

## Reflections on patronage, form, iconography and politics in Pinturicchio's 'Fossi altarpiece'

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**Abstract for Part 1:** The legacies of Vasarian and Burckhardtian historical paradigms have had the effect of leaving Bernardino Pinturicchio's Fossi altarpiece (1495-6) in the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria insufficiently investigated. This study examines the patronage, form, iconography and politics surrounding the polyptych, in the light of contemporary historical and cultural phenomena. Pinturicchio's reputation in Rome at that moment was unsurpassed, the artist having been named by the incumbent pope '*pictor palatii apostolici*'. The article, presented in two parts, demonstrates that the altarpiece should not be considered a parochial work of art by a second rate painter: it is, rather, a visual manifestation of a complex web of designs - commercial, communal, ecclesiastical and papal - moulded by the most pressing artistic and historical exigencies in the Italian peninsula in the closing years of the fifteenth century. Part 1 begins by setting out the circumstances of the commission, establishing the identities and circumstances of those named in the contract, summarising the external history of the altarpiece and situating it into its late fifteenth-century setting - the extant, though deconsecrated, church of Santa Maria dei Fossi in Perugia. The polyptych form of the altarpiece is addressed, followed by a detailed iconographical analysis of the main panel. The article is continued in Part 2.

**Abstract for Part 2:** The legacies of Vasarian and Burckhardtian historical paradigms have had the effect of leaving Bernardino Pinturicchio's Fossi altarpiece (1495-6) in the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria insufficiently investigated. This study examines the patronage, form, iconography and politics surrounding the polyptych, in the light of contemporary historical and cultural phenomena. Pinturicchio's reputation in Rome at that moment was unsurpassed, the artist having been named by the incumbent pope '*pictor palatii apostolici*'. The article, presented in two parts, demonstrates that the altarpiece should not be considered a parochial work of art by a second rate painter: it is, rather, a visual manifestation of a complex web of designs - commercial, communal, ecclesiastical and papal - moulded by the most pressing artistic and historical exigencies in the Italian peninsula in the closing years of the fifteenth century. Resuming the iconographical study from Part 1, where the main panel is analysed, Part 2 examines the other parts of the polyptych in relation to the theological programme of the whole. The mismatch between the painted predella and that stipulated in the contract is explained here with reference to the divergent interests of the parties involved in the commission, Perugian political history in the 1490s and the strategic manoeuvres of the Borgia pope.

## **Reflections on patronage, form, iconography and politics in Pinturicchio's 'Fossi altarpiece'**

The so-called Fossi altarpiece (Fig 1) is generally accepted to be Bernardino Pinturicchio's most outstanding surviving panel painting, praised for its graceful composition and its fine, autograph execution. Although the detailed contractual document has survived, scholarly attention remains insufficient in respect of the original location of the work, the historical circumstances of the commission and the intricacies of the imagery in relation to the iconographical programme of the altarpiece.<sup>1</sup>

Historians such as Wilhelm Dilthey, David Thomson, Geoffrey Elton, and Eric Hobsbaum were eager for their discipline to avoid allowing a perceived historical pattern, or a model borrowed from another discipline, to dictate the selection of facts which might then be presented as evidence to uphold the existing paradigm.<sup>2</sup> Such tautologies only serve to entrench misapprehensions about a given locale or period or the nature of historical change.<sup>3</sup> When examined closely against received generalisations, this work of art throws up some fascinating anomalies: the commissioning of a polyptych at a time when its popularity is generally considered to be waning, a curious mis-match between the predella requested in the contract and that currently in place, the choice of artist, and the surprisingly generous channelling of funds into an apparently insignificant religious community lying outside of the city walls. This article thus seeks to clarify the facts of patronage, form, iconography and politics in relation to the Fossi altarpiece.

## **The altarpiece**

The Fossi altarpiece is a large polyptych set into an *all'antica*, architectural frame, the latter mostly gilt with painted in-fills and inscriptions. The main, central panel shows the Madonna seated upon an ornately decorated throne set against a glowing, landscape background. She and the Christ Child, perched on a brocade cushion in her lap, jointly hold a pomegranate and look down to their right, where a young Saint John the Baptist passes to his cousin an ornate cross with an encircling, inscribed ribbon. The left-hand compartment contains the figure of Saint Augustine wearing ceremonial, episcopal robes and mitre: that on the right Saint Jerome in cardinalate dress, holding in his right hand a diminutive church. Split between the panels above these two saints are the two protagonists of the Annunciation: the archangel Gabriel at left, the Virgin Annunciate at right. In the tympanum, between decorated volutes, is an *imago pietatis* or Man of Sorrows. Crowning the whole, in the triangular pediment, the dove of the Holy Spirit floats, wings outstretched, before a golden sun. The predella, as seen today, comprises a central inscription of later date, a *Vision of Saint Augustine* beneath his image at left and *Saint Jerome in Penitence* below the counterpart figure at right. The three predella panels are bracketed by half-figure representations of the four Evangelists in small, wreath-encircled *tondi*.

## **The contract**

The painting can be safely dated to 1495-6, based on the original contract of 14 February 1495 between the prior of the Augustinian canons regular of Santa Maria degli Angeli at Porta San Pietro, more commonly known as Santa Maria dei Fossi, and Pinturicchio:<sup>4</sup> the terms required that the altarpiece be completed within two years of that date and its iconographical programme was specified in considerable detail.<sup>5</sup>

The opening sentence of the contract locates its signing in the house of Diamante Alfani near to the prior's palace: those present included Diamante himself and his son Alfano Alfani.<sup>6</sup> The Alfani family was Perugia's leading banking concern, Alfano Alfani, a respected humanist, at its helm from the 1490s.<sup>7</sup> It was into its fund (*camera*) that all of the monies for this commission were deposited. Payment for the altarpiece was to be made to Pinturicchio in two stages: the first of seventy florins at the start of painting; the second of forty florins upon completion. In addition the contract provided for the rent of three florins for a place where the artist could work.<sup>8</sup> Pinturicchio's obligation was to furnish Fra Hieronymo de Francesco da Venezia, prior of the Augustinian canons regular of Santa Maria dei Fossi, with an altarpiece for the high altar of the said church.<sup>9</sup>

The names of the depositors into the Alfani fund that appear in the contract of 14 February 1495 number three. Of these the first to be singled out for mention is that of the original patron of the Fossi altarpiece, Melchiorre di Goro. Already deceased by the time of the commission, he is identified in the contract as having provided, through his heirs, a sizeable contribution to the fund for 'making pictures in the said church'. This provision however left a shortfall. The balance to constitute Pinturicchio's total payment of 110 florins was met, according to the contractual document, by the prior Fra Hieronymo (forty florins) and Sebastiano di Pietro Paulo di Goro, nephew and heir of Melchiorre (ten florins).<sup>10</sup>

Melchiorre di Goro di Giacomo, a resident of the parish of San Paolo, was a wealthy and influential figure in Perugia, many times prior and finally in 1468 consul of the

city's cobblers' guild (*calzolai*).<sup>11</sup> His intention to furnish Santa Maria dei Fossi with an altarpiece for the main altar is already stated in his testament of 2 October 1479, in which Melchiorre bequeathed 150 florins for its construction and painting,<sup>12</sup> although subsequently in 1482 and 1484 he added codicils to his will which effectively reduced the amount available for the Fossi commission.<sup>13</sup> By the time the wooden construction of the altarpiece was entrusted to the carpenter on 2 July 1492, Melchiorre was already dead.

### **Santa Maria dei Fossi**

The church as named in the contract, Santa Maria degli Angeli at Porta San Pietro, had also been known as Santa Maria dei Fossi since the year 1400 when Braccio Fortebraccio added an outer defensive wall to the city, enclosing the gullies (*fossi*) which pass behind the monastery.<sup>14</sup> The old building can today be seen clinging to the top of the valley slope alongside the Viale Roma some little distance from Porta San Pietro, overlooking the vale in which today is located the railway line and the station of Sant'Anna (Fig 2), its position clearly visible on a late sixteenth-century 'aerial view' of the city (Fig 3). The building is currently occupied by the Scuola Media Statale San Paolo, its former incarnations obscured by an imposing neoclassical façade (Fig 4).<sup>15</sup> The church, still buried within the complex, was deconsecrated during the 1970s and is no longer open to the public.<sup>16</sup>

In attempting to contextualise the Fossi altarpiece, an initial problem is that its original environment is now different to that which pertained at the time of its making. A medieval convent was constructed on this site at some time between 1200 and 1250 when it was occupied by Clarissan nuns. In 1464 the community was struck

by an epidemic, leaving the convent empty.<sup>17</sup> Its physical appearance remains unrecorded until its new inhabitants of four years later, the Augustinian canons regular, began to seek financial assistance from the Commune of Perugia from the 1470s onward. Their success in eliciting funds is documented by the Perugian chronicler Francesco Matarazzo:

And the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli was thoroughly repaired, yea almost rebuilt; and it was granted to those regular canons who celebrate masses there up to the day and hour in which I write. ... and they were endowed with privileges than which no other brotherhood had greater – indulgences and other prerogatives in abundance. At this time, as I said, their habitation which had been dismantled and in ruins was entirely repaired. At this time also there was taken in hand the building of the new church.<sup>18</sup>

The transformation of the site can be gauged from the series of applications for funding.<sup>19</sup> In 1481, for example, the brothers applied to the Commune for a contribution of thirty florins to rebuild a surrounding wall, to prevent the recurrence of its breach by thieves who had entered the friars' cells, which were kept permanently open in accordance with their rule.<sup>20</sup> The building of the new church mentioned by Matarazzo must have begun *c.* 1495, when one Giovanni di Giovannino Lombardo was commissioned 'to make the walls of the tribune in the new church in the place already started near to the dormitory'.<sup>21</sup> This was followed in the years between 1499 and 1505 by the erection of an infirmary and a cloister with columns and capitals of travertine (Fig 5).<sup>22</sup>

In seeking to reconstruct the appearance of the late quattrocento church for which Pinturicchio's altarpiece was commissioned, it is necessary to peel back the layers of the subsequent baroque and neoclassical 'make-overs'.<sup>23</sup> This reveals the fifteenth-century structure to have been a barrel-vaulted hall with neither aisles nor crossing (Fig 6) and having three lateral altars set into recessed arches along each nave wall (Figs 7 and 9). The semicircular apse bore, as it still does, two small galleries high up in its curving wall with views down into the choir from the conventual buildings behind.<sup>24</sup> The apse and nave were separated, not by the Serlian arch visible today, but by a solid wall punctuated by a simple, tall, round-topped archway opening at its centre.<sup>25</sup> The church had three doorways in its entrance wall as well as a small, side door in the west wall opposite the main altar, the part of the church nearest to the cloister (Figs 9 and 10).<sup>26</sup> Illuminated today by the first storey windows of the superimposed façade (on the left hand side as one faces the building; see Fig 4), the church must once have been lit by an oculus above its central door, a feature still of innumerable church buildings in and around Perugia, indeed also of her cathedral of San Lorenzo. Engulfed now by the mid-nineteenth-century edifice, the exterior elevations of the church are no longer visible. On the grounds that the oculus would barely have admitted sufficient light, it is proposed that the original side walls were pierced at intervals above the cornice by small, rectangular windows, the strongest light thus entering from the east. This is supported by the notional light source taken by Pinturicchio in painting the Fossi altarpiece, in which shadows fall to the right and slightly behind the painted figures and objects.

It was in the dark and restricted (in those days) location of the apse that Pinturicchio's altarpiece could be seen in March 1820, when it was acquired and relocated to the

city's Accademia del Disegno.<sup>27</sup> By 1822, the polyptych, newly housed in the rooms of the Accademia, had been dismantled into seven separate panels,<sup>28</sup> to be finally reunited in 1863 for the opening of the Pinacoteca Vannucci, now the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria.<sup>29</sup> For around two and a half centuries however, following its completion in 1496, Pinturicchio's painting had taken its place on the high altar of Santa Maria dei Fossi.<sup>30</sup> Measuring over three metres wide and standing just behind the simple archway, for most of its time upon a plain, stone, altar *mensa*, the polyptych must have been a commanding sight in an otherwise unassuming church interior.

### **Venetian significance**

The fact that the congregation of Santa Maria dei Fossi were canons regular of Saint Augustine naturally had manifest consequences for the iconography of Melchiorre's altarpiece. The provenance of the canons is also significant in this respect.

Politically, Perugia had been since 1424 subject to papal overlordship. Allowed to maintain its ancient administrative infrastructure of councils and statutes, the city was ruled by a cardinal legate who had ultimate control.<sup>31</sup> In 1468 the appointed vicar of the province, Alberto da Perugia, advised that the abandoned monastery of Santa Maria dei Fossi be ceded to the Augustinian canons regular of San Salvatore of Venice, which was confirmed by papal bull in December of that year.<sup>32</sup> This concession can be understood as part of a broadly Venetian-led reform initiative going back to the beginning of the fifteenth century and persisting well into the sixteenth.<sup>33</sup> The move of the canons regular into Santa Maria dei Fossi followed established precedent, whereby reforming Augustinians relocated from a mother house into an already derelict or failing conventual building in order to inculcate there a life of



observance. Pope Paul II Barbo (1464-71), a Venetian who was active in furthering the interests of the reformist wing of the order, issued the bull which forbade the Venetian canons regular of San Salvatore to sell on or transfer the donation of this house, and required them to 'officiate with due propriety'.<sup>34</sup> The geographical origins and ecclesiological sympathies of the community which commissioned the Fossi altarpiece go some way to explaining its form and iconography.

One of the truisms of art history is the gradual waning in Italian art of the polyptych and a corresponding rise in popularity of the unified, single panel altarpiece, which had become increasingly familiar in Florence from about the 1430s. There is a difficulty however in perceiving this stereotypical pattern at work in Perugia: Jacob Burckhardt already singled out Pinturicchio's painting in his essay '*Das Altarbild*' of 1893-4 as evidence of the continuing popularity of the ornate polyptych in some parts of Italy late into the quattrocento.<sup>35</sup> He observed furthermore that the advent of the unified *pala* was met with equivocal enthusiasm in Umbria.<sup>36</sup> The Augustinian canons regular of Santa Maria dei Fossi were not averse in principle to the *pala*, since Pietro Perugino's large, round-topped painting *The Family of the Madonna* was commissioned for the chapel of Sant'Anna in the same church at around the same time as the Fossi altarpiece (Fig 11).<sup>37</sup> The abiding preference of the canons regular, however, for their high altar to be adorned with a polyptych may be accounted for by the roots of this congregation in the Veneto, where the multi-panelled altarpiece continued until the early cinquecento to flourish alongside the *pala*.<sup>38</sup>

The large wooden frame which the Venetian canons regular commissioned for Pinturicchio's painting was already under construction by Matteo di Tommaso da

Reggio in 1492.<sup>39</sup> That this represented an important impetus for the continuation in Perugia of the multi-panelled altarpiece can be judged by the fact that the same carpenter was engaged for another commission on 23 April 1495 to build an even more monumental and complex, two-faced polyptych, based on the design of the Fossi altarpiece, for the church of Sant'Agostino in Perugia.<sup>40</sup>

### **Iconography**

The programme of the Fossi altarpiece is not unexpected for the high altar of an order of Augustinian canons regular: it centres on the doctrinal tenet of redemption through Christ's sacrifice and the role of Ecclesia as His agency on earth. This theme is loudly proclaimed by the inscription picked out in deep letters of gold on a blue ground across the entire length of the entablature (Fig 1): 'LOOK, O MORTAL, BY WHAT BLOOD YOU HAVE BEEN REDEEMED. MAKE SURE THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN SHED IN VAIN'.<sup>41</sup> This admonition follows the teachings of Saint Augustine: as bishop his main objectives had been the instruction of Christians in their faith and the defence of that faith against heresies or malpractice.

### **The main panel: The Virgin, Christ Child and Saint John the Baptist**

The theme of salvation is manifest in the main panel (Fig 12) by way of the action of the young Saint John the Baptist, the last Old Testament prophet, handing to Christ, the Redeemer, a long stemmed *crux gemmata* encircled by a ribbon containing Saint John's prophetic words, 'Ecce, Agnius (*sic*) Dei'. The significance of this gesture is underscored by the gilt inscription along the bottom of the panel, 'O HOLY CHILD, GIVE THIS CROSS TO THE CHILD. [SAINT JOHN] WILL NOT CARRY IT TO GOD ON THE WORLD'S BEHALF, THERE WILL BE ANOTHER'.<sup>42</sup> The early

lives of Christ and Saint John the Baptist had long been the subject of apocryphal gospels and biographies. One such was made popular in Italy during the fourteenth century by the Dominican Domenico Cavalca, in which the two cousins met during the holy family's flight into Egypt. The young John the Baptist who, with his mother Elizabeth, had also fled Herod's massacre of the innocents (Luke 3:1-8) and was living the eremitic life in the wilderness, paid homage to Jesus, who in turn blessed his older cousin and prophesied the Baptism.<sup>43</sup> The polylobate, bejewelled cross passing between them, with its thirteen precious pearls, is symbolic of Christ and his twelve apostles, representing His resurrection and the apostolic mission of the Church.<sup>44</sup> The artist's attention to detail in the rendering of this exquisitely crafted piece of metalwork is also a celebration of the city's local craftsmanship in the production of processional crosses. The diagonal left-to-right thrust of the cross from one infant to the other, echoed compositionally by the upturned face of Saint John and the answering glances of the Virgin and her Son, lays emphasis on the iconographical importance of this device as the instrument of salvation.

Compositionally, the three heads of Mary, Christ and John the Baptist delineate one side of a triangle. The sinuous, delicate, golden edge of the Virgin's outer sleeve, tracing the undulation of her knees, echoes its base line. The right hand extremity of the triangle lies at the lower edge of the arm of the Madonna's elaborate throne. There, from within the hollow of an acanthus leafed scroll, emerges the upper torso of a male figure, his arms clawing his way out of the dark void, his sad face looking up sheepishly towards the Saviour. The singularity of this unusual motif seems to endow it with some programmatic significance, over and above its value as decoration to the throne of the Virgin Mary.

Pinturicchio was contracted to paint the Fossi altarpiece at a time when he had spent over a decade in Rome fulfilling a series of prestigious cardinalate and papal commissions, culminating in the Borgia Apartments (1492-4) in the Vatican Palace for Alexander VI. A centre of pilgrimage not least for its ancient heritage, the Rome in which Pinturicchio moved was ablaze with contagious humanistic fervour for the antique. Himself one of the earliest visitors to Nero's newly excavated *Domus Aurea*, the artist's personal predilection for classical art, and indeed for the learning of ancient Egypt, is evident from quotations and passages in his oeuvre both before and after the Fossi altarpiece. By the latter quattrocento, under the influence of Neoplatonism and Cabbalism, the artefacts of the distant past were held to pre-figure Christian truths. Saint Augustine, in his hermeneutical handbook *De doctrina christiana*, had not only formulated rules for figurative interpretation of the bible, but also extended these to embrace pre-Christian myth, teaching that 'the thing itself' ('*res ipsa*'), namely the Christian religion, was already 'with the ancients' ('*erat apud antiquos*') although it could not be called Christian until the birth of Christ Himself. Augustine advocated a non-literal interpretation of sources on the grounds that intimations can thus be perceived of the divine plan of redemption.<sup>45</sup> For renaissance artists there was nothing sacrilegious in quoting from antique sources, since these were to be read in Christian allegorical terms.<sup>46</sup>

Anticipating that the diminutive figure at the Madonna's left hand *was* intended to have symbolic meaning, it remains to be shown whence Pinturicchio borrowed the motif and what, or whom, it may represent. The human upper torso, appearing in the painting as if crawling out of the arm of the Virgin Mary's throne, bears a striking

resemblance to that of an Etruscan bronze statuette in the collection of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Perugia (Fig 13).<sup>47</sup> It is well within the realms of possibility, since Perugia and its environs are peppered with Etruscan *hypogea*, that Pinturicchio was familiar with the type. Its original symbolism of little interest, the form of such a sculpture lent itself beautifully to the idea of Adam, hence everyman, emerging from the darkness of a cave into the illumination of Christ's divine light. Eve's likely presence on the opposite arm of the throne, obscured by the young Baptist, may be understood.

The part played by Adam and Eve in the doctrine of Original Sin hardly needs repeating: recounted in the third chapter of Genesis, the subject was returned to time and time again by Saint Augustine in the development of his theology and assumes primary importance throughout his writings, expounded especially in the fourteenth book of *De civitate Dei*. According to his traducianist account, all souls are propagated from Adam's post-lapsarian soul, thus linking each soul to all previous ones in a kind of genealogical chain.<sup>48</sup> Due to this universality of the First Sin, the whole of humanity, in Augustine's eyes, is a mass of the damned (*'massa damnata'*) which has turned away from God and towards the rule of self.<sup>49</sup> Elaborating on the words in Romans 5:12, humankind was however, by the Grace of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ:

For just as we have descended to this evil state through one man who sinned, so through one man (who is also God) who justifies us, we shall ascend to that height of goodness.<sup>50</sup>

A reference to Original Sin in a painting of the Madonna and Child is therefore not uncommon. The notion that Adam is here represented as if emerging from a cave is no arbitrary interpretation. In Augustine's complex theory of divine illumination, what distinguished belief from knowledge was that the latter involved 'seeing', both literally and metaphorically, through the agency of light. The notion has its roots in Plato's simile in *The Republic*, whereby the power of wisdom, like a celestial sun, provides illumination for the ignorant blinded by darkness in a cave.<sup>51</sup> Although the idea of the sun representing the deity is a commonplace in art and literature through the ages, Augustine's extrapolations on light had a particularly profound influence during the renaissance, both in artistic and philosophical circles. In the writings of Augustinian reformer Egidio da Viterbo (1469-1532), who was to become master general of the order in 1498, Egidio explicitly returned to Plato's cave, interpreting it as the world and Christ as the sun.<sup>52</sup> The little human form in the painting seen emerging from a cave-like aperture in the Madonna's throne (which, as will be shown, is pregnant with symbolism) succinctly encapsulates the idea of Adam cut off from God's Grace until the coming of Christ to deliver humankind from Sin.<sup>53</sup>

Exercising his hermeneutical exegetics, Augustine deemed the creation of Eve from Adam's side to be a foreshadowing of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Just as Eve was fashioned from Adam's rib (Gen 2:22-3), Augustine explained, so the Church was born from the sacraments of the water and the blood that flowed from Christ's lance wound as he hung on the cross (John 19:34).<sup>54</sup> Christ was the second Adam, the Church the second Eve. This typology, accepted by Saint Augustine, was oft repeated in written and pictorial form in popular medieval tracts and in learned theological writings.<sup>55</sup> Moreover in medieval Christianity Mary herself was widely

understood both as the second Eve, since it was she who served as the means by which Jesus was delivered to the world to redeem humankind from the First Sin,<sup>56</sup> and also as a personification of Ecclesia.<sup>57</sup> Together Mary and her Son completed the cycle of fall and redemption begun in the Garden of Eden. The Madonna's significance in Pinturicchio's altarpiece is twofold: Mary as the second Eve and Mary as a personification of Ecclesia, concepts which are paradoxical but not contradictory: both held currency in contemporary culture.

The joint role of Mary and Christ in facilitating the birth of the Church is in any case conveyed by their holding of a pomegranate, a gesture which is both symbolic and compositionally satisfying, the Virgin's slender fingers supporting the fruit from beneath, the infant's hand protectively resting on top. In pagan mythology, the pomegranate was an attribute of Proserpine, daughter of the corn goddess Ceres, symbolising Proserpine's return from the underworld each spring and the consequent renewal of the earth with life.<sup>58</sup> Translated into Christian terms, this fruit was therefore construed to denote the resurrection, an appropriate reading for the present image, given its proximity to the cross.<sup>59</sup> Given that the thirteen pearls of the *crux gemmata* signify Christ, his twelve apostles and their evangelical mission, the additional symbolism of the pomegranate as an allusion to Ecclesia seems fitting here. This derived from the *Letter to Fabiola* written by Saint Jerome (who is represented in this altarpiece to the right), in which the inner unity of countless seeds within one encompassing skin was a metaphor for the Church.<sup>60</sup>

The instruction to Pinturicchio to paint the Madonna and Child 'seated with such adornment as is most suitable'<sup>61</sup> was a green light to this avid student of the antique to

ensconce Mary in an architectonic fantasy of marble, travertine and gilded bronze burgeoning with *all'antica* detail. As has been witnessed in the case of the little Etruscan-derived figure, these motifs are not without symbolic meaning. The throne is flanked by two winged creatures with lion-like forepaws, feathery chests, panting mouths, crest-like ears cocked forward and serpentine coils behind. Tantalisingly griffin-like in their forequarters,<sup>62</sup> yet distinctly un-griffin-like in other respects, these chimerical beasts are basilisks. Deriving from the Greek *basiliskos*, meaning 'little king', the basilisk was described in Pliny's *Natural History* as serpentine, superior to other snakes, having a diadem marking on its head and the power to kill with its vision,<sup>63</sup> by Lucan in his *Pharsalia* as reigning supreme over all other serpents<sup>64</sup> and by Horapollon in his *Hieroglyphica* as being fashioned in gold and placed on the heads of gods.<sup>65</sup> These and other ancient literary sources have two common denominators: the first an association with kingship, the second the attribution of dangerous powers, such as a fatal glance or fiery or poisonous breath. In medieval bestiaries, fantastical hybridisation endowed the basilisk with the wings, comb and sometimes the beak and clawed feet of a cockerel, though retaining its lethal power.<sup>66</sup> It is in the latter respect, in a protective role, that the basilisks guard the divine occupants of the throne in the altarpiece, in the same way that Guido Bigarelli's marble inlay of a basilisk wards off evil from the atrium of the Cathedral of San Martino in Lucca (Fig 14) and Vincenzo Frediano's frescoed basilisks stand sentinel on the interior entrance wall of the same building (Fig 15).

Because of its fatal gaze, Lucan suggested that the basilisk sprang from the blood of Medusa, one of the three snake-haired Gorgons of Greek mythology, who shared this power and was slain by Perseus.<sup>67</sup> One such head appears in the painting at the apex



of the semicircular aedicule of the Virgin's throne, its purpose here the same as that of the reliefs fronting innumerable Etruscan cinerary urns (Fig 16) - to ward off malignant forces. According to Ovid, when Perseus laid down the severed Gorgon's head, having rescued Andromeda from the sea monster, the effect of its cadaverous gaze was to petrify the seaweed, turning it to coral.<sup>68</sup> This too was believed to have healing properties and the power of averting the 'evil eye': its protection is invoked, at the hands of the artist, by the Virgin Annunciate in the panel above right (Fig 17), where a piece of coral is seen hanging under her bookshelf. The details of the basilisks, the Gorgon's head and the coral could be perceived as signs of popular, superstitious folklore as well as of humanistic erudition.

The ornaments silhouetted against the sky on top of the throne (Fig 12) are, conversely, of eschatological significance. The two insect-like multipedes 'ascending' half way up either side of the aedicule are in fact profile views of a creature which appears elsewhere in scenes of the Passion. The right hand predella panel of Giovanni Boccati's *Madonna del Pergolato*, the *Road to Calvary* (Fig 18) displays two symbols. The first, in gold on a red ground, appears on the fluttering pennant carried by an armoured horseman at right, repeated indeed on his equestrian livery. This, once again, is the basilisk, half-cockerel, half-serpent, denoting the kingship of the Lord Jesus, the colours matching those of His halo. The second insignia, black on yellow, appearing on the other flag, on the coat of the horse behind and on the guard who prods Christ in the back, is a scorpion. Deriving from the creature's treacherous bite, the scorpion is an allusion to the betrayal by Judas, which paradoxically facilitated humankind's salvation.<sup>69</sup>

Just as the two flags in Boccati's predella are antithetical, so too has Pinturicchio juxtaposed the scorpions, redolent of Christ's death sentence, with symbols of everlasting life, the peacocks.<sup>70</sup> Even the objects on which the birds stand, overturned cornucopiae, have significance, for redemption of the human race could only take place through divine Grace. In Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* 'Grace of God' is represented by an inverted horn of plenty.<sup>71</sup> The iconography, meanwhile, of an overbrimming cornucopia normally denotes 'abundance',<sup>72</sup> and this we may infer is the meaning of the crowning finial: the central vase cascading with fruit and flowers is a symbol of optimism, Mary as the vessel of Christ.

The sculptural reliefs which embellish the Madonna's massive, architectural throne are too easily explained away as the artist's quattrocentesque *horror vacui* and his predilection for ubiquitous ornamentation. These reliefs, whilst demonstrating Pinturicchio's assimilation of the antique, are not simply arbitrary borrowings for stylistic effect: they are of allegorical relevance to the programme of the altarpiece. That on the throne-back between Saint John and the Christ Child shows the edge of a battle scene in which a mounted, helmeted horseman spears a falling, uniformed infantryman through the chest. The panel to the left of it, seen in perspective, displays a column of trophies. It may not be coincidental that this battle scene is reminiscent of the two appearing in fictive reliefs in Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Apparition of the Angel to Zacharias* in the Tournabuoni Chapel of Santa Maria Novella in Florence (Fig 19): these also show cavalry, trophies and fallen men. The main scene in fresco here depicts the moment when Zacharias, priest of the temple and husband of Elizabeth, is told by an angel that, though he and his wife are elderly, he is to be father to a son who will prepare the people for the Messiah (Luke 1:5-22). The

classicising scenes of victory both here and in the illusionistic throne-back behind the young Baptist in the Fossi altarpiece allegorise the prophesied triumph of Christianity.

The sculptural *all'antica* relief painted in gold on the lower right front of the Virgin's throne comprises a chariot drawn by two coiling serpents which are driven by a standing female figure, who holds their reins in her right hand and a staff or torch in her left. Wearing fluttering, classicising drapery, she turns sharply to look behind her, where a female seated on the rear of the chariot nurses a clutch of infants, and to whom is offered another child by a male figure following at the rear. At foreground right, a winged basilisk similar to those on the arms of the Virgin's throne gyrates its head to snarl at the goat behind it, which trots alongside the chariot on a leash. In the background is a cavalcade of horses and riders also moving from left to right, in the midst of which is a walking figure bowed down under the weight of a heavy shaft, conceivably a cross, borne on his right shoulder. The rider at the top left reaches out an arm, as if drawing attention to the cross-bearing figure before him and the charioteer.

This female can be securely identified as Ceres, mother of Proserpine, by way of the creatures which pull her car. The mythological tale of the abduction to the underworld of Proserpine by Pluto continues with an account of Ceres' subsequent anguished scouring of the earth to find her daughter.<sup>73</sup> The pair of air-borne serpents which lead Ceres' chariot commonly appear on 'Rape of Proserpine' funerary reliefs from the second century AD.<sup>74</sup> The sculptural relief, thematically linked to the Madonna and Child by way of the symbolism of the pomegranate, here again serves an allegorical purpose.

To the Middle Ages, Ceres looking for Proserpine symbolised the Church seeking to recover the souls of the faithful who had strayed from its ministry.<sup>75</sup> This meaning may be ascribed to the illusionistic relief, where little children are being handed into the sanctuary of Ceres' chariot, against the backdrop of the road to Calvary, upon which Christ's side was to be pierced by the lance, thus giving birth to the Church.<sup>76</sup> The basilisk turning to hiss at the tethered goat alludes to Christ's sovereignty and the power of its gaze over the horned captive, goats in Matthew's gospel metaphorically standing in for the damned at the Last Judgment (Matt 25:32-33). The relief is thus an allegory of the Church - its birth, its primacy and its ministry - and as such a reference to the part played by the Virgin Mary in the redemption of humankind.

Balanced on the cornice of the throne against the glowing horizon are two lamps, each alight with a flickering flame, motifs seen in architectural sculpture, for example that flanking the main entrance of Prato cathedral (Fig 20). In the context of the altarpiece, in which the lamps hover over a bipartite landscape, these can be understood as denoting the Old and the New Testament. A centrally planned church of Greek cross design, considered an ideal architectural form symbolising the perfection of God,<sup>77</sup> has been placed in the background behind Saint John and to the Virgin's right side. This indicates the artist's lip service to the late medieval and renaissance *paysage moralisé* tradition, in which the background is divided into two halves of symbolically contrasting character, the '*aera sub gratia*' and the '*area sub lege*', that under Grace and that under law.<sup>78</sup> Such an intended contrast is confirmed by the ominous, barren crag which towers up the right hand side of the arching frame, with blue, cliff-like coulisses closing in on the horizon behind, compared to the more

fertile, softer, though still typically quattrocentesque landscape to the left. It is notable that the rural panorama is punctuated on either side of the throne by two dominant trees, almost symmetrical in the formation of their trunks and main lateral branch, though the tree on the right is smaller, less leafy and has a broken branch hanging lifeless, just to the right of the cornice of the aedicule.

The stunted growth of a deformed or damaged tree occurs in sculptural reliefs of classical antiquity and re-emerges in the art of renaissance humanist circles. For the ancient Romans the spontaneous sprouting of trees following the act of pruning, cutting or accidental damage signified renewal following catastrophe or trauma, a metaphor for the overcoming of evil.<sup>79</sup> The withered sapling came to carry specifically Christian symbolism as the ‘dry tree’, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which lost its verdancy because it was an agent in Original Sin and was rendered lifeless until the resurrection.<sup>80</sup> Its wood was considered to have played a role both in the Fall from Grace and the Crucifixion, creating what Gerhart Ladner terms a ‘half-antithetical and half-causative relationship between the tree of knowledge and the Cross’.<sup>81</sup> In Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* and in his *In Joannis Evangelium tractatus*, a verse-by-verse exposition of Saint John’s Gospel, the word ‘*lignum*’ is used, as it is by other writers, for both of the trees in Paradise and for the cross.<sup>82</sup> The damaged, dwarfed tree on the right hand side of the Fossi panel, vertically aligned with the Etruscan-derived Adam figure on the throne, connotes the tree of knowledge and the First Sin, whilst the flourishing tree on the left alludes to Christ’s death on the Cross, His resurrection and the possibility for humankind of salvation.

The right hand foreground of the main panel, loosely in line with the tree of knowledge and the Adam detail, features a small still life motif comprising apples and walnuts, one of the former shown to be rotting, one of the latter cracked open to reveal its inner kernel (Fig 21). Although the apple is not mentioned by name in the scriptural account as the fruit of the tree of knowledge (Gen 3:1-7), the apple was taken by many Christian artists, due to its etymology, as a symbol of the Original Sin: the Latin word for evil and that for apple are the same, *malum*.<sup>83</sup> In her redemptive role as the second Eve, the Virgin Mary could also antithetically be termed the ‘apple of life’.<sup>84</sup> The symbolism of the three layers of the walnut, usually seen to denote the Trinity, was interpreted more specifically by Saint Augustine: the outer green case was the flesh of Christ, the shell the wood of His cross, the kernel His divine nature.<sup>85</sup> Whilst the cluster of fruit at the lower right refers to the Fall from Grace through Adam and Eve and the possibility of salvation through Christ, the small, red, clasped book on the opposite side, at the lower left, would seem to allude to the prophecy of Saint John the Baptist of the coming of Christ, the Lamb of God, as inscribed on the ribbon encircling the cross which passes from one child to the other. The artist’s use of the colour red for the small book, the Baptist’s cloak and Mary’s gown formally reflects the foreknowledge shared by the two of them, reinforced by the young Saint John’s privileged foothold as he tramples on the Virgin’s gold-edged mantle. The infant Redeemer is shielded, quite literally cushioned, between his Virgin mother and his older cousin. The inanimate objects at the feet of Mary independently symbolise the cycle of Fall, prophecy and Redemption which is personified by the holy figures above, serving to embody the perfect harmony between form and content sought by artists of the renaissance.

[End of Part 1]

## [Part 2]

### Reflections on patronage, form, iconography and politics in Pinturicchio's 'Fossi altarpiece'

#### The Annunciation and the *imago pietatis*

In the composition of the main panel of the Fossi altarpiece (Fig 22), Pinturicchio marshalled all of the resources at his disposal - art from diverse historical periods (ancient Roman, Etruscan, medieval) and the symbolism hidden in nature, perceived as the book of God - to point up the inexorability of the scriptural account of the coming of the Messiah and His mission on earth. Above the panel the viewer is instructed epigraphically to 'LOOK ... BY WHAT BLOOD YOU HAVE BEEN REDEEMED', the holy blood pictorially and prophetically evoked by the vessel of eucharistic wine balanced on the Virgin's bookshelf at the extreme right of the Annunciation scene. The angel Gabriel here announces to Mary the immaculate conception of the Son of God whom she will bring into the world to redeem humankind (Luke 1:26-38). In accordance with the instruction in the contract, the two protagonists are placed opposite each other in paired panels, in a similar fashion to Giovanni Bellini's *Annunciation* in the upper register of the *Saint Vincent Ferrer* polyptych (c. 1465-8), still in its original position in the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.<sup>86</sup>

The eucharistic wine alludes to the redeeming holy blood seen trickling from Christ's wounds in the *imago pietatis* in the tympanum of the altarpiece. An adaptation of the German Man of Sorrows type, the half-length body of Christ is propped by angels on the rim of his open sepulchre to display his wounds, the cross of crucifixion

represented behind. This kind of devotional image was popularised in the latter fifteenth century by cults dedicated to the blood of Christ, often included in the central upper section of multi-panelled altarpieces by Andrea Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini.<sup>87</sup> The importance attributed to this sacred fluid is manifest in the second part of the inscription, admonishing the onlooker to ‘MAKE SURE THAT IT [the holy blood] HAS NOT BEEN SHED IN VAIN’.<sup>88</sup> Since Saint Augustine construed the sacraments of water and blood that flowed from Christ’s side to be the foundations of the Church,<sup>89</sup> the invocation by this reformist wing of Augustinian canons regular is more than a plea for personal piety: it urges the safeguarding of Christ’s legacy on earth, Ecclesia, personified by the Virgin Mary and supported by the saints and prelates past and present depicted elsewhere in the altarpiece.

### **Saint Augustine**

The contract requires the altarpiece to include, ‘to the right hand of the picture of our Lady, the figure of the glorious Saint Augustine in pontifical habit and, on the left side, the painting of the image of Saint Jerome in cardinalate habit’.<sup>90</sup> Saint Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo, is depicted wearing lavish episcopal robes and mitre and holding in his right hand a crozier (Fig 23). The pinkish-red object held in his left is variously described as a heart or an apple.<sup>91</sup> Whilst the latter would be congruent with the iconography of the main panel, Augustine’s more usual attribute of a flaming heart, a symbol of *amor Dei*, renders the former more likely in this case.<sup>92</sup> *Amor Dei* is one aspect of Augustine’s dualistic definition of charity as ‘love of God and love of one’s neighbours’: both elements constitute *caritas*, yet as the gospels repeatedly state the latter is of no value without the former.<sup>93</sup> In the reform thought of the late quattrocento and early cinquecento, charity was recognised as a



vital factor in the restoration and continuation of personal and societal harmony lost through Original Sin. Augustinian reformer Egidio da Viterbo attributed the steady decline in morals within the Church under Sixtus IV and Alexander VI to a dereliction of the divine gift of charity.<sup>94</sup> In the minds of reformers like Egidio, a *renovatio ecclesiae* could only succeed if humankind strove to fulfil his mission to respond in love: man must do ‘the one thing necessary’ (Luke 10, 42) by carrying out Christ’s command ‘to love one another as I have loved you’ (John 15, 12).<sup>95</sup>

As has been witnessed in the main panel of the polyptych, Pinturicchio enjoyed using both formal qualities and detailed symbolic language integrated into a naturalistic setting to communicate the abstract theological concepts at work there. In the *Annunciation* scene above and to either side of it, he enhanced the narrative, historical element of the immaculate conception by showing it to have taken place in the terrestrial context of a unified interior space viewed in depth. As was the case with the fully *all’antica* wooden construction contracted from Matteo di Tommaso da Reggio, the patrons’ interest in the latest artistic developments is clear from their documented request for ‘countryside and air’ in the ‘fields where colour is to be put’.<sup>96</sup> In contrast to this, the crowning *imago pietatis* and Saints Augustine and Jerome are depicted against a flat background with a gilt geometrical design, a trope which emanates from Pinturicchio’s experience as a miniaturist. With the benefit of hindsight, there might appear to be a stylistic incongruity between the relative archaism of the background and the virtuoso performance - in the latest Flemish manner - of rendering meticulously detailed embroidery and jewellery on the figure of Saint Augustine. However it was precisely these characteristics which brought Pinturicchio’s work into huge demand amongst members of the *curia romana* in the

last two decades of the fifteenth century. It was the same traits that also determined his rapid eclipse in the first decade of the sixteenth.<sup>97</sup>

The artist's delight in rendering observed reality is nowhere more evident than in the diminutive saints decorating the borders of Saint Augustine's red cope. Indicative of quattrocentesque naturalism, these embroidered holy figures in renaissance paintings could also compensate for the saints' disappearance from surrounding frames.

Reading from the top on the left hand side is Saint Andrew, holding a book and the cross of his martyrdom; below him Saint Sebastian pierced by arrows; a Dominican whose face is hidden, possibly Saint Peter Martyr; the Benedictine monk Saint Leonard, holding broken fetters and displaying an open book, and the enthroned Saint Peter holding keys and a book. Ultimately to be charged with the ministry of the Church, Peter along with his brother Andrew, who was to become an ardent missionary, were the first to be recruited by Christ as 'fishers of men' (Matt 4:19). As early disciples, their appearance in the altarpiece can be understood in the light of the generally held belief that the further in time the Church was removed from Christ, the weaker and more corrupt it would become, hence the reformist ideology to return the Church to its early pristine state.<sup>98</sup> Similarly, if the anonymous Dominican were indeed Peter Martyr, this was owing to his renown as a relentless pursuer of heretics. The significance of Saint Sebastian in renaissance art is in his role as protector against the plague, his iconography based on the late medieval belief that disease was caused by the rays of the sun, associated with the arrows of Apollo.<sup>99</sup> Saint Leonard, patron saint of prisoners, especially prisoners of war, was most commonly represented in Venice, whose citizens were constantly at risk of being taken captive by the Mohammedan Turks.<sup>100</sup> Although until 1499 the Serenissima was officially at peace

with the Ottoman Empire, dire warnings had been passing through Venice to the rest of the peninsula since May 1492 of the massive fleet that was being prepared by the Sultan.<sup>101</sup>

The saints on the right side of Augustine's garment are headed by the adult Saint John the Baptist as an ascetic; Saint Francis holding an open book; Saint Dominic holding a lily and a closed book; Saint Julian;<sup>102</sup> Fra Giacomo della Marca and an enthroned Saint Paul displaying an open volume.<sup>103</sup> The Baptist's inclusion is natural given his appearance in the main panel. The figures of Saints Francis and Dominic pay homage to the two major orders of mendicant friars. The open book of Saint Paul connotes his authorship of the Epistles and, as a pendant to Saint Peter, both shown enthroned in the bottom-most panels of the two sides of the cope, they stand for the joint founders of the Church. Fra Giacomo della Marca (1393-1476) was venerated immediately following his death, though he was officially beatified only in 1624 and canonised in 1726. A fervent Franciscan observant, his inclusion in the Fossi altarpiece is explained by the evangelical zeal of this local *beato*: as Apostolic Nuncio he preached in Poland, Dalmatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia and Denmark, as well as his native land, and founded many new confraternities.<sup>104</sup> The iconography of Giacomo della Marca, as pictured here wearing the Franciscan habit, holding a red book and pointing (or looking) heavenward, was already established by the late quattrocento.<sup>105</sup>

In the programme of the Fossi altarpiece, the saints depicted on Saint Augustine's ecclesiastical robes are those with whom this community of Venetian canons regular would have most closely identified. For this reason the embroidered cope features a

prophet, disciples and an apostle from Christ's own era, duecento founders of the preaching orders and saints of particular significance in the Veneto.

The richness of Saint Augustine's regalia is heightened by a number of brooches: a large morse on his chest, holding the cope in place, two on his bishop's mitre and one on the back of his gloved right hand. Each of these is encircled by eight pearls. The same pattern prevails in the brooch on the angel's shoulder in the *Annunciation* scene above. In his methodical study of sacred texts, Augustine identified in them a complex, hidden system of cosmological symbols, concluding in his own tract *De fide et symbolo* that only through symbolic analysis was it possible to penetrate the profound mysteries of the faith.<sup>106</sup> The eleventh chapter of *De libero arbitrio* and the ninth of *De musica* leave no doubt as to the importance attributed by him to number.<sup>107</sup> Interest in Augustine's numerology was kindled anew by fifteenth-century Neoplatonist theologians such as Nicholas of Cusa and Giovanni Bessarion, and was spread via the philological activities of the humanists.<sup>108</sup>

The recurrent eight-pearled brooch enriching the garb of the saint and the archangel Gabriel in the altarpiece has mystical significance founded on the fact that for Augustine the number seven expresses the Old Testament. As its successor, the number eight is symbolic of the New Testament, which promises and realises the possibility of return to God through Christ's resurrection.<sup>109</sup> Eight is the divine cipher for the absolute unity and eternity of the Church Triumphant.<sup>110</sup>

In the main panel, an exquisite brooch graces also the neckline of the Madonna, its opulence rendered all the more remarkable by the Virgin's customary lack of artificial

adornment, suggesting that the artist must have been apprised of some justifying reason for flouting this delicate issue of decorum. Mary's brooch differs from those noted above in carrying an additional pearl, making a total of nine. The significance of this semi-precious stone is probably that the 'pearl of great price' mentioned in Matthew's gospel (13:46) was interpreted by Saint Antonine of Florence as the incarnation of Christ.<sup>111</sup> The significance of the number nine can be traced back to the Pythagoreans, in whose culture figures were noted in geometrical forms. Whilst three was written as a triangle of points, nine appeared as a nine-point square. It was this which led Augustine to emphasize, in his *De doctrina christiana*, the immutability of numerical truths:

No one can *decide* merely because he *desires* it, that three times three are not nine, or do not form a square.<sup>112</sup>

It was this numerical tradition that led Dante in the *Vita nuova* to regard Beatrice herself to be the embodiment of the 'perfect' number nine, a 'miracle' rooted in the Trinity.<sup>113</sup> The same symbolism applies to the nine pearls of the Madonna's brooch: it denotes the miraculous perfection, via the virgin birth and sacrifice of His incarnate Son, of God's plan for the salvation of humankind.

### **Saint Jerome**

Saint Augustine naturally takes his place in the polyptych at the Virgin's right hand as the author of the Augustinian rule. The presence of Saint Jerome, on the other hand, was specified by the original patron of the altarpiece, Melchiorre di Goro, in his will of 2 October 1479.<sup>114</sup> As Jerome's namesake, the prior Fra Hieronymo de Francesco

would have taken personal pleasure in implementing Melchiorre's testamentary wish when he drew up the contract on 14 February 1495.<sup>115</sup>

Saint Jerome (342-420) is portrayed, as contracted, in his cardinal's robes, his red hat placed obliquely on the ground at left, opposite his most common attribute, the lion (Fig 24). His holding of a golden leafed, clasped tome is a reminder of his translation of the Old and New Testaments into the Vulgate. Compared to his counterpart opposite, Saint Jerome's wardrobe is rich but restrained, decoration extending only to the large, ermine-lined cowl lying across his chest and shoulders and tucked behind his head in the manner of fifteenth-century cardinalate dress.<sup>116</sup>

Jerome is frequently pictured in renaissance art holding a model of a church. This iconography may refer to the convents founded by his convert Paula, a Roman noblewoman who followed him to Bethlehem.<sup>117</sup> In the polyptych, the church can be understood on one level as representing Santa Maria dei Fossi: the painted form of the church with drum and cupola does not however correspond with the barrel-vaulted architecture of the actual building, except in its triple doorway (although the possibility of an intention in the late fifteenth century to construct a classical style portico cannot be discounted). In the context of the whole altarpiece, in which the Virgin Mary signifies Ecclesia, founded upon the sacraments of the blood and water which flowed from Christ's wound, and the epigraphic admonition to safeguard Christ's heritage, the building held by Saint Jerome symbolises the collective Church Militant - as envisaged in his *Letter to Fabiola* - as countless seeds within one encompassing skin.<sup>118</sup> In conformity with church renewal rhetoric and the urgent contemporary plea for Christian unity, the centrally planned edifice in the painting,

reflecting the perfection of God, is the cleansed and revitalised institution striven for by the reformist theologians.

### **The painted predella, the contracted predella and political considerations**

Thus far the polyptych corresponds with the requirements stipulated in the contract. In the case of the predella, the series of hollow boxes in the lower register which act as the foundation for the altarpiece above, one finds that the painted panels there are wholly at odds with the imagery requested in the document of 1495.

The present, left hand predella panel, the *Vision of Saint Augustine* (Fig 25), contains a narrative image of the mitred Saint Augustine shown three-quarter face against a glowing, marine horizon and an Italianate coastal town. He interacts with a haloed child kneeling before a round hole in the foreground, who looks up at the saint and proffers a spoon. This image, deriving from the well known legend, appeared in visual form during the quattrocento first in woodcuts and later in fresco and on panel: Pinturicchio's rendition is close to that of Botticelli's predella for the Barbadori altarpiece (Fig 26).<sup>119</sup> Saint Augustine's interest in the question of the Trinity, to which the legendary vision relates, can be inferred from the fact that it took him twenty years to complete the fifteen books of his treatise *De Trinitate*. These defend and expound the doctrine which for Augustine was crucial to a true understanding of nature, of man and of God, and the foundation of all Christian theology.<sup>120</sup>

The iconography of the right hand predella panel, *Saint Jerome in Penitence* (Fig 27), is more widespread than that of the *Vision of Augustine*. Unlike the latter it has some basis in fact, Jerome having retired for four years to the Syrian desert to lead the

eremitic life.<sup>121</sup> Here the saint, accompanied by his lion and red hat and recognisable from the iconic image above, is dishevelled and bares his breast in order to beat it with the rock held in his right hand. He kneels before a tall crucifix, at its base the skull of Adam. The ‘wilderness’ in the image, hardly the Syrian desert, is evoked by antithesis: Jerome is *outside* of the security and civilisation of the walled city with its encircling river, seen in the distance behind him.<sup>122</sup>

These two paintings were clearly composed to complement each other, each saint echoing his counterpart against a co-ordinated horizon (in colour and depth), the crucifix before Jerome (the ‘dry tree’) matched by the tree growing immediately behind the visionary Christ Child (the tree of life), the rocky configuration at the right of the first balancing that at the left of the second.

Accounts of the altarpiece in 1784 and 1822 report that the central predella was a *Baptism of Christ*, though a ‘mediocre copy’ substituted for Pinturicchio’s original, which had been removed many years before.<sup>123</sup> All four gospels record Christ’s baptism by his cousin in the River Jordan (Matt 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34). A theme in art since the third century, its iconography was well established by the renaissance and it is likely that Pinturicchio’s *Baptism*, and that which replaced it, followed the usual formula for the period. The fact that the ‘mediocre copy’ that replaced Pinturicchio’s original has *itself* subsequently disappeared seems to substantiate the view that it was a work of inferior quality which was dispensed with some time after the polyptych was dismembered.



The 'column bases' which divide the three predella panels bear *tondi* wreathed with fruit, flowers and ribbons, containing half-length figures of the four Evangelists, all holding books and accompanied by their usual attributes (Fig 22).

The altarpiece as seen today follows perfectly the internal logic of the majority of other extant polyptychs. In this type of altarpiece, the frame assists in establishing a hierarchy amongst the protagonists, separating the main cult figures of the Virgin and Child from the saints, thence from other scenes which support and amplify the main subjects. The predella panels usually each narrate a scene from the life of the saint in the panel above. This indeed is precisely the case with the *Vision of Saint Augustine*, the *Baptism of Christ* and *Saint Jerome in Penitence*. The intriguing fact is that, notwithstanding the coherence of these predella panels with the rest of the altarpiece, they in no way coincide with the predella scenes stipulated in the contract. Indeed the contract radically departs from any established pattern:

In the predella of this altarpiece to paint eighteen figures, that is to say in the two first bases, on one side Saint Baldo and on the other Saint Bernardo with habits of the canons regular; in the two last bases, on one side Saint Joseph, on the other Saint [Dignamerita] and in the middle of the said predella, that is to say in the middle of the painting, the pope in majesty with four cardinals and with five brothers at their feet; on one side a cardinal in majesty with a bishop and with one brother and a convert kneeling, and similarly on the other side, all decorated as needed with gold and with fine colours all at the expense of the said Master Bernardino...<sup>124</sup>

While on one hand the documented requirements for the predella are widely at variance with established artistic practice, on the other, we have an executed predella which conforms to the normal pattern but which is entirely different from that stipulated in the contract. The problem is threefold. What circumstances might account for the request for the unusual iconographical programme of the predella in the contract of 14 February 1495? Was the requested predella ever painted? What contingency determined the change of plan from the requested predella to that now known in painted form?<sup>125</sup>

On the grounds that the extant predella corresponds precisely with that which one might expect, it is proposed that it was the original intention of the canons regular to include there the *Vision of Saint Augustine*, the *Baptism of Christ* and *Saint Jerome in Penitence*.<sup>126</sup> The idea to incorporate instead three group portraits of Alexander VI and high-ranking ecclesiastics was clearly conceived by someone eager to promote papal constitutional power. The fact that time honoured artistic tradition was compromised shows that whoever proposed this deviation from standard practice wielded considerable influence over the prior of the Augustinian canons regular of Santa Maria dei Fossi.

Politics in Perugia, a papal principality, were determined by an essentially diarchic government with the pontiff's officials on one side and communal councils on the other. Burckhardt's assertion of 'the absolute despotism of the Baglioni' to which 'the papal governors and *nipoti* held their tongues' has left a lasting, though inaccurate, impression that the cardinal legate for Perugia was entirely impotent.<sup>127</sup> Whilst in principle he had overall control, in practice this was negotiated with the

*priori*. The delicate balance of power was weighted in favour of the pope however, when it came to Perugia's finances: these were controlled by a treasurer or vice-treasurer working for the *camera apostolica*.<sup>128</sup> At the time of the contract for the altarpiece, a key member of the papal legation was none other than Alexander VI's son, Cesare Borgia, Archbishop of Valencia, who had been elected protector of the city by the Magistrato de' Signori in 1493.<sup>129</sup> It was through the same office of Magistrato that funds were channelled to Santa Maria dei Fossi for the rebuilding work.<sup>130</sup> As Matarazzo was eager to point out, the canons regular at Santa Maria dei Fossi 'were endowed with privileges than which no other brotherhood had greater – indulgences and other prerogatives in abundance'.<sup>131</sup> Since the community was thus benefiting from considerable papal favour, it is small wonder that the prior was constrained to capitulate to the requested unorthodox imagery for the predella.<sup>132</sup>

This relationship begs the question, for what possible purpose were papal officials directing unusually generous contributions to a small community of immigrant religious living in a derelict monastery, the Augustinian canons regular at Santa Maria dei Fossi?<sup>133</sup> One possible answer is that the reformist wings of the religious orders were unwittingly used during the quattrocento as political pawns in papal strategy. This was not an initiative introduced by the Borgia pope: it had been a ploy of his illustrious forebears.<sup>134</sup> Doubtless recognising some potential advantage, Alexander VI in a bull of 1496 was also to extend to the congregation of Augustinian hermits the special protection of the pope. In 1497 he would bestow permanently and exclusively on the Augustinian order the office of sacristan of the chapel of the papal palace, with the condition that from that time onward a special prayer for the pope was to be said in all Augustinian churches and convents.<sup>135</sup> Possibly the pope was learning the

advantage of bestowing such gestures onto religious orders from the example of Perugia: it is proposed that in the delicate and constantly fluctuating political status quo of this city, the pope's men recognised in the canons regular from Venice - who were thus independent of local factional partisanship - an opportunity to establish a small but unequivocally loyal foothold.

Cesare Borgia, a skilled *condottiere*, shared with his uncle a prevailing interest in military architecture and its strategic siting and must have noticed that Santa Maria dei Fossi occupied an important position relative to the city.<sup>136</sup> He knew Perugia well, having attended university there. In times of local conflict the nearby tower of San Pietro (see Figs 2 and 3) was used as a lookout to spot riders approaching the southern side of the city and heading towards the gate of San Pietro.<sup>137</sup> The monastery, situated just outside this gate but inside the outer defensive wall constructed under Braccio Fortebraccio (see Fig 3), was thus a very convenient place to have allies, whether one were about to enter the city from outside or whether one were defending the city against attack. The importance of the site becomes evident from Matarazzo's chronicle of events a few years later. Following Cesare Borgia's failed attempt to conquer Perugia in 1502 and Giovan Paolo Baglioni's return from his refuge in Lucca after the pope's death (18th August 1503) to retake the city for himself, Giovan Paolo's army battered down the gate in the first peripheral fortification and

stormed over the walls, here, there and everywhere, even up to the garden of Our Lady of the Angels. ... The High and Mighty Captain now purposed to break through the inner circuit of the walls as he had through the outer ... he

gave the signal for assault at the Two Gates and against the wall near to Our Lady of the Angels.<sup>138</sup>

Created Archbishop of Valencia on his uncle's accession to the pontifical throne in 1492 and cardinal the following year, Cesare played a vital role in Vatican politics, becoming his father's closest adviser.<sup>139</sup> It seems more than coincidental that such extraordinary investment was channelled into Santa Maria dei Fossi whilst the city was under the sway of a papal *nipote* who was later to earn the praise of Machiavelli,<sup>140</sup> if not for political gain. Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia may have thought opportunistically of Santa Maria dei Fossi as a 'safe house' for such time as it would become useful to them.

Such an opportunity almost transpired just a few months after the altarpiece was commissioned, in June 1495. In the course of the Italian manoeuvrings of King Charles VIII of France, who was then returning north from Naples, Alexander and his retinue spent sixteen days in Perugia:

And the Pope being in Perugia with these soldiers, he desired to see the whole of the city, especially the strong places such as the citadel and the other forts, and how the defence of the city was ordered. And when he had seen them it came into his heart to desire to be Lord of Perugia and to have no hindrance of the Baglioni; for while these were in Perugia he had never been able to rule the city at his will, nor to dispose of anything that was in it: for they did not scruple to use violence to his Governor and other officers....<sup>141</sup>

Guido and Rodolfo Baglioni had indeed campaigned relentlessly on behalf of the commune against papal interference.<sup>142</sup> Matarazzo, admittedly pro-Baglioni, took great pleasure in reporting that the pope's contrivance to gather the whole clan into one place and conduct a military strike was foiled and Alexander and his party returned disappointed to Rome.<sup>143</sup>

Alfano Alfani, who was to become from 1499 vice-treasurer and later treasurer of the provincial branch of the *camera apostolica*, played a role as link person between the commune and the papacy. In charge of the funds for the Fossi altarpiece, it may have been he who had prevailed on the prior of the canons regular to include a display of papal supremacy in the predella of the altarpiece.<sup>144</sup> Despite his part in curial affairs, Alfano was at the same time a leading member of one of the most powerful families in Perugia, one of the *gentilhuomini*, and personally related to the Baglioni through his own marriage, sometimes using his position to their advantage. Alexander VI's attempted seizure of power and his having left the city 'in worse condition than when he came' had enraged the Perugian citizens: 'their Highnesses the Baglioni and the other men of birth who had rule in this city of Perugia [felt] that this thing was a very great injury and dishonour to them'.<sup>145</sup> Alfano's bipolar loyalties must have been strained at this time.<sup>146</sup> In Matarazzo's chronicle, his own feelings about the Borgias remain thinly veiled, despite his concern that, 'Perchance God will let my conscience prick me for that I write such things of the Chief Pontiff'.<sup>147</sup> Herein may lie an explanation to the mismatch between the contracted and the painted predella panels: it is possible that in the negative climate following the pope's sojourn in Perugia in June 1495, the plan for the predella documented four months earlier was revoked and the more customary biblical and hagiographical scenes painted there after all.<sup>148</sup>

**Pinturicchio: ‘*pictor palatii apostolici*’**

Considering that the most highly acclaimed artist not only in Perugia, but also in Rome and Tuscany, was Pietro Perugino, and considering that he was already working locally, the decision to award the Fossi altarpiece to the less celebrated Pinturicchio, reputedly ranking second and established elsewhere, requires clarification.<sup>149</sup> Both were born and had trained in Perugia, the two artists collaborating on the murals of the Sistine Chapel. Thereafter Pinturicchio stayed on in Rome to complete several lucrative projects for cardinals and members of the curia, including a chapel in the Augustinian church of Santa Maria del Popolo for Vanozza Catanei, Rodrigo Borgia’s mistress and mother of four of his children, Cesare amongst them.<sup>150</sup> This success led to the prestigious contract to decorate the papal living quarters, the Appartamento Borgia in the Vatican Palace (1492-4), commissioned by Rodrigo following his accession to the pontifical throne, as Alexander VI, on 11 August 1492. The artist is next documented in 1495 living in Perugia and working on the Fossi altarpiece. Rather than Pinturicchio having first returned to his native city and subsequently found work there, it seems more likely that he was requested to go there specifically to complete this commission, especially given the Borgia interest in Santa Maria dei Fossi indicated above and the fact that Pinturicchio was by now Alexander VI’s official court artist: a document in the Vatican archive dated 16 June 1495 showing continued payment of his rent in Rome terms him ‘*magister Berardinus pictor palatii apostolici*’.<sup>151</sup> In April and December of that year, by special mandate of the pope, he was granted possession of two farms near Chiusi<sup>152</sup> and around that time was summoned back to Rome by the pope to paint an important cycle of frescoes (now lost) in the Castel Sant’Angelo.<sup>153</sup> Pinturicchio’s

high standing, not only with Alexander VI but also with his son, is clear from a letter of 14 October 1500 written by Cesare to Alfano Alfani, by then vice treasurer of the apostolic purse for Umbria, which states that:

... he has again taken to his service Bernardino Pinturicchio of Perosa, whom he always loved because of his talent and gifts; and he desires that in all things he should be considered as 'one of ours'.<sup>154</sup>

A further letter by Cesare, referring to his '*dilectissimo familiare et domestico servitore maestro Berardino Pintorichio*', suggests that the artist was under his personal protection.<sup>155</sup> Taken together, the evidence points toward the conclusion that in the bestowal of the commission for the Fossi altarpiece to Pinturicchio, the deciding factor had not been the artist's Perugian roots, but rather his prior relationship with the pope and Cesare Borgia.

## **Conclusion**

The iconographical programme of the Fossi altarpiece reflects the reformist zeal of the Augustinian canons regular in their choosing for its theme the doctrinal tenet of redemption through Christ's sacrifice and the role of Ecclesia as His agency on earth. With Augustinian theology at its core, the canons probably initially conceived of a programme which would include the important principles of faith and repentance, the lessons respectively of the *Vision of Saint Augustine* and the *Penitence of Saint Jerome*, hagiographical scenes to be included in the predella which would be consistent with the usual polyptych format. Paradoxically it seems that these two theological precepts were edited out of the conceived programme, possibly when the



contract was being drawn up by the commissioning body, in favour of a predella which instead would highlight papal constitutional supremacy, an eventuality resulting from the particular political circumstances pertaining in Perugia in the early 1490s. The adverse effect on personal and communal sensibilities resulting from the pope's visit in June 1495 may, however, have led to a reversion to the original plan for the predella. In any case at some point before or after the pope's death, Pinturicchio's painted panels of the *Vision of Saint Augustine*, the *Baptism of Christ* (now lost) and the *Penitence of Saint Jerome* were integrated into the base of the altarpiece.

In envisaging Pinturicchio's painting within the interior for which it was commissioned, the imposing, gilt-framed polyptych is seen to have constituted a grand spectacle within the simple, barrel-vaulted church of Santa Maria dei Fossi. The relocation of the Augustinian canons regular of San Salvatore to this derelict Perugian monastery is significant not only in geographical terms for altarpiece development, but also in ecclesiological terms, as an emanation of a particularly Venetian-led, Augustinian-centred push for church reform within the broader observant movement. The apparent ease with which the curial purse strings were loosened in favour of this community connotes their potential role, albeit unwitting, in papal political strategy, a symbiotic relationship which was mutually beneficial. Whilst on one side the canons were enabled to establish their reformist house, on the other it is difficult to divorce this investment from emerging dynastic aspirations for the subjugation of the whole of the Romagna to Cesare Borgia's rule.<sup>156</sup>

ILLUSTRATIONS (NB: copyrighted images have been withdrawn)

Fig 1: Bernardino Pinturicchio, polyptych of Santa Maria dei Fossi (the Fossi altarpiece), 1495-6. Tempera on panel, 512 x 314 cm. Perugia: Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria. Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.



Fig 2: Outer cloister wall of Santa Maria dei Fossi, as seen from Via Fratelli Pallas adjacent to Stazione Sant'Anna. Distant right, *campanile* of San Pietro. Photo: authors.



Fig 3: *Perusia gratummusis in tuscia domicilium* (detail), from Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, Cologne, 1577-88, vol 4, 535.(1) Santa Maria dei Fossi. (2) San Pietro. (3) San Domenico.



Fig 4: Façade of Scuola Media Statale San Paolo, Viale Roma, behind which lie the former church and conventual buildings of Santa Maria dei Fossi.  
Photo: authors.





Fig 5: The cloister, 1499-1505, former convent of Santa Maria dei Fossi.  
Photo: authors.



Fig 6: Interior of former church of Santa Maria dei Fossi, showing neoclassical decoration of 1852-5 completed under Giovanni Santini.  
Photo: authors.



Fig 7: Former side altar dedicated to Saint Anne, centre of right hand (west) wall, formerly containing Perugino's *Family of the Madonna* (Fig 9).  
Photo: authors.



Fig 8: Excavated semicircular niche of 1852-5, set into fifteenth-century arched recess (west wall), showing frescoed designs of c1718.  
Photo: authors.

Fig 9: Pietro Perugino, *Family of the Madonna*, 1500-02. Oil on wood, 296 x 259 cm. Marseille: Musée des Beaux-Arts, formerly in Santa Maria dei Fossi (Fig 7).  
Photo: courtesy Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille.

Fig 10: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Virgin Mary, Christ Child and Saint John the Baptist*, central panel of Fossi altarpiece (detail of Fig 1).  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.



Fig 11: Etruscan statuette of a mermaid, third quarter of sixth century AD. Bronze, length 19.8 cm. Perugia: Museo Archeologico Nazionale (inv. Bellucci 1422). Photo: courtesy Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Perugia.



Fig 12: Guido Bigarelli, *Basilisk*, first half of thirteenth century, marble inlay. Lucca, Cathedral of San Martino, atrium, adjacent to right entrance. Photo: authors.





Fig 13: Vincenzo Frediano of Lucca, *Basilisks*, fifteenth century. Fresco. Lucca, Cathedral of San Martino, interior of entrance wall. Photo: authors.



Fig 14: Head of Medusa, cinerary urn from tomb of the Tite Vesi family at San Sisto, late-second to early-first-century BC, excavated sixteenth century. Travertine. Perugia: Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Photo: authors.

Fig 15: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Virgin Annunciate*, (detail of Fig 1).  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

Fig 16: Giovanni Boccati, *Road to Calvary*, 1447. Tempera on panel, 40.2 x 73.5 cm.  
Perugia: Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria.  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

Fig 17: Domenico Ghirlandaio, *The Apparition of the Angel to Zacharias* (detail),  
1485-90. Fresco. Florence: Tournabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella.  
Photo: authors.



Fig 18: Andrea della Robbia, tympanum decoration above main entrance of Prato Cathedral, flanked by flaming, vase-shaped lamps, 1489. Marble.  
Photo: authors.

Fig 19: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Virgin Mary, Christ Child and Saint John the Baptist* (detail), central panel of Fossi altarpiece (detail of Fig 1).  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

Fig 20: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Saint Augustine*, the Fossi altarpiece (detail of Fig 1).  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

Fig 21: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Saint Jerome*, the Fossi altarpiece (detail of Fig 1).  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

Fig 22: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *The Vision of Saint Augustine*, left-hand predella panel, the Fossi altarpiece (detail of Fig 1).  
Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.



Fig 23: Sandro Botticelli, *The Vision of Saint Augustine*, predella panel from the San Barnaba altarpiece, c1488. Tempera on panel, 20 x 38 cm. Florence: Galleria degli Uffizi.

Photo: courtesy Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Fig 24: Bernardino Pinturicchio, *The Penitence of Saint Jerome*, right-hand predella panel, the Fossi altarpiece (detail of Fig 1).

Photo: courtesy Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The most recent published material which pays detailed attention to the Fossi altarpiece includes Pietro Scarpellini and Maria Rita Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, Milan, 2004, pp193-6, 207-11; Francesco F Mancini, 'Pinturicchio e il polittico', in *L'arte nella storia: Contributi di critica e storia dell'arte per Gianni Carlo Sciolla*, Valerio Terraroli, Franca Varallo, Laura De Fanti (eds), Milan, 2000, 225-234; Cristina Luchinat Acidini, *Pintoricchio*, Florence, 1999, 41-46; F Santi, *Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria: Dipinti, Sculture e Oggetti dei Secolo XV-XVI*, Rome, 1985, 91-4;

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Giovanni Cecchini, *La Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria in Perugia*, Rome, 1932, 176-180.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey, from his writings of around 1907 to 1910, published as *Pattern and Meaning in History: Thoughts on History and Society*, H P Rickman (ed), New York, 1961, 136-58; David Thomson, *The Aims of History*, London, 1969, 37-47; Geoffrey R Elton, *The Practice of History*, London and Glasgow, 1969, 55-6; Eric Hobsbaum, originally a conference paper 'The Sense of the Past and History' delivered in 1970; reproduced as Chapter 2 in *On History*, London, 1998, see here p19.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Jacob Burckhardt's broad generalisations on the history of civilisation contained in his *Historische Fragmente*, selected from his lecture notes from 1865 to 1885, and more recently published as *On History and Historians*, New York, 1965.

<sup>4</sup> The document is preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Perugia (ASP), Notarile, not. Maraiotto Calcina, prot. 474, fols 82v-83r. The wording was published for the first time by Annibale Mariotti, *Lettere pittoriche perugine ossi ragguaglio di alcune memorie storiche riguardanti le Arti del disegno*, Perugia, 1788, 220-21 and again by Giovanni B Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti di Bernardino Pintoricchio*, Perugia, 1837, Appendix 2, iv-vii. The latter has been consulted for the present purposes.

<sup>5</sup> 'Et queste cose promise de fare ... de doi anni hogie incominciando et da finire come seguita' ('And these things he promises to do ... from two years starting from today and to follow through to completion'; Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, iv.

<sup>6</sup> '1495 die XIII. Februarii. Actum Perusie in domibus Diamantis Alphani de Alphanis ec. in camera Alphani sita juxta plateam magnam ante palatium

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Magnificorum Dominorum Priorum, praesentibus Diamante Alphani et Alphano eius filio mercatoribus perusinis testibus rogatis' ('14 February 1495. By an act of Perugia in the home of Diamante Alfani of Alfanis in the bank chamber of the Alfani situated next to the large theatre before the palace of the Grand Master of the Priory, present Diamante Alfani and Alfano his son, and testified by a Perugian merchant');

Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, iv.

<sup>7</sup> C F Black, 'The Baglioni as tyrants of Perugia, 1488-1540', *English Historical Review*, 1970, 85, 245-281, here 261. The Alfani were connected to the mighty Baglioni family of Perugia through the union of Alfano with Marietta di Mariano Baglioni in 1493.

<sup>8</sup> '...dare et solvere fiorini centodieci a bol. XL in questo modo cioe fiorini septanta al principio de la pictura de epsa tavola et pictura et el resto al fine del lavoro', and, 'Anche promise dare a dicto M. Berardino fiorini tre a bol. quaranta per fiorino et lui se trove le stantie atte al preposito suo del pegnere, et tutte le alter spese sia tenuto epso M. Berardino' ('... to give and pay one hundred and ten florins in this way, that is to say seventy florins at the beginning of painting this panel, and the rest at the end of the work', and, 'Also he promises to give to the said Master Bernardino three florins at a rate of forty per florin, and with him the stated terms are agreed, placed before him as security, and all the other expenses will be borne by this Master Bernardino'); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, vi. See Mancini, 'Pinturicchio e il polittico', 226; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pinturicchio*, 193.

<sup>9</sup> '...promise et convenne ... depingere in una tavola stante super al altare grande de dicta Ecclesia le infrascripte penture et figure cioè in prima' ('promises and agrees to ... to paint on panel to stand on the high altar of the said church the painting and figures described herein'); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, iv-v.

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<sup>10</sup> ‘...cioe dicto frate Hieronymo fiorini cento a dicta ragione in questo modo fiorini septanta da pigliarse per parte del dicto Berardino dal fondico del erede de Nicolo de ser Giapeco et compagni depositati et relictli li per Melchiorre de Bor ... dirizate a dicta Chiesa per fare picture in dicta Ecclesia, et da ponerse al fundico de lAlphani et fiorini trenta a 40 promise dicto frate Hieronymo dicti nomi. Ponerli in dicto fundico dAlfani et fiorini dieci dicto Sebastiano promise de ponerli a dicto fundico da pagarse in dicti tempi’ (‘that is to say the said Fra Hieronymo one hundred florins for the said reasons in this way: seventy florins to be taken by the said Bernardino from the fund of the heirs of Nicolo de ser Giapeco and company, deposited and left there by Melchiorre of Bor ... directed to the said church for making pictures in said church and having been put in the fund of the Alfani, and the said Hieronymo promises to put there in the said fund of Alfani thirty to forty florins, and the said Sebastiano promises to put there in the said fund ten florins to be paid in the said time’); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, vii. Sebastiano di Pietro Paulo di Goro is termed ‘recevente per la dicta Ecclesia’. He and his brother Fioravante were nephews of Melchiorre di Goro, sons of his brother Pietro Paulo di Goro: both were named Melchiorre’s designated heirs; Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 231, citing ASP, Notarile, not. Francesco di Giacomo, prot. 226, fols 140-142v. Scarpellini and Silvestrelli note other initiatives by the prior to bridge the shortfall in the fund, including a request made to the papal legate (Archivio di Stato di Perugia, Notarile, 474, fols 1v-4r, 66r-v) to allow the friars to deploy towards the cost of the Fossi altarpiece 50 florins previously allocated for a painting of the Virgin Annunciate for the entrance to the church, but which was now impractical because of the building works in progress; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193.

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<sup>11</sup> ASP, Notarile, Prot. 226, fols 140r, 141v, 176v, 210 rv, cited by Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193, 204 nn 9, 11.

<sup>12</sup> ‘pro constructione et pictura unius tabule ponende et erigende ante altare principale ipsius ecclesie...’; Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 231, citing ASP, Notarile, not. Francesco di Giacomo, prot. 226, fols 140r-142v. In the same testament Melchiorre patronised the church of San Domenico. Scarpellini and Silvestrelli also note his patronage of the parish church of San Silvestro in colle Landone; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 204 n9.

<sup>13</sup> This reduced the amount available for the altarpiece to 50 florins, some of the original bequest now being re-directed to the Franciscan friars of the Osservanza for the convent of San Gerolamo in Porta San Pietro; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193.

<sup>14</sup> Mario Palazzetti, *55 + 1: Storia della Scuola Media Statale “San Paolo” 1940-1996*, Perugia, 1998, 231. Braccio Fortebraccio would effectively become *signore* of Perugia in the years 1416 to 1424; Black, ‘The Baglioni’, 249.

<sup>15</sup> The history of Santa Maria degli Angeli since the cinquecento can be briefly summarised as follows. The name of the convent was changed in the year 1700 to Sant’Anna. At the end of 1789 it became the property of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia, to be purchased on 9 October 1795 by Bishop Alessandro Maria Odoardi, who established there from 1797 an asylum for poor boys; Serafino Siepi, *Descrizione topologico – istoria della città di Perugia*, Perugia, 1822, 2 vols, 2, 614. Between 1852 and 1855 alterations took place according to designs by Giovanni Santini, transforming the building into a college for young ladies of noble birth; Francesco R Cassano, *Perugia e il suo territorio: Incisioni dal XV al XIX secolo*, Perugia, 1990, 2 vols, 1, 154-5; 2, 166-7. It was during this campaign that the

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building acquired its neoclassical façade. Known during the nineteenth century as Il Conservatorio Pio and L'Educatario Femminile di Sant'Anna, its chequered history through the twentieth century culminated in the building's occupation in the 1970s by the Scuola Media Statale San Paolo, the proprietors being the Istituto di Formazione Culturale Sant'Anna, resident at the same address.

<sup>16</sup> The authors are grateful to Luciano Lorenzetti, President of the Consiglio di Amministrazione, Istituto di Formazione Culturale Sant'Anna for this information, provided in a letter dated 6 February 2006.

<sup>17</sup> The first archival mention of Santa Maria degli Angeli and its order of Clarissans comes in the Statuto di Perugia of 1279. In 1429 the monastery of Monteluca in Perugia boosted the former's falling numbers with a new colony of nuns, the two institutions operating in union until the epidemic of 1464, which spared only one nun who fled; Palazzetti, *Storia della Scuola Media*, 231. See also Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193, citing *Memoriale di Monteluca: Cronaca del monastero delle clarisse di Perugia*, Santa Maria degli Angeli, 1983, 24-28.

<sup>18</sup> Francesco Matarazzo, *Chronicles of the City of Perugia 1492-1503*, trans E Strachan Morgan, London, 1905, 5. Scarpellini and Silvestrelli cite the original manuscript as Francesco Maturanzio, *Cronaca della città di Perugia 1492-1503*, ms 715 (I, 109), fol 19r; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193. The sixteenth century historian Pompeo Pellini (1523-1594) also notes the commune's sponsorship of the renovation of the convent; *Dell'Historia di Perugia di Pompeo Pellini, Parte Seconda*, Venezia (Giacomo Herz), 1664 in facsimile, Bologna, 1968, 697.

<sup>19</sup> An outline of the applications with archival references was published by Mancini, 'Pintoricchio e il polittico', 233 n34.

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<sup>20</sup> ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, 117, fols. 21v-23r, cited by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 233 n34. On 22 September 1487, having been granted a total of at least 130 florins in 1486 and 1487, fra Girolamo di Benedetto da Venezia, prior, commissioned one Lorenzo di Martino to reconstruct the refectory and an adjacent room; ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, 119, fols. 103v-104r, 120r-21v and ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, not. Francesco di Giacomo, prot. 218, fol 514r-v, cited by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 233 n34. In 1488, 30 florins were remitted for the construction of a chapel dedicated to Saint Roche; ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, 120, fol 47v, Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 233 n34.

<sup>21</sup> ‘...de fare li mura del la tribuna in la ecclesia nova da fabricarse in lo sito già incomenzato apresso el dormentorio’; ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, not. Mariotto Calcina, prot. 474, fols 142r-143v, cited by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 233 n34.

<sup>22</sup> For the infirmary, ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, 123, fol 187r and 124, fol 7r; for the cloister, ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, 124, fols 55v-56r, cited by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 233 n34. See also Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193.

<sup>23</sup> The baroque interior of the church, by this time re-named Sant’Anna (see n15 above), was described in 1822 by the historian Siepi: ‘La Chiesa a volta con 4 fasce e cornicione dorico sostenuto da otto pilastri per parte che dividono le pareti in 7 compartimenti, nei 3 maggiori de’ quali sotto degli archi sono 3 altari, e nei minori sotto altri più piccioli archi sono delle pitture prospettiche di tempj e edificj con figurine rappresentanti le gesta di s. Anna e della B. V.’; Siepi, *Descrizione topologico*, 2, 614f. The present, disused shell of the building (Fig 6) shows the neoclassical alterations made between 1852 and 1855 by Giovanni Santini. The side

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walls are still today divided by eight pilasters, as they were when described by Siepi, although the number of recesses in each has been reduced from seven to three, now a tall, deep recess rising from a lateral altar in the centre of each nave wall (Fig 7), with two shallower niches for statuary to either side (visible in Fig 6). The niches nearest to the original entrance to the church have been subject to some prior, preliminary archaeological examination, which confirms that these smaller niches were built into the major arches mentioned by Siepi. The partial dismantling of these, besides revealing the fifteenth century architectural recesses behind, has also exposed passages of frescoed decoration (Fig 8); fairly unrefined, monochromatic foliate and scroll designs, probably contemporaneous with the installation of the high altar in 1718. During Santini's campaign of 1852-5 the bands of stucco coffering arching across the vault were applied, as well as those above the recesses of the side altars, the latter decorated with stucco rosettes (Figs 6 and 7). At this time the upper gallery was installed: this runs the full length of the entrance wall of the church, opening onto the upper storey of the nineteenth century building through a door piercing the upper west wall of the nave.

<sup>24</sup> See n27 below.

<sup>25</sup> This is indicated by Siepi's description in 1822 of the high altar, today no longer extant, which had doors allowing entry from the nave to the apparently otherwise inaccessible apsidal choir, thus suggesting that the transformation from a simple archway into a Serlian arch took place under Santini thirty years later: 'L'Alt. mag. isolato ha un grand' arco adorno di mezze colonne cornicione e frontespizio acuto di stucco di ordine dorico: ai lati a piccioli archi collo sfondo anch' esso aperto per dar maggior lume al Coro: e sotto di essi 2 porte che guidano al medesimo. Vi è notato l'anno 1718 in cui fu eretto quest' ornamento'; Siepi, *Descrizione topologica*, 2, 615f.



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Pietro Perugino's *Family of the Madonna*, 1500-02 (Fig 11), which was commissioned for one of the side altars of Santa Maria dei Fossi (see n38 below) is set within just such a painted architectural interior, comprising a barrel vaulted hall with a simple arch opening out onto a landscape background.

<sup>26</sup> Standing to face the neoclassical façade (see Fig 4), the entrance to the church is the left hand doorway, which corresponds to the central doorway visible on the interior of the nave. The two doorways on either side which one sees from inside the church have been blocked off and have no corresponding aperture on the present, exterior façade.

<sup>27</sup> 'Il Coro semicircolare con due coretti in alto avea in fondo una pregevolissima tavola del Pinturicchio. Essendo in luogo piuttosto oscuro e in tempio poco frequentato, fu richiesta questa tavola dai Direttori dell'Accademia del Disegno; quindi nel marzo del 1820 fu trasferita nelle Camere di essa Accademia'; Siepi, *Descrizione topologico*, 2, 616.

<sup>28</sup> Siepi, *Descrizione topologico*, 1, 258.

<sup>29</sup> This is commemorated in the inscription which now takes the place of the lost central section of the predella: 'HANC LIGNEAM MOLEM NON TAM VETVSTATE QVAM INCVRIA DISIECTAM AC PENE PERDITAM PRAEPOSITI TABVVLIS COLLIGENDIS DISPONENDISQVE CVRRARUNT A.S. MDCCCLXIII QVO HISCE IN AEDIBVS PINACOTHECA CONSTITVTA ITEMQVE VII IDI IVNII ITALIS NVPER IN LIBERTATEM VINDICATIS RITE SOLEMNI AB PETRI NOSTRATIS PICTVRAE MAGISTRI PEREXIMII COGNOMINE MAGISTRAE CONS[TIT]VTO VANNVCCI APPELLATA'. See Santi, *Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 93. Siepi records that Pinturicchio's altarpiece was replaced by a *Coronation of the Virgin*, as follows: 'Vi fu sostituita altra tavola

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che esisteva un tempo nella ch. dello Sperandio e che passò in dominio dell'Accademia. Ha in alto in mezzo agli Angeli G. C. che incorona la Madre, poco sotto inginocchiati sulle nubi s. Pietro e s. Paolo, sul piano, in atto di contemplazione s. Benedetto e s. M. Maddalena, lateralmente in ginocchio, uno stuolo di Monaci e Monache. Vi è notato in abbreviatura non intelligibile il nome della Religiosa che commise il quadro, il nome dell' autore e l'anno 1583'; Siepi, *Descrizione topologica*, 2, 616. Santi identifies the artist of the replacement altarpiece as Valerio Aretino; *Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 92.

<sup>30</sup> When Pascoli saw the Fossi altarpiece in 1732, it was still standing on the high altar; L Pascoli, *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti perugini*, Rome, 1732, 40.

However by 1784 Orsini recorded its presence above the stalls in the choir; B Orsini, *Guida al forestiere per l'augusta città di Perugia*, Perugia, 1784, 220-1.

<sup>31</sup> Black, 'The Baglioni', 250.

<sup>32</sup> Palazzetti, *Storia della Scuola Media*, 231; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193, citing *Memoriale di Monteluca*, 24-28 and ASP, Notarile, 173, fol 270v. This change of occupants is recorded by the contemporary chronicler Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 5.

<sup>33</sup> This Venetian strain in Italian reform is traced back to Gregory XII Correr's encouragement of a religious revival at the Augustinian house of San Giorgio in Alga, Venice. By 1421 this had led to the recognition by Martin V of a new congregation, which came to be known in the years after 1438 as the Augustinian canons regular of the Lateran (or the Lateran Canons). By 1485 the order had some 39 houses. On this drive for reform and the derivation of the new congregation's name of canons regular of the Lateran, see Denys Hay, *The Church in Italy in the Fifteenth Century*, Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne, 1977, 74-8, 85-90.

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<sup>34</sup> ‘...offiziare la chiesa [Santa Maria dei Fossi] con la debita decenza’; Palazzetti, *Storia della Scuola Media*, 231.

<sup>35</sup> The essay is presented in English translation in an illustrated edition as Jacob Burckhardt, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Italy*, trans and ed Peter Humfrey, Oxford, 1988: here see 56. Painted polyptychs were still widespread in Umbria; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 208.

<sup>36</sup> Burckhardt, *The Altarpiece*, 60. Giovanni Boccati’s *Madonna del Pergolato* of 1447, a unified *sacra conversazione*, appears to have been rejected for this reason by its first patron. It was subsequently accepted by the Oratorio della confraternità dei Disciplinati di San Domenico and is now in the Galleria nazionale dell’Umbria, Room 9, No 62.

<sup>37</sup> In 1492 Angelo di Tommaso del Conte Francesco left 80 florins for the construction of this ‘*capella*’: ‘cum altari et tabula depicta et bene ornate super dicto altari, in qua faciant depingi figuram sive inmaginem gloriose sancte Anne manu alicuius experti magistri bene et condecem ornatam’; ASP, Consigli e Riformanze, not. Pietropaolo di Bartolomeo, prot. 322, fols. 258r-261r, cited by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 233-4 n34. It is to be noted that the word ‘*cappella*’ during the quattrocento denoted liturgical function rather than formal or spatial arrangement; Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence*, University Park, PA, 2004, 120. The altarpiece resulting from this testamentary provision, Perugino’s *Family of the Madonna*, (1500-02) now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseille, was recorded as having stood until 1790 on the second altar to the right (namely the middle of the west wall) in Santa Maria dei Fossi, whence it was transferred to the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia; Siepi, *Descrizione topologico*, 2, 615. On 1 March 1797 it was requisitioned by a

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Napoleonic commission for removal to France; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 208. For the altar, see Fig 7.

<sup>38</sup> Also in the Marches; Burckhardt, *The Altarpiece*, 56; Peter Humfrey, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*, New Haven and London, 1993, 217; André Chastel, *The Studios and Styles of the Renaissance, Italy 1460-1500*, trans Jonathan Griffin, London, 1966, 246.

<sup>39</sup> The contract dated 2 July 1492 was between carpenter Mattia di Tommaso of Reggio and Melchiorre's designated heirs, Sebastiano and Fioravante di Pietro Paolo Gori; Mancini, 'Pinturicchio e il polittico', 232 n8, citing ASP, Notarile, not. Mariotto Calcina, Prot. 472, fols. 456r-457r. The altarpiece was to be of poplar to a design already decided, 12 feet (*pie*di) tall and 8 wide, for the total cost of 29 florins, the work to be consigned in the following April; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193 and n12. On the rear of the panel which would be occupied by the painted Saint Jerome, there are various drawings of the profile and form of the predella, which correspond with the predella as it appears today. Scarpellini and Silvestrelli are of the opinion that it was Pinturicchio who furnished the design of the wooden polyptych during one of his visits to Perugia in late spring 1492, citing as compositional inspiration the sculpted *Dossale dell'abate Amatisco* (1469) attributed to the so-called 'Maestro di Pio II' in the church of San Gregorio al Cielo, Rome; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193, 208. Indeed the form of the *Dossale* is strikingly similar to the framing elements of the Fossi altarpiece. Further, since the *Dossale* has no predella, this may account for the need at some later point in time to work out its form, hence the sketches on the rear of the Saint Jerome panel.

<sup>40</sup> Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193, citing A Rossi, 'Maestri e lavori in legname in Perugia nei secoli XV e XVI', in *Giornale di Erudizione Artistica*, 1, 93-

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106, here 101-103. The painting of the Sant'Agostino polyptych was commissioned in 1502 and begun in 1512 by Perugino: it is now housed in the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria.

<sup>41</sup> 'ASPICE . MORTALIS . QU[O] . SIS REDEMPTVS . SANGVINE AGE NE . FRVSTRA . FLVXERIT.' Santi is of the opinion that this entablature is the one single element of the polyptych which is 'almost certainly not original' ('*quasi certamente non originale*'); *Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 92. Acidini assumes 'the loss of moldings and pillars' on its dismemberment; see her *Pintoricchio*, 43. Scarpellini and Silvestrelli conversely strongly argue that all parts of the altarpiece, even the volutes at the top, are absolutely autograph; *Pintoricchio*, 207.

<sup>42</sup> SANTE . CRVCEM PVERO . PVER HA[N]C . DIMITTE . DEOQVE . NON . PRO MVNDO GERAT ALTER . ERIT.' Acidini suggests that the tiny initials 'BN' above and between the words 'NON' and 'PRO' should be read as a short form of Bernardino Pinturicchio's first name; Acidini, *Pintoricchio*, 43. 'BN', however, could be the abbreviation of the word 'BENE', to be read after the word 'NON'; Cecchini, *La Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 178. The inclusion of the young saint John appears to have been decided after the contract was drawn up, which states only, 'Nel quadro de mezzo depsa tavola cioe nel maiur quadro laimagine de la nostra gloriosa Donna cum lo Bambino in quello modo che parera a dicto maestro et che sara meglio et in maesta cioe in sedere cum quelli adornamente più convenienti ...' ('In the painting in the middle of the altarpiece, that is to say in the main panel, the image of our glorious Madonna with the Child, in such a way that it seems to the said master that it will be best and in majesty, that is to say seated with such adornment as is most suitable'); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, v.

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<sup>43</sup> On the legend of the infancy of the Baptist, see Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, ‘Giovannino Battista: A Study in Renaissance Symbolism’, *The Art Bulletin*, 37, 2, 85-101. In the few years following completion of the Fossi altarpiece, Pinturicchio experimented with permutations of the composition of the Virgin, Christ Child and Saint John. See Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 212-3.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Cross and Crucifixion’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Chicago, London, Toronto, 1947, 6, 753.

<sup>45</sup> K Fröhlich, “‘Always to keep the literal sense in Holy Scripture means to kill one’s soul’: the state of biblical hermeneutics at the beginning of the fifteenth century”, in *Literary Uses of Typology from the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, E Miner (ed), Princeton, NJ, 1977, 20-48; Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, London, 1958, 2. Saint Augustine formulated a fourfold interpretation of scripture: it can be read as history, aetiology, analogy and allegory; Saint Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram imperfectus*, 2:5; Augustine, *Opera omnia*, in J-P Migne (ed), *Patrologia Latina* (Pat lat), Paris, 1845, Vols 32-46, 34:222; idem, *De civitate Dei*, 16:2; Pat lat 41:479.

<sup>46</sup> On the allegorical tradition in the visual arts, see Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Garden City, NY, 1957, 40f; idem, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York, Evanston and London, 1962, 7-17; Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods: The Mythological Tradition and its Place in Renaissance Humanism and Art*, Princeton, NJ, 1972, 112-121; Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, 1-19. The authors consider Ernst Gombrich’s position on allegorical interpretation, as stated in *Symbolic Images; Studies in the Art of the Renaissance II*, 3rd edn, London, 1972, 1-22, to be over-cautious. Gombrich argues that, ‘To my knowledge neither Vasari nor any other text of the fifteenth or sixteenth century ever

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says that any painting or sculpture is intended to have two divergent meanings or to represent two distinct events through the same set of figures'; Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, op cit, p19. This is refuted with reference to Dante's *Purgatorio*, Canto X. lines 32-99, in which the poet recommends the reading of visual images for their allegorical rather than their literal meaning. See George Noszlopy, 'Botticelli's "Pallas and the Centaur": an aspect of the revival of late-antique and trecento exegetic allegory in the Medici circle', MA dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1973, 53.

<sup>47</sup> The face and upper body of the statuette are human, the rear that of a fish: scholarly opinion is divided as to its gender. This example, classified as a triton (inv. Bellucci 1422), was excavated at Castel San Mariano, near Corciano. Five other practically identical examples are found in museums in Monaco, Munich and Paris, whilst a closely related bronze statuette is held in the British Museum, London. The authors are indebted to Sergio Sabatini at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Perugia and Mariarosaria Salvatore of the Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Umbria for their time and assistance.

<sup>48</sup> 'In primo igitur homine per feminam in progeniem transiturum universum genus humanum fuit, quando illa conjugum copula divinam sententiam suae damnationis excepit: et quod homo factus est, non cum crearetur, sed cum peccaret et puniretur, hoc genuit, quantum quidem attinet ad peccati et mortis originem' ('Therefore the whole human race was in the first man, and it was to pass from him through the woman into his progeny, when the married pair had received the divine sentence of condemnation. And it was not man as first made, but what man became after his sin and punishment, that was thus begotten, as far as concerns the origin of sin and death'); Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 13:3; Pat lat 41:378.

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<sup>49</sup> For example, *De civitate Dei*, 8:14; Pat lat 41:386-7. Augustine's view of humanity as a '*massa damnata*' and the implications of the Fall from Grace for his political philosophy are analysed by E Pagels, 'The Politics of Paradise: Augustine's Exegesis of Genesis 1-3 versus that of John Chrysostom', *Harvard Theological Review*, 78, 1985, 67-99.

<sup>50</sup> 'Sicut enim per unum hominem peccantem in hoc tam grave malum devenimus, ita per unum hominem eundemque Deum justificantem ad illud bonum tam sublime veniemus'; Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 21:15; Pat lat 41:729. For Augustine on the mystery of the Incarnation, see Albert C Outler, 'The Person and Work of Christ', in *A Companion to the Study of Saint Augustine*, Roy W Battenhouse (ed), New York, 1955, 343-370.

<sup>51</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 6:507-7:519, trans P Shorey, Loeb Classical Library, 2, Cambridge, MA, 1956, 94-99, 136-141. On Augustine and knowledge as illumination, see Chapter 4, 'Augustine's light', in Meredith J Gill, *Augustine in the Italian Renaissance: Art and Philosophy from Petrarch to Michelangelo*, Cambridge, 2005, 125-147.

<sup>52</sup> Egidio da Viterbo, *Historia viginti saeculorum*, Biblioteca Angelica, Rome, cod lat 502, fols 57r-v, 62r, 161r-162r.

<sup>53</sup> The motif of an emerging figure is utilised in the painted decoration of the two volutes on either side of the *imago pietatis*. The two half figures, issuing from the kind of scrolling vegetation seen in manuscript illumination, instead of looking up, here bow down in supplication toward the Madonna and Christ Child in the main panel.

<sup>54</sup> '... cuius exanimis in cruce pendentis latus lancea perforatum est atque inde sanguis et aqua profluxit, quae sacramenta esse novimus, quibus aedificatur Ecclesia'



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(‘...and Christ’s side, as he hung lifeless on the cross, was pierced by a lance. And from the wound there flowed blood and water, which we recognize as the sacraments by which the Church is built up’); Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 22:17; Pat lat 41:778-9. Augustine is alluding here to John 19:34.

<sup>55</sup> Saint Augustine, *Sermo CXXIII (a)* in *Natali Domini, VII (b)*; Pat lat 39.1991. See also the manuscript dated 1414 from the Benedictine Abbey of Metten in Bavaria, now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, ms 8201, fol 86v, and the *Bible moralisée*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod 2554, fol 1v, both cited by Edgar Wind in *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo: the Sistine Ceiling*, E Sears (ed), Oxford, 2000, 60 and his Fig 81. The typology was followed by the theologian - much influenced by Augustine - Nicholas of Cusa in his *De concordantia catholica*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat Lat 4193.

<sup>56</sup> Anne Dunlop, ‘Flesh and the feminine: early Renaissance images of the Madonna with Eve at her feet’, *Oxford Art Journal*, 25:2, 2002, 127-48.

<sup>57</sup> Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *The Sculptural Programs of Chartres Cathedral: Christ – Mary - Ecclesia*, New York, 1959, 59-61. See also Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City-State*, New Haven and London, 1999, 37.

<sup>58</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 5.534-38 and 5:358-424.

<sup>59</sup> Mirella Levi d’Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting*, Florence, 1977, 315-6.

<sup>60</sup> Jerome, *Letter to Fabiola*, Pat lat 22:710. In *Exodus*, 28:33, pomegranates were prescribed as an ornament for the priest’s dress. See Levi d’Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance*, 315.

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<sup>61</sup> See n42 above. The shell-like cusp of the semicircular aedicule behind the Virgin's head seems to be a local idiosyncrasy, the same appearing in Bartolomeo Caporali's *Triptych of the Giustizia* (c1475-6) painted for San Francesco al Prato, Oratorio della Giustizia and now in Room 15 of the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria.

<sup>62</sup> The griffin would have had particular resonance for a Perugian audience. Examples of the ancient Etruscan griffin, half eagle and half lion, can be seen amongst the funerary sculpture of the *cai cutu hypogeum* dating from the first to the third centuries BC in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria. The General Council established the griffin as a symbol of the city in the Perugian arms in 1378, the griffin's now ubiquitous presence most famously represented by the bronze sculpture originally cast in 1274 for the façade of the Prior's Palace. See Gustavo Cuccini, *Il grifo e il leone bronzei di Perugia*, Perugia, 1994. The dual nature of the griffin was a symbol for the divine and human natures of Christ in Dante's *Purgatorio*, 32:38ff.

<sup>63</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, 13:33.

<sup>64</sup> Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 9:724-726; 9:824-833.

<sup>65</sup> Horapollo, *Hieroglyphica*, 1:1. See also Heliodorus, *Aethiopica*, 3:8. The basilisk also appeared in the Old Testament, Psalms (91:13) and Isaiah (59:5), though in the King James translation it was watered down to an 'adder' and 'viper' respectively.

<sup>66</sup> For example Alexander Neckham's *De naturis rerum*, 1:175. See T H White (ed and trans), *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts, Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*, New York, 1954, 168; Florence McCulloch, *Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries*, Chapel Hill, NC, 1960, 62-9, 199; Daniel Cohen, *The Encyclopedia of Monsters*, New York, 1982, 227.

<sup>67</sup> Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 9:696f. The Gorgons are described in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 4:769-803. Even after the beheading of Medusa by Perseus, her stare retained its

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petrifying power and for this reason Perseus' protectress, Minerva, used the Gorgon's head as a talisman on her *aegis* (cloak): in later art it appears on her shield or breastplate; Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 209.

<sup>68</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 4:740ff.

<sup>69</sup> Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 275.

<sup>70</sup> This symbol derived from the ancient belief that the peacock's flesh never decayed: Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 238.

<sup>71</sup> 'Gratia di Dio', Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia*, Padua (Pietro Paolo Tozzi), 1611, 212.

<sup>72</sup> 'Abondanza', Ripa, *Iconologia*, 1.

<sup>73</sup> See n58 above.

<sup>74</sup> Phyllis P Bober and Ruth O Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, Oxford, 1986, 56-7.

<sup>75</sup> C de Boer, *Ovide moralisé, poème du commencement du XIVe siècle publié d'après tous les manuscrits connus*, Amsterdam, 1915-1938, 1, verses 4099-4150; 3, 635-643; 1, 4245-4260; 5, 3041-3144.

<sup>76</sup> See n54 above.

<sup>77</sup> The idea of designing centrally planned churches, inspired by antique mausolea, became an obsession as the fifteenth century progressed. See Peter Murray, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, London, 1986, 102-4. Alberti recommended this architectural form in Book 7:4 of *De re aedificatoria* (1443-52); L B Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans J Rykwert, N Leach, R Tavernor, Cambridge, MA and London, 1988, 196f.

<sup>78</sup> Wind, *Studies in Iconology*, 64.

<sup>79</sup> Gerhart H Ladner, 'Vegetation symbolism and the concept of Renaissance', in *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, M Meiss (ed), New York,

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1961, 2 vols, 1, 303-322, here 306-8. See, for example, one of the Hadrianic *tondi* incorporated into the Arch of Constantine; Bober and Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, cat no 182, fig 189, 215.

<sup>80</sup> Ladner provides an extensive bibliography on the legend of the Holy Cross; ‘Vegetation symbolism’, 308-9 n26. Further literary and pictorial versions of the legend are detailed by M R Bennett, ‘The legend of the green tree and the dry’, *The Archaeological Journal*, 1, 83, ser 2, 1926, 21-32.

<sup>81</sup> Ladner, ‘Vegetation symbolism’, 313. This symbolism accounts for a detail in the background of Piero della Francesca’s *The Baptism of Christ*, National Gallery (NG665), London, (1450s), where the landscape immediately behind Christ is peppered with tree stumps, apparently the result of systematic silviculture, foreshadowing his death on the cross.

<sup>82</sup> Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 13:20-21; Pat lat 41:244-246; *In Joannis Evangelium tractatus*, 13:3; Pat lat 35:1451. Augustine uses tree symbolism in his commentary on Psalm 102, *Ennarationes in psalmos*, Ps 102 (70:101), Sermo 2, v25; Pat lat 36:890-901. In Pinturicchio’s *The Madonna and Child with Saints* in the Chapel of Basso della Rovere, Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, Mary’s throne is flanked on one side by a lanky cypress and on the other by a tall deciduous tree, respectively the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. In his decoration of the Chapel of Saint Leonard in the *duomo* of Spoleto, a palm and a deciduous tree perform the same function.

<sup>83</sup> For example, ‘Mala arbor fecerat fructus malos, concupiscentiam scilicet carnis, originale peccatum, malorum seminarium, communis corruptelae fermentum, et generale nostrae perditionis initium’; Petrus Blesensis (1160-1200), *Sermones*, Pat lat 207.675 B, cited by Levi d’Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance*, 47. The

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Christian symbolism may have derived from the apples guarded by the serpent Ladon in the garden of the Hesperides; Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 30, 150, 330.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Clara pudicitia, pulcherrima prole Maria  
Tu vitae pomum, tu mellifluum cinnomomum ...’  
(‘Radiant chastity, Mary, most beautiful in your offspring,  
You, the fruit of life, you the honey-sweet cinnamon ...’)

Guillaume de Deguileville, *Analecta*, 46, 154, n103, strophe 3:4, cited Levi d’Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance*, 48.

<sup>85</sup> Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 330. Sources for the Trinitarian symbolism of the generic ‘Nut’ are cited by Levi d’Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance*, 245-9.

<sup>86</sup> See Humfrey, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*, 342-3.

<sup>87</sup> On the Man of Sorrows, see Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 197. Such an *imago pietatis* appears in Mantegna’s *Saint Luke* polyptych (1453-4) now in the Brera, Milan, and also in Bellini’s aforementioned *Saint Vincent Ferrer* polyptych (c. 1465-8), SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice. The wording of the contract for this part of the Fossi altarpiece requires: ‘Nel quadro de mezzo de sopra al supradicto quadro la pietà con quelli adornamenti che saranno più convenienti ad epsa’ (‘In the painting, in the middle, above the above-mentioned painting, a *Pietà* with decoration which will be most suitable for this’); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, v.

<sup>88</sup> See n41 above.

<sup>89</sup> See n54 above.

<sup>90</sup> ‘... a mano destra depsa ymagine et pictura de nostra Donna la figura glorioso Sancto Augustino in habitu pontificali et dallato sinistro la penctura de lamagine de

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Sancto Hieronymo in habitu cardinalesco' ('and to the right hand of the image and picture of our Lady, the figure of the glorious Saint Augustine in pontifical habit and, on the left side, the painting of the image of Saint Jerome in cardinalate habit'); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, v.

<sup>91</sup> Acidini construes the object to be an apple; Acidini, *Pintoricchio*, 43, whilst Cecchini perceives it as a heart; Cecchini, *La Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 80, as do Joseph A Crowe and Giovanni B Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in Italy*, 5, *Umbrian and Sieneese Masters of the Fifteenth Century*, London, 1914, 389 n1.

<sup>92</sup> On Augustine's attributes, see Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 35. On the iconography of *amor Dei*, see R Freyan, 'The evolution of the Caritas figure in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 2, 1948, 68-86; E Wind, 'Charity, the case history of a pattern', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1, 1938, 322-30.

<sup>93</sup> 'Caritas dicitur amor Dei et proximi'; Saint Augustine, *Ennarationes in psalmos*, 31:5; Pat lat 36.260.

<sup>94</sup> For example, Naples, cod V F 20, fols 94r-95r, letter dated 15 August 1505 to Serafino Ferri: 'Mater ecclesia jam prope extincta est ... Refrixit multis jam annis haec regina; obriguit nostra luna, quoniam refrixit caritas multorum ... Ecce jam media propinquat nox. Audio mortis strepitus'. ('Mother Church is almost dead. For many years now this queen has grown cold, our moon is freezing over, for the love of so many has grown cold.... See, now, the middle of the night is close at hand. I hear the sound of death.') On this Augustinian observant, see J W O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform: A Study in Renaissance Thought*, Leiden, 1968.

<sup>95</sup> J W O'Malley, 'Preaching for the popes', in *The Pursuit of Holiness in late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, C Trinkaus (ed), Leiden, 1974, 408-80, here 431.

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A similar sentiment is expressed by Dante, that divine love increases in proportion to an increase in charity; *Purgatorio*, 15:70-72. On the reform thought of the period, see J W O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c1450-1521*, Durham, NC, 1979.

<sup>96</sup> 'Anche promette nel vacuo delli quadri o vero campi de le figure pegnere paese et aiere et tutti li altri campi dove se mette colore excepto li cornicioni dove se ha a ponere loro li quadri non sintendono in epso coptimo' ('Also he promises in the spaces of the paintings, or really the fields occupied by the figures, to paint countryside and air and all the other fields where colour is to be put, except the frames in which the pictures are placed, which are not covered by this contract'); Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, vi.

<sup>97</sup> In the 1550 and 1568 editions of the *Vite*, Giorgio Vasari put the nail into the coffin of Pinturicchio's reputation for posterity. Painting him as an unsavoury character who never had the benefit of work in Florence, Vasari judged his oeuvre harshly according to anachronistic tastes and considered that the quality of his output suffered at the hands of the large number of workshop assistants. This negative assessment was reinforced by Vasari's linking of Pinturicchio's name with that of the unprincipled Pope Alexander VI Borgia; G Vasari, *Le Vite de' più Eccellenti Pittori, Scultori et Architettori nelle Redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, R Bettarini and P Barocchi (eds), Florence, 1966-87, 6 vols, 'Vita di Bernardino Pinturicchio pittore perugino', 3, 571-580 and 'Vita di Raffaello da Urbino', 4, 155-214.

<sup>98</sup> Gerhart B Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*, Cambridge, MA, 1959, 10.

<sup>99</sup> Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 276-7; Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death*, New York, 1951, 77.

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<sup>100</sup> Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 191-2; Mrs Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art*, London, 1874, 2, 765-768.

<sup>101</sup> K M Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, Philadelphia, 1978, 2, 425-6.

<sup>102</sup> The identification of Saint Julian is made on the basis of the figure's striking similarity to that in the predella of Bartolomeo Caporali's *Triptych of the Giustizia* (c1475-6) painted for San Francesco al Prato, Oratorio della Giustizia and now in Room 15 of the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria.

<sup>103</sup> Cecchini identifies some of the saints on the right hand side differently, namely, from the top: Saint John the Evangelist; Saint Francis; Saint Anthony of Padua; Saint Stephen; Saint Bernardino and Saint Paul; Cecchini, *La Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 180. Santi follows Cecchini's reading, and omits to mention Saint Paul (bottom right); Santi, *Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria*, 91.

<sup>104</sup> Comune di Montprandone, 'San Giacomo della Marca', <http://www.comune.montprandone.ap.it/sangiaco.php>, accessed 14 May 2006.

<sup>105</sup> Carlo Crivelli's *Saint Jacques de la Marche* (1477) in the Musée du Louvre, Paris; Perugino's *Beato Giacomo della Marca* (1517), tempera on silk for the Campagna di San Girolamo, Perugia, now in Room 23 of the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria; the right hand predella of Luca Signorelli's *Pala dei francescani* (1517) painted for the church of Sant'Antonio dei Minori Osservanti, Paciano, now in Room 23 of the Galleria nazionale dell'Umbria.

<sup>106</sup> '...non tantum in illiis verbis accipere et credere, sed etiam divino revelante intelligere atque cognoscere' ('...not only to accept and to believe [the catholic faith] in these words but with the Lord's help to understand and get to know it'); Saint Augustine, *De fide et symbolo*, 1:1; Pat lat 40:181.



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<sup>107</sup> Augustine's numerology is examined by F Benzi, *Sisto Quarto Renovator Urbis: Architettura a Roma 1471-1484*, Rome, 1990, 35-37 and Gill, *Augustine*, 132-3.

<sup>108</sup> Kristeller, 'Augustine', 355-372.

<sup>109</sup> '... sicut septenario numero transacto; quia unumquodque temporaliter agitur, quaternario in corpus, ternario in animum distributo, veniet octavus iudicii dies: qui meritis distribuens quod debetur, jam non ad opera temporalia, sed ad vitam aeternam sanctos transferet, impios vero damnabit in aeternum' ('just as the number seven has been passed, because everything is done in time, now that four has been distributed to the body and three to the mind, the eighth will come, the day of judgement, which, assigning to merits their due, will transfer the saints not to temporal works but to eternal life and will condemn the wicked to everlasting punishment'); Saint Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 6:2; Pat lat 36:91. Also, 'Dies tamen Dominicus non Judaeis, sed Christianis resurrectionem Domini declaratus est, et ex illo habere coepit festivitatem suam .... Quapropter ante resurrectionem Domini, quamvis sanctos patres plenos prophetico spiritu octavi sacramentum nequaquam lateret, quo significatur resurrectio: nam et pro octavo Psalmus inscribitur, et octavo die circuncidebantur infantes, et in ecclesiae ad duorum Testamentorum significationem dicitur, 'Da illis septem et illis octo' (Eccl 11:2) reservatum est tamen et occultatum, et solum celebrandum sabbatum traditum est ... eundem diem Dominus sua passione signaret, qui etiam Dominicus, id est, octavum, qui et primus est declaratus advenerat' ('However the Lord's day was made known not to Jews but to Christians by the resurrection of the Lord and from that it began to acquire its solemnity... And so before the Lord's resurrection, although this mystery of the eighth day by which the resurrection is symbolized was not concealed from the Holy Fathers who were filled with the spirit of prophecy ... (for we have the psalm written for the octave and

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children circumcised on the eighth day; in Ecclesiastes it is used to signify the two testaments, ‘Give a portion to seven and also to eight’) it was stored up and hidden and it was handed down that the sabbath alone was to be celebrated ... so that the Lord might also indicate the same day by his Passion, who had also come to announce the Lord’s day, that is the eighth, which is also the first’); Saint Augustine, *Epistolae*, 55:13:23; Pat lat 33:215.

<sup>110</sup> ‘Anima quippe omnium sanctorum ante resurrectionem corporis sunt quidem in requie, sed in ea non sunt actione, qua corpora recepta vegetantur. Talem quippe actionem significat dies octavus, qui et primus, quia non aufert illam requiem, sed glorificat’ (‘No doubt the souls of all the saints prior to the resurrection of the body enjoy repose, but they do not possess that activity which gives power to risen bodies. It is the eighth day that symbolizes that activity, which is also the first because it does not destroy that rest, but glorifies it’); Saint Augustine, *Epistolae*, 55:13:23; Pat lat 33:215.

<sup>111</sup> F Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, London, 1987, 217.

<sup>112</sup> ‘...ita quisquam potest efficere cum voluerit, ut ter terna aut non sint novem, aut non possint efficere quadratam figuram’; Saint Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2:38:56; Pat lat 34:61. See T S K Scott-Craig, ‘On Christian Instruction’, in *A Companion*, Battenhouse (ed), 127-147, here 131f.

<sup>113</sup> Dante outlines the significance of the number nine, relating the time and date of Beatrice’s death to Pythagorean numerology, and comparing the perfection of her person with Trinitarian symbolism; Dante Alighieri, *Vita nuova* 18 and 19. On the significance of the number nine, see also Wayne Shumaker, *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance: A Study in Intellectual Patterns*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1972, 139.

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<sup>114</sup> ‘... in qua tabula inter alias inmagines et pictures fiendas depingi debeat figura et imago sancti Ieronimi’; ASP Notarile, not. Francesco di Giacomo, prot. 226, fols 140r-142v, cited by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 231. As pointed out by Mancini, Melchiorre’s patronage showed a particular devotion to that saint.

<sup>115</sup> Also noted by Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 231. For the wording of this part of the contract, see n90 above.

<sup>116</sup> The ‘*cappa magna con strascico*’ was worn only by the pope in the fourteenth century but by the beginning of the fifteenth its use had extended to the cardinals; Meri Raspini, ‘La moda del quattrocento nella Libreria Piccolomini. I tessuti ed i gioielli’, in *Imago Virginis: dall'Arte delle origini alla Libreria Piccolomini. Leggere l'Arte della Chiesa*, M Lorenzoni and R Guerrini (eds), Siena, 2003, 89-174, here 118 n82.

<sup>117</sup> Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 168-9.

<sup>118</sup> See n60 above.

<sup>119</sup> On the vision of Saint Augustine, see Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 36. Not included in the *Legenda aurea*, the story may originate as a poetic ‘image’ in a Bernardinesque sermon. A coloured woodcut (31 x 61 mm) of c1460, which was sold at Sotheby’s on 24 June 1969, shows the child holding the spoon at the water’s edge to the left of Saint Augustine, who is enthroned in a cathedra: a half length Madonna with the dead Christ hover in a mandorla above the child. Filippo Lippi painted the *Vision of Saint Augustine* as a predella panel to the ‘Barbadori Altarpiece’ (begun 1437), Musée du Louvre, Paris: the predella panel is housed in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, USSR. The *Vision* can be seen in fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli, included in the left hand side of the *Visit to the Friars of Mount Pisano*, in the apsidal chapel of Sant’Agostino in San Gimignano (1464-5). It appears in an incunabulum as

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an illuminated capital painted by the 'Master of the Putti' on fol 1 of Saint Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, Venice (J and V de Spira), 1470, Private Collection, reproduced in Lilian Armstrong, *Renaissance Miniature Painters and Classical Imagery: the Master of the Putti and his Venetian Workshop*, London, 1981, her Fig 6.

<sup>120</sup> Roy W Battenhouse, 'The Life of Saint Augustine', in *A Companion*, Battenhouse (ed), 15-56, here 50. For a study of *De Trinitate* see Cyril C Richardson, 'The Enigma of the Trinity', in *A Companion*, Battenhouse (ed), 235-55.

<sup>121</sup> Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 168.

<sup>122</sup> A drawing of the *Penitence of Saint Jerome* (c1501-4) by Raphael in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, is based on Pinturicchio's composition but with a topographical landscape of Perugia in the distance. See Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, 'Raphael's activity in Perugia as reflected in a drawing in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz*, 25, 1981, 231-52.

<sup>123</sup> Orsini, *Guida al forestiere*, 220-1; Siepi, *Descrizione topologica*, 1, 258. In considering why the original central predella panel needed to be replaced, one may conjecture that it may have sustained fire damage from altar candles.

<sup>124</sup> 'Nella predella depsta [*sic*] tavola pingere diciotto figure cioe nelle doi primi basamenti da un canto Sancto Baldo da laltro Sancto Bernardo cum habitu de Canonici Regolari nelli doi basamenti ultimi da uno Sancto Joseph da laltro S ... et in nel mezzo de dicta predella cioe in mezzo del quadro el Papa cum Quattro Cardinali in maesta cum cinque frati a li piedi loro, da uno lato uno Cardinale cum uno Vescovo in maestà cum uno frate et uno converso in ginocchione et similmente dalaltro lato ornate tutti come bisogna si doro et si de colori sien a tutte a spese de dicto Maestro Berardino ...'; Vermiglioli, *Memorie e documenti*, App 2, vi. From their reading of

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the original document, the name of the saint missing from Vermiglioli's transcript has been ascertained as that of Saint Dignamerita; Mancini, 'Pinturicchio e il polittico', 230; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pinturicchio*, 287.

<sup>125</sup> These are the very questions that concern Mancini in 'Pinturicchio e il polittico'. See nn 132 and 148 below.

<sup>126</sup> The contract with Pinturicchio seems to have been the conclusion of long preliminaries involving his input; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli *Pinturicchio*, 193. See also n39 above regarding his possible design of the polyptych construction.

<sup>127</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Harmondsworth, 1990, 35-6. This impression is sustained in 'The Rule of the Baglioni', Chapter 22 of William Heywood's *A History of Perugia*, London, 1910, 305-323. In his article Black re-assesses the extent of such 'tyranny', showing that the Baglioni were limited in the possible exercise of dictatorial power; Black, 'The Baglioni'. Cardinal legate Francesco Piccolomini was in fact a hard and shrewd bargainer, not to be intimidated; Black, 'The Baglioni', 267. Cardinal Piccolomini was appointed legate to Perugia under Innocent VIII (1484-92) with effect from November 1488; M Sanfilippo, 'Pio III', in *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, Rome, 2000, 3, 22-30.

<sup>128</sup> Black, 'The Baglioni', 252.

<sup>129</sup> 'Ultimamente questo Magistrato de' Signori ... elesse per protettore di essa [le contrade della Città] il Cardinale di Valenza nipote del Papa'; Pellini, *Della Historia di Perugia, Parte Terza*, 36. It is germane to note that in the year 1493 the communal authorities were campaigning against the appointment of officials by papal brief, a typical emanation of the tension between the local and papal sides of administration in Perugia during the latter quattrocento; Black, 'The Baglioni', 257.

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<sup>130</sup> ‘Et furono donati da questo Magistrato cento fiorini d’oro, et alter somme in diuersi tempi alli Reuerendi padri di Santa Maria de gli Angeli di Perugia fuor delle mure in porta San Pietro Canonici Regolari di San Salvatore detti delli Scopetini per risarcimento della loro Chiesa...’; Pellini, *Dell’Historia di Perugia, Parte Seconda*, 697.

<sup>131</sup> See n18 above.

<sup>132</sup> Mancini plausibly attributes this influence to Alfano Alfani, the banker who managed the fund into which the monies for the altarpiece were deposited. This he concludes by having consulted unpublished Alfani correspondence to find that Alfano was in a close relationship with the ambient of Alexander VI, and on the basis that in 1500 he would be appointed treasurer of the *camera apostolica* for Umbria; Mancini, ‘Pinturicchio e il polittico’, 227-9.

<sup>133</sup> Palazzetti cites Mariotti, *Lettere pittoriche perugine*, who numbered the canons regular at seven and who commented on their ‘extreme poverty’; Palazzetti, *Storia della Scuola Media*, 231.

<sup>134</sup> For example, Pius II had intentionally not published the decision of the Dominican inquisitor against the Franciscan observants in the controversy of the holy blood, since this might interfere with the support of the latter for his crusade against the Turks; Ludwig von Pastor, *History of the Popes from the close of the Middle Ages*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, ed and trans F I Antrobus, London, 1923, 3, 298-9; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 2, 208 n33. Sixtus IV della Rovere had generously patronised, largely from his personal wealth, the Augustinian and Franciscan observants as a way of securing lasting fame via his vast rebuilding programme in Rome; Benzi, *Sisto Quarto*, 18.

<sup>135</sup> Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 4, 142.

<sup>136</sup> Mallett, *The Borgias*, 129, 135.

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<sup>137</sup> Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 265; Pellini, *Della Historia di Perugia, Parte Terza*, 84.

The district of Porta San Pietro was usually captained by one of the ruling branches of the Baglioni family; Black, 'The Baglioni', 259.

<sup>138</sup> Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 265-6. Giovan Paolo Baglioni had been granted monies by Pandolfo Petrucci of Siena to fund a war against Cesare; Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 230-47. The latter had by this time (since 1498) renounced his ecclesiastical offices, although was still in papal service as gonfaloniere and captain of the armies of the Church; Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 229, 244; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 2, 504, 510. The strategic importance of the site of Santa Maria dei Fossi is also noted by Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 193.

<sup>139</sup> It remains a matter of debate amongst historians who made most use of whom, Alexander of Cesare, or Cesare of his father. See the assessment of Borgia government in Mallett, *The Borgias*, 210-19.

<sup>140</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, G Sasso (ed), Florence, 1963, Chapter 7.

<sup>141</sup> Matarazzo recalls the date of the pope's arrival as 6 June 1495; *Chronicles*, 32. See also Pellini, *Della Historia di Perugia, Parte Terza*, 61-2; Mallett, *The Borgias*, 141, 221; Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 2, 490-540.

<sup>142</sup> Black, 'The Baglioni', 265.

<sup>143</sup> Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 33-4.

<sup>144</sup> On Alfano Alfani, see Black, 'The Baglioni', 259, 261-2. On his possible role in devising or supporting the iconographical programme of the predella, see n132 above.

<sup>145</sup> Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 34-5.

<sup>146</sup> Certainly by January to September 1503, when Cesare Borgia was attempting to dispossess the major Baglioni of their property, Alfano's allegiance lay with the family first; Black, 'The Baglioni', 262, 270.

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<sup>147</sup> Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 209.

<sup>148</sup> There is no conclusive evidence to date as to whether or not the contracted predella was ever painted. Mancini puts forward the alternative and reasonable argument that the documented predella was completed, on the grounds that Pinturicchio complied with all the other terms of the contract, proposing that it was probably modified immediately after the death of Alexander VI and the *damnatio* that followed, and that the modified version arrived at the convent probably at the end of 1503 or beginning of 1504; Mancini, 'Pinturicchio e il polittico', 230.

<sup>149</sup> 'Even as the said Mastro Pietro [Perugino] was the first in his art, so was this man [Pinturicchio] second; and there was in the world no one that could contend with him for second place'; Matarazzo, *Chronicles*, 5-6. The Sienese banker, Agostino Chigi, in a letter to his father of 7 November 1500 wrote: 'voi dite d'aver parlato a Maestro Perugino: vi dico che, volendo fare di sua mano, lui è il meglio Maestro d'Italia. E questo che si chiama Patoricchio è stato suo discepolo, il quale al presente non è qui: altri Maestri non ci sono che vaglino' ('you talk of having spoken to Master Perugino: I say to you, wanting work by his hand, that he is the best master in Italy. And the one who is called Pinturicchio was his disciple, he is not here at present: there are no other masters who measure up to them'); cited by Pietro Scarpellini, *Pintoricchio*, Milan, 1968, 1; listed as document 103 in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 289.

<sup>150</sup> The chapel was to the right of the main altar, now known as the chapel of Santa Lucia, restored and redecorated by Alexander VII in the seventeenth century; Mallett, *The Borgias*, 101. There is a significant incidence of work for the Augustinian order in Pinturicchio's oeuvre, including several chapels in Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome and commissions for Sant'Agostino in Perugia. On the Augustinian theology at work



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in Pinturicchio's decoration of the Piccolomini library in Siena cathedral, see Susan J May, 'The Piccolomini library: the iconographical programme in the light of Cardinal Francesco's humanism and theology', PhD thesis, University of Central England in Birmingham, 2005.

<sup>151</sup> Archivio di Stato Vaticano (ASV), *Cam. Ap. Intr. Et Ex.*, 527, fol 136v dated 16 June 1495, cited (as document 63) by Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 287.

<sup>152</sup> ASV, *Cam. Ap., Div. Cam.* 51, fols 21r-v, dated Rome, 20 April 1495 and ASP, *ASCP, Camera Apostolica* 2, fol 8v, dated 1 December 1495, cited (as documents 62 and 66) by Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 287. This is significant since it was the papal vice-legate and the *camera apostolica* that had direct control of this fertile grain-producing area around Chiusi ('*Chiugi Perugino*'). The *camera* leased out plots to leading Perugians, who would then sublet to small farmers, bringing the leaseholders large profits. These concessions were granted by the *camera apostolica* to Perugian citizens in order to secure their loyalty; Black, 'The Baglioni', 253.

<sup>153</sup> This cycle (c. 1495-7), depicting the visit of the French king Charles VIII to Rome in January 1495 in the course of his invasion, highlighted Charles' subservience to the pope. It decorated the lower garden entrance loggia of the Torrione of Castel Sant'Angelo, demolished during improvements under Urban VIII Barberini in 1628. See Donatella Toracca, 'Painted histories of the Popes', in *The Piccolomini Library in Siena Cathedral*, Salvatore Settis and Donatella Toracca (eds), Modena, 1998, 227-236.

<sup>154</sup> Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting*, 5, 391. The letter, now lost, required Alfano to allow to Pinturicchio a communal subsidy for the well at his house in Perugia; detailed with references (as document 100) in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 289. See also Mancini, 'Pinturicchio e il polittico', 232 n9.

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<sup>155</sup> The letter to Alfano dated 20 October 1500 articulates Cesare's annoyance that his earlier request regarding the subsidy had not been fulfilled; ASP, *Carteggio Alfani*, 69, cited (as document 101) by Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, 239. Mallett states, though without a reference, that 'the only other artist [besides Piero Torrigiani] of note who seems to have been patronised by Cesare was his father's favourite, Pinturicchio, who received a pension from the Duke...'; Mallett, *The Borgias*, 218.

<sup>156</sup> From the outset of his pontificate in 1492 Alexander VI took immediate steps to consolidate central authority over the papal states. His dynastic ambitions raised the possibility of Cesare abandoning his ecclesiastical career even as early as 1493; Mallett, *The Borgias*, 123-7.