in the city.²⁰⁹ However, the provenance and dating of the medal, which are close to Lorenzo Costa's activity at the Bentivoglio court, make our artist's deliberate decision to completely disregard this entire tradition even more puzzling. So which other visual or literary sources could have Costa drawn from to form his unique depiction of *Fame*, and with what aims?

²⁰⁷ The first edition of *Images of the Gods*, published in 1556, contained no illustration; these first appeared in the Venetian edition of 1571 created by printer and publisher Bolognino Zaltieri.

²⁰⁸ The object, which was first referenced in Guastella 2012, 254, note 15, can be seen at: <http://numismatics.org/collection/0000.999.75819> (accessed August 2021)

²⁰⁹ Translation is mine.

Around 1447 Leonello d'Este, marquis of Ferrara, put Guarino da Verona, his former preceptor and a prominent humanist serving at the Este court, in charge of elaborating a series of paintings destined to his suburban retreat outside Ferrara, the Belfiore palace, and representing the nine Muses, ancient goddesses of poetic inspiration. The series was likely completed after Leonello's death in 1451 under the tenure of his successor, his brother Borso, another great patron of the arts. Exceptionally enough for an artistic commission from this period, a letter sent by Guarino to Leonello on 5 November 1447 survives to inform us of the artistic program imagined by the marquis and to transmit Guarino's ideas about the Muses as well as detailed instructions on how these should be depicted.²¹⁰ From this letter, we immediately learn that Guarino operated several departures from the classical tradition, in which each Muse was associated with the genres of ancient theatre and poetry. Instead, the humanist reassigns these figures to different arts, activities, and pursuits that were popular at the Este court and that were intended to reframe them as useful and decorous in an attempt to rescue their reputation from the defamation they had suffered after antiquity.²¹¹ For instance, Thalia and Polyhymnia, once associated with the art of comedy and mime, came to embody the art of planting land and agriculture. Other muses did not undergo substantial transformations, but their traditional roles were provided with a moralizing frame within which their influence could be acceptably exercised. That was the case of Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy, now associated with sacred song; Erato, former inspirer of erotic poetry, now protected marital love. Finally, Clio kept her traditional role as the Muse of History. In Guarino's program in fact, "Clio is the discoverer of history and things that pertain to fame and antiquity;" in his letter, he continues: "for this reason

²¹⁰ A full transcription and translation of the letter is published in Baxandall 1965, 186-187, 201-202.

²¹¹ See discussion below.

let her hold a trumpet in one hand and a book in the other; varied colors and patterns will be woven into her garments, like silken drapery in the ancient manner.”²¹²

Unfortunately, because the studiolo was dismantled and its collection of artworks and objects dispersed already in the seventeenth century, the identification of the Belfiore Muses with surviving paintings is difficult and often disputed among scholars. So far, only five paintings scattered in various European museums have been accepted as belonging to this group and attributed to different artists that include Michele Pannonio, Angelo Maccagnino, and Cosmè Tura. Although the *Clio* is not, unfortunately, among the surviving identified panels, a valuable description of its original aspect appears in a chronicle composed by Ciriaco d’Ancona, a travelling humanist and antiquarian whose writings offer an account of his visit to the studio of artist Angelo Maccagnino that took place around 1449, while the painter was working on the *Clio* and the *Melpemone* panels destined to Belfiore. He describes the first as follows:

The *Clio* is distinguished by a chiton worked with purple and gold and by a chlamys of azure. In her right hand she holds a trumpet, in her left an open book. With a kind of calm joy in her living face, indicating encouragement by a certain god-like movement of her eyes, she is seen to urge men on to glory.²¹³

An epigram, which Ciriaco attributes to Guarino, is also mentioned as appearing at the base of the painting, which read: “Historiis, famaque & facta vetusta reservo. Ad instrumenti musici genus” (“I preserve history, reputation, and ancient deeds. I give origin to musical instruments”).²¹⁴ Hence, these period accounts attest that the association of *Clio* with the

²¹² Baxandall 1965, 186.

²¹³ Ibidem, 187.

²¹⁴ Ibidem, 188. Translation is mine.

concepts of fame and glory, as well as the presence of the book and the trumpet as her attributes, seem to have been well established in the Belfiore series despite the circulation, at the Este court, of other visual and literary sources offering different possibilities for the representation of the Muse of History. For instance, in the so-called “Tarocchi del Mantegna,” a conventional name referring to different sets of engraved cards created in Ferrara between 1465 and 1475, Clio is accompanied by a swan, while her sisters are made to carry musical instruments in accord with the muses’ ancient association with music (fig. 41). In antiquity, Clio had been mostly depicted with the sole attribute of the scroll – and sometimes a stylus – on which she can be seen recording historical events, thus expressing a focus on her role as preserver of collective memory (fig. 42). This iconography, however, does not seem to have survived into the early modern centuries.

Despite the broad variety of available visual precedents, the iconography of Clio as devised by Guarino at Belfiore seems to have been considered especially suitable for Quattrocento princely spaces, likely in virtue of the meanings attached to her attributes. As the symbol par excellence of victory in battle as well as of divine power, the trumpet would have echoed the prince’s qualities of distinction and leadership, while the book would have referred to the education of a ruler, based on the classics, as much as to Fame’s prerogative to record and preserve worthy deeds.²¹⁵ At least two surviving depictions of the Muse of History produced at the courts of Rimini and Mantua reflect the success of Guarino’s invention in princely contexts. The first is a relief realized by the sculptor Agostino di Duccio between 1449 and 1457 in the Tempio Malatestiano, a medieval cathedral redesigned by the Florentine architect and theorist Leon Battista Alberti and lavishly decorated in a style inspired by classical antiquity under the

²¹⁵ On the symbolic meaning of the attributes of the book and the trumpet in Renaissance Italy see Gilday 1996, 47-50, and 59-61 respectively.

patronage of the lord of Rimini Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta (fig. 43). Among the numerous marble sculptures and reliefs that cover the walls of the church interior with coats of arms, emblems, and images of triumph, in the chapel dedicated to the Muses and to the Liberal Arts is a depiction of Clio. These two groups of personifications, associated with the pagan and the Christian world respectively, and coexisting in the Tempio for the first time in Quattrocento art, attest to the unprecedented degree of syncretism at play in the Riminese monument. While scholars have widely understood this as a manifestation of Sigismondo's personal reverence toward the classical world and of his desire to revive and emulate its most authentic spirit, this study contributes to demonstrate that a strong interest in the intersections between ancient wisdom and Christian truth was widespread among fifteenth-century rulers, finding literary foundation in the work of humanists serving at their court and acceptable expression in official spaces of worship.²¹⁶ The Clio in the Tempio Malatestiano is a neo-antique figure clad in ample draperies; she stands on a sphere as she presses a book against her chest with her right hand and holds a long trumpet in the other, her attributes faithfully reflecting Guarino's prescriptions for the Muse of History destined to the Belfiore studiolo, which the Malatesta had visited in 1450.²¹⁷

A later instance of the success of this iconography is found on the monumental portal of white marble and *pietre dure* that connects the grotto with the *studiolo* of Isabella d'Este in Mantua, carved by Gian Cristoforo Romano before 1505 (fig. 44). The portal is decorated with several *tondi*, or round medallions, which bear depictions of Minerva and of three of the Muses (Clio, Euterpe, and Thalia) each paired with the image of an animal associated with them. Clio, who appears next to a peacock, a symbol of immortality that alludes to the lasting memory she bestows on men, is represented as a young woman fully in the nude, except for a loincloth softly

²¹⁶ D'Elia 2016.

²¹⁷ Muscolino 2000, 58-65.

knot around her waist. She is seen balancing with one foot on a human skull on which she travels from a rocky landscape toward a walled city across a river while carrying two heavy volumes overhead and holding a horn or trumpet in her right.²¹⁸

With the exception of the book, replaced with a rod ending in a trident and topped by a chiseled dolphin, Costa's depiction of the Bentivoglio so-called *Fame* seems to owe much to the figure of the Muse of History as originally formulated by Guarino and later painted by Angelo Maccagnino in Ferrara. This departure from their vision and the visual tradition that could have been meant to infuse the figure with antiquarian and military undertones that would have appealed to Giovanni's ambitions as a *condottiere*. In fact, perhaps due to the animal's curvilinear body and flexible shape, the dolphin was a popular decorative motif in ancient Greece and Rome often found on vases, coins, articles of jewelry, coats of arms, but also on armor, shields, and seals.²¹⁹ As a native of Ferrara to a family of artists, Costa would have likely been aware of the existence of the Belfiore muses and could have intentionally borrowed some of Clio's iconographic traits such as the attribute of the trumpet, the gold and blue *all'antica* garments, and her dignified demeanor to expand his figure's symbolic meaning beyond that of Virgilian or Petrarchan Fame. The benevolent gaze that she extends onto the two generations of present and future Bentivoglio leaders, standing in the foreground, would have demonstrated to the viewer the goddess's favor for the Bolognese dynasty of rulers as well as her willingness to preserve the memory of their deeds and transmit it to posterity along with that of the great men of antiquity celebrated in the circular field above her head.

²¹⁸ For Campbell she "expresses the triumph of fame over death" Campbell 2006, 140. Vecce 2016, 223.

²¹⁹ Stebbins 1929, 97-129. In particular, Stebbins claims that the dolphin appeared on the seal of the Legio XXI Primigenia, a legion of the Imperial Roman army stationed in modern-day Germany that was created in 89 AD and dedicated to the Goddess Fortuna Primigenia, an ancient Roman goddess of fate and good fortune. If this information was correct, this reference may have contributed to echo the figure's additional identification with Fortune, which is discussed below.

Another enigmatic detail in Costa's figure of Fame, so far unnoticed, further demonstrates that this is also meant to be associated with the knowledge of the things of the past. This is her left foot curiously resting on a square stone while the other lies simply on the chariot floor. This otherwise unwarranted pose would later be prescribed for the personification of history by Cesare Ripa in his *Iconologia*, where 'Historia' is described as follows:

winged woman, with a white dress, who looks backwards. In her left hand she shall hold a book, which she shall show to be writing on, and *she shall rest her left foot over a square stone* (...) Gazing backwards shows that History is the memory of the things of the past, meant for posterity. (...) She lays her foot on a square stone because History must always stand still.²²⁰

Although Ripa's manual appeared over a century after Costa's Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, the tradition that the sixteenth-century writer drew from is clearly the same that inspired our artist to pose the left foot of his allegorical figure the way he did, as well as to have her gaze backwards to convey her association with the concept of history. This was indeed central to the message of political legitimization and self-promotion that Giovanni II intended to convey through the decorative program of the Bentivoglio chapel. In fact, both the presence of his ancestors in the triumphal parades and the ancient narratives displayed in the circle in the upper side of the left-hand *Triumph* underlie a strong emphasis on the exemplar value of the past, personal (Giovanni's) as well as collective (humanity). By transferring some of the attributes of the personification of history to the triumphal context of Petrarchan Fame, Costa demonstrates his commitment to create an original and distinctive image tailored to the patrons and audiences of

²²⁰ Ripa 1645, 268-269. Italic is mine for emphasis.

the Bentivoglio chapel. After all, the possibility that Costa's Bentivoglio *Triumphs* conflate multiple meanings has already been foreseen by other scholars who have previously investigated the chapel, chiefly Werner Weisbach and Wendy Wegener. Expanding on Weisbach's observation that the two scenes include additional Petrarchan personifications that refer to the triumphs of Chastity, Time, and Eternity, Wegener identified the circle containing ancient narratives above the figure of Fame as a variation on the Medieval tradition of the Wheel of Fortune, thus proposing to read the scene as a *Triumph of Fame and Fortune*.²²¹ Wegener's intuition seems to be confirmed by the inscription, recently recovered from textual sources, that originally ran below the two triumphal canvases and offered the interpretative key to the two scenes centered on the role of Fortune in the earthly life of humankind.²²²

The concepts of Fame, Fortune, History, and the re-emergence of the ancient Muses are all manifest in the figure that presides over Costa's left-hand *Triumph* in the Bentivoglio chapel. These themes were also deeply rooted in the humanistic culture that grew along and within the princely courts of the Quattrocento and dominated the literary debate during the central decades of the fifteenth century, so that the ways in which these themes surface and intertwine in the decorative program of the Bentivoglio chapel signals the interest that this space possesses as a privileged viewpoint to observe and understand Renaissance court culture in a lesser investigated but intellectually lively center like Bologna. Petrarch was a key figure in the transmission of ideas of fame and fortune from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, which he drew from authors of the late antiquity, especially Macrobius's *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* (the

²²¹ Weisbach 1919, 90-91; Wegener 1989, 199.

²²² This read "Fortuna extollit, calcat, dat gaudia luctus, post obitum fulgente vehat te Gloria curru," which I propose to translate as "Fortune elevates, tramples, gives joys and griefs, [and] after death [it] carries you to glory on a shining chariot." The inscription, its content, and meaning have been discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Commentary on Cicero's Dream of Scipio) and Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*). These texts offered long-lasting arguments for the rejection of delusive and transient values such as worldly glory and fame, a direction that was further developed in the following centuries by Christian writers who contrasted the worldly limits of human achievements with concerns about eternity and spiritual salvation. As demonstrated in previous chapters of this dissertation, early Renaissance humanists and scholars were confronted with the difficult task of recovering and reframing those debates for their patrons and contemporary audiences. Because these consisted primarily of *signori*, princes, and *condottieri* for whom the pursuit and celebration of military achievements were critical to the keeping of their titles and positions of power, ideas surrounding fame and fortune had to be reshaped in a more positive light and renegotiated to fit the current socio-political situation.²²³

Boethius also had had a major impact on the reception of the Muses between late antiquity and the early modern period, causing these goddesses of poetic inspiration to be forgotten for about ten centuries following their condemnation as lascivious subjects, “useless and potentially corrupting, especially when taught to the young.”²²⁴ More specifically, Boethius had defined the Muses “meretriculas” (‘harlots’), and “Sirenes,” a term with which he referred to the malicious Greek mythological creatures believed to lure sailors with their enticing voices to the dangerously rocky shores of their island, ultimately causing their shipwreck.²²⁵ By association, Boethius regarded music, and by extension, poetry, as equally dangerous tools of seduction for their vacuous and licentious content concealed behind a seductive surface. However, an

²²³ In particular, chapter 2 of this dissertation examined Lapini's discussion of the themes of fame and fortune in his commentary on Petrarch's *Triumphs*.

²²⁴ For this reason, they were considered by Boethius the epitome of feminine seduction and temptation. Baxandall 1965, 186; the relevant passage from Boethius is cited in Campbell 1995, 167.

²²⁵ *Idem*.

alternative, positive interpretation of the Sirens had also been in place since antiquity. Cicero, a classical author particularly dear to Guarino, engaged with the Homeric tradition directly to suggest that it was the Sirens' "passion for learning" and their "professions of knowledge," not the deceiving qualities of their voices and songs, to draw men towards them.²²⁶ Previously, in the *Republic*, Plato had had the Sirens preside over the eight celestial spheres and maintain universal harmony with their enchanting voices: "On every one of its circles is a Siren, who travels round with the circle, and cries out on one note, and the eight notes are joined in one harmony."²²⁷ But because of the increasingly negative characterization that these figures had received in Homeric literature, the Greek author Plutarch had eventually suggested to substitute the Sirens with the Nine Muses, assigning the role of preservers of universal harmony to the latter instead.²²⁸ Plato's theory was revived in fifteenth-century Ferrara by Giorgio Anselmi, a scholar of astronomy, medicine, and music who in 1434 composed a treatise titled *De musica (On Music)*, where he talked about the entities that preside the celestial spheres as 'spirits' and reframed them from a Christian perspective:

These are in truth the spirits which Socrates in the Republic of Plato called Sirens, each sitting, as he said, upon one ring. "Siren" in fact means a singing god, but he actually meant to signify spirits, as ceaseless in their song as the spheres are in their motion. Our theologians more correctly call these spirits angels.²²⁹

²²⁶ In *De finibus bonorum et malorum (On the Ends of Good and Evil)*, Cicero wrote: "Apparently it was not the sweetness of their voces or the novelty and diversity of their songs, but their professions of knowledge that used to attract the passing voyagers; it was the passion for learning that kept men rooted to the Sirens' rocky shores." The full passage is cited in Shephard 2014, 45.

²²⁷ Richards 1966, 192.

²²⁸ Shapiro 1959, 185.

²²⁹ Quoted in Shephard 2014, 46.

An overlap in their function, and the association that both these groups held with music and song, may have ultimately contributed to the transfer of the Sirens' negative characters onto the Muses, as demonstrated by Boethius's invective. As a matter of fact, the danger for moral corruption was the most common accusation that the humanists of the early Renaissance had to confront when defending the pagan culture that they were so passionately uncovering and recovering. Their efforts to demonstrate the pedagogical benefits to the study of ancient literature, and particularly of Latin poetry, eventually led to the reevaluation of the Muses that is reflected in the artistic production of the Quattrocento examined in this chapter.²³⁰

The earliest and most forceful advocate for the merits of poetry and the legitimacy of the cult of Muses was certainly the early Renaissance author and humanist Giovanni Boccaccio, first biographer of Dante Alighieri and a contemporary of Petrarch. In his *Expositions*, one of the most important fourteenth-century commentaries on Dante's *Comedy*, Boccaccio presents the Muses as the daughters of the king of the gods Jove and the goddess of memory Mnemosyne, but gives them a decisive Christian imprint when affirming that "We can, and must, say that these Muses (i.e., the knowledge that we assimilate through our intellect and memory) can be called daughters of Jove, that is, of God the Father, and of Memory."²³¹ Boccaccio thus identifies the Nine sisters with knowledge itself, and grounds his argument in the work of the great scholars of late antiquity such as Isidore of Seville and Macrobius. But it is the mythographer Fulgentius to offer to Boccaccio the most complete source of detailed information on the Muses including the names, functions, and meaning of each, which he records carefully. After comparing the Muses to the formation of human voice through the organs of speech, Fulgentius offers an etymology

²³⁰ See Campbell 1995.

²³¹ Papio 2009, 114.

for Clio's name that would become fundamental for the iconographic types described in this chapter. Paraphrasing the *Mythologies*, Boccaccio explains:

The first is Clio, which stands for the first conception of learning since “cleos” in Greek is “fame” in Italian. There is no one who seeks any knowledge other than that by which he believes he may advance the dignity of his reputation. For this reason, the first is called Clio, that is, “the conception of the search for knowledge.”²³²

The conflation between the identity of the Muse Clio and the concept of fame intended as ‘reputation’ and ‘glory,’ which had been already formulated in late antiquity, was thus revived in the early Renaissance by the proto humanist Boccaccio and found its first artistic visualization in Lorenzo Costa's female personification that presides over one of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*. In this sense, the figure created for Giovanni Bentivoglio would have successfully exemplified the patron's desire to acquire wisdom and knowledge by learning from the examples and teachings of the great men of antiquity in order to achieve fame himself as a worthy political leader and military commander.

The breadth of the domain of the Muses, whose perceived usefulness even extended to the civic and political spheres, is further suggested by an interesting passage found in a letter written in 1419 by Guarino and addressed to his fellow Veronese and former pupil Nicola Salerno, then *podestà* of Bologna (essentially a magistrate, or city official), which read: “They [the Muses] taught you [Nicola] how to carry out your tasks in society. Hence you are living proof that the Muses rule not only musical instruments but also public affairs.”²³³ It is no surprise then that by the middle of the fifteenth century these mythological goddesses had come to be regarded as

²³² Papio 2009, 116.

²³³ Grafton and Jardine 1986, 2.

suitable subjects for the study of a Renaissance prince in virtue of their association with the classical world and with the activities of contemplation and scholarly pursuit that were also central to the *studiolo* culture. Since at least the fourteenth century this space, traditionally designated for the practical ends of writing and reading (not unlike a modern private office or workroom), was commonly used by scholars, clerics, merchants, and businessmen, with little uniformity regarding its denominations (*studiolo*, *camerino*, *stanzino*, *scrittoio*) or its location within the apartment or palace (usually a private room in proximity of the owner's bedroom and/or a small chapel). Increasingly over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, the *studiolo* became a distinctive feature of princely households and a place for the expression of the wealth and learning of its owner through the calculated selection and display of books, luxury objects, collectibles, and works of art – both modern and ancient. While manuscripts, coins, medals, and small sculptures were often arranged at eye level on shelves or in cabinets, the walls were either lined with intarsia panels and marquetry or decorated with paintings set into a continuous wood framing above the wainscoting. Their subjects were those evidently considered conducive to the activities of study and writing carried out in these spaces, hence they often included personifications or symbols of the Liberal Arts, the Virtues, famous and exemplary men (both ancient and modern), and sometimes ancient Greek and Roman divinities.²³⁴

The most popular subject, however, seems to have been the nine Muses, who conveniently expressed the desire for knowledge at the core of the *studiolo* culture. As we have seen, these ancient goddesses of poetry and music had made their first reappearance in Renaissance art around the middle of the fifteenth century at Belfiore, in Ferrara, where they were requested by the marquis Leonello to appear in his private study. The resulting paintings, including one

²³⁴ The latter is the case, for instance, of Isabella and Alfonso d'Este's *studioli*.

attributed to Cosme Tura and tentatively identified as *Calliope*, have been seen to embody the notion of art and artistic creation itself on the basis of their eccentric style as well as of the irreconcilable disjunctions observable between the ‘de-poeticized’ version of the Muses devised in Guarino’s program and the surviving pictorial evidence.

About Tura’s *Muse*, for instance, Campbell has argued that the figure’s flirtatious appearance, enhanced by her alluring gestures and the shimmering materials that make up her clothing and throne, embody the painter’s own creative fantasy and artistic license and take an open stance in the inflammatory debate surrounding the propriety of poetry that was in progress at the time at the Este court.²³⁵ At the same time, these figures certainly served a specific function for their patron Leonello, who commissioned and intended to use these images in his *studiolo*. This was, according to Tim Shephard, to inspire and preside on Leonello’s own poetic enterprises as a writer of verses and sonnets on amorous subjects, paralleling the custom of ancient poets to invoke the Muses to provide guidance to them and immortality to their verses.²³⁶ In this sense, the Belfiore Muses are presented at the same time as the sources and products of acts of artistic creation, both literary (on the part of the patron) and visual (on the part of the artist). Their sensual, Siren-like qualities could have been intended, as Shephard proposes, to reflect the Sirens’ ancient identity as teachers and inspirers of knowledge that was attributed to them already in antiquity, as discussed above. The fantastic marine motifs that appear in Tura’s painting, most notably the shell-niche and monstrous dolphins that decorate the throne on which the Muse sits, would have further reinforced her identification with the Sirens, who throughout

²³⁵ On this topic, see Campbell 1995 and previous literature.

²³⁶ Shephard 2014, 52.

the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were commonly understood as mermaid-like creatures, half-women half-fish.²³⁷

This use of marine imagery may finally prompt us to reconsider the symbolism of Costa's own female personification at the center of the left-hand *Triumph*. While her pose and appearance can be seen to generally echo Tura's Belfiore Muse, which Costa likely saw in his youthful years in Ferrara (they both sit upright, their busts rotate turning slightly away from their legs, and they gaze sideways delicately tilting their round heads downward), the metal rod that the figure holds in her right hand is topped with a chiseled dolphin that is closely reminiscent of the maritime creatures decorating the throne of Tura's Muse. This may have been meant to evoke those same association with the Sirens-Muses in their role as poetic inspirers and seekers of knowledge, so that paired with the attribute of the trumpet, the dolphin-decorated rod upheld by Costa's personification would have expressed Giovanni Bentivoglio's lust for learning that leads to fame.

Another princely space where the Muses held particular significance is the ducal palace of Urbino, which was erected by architects Francesco Laurana and Francesco di Giorgio Martini for the lord Federico da Montefeltro over the 1460s and 70s, and today is considered one of the best-preserved spaces from the early Renaissance. Federico's *studiolo*, located on the noble floor, still exhibits its famous marquetry panels that imitate cabinets filled with books, writing instruments, scientific tools, and other objects associated with the exercise of the liberal arts as well as of war, while the twenty-eight paintings depicting ancient philosophers, Fathers of the Church, Biblical figures, scholars, and modern poets that used to hang on two registers in the

²³⁷ Shephard 2014, 44, especially note 46. Shephard also suggest that the motif of dolphins held additional associations with music that would have pointed to the identification of the Muse depicted by Tura as Euterpe by reminding the viewer of the story of the Greek harper Arion and the dolphin that saved him from drowning. On this aspect, see Shepherd 2014, 47.

upper half of the four walls have been displaced. However, it is the two twin rooms located on the ground floor, directly below the studiolo and connected to it by an internal staircase, that hold an even greater interest for our discussion. These small, rectangular spaces, known as the *Cappella del Perdono* and the *Tempietto delle Muse*, were dedicated to God and to the Muses respectively, as declared by the inscription that welcomes visitors from the vestibule that provides access to them.²³⁸ In their proximity and specularity, *Cappella* and the *Tempietto* proclaim the belief in the complementary nature of the Christian and pagan traditions. While the chapel's interior is entirely lined with panels of multicolored marble, the tempietto has come to us completely bare and stripped of its original decoration, which would have included painted panels depicting Apollo, Athene, and the Nine Muses mounted into frames of inlaid wood. Today, only eight paintings from the series survive and have been identified with a group of panels today in the Galleria Corsini in Florence, which are variously attributed to painters Timoteo Viti and Giovanni Santi and dated to circa 1480-90. Each Muse is associated with a musical instrument, which they are shown to be playing while standing in front of cave-like rock formations within a remote landscape (curiously, here Clio is the only figure to be shown with no attribute, fig. 45). As discussed earlier in this chapter, the association of the Muses with song and musical conceits dates back to antiquity, when little distinction existed between poetry and music, as these arts were performed together and accompanied each other. This connection was well understood by medieval and Renaissance authors and music theorists, and it is the reason behind the musical characterization of the Muses in the majority of fifteenth-century depictions of these subjects in courtly contexts. In fact, the Muses appear with their musical connotations

²³⁸ “Bina vides parvo discrimine jvncta sacella altera pars Mvsis altera sacra Deo est” (“Here you see the two small temples divided by just a small space; one is dedicated to the Muses, the other to God”). Cheles 1986, 13.

not only in Federico da Montefeltro's *Tempietto delle Muse* but also at Carpi, in the residence of Alberto Pio, the lord of another small principality in the Emilia region.²³⁹ In a configuration certainly inspired by the Urbino palace, the palace at Carpi also presents a room located directly below the *studiolo* proper and connected to it by a hidden staircase. Here, inside the lunettes created by the vaulted ceiling, stand the half-length painted figures of the Nine Muses holding musical instruments, which are closely comparable to those displayed in the Urbino series and likely completed between 1506 and 1509. In this representational typology, the Muses reflect Neoplatonic theories that charged them with maintaining the harmony of the celestial spheres and endowed them with the power to dispense divine wisdom and elevate humankind spiritually through music and poetry. Thus, two very different approaches to the conception and characterization of the Muses within the context of princely *studioli* emerges during the Quattrocento and early-Cinquecento: one, operating at Belfiore, presents the Muses as sensual, Siren-like goddesses who embody the desire for knowledge and offer artistic inspiration and immortality to their patrons and beholders; the other, exemplified at Urbino and Carpi, is a more chaste and pious approach where Neoplatonic theories are used to reconcile ancient pagan tradition and Christian orthodoxy out of the necessity to frame these artistic initiatives as acceptable princely enterprises.

In seeking to reconnect pagan knowledge and Christian wisdom, the patrons and owners of a Renaissance *studiolo* employed the visual arts to experiment with different “strategies of accommodation” to reconcile secular images and spiritual content.²⁴⁰ One of these strategies was

²³⁹ He was also a patron of Costa, to whom he commissioned the altarpiece with the *Saints Anthony of Padua, Ursula, and Catherine of Alexandria* now in the collection of the Cassa di Risparmio of Carpi, and a relative of Gilberto Pio, who in 1481 took in marriage Francesca, daughter of Giovanni II Bentivoglio.

²⁴⁰ The term is borrowed from Campbell 2006, 35.

the inclusion of objects and artworks deemed worthy not only for the valuable materials employed in their production, but also for the admirable craftsmanship and skill demonstrated by the artist who created them and the edifying stories they communicate. This seems to have been the case, for instance, of the *studiolo* of Piero de Medici in Florence, the aesthetic qualities of which are praised in a period account written before 1464 by the architect and theorist Antonio di Pietro Averlino, known as Filarete. Piero's numerous manuscripts of Latin, Greek, and Italian classic authors, and the effigies and portraits of illustrious men he owns, strike Filarete as remarkable objects of luxury and artistry that appeal to the mind as well as to the eyes by offering inspiring examples of human virtue in both their form and subject:

These things give pleasure in two ways to anyone who understands and enjoys them as he does; first, for the excellence of the image represented, secondly for the noble mastery of those ancient angelic spirits who with their sublime intellects made such ordinary things as bronze, marble and such materials acquire great price. (...) They have made a worth more than gold by means of their skill.²⁴¹

Another way images came to be acceptably incorporated in the *studiolo* and endowed with elevating purposes was in virtue of their capacity to function as texts, meaning that the viewer's experience was reconfigured as that of a reader encouraged to interact with the image and participate in the construction of its meaning(s). In this sense, these images required a specialized knowledge and an intellectual engagement similar to that required to a reader of a book or text, ultimately turning the study into an "instrument for thinking."²⁴² Campbell has demonstrated how these mechanisms were at play in the now-dismantled study of Isabella d'Este, the

²⁴¹ Quoted in Campbell 2006, 29.

²⁴² Campbell 2006, 46.

marchioness of Mantua, which was once adorned with six paintings of mythological subject including two by Lorenzo Costa. The previous chapters of this dissertation have shown how the contributions of the artist from Ferrara to this Mantuan enterprise share a similar approach in mediating between images and texts with the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*.

The ambivalence between religious pursuits and the Renaissance fascination with pagan antiquity and secular culture that was certainly present in the early-modern *studiolo* culture is expressed perhaps most clearly in the *Vision of St. Augustine*, a famous painting created by artist Vittore Carpaccio for the Venetian confraternity of San Giorgio degli Schiavoni in 1502 (fig. 46). The image has often been seen as a true recreation of a typical Renaissance *studiolo* for the accuracy with which it describes this intimate room interior cluttered with a number of bronzes, vases, scientific instruments, and books that are displayed on shelves or scattered on and around the desk where St. Augustine is raptly experiencing his vision. But the apse of marbles and mosaics in the back wall, which hosts an altar for the celebration of the mass fully furnished with ritual paraphernalia (including the miter and staff of Augustine's office) and endowed with a bronze sculptural altarpiece of the blessing Christ, suggests a space destined to religious liturgy and spiritual contemplation as much as to reading and studying. The presence of a small, contiguous room opening on the left in the back wall, which appears to contain more of the objects of the study proper, including a desk, books, and lecterns, seems to stage the significant degree of closeness and interchangeability in the use of spaces for study and for prayer at this particular moment in history. This representational mode has suggested to Campbell that this image may be seen as "vividly evoking the form and the contents of a *studiolo* only to displace it with that of the chapel."²⁴³

²⁴³ Campbell 2006, 33.

This chapter has argued that a similar kind of displacement is also at play in the Bentivoglio chapel, where imagery commonly employed in the decoration of Renaissance *studioli* – the Muses, illustrious men, concepts of active and contemplative life – has entered the religious space of the chapel through the female figure at the center of the so-called *Triumph of Fame*. This character conflates the personifications of History as well as of Fame, and her identification is further complicated by her reading under the overarching concept of Fortune, which is presented as the force governing human existence in the inscription originally located below the diptych. Given period designations of Fortune as an emanation of Divine Providence, as discussed in the previous chapter, this figure emerges as a Christianized version of the capricious ancient goddess, as confirmed by her alignment with the figure of God the Father of the creation scene directly above her. All this contributes to making the Bentivoglio chapel a space more fluid and nuanced than it has been so far acknowledged, capable of fulfilling both religious and secular functions thanks to the presence of a decorative program that would have been conducive to a range of exchanges and intellectual pursuits undertaken by the Bentivoglio and their erudite interlocutors.

5. Creation and Invention. Picturing Genesis in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* and the God-like Power of the Renaissance Artist

The history of the creation of the universe and of humankind by the hand of God is an inceptive moment in the history of the world under Christian lenses, and one that for centuries posed special challenges to artists who strove to depict these supernatural events in a naturalistic way. The textual source for the story of the creation is the Old Testament, specifically the book of Genesis, which contains two distinct accounts that were brought together when the Bible was compiled and edited into one cohesive text. The first account, called the Priestly Document, is a quite succinct chronicle that narrates the creation of the universe by God in seven days, also known as the Hexameron. However, its language, sometimes generic, failed to provide artists with enough visual clues to establish a normative way to depict the events, and in some instances caused deep controversy between Jewish and Christian exegetes since an early date. For instance, the relevant passage on the creation of the first man and woman reads:

And he said: Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth.

And God created man to his own image: to the image of God he created him: male and female he created them.²⁴⁴

While Judaic commentators interpreted the use of the plural person (“Let us...”) as referring to God acting together with the angelic intelligences created on the previous day, and understood the first human to have been an androgynous being who was subsequently split into the first man

²⁴⁴ Genesis 1:26-7.

and woman, the Christian fathers of the Church argued that the creation of the universe was an act of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), and insisted that the first human to be created was Adam, from which Eve was later formed. As a result, Western depictions of Genesis (including Costa's) usually depict God with a triangular nimbus (or halo) over his head, identifying him as a member of the Trinity, and the creation of the two ancestors of humanity is most often represented as two distinct events.

A second and more detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve comes from the second book of Genesis, derived from what is known as the Yawist Document. While partially contradicting the previous account for what concerns the succession of the events, this text provided key additional elements to the story that offered artists useful starting points to develop their visual narrative. The relevant passage reads: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul."²⁴⁵ Only after placing Adam in the Garden of Eden ("And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning: wherein he placed man whom he had formed," Genesis 2:8), and finding that he did not have an appropriate mate among the creatures that he populated it with ("And Adam called all the beasts by their names, and all the fowls of the air, and all the cattle of the field: but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself," Genesis 2:20), did God resolve himself to make one for him:

Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it.

And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Genesis, 2:7.

²⁴⁶ Ibidem, 2:21-22.

Upon meeting Eve, Adam is made to pronounce a short speech, which further clarifies the origin and role of his companion for the reader: “And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.”²⁴⁷ Reflecting this emphasis on Adam’s side as the site of Eve’s origin, artistic representations of the creation of the first woman produced in the West increasingly reflected an interpretative shift that had been initiated by early Christian commentators of the Bible, including Augustine and Isidore of Seville, who understood Adam’s speech on the origin of his helpmate as a metaphor for the marital bond between man and woman and a prefiguration of the union between Christ and the Church. In order to visually emphasize this interpretation, artist depicting the *Creation of Eve* most often omitted the detail of the woman’s formation from one of Adam’s ribs; instead, they preferred to show her in the process of emerging from an opening in the man’s body placed somewhere between the shoulder and the hip (a literal illustration of the words “de viro sumpta”, “taken from man,” Genesis 2:23), despite this being a departure from the narrative offered in the Yawist Document. In addition to the theological justifications for this choice, Jack M. Greenstein has argued that despite the difficulty of showing a fully-grown body spurting from another, such solution still afforded Renaissance artists the best opportunity to represent the event of the Creation of Eve in naturalistic terms, which is at the root of the success and diffusion of this iconography in the early-modern period.²⁴⁸

From a theological standpoint, it was Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) who carried out the most significant effort to address the incongruities between the two accounts of the creation contained in the first two books of Genesis. In all of his major works, including the *Confessions* and the *City of God*, but especially in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, a commentary on the Old

²⁴⁷ Genesis, 2:23.

²⁴⁸ Greenstein 2016.

Testament book, the bishop of Hippo firmly defended the historical truth and literal accuracy of the Biblical revelation against its many detractors. In particular, Augustine argued that both the Priestly and the Yawist accounts were true and accurate in the literal sense, and not just figuratively, and in order to affirm their non-exclusionary truthfulness, he held that these two texts referred to two distinct events: the first described a “spiritual creation,” the simultaneous act of God through which all things originated from nothing and in a supratemporal dimension (“*in principio*,” in the beginning);²⁴⁹ the second narrated the succession of creative acts through which God gave physical form and visible existence to the world and to all living beings within time and space, although he considered the temporal framework offered by the Hexameron an intelligible metaphor rather than actual temporal spans.²⁵⁰ Even though theologians of the following centuries could not accept Augustine’s theory of two distinct creations in his exact terms, the idea of distinguishing two narrative angles to the same creation story was seen as offering an effective solution to the interpretative problems of Genesis while defending the credibility of the holy text in its entirety. This reading was further developed by subsequent Latin theologians, including Bonaventura (1221-72) and Thomas Aquinas (1225 or 1227-1274), but chiefly by Bede (673-735), who was the author of a fundamental commentary, *On Genesis*, that upheld that the Priestly and the Yawist accounts described the same event, only with a focus on

²⁴⁹ “here we have the spiritual creation which in its contemplation of Truth is beyond all time, and God giving an order outside of time, and the spiritual creation hearing it outside of time, but having these formulae [*rationes*] mentally impressed upon it from God’s unchanging Wisdom like so many intelligible utterances, and then transmitting them to lower levels so that time-measured movements should be set up in time-measured things, whether for giving them specific form or for controlling them; how this could happen it is practically impossible to grasp.” Quoted from Greenstein 2016, 18-19.

²⁵⁰ “And thus it was in the course of these most familiar days of material light, which are made by the sun going round and round, that Eve was made from the side of her man. That is when it was, after all, that God still molded beasts and flying things from the earth, among which a help like Adam himself was not to be found, and she was formed. So it was in the same sort of days that God also molded him from mud.” Ibidem, 19-20.

different aspects and moments of it. This eventually became the official position of the Roman Church when the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) sanctioned that “from the beginning of time and by His omnipotent power [God] made from nothing creatures both spiritual and corporeal, angelic, namely, and mundane, and then human, as it were, common, composed of spirit and body.”²⁵¹

This view, widely shared in the medieval Christian world, quickly propagated to the arts, where it informed some of the most important creation cycles in the Italian peninsula. One of the most prominent of these painted cycles are the now-lost early medieval murals of the ancient basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome, whose appearance has fortunately been preserved in the pages of an illuminated manuscript created in 1634-5 for cardinal Francesco Barberini (figs. 47-49). The seventeenth-century watercolors suggest that the original murals of the basilica narrated the story of the creation over three scenes. In the first, centrally composed, the half-length figure of God the Father could be seen appearing from the heavens and gesturing below toward two human figures in the nude within a barren, rocky landscape: on the left, a woman, suspended within a shell-like shape, and on the right, a man inside a mandorla. These have been interpreted by scholars as the souls of Eve and of Adam respectively, in the moment of their first conception in God’s mind and prior to the world’s material formation.²⁵² The two following scenes contain the laterally composed narratives of the *Creation of Adam* and the *Creation of Eve*, rendered as distinct events set in temporal succession within a naturalistic landscape. By combining Augustine’s idea of a supratemporal, simultaneous act of creation of the two ancestors with the subsequent acts of their material formation set within time and space, the San

²⁵¹ See Canon 1 in the Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) available through Internet History Sourcebooks Project: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp> (accessed August 2021).

²⁵² Deborah Markow 1983, 35–42.

Paolo murals would have thus visually reconciled the Priestly and the Yawist accounts by bringing them into succession. Art historians have suggested that this formula, documented in the San Paolo basilica, may have had an early prototype in the lost decoration of the Old St. Peters in Rome, from where it would have spread to much of central Italy between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries, as the numerous still-extant examples in dozen of churches in Lazio, Umbria, and Tuscany attest.²⁵³ However, increasingly during the Renaissance, artists confronted with the task of representing the creation story tended to privilege the moment of the physical formation of the two ancestors, which arguably afforded them better opportunities to approach the biblical scene from the narrative, naturalistic angle they favored.

Around 1490, in the center of the circular field that fills the upper half of the *Triumph of Fame*, on the north wall of the Bentivoglio chapel, Lorenzo Costa offered his own vision of Genesis, characterized by significant departures from the visual tradition that his predecessors had worked to establish during the first half of the fifteenth century (fig. 50). In his scene, Costa adopts a single, centralized composition that conflates multiple moments of the creation story in a spatial and temporal continuum and arranges his figures according to a pyramidal scheme. At the top, is the figure of God the Father, a bearded man clad in the traditional red and blue colors who also occupies the very center of the entire circular field. The Creator is shown holding the terrestrial globe in one hand (an allusion to the creation of the earth) and imparting a blessing with the other while a semi-circular host of angelic beings surrounds him, their heads and bird-like wings rendered with minute, rapid brushstrokes. The river running behind him and the animals, real and fantastic, that can be seen grazing in the verdant landscape, evoke subsequent phases of the creation when waters were separated from the land, and this was filled with all the

²⁵³ Greenstein 2016, 24-26.

living creatures. At each of God's sides, Costa positions the creation of the first man and woman, who he renders in a slightly reduced hierarchical scale. In the centrality and symmetry of the composition, Costa's *Creation* resembles the opening scene of the Barberini codex more closely than any other image of this kind produced in the Quattrocento. By choosing to make all the elements of the creation concurrently present, the artist appears to be evoking the interpretation of Genesis put forth by Augustine on God's first simultaneous act of creation. With the Church of San Giacomo Maggiore (within which the Bentivoglio chapel stands) serving as the house of the eremitical community of Augustinian friars since the thirteenth century (and into this day), it is not difficult to imagine that a theory elaborated by the friars' founding father would have been upheld in the decorative program of the most prestigious of its chapels. At the same time, however, Costa appears to have intentionally introduced critical temporal elements in his *Creation* scene by choosing to depict the bodies of both ancestors not in their final, fully human form – as it had been the norm in the Western visual tradition up until the fifteenth century – but instead showing them in the process of their becoming. While the *Creation of Eve*, who can be seen rising from the side of Adam's reclining body commanded by God's blessing gesture, follows in a visual solution that had become increasingly widespread in the Italian peninsula during the first half of the Quattrocento, the *Creation of Adam* presents us with an iconography rarely seen in Italian representations of the first man's creation.

Carved around 1099 C.E., Wiligelmo's reliefs for the Cathedral of Modena, some 22 miles north-west of Bologna, are among the earliest depictions of Genesis in Italian monumental art (fig. 51). In the second of the thirteen scenes that compose the frieze with the story of the Creation and Fall of Adam and Eve, today mounted on the exterior of the west wall of the building, the fully grown body of Adam stands erect in front of his Creator. However, the man's

pose appears somewhat odd: his bust straightened up, his knees half bent, his eyes seemingly vacant as he fails to gaze back at God, who in close proximity, presses his hand against his forehead. This moment is commonly read by art historians as God impressing a soul onto Adam, which sanctions the man's ultimate coming to life. It is this moment of spiritual animation of the male ancestor, rather than the act of forming the body itself, that would become the most commonly represented by artists of the Renaissance, from Andrea Pisano to Lorenzo Ghiberti, to Jacopo della Quercia, and perhaps most memorably, by Michelangelo.

In the example most readily available to Costa in the second half of the fifteenth century, Quercia's vigorous reliefs on the main portal of the San Petronio basilica in Bologna (1427-37), the first man readily appears in his fully human form, resting in a semi-reclined pose as the bulky, heavily clad figure of God bestows life onto him through a forceful gesture of the hand; this elicits Adam's animated gaze toward the Creator, accompanied by an outreaching gesture of the hand, which together with Quercia's anatomical focus, notably inspired Michelangelo's poetic Sistine scene (fig. 52). However, this was not the direction that Costa intended to follow, deviating noticeably from the established fifteenth-century tradition. Instead, like for Eve, he showed Adam in an intermediate moment of his becoming when his body is being formed out of the earth, his lower limbs still amounting to an amorphous pile of rocky soil. This highly original iconographic solution, I argue in this chapter, was intended to evoke Costa's own creative powers as an image-maker and to reaffirm his prerogatives as an artist.

In order to find an example in the territory of the Italian peninsula where the artist demonstrates a distinct interest in the depiction of the process of formation of Adam's body, one needs to go back to at least the thirteenth century and look at the lavish mosaics that adorn the

interior of the San Marco cathedral in Venice.²⁵⁴ Here, inside the central dome, the creation story unravels in twenty-four scenes arranged in three concentric registers, from the *Separation of Light and Darkness* to the *Labors of Adam and Eve*. Two of the twenty-four scenes are dedicated to the creation of the first man, which is divided into the *Formation of Adam* and his *Animation* (figs. 53-54). In the first one, the enthroned figure of God engages directly in the act of shaping the body of Adam, whose left arm the Creator can be seen clinging to and modelling with both hands. While Adam's body appears fully formed, although in a slightly reduced scale, the resumption of the story in a subsequent scene as well as the color of his skin suggest that the creative act cannot yet be considered complete.²⁵⁵ While the scene that immediately follows the *Formation of Adam – The Blessing of the Seventh Day* – illustrates the final stage of the Hexameral account and serves to provide a moment of respite from the busy narrative, the next scene picks up again from the creation story, this time presenting it from the perspective of the Yawist account. Here, God the Father and Adam stand again face to face, depicted in the moment when the former is bestowing a soul (or *animula*) onto the man in the form of a small, winged cherub who is being physically handed to him by the Creator (*Animation of Adam*). Now Adam can be said to have been fully made “in the image” of God; not just in the sense of his physical likeness, but fully his creature in virtue of the rational soul which he has been endowed with.

²⁵⁴ Scholars generally agree that the San Marco Genesis mosaic were modelled after the miniatures of a late fifth-century Alexandrian manuscript known as Cotton Genesis, which was lost to a fire in the eighteenth century. Jolly 1997, 8-9.

²⁵⁵ Art historians have usually read the dark-brown complexion of Adam in this scene of the San Marco mosaic as signaling the substance from which the first man was formed – the earth itself (for instance, see Greenstein 2016, 29). However, the color of Adam's skin contrasts visibly with the verdant green of the ground under his feet, leaving us to wonder whether the artists may have intended to depict Adam in the stage that precedes the bestowing of a soul on him by God as an African man, and if so, what the racial implications of such choice may have been for the artist.

Although the two scenes of the *Creation of Adam* from the dome of San Marco are of great interest to the present discussion in virtue of the particular attention that they manifest toward the process of physical formation of Adam's body, as well as for the inclusion of a rare instance of artistic representation of the human soul (on the latter I will return to in this dissertation), another artwork displays an original iconographic solution that is even more closely comparable to the one found in the Bentivoglio chapel. This is the Grabow Altarpiece, a most famous North German painting created around 1379 for the church of St. Petri in Hamburg often celebrated for its luminous colors and inventive iconographies.²⁵⁶ Its author is Bertram of Minden, an artist who had received the title of master ("*magistro*") in 1372 and went on to become a leading painter and the head of a major workshop in the north-German city of Hamburg.²⁵⁷ In his version of the *Creation of Adam* (fig. 55), a slightly stiff but dynamic God the Father, clad in a heavy red and blue cape, is shown bending over Adam and bestowing life on him through a gesture of the hands, which almost touch those of the first man who gestures back in an expression of surprise and reverence. Much like Costa's, Master Bertram's Adam is only formed from the waist up and emerges directly from the ground, his creation process purposefully captured in an intermediate stage. At the same time, the artist seems to be conflating the moment of the first man's formation and that of his animation together by engraving three rays in the gold ground that radiate from the creator's mouth down onto the first man, seemingly visualizing the Genesis verses "the Lord formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."²⁵⁸ The subsequent success of this formula in the North-European territories, for which Master Bertram seems to have offered an essential prototype, was further

²⁵⁶ For instance, its stories include the earliest known depiction of the *Flight into Egypt*.

²⁵⁷ Dube 1982, 14.

²⁵⁸ Genesis 2.7.

strengthened by the dissemination it received in the fifteenth century through the so-called Nuremberg Chronicle, a text that traced the universal history of the world from a Christian perspective from the beginning of times to the contemporary era.²⁵⁹ This monumental book, which was first printed in the city to which it owes its name in 1493, was accompanied by over 1,800 illustrations created by painter and printmaker Michael Wolgemut. Among them, the scene of the *Creation of Adam* shares evident similarities with its equivalent in the Grabow Altarpiece, especially for what concerns the iconography of the first man halfway embedded into the ground (fig. 56). Through the sixteenth century, the emphasis on the manual work through which God modelled Adam's human body directly from the earth continued to echo in North-European art, as demonstrated by subsequent depictions such as Lucas Cranach the Elder's two versions of the *Garden of Eden*, both painted around 1530 (fig. 57).²⁶⁰

Examining the Grabow Altarpiece in detail in her doctoral dissertation, Elizabeth Healy Dube has linked the portrayal of Adam as “embedded in the ground” to the interpretation of Christ as a “new Adam” whose “physical” nature stood in opposition to Christ's spiritual substance that put forth by St. Paul the Apostle.²⁶¹ One particularly fitting passage from the first epistle to the Corinthians is quoted in support to this connection: “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.”²⁶² Not only has Dube shown how St. Augustine was receptive of this idea of Paul's in his own thinking (in *The City of God* he would go to describe Adam as “a man of the earth, earthly”), but she has also convincingly demonstrated that many of the iconographies contained in the Grabow Altarpiece derive from an

²⁵⁹ Also known as *Liber Chronicarum* in Latin, or *Die Schedelsche Weltchronik* in German.

²⁶⁰ Today, the paintings are housed in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Dresden and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.

²⁶¹ Dube 1982, 79-80.

²⁶² *Ibidem*, 80.

interpretation of the scriptures that draws extensively on the work of St. Augustine as part of a wider revival of the philosophy of the fourth-century theologian in fourteenth century-Europe.²⁶³ While Dube's argument for the Augustinian culture underlying the Grabow Altarpiece is persuasive and reinforces my own similar conclusions about the theological background of Bentivoglio chapel's decoration, I would like to suggest that the use of the iconography of Adam emerging from the ground also has an important pillar in the work of another great Father of the Church – St. Jerome.

As the author of the Latin edition of the Bible known as the Vulgate, or common version, which he newly translated directly from the original Hebrew in an effort to correct the errors of earlier versions and guarantee the proper understanding of the scriptures, Jerome had allowed two different creation stories to coexist in the book of Genesis.²⁶⁴ In the second of these creation stories, the Yawist account, Jerome rendered God's act of forming man "of the slime of the earth" from the original Hebrew into the Latin through the term *formavit* ("formed"), a verb traditionally associated with the work of potters and used to describe the artisans' act of modelling clay into three-dimensional objects.²⁶⁵ The artistic context evoked by the use of such term in the biblical account might have had a unique resonance during the Renaissance, when the most popular tale about the origins of art centered on the figure of Butades, a Greek potter from the ancient city of Sicyon who was widely celebrated through antiquity and into the early-modern era for having invented portrait sculpture when he shaped clay in the form of his daughter's departed lover. The story of Butades, recorded by Pliny the Elder in the *Natural History*, poetically grounded the beginnings of art in the feeling of longing for an absent person

²⁶³ Dube 1982, 59-90.

²⁶⁴ The Vulgate came to be considered the standard text in Western Christendom from the medieval time into the twentieth century.

²⁶⁵ Jolly 1997, 22-23.

in a way that profoundly shaped the development of the genre of portraiture in the Renaissance. At the same time, his figure represented a prototype for the modern artist that traced the lineage of art back to a mythic antiquity while also establishing a direct connection between the artist and God as the modeler of the human body. As a matter of fact, beginning in the Renaissance, the role of visual artists as image makers came to be understood and described in terms that suggested an analogy between their increasingly illusionistic work and God's prerogative power to create life from nothing. For instance, the epitaph erected in 1446 inside the Florence cathedral to commemorate the death of one of the Renaissance founding fathers, the Florentine architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377 – 1446), celebrates the man's "divino ingenio" (divine genius) at the origin of Santa Maria del Fiore's innovative architecture and of his many other extraordinary inventions.²⁶⁶ In the same round of years, the first theorist of Renaissance art, author and architect Leon Battista Alberti, was composing his profoundly influential commentary on artistic theory and practice where it is said that "painting possesses a truly divine power," and that painters "see their works admired and feel themselves to be almost like the Creator."²⁶⁷

As the artist's pursuit of the imitation of nature evolved into a quest to display the ability to imagine and generate new forms, a process that rendered him more and more similar to God, the hand remained an important site in artistic imagery and literature to express the potential for both intellectual invention and material creation. This is suggested not only by the centrality of God's hand in early modern depictions of the Creation scene, as shown in the cases considered in this chapter, but also in the words of praise directed to artists to celebrate their manual dexterity.

²⁶⁶ Vasari 1895, 53. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, painter and poet Francesco Lancilotti used prose to claim that painting is no less than "another God and another nature" Lancilotti 1885, 3.

²⁶⁷ Quoted in Emison 2004, 32.

The epitaph composed by humanist Angelo Poliziano for Florentine painter Fra Filippo Lippi, for instance, constitutes a point in case as it elevates his hand as the source of both the intellectual qualities of his art and of life itself: “Here I lie, Filippo, the glory of painting: to no one is the wonderful *gratia* of my hand unknown,” and “My touch gave life to lifeless paint.”²⁶⁸

While the comparison between the painter and God was ultimately aimed at lifting the arts above the status of mere crafts and projecting them on an intellectual level – a century-long process that would culminate in the foundation of the academies in the mid-sixteenth century – its use was not unproblematic in a deeply religious society such as fifteenth-century Italy, where it ran the concrete risk of being received as potentially blasphemous. As a result, it was not until the middle of the sixteenth century, with the divinization of Michelangelo, that the use of the term *divine* as a qualifier for the artist was openly adopted in artistic literature. It was in response to the artist’s detractors that Michelangelo’s friends and biographers began to celebrate his ability not only to evoke the presence of human likeness through inanimate matter, but also his capacity to transcend the visible and give form to ‘superhuman’ figures of never-before-seen beauty and power, as God-willed.²⁶⁹ However, taking Michelangelo as the epitome of the phenomenon of the divinization of the artist, modern critics have often mistakenly regarded the Renaissance artist as an icon of individual freedom, natural genius, and rulelessness. Such views, which rely on later, romantic-era constructs, find little evidence in the primary sources from the period. This has prompted historians of early modernity to engage in the work of correcting those notions through careful re-examination of the words of praise applied to artists and their works between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to identify the qualities that made an artist worthy of fame in the eyes of their contemporaries.

²⁶⁸ The passage is transcribed and translated from Latin in Baxandall 1988, 128.

²⁶⁹ For a recent discussion of the divinization of Michelangelo’s art and its reception, see Campbell 2002.

Among the earliest and most attentive attempts to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the cultural meaning of the terms used to denote artistic achievement in fifteenth-century Italy is certainly Michael Baxandall's discussion of the language of Cristoforo Landino, whom the scholar considered "the best of the Quattrocento art critics", to describe the style of the most successful Florentine painters of his time.²⁷⁰ In examining the preface of Landino's commentary to Dante's *Comedy* from 1481 (a text that has been considered elsewhere in the present study), Baxandall identified sixteen terms that in his view can offer "a basic conceptual equipment for addressing Quattrocento pictorial quality."²⁷¹ As some of the vocabulary used by Landino to criticize the art of his time was borrowed from other fields such as contemporary literature, classical rhetoric, theology, as well as from the technical language spoken in the artistic *botteghe*, Baxandall convincingly demonstrated that a careful consideration of the cultural meaning embedded in these words can offer unique points of entry into the aesthetics of the society that produced them.²⁷² At the end of the same decade, Martin Kemp used a similar approach to describe a shift occurred in art criticism between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which saw the notion of the artist's individual creativity, expressed through terms like *invenzione* and *fantasia*, progressively displace the celebration of *mimesis*, or the imitation of nature, which had been the first driving force of the Renaissance revolution.²⁷³ Kemp showed that the Quattrocento concept of *invenzione* was closely associated with both the philosophical

²⁷⁰ Baxandall 1988.

²⁷¹ The full list of these terms include: "imitatore della natura" (imitator of nature), "rilievo" (relief), "puro" (pure), "facilita" (ease), "prospettivo" (perspectivist), "gratioso" (gracious), "ornato" (ornate), "varietà" (variety), "composizione" (composition), "colorire" (colouring), "disegnatore" (exponent of design), "amatore delle difficoltà" (lover of difficulties), "scorci" (foreshortening), "prompt" (prompt), "vezzoso" (blithe), "devote" (devout). Ibidem, 114-153.

²⁷² Baxandall 1988, 152: "a pictorial style gives access to the visual skills and habits and, through these, to the distinctive social experience."

²⁷³ Kemp 1977, 347.

search for truth and with the artist's power to generate new forms.²⁷⁴ Most recently, Patricia Emison has shown how, in constructing the myth of the Renaissance artist, *ingegno* (a creative intelligence fueled by imagination), *diligentia* (industrious practice), and *grazia* (an innate charm and amiability), all intellectual and interpersonal qualities traditionally attributed to humanists and orators whose respectability was already established within the early-modern society at large, came to be used in relation to artists with the intent of elevating their social stance and transforming art-making into a liberal art with the same dignity enjoyed by the sciences.²⁷⁵ Significantly, Emison has also made apparent how the process of the emergence of artistic fame in Renaissance Italy was deeply rooted in the system of court patronage, its implementation driven by the fact that the success of the artist reflected positively upon the reputation of both the patron who employed him and the courtiers who recognized and publicly celebrated his exceptionality.²⁷⁶ In this respect, the concept of magnificence, the idea that a patron's great expenditure of riches in artistic commissions was justifiable in light of serving a higher, collective good, has also been frequently used by art historians to understand initiatives of munificent art patronage in Renaissance Italy.

While the verbal investigations conducted by Baxandall, Kemp, Emison, and others makes it clear that the hierarchy among the single intellectual qualities and stylistic traits celebrated by art theorists and critics of the fifteenth- and sixteenth centuries as most essential to succeed in the artistic profession evolved over time, these studies established beyond doubt that the idea of the divinity of the artist constructed through the projection of those qualities was unquestionably a Renaissance phenomenon. It has been the purpose of this study then to

²⁷⁴ Kemp 1977, 348.

²⁷⁵ Emison 2004.

²⁷⁶ "For the artist to be 'divine' says more about the relationship to patron, or prospective patron, than to the natural world" and "An artist's reputation as divine insured the patron's exposed taste." Ibidem, 8, 11.

determine how particular and overlooked aspects in the decoration conceived by Lorenzo Costa for the chapel of the Bentivoglio family can contribute with new visual evidence to our understanding of the status of the artist and the discourse on painting in early-modern Italy. I have suggested that, in selecting an iconography for the creation of Adam that emphasized the process of modelling the first man's body from inanimate matter instead of the more common scene presenting Adam in his final human form, Lorenzo Costa's intent was to purposely draw attention to an existing parallel between God's primordial act of creation and the process of art making. Appearing at the beginning of the last decade of the fifteenth century, a critical time for the emancipation of the visual arts from mechanical crafts to sophisticated pursuits rooted in intellectual operations, this image of the *Creation of Adam* would have contributed considerably to these efforts by presenting art making at large (and the decoration of the Bentivoglio chapel in the specific) as a God-like activity.

Upon closer look, Costa's ancestors can be seen extending their arms toward the central figure of the Creator and clasping their hands in a gesture of supplication, an arrangement that seems to mirror the portraits of Giovanni II Bentivoglio and of his consort Ginevra on the opposite wall of the chapel, where the couple can be seen kneeling devoutly by the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child as they plead for the protection of their family and city (fig. 3). At the same time, another couple in Quattrocento clothing can be seen taking a leisurely walk toward the center of the circular field on the left of the Creation, drawing further attention to the biblical episode and emphasizing its resonance for period viewers (figure 58). The couple appears to have strayed from their group, part of the scene illustrating *The Murder of Philip of Macedon at his Daughter's Wedding*. While the woman modestly gazes downward, her male companion demonstrates his receptiveness to the events unravelling close by, and points at the Creation

group with his index finger as to invite the woman (and the viewer) to pay due attention. These visual clues, together with the particular iconography selected by Costa to depict the *Creation of Eve*, point to the patrons' personal stakes in the messaging of their chapel's decorative program. In fact, the iconography of Eve emerging from the side of Adam derives from an interpretation of the scriptures that attached to the episode of the creation of the first woman a symbolic meaning associated with the marital bond.²⁷⁷ In addition to acknowledging the precedents that the artist would have been familiar with when envisioning this scene, such as the sculptural reliefs by Wiligelmo in Parma and by Jacopo della Quercia in Bologna, the presence of this iconography in the chapel of the Bentivoglio also signals the relevance of the theme of conjugal union to their family. Not only had Giovanni's marriage to Ginevra served to sanction the continuity between his own rule and that of his predecessor Sante (and thus his own legitimacy as the succeeding leader) and to preserve Bologna's strategic alliance with the Milanese Sforza family; but the recent marriage of Giovanni's firstborn Annibale II with Lucrezia d'Este, the daughter of the powerful duke of Ferrara, spectacularly celebrated the year before the beginning of Costa's involvement in the decoration of the chapel, had further consolidated the familial and political ties with other prominent clans in the Italian peninsula.²⁷⁸ Finally, it is possible to speculate that, to period viewers, the iconography of Eve emerging from Adam's torso would have purposely suggested a play on words between the Latin word "costa", meaning both "rib" and "side", and the artist's own name, thus weaving a self-referential celebration of the artist's own persona in the creation story.

²⁷⁷ In addition to Augustine and Isidore mentioned earlier in this chapter, this reading found further grounding in additional passages from the New Testament, like the Gospel of Matthew, and in the letters of the Apostle Paul.

²⁷⁸ The wedding took place on January 28, 1487.

Costa's intellectually charged reflection on authoriality and on the artistic process at large is also apparent in the original way he chose to claim authorship over the Bentivoglio canvases with a signature that constitutes the earliest known example of its kind in Renaissance Italy. The inscribed signature, painted directly on the canvases of the north wall and broken across the four pillars that frame the two triumphal scenes, reads: "MCCCC LXXXX / ZU [G] NO / [LAVRENT]IVS / CO[STA] FACIEBAT" (1490 / June / Lorenzo Costa was making).²⁷⁹ The same formula had already been used by Costa two years prior to sign the canvas with the *Entroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* on the opposite wall of the chapel. There, a painted marble slab at the base of the throne carries a fictive inscription which is written in the first person as if voiced by Giovanni II himself, who can be seen kneeling by the Virgin Mary as he entrusts her with a prayer for the salvation of his family and of the entire city of Bologna. In the last three lines, the artist signed the work with these words: "MCCCC LXXXVIII / AGVSTI / LAURENTIVS COSTA FACIEBAT" (1488, August, Lorenzo Costa was making).²⁸⁰ These signatures, in which the verb is conjugated in the imperfect tense rather than in the past tense, thus translating as "the artist was making" rather than "made", is what historians call the Plinian signature because its use and meaning in the ancient world was first recorded by Roman author and naturalist Pliny the Elder in his widely famous encyclopedic work, the *Natural History* (77 BCE). According to the ancient writer, this signature type was widely in use among the greatest artists of classical Greece, such as painter Apelles and sculptor Polycleitus, to sign their most admired masterpieces. In doing so, they suggested that their work existed in a dimension of perpetual incompleteness, expressing both their humility and the

²⁷⁹ The inscription is only partially visible today, as some letters have faded or disappeared. For its transcription, see Negro and Roio 2001, 91, Cat.n.12b-c. For a discussion of the placement of the artist's signature, see chapter 1 of this dissertation.

²⁸⁰ For the full inscription, see chapter 2 of this dissertation as well as Negro and Roio 2001, 91, Ct.n.12a.

willingness to continue adjusting their artistic creations in response to the reactions and criticism of the public. In the opening of his book, which begins with a dedicatory letter to his protector, the Roman emperor Titus, Pliny describes this custom in an effort to position himself within the tradition of those ancient masters who humbly declared their work unfinished as a strategy to shield away from condemnation and appeal to the benevolence of their patron:

I should wish to be considered under the same point of view with those inventors of the arts of painting and sculpture, of whom you will find an account in these volumes, whose works, although they are so perfect that we are never satisfied with admiring them, are inscribed with a temporary title, such as “Apelles, or Polycleitus, was doing this;” implying that the work was only commenced and still imperfect, and that the artist might benefit by the criticisms that were made on it and alter any part that required it, if he had not been prevented by death. It is also a great mark of their modesty, that they inscribed their works as if they were the last which they had executed, and as still in hand at the time of their death.²⁸¹

Admittedly, Pliny understood that the Greek artists’ use of the signature in the imperfect tense had little to do with the degree of finiteness of the artwork that it served to claim authorship on, which was in fact considered complete in every aspect of its physical form; instead, it was clear to the scholar that said formula was used as a mean for the artist’s self-fashioning as a creative intellect, one that depended critically on the satisfaction of its patron and intended audience. It should also be noted that for a writer to align himself with visual artists and purposefully ask for their literary enterprise to be judged with criteria otherwise reserved to painting and sculpture,

²⁸¹ Pliny 1890, book 1, Dedication. Available at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0137#note35> (accessed August 2021)

like Pliny did in his prefatory text, is both an astute rhetorical strategy and an unexpected subversion of the order of precedence traditionally dominating the liberal arts. In fact, despite the popularity of the Horatian simile “ut pictura poesis” (“as is painting, so is poetry”) in the classical world, literature occupied a privileged position in the relationship between the two art forms throughout the early modern period, when Renaissance artists began to oppose this long-engrained hierarchy and advocate for greater dignity for the visual arts. Together with Horace and Aristotle, Pliny’s self-alignment with Apelles and Polyclitus would have thus offered further ground to early modern artists to claim deeper ties between the literary and visual arts and achieve the long-longed recognition of their equal status.

The meaning of the Plinian signature and its implications for the place of the arts was widely understood within Quattrocento Italian scholarly and courtly circles, including in the Bologna of the Bentivoglio. Interest in the *Natural History* among the elites was initially sparked in the fourteenth century by Petrarch, who first rediscovered the potential of this work as a unique resource on the art and culture of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. The stable inclusion of Pliny’s encyclopedia in the curriculum of study of the aristocratic youths of Italy was the merit of Guarino da Verona (1374–1460), who taught from it to his students in the university classrooms of Florence, Venice, and Ferrara as well as to the princes he tutored privately, like Lionello d’Este. In his life-long fascination with this work, Guarino compiled two critical editions of the *Natural History* in the manuscript form, one completed in the early 1430s and another shortly before dying, in 1459, which were of fundamental importance to the subsequent study of the text in the following decades.²⁸² Starting in 1469 with the *editio princeps* curated by Johannes de Spira in Venice, fifteen editions of the *Natural History* were printed in

²⁸² McHam 2013, 129-130.

Italy in the remainder of the fifteenth century alone.²⁸³ In those years, commentaries and annotations multiplied, penned by some of the most erudite humanists of the Quattrocento, including Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493), Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494), and even more significantly for our Bolognese focus, the Emilian Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453–1505).

The commentary to Pliny's *Natural History* produced by the Venetian diplomat and humanist Barbaro and published in 1492 and 1493 is considered the most complete and authoritative analysis of the ancient encyclopedia in the early-modern period in virtue of its thorough emendations and list of errors.²⁸⁴ His work profoundly influenced Poliziano, poet and humanist at the service of Lorenzo de Medici, who although never produced a proper commentary on Pliny, left an annotated copy of the *Natural History* (1490) which he emended meticulously after careful study of two earlier manuscripts obtained from the San Marco library and from the private collection of King Ferrante of Naples. Poliziano lectured widely on the subject of Pliny, and his mastery is wittingly epitomized in the inclusion, in his *Miscellaneorum centuria prima*, a collection of translations and fragments from Greek and Latin texts published in Florence in 1489, of a personal memory of the time when, during a visit to a collection of ancient sculpture in a private Roman residence, he recognized the signature of the Greek sculptor Lysippus formulated in the imperfect tense on the base of an ancient king's portrait statue. The attentive scholar was immediately reminded of Pliny's explanation for such practice:

For, as Pliny said in the preface to the *Natural History*, the best artists labeled even their finished works with a suspensive inscription such as "Apelles faciebat" or "Polyclitus faciebat," as if art were always something begun and unfinished: thus, in the face of changes

²⁸³ McHam 2013, 147.

²⁸⁴ *Ibidem* 149.

in taste, the artist had recourse as he had indicated that he was ready to correct all the faults brought to his attention, if death did not interrupt him. According to Pliny, it is a very modest gesture to sign all works of art as if they were the artist's last, taken away from him by fate.²⁸⁵

It is interesting to notice how, in the humanist's mind, notions of fame after death and the remembrance of artistic legacy beyond the moment of creation of a work of art resonate most strongly among the reasons offered by Pliny for why a signature in the imperfect tense was favored by the ancients. In particular, Poliziano's last sentence in the above-quoted passage seems to voice in romanticized tones the Renaissance concern for the perpetuation to posterity of the memory of great human achievements in the face of inescapable mortality – a theme that is also deeply embedded in the triumphal scenes painted by Costa in the Bentivoglio chapel, and which certainly was on the artist's mind when he decided to claim authorship on them with the Plinian signature.

Poliziano's passage possesses one other point of interest that has captured the attention of art historians of the early-modern period, which is the use of the term "suspensive inscription" ("pendenti titulo" in the original Latin) to designate the power of the Plinian signature to withhold time.²⁸⁶ Sarah McHam has argued that Michelangelo Buonarroti signed his 1499 marble *Pietà* by carving the words "MICHAEL A[N]GELUS BONAROTUS FLORENT[INUS] FACIEBA[T]" on a band that descends from the Virgin's shoulder and hangs diagonally on her chest as a way to visually reinforce precisely this sense of suspension which is conveyed in words through the Plinian formula.²⁸⁷ Celebrated already by his contemporaries as the highest

²⁸⁵ Quoted in McHam 2013, 185.

²⁸⁶ The full passage is given in the original Latin in McHam 2013, 392, note 12.

²⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, 185.

artistic achievement of the modern era, the *Pietà* was commissioned to Michelangelo by the powerful Cardinal Jean de Bilhères de Lagraulas, ambassador of the French King to the Holy See, shortly after the young artist arrived in Rome to pursue his career, but not before he had traveled to Bologna, where he spent “a little more than a year” between 1494 and 1495.²⁸⁸ Looking for new patrons after the passing of his protector Lorenzo de Medici in 1492 and fleeing the socio-political turbulences that had been shaking Florence since, Michelangelo relied on the close connections between the Medici and the Bentivoglio to be introduced to the local artistic circles.²⁸⁹ At the time when Michelangelo arrived in Bologna in 1494, Costa’s Bentivoglio canvases were likely among the most admired paintings in the city. Completed less than five years prior, they were the latest product of a remarkable artistic season that, starting in the 1460s, had brought about new, groundbreaking expressive vocabulary and spectacular formal novelties to local painting and sculpture alike. In 1463, Niccolò d’Antonio d’Apulia’s (c. 1435-1440–1494) terracotta group of the *Lamentation* for the confraternity of Santa Maria della Vita transformed sacred art from narrative form to lived experience by exploiting the engaging potential of sculpture’s three-dimensionality and the emotional intensity of gestures and facial expressions rendered with mimic virtuosity; in 1473-74, Francesco del Cossa (Ferrarese, c. 1436–1477/1478), with the assistance of the young Ercole de Roberti (Ferrarese, c. 1455/1456–1496), painted the altarpiece for the family chapel of Floriano Griffoni in San Petronio, which translated the gothic polyptych of the late-medieval Bolognese tradition into modern forms; Cossa’s following commission, the decoration of the now-lost Garganelli chapel in San Pietro,

²⁸⁸ The news is given by both Condivi and Vasari (in the second edition of the *Vite*). See Klebanoff 1994, 139-140, especially note 1. Michelangelo left Florence in the October of 1494, initially for Venice, where he stayed briefly, and then went to Bologna where he remained until late in 1495, after which he headed back to Florence before heading to Rome. See also Dunkelman 2014, 116.

²⁸⁹ See Klebanoff 1994, 140-193.

was left unfinished at the time of the artist's death and completed by de Roberti by 1486; a few fragments, preparatory drawings, copies, descriptions, and reconstructions pass down to us a space unique in its time for the life-size figures, illusionistic foreshortenings, and unprecedented emotional power that filled the murals and for the fictive architecture that created convincing continuity between the real space of the chapel and the painted sacred scenes.²⁹⁰ The striking visual impact of the Garganelli chapel was celebrated unanimously by period viewers who recognized it as a major monument of the Italian Renaissance; among them was Michelangelo himself, who reportedly praised it as being "worth half of Rome."²⁹¹

While Michelangelo's adoption of the Plinian signature in the Rome *Pietà* has been traditionally traced back to his early exchanges with Poliziano during his youthful training in the Medici garden, increasing scholarly attention to the possible impacts of the artist's Bolognese residence in the 1490s on his formation and later career choices might lead us, among other considerations, to attribute a more inspirational role to Costa's use of the ancient signature in the Bentivoglio chapel.²⁹² As the "earliest, securely signed and dated" examples of Plinian signatures in Renaissance Italy, the inscriptions affixed by Costa on the Bentivoglio Sacred Conversation and shortly after on the *Triumphs* voice an unprecedented claim made with intentionality and awareness by a modern visual artist.²⁹³ Not only is the formula in the imperfect tense repeated on the triumphal diptych after just two years since its first appearance in the Bentivoglio family portrait, completed in 1488, but in its second reiteration the sentence is split across the three pillars that frame the fantastical visions, thus visualizing the same sense of suspension that

²⁹⁰ See Manca 1986.

²⁹¹ "Questa capella ch'avete qua/E una meza Roma de' bontà." The sentence, first transmitted by Pietro Lamo's *Graticola di Bologna*, is quoted in Manca 1986, note 1.

²⁹² See Klebanoff 1994 and Dunkelman 2014.

²⁹³ McHam 2013, 186.

Michelangelo would soon render by signing his Rome *Pietà* across Mary's sliding chest band. The concept of potentially unending transformation and unceasing becoming that underlay the use of the Greek signature among ancients and moderns alike, moreover, appears to be echoed, in the Bentivoglio chapel, by the iconography of the unformed Adam selected by Costa to signify both the creative and artistic process.

Finally, Costa's use of the Plinian signature in the context of the Bentivoglio patronage has been rightly contextualized by Sarah McHam within the literary and familial connections of Giovanni II, which included renowned humanist Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453–1505) and philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494).²⁹⁴ The former was a professor of rhetoric and poetry at the University of Bologna, a prolific editor and commentator of ancient Latin authors, and a tutor to Giovanni's offspring, to whose family he maintained close personal ties throughout his life.²⁹⁵ In particular, he produced two sets of annotations on the subject of Pliny's *Natural History*, which were first published in 1476 and reprinted six times until 1491. His expertise and interest in ancient literature, which he often sought to interpret historically, morally, and allegorically, as well as in terms of Christian philosophy, would have offered to Costa opportunities for fruitful dialogue around topics such as the Plinian signature and artistic authoriality in antiquity. The latter, best known as the author of the *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*), a public speech presented in 1486 and often considered the "Manifesto of the Renaissance," was the brother-in-law of Costanza Bentivoglio, daughter of Sante – Giovanni's uncle and predecessor. In addition to having formulated the most modern period definition of the Renaissance man as a creature with infinite potential, capable of extraordinary achievements through the exercise of free will and the cultivation of the liberal

²⁹⁴ McHam 2013, 188.

²⁹⁵ Gilmore 1967.

arts, Pio was also an avid reader of Pliny and commissioned a richly illustrated volume of the *Natural History*.²⁹⁶ In light of what this chapter has revealed about Costa's artistic agenda in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* – where bold claims to the God-like powers of art making are subtly weaved in the iconography of the *Creation of Adam* and statements of learning and agency are implied in the use of the Plinian signature – these connections between Giovanni II and some of the most prominent humanists of his time only reinforce the need to put the Bentivoglio chapel on the map of the monuments that made the Renaissance the period in which the modern self-consciousness of both artists and patrons was formed.

²⁹⁶ On Pico's illustrated volume, see McHam 2006.

Conclusions

This dissertation examined the pictorial decoration of the Bentivoglio chapel in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna, a space under the patronage of Giovanni II Bentivoglio, de-facto ruler of the city through the second half of the fifteenth century. Specifically, my research offered the first, detailed analysis of two previously overlooked, albeit striking pictures, the so-called *Triumph of Fame* and *Triumph of Death*, created by Lorenzo Costa between 1488 and 1490.

Chapter one described the spatial and material conditions of presentation of the *Triumphs* in their original setting, considering questions of genre, form, and content in relation to function and placing. As virtual images existing within the real and social space of the Bentivoglio chapel, these pictures entertain varying degrees of relationships with their surroundings: while their compositional characteristics and the multiple perspectival systems they employ signal their status as fantastic constructions, the fictive architectural elements that frame the triumphal visions also place them in continuity with the real space of the chapel, the church, and the city. Furthermore, in sharing the medium of tempera on canvas with a local tradition of devotional images while standing out in the panorama of fifteenth-century church decoration for featuring a subject matter not immediately recognizable as religious, the *Triumphs* immediately signal their hybrid nature, evident in their materiality as much as in their subject matter, and demonstrate the artist's alignment with the cultural heritage of classical antiquity.

Chapter two has examined the relationship between the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* and Petrarch's *Triumphs* through the lens of the religious syncretism that characterized Quattrocento culture. While most of the artistic transpositions of Petrarch's poem created in fifteenth-century

Italy – and especially depictions of Fame – were endowed with political and military overtones connected to the poem’s roots in the celebratory parades held in the ancient world, chapter two demonstrated that Costa’s diptych represents the first instance in the visual arts where the allegorical-religious interpretation of the poem first offered by the humanist Bernardo Lapini informed the artistic rendition of the Petrarchan subject instead. Lapini’s commentary to the *Triumphs*, the first to be published in 1475, when it appeared in Bologna, proposed a reading of the poem as an allegory of the progress of the human soul moving through the stages of life, from the subjugation to the flesh (the Triumph of Love) to the spiritual release and ultimate salvation achieved through the Christian faith (the Triumph of Eternity).

The first visual clue I utilized to demonstrate that the paintings offer an allegorical interpretation of the Petrarchan subject matter is their composition, whose specularly implies complementarity of content rather than opposition or linear progression, and encourages a circular, self-contained reading of the diptych. This begins in the upper left, where men are subjected to a fortuitous destiny and their stories are immortalized by fame, to the lower right where, through physical death, the soul is separated from the body and ascends to the heavens in the upper half of the right-hand canvas. I also noticed how in constructing his *Triumphs*, Costa extrapolated two subjects from the series of six triumphs originally envisioned by Petrarch and deviated from the order in which the entities confront each other in the poem (as well as in Lapini’s commentary), where Fame follows Death, and not the contrary as staged in the Bentivoglio diptych. This adjustment ultimately allowed the artist to adapt the Petrarchan subject matter to the Christian message that the images were meant to embody in the space in which they would be viewed: a chapel intended as the burial place of the Bentivoglio family. This way, the

apparently secular subject matter of Costa's paintings has been understood in its eschatological overtones, and the significance of the *Triumphs* within their original funerary setting unearthed.

In addition to these compositional aspects, two figures in Costa's *Triumph of Death* captured my attention in the second part of this chapter that demonstrate the painting's ties with allegorical interpretations of the *Triumphs* and point to meanings beyond their literary subject matter. The first is the depiction of a soul in fully human form (a rare occurrence in Western art), which reveals the allegorical theme of the soul's journey first associated with the *Triumphs* by Lapini and reflects Costa's engagement with period debates on the topic of the immortality of man's spiritual component and its relation to the body. The second is the figure of Orpheus, who I proposed to recognize in the musician playing a *lira da braccio* in the foreground. The association of this mythic figure with the eschatological power of poetry, as well as its figurative interpretation as the soul separated from and reunited with the mind, further demonstrate the broader implications of his presence. The Renaissance revival of Orpheus as a connector between ancient esoterism and Christian doctrine is one outcome of a paramount phenomenon in Quattrocento humanism, for which pagan religion and ancient myth are legitimate conduits to Christian truths. This is ultimately what warranted the presence and proliferation of ancient Greek and Roman deities and mythological stories in the artistic imagery of fourteenth and fifteenth-century Italy. The culmination of this process reached its artistic peak with Raphael's celebrated frescos in the Vatican *Stanze* (1508–1524), and chiefly in the harmonious scenes of the *Stanza della Segnatura*. There, the union of the Church Triumphant and the Church Militant, depicted in the scene known as *The Disputation over the Holy Sacrament*, are faced by the great philosophical schools of antiquity (*The School of Athens*), and complemented by the liberal arts

(*Parnassus*), the cardinal and theological virtues, and the law.²⁹⁷ In this trajectory, the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* represents an early moment in the evolution of the same kind of idiosyncratic thought – an incubator where Christian and secular imagery are intimately weaved together to reflect a comprehensive belief system about the origins of humankind and its relationship to the divine. In this sense, the words of Giovanni Gozzadini with which I chose to open my dissertation (see Introduction, note 1) reveal the sharpness of that early critic, who provided the first reading of Costa's *Triumphs* 350 years after their creation. By defining the diptych as a 'poem' with mankind as its subject matter, Gozzadini argued very early on that these images accomplish more than Giovanni Bentivoglio's self-glorification, as these images have been framed; instead, Gozzadini understood that their concern is universal, and that their iconographic and compositional complexity exemplifies the possibilities open to painting of poetic subject matter at this particular moment in the history of art.

Chapter three has offered the most in-depth investigation to date of the Dantean scenes depicted in the backgrounds of the *Triumph of Fame* and of the *Triumph of Death*, where the Trecento poet and his guide Virgil are shown at the gates of Hell and of Purgatory respectively. Shortly after Dante's death (1321), the Bolognese professor of arts and theology Iacomo della Lana produced the earliest, full-scale commentary to the *Comedy* and established the allegorical interpretation of the poem that would thenceforth become canonical. Lana presented Dante as a symbol for all humankind and his otherworldly exploration of the realms of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise as a metaphor for the journey of the soul through the stages of life, death, and spiritual

²⁹⁷ Completed between 1508 and 1511, the *Stanza della Segnatura* became the first room in the papal apartments to be decorated with Raphael's frescos under the commission of pope Julius II. Only two years prior (1506), the same Pope had taken military control over Bologna and expelled Giovanni II Bentivoglio and his family from the city, paving the way for the destruction and dispersal of his artistic patronage.

salvation. This influential reading of the *Comedy*, which at the time of the Bentivoglio commission of the *Triumphs* circulated widely in Bologna through manuscripts and incunabula, endowed the poem with a figurative meaning that made its subject matter fitting to the funerary setting of the chapel, where the Dantean visual citations ultimately reinforce the eschatological theme of this pictorial decoration.

Moreover, two particular aspects of Costa's paintings have been illuminated in light of Dante's *Comedy* and its reception in fifteenth-century Bologna. First, a close looking of the images has allowed me to narrow down the moment in the poem that corresponds to the episode evoked by Costa in the backdrop of the *Triumph of Fame*. This is likely Dante's encounter with the souls of the morally coward described in *Inferno* 3, where the poet offered a political critique of those who are fearful to take a stance and live their life without knowing the grace of God. I have argued that those verses would have resonated strongly with Giovanni Bentivoglio, whose wise policy of military and political alliances made Bologna a key player in the delicate balance of powers that characterized the Italian peninsula in the second half of the fifteenth century. Finally, the Dantean notion of Fortune articulated in the *Comedy* as an intelligence ordained by God to fulfill a divine plan yielded a new, religious dimension to the interpretation of the inscription that originally accompanied the viewing of the Bentivoglio diptych, which I discussed at greater length in the following chapter.

In addition to clarifying the overarching meaning of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs*, chapters two and three allowed me the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between words and images in early Renaissance art. By uncovering Costa's independence and ingenuity in transforming and combining his visual and literary sources, I presented his paintings as the pictorial counterpart to the hermeneutic practice of the commentary, which had been

distinctively developed in Bologna in the fourteenth century and by Costa's time had attained the status of autonomous literary genre noted for the freedom and creativity of its engagement with the textual sources. In doing so, I ultimately challenged dominant art historical models that too often have posited the subordination of complex iconographic projects to the existence of supposedly lost written programs and have limited the role of artists to material executors of literary inventions that are most often credited to scholars and intellectuals. Instead, these paintings have revealed Costa's previously overlooked investment in shaping images that can rival the complexity of the written word and elicit their power to generate a multiplicity of meanings.

Once we begin to understand these images as allegorical constructions – that is, visual aids in the representation of abstract concepts made to symbolize systems of beliefs rather than illustrate the stories on which their subject matter is based – some of the paintings' formal traits that have been condemned most harshly by earlier critics (such as their apparent static character and crowded composition) might become less insufferable. That was the case, for instance, of previous scholars with a formalist and connoisseurial approach like Roberto Longhi, who heavily criticized the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* for supposedly failing to effectively show a narrative but failed to measure his personal aesthetic taste against Costa's true artistic goals.

I continued to explore Costa's original relation to literary and visual sources in chapter four, which focused on the original iconography devised by the artist for the allegorical figure at the center of the so-called *Triumph of Fame*. Defying contemporary iconographic conventions for the depiction of this literary subject in fifteenth-century Italy, the Bentivoglio *Fame* is constructed to conflate multiple identities as the Muse of History as well as the personification of Fame and of Fortune/Divine Providence. I connected her presence in the Bentivoglio chapel to

the resurgence of the muses as inspirers of knowledge and scholarly pursuits in Quattrocento courts, and to the rediscovery of history as a source of teachable moments and exemplary stories in humanistic circles. Typically, in Renaissance Italy, these concepts found visual representation in the domestic space of the *studiolo* rather than in a public, sacred venue like the chapel; in this sense, the idiosyncratic character of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* enabled the Bentivoglio shrine in San Giacomo to fulfill both those functions for its patron and audiences, suggesting that rigid distinctions among categories of sacred and secular spaces in the early Renaissance should be nuanced to account for the religious syncretism at play in Italy throughout the fifteenth century.

Finally, chapter five focused on the scene of the *Creation of Adam and Eve* depicted at the center of the circular field floating above the chariot of Fame, which emerged as a site for Costa to claim his status as a Renaissance artist and image maker. In particular, this chapter has argued that by depicting the body of Adam in the process of being modelled out of the earth instead of presenting it in its fully developed human form, as it had become the norm for this subject, the painter drew from Renaissance tropes about the origin of art and offered a parallel between God's prerogative power to create life from nothing and the artist's ability to generate new forms through his imagination and the manipulation of natural elements. Furthermore, Costa's bold claims to authorship and to the agency of the artistic act have also been inferred from his employment of the Plinian signature in both the *Triumphs* and in the *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family* that preceded the completion of the diptych by two years. Costa's pictures in the Bentivoglio chapel are the earliest, securely dated examples in Renaissance art where the Latin verb "facere" (to make) is used in the imperfect tense ("faciebat," was making) with the aims of aligning the work of art with the Classical Greek tradition recounted by Pliny. I have related this choice to the artist's familiarity with humanistic

themes and sources and suggested that it could have even constituted a precedent for eminent later uses of the ancient formula, most eminently in Michelangelo's Vatican *Pietà*, signed by the sculptor not long after his first sojourn in Bologna (1494).

Ultimately, the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* signal the capacity (and the ambition) of fifteenth-century painting to compete with literature and poetry in the construction of meaning and in the revelation of higher truths with the aim of advancing the visual arts in the process of emancipation from mechanical crafts to intellectual pursuits; they also exemplify the imaginative nature of Renaissance images, which distinctively employed the tools of optical naturalism to give believable pictorial form to fantastic visions that embody the religious, philosophical, and political ideologies of late-fifteenth century Bologna. In this sense, the place of the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* in the history of Renaissance art is still greatly overlooked and marginalized, even within the field of early-modern Bologna studies.²⁹⁸

With this research, I have offered evidence of the formal, artistic, and cultural interest of this monument by situating it within the lively milieu of its time. I have demonstrated that the literary subject matter of these pictures cannot be divorced from the funerary function of the space for which they were created (the designated burial place of a devout city leader) and that the artist's engagement with his literary and visual sources was more ingenious and freer than previously thought. In this respect, Costa's capacity to inscribe Petrarch's *Triumphs*, Dante's *Comedy*, and figures from the ancient myth into a Christian worldview in the Bentivoglio *Triumphs* has offered a new, peripheral window from which to observe the outcomes of the fruitful interactions between art and humanism in Renaissance Italy – one that expands existing narratives often overwhelmingly centered on the Florentine Neoplatonic circles or on the papal

²⁹⁸ See my discussion of the literature in the Introduction and in chapter 1 of this dissertation.

courts of Pius II and Julius II. Finally, by illuminating the religious connotations attached to Petrarch's *Triumph* in Lapini's 1475 commentary, I have brought attention to the reception of the poem in the fifteenth century and opened the way to more complicated readings of triumphal imagery in the arts beyond the self-aggrandizing ends that have been usually assumed in modern studies. This way, I ultimately resist recently renewed pushes toward notions of an essentially pagan and secular Renaissance and also reaffirm the usefulness of the iconological method in Renaissance studies. As the analysis of these images has revealed, the culture of syncretism that imbued the intellectual life and artistic production of Quattrocento Bologna has still much to reveal about this fascinating season in the history of Western art.

Appendix I

From Ghisalberti 1931, 89.

Liber X

1. Prima mutatio est de Orpheo. Orpheus sapientissimus et eloquentissimus fuit. Et ideo fingitur fuisse filius Apolinis dei sapientie et Caliope muse eloquentie. Iste accepit Euridicem uxorem. Euridice autem interpretatur profunda diiudicatio quam sibi desponsavit Orpheus quia profunde diiudicabat. Sed dum profunda diiudicatio vagatur per prata i. dum delectatur in mundanis et Aristeus i. mens divina ab aristos et theos quod est deus insequeretur eum, tunc serpens i. diabolus momordit eam et occidit i. quod diabolus traxit eum de bona via. Sed Orpheus videns se amisisse veritatem profundam cepit laudare deum humiliter, et reddita sibi est uxor sub lege ne respiceret eam ante inferni exitum i. ne succumberet temptationi. Sed fracta lege iterum perdidit eam. Qua propter Orpheus dimittens inferos i. temptatores reversus est ad Deum et cepit spernere mulieres, dans animam suam Deo, et cepit amare viros i. viriliter agere unde mortuus est mundo. Nam tales moriuntur mundu. Et sic habuit Euridicem. U. v.:

Orpheus est sapiens cuius movet omnia cantus

Iudicium penetrans devorat Euridicem.

Nec inferna petit morsu serpentis iniqui

Dum fugit hic inter orbis amena deum.

At sapiens revocat sanctis rationibus illam

Que respecta sibi mersus ad ima ruit.

Manibus exclusus sese ad celestia tollens

Per Mercurii opus se probat esse virum.

Et mundo moritur mundi muliebria damnans

Euridicemque suam post modum tutus habet.

Appendix II

From Bonsignori 2001, 475-476.

Allegoria e prima esposizione de Orfeo.

Le allegorie del decimo libro sono XIII; la prima è come Orfeo andò all'inferno. Orfeo fu de Grecia e fu savissimo uomo e bello parlatore, e perciò se dice che fu figliuolo de Apollo, dio de la sapienza. La madre sua se dice che fu Caliope, muse della eloquenza; costui tolse per moglie una donna chiamata Euridice, e tanto è a dire "euridice" quanto che "profundo e ragionevole giudizio", perciò che profondamente e derittamente giudicava. Ma essendo questo senno ed andando per lu prato, cioè mentre che se delectava delle cose mundane, Aristeo, cioè la mente divina, sì la seguitava; alore el serpente, cioè el demonio de l'inferno, sì le diede di morso e sì la uccise. Ciò s'intende che 'l demonio tresse Orfeo dell bona via; vedendose Orfeo avere perduta la bona mente, cominciò a pregare dio umilmente, allora questa memoria gli fu renduta sotto questa legge, ch'elli non se voltasse indietro, cioè che più non se lassasse tentare al demonio. Ma dice che se voltò indietro e ruppe la legge, allora li fu ritolta Euridice, cioè la memoria, onde procede el deritto giudizio. Allora Orfeo cominciò a spregiare le donne, cioè ogni cosa mundana li era in dispregio, e combatteano contra de lui, come se dirrà, perchè dice che s'era dato ad usare con li gioveni. Ciò s'intende che 'l cominciò virilmente ad operare onde fu morto dalle donne, cioè ch'elli fu morto dal mondo, sì come muoiono li altri nel mondo, e così trovò lo spirito de Euridice, cioè che, levato el velamento del corpo, l'anima ritrova la mente, cioè allora è d'ogni cosa chiara.

Appendix III

Iacomo della Lana on Fortune. From Scarabelli 1866-67, *Inferno* 7.Nota.

Poi che ha nel sesto capitolo trattato del vizio della gola, in questo settimo intende di trattare de' prodighi e delli avari e delli iracondiosi in fine. Circa li quali primi vizii è da notare che li beni temporali si possano tenere e dare virtuosamente, e possonsi dare e tenere viziosamente. Se si dà quello che è bisogno temperatamente, e tiensi quello che non ha luogo a spendere secondo la condizion e facultà dello uomo, questo è vertudioso modo ed è apellato largo, overo liberale, sicome dice lo Filosofo in secondo e quarto *Ethicorum: liberalitas moderat cupiditatem acquirendi vel possidendi res exteriores*: e intendesi *res*, overo *bona exteriora* tutte quelle cose che si puonno con pecunia misurare. Se si dàe o spende più che non è, overo s'aviene alla facultade dell'uomo, è apellato prodigo quasi *proditus*, cioè tradito, che si lascia tradire e ingannare alla sua volontà; perchè se bene si considera, questi beni esteriori sono ordinati e alla vita e all'onore: e perciò colui che li dispensa disordinatamente per sua volontà, si può dire prodito, cioè tradito. E però dice Aristotile in lo secondo e quarto dell'Etica: *prodigalitas est vitium quod consistit in indebita corruptione vel consumptione substantiae*: e la glosa dice: *proprium divitiarum etc.*; *posse* similmente li esteriori beni tenere viziosamente, e similmente affettarli con viziosa ed indebita maniera. E questo avviene alli illiberali, overo avari, li quali non solamente peccano in tórre lo superfluo ad altri, ma eziandio sono defettuosi e manchevoli in dar quello che liberamente dovrebbero dispensare; è similmente, sicome dice Aristotile in l'Etica, in li predetti libri; *questo è uno pestifero ed incurabile morbo*, che naturalmente l'umana natura tende ad imperfezione di sè. Sichè come vive più l'uomo, tanto diventa più pusillanimo e cattivo d'animo: per le quali cose si segue ch'elli diventa avaro e va sempre peggiorando. E questo avviene perchè li spiriti s'affievoliscono per lo corpo che è in declinazione, l'animo che segue alle passioni del corpo, perchè cognosce più li pericoli mondani e aspetta meno essere aiutato, s'indebolisce e diventa cattivo, ed ha sempre paura che Dio e 'l mondo li vegna meno. Or per questa tal paura inordinata, che l'anima segue e il corpo, si è peccato: e dice san Bernardo: *avaritia est quarumlibet rerum insatiabilis et inonhesta cupido*; e l'Apostolo dice: *avaritia est ydolorum servitus, quia homo avarus exhibet creaturae, quod debet creatori, scilicet fidem spem et dilectionem*. Or perchè in questo vizio abunda molto l'umana natura, acciò che li uomini se ne sottraggano e devieno, ha voluto l'autore fare menzione di lor

pena, è maestrevolmente per bene esemplificare loro atto ed a palesare con effetto, sì li pone nel quarto cerchio di quello pericoloso luogo, ovvero foro, che ha nomato, ed imagina che mezza la circolazione sia abitata e scorsa per li prodighi, l'altra metade sia agregata per li avari. E imagina sicome lo prodigo che dispensa e dà oltramisura la sua substanzia e divizia sta sempre in movimento e senza quiete, così quelle anime che sono lie sempre corrono, e in movimento velocissimo adoprano suo tempo, e non vanno se non in una delle due parti del circolo per opposito. Sicome l'animo dello avaro mai non è in riposo ma sempre pieno e superabundante di voglia insaziabile: così quelle anime che sono lie mai non riposano, ma sempre corrono in l'altro semicircolo. E pone Dante che la divina giustizia vuole che in li due termini ove si parteno li tristi cori sì delli avari, come de' prodighi, elli si pettoleggino e diansi di grandi scontri dicendo l'uno all'altro per conservarsi maggior pena, l'avarò al prodigo: *perchè burli?* cioè perchè getti tu via? e l' prodigo all'avarò: *perchè tieni?* cioè tu perchè ritieni quello che dovresti spendere? E soggiunge l'autore, come appare nel testo, che in questi avari ha molti prelati chierici, per la qual cosa è da notare che alla virtù divina dispiace *cherico tesaurizzante* sicome dice santo Agostino: *maledictus dispensator avarus cui dominus est largus*, che s'elli ne tolleno ad altri nè tesoro a farli dispensatori di grazia: Dio non li tolle pregio vendendo le spirituali per le temporali secondo la detta sentenzaia sono maledetti.

Poi ch'ha ditto di questi due vizii, tocca alcuna cosa della fortuna, cioè della ventura. E dice che la fortuna è una intelligenza la quale hae a dispensare li beni mondani, cioè le cose commutative. E dà per esempio che sicome Dio ha posto a ciascuno cielo una intelligenza, la quale regge, distribuisce e guida la sua influenza in queste cose naturali di sotto egualmente, cioè sempre secondo sua regola uniforme, ma variasi per lo obietto, *vel* materia ch'hae a ricevere; sicome lo cielo della Luna ch'hae a reggere l'acque e li umidi, quel di Saturno, secondo astrologia, le sette e li reami, quel di Marte le battaglie *etc.*, come si mostra per Albumazar: *De conjunctionibus*: così vuol dire Dante che sia posta una simile, intelligenza, la quale hae a muovere le ricchezze del mondo. E mette che molto èno più obedienti questi beni commutativi a quella intelligenza che non sono le materie inferiori a' celesti movimenti, quando dice: *vostro saper non ha contrasto a lei*, quasi a dire che umano arbitrio non può contra lei: ciò si può contra li cieli per Tolommeo astrologo in lo Centiloquio: *anima sapientis adiuvat opus stellarum* *etc.* Or di questa fortuna è stato grandi e diverse oppinioni tra li savi. Che alcuni e quasi tutti vogliono dire ch'ell'è nulla da

sè, ma è, sicome dice Aristotile in lo secondo della Fisica, *uno conseguente senza proposito*; la quale conseguenza è cagionata da' cieli e nature inferiori sichè di sè non è nulla; e san Gregorio dice: *absit a fidelium cordibus ut fatum vel fortunam aliquid esse dicant*. Ora è da sapere che la intenzione di Dante è che questa fortuna sia uno effetto, particolare, lo quale è ignoto alla scienza mondana, *vel umana*, perchè, come dice Aristotile in la Posteriore: *de particularibus non est scientia*; ma è cagionata da alcuna generale constellazione. E raducendolo in li suoi principii ello è natura, ma per comparazioni a' savii uomini è fortuna cioè ventura che è: *praeter propositum*: ed aducene san Tommaso in la prima parte uno bello esempio in la questione di fatto.

Uno signore manda due fanti per messaggi in uno luogo; non sappiendo l'uno dell'altro questi si truovono in lo luogo preditto. Se si riferisce lo viaggio a' fanti questo è casuale perchè senza loro intento e proposito: se si riferisce al signore che gli ha mandati e che preordinò loro viaggio, questo non è a fortuna. E così similmente se si riferisce alla scienza naturale, cioè umana, questi particolari sono a fortuna, sicome cavando terra per uno sepolcro trovare tesoro, che il trovar tesoro è *preter intentionem*, e però è a fortuna. Se si referisce alla natività parlando astrologicamente in la tale età lo nato troverà tesoro perchè il segno della seconda è nella seconda revoluzione. Allora sarà a constellazione e non a fortuna; ma apellasi quello, che non si può sapere per iscienza naturale, per accidente; e però dice in la detta questione fra Tommaso: *quoniam ea quae per accidens hic aguntur, sive in rebus naturalibus sive humanis, reductur in aliquam causam praeordinantem quae est providentia divina* etc. Sicchè si può dire che li beni commutativi, come le ricchezze mondane, sieno distribuite per fortuna, la qual fortuna è una scienza di particolari ignorata e non saputa dalli intelletti umani, alla quale per tale ignoranza non si può contrastare per sapere o per possanza umana. Questo è ragionevole che libero arbitrio non è se non là ove la volontade e lo intelletto può eleggere: ed elezion non si può fare se non in quelle, ovvero di quelle cose che si fanno se fortuna è com'è detto, ignota e non saputa; per *consequens* non si può fare elezioni sì chè arbitrio non li può contrastare e questa fu intenzione di Dante, e però dice: *necessità la fè essere* etc. La qual fortuna è coordinata da quella possanza infinita che regge e governa, e creò lo mondo a suo piacere, si come sono l'altre intelligenze e vertudi.

Appendix IV

From L'Ottimo Commento 1333, *Inferno* 7.88-90 (Italic is mine for emphasis)

Le sue permutazion ec. E bene dice che non hanno triegue, però che sempre sono in moto, e in battaglie; e soggiugne: Necessità ec. Il Cancelliere di Bologna Ser Graziuolo chiosòde sopra queste parole: così dice il testo, che questa fortuna mai non cessa, mai non posa di trasmutare d'uno in altro questi beni temporali; che di necessitade ell'è veloce nelle sue influenzie e permutazioni: ma avegna che queste parole così suonino, che la fortuna così meni, e faccia influenza in questi beni temporali, e che il senno umano non possa provvedere, riparare contra l'operazioni e permutazioni di questa fortuna; *nientemeno sicondo la discrezione della mia giovanezza io dichiarerò alcuna cosa sopra questa materia per difensione, e conservazione dell'onore, e della fama di questo venerabile Autore, acciò che per la infamia delli male parlanti, e invidiosi non si possa ditrarre, nè dirogare alla sua vera scienza, e virtude. Da vedere, e da sapere è, che Dio, ch'è la prima causa della quale tutte le cose hanno a causarsi per le influenzie e delle sperie, e circuli del Cielo, sì come per cause secundarie, in queste cose di sotto adopera, e fa influenzie alcuna volta per necessità, alcuna volta per disposizione e qualitate;* per necessitade adopera la celestiale spera nel generare, e produrre qualunque nascente: però che necessario è, secondo naturale necessitade causando le virtù della materia celestiale, che uomo ingeneri uomo, bue bue, erba erba ec.; nè 'n ciò che dopo il dì venga la notte, e dopo le tenebre notturne si spanda il raggio della luce in terra, secondo il na[tu]rale corso e ordine del grande lume; se non facesse il contrario miracolosamente e supernalmente la infinita potenza di Dio. Questa natura del Cielo dà influenza e disposizione, qualificando e disponendo li uomini razionali ad abitare, operare, e perseguire a cotale pensiero, cosa, o disiderio, quale in esso infonde la celestiale materia: verbi grazia, se il feto, o fanciullo nascerà signoregiante il pianeta di Giove, conciosiacosachè sotto Jove sieno ricchezze e onori, e ciascuno pianeto abbia a dare influenza di quelle cose, di che è la sua natura, quello fanciullo per la influenza del suo pianeta non si necessiterà, ma disporassi, e innanimerassi volontariamente a ricevere, e amare onori, e ricchezze. Per simile esemplo diràe quello infante nato sotto Marte, che di sua voluntade s'inanimeràe, e disporràe, e attenderàe a guerre, e a romori, scandoli, divisioni di battaglie. *E che per la influenza del Cielo non si causi necessitade nelli uomini, questa è la ragione: la incessabile sapienza dell'onnipotente nostro Creatore in operazione, e somma perfezione di tutti li beni opera nelle creature, e nelle sue*

operazioni perfettissimamente; lo quale quando perfettamente ebbe creato l'uomo, diede e spiròe in lui tre cose: ragione, volo[n]tà, e libero arbitrio. La libertade dello arbitrio sta nell'eleggere da operare bene, e male; l'appetito che per sè è mosso, seguita quello che li piace; la ragione hae a regolare l'appetito e fargli seguire virtude; e questo è secondo che si pruova quivi. Idio fece l'uomo semplice, e diritto, e lasciollo nelle mani del suo consiglio; questo è quello che pruova Santo Agostino, quando elli dice: colui che fece te, non giustificherà te senza te; però che Dio, che fece noi senza nullo nostro aiutorio, non giustificherà, e non darà li meriti di vita eterna senza nostri meriti e virtudi; nè saremo tormentati in Inferno se non è per lo peso, e opere, e meriti delle nostre malizie. E però, avegnachè quella celistiale influenza di Saturno, o di Marte, o d'altro pianeta malvagio di sua natura disponga, e chiami li uomini a furto, o povertà, o guerre, o altri difetti; e avegnachè la influenza di qualunque pianeta benivolo disponga l'uomo a ricchezze, a virtudi, ad onori; niente meno lo pianeta benivolo e felice a bene ricevere e a fare non ci conduce, o mena, o qualifica, ma dispone[ci]. Per le quali influenzie non necessitate sono in portare, ma qualitate, e abito, e disposizione, che per lo più sono differenti dalla necessitate: chè, posto che Piero nato sotto Mercurio, per la influenza di Mercurio sia disposto ad eloquenzia e ricchezze, mai non sarebbe bello parlatore, se per ragione, e intelletto con belli parlatori, e savi non vorrà conversare; mai non sarè ricco, s'elli s'asterrà di procurare ricchezze e mercatanzie; mai non avrà onori, s'elli dispregerà onori; mai non verrà alle predette cose influsse da pianeta, s'elli si diletterà nel contrario: e così diremo di Martino, nato sotto Marte, disposto a battaglia, guerre, e scandoli per la influenza del suo pianeta; il quale se si vorà regere per ragione e per intelletto, allora non seguirà l'appetito e l'abito disposto alle battaglie e mali, ma regolerà la qualitate e la disposizione per sano giudicio di ragione conceduta a lui per la podestà del libero arbitro. E così, non [o]stante che per alcuni scellerati movimenti di stelle, nè per influenza rea d'alcuno corpo di pianeta, nè per disposizione, qualitate, o abito alcuno influss[o] da esse (dalle quali sono mossi) [sieno] tratti li uomini per necessario moto del Cielo; niente meno ciascuno uomo per senno e ragione, e per intelletto potrà rafrenare, e del tutto rimuovere da sè li suoi malvagi desideri, e voluntadi, e intendimenti mali, quantunque procedano per influenza di pianeta, o di stelle. E questo farà per elezione di migliore consiglio, e per la libertade dello arbitro umano; sì che non perverrà alle sconcie operazioni; la qual cosa s'elli la farà, sì fia degno di laude, e dovrà essere chiamato uomo vero, e razionale, però che allora si governa collo imperio della ragione. Ma se elli per suo difetto di debilità d'animo, o per alcuna subita

volontà, lui traente a cose sconcie, non vorrà vincere, e raffrenare quelli cotali pensieri, qualità, disposizioni perverse; allora non dovrà essere appellato uomo, ma bestia, però che si conduce a modo di bestia per passione d'animo e per appetito; e questo si dee alla sua inexcusabile negligenza, e malizia volontaria, però che non volle schifare le iniquità, e perversioni, e fellonie, le quali elli potè cessare per sapienza. E quest[o] assai pruova, e verifica quella boce del grande Astrolago Tolomeo: il savio signoreggerà le stelle. E pruovalo Boezio nel IIII libro di Consolazione, quando elli dice: nella vostra mano è posto quale fortuna voi vogliate edificare a voi; per la qual cosa seguita, che della influenza de' corpi di sopra non causa necessitate, ma disposizione, e abito, e qualità. Ancora, s'elli addivenissi che per movimento di pianeto li uomini di necessitate si movessino a male, o a bene operare, seguiterebbersi allora cosa sconvenevole, e da non dire; cioè che l'umano arbitrio perisce. Questo è falso; e così indarno alli buoni meriti, e alli rei pene si darebbono, però che a loro non si dovrebbero dare, perchè le loro operazioni non procederebbono da libero arbitro, nè da volontario movimento d'animo, ma da necessitate; e così si darebbe materia agli uomini di peccare, e anche non dovesse loro giovare la semplicità della virtù, e della buona operazione, da che futura necessitate e da non potersi schifare allora ordinasse delli uomini. E seguirebbe altresì quella fallace iniquissima cosa, cioè che li uomini invano contemplerebbono, e speculerebbono la bontà e sapienza divina; e indarno amerebbono lui per caritate, e perdarebbono li prieghi, e l'orazioni; e indarno sarebbero scritti li comandamenti della divina legge, e che si osservasse caritate, fede, speranza, giustizia, fortezza, e l'altre virtù; e amerebbersi a fine di perdere quello che l'uomo facesse: di che alli buoni, e alli mali tutte le cose diveniscono di necessitate; la quale cosa è contro alla fede, e in tutto e per tutto da abominare, e da riprendere, considerata la somma e perfettissima giustizia del santissimo, e increato principio, lo quale per lo giudicio della sua perfettissima ragione dona alli buoni meritandoli grazia, e alli rei pena. *E però sopra la materia delle premesse parole s[i] conchiude per necessaria ragione, che della influenza delle stelle, che noi comunemente chiamiamo fortuna, non si infonde necessitade di bene e di male, ma veramente disposizione, qualità, e abito a bene e a male; la qual cosa pienamente pruova Boezio nella fine del V libro di Consolazione, dove dice: sta ferma non corrotta la libertà dello arbitro alli uomini, e sta Dio fermo sopra le menti di tutti, che dispensa alli buoni meriti, e alli mali pena. Ma a vera disposizione, e difesa del testo, che dice – Le sue permutacion non hanno triegue; Necessitade la fa esser veloce; Sì spesso vien chi vincendo consegue – sì è da dire, ed è vero, che la fortuna, cioè il moto*

suo mai non posa, ma sempre dà influenza e di muovere, e di necessitate. Che 'l Cielo continovo si muova, e dea influenza, ma non ch'elli necessiti, come di sopra è provato, e dice – Vostro saver non ha contasto a lei {v.85}, Oltre la difension de' senni umani {v.81} – si può rispondere in due modi: puotesi rispondere, ed è vero, che l'umana prudenzia non può fare, nè contrariare che 'l Cielo non si muova, e di[a] influenzie secondo sua natura; e puotesi rispondere che, dato che 'l testo dica – Vostro saver non ha contasto a lei {v.85}; cioè vostro senno non contesta alla influenza del Cielo, che per questo non si toglie via; nè seguita, che la prudenzia di ciascuno uomo non possa infrenare le inlicite, e perverse cogitazioni, e disposizioni causate dalla influenza del Cielo: chè, posto che Piero ch'è potente a correre non corra, non seguita ch'elli non possa correre; e così posto che 'l senno umano non contradica, nè si opponga alla mala disposizione del pianeta, però non si toglie, nè dice il testo che contradicare non si possa: di che seguita, che l'umana ragione potrebbe per la libertà del suo arbitro rafrenare li movimenti, e le disposizioni, e le qualitati ree, che disendono dalla influenza del Cielo.

Bibliography

Affatato 2014

Rosa Affatato. "Prospettiva allgorica e orizzonte del reale nei proemi dei commenti alla Divina Commedia tra Trecento e Quattrocento." In Carlota Cattermole, Celia de Aldama, and Chiara Giordano, eds. *Ortodossia ed eterodossia in Dante Alighieri, 759-924*. Madrid: Ediciones de La Discreta, 2014.

Anselmi, De Benedictis, and Terpstra 2013

Gian Mario Anselmi, Angela De Benedictis, Nicholas Terpstra, eds. *Bologna: Cultural Crossroads from the Medieval to the Baroque: Recent Anglo-American Scholarship*. Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2013.

Ardissino 1993

Erminia Ardissino. "Saggio per l'edizione critica dell' 'Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare' di Giovanni di Bonsignori: il 'Proemio' e l' 'Esordio.'" *Traditio* 48 (1993): 107-71.

Bacchi 1984

Andrea Bacchi. "Vicende della pittura nell'età di Giovanni II Bentivoglio." In Bruno Basile, ed. *Bentivolorum magnificentia. Principe e cultura a Bologna nel Rinascimento*, 285-335. Roma, Bulzoni: 1984.

Ballardini 1929

Gaetano Ballardini. "Uno sconosciuto pavimento robbiano a Bologna." *Atti e Memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Province di Romagna*, serie IV , vol . IX , fasc . IV - VI (luglio - dicembre 1929): 197-204.

Bambaglioli 1998

Graziolo Bambaglioli. *Commento all' "Inferno" di Dante*. In Luca Carlo Rossi, ed. Pisa: Scuola Normale Superiore, 1998.

Barolini 2018

Teodolinda Barolini. *Commento Baroliniano, Digital Dante*. New York, NY: Columbia University Libraries, 2018. <https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/>

Baxandall 1965

Michael Baxandall. "Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysolaras." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, no. 28, (1965): 183-204.

Baxandall 1988

Michael Baxandall. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press: 1988.

Benati and Calogero 2019

Daniele Benati, Giacomo A. Calogero, eds. *Arte e umanesimo a Bologna. Materiali e nuove prospettive*. Bologna : Bononia university press, 2019.

Bellomo 2004

Saverio Bellomo. *Dizionario dei Commentatori Danteschi : L'esegesi della Commedia da Iacopo Alighieri a Nidobeato*. Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2004.

Blanshei 2018

Sarah Rubin Blanshei, ed. *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna*. Boston: Brill, 2018.

Boccaccio 1986

Giovanni Boccaccio. *Amorosa Visione*. In Robert Hollander, ed. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986.

Bologna 1969

Ferdinando Bologna. *I pittori alla corte angioina di Napoli (1266-1414)*. Roma: U. Bozzi, 1969.

Bonsignori 2001

Giovanni Bonsignori. *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare*. Erminia Ardissino, ed. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 2001.

Bordignon 2018

Giulia Bordignon. "Riemersione del pathos dell'annientamento. Una proposta di lettura di Mnemosyne Atlas, Tavola 41." *La Rivista di Engramma*, 157 (luglio/agosto 2018).

Brendel 1944

Otto Brendel. "Origin and Meaning of the Mandorla." *Gazette des beaux-arts* 86, no. 25 (1944): 5-24.

Bridgeman 2013

Jane Bridgeman. *A Renaissance Wedding : The Celebrations at Pesaro for the Marriage of Costanzo Sforza & Camilla Marzano D'Aragona, 26-30 May 1475*, Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2013.

Brown 1966

Clifford Malcom Brown. *Lorenzo Costa*. PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1966.

Brown 1968

Clifford Malcolm Brown. "The Church of Santa Cecilia and the Bentivoglio Chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna. With an Appendix Containing a Catalogue of Isabella D'Este's Correspondence concerning Lorenzo Costa and Francesco Francia." *Mitteilungen Des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 13, no. 1 (1968): 301-24.

Buck 1961

August Buck. *Der Orpheus-mythos in der italienischen Renaissance*. Krefeld: Scherpe, 1961.

Campbell 1995

Stephen J. Campbell. "'Sic in Amore Furens': Painting as Poetic Theory in the Early Renaissance." *I Tatti Studies* 6 (1995): 145-68.

Campbell 1997

Stephen J. Campbell. *Cosmè Tura of Ferrara: Style, Politics, and the Renaissance City, 1450-1495*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Campbell 2002

Stephen J. Campbell. "'Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva': Michelangelo, Rosso, and the (Un)Divinity of Art." *The Art Bulletin* 84, No. 4 (December 2002): 596-620.

Campbell 2004

Stephen J. Campbell. "Mantegna's Triumph: The Cultural Politics of Imitation 'all'antica' at the Court of Mantua 1490-1530." In Stephen J. Campbell, ed. *Artists at Court : Image Making and Identity 1300 - 1550*, 91-105. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Campbell 2006

Stephen J. Campbell. *The Cabinet of Eros : Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella D'Este*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

Campbell and Cole 2012

Stephen J. Campbell and Michael W. Cole. *Italian Renaissance Art*. New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012.

Carandente 1963

Giovanni Carandente. *I Trionfi nel primo Rinascimento*. Roma, Edizioni Rai Radiotelevisione Italiana, 1963.

Carnicelli 1969

D. D. Carnicelli. "Bernardo Illicino and the Renaissance Commentaries on Petrarch's "Trionfi."” *Romance Philology* 23, no. 1 (1969): 57-64.

Cavigli 2005

Rossella Cavigli, *I dipinti su tela di Andrea Mantegna. Tradizione tecnica e interpretazione umanistica*. Tesi di laurea specialistica, Università degli Studi di Venezia Ca' Foscari, 2005.

Ceregato and Vai 2017

Alessandro Ceregato, Gian Battista Vai. "Sullo sfondo: visita geologica pittorica alle cappelle Bentivoglio e S. Antonio nel tempio di San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna." *Natura & Montagna*, Anno LXIII – n. 2 (2017): 18-31.

Chastel 1961

André Chastel. *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1961.

Cheles 1986

Luciano Cheles. *The Studiolo of Urbino : An Iconographic Investigation*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986.

Ciammitti 1985

Luisa Ciammitti. "Ercole Roberti : la cappella Garganelli in San Pietro." In Franca Varignana, ed. *Tre Artisti Nella Bologna Dei Bentivoglio : Francesco Del Cossa, Ercole Roberti, Niccolò Dell'Arca*, 117–198. Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1985.

Clough 1965

Cecil H. Clough. "The Archivio Bentivoglio in Ferrara." *Renaissance News* 18, no. 1 (1965): 12-19.

Cole 2005

Michael Cole. "Response: Nihil Sub Sole Novum." *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) 87, no. 3 (2005): 421-24.

Corso 1957

Cosimo Corso. "L'Ilicino (Bernardo Lapini)." *Bullettino senese di storia patria* LXIV (1957): 3-108.

Cracolici 1999

Stefano Cracolici. "Esemplarità ed emblematica nel commento di Bernardo Illicino ai *Triumph* di Petrarca." In Claudia Berra, ed. *I Triumph di Francesco Petrarca*, 403-417. Milano: Cisalpino, 1999.

D'Amico 1988

Rosalba D'Amico. "Dipinti su tela a Bologna tra '300 e '400 note su una tipologia artistica." *Strenna storica bolognese*, 38 (1988): 137-151.

D'Arco 1857

Carlo d'Arco. *Delle arti e degli artefici di Mantova; notizie raccolte ed illustrate con disegni e con documenti da Carlo d'Arco*. Mantova: Tip. Ditta G. Agazzi, 1857.

De Benedictis 1984

Angela De Benedictis. "Quale "corte" per quale "signoria"? A proposito di organizzazione e immagine del potere durante la preminenza di Giovanni II Bentivoglio." In Bruno Basile, ed. *Bentivolorum magnificentia. Principe e cultura a Bologna nel Rinascimento*, 13-33. Roma, Bulzoni, 1984.

D'Elia 2016

Anthony F. D'Elia. *Pagan Virtue in a Christian World : Sigismondo Malatesta and the Italian Renaissance*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Dempsey 2005

Charles Dempsey. "Response: Historia and Anachronism in Renaissance Art." *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) 87, no. 3 (2005): 416-21.

Didi-Huberman 2003

Georges Didi-Huberman. "Artistic Survival: Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time." *Common Knowledge* 9:2 (2003): 273-285.

Dionisotti 1974

Carlo Dionisotti. "Fortuna del Petrarca nel Quattrocento." *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, XVII (1974): 71-113.

Drogin 2003

David J. Drogin. *Representations of Bentivoglio Authority: Fifteenth-century Painting and Sculpture in the Bentivoglio Chapel, San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna*. PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2003.

Drogin 2004

David J. Drogin. "Bologna's Bentivoglio Family and its Artists: Overview of a Quattrocento Court in the Making." In Stephen J. Campbell, ed. *Artists at Court: Image Making and Identity 1300 – 1550*, 72-90. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Drogin 2018

David J. Drogin. "Art and Patronage in Bologna's "Long" Quattrocento." In Sarah Rubin Blanshei, ed. *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna*, 559-600. Boston: Brill, 2018.

Dube 1982

Elizabeth H. Dube. *The Grabow Altar of Master Bertram von Minden*. PhD dissertation, Brown University, 1982.

Dunkelman 2014

Dunkelman, Martha. "What Michelangelo Learned in Bologna." *Artibus Et Historiae* 35, no. 69 (2014): 107-35.

Eisenbichler and Iannucci 1990

Konrad Eisenbichler, Amilcare A. Iannucci. *Petrarch's Triumphs : Allegory and Spectacle*. Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, 1990.

Emison 2004

Patricia Emison. *Creating the 'Divine' Artist from Dante to Michelangelo*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2004.

Faietti, Oberhuber, and Anselmi 1988

Marzia Faietti, Konrad Oberhuber, and Gian Mario Anselmi. *Bologna e L'umanesimo, 1490-1510*. Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1988.

Farago 2005

Claire Farago. "Response: Time Out of Joint." *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) 87, no. 3 (2005): 424-29.

Filippini 1917

Francesco Filippini. "Ercole da Ferrara ed Ercole da Bologna." *Bollettino d'Arte*, XI (1917): 49-63.

Forti 1970

Fiorenzo Forti. "Bologna. Tradizione manoscritta e commentatori." In *Enciclopedia dantesca*, vol. 1, 664-667. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1970.

Francalanci 2006

Leonardo Francalanci. "Il commento di Bernardo Illicino ai Triumphs del Petrarca: Alcune questioni di metodo." *Studi di Filologia Italiana*. Firenze: Le Lettere, LXIV (2006): 143-154.

Francalanci 2008

Leonardo Francalanci. "La Traduzione catalana del commento di Bernardo Illicino ai Triumphs del Petrarca: il modello italiano." *Quaderns d'Italià*, XIII (2008): 113-126.

Friedman 1970

John Block Friedman. *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Ghisalberti 1931

Fausto Ghisalberti. "Giovanni del Virgilio espositore delle Metamorfosi." *Giornale dantesco* 34 (1931): 43-107.

Ghisalberti 1932

Fausto Ghisalberti. "Arnolfo d'Orléans, un cultore di Ovidio nel secolo XII." *Memorie del R. Istituto lombardo di scienze e lettere*, vol. XXIV, fasc. IV (1932): 157-229.

Ghisalberti 1933

Fausto Ghisalberti. "L'Ovidius *Moralizatus* di Pierre Bersuire." *Studi Romanzi* 23 (1933): 6-136.

Gilday 1996

Rosa Prieto Gilday. *Politics as Usual: Depictions of Petrarch's "Triumph of Fame" in Early Renaissance Florence*. PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1996.

Gilmore 1967

Myron Gilmore. "Filippo Beroaldo, senior." In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, IX. Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1967: 382-384.

Gilson 2018

Simon A. Gilson. *Reading Dante in Renaissance Italy: Florence, Venice, and the 'divine Poet'*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Gozzadini 1839

Giovanni Gozzadini. *Memorie per la vita di Giovanni II Bentivoglio*. Bologna: Tipi delle Belle Arti, 1839.

Graf 2012

Fritz Graf. "Orpheus." In Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow, eds. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th ed. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Grafton and Jardine 1986

Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine. *From Humanism to the Humanities : Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-century Europe*. London: Duckworth, 1986.

Greenstein 2016

Jack M. Greenstein. "The Rib and the Side." In *The Creation of Eve and Renaissance Naturalism: Visual Theology and Artistic Invention*, 41–83. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Guastella 2012

Gianni Guastella. "La personificazione della Fama: da Virgilio ai Trionfi di Petrarca." In Gabriella Moretti and Alice Bonandini, eds. *Persona ficta. La personificazione allegorica nella cultura antica fra letteratura, retorica e iconografia*, 249-282. Trento: Università degli studi di Trento, Dipartimento di studi letterari, linguistici e filologici, 2012.

Idel 2002

Moshe Idel. "Prisca Theologia in Marsilio Ficino and in Some Jewish Treatments." In Michael Allen, Valery Rees, and Martin Davies, eds. *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, 137-158. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Ikegami 2010

Hidehiro Ikegami. "Spazi prospettici e contenuti. Anamorfosi, Vanitas, Trionfi e Tempi: Holbein e Costa." *Nel cuore della meraviglia: omaggio a Jurgis Baltrušaitis. Quaderni di PsicoArt* 1 (2010): 1-19.

Jolly 1997

Penny Howell Jolly. *Made in God's Image? Eve and Adam in the Genesis Mosaics at San Marco, Venice*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Kemp 1977

Martin Kemp, "From Mimesis to Fantasia: The Quattrocento Vocabulary of Creation, Inspiration and Genius in the Visual Arts." *Viator (Berkeley)* 8 (1977): 347-98.

Klebanoff 1994

Randi Paula Klebanoff. *The Bolognese Sculpture of Niccolo Dell'Arca and Michelangelo: Studies in Context*. PhD dissertation, Harvard University 1994.

Kleiner 2016

Fred S. Kleiner. *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History*. 15th ed. Cengage Learning, 2016.

Kubiski 2001

Joyce Kubiski, "Orientalizing Costume in Early Fifteenth-Century French Manuscript Painting (Cité Des Dames Master, Limbourg Brothers, Boucicaut Master, and Bedford Master)," *Gesta* 40, no. 2 (2001): 161-80.

Scarabelli 1866-67

Luciano Scarabelli. "Comedia di Dante degli Allaghieri col Commento di Jacopo della Lana bolognese Iacomo della Lana." Bologna, Tipografia Regia, 1866-67.

Lancilotti 1885

Francesco Lancilotti. *Tractato di picture*. Roma 1509, ed. Filippo Raffaelli. Recanati: Officina Tipografica Rinaldo Simboli, 1885.

Landino 1578

Cristoforo Landino. *Dante con l'espositioni di Christoforo Landino, et d'Alessandro Vellvtello. Sopra la sua Comedia dell'Inferno, del Purgatorio, & del Paradiso. Con tavole, argomenti, & allegorie, & riformato, riveduto, & ridotto alla sua sua vera lettura per Francesco Sansovino Fiorentino*. Venezia: Giouambattista, Marchio Sessa, & Fratelli, 1578.

Leist 2005

Marnie Anjenette Leist. "The Virgin and Hell: An Anomalous Fifteenth-century Italian Mural." PhD dissertation, University of Cincinnati, 2005.

Longhi 1968

Roberto Longhi. *Officina Ferrarese*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1968 (first ed. 1934).

Manca 1986

Joseph Manca. "Ercole De' Roberti's Garganelli Chapel Frescoes: A Reconstruction and Analysis." *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 49, no. 2 (1986): 147-64.

Marino 1990

Eugenio Marino. "Art Criticism and Icon-Theology." In Timothy Verdon and John Henderson, eds. *Christianity and the Renaissance : Image and Religious Imagination in the Quattrocento, 572-591*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1990.

Markow 1983

Deborah Markow. *The Iconography of the Soul in Medieval Art*. PhD dissertation, New York University, 1983.

Masséna and Müntz 1902

Victor Masséna Prince d'Essling, Eugène Müntz. *Pétrarque : ses études d'art, son influence sur les artistes, ses portraits et ceux de Laure, l'illustration de ses écrits*. Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1902.

Mazzoni 1970

Francesco Mazzoni. "Iacopo della Lana." In Umberto Bosco, ed. *Enciclopedia dantesca*, III, 563-5. Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana 1970.

McHam 2006

Sarah Blake McHam. "Erudition on Display : The "scientific" Illustrations in Pico Della Mirandola's Manuscript of Pliny the Elder's Natural History." In *Visualizing Medieval Medicine and Natural History 1200-1550*, 83-114. Aldershot: Ashgate 2006.

McHam 2013

Sarah Blake McHam. *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance : The Legacy of the Natural History*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013.

Mengaldo 1970

Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo. "Bologna. Lingua." In Umberto Bosco, ed. *Enciclopedia dantesca*, vol. 1, 663-664. Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970.

Miziolek 2009

Jerzy Miziolek. "Orpheus and Eurydice: Three Spalliera Panels by Jacopo del Sellaio," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 12 (2009): 117-48.

Montrésor 2000

Carlo Montrésor. *The Opera del Duomo Museum in Florence*. Florence: Mandragora, 2000.

Muscolino 2000

Cetty Muscolino. *Il Tempio Malatestiano di Rimini*. Ravenna: Longo, 2000.

Nagel and Wood 2005a

Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood. "Toward a New Model of Renaissance Anachronism." *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) 87, no. 3 (2005): 403-15.

Nagel and Wood 2005b

Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood. "The Authors Reply: Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood." *The Art Bulletin* (New York, N.Y.) 87, no. 3 (2005): 429-32.

Negro and Roio 2001

Emilio Negro, and Nicosetta Roio. *Lorenzo Costa : 1460-1535*. Modena: Artioli, 2001.

Nieuwenhuizen 1996

Paul Nieuwenhuizen. "Worldly Ritual and Dynastic Iconography in the Bentivoglio Chapel in Bologna 1483-1499." *Medelingen van het Nederlands Instituut of Rome* 55, 1996: 187-212.

O'Connor 1921

William P. O'Connor. "The Concept of the Human Soul According to Saint Augustine." PhD dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1921.

Osgood 1956

Charles Grosvenor Osgood. *Boccaccio on Poetry*. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956.

Ottani Cavina 1967

Anna Ottani Cavina. "La Cappella Bentivoglio." In Carlo Volpe, ed. *Il tempio di San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna. Studi sulla storia e le opere d'arte. Regesto documentario. Settimo centenario della fondazione, 1267-1967*, 117-131. Bologna, Officine grafiche poligrafici Il Resto del Carlino, 1967.

L'Ottimo Commento 1333

Andrea Lancia. *L'Ottimo Commento della Divina Commedia. Testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante*, Alessandro Torri, ed. Pisa: N. Capurro, 1827-1829.

Panofsky 1962

Erwin Panofsky. *Studies in Iconology : Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*. New York: Harper & Row, 1962 (first ed. 1939).

Panofsky 1972

Erwin Panofsky. *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972 (first ed. 1960).

Papio 2009

Michael Papio. *Boccaccio's Expositions on Dante's Comedy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Pearce 2013

Spencer Pearce. "Use of Learning in the Dante Commentary of Iacomo della Lana." In Paola Nasti and Claudia Rossignoli, eds. *Interpreting Dante : Essays on the Traditions of Dante Commentary*, 53-83. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013.

Petrarch 1475

Francesco Petrarca, *Trionfi col commento di Bernardo Lapini da Siena chiamato Glicinio o Illicino*. Bologna: Annibale Malpighi, 27 Aprile 1475
(http://www.tectel.services/dbook/BibliotecaLugano/Incunaboli/550050_00/Index_Pc.html#p=1).

Pellegrini 1894

Flaminio Pellegrini. "Due atti testamentari di Giovanni II Bentivoglio signore di Bologna." *Atti e memorie della Regia deputazione di storia patria per le provincie di Romagna*, terza serie, vol. XI (1894): 303-359.

Perazzini 1999

Pier Luigi Perazzini. "La Cappella Bentivoglio in S. Giacomo Maggiore alla luce di nuovi documenti." *Strenna Storica Bolognese*, 49 (1999): 351-72.

Pinelli 1985

Antonio Pinelli. "Feste e trionfi: continuità e metamorfosi di un tema." In Salvatore Settis, ed. *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, vol. II, 281-350. Torino, Einaudi: 1985.

Pliny 1890

Pliny the Elder. *The Natural History of Pliny*. John Bostock and H. T. Riley, eds. England: G. Bell, 1890.

Renaissance Studies 1999

John Law and Sarah Alyn-Stacey, eds. "Special Issue: Civic Self-Fashioning in Renaissance Bologna: historical and scholarly contexts." *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 13, no. 4 (December 1999).

Reynolds 1972

William Ronald Reynolds. "The 'Ovidius moralizatus' of Petrus Berchorius." PhD dissertation, University of Illinois, 1972.

Richards 1966

I. A. Richards. *Plato's Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1966.

Ripa 1645

Cesare Ripa. *Iconologia*. Venice: Cristoforo Tomasini, 1645.

Rossi 1997

Luca Carlo Rossi. "Per il commento di Martino Paolo Nibia alla Commedia." In Vincenzo Fera and Giacomo Ferrau, eds. *Filologia umanistica. Per Gianvito Resta*, 3: 1677-1716. Padua: Antenore, 1997.

Shapiro 1959

Maurice L. Shapiro. "Studies in the Iconology of the Sculptures in the Tempio Malatestiano." PhD dissertation, New York University, 1959.

Shephard 2014

Tim Shephard. *Echoing Helicon : Music, Art and Identity in the Este Studioli, 1440-1530*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Shorr 1938

Dorothy C. Shorr. "Some Notes on the Iconography of Petrarch's Triumph of Fame." *The Art Bulletin* 20, no. 1 (1938): 100-07.

Shubring 1923

Paul Schubring. *Cassoni: Truhen und Truhenbilder der italienischen Frührenaissance* (1915). K.W. Hiersemann, 1923.

Stebbins 1929

Eunice Burr Stebbins. *The Dolphin in the Literature and Art of Greece and Rome*. Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1929.

Stern 1955

Henri Stern. "La mosaïque d'Orphée de Blanzky-les-Fismes (Aisne)." *Gallia* 13, no. 1 (1955): 39-77.

Summers 2003

David Summers. *Real Spaces : World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*. New York, NY: Phaidon Press, 2003.

Tateo 1999

Francesco Tateo. "Sulla ricezione umanistica dei *Trionfi*." In Claudia Berra, ed. *I Triumphs di Francesco Petrarca*, 375-401. Milano: Cisalpino, 1999.

Thornton 1997

Dora Thornton. *The Scholar in His Study : Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.

Tosetti Grandi 1984

Paola Tosetti Grandi. "Lorenzo Costa." In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, XXX, 211-219. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1984.

Toynbee 1968

Paget Toynbee. *A Dictionary of Proper Names and Notable Matters in the Works of Dante*. Oxford University Press, 1968.

Varese 1967

Ranieri Varese. *Lorenzo Costa 1460-1535*. Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 1967.

Vasari 1895

Giorgio Vasari. *Vasari's Lives of Italian Painters*, Havelock Ellis ed. England: Walter Scott, 1895.

Vasina 1970

Augusto Vasina. "Bologna." In Umberto Bosco, ed. *Enciclopedia dantesca*, vol. 1, 660-663. Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1970.

Vasoli 1967

Cesare Vasoli. "Bernardo da Siena, detto Illicino." In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, IX, 290-291. Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1967.

Vecce 2016

Carlo Vecce. ““The Sculptor Says.” Leonardo and Gian Cristoforo Romano.” In Constance Moffatt and Sara Tagliagambe, eds. *Illuminating Leonardo. A Festschrift for Carlo Pedretti Celebrating His 70 Years of Scholarship (1944–2014)*, 223–238. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Venturoli 1969

Paolo Venturoli. “Lorenzo Costa” *Storia dell'Arte* 1-2 (1969): 161-168.

Virgil 2007

Virgil. *Aeneid*. In Frederick Ahl, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Volpi 2009

Mirko Volpi, ed. *Iacomo della Lana: Commento alla “Commedia.”* Roma: Salerno Editore, 2009.

Volpi 2011

Mirko Volpi. “Iacomo della Lana.” In Enrico Malato and Andrea Mazzucchi, eds. *Censimento dei commenti danteschi: 1. Commenti di tradizione manoscritta (fino al 1480)*,” 290-315. Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2011.

Voss 2002

Angela Voss. “Orpheus Redivivus: The Musical Magic of Marsilio Ficino.” In Michael Allen, Valery Rees, and Martin Davies, eds. *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, 227-41. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Wallace 1979

William E. Wallace. “The Bentivoglio Palace Lost and Reconstructed.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, no. 3 (1979): 97-114.

Walker 1953

D. P. Walker. “Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonists.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 16, no. 1/2 (1953): 100-20.

Warburg 1999

Aby Warburg. *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999.

Warden 1982

John Warden. “Orpheus and Ficino.” In John Warden, ed. *Orpheus: The Metamorphoses of a Myth*, 85-110. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Wegener 1989

Wendy Wegener. “*Mortuary Chapels of Renaissance ‘condottieri’*.” PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1989.

Weisbach 1919

Werner Weisbach. *Trionfi*. Berlin: G. Grote, 1919.

Zaho 2004

Margaret Ann Zaho. *Imago Triumphalis : The Function and Significance of Triumphal Imagery for Italian Renaissance Rulers*. New York: P. Lang, 2004.

Illustrations



Figure 1. Lorenzo Costa, *Triumph of Fame*, 1490. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, San Giacomo Maggiore.



Figure 2. Lorenzo Costa, *Triumph of Death*, 1490. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, San Giacomo Maggiore.



Figure 3. Lorenzo Costa, *Enthroned Madonna and Child with the Bentivoglio Family*, 1488. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, San Giacomo Maggiore.

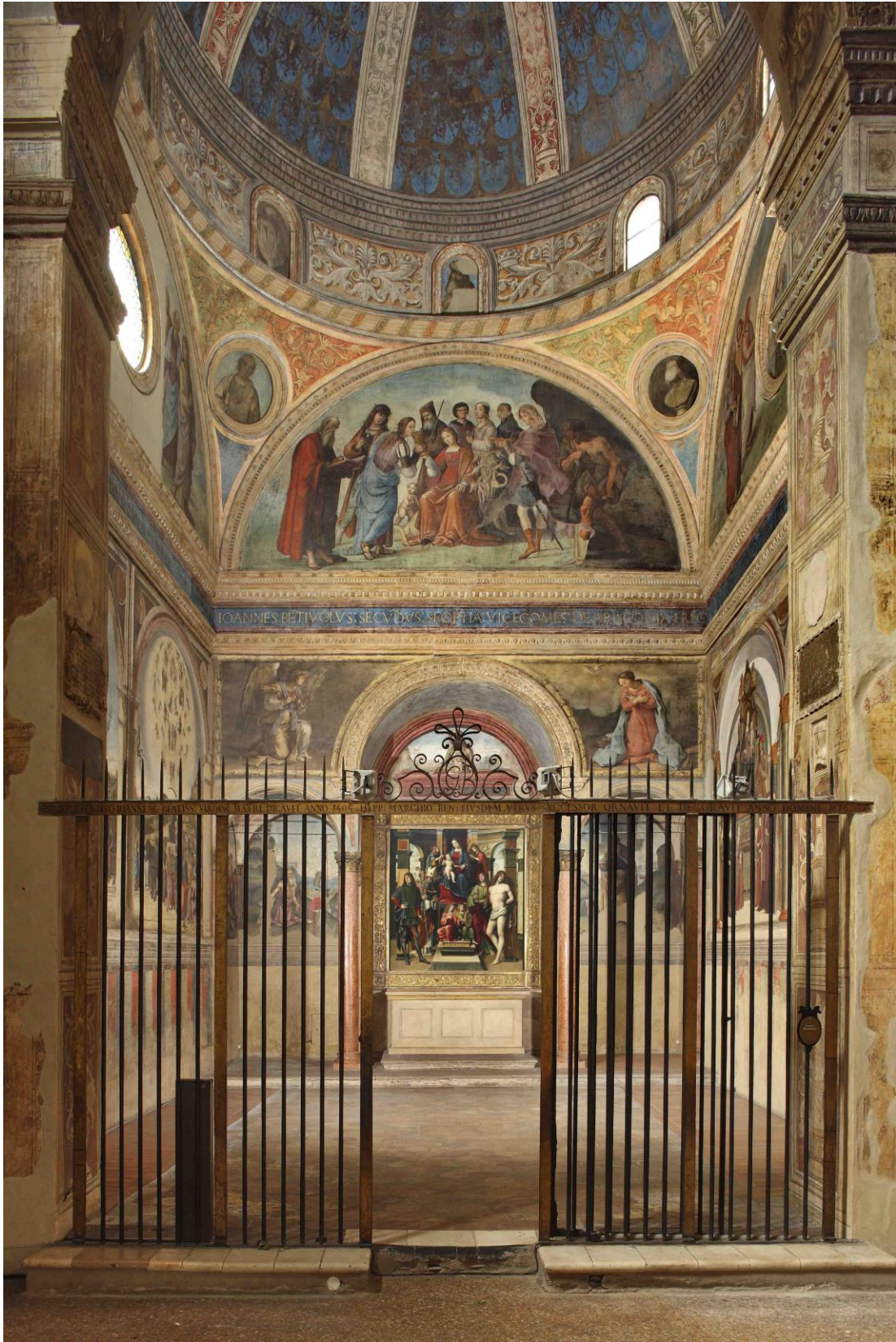


Figure 4. The Bentivoglio chapel from the ambulatory of San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna.

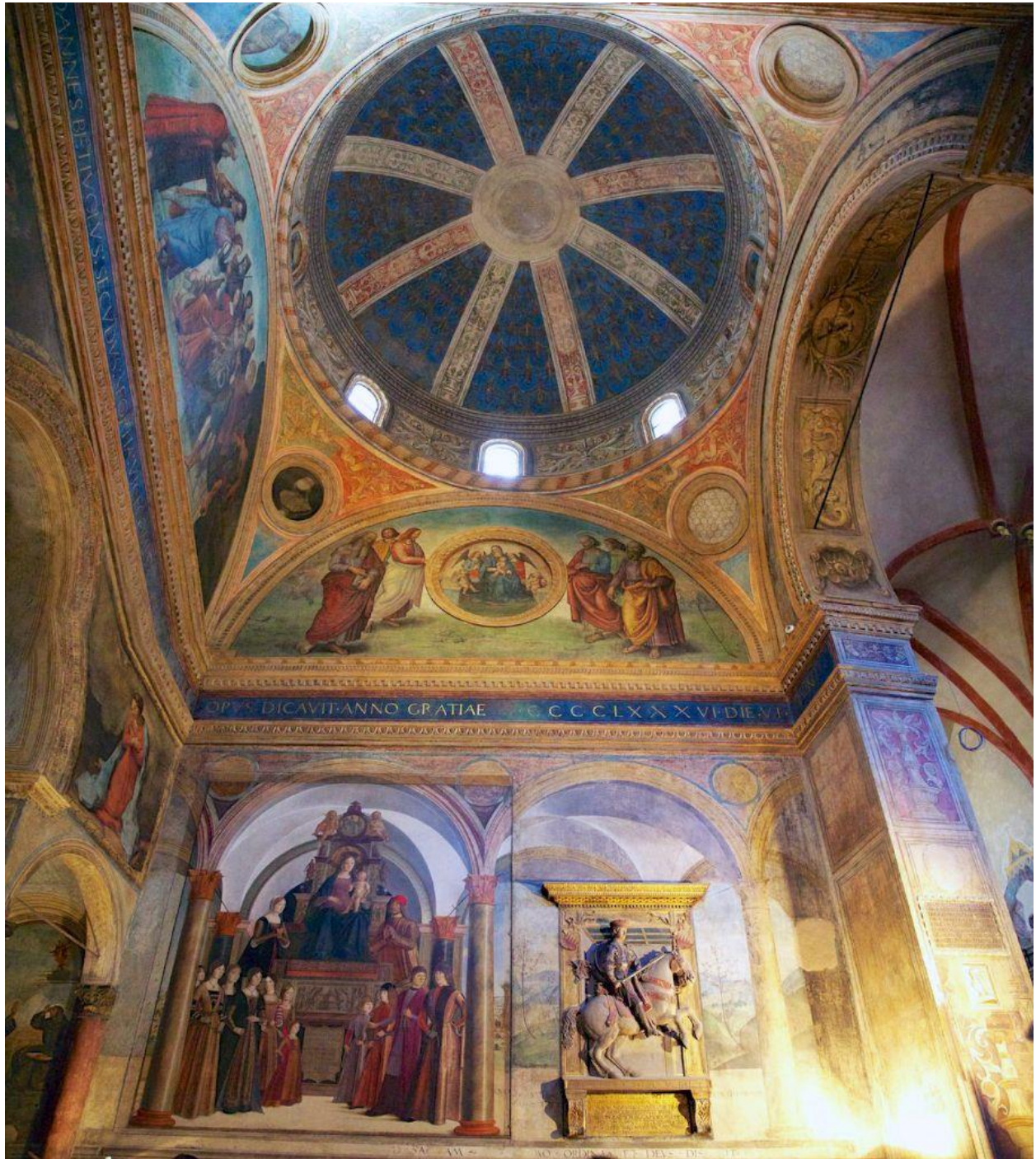


Figure 5. The Bentivoglio chapel, view of the south wall and of the dome.



Figure 6. Simone dei Crocifissi, *Saint Helen in Adoration of the Cross*, c. 1370. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



Figure 7. Lippo di Dalmasio, *The Madonna of Humility*, c. 1390. Tempera on canvas. London, National Gallery.



Figure 8. Pietro Lianori, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, c. 1420. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



Figure 9. Francesco del Cossa, *Altarpiece of Merchants*, 1474. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



Figure 10. Maestro di Ambrogio Saraceno, *Saint Apollonia*, 1488-90. Tempera on canvas. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



Figure 11. Andrea Mantegna, *The Picture-Bearers* (part of the series *The Triumphs of Caesar*), 1484-92. Tempera on canvas. London, Hampton Court Palace.



Figure 12. Francesco Pesellino, *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death*, c. 1450. Tempera and gold on panel. Boston, Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum.



Figure 13. Francesco Pesellino, *The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Eternity*, c. 1450. Tempera and gold on panel. Boston, Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum.

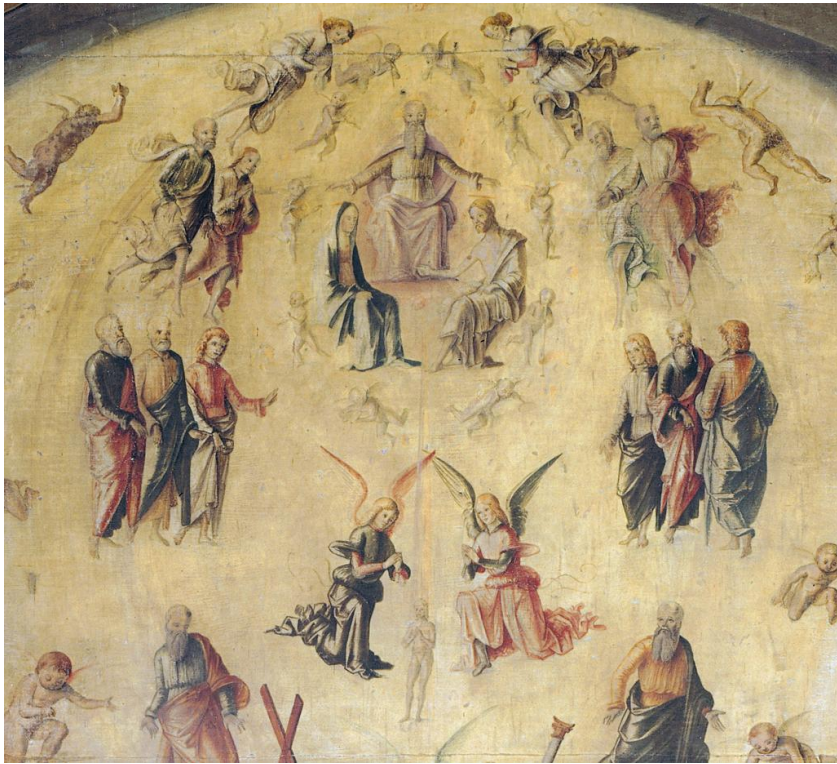


Figure 14. Detail of figure 2 showing a human soul ascending toward the divine assembly.



Figure 15. Jacopo Torriti, *Creation of the World*, 1290s. Fresco. Assisi, Basilica of San Francesco, upper church.



Figure 16. The Stuttgart Psalter, 801-850 CE. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, ms. 23, fol. 55r.



Figure 17. Detail of figure 2 showing the ascending human soul.

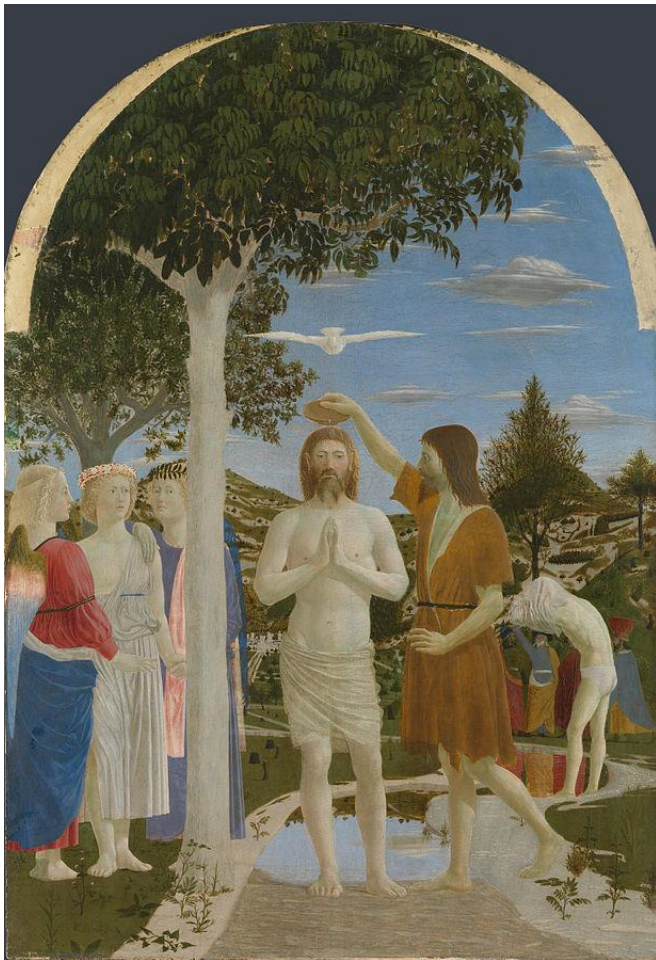


Figure 18. Piero della Francesca, *The Baptism of Christ*, after 1437. Tempera on panel. London, The National Gallery.



Figure 19. Detail of figure 2 showing the divine assembly.



Figure 20. Francesco Rosselli (attributed to), illustration of Petrarch's *Triumph of Divinity*, c.1480-90. Engraving, ink on paper. London, The British Museum.



Figure 21. Giovanni da Modena, *Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity in Paradise and Hell*, 1408-12. Fresco. Bologna, Basilica of San Petronio (Bolognini chapel).



Figure 22. Detail of figure 2 showing a musician playing the lyre, here identified as Orpheus.



Figure 23. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Orpheus Charming the Animals*, c. 1506. Engraving, ink on paper. Vienna, Albertina.



Figure 24. Anonymous (Ferrarese?), *Orpheus Charming the Animals*, 1490s. Pen, ink, and white lead on paper. Firenze, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi.



Figure 25. Master of the Orpheus Legend, *Orpheus Playing to the Animals*, 1470s. Bronze. National Gallery of Art, Washington.



Figure 26. Marcantonio Raimondi, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1509-1510. Engraving, ink on paper. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.



Figure 27. Luca della Robbia, *Orpheus/Music*, 1437-39. Marble. Firenze, Museo dell'Opera de Duomo.



Figure 28. Nicolò d'Antonio degli Agli, *Orpheus, Messenger of Apollo*, 1480. Ink on paper. Roma, Biblioteca Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Urb. lat. 899, Fol. 64v.



Figure 29. Jacopo del Sellaio, *Orpheus and Eurydice in Hades*, c. 1485. Tempera and oil on panel. Kiev, Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art.



Figure 30. Jacopo del Sellaio, *Orpheus and Eurydice in Hades*, c. 1485. Tempera and oil on panel. Kraków, Wawel Royal Castle.



Figure 31. Detail of figure 30.



Figure 32. Circle of Andrea Mantegna, *The Descent of Christ into Limbo*, c. 1480-85. Engraving, ink on paper. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.



Figure 33. Detail of figure 1 showing a scene from Dante's *Inferno*.



Figure 34. Detail of figure 2 showing a scene from Dante's *Purgatorio*.



Figure 35. Detail of figure 1 showing the personification of Fame.

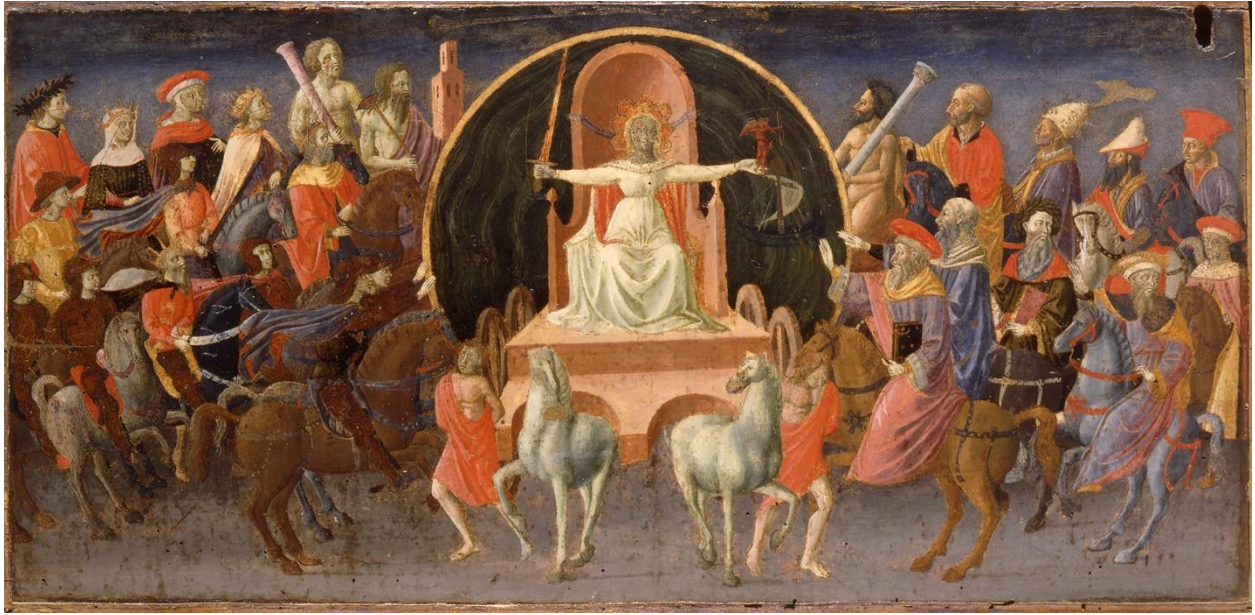


Figure 36. Zanobi Strozzi, *Triumph of Fame*, c. 1445. Tempera on panel. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



Figure 37. Altichiero, *Triumph of Fame*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Lat. 6069 I.

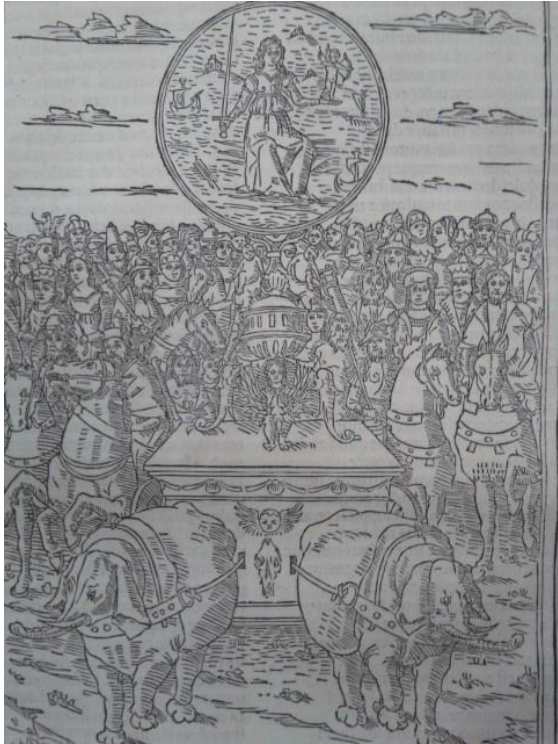


Figure 38. Unknown artist, *Triumph of Fame*. Ink on paper. Bologna, Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, from a 1490 Venetian edition of Petrarch's *Triumphs*.



Figure 39. Bolognino Zaltieri, *Fame*. Engraving from the 1571 edition of Vincenzo Cartari's *Images of the Gods*.



Figure 40. Sperandio, *Fame* (verso of a bronze metal portrait of Andrea Barbazza), 1479. American Numismatic Society.



Figure 41. *Clio* (after the so-called Tarocchi Cards of Mantegna, printed by Hans Ladenspelder), 1530-1561. Engraving, ink on paper. London, The British Museum.



Figure 42. A Roman sculpture of unknown date depicting Clio the Muse of history. Rome, Vatican Museums.



Figure 43. Agostino di Duccio, *Clio*, 1446-61. Marble relief. Rimini, Malatesta Temple.



Figure 44. Gian Cristoforo Romano, *Clio*, before 1505. Marble relief. Mantua, Ducal Palace.



Figure 45. Giovanni Santi, *Clio*, 1480-90. Tempera on panel. Florence, Galleria Corsini.



Figure 46. Vittore Carpaccio, *Saint Augustine in his Study*, 1502-07. Tempera on panel. Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni.

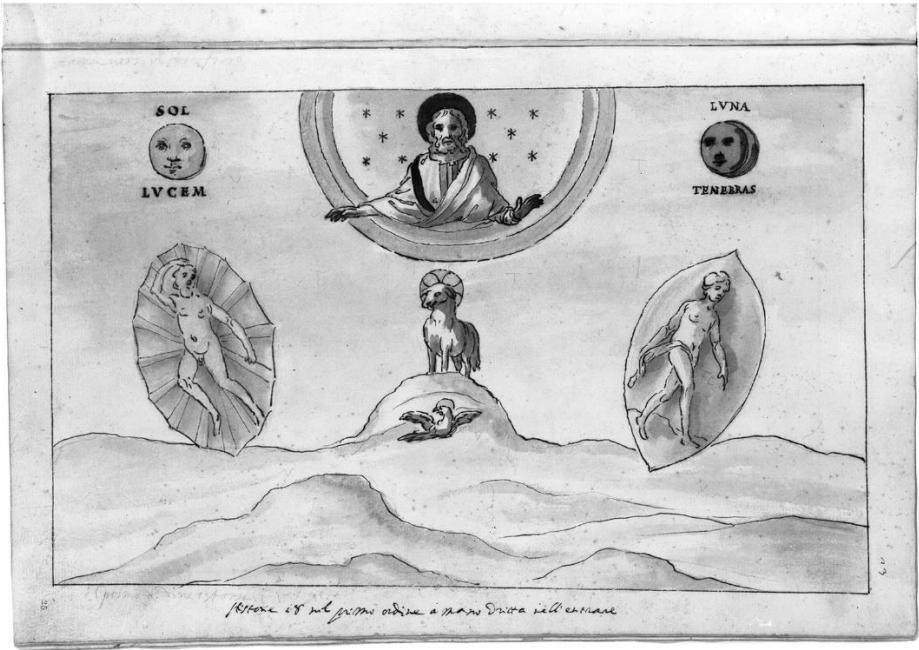


Figure 47. *Creation of the World* (watercolor record made for Cardinal Francesco Barberini of the fresco cycles in San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome), 1634–35. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Barb. Lat. 4406, fol. 23

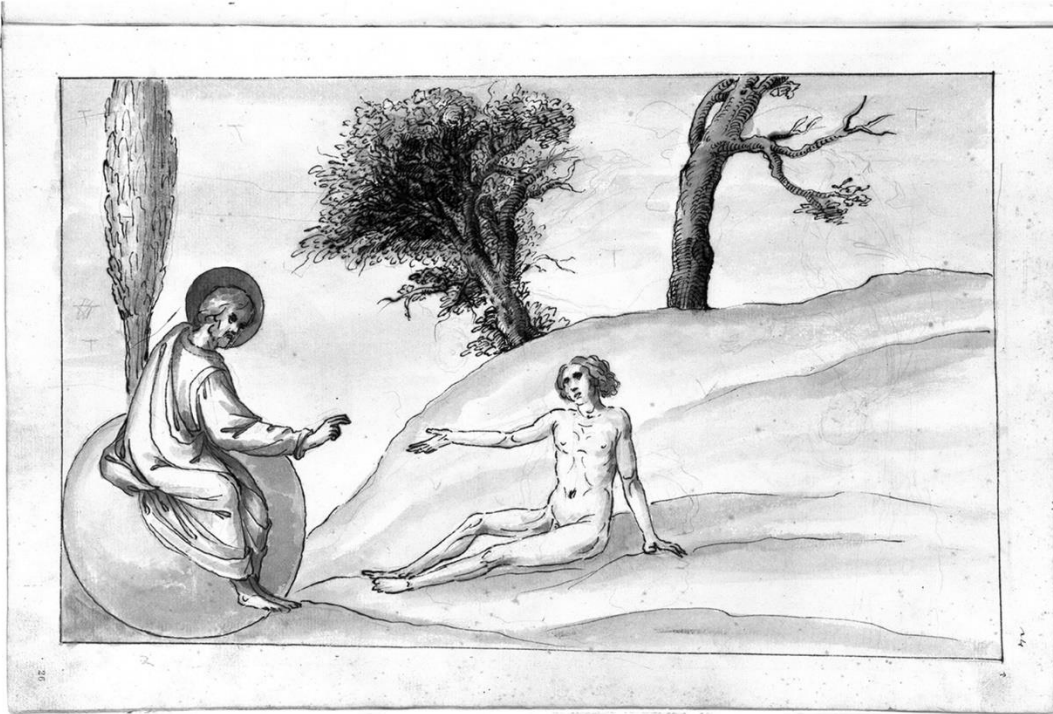


Figure 48. *Creation of Adam* (watercolor record made for Cardinal Francesco Barberini of the fresco cycles in San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome), 1634–35. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Barb. Lat. 4406, fol. 24.



Figure 49. *Creation of Eve* (watercolor record made for Cardinal Francesco Barberini of the fresco cycles in San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome), 1634–35. Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Barb. Lat. 4406, fol. 25.



Figure 50. Detail of figure 1 showing the Creation of Adam and Eve.

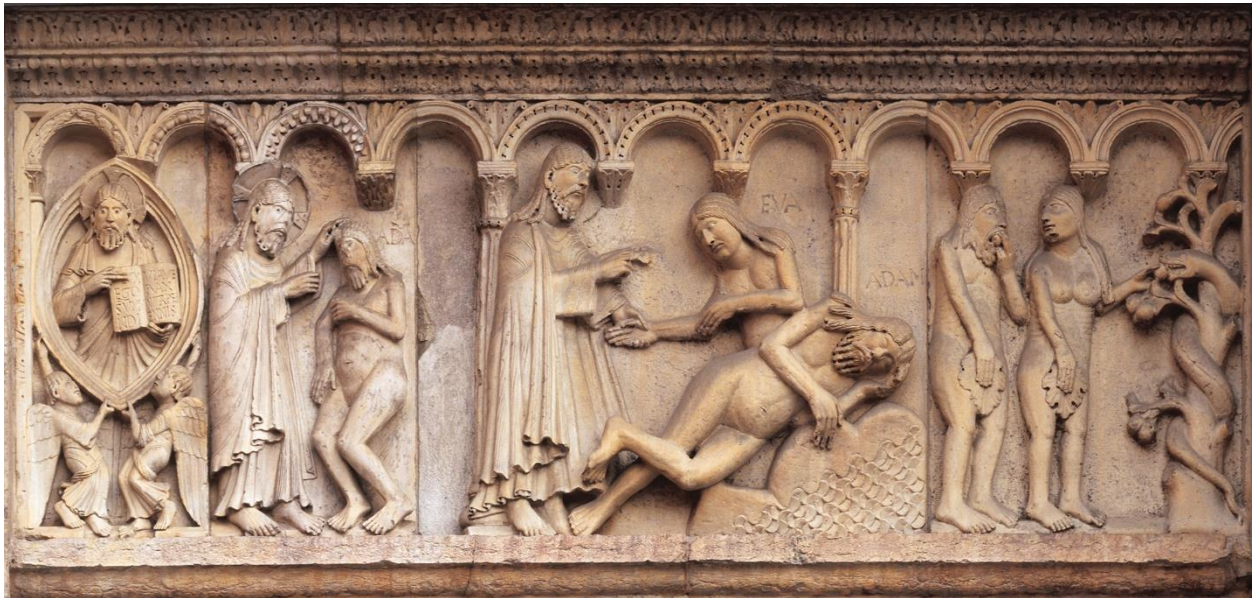


Figure 51. Wiligelmus (Wiligelmo) of Modena, *The Creation and Fall of Adam and Eve* (detail of Genesis frieze), ca. 1099–1110. Marble relief. Modena Cathedral.



Figure 52. Jacopo della Quercia, *Creation of Adam*, 1429–34. Marble. Bologna, Basilica of San Petronio (Porta Maggiore).



Figure 53. *Formation of Adam*, thirteenth century. Mosaic. Venice, San Marco Basilica (Genesis dome, narthex).



Figure 54. *Animation of Adam*, thirteenth century. Mosaic. Venice, San Marco Basilica (Genesis dome, narthex).



Figure 55. Master Bertram of Minden, *Creation of Adam* (upper right), from the Grabow Altarpiece, 1379–83. Hamburg, Kunsthalle, Hamburg



Figure 56. Michael Wolgemut, *Creation of Adam* (from *The Nuremburg Chronicle*), 1493. Woodcut, ink on paper. Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.



Figure 57. Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Garden of Eden* (detail of the *Creation of Adam*), 1530. Oil on panel. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.



Figure 58. Detail of figure 1 showing a couple in contemporary clothing gesturing toward the scene of the Creation.