

**Painting and Persecution:
Anti-Jewish and Anti-Protestant Visual Rhetoric in Northern Italy, 1475-1550**

by

Andrea Kibler Maxwell

Bachelor of Arts, Concord University, 2006; Mary Baldwin University, 2013

Master of Arts, East Carolina University, 2010; Kent State University, 2015

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This dissertation was presented

by

Andrea Kibler Maxwell

It was defended on

February 21, 2022

and approved by

Jennifer Josten, Associate Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Shirin Fozi, Associate Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Adam Shear, Associate Professor, Religious Studies

Dissertation Director: Christopher J. Nygren, Associate Professor, History of Art and
Architecture

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From 1475 to 1550, North Italian artists and their patrons responded to tumultuous events such as the death of Simon of Trent, the Italian Wars, and the Protestant Reformation. This dissertation examines a series of case studies across this time span and demonstrates a continuity between anti-Jewish imagery before 1500 and the art that emerged during the Protestant Reformation. In the following chapters, I reunite artworks with their intense local histories and Northern Italy's geographic liminality to reveal how artists made choices pertinent to their own lived realities. These choices extend beyond a consideration of urban art styles and center-periphery theories of influence. Instead, I demonstrate how artists used visual rhetoric to stake a claim in regional identities and beliefs by using these theologies to foreground a notion of "this is us, not them."

The first case study shows how fifteenth-century communities throughout Valcamonica aligned images of Simon of Trent with regional preaching to stoke hatred and fear of Jews and Jew-like men and women. The second and third case studies follow the trajectory of Girolamo Romanino in Cremona and Valcamonica. In Cremona, the artist responded to local violence by replacing the generalized Jewish threat to Christianity with one from his immediate sixteenth-century contemporary experience—*Landsknechte* invading Northern Italy—to align anti-Jewish visual rhetoric with new alleged enemies of the Catholic Church. His subsequent work in Valcamonica became more theologically advanced as his fresco cycles in Pisogne and Breno

subtly addressed both traditional Jewish enemies and the new Protestant threat while contributing to local identity formation. The fourth case study presents Lorenzo Lotto as a counterapproach to Romanino. Whereas Romanino developed exegetical visual rhetoric that condemned Jews and reformers, Lotto created art that emphasized Catholic catechisms while remaining vague regarding Jews or contemporary heretics. Instead, he used experimentation and ambiguity to create art that walked the line between defending the Catholic Church and questioning it. Taken together, this research reveals the various ways artists and patrons dealt with local trauma and produces a coherent story of North Italian art that affords agency to a region deeply entrenched in theological discourse.

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1.0 Introduction

“What made the confrontational depiction of the Jew so seductive was its fictitiousness. This was a competition with only [...] the Christian, who alone set the rules and named the game.”

Kenneth Stow, 1992

Art historians have not typically linked the fifteenth-century story of Simon of Trent with sixteenth-century artists Girolamo Romanino or Lorenzo Lotto. To be sure, neither Romanino nor Lotto ever painted images of Simon, the Christian boy who garnered a cult following throughout Northern Italy after being allegedly murdered by Jews. In fact, as both men reached the height of their careers, history had already relegated Simon to a fading memory throughout Northern Italy, at least for a while.¹ The wager of this dissertation is that while Simon’s story and the artworks depicting him faded for a period of time, the anti-Jewish animus that made his cult possible persisted and adapted throughout Northern Italy.² This adaptation was necessary to account for the Protestant Reformation, and it manifested in the art of Romanino and Lotto.

¹ Simon never really faded from memory in Trent. This statement relates to his cult-following throughout Northern Italy beyond Trent. In the 1580s, the Catholic Church revised the liturgical calendar and added Simon of Trent, affirming and restoring the boy’s cult, which persists today despite being officially banned in the twentieth century. Magda Teter, *Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 103-106.

² Throughout this dissertation I have chosen to use the word “anti-Jewish” rather than “anti-Semitic” because of the difference between pre- and early modern rhetoric and the nineteenth-century context that gave rise to the term “anti-Semitism” in conjunction with language and “race.” As might be expected, no pre- or early modern source refers to actions against or hatred towards Jews as anti-Semitic. To align with fifteenth- and sixteenth-century records and to demonstrate that my research in its current iteration only contends with Jews, I use the term “anti-Jewish.” In the title and throughout, I also use the term “anti-Protestant,” which knowingly consolidates disparate groups of heterodox thinkers under one title. At several points throughout this dissertation, I note that no clear line distinguished orthodox and heterodox Christians at any point throughout the reformations. However, in most instances, the Catholic Church classified all who disagreed with the institution under the singular title of “heretic.” For that reason, I have chosen to group Reformation thinkers under the moniker of “Protestant” or “heretic” knowing that there were vast theological differences between the followers of Luther and Zwingli, for example.

In the chapters that follow, I have reassembled some of the disconnected histories of Lombardy and the Veneto region as they relate to depictions of (perceived) Christian enemies in art. Consistently across this period from 1475 (the death of Simon) to approximately 1550 (the height of the Council of Trent), Catholic patrons and artists designed works that visually addressed religious “others” while fortifying Catholic beliefs. In towns such as Brescia, Bergamo, and Cremona, as well as the Valcamonica region, this manifested as a theological blending between the traditional perfidious Jews and the new heretical enemies from north of the Alps. This Catholic prejudice of others persisted and transformed across Northern Italy, and the paintings of Romanino and Lotto provide visual evidence of these transitions and the varied ways in which artists responded.

1.1 The Jew in Christian Art

For nearly a millennium after the life of Christ, Western Christian art rarely depicted Jews. Early Christian art presented *many* Jewish characters from Old and New Testament scriptures, but many of them were not explicitly portrayed as Jewish for the sake of their Jewishness. Instead, artists typically designated the characters of Abraham, David, and Jonah with attributes characteristic to their tales: tablets of law, a harp, and a giant fish, respectively. Works such as the fourth-century ivory casket in Brescia’s Museo Civico Cristiano included images of Christ and events from the New Testament alongside the Old Testament stories of Daniel in the lion’s den, Susanna and the Elders, Jonah and the whale, and others (Figure 1.1). Despite being Jewish characters, the leering men and Susanna appear identical in terms of dress and physiognomy to that of Christ and Mary Magdalene.

After the turn of the century in the year 1000, a shift took place in the typical depiction of Jews in Christian art. Art that previously portrayed Old Testament characters like any other instead explicitly presented them as Jewish and as people to be considered separate from Christians. This distinction seems harmless at first glance. In the manuscript illumination preceding the book of Matthew in the Second Gospel Book of Bernward of Hildesheim from 1015, a group of Jewish men gather by the personified River Jordan to hear John the Baptist preach and be baptized in the wilderness (Figure 1.2). The evangelical accounts of this event describe the men as Judean people of Jerusalem who questioned whether John was actually Isaiah or a different prophet from the Jewish tradition.³ Despite simply being a gathering of men in the wilderness, the image depicts those from Jerusalem as bearded and wearing pointed hats in red and yellow with various amounts of striped patterning. In contrast, John the Baptist has neither hat nor beard and instead, he bears a halo indicative of his already sanctified Christian soul.⁴ Through costume and facial hair, the artist made the audience aware of both John's sainthood and the absence of divinity among the Jewish men (prior to receiving any baptism or acceptance of Christ). Two centuries later, the frescoed image of a prophet in the Holy Sepulcher Chapel of Winchester Cathedral continued this tradition of Jewish characters in pointed hats (Figure 1.3). This use of the so-called "Jewish hat," color choices (mainly red and yellow), and facial hair persisted as visual indicators of Jewishness throughout pre-modern European Christian art.⁵

³ Matthew 3:4-5; Mark 1:4-5; John 1:19.

⁴ For more on this image and others in the Hildesheim book, and on the appearance of the "Jewish hat" in Christian art, see Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014), 13-54.

⁵ For a thorough discussion of how color, patterning, clothing, pseudo-script, and physiognomy were used to denote Jewishness in pre-modern art, see Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), esp. 1:3-94; and James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Ven Ghemmert, 1979). Despite their focus on

For scenes from the Old Testament, depictions of prophets, and the occasional New Testament Jewish ensemble, this seemingly innocuous portrayal sufficiently distinguished those who preceded the coming of Christ from everyone else. However, many New Testament-derived Christian images focused on the Passion of Christ, and while these included the same groups of humans from before, a pointed hat could not convey the treachery needed for the villains of this tale. As in most regions throughout Europe, North Italian art cast Jewish figures as the tormentors and murderers of Christ in their Passion depictions. The fifteenth-century viewer could simply look at the people in each scene and recognize the “bad” characters as Jewish. However, the indicators shifted from simple attributes to caricatures of perfidy which, when combined, established a tradition that visually accused the contemporary Jewish population as well as those alive during the life of Jesus.

1.1.1 Jews in Passion Scenes

In the Valle di Susa town of Ranverso, just west of Turin, a depiction of Christ carrying the cross embodied the most widely accepted mode of portraying Jews in Passion imagery throughout the region. Inside the sacristy of Sant’Antonio, artist Giacomo Jaquerio painted his *Way to Calvary* (1411-1415) lunette fresco that other Alpine artists would imitate for the next century (Figure 1.4). To the viewer standing below, the scene resembled a theatrical stage set, with Christ—clad in bright white—standing downstage center and bearing the weight of the cross to which he would soon be nailed. Nearly hidden in the far left stands Veronica with her newly

Northern European art examples, much of their discussions match that which appears in Northern Italy during the same timeframe due to the proximity of the Italian Alpine towns to France and Germany.

acquired *acheiropoieton* of Christ's visage; beside her, the three Marys recoil in surprise as two nefarious henchmen accost them, one of which bears the rear of his underwear to the viewer. Crouched at the base of the cross, Simon of Cyrene responds to the demand that he assist with carrying Christ's burden the rest of the way. Just behind Christ, a horseman jabs another man, as he, too, grasps the cross in assistance. To the viewer's right, the two thieves, set to be executed with Christ, lead the mob while bound and prodded. Everyone else in this dense crowd fills in as the enemies who intend to murder Christ.

These villains don a wide variety of clothing, military armor, and head coverings; to be sure, no two hats are alike, and while none include the characteristic "Jewish hat" from previous centuries, many imply a sense of othering or foreignness.⁶ Even without the "Jewish hat" or color/pattern distinctions, the fifteenth-century viewer would have no doubt that the wide lunette was filled end to end with people representing Jews. Every character in this scene appears utterly miserable; the gloom of Christ, his entourage, and the thieves devotionally prompt viewers to share in their anguish. The Jews' dismalness, however, rendered visible their alleged perfidy and hatred of Christ. Grimaces, sneers, and glares cover all their faces, but the figures intimately harming the Christians appear especially sinister. For these men, Jaquerio utilized animalistic physiognomic features to heighten the viewer's fear and disgust. The most common of these features—hooked noses, severely pointed or barbarous beards, ruddy faces, sunken cheeks, fang-like teeth, hooded eyes, and fleshy jowls—all appear throughout this scene.⁷

⁶ For a discussion on how the variety of these hats denote Jewishness through a sense of fear and distrust, see Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:57-94.

⁷ Marrow has extensively documented the varied physiognomies assigned to Jews in Passion scenes and their relation to animal imagery. Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 33-42. See also footnote 13 in this chapter for this imagery in North Italian frescoes. More recently, Mellinkoff has examined a wider array of pictorial motifs, including costume and physiognomy, used to denote "others" in Northern European art. For physical aspects, see *Outcasts*, 1:121-227.

A belief rooted in the Old Testament suggested that God found those with physical imperfections unworthy.⁸ If God made humans in his image, then those with prominent imperfections were inherently damaged.⁹ In Leviticus, instructions restricted the imperfect from offering sacrifices, but gave no further admonishment beyond entering sanctuaries.¹⁰ Later in Deuteronomy, God threatens all who disobey him with a variety of maladies and ailments of the body as a threat to overturn the exodus.¹¹ Later Christian legends would directly link sinful behavior with physical deformities such as crooked noses and skin diseases, and in the same conclusion, label Jews as the recipients of these defects for usury, gluttony, and most of all, denying Christ.¹² Christian piety and devotion became the only viable way to repair one's soul; Christians believed the Jewish population would not be spared without conversion.

In Jaquerio's fresco, this compilation of physiognomic motifs conveyed the crowd's inherent evilness. Many Northern European artworks of Christ's Passion used these grotesque exaggerations of physiognomy to portray Christ's tormentors as animalistic in their cruelty.¹³ In

⁸ Western pseudoscience of physiognomy and its relatedness to physical character dates back as far ancient Greece and third-century Aristotelian commentary. By the medieval Christian period, this association began to include astrology, and then settled as a general correlation between appearances and a person's soul. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:115-117; see also Aristotle, *Minor Works*, vol. 1, *Physiognomics*, trans. W.S. Hett (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936). For a unique approach to art rendering the conditions of one's soul through physical depiction, see Stephen J. Campbell, *Cosmè Tura of Ferrara: Style, Politics, and the Renaissance City, 1450-1495* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

⁹ Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1.

¹⁰ Leviticus 21:16-23.

¹¹ Deuteronomy 28:22, 27-35, 58-61. Some of these afflictions correspond to Neo-Assyrian gods and the curses associated with them. For more, see the commentary for chapter 28 in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, Augmented Third Edition with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Michael D. Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 290-294.

¹² Hence the modern phrase, "ugly as sin." This is explicitly drawn out in the *Bible moralisée*, as described by Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:114-115. For more on the depiction of Jews in the *Bible moralisée*, see Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralisée* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). For commentary on the link between deformities and punishments for sin, see John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

¹³ This aligned with Psalm 21:13-17 that describes enemies as dogs, lions, bulls, etc., as well as references to gnashing of teeth and wagging heads in the Old and New Testaments. In Christian art, these physical characteristics also became markers for Jewishness, though they applied to Roman and Gentile tormentors of Christ as well. Instead, inclusion of other Jewish symbols brought the anti-Jewish rhetoric to the forefront in paintings such as these. Porcine physiognomy

the Alpine region of Italy, prints and traveling artists brought these styles from the north, and this point of visual contact is evident in Jaquerio's work.¹⁴ Through this juxtaposition of exaggerated figures and the idealized depictions of Christ and his entourage, Jaquerio portrayed the crowd of tormentors as "evil-looking" and a threat to the good Christians in the scene.

While physiognomy indicated an evil crowd, Jaquerio used props and symbols to explicitly identify the figures as Jews in the *Way to Calvary*. Amidst an array of spears, battle standards and banners, trumpets, and other vicious weaponry, two red flags with the golden letters of S.P.Q.R. situate this tragic parade in ancient Rome. The other three banners stand out even more prominently against the sky background—one bright yellow with a black dragon, and two others in crisp white with black scorpions. Together, these specific symbols signified the Jewishness of Christ's tormentors. In early manuscript illuminations, nefarious Jews frequently appear paired with dragons, at times riding one as a steed or merged with one as a hybrid being.¹⁵ In Jaquerio's fresco, the black dragon on a yellow banner both signified Jewish presence and emphasized their failure to accept that which was right in front of them—God in the flesh.¹⁶

also became analogous to Jewishness in Christian art in reference to several scriptures as emphasized by Christian writers such as Augustine. Marrow, *Passion Iconography*, 33-43, also fts. 120, 141. See also Eric M. Zafran, "The Iconography of Antisemitism: A Study of the Representation of the Jews in the Visual Arts of Europe 1400-1600" (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York, 1973).

¹⁴ For commentary on the northern aspects found in fifteenth-century Piedmontese art, see Anna de Floriani, "Fiamminghi del tre e del quattrocento, Genova e l'Italia," in *Pittura fiamminga in Liguria: Secoli XIV-XVII*, ed. Piero Boccardo and Clario di Fabio (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1997), 14-37.

¹⁵ See Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 102-105 and 186-194 for examples from historiated initials and marginalia in various psalters. Creatures such as these also served as reference to the Old Testament Brazen Serpent. In Numbers 21:4-9, God instructed Moses to craft a metal serpent attached to a rod, which when looked upon would heal people from snake bites attained while fleeing during the exodus. Later, in 2 Kings 18:4, the serpent staff attained the status of a cult relic and was subsequently destroyed as an idol. In some medieval depictions of this tale, the serpent appears more like a dragon, complete with legs and wings. For an example of this, see Lipton's discussion of the St. Denis window medallion depicting the Brazen Serpent in *Dark Mirror*, 90-93, and further association with dragons on 103.

¹⁶ In the fifth century, Augustine wrote extensively about Jews living amongst Christians. In *The City of God*, 10:28, he wrote of Jewish folly in their need for physical signs from God in order to believe, juxtaposing this with the Christian reliance on faith. This need for something tangible was reflected in God's command to Moses to make the Brazen Serpent as something for the afflicted to look upon for healing. In this story, faith was not enough—the material object was necessary for redemption from God. Christian theology relied on a spiritual belief, and as such, posited Jews who did not accept Christ as unseeing idol worshippers of the Old Law.

Alongside the dragon banner, vicious scorpions with threatening pincers and stinging tails represented Jewish treachery and falsehood.¹⁷ This use of the scorpion banner appears throughout Italian Passion scenes such as Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni's *Crucifixion* (1416) in the Oratorio di San Giovanni in Urbino (Figure 1.5). Here, a nearly identical black scorpion on a white banner flutters in the background projecting from the throng of people behind one of the thieves. Just as in Ranverso, the symbol both identifies and accuses Jews as those involved in the Passion of Christ. When taken together, this typological pairing between sinister creatures and a cacophony of people depicted with extreme animalistic physiognomy instructed Christians to believe that Jews were treacherous and monstrous people meant to be feared. Through this distinction, the viewer received a clear depiction of "others" as the tormentors of Christ, and this portrayal became the accepted mode of depicting Jews in fifteenth-century Passion scenes.

Eighty years after Jaquerio painted in Ranverso, Giovanni Canavesio completed an extensive fresco cycle of the Passion that reveals just how standardized this visual rhetoric of Jewishness had become in Alpine towns.¹⁸ The cycle covers the walls of the little chapel known as Notre-Dame des Fontaines in La Brigue.¹⁹ Though Canavesio painted smaller, more economical scenes to fit within the space, his *Way to Calvary* condensed the essential features from Jaquerio's work (Figures 1.6-1.7). Everyone that contributes to the forthcoming crucifixion has physiognomic features meant to indicate their Jewishness: pointed noses and chins, bulbous

¹⁷ The scorpion as a Jewish symbol dates to at least the fourteenth century in Central Italy and spread into Northern Italy soon after. For the explanation and history of scorpions as representative of Jews in Christian art, see Marcel Bulard, *Le scorpion, symbole du peuple juif dans l'art religieux des XIV^e, XV^e et XVI^e siècles: A propos de quatre peintures murales de la chapelle Saint-Sébastien, à Lanslevillard (Savoie)* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1935).

¹⁸ For more on Canavesio's work and the religious implications in the fifteenth century, see Véronique Plesch, *Painter and Priest: Giovanni Canavesio's Visual Rhetoric and the Passion Cycle at La Brigue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006). For more on the regional quotations of Jaquerio's work, see Massimo Bartoletti, "Ai confini della Liguria: La Riviera di Ponente dal finale a ventimiglia," in *La pittura in Liguria: Il cinquecento*, ed. Elena Parma (Genova: Le Mani, 2000), 87-91.

¹⁹ While La Brigue belongs to modern-day France, the small Alpine town was part of Italy until World War II.

snouts, bared fang-like teeth, and ruddy puffed faces. Besides scorpions, Canavesio referenced other emblems for Jews—a stork and black bats.²⁰ Using these symbols and motifs, fifteenth-century North Italian artists consistently exposed church visitors to visual rhetoric that explicitly vilified Jews. This visual trend continued throughout the sixteenth century, which I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4. During this time, however, another character entered the frame of Christian artworks: the contemporary Jew.

1.1.2 The Contemporary Jew

In the thirteenth century, a confluence of events too large to rehearse here combined to cause a shift in how Western European Christians viewed Jews, and we see this in the emergence of new anti-Jewish anecdotes, known as “host profanation” tales, that prompted fear and unease and percolated throughout Europe.²¹ In these stories, Jews came into contact with or desecrated a Eucharistic host wafer.²² In *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*, Mitchell Merback argued that during the

²⁰ Bulard also addressed the symbolic meaning of the stork for Jews, *Le scorpion*, 259-261. In her analysis of Canavesio’s work, Plesch argued that the two birds have made it impossible to see what stands directly in front of them, visually embodying the Jews “inability” to see the divinity of Christ. Plesch, following suggestions from Bulard, concluded that the bat is like a hypocrite and heretic for being a nocturnal bird, and this duplicity (a daytime creature awake at night) along with their dangerous-seeming nature made bats an adequate symbol for Jews, 190-191, 283.

²¹ For some of these histories, see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Anna Sapir Abulafia, ed., *Religious Violence between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, vol. II, 1254-1314 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary in America, 1989); and Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). In referencing Heng, I also want to direct readers S.J. Pearce’s response titled, “The Inquisitor and the Moserret: *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* and the New English Colonialism in Jewish Historiography,” *Medieval Encounters* 26, (2020): 145-190. Together, these two works-in-conversation reveal how much work remains regarding twenty-first-century conceptions of pre- and early modern race and racism towards Jews.

²² For Christians, there was a palpable need to feel close to the physical presence of Christ, as is evidenced by the number of messianic relics scattered across Western Europe. The direct mode of access between parishioners and his body, however, relied on the transubstantiation and consumption of the Holy Eucharist (wine and wafer). For more on the Eucharist and its history, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Late Middle Ages, the internal Christian discordancy between faith and rational-empirical thinking gave rise to accusations of host desecration and anti-Jewish miracles as a means of circuitous proof of God's will.²³ The myth evolved from a sixth-century Greek Marian miracle simply known as "The Jewish Boy" that quickly spread westward.²⁴ In this tale, a Jewish boy unwittingly consumed a Eucharistic wafer while palling around with his Christian schoolmates. The boy returned home and told his father about his day, including consuming the host. In response, the Jewish father, full of rage, tossed his son into the oven. Area Christians heard the wailing mother and discovered the boy miraculously unharmed. He then recounted his time in the oven indicating that the Virgin Mary protected him from the flames with her mantle. Various endings to the story exist, most of which involve the subsequent conversion of the boy and his mother, along with the execution of the Jewish father.²⁵ Eventually, the story shifted from a Jewish man attacking his host-consuming child to the man attacking the host directly.

²³ Mitchell B. Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom: Violence, Memory, and Visual Culture at the Host-Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 27. This internal conflict between reason and faith was first pointed out by Gavin Langmuir throughout his simultaneous publications: *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and *Toward a Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

²⁴ For the origin of this story and its various iterations and disseminations, see Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 7-39. See also Francisco Prado-Vilar, "Iudeus sacer: Life, Law, and Identity in the "State of Exception" called "Marian Miracle,"" in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, eds. Herbert L. Kessler and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 115-142.

²⁵ For Christians, the ease with which a Jewish child gained access to the Holy Eucharist—the miraculous body of Christ—was abhorrent, and concerns such as this were made manifest because of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which confirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation and heightened Christian anxieties about contact with the host as body of Christ. This convocation also initiated rules governing interactions between Christians and Jews, including work arrangements, living proximities, and carnal relations—the majority of which were simply proscribed. To further "protect" Christians, Jews were also prohibited from leaving their homes during Holy Week celebrations. Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 29, and n. 102, 103, and Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 19-32. For a discussion on the other nefarious aspects of these Holy Week bans, including Christian boys ceremoniously stoning local Jewish homes in "retribution" for Christ's death, see Dana Katz, *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 20-21, and 40-68.

Host desecration tales embodied a powerful narrative against contemporary Jews that characterized them as sinister and full of hatred against Christ.²⁶ For centuries, the stories remained relatively consistent in structure: a Christian woman, in need of money or pawned items, trades a consecrated Eucharistic wafer to a Jewish lender for the desired goods; the Jewish man subsequently attacks the wafer by stabbing, boiling, or burning; the wafer miraculously bleeds or transforms into either the image of the Christ child or a crucifix; something alerts local Christians to the miraculous event, they retrieve the wafer, and then execute the Jew; a subsequent cult then forms around the wafer, and further miracles allegedly occur.²⁷ While actual accusations against area Jews throughout Europe inspired many of these stories, the myth itself took on an independent life following the Fourth Lateran Council's doctrine of transubstantiation, and the myth consequently appeared in art even in regions that never documented cases of host desecration allegations or trials.²⁸

As a result, contemporary Jews found themselves appearing in Christian art separate from the visual accusations levied against them for the death of Christ. Manuscript illuminations and prints portrayed Jews as instigators of crimes against Christ's Eucharistic body, however their depictions often differed from those in Passion scenes. While pointed hats and caricatured physiognomy differentiated biblical Jews from Christians, the appearance of contemporary Jews in Christian art initiated new modes of iconography. For example, in a series of German prints from 1495, circular badges and money pouches denoted Jewishness, as well as attributes like the

²⁶ For an exploration of the cognitive rationale for Christians to use these types of narrative attacks on area Jews to bolster their own waning faith, see Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*, esp. 19-38.

²⁷ Rubin, *Gentile Tales*, 40-69.

²⁸ See footnote 25.

Tablets of Law with pseudo-script (Figure 1.8).²⁹ Similarly in Urbino, a six-panel altarpiece predella depicted the *Miracle of the Profaned Host* (1468-1474), despite no host desecration tales ever being recorded in the Italian town (Figure 1.9). Here, Uccello used black scorpions, a Jewish star, and an emblem of a Moor meant to signify “infidel” to convey the Jewishness of the story’s villain.³⁰ These types of images functioned in tandem with images of Jews as the murderers of Christ. Now fitted with money bags and circular badges, the Christian depiction of Jews became a generalizable rhetoric of derogation and slander.

1.2 Theological Climate

1.2.1 The Fifteenth Century

While impossible to summarize the entirety of theological events taking place over the course of this dissertation, a few points warrant attention. First, the artists discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 grew up during the 1480-90s when distinct shifts occurred in how the Church disseminated messages amongst Christian followers and in the content of those messages. By this time, the printing press had revolutionized book production, cost, and access throughout Europe.³¹

²⁹ For a discussion of this particular instance, see Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*, 123-153, and also Mellinkoff, *Outcasts*, 1:100. The circular badge was known as the Jewish ring or *rota*, and appears in the majority of pre- and early modern imagery depicting non-biblical Jews. See various examples throughout Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History* (New York: Continuum, 1996).

³⁰ For more on the unusual features throughout this predella series, as well as the relationship between the Salimbeni fresco, discussed earlier, and the iconography of Uccello’s work, see Katz, *The Jew in the Art*, esp. 29-30.

³¹ On the changes elicited by the printing press, see Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); and *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, eds. Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).

At the same time, effectual preachers dominated the Italian peninsula with messages of impending doom, anti-Jewish rhetoric, and threats to secular leadership. Perhaps the most popular was Girolamo Savonarola, who announced the coming end of times by the year 1500.³² Though the papacy excommunicated Savonarola for his unorthodox claims, the seeds of imminent disaster and the need for spiritual penitence he planted in Christian minds persisted well into the sixteenth century. In 1498, Florentines condemned and executed the radical preacher as a heretic, and later reformers repurposed his sermons for their own use.³³

1.2.2 The Sixteenth Century

Martin Luther's 95 *Theses* in 1517 initiated a radical break among Christians. While reformer ideas and frustrations with the Roman Church long preceded this event, the young Augustinian monk's actions undoubtedly became a pivotal moment in history that reverberated throughout Europe and fomented the emerging debates in early modern Christianity.³⁴ As preachers and small communities veered from orthodox doctrine, heretical ideas and beliefs bloomed. Luther's followers grew, and traveling preachers and the printing press became effective channels for spreading new doctrine in Alpine towns like Brescia and Trent.³⁵

³² For a collection of Savonarola's writings and recorded sermons, see *Selected Writings of Girolamo Savonarola: Religion and Politics 1490-1498*, eds. Anne Borelli, and Maria Pastore Passaro (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

³³ On Savonarola's theology and its use in the Protestant and Counter-Reformations, see Stefano Dall'Aglio, *Savonarola and Savonarolism*, trans. John Gagné, *Essays and Studies*, vol. 24, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010); and John C. Olin, *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola: Reform in the Church 1495-1540* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

³⁴ Carlos M. N. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 1-129.

³⁵ Salvatore Caponetto, *La riforma protestante nell'Italia del cinquecento* (Torino: Claudiana, 1992), 191-192.

The liminal location of North Italian Alpine cities placed them at a strategic disadvantage in keeping northern heretical ideas from entering their churches, but this was not a novel issue. Nearly a century before Luther took his stand against the Church, cities such as Edolo had reports of Christian heretics refusing sacraments and ritually murdering children.³⁶ In most instances, the Church regarded these types of accusations as symptomatic of witchcraft, Jewishness, or superstitious-ness in a region.³⁷ Ideas from early sixteenth-century reformers like Luther only heightened these allegations and denunciations. By 1521, Pope Leo X issued a papal bull railing against Reformation heresies in the Italian cities. In it, he noted that Valcamonica, the Alpine region north of Brescia, was especially fraught with Reformation scandal that necessitated Inquisitorial intervention and resulted in the dismissal of many area preachers including some in Brescia and Bergamo.³⁸ Three years later, challenges against venerating the Brescian Cross of *Orifiamma* relic prompted Pope Clement VII to condemn the heresy in and around Brescia, and he ordered that all Lutheran books found in the area be burned and the sellers punished.³⁹

Even with these intermediations, the area remained riddled with Reformation ideas and accusations. Already by 1518, Italians such as Marin Sanuto wrote of Luther and his war against the Church that doubled in size like the plague.⁴⁰ The geographic location of these Alpine towns meant that regular contact with travelers from the reforming north was inherent and unavoidable,

³⁶ Stephen D. Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City: Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 179.

³⁷ For more on this, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

³⁸ Giorgio Caravale, *Preaching and Inquisition in Renaissance Italy: Words on Trial*, trans. Frank Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 52-54.

³⁹ Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 226-228. The Cross of *Orifiamma* is a major relic dedicated to the True Cross, kept in the Duomo Vecchio of Brescia, and it is rumored to be the standard of Constantine. Giuseppe Fusari, "L'eresia a Brescia," in *Aspirazioni e devozioni: Brescia nel cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio (Milan: Electa, 2006), 52.

⁴⁰ Massimo Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici: Il mondo di Lorenzo Lotto tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Laterza, Italy: Editori Laterza, 2001), 56-57.

and church leaders living in Brescia and Venice blamed heresy in this region on ignorance, uneducated priests, and a lack of clerical presence from urban centers.⁴¹ Throughout this time, political upheaval and warfare also marked the region through the Italian Wars, which I discuss more fully in Chapter 3.⁴²

1.3 Images of the Divine

Debates during the Protestant Reformation questioned the permissibility of divine images and the excess of Church spending on art. Varying opinions existed among the reformers, but many instigated a return to iconoclasm that permeated Northern Europe.⁴³ The initial argument around the Old Testament Second Commandment posits that divine images are either idolatrous or capable of possessing their own divine truth. The very need for such a commandment from an omnipotent God implies that both can be true. While Luther did not oppose Christian images and frequently admonished iconoclasm, he staunchly believed that the only way to know God was through inner faith and study of the Word of God. This inward turn towards knowing the invisible focused on word, spirit, and “faith alone.”⁴⁴ Luther dissociated images from offering any content

⁴¹ Daniele Montanari, “Chiesa e istituzioni politiche,” in *Aspirazioni e devozioni: Brescia nel cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio (Milan: Electa, 2006), 20-21. In this same book, Giuseppe Fusari also explored how early sermons by Savonarola and the presence of mystics in and around Brescia primed the area for spiritual renewal and the presence of reformers and Lutheran ideas. Fusari, “L’eresia a Brescia,” 52-59.

⁴² While not a stake in my claims, the recent discovery of the New World also meant that Italians began seeing themselves as part of a global community they had not previously considered. In a Christian context, this brought questions of who could and could not be converted and what it meant to call someone truly a Christian.

⁴³ Early Christianity fluctuated between the permissibility of divine images and periods of iconoclasm. For an exploration of one of these periods, see Leslie Brubaker, *Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2012). For a brief history, see also Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994), esp. 102-114.

⁴⁴ Joesph Leo Koerner, *Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 38-51.

beyond what they textually referenced, and as such, implied that images should only be understood as decodable illustrations.⁴⁵ For Luther, the less decoding necessary, the more acceptable the image.

Other reformers, such as Andreas Karlstadt and Ulrich Zwingli, took a strong iconoclastic stance on images.⁴⁶ In his *On the Removal of Images*, Karlstadt warned against images, demanding all Christian pictures and sculptures be destroyed.⁴⁷ Luther, in contrast, did not demand their destruction or assert their power—he even condemned Karlstadt for doing so.⁴⁸ In Catholic practice, artists continued to paint images of the divine for patrons. Eventually, the Council of Trent issued a decree that sacraments such as the Eucharist—another hotly contested subject between reformers—represented a materialized miracle and not just a rhetorical device for the Last Supper; consequently, images had the ability to possess divine truth, and thus were permissible and could not be reduced to words.⁴⁹ Artists in the sixteenth century that worked for Catholic patrons embodied this belief in divine images through their very actions. By depicting God, Christ, and the various saints, artists like Romanino and Lotto visually contested all prohibition of divine images.

⁴⁵ Koerner, *Reformation of the Image*, 235; Michael Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 33, 37.

⁴⁶ These differing opinions highlight the fact that there was never a clear divide between pure orthodox and pure heterodox thinking during the Reformation debates. On both sides, opinions varied. This was certainly the case in the regions explored in this dissertation. Adriano Prosperi, “Introduzione: Storia e storiografia di Brescia moderna,” in *Aspirazioni e devozioni: Brescia nel cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio (Milan: Electa, 2006), 12-15.

⁴⁷ Ironically, in doing so, he implied that images did, in fact, have agency. Andreas Karlstadt, “On the Removal of Images,” in *A Reformation Debate: Karlstadt, Emser, and Eck on Sacred Images. Three Treatises in Translation*, trans. Bryan D. Mangrum and Giuseppe Scavizzi (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions, Inc. 1991), 20, 35. For more on Zwingli’s opinions, see Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

⁴⁸ Squire, *Image and Text*, 25-26.

⁴⁹ Squire, *Image and Text*, 29; Gesa Elsbeth Thiessen, *Theological Aesthetics: A Reader* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 142-143.

1.4 Art Historical Theory

1.4.1 “Renaissance” Art

Inside art museums, visitors marvel at famous works by Raphael, Michelangelo, and many others. Tour guides and information sheets hail the height of Renaissance art, classicizing forms, and humanist endeavors, but they often miss the socio-political context that sat behind each artistic decision made. To be sure, centuries of discourse on the Renaissance focused primarily on the rebirth of classical knowledge—consequently praising the artists that followed this trajectory—and disregarded the innovations of other artists in the early modern period. Quattrocento and cinquecento artists throughout Northern Italy responded to an ever-shifting landscape of political and religious turmoil resulting in complex and original artworks that early Renaissance scholarship neglected.

Jill Burke has claimed that the old paradigm of High Renaissance art relies too heavily on classical ideals and rebirth.⁵⁰ She noted that while a consensus of similar art styles during this period existed, the term High Renaissance must be redefined. Burke suggested that the art of this period focused on innovation that did not have to adhere to classical ideals; rather, artists drew from multiple sources—antiquity, local vernacular, theology, and so on—to invent new works not bound by imitation or emulation of the antique. This new paradigm opens space to explore the early modern period as one that found innovative modes of designing art to meet local needs.

⁵⁰ Jill Burke, “Inventing the High Renaissance, from Winckelmann to Wikipedia: An Introductory Essay,” in *Rethinking the High Renaissance: The Culture of the Visual Arts in Early Sixteenth-century Rome*, ed. Jill Burke (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 1-23.

This dissertation provides one intervention into this new model of Renaissance art in Northern Italy. Recent scholarship on this region typically focuses on distinct events, time periods, or themes without creating a cohesive narrative of artistic innovation. For example, scholars have examined art related to the story of Simon of Trent, the tragedy of the Italian Wars, or the rise of the Protestant Reformation. However, most writers explore each of these in isolation from one another, despite these events occurring in the same towns and regions over the course of a mere seventy-five years. Throughout this dissertation, I propose an interrelatedness and consistency within North Italian art innovation as artists and patrons considered Catholic “enemies” during these three major events.

1.4.2 Center-Periphery Model

In 1979, Carlo Ginzburg and Enrico Castelfnuovo published a lengthy essay on “Centre and Periphery” that took the popular artists and the artistic centers—Rome, Florence, and Venice, for example—and developed a model of dominance and passive exchange in art.⁵¹ Outside of these centers, peripheries emerged as places of “delayed development” where artists who could not keep up with the innovative centers could retreat and find continued employment.⁵² Once a center had established its artistic style, leaders could export that style and artworks to the peripheries they wished to “colonize.”⁵³ Ginzburg and Castelfnuovo left room for certain artistic potentials in the

⁵¹ Carlo Ginzburg and Enrico Castelfnuovo, “Centre and Periphery,” (1979) in *History of Italian Art*, ed. E. Bianchini and C. Dorey (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 31, 45, 48-49. It is worth noting that the authors did not believe any city could become a center if it received its episcopal see later than the eleventh century, 47.

⁵² “Innovation” primarily meant referencing classical antiquity, as discussed in the previous section. Ibid., 49-51.

⁵³ Ibid., 90. This is a dangerous use of the term “colonize.” The spread of artistic styles to link towns and regions, even when political affiliation (control) was sought, is not even remotely equivalent to the acts of colonization that were occurring during this time throughout the Western World.

periphery; they claimed that because a periphery did not have established traditions, they were more open to invention based on foreign influences, as well as the freedom of “side-steps” to meet local devotional needs.⁵⁴

Until recently, this model held in early modern Italian scholarship. In the last two decades, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and David Young Kim both worked to adapt the center-periphery model to account for more than passive influences of style. Kaufmann concluded that the model in Italy manifested due to culture, ideologies, and domination rather than just political structure and economics of urban centers.⁵⁵ A decade later, Kim factored in artist mobility and argued that artists initiated interaction between regions, allowing for a dynamic—and not passive—exchange between centers and peripheries.⁵⁶ While both of these scholars produced groundbreaking ideas related to artistic mobility and exchange, their work was still predicated on notions of influence and a focus on style over historical context. Unfortunately, these models fail at allocating agency to patrons and artists in the Alpine regions of Italy that had little need for the urban centers’ art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁵⁷

In the study of North Italian art, Stephen Campbell has provided the most successful interventions thus far, which I discuss in the relevant chapters of this dissertation. His work has reanimated the spirit of the so-called peripheries of Bergamo and Brescia and returned agency to

⁵⁴ Ibid., 74, 78.

⁵⁵ Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), 97-98, 156-160, and 272-301.

⁵⁶ David Young Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014): 65.

⁵⁷ Frequently in this dissertation, I use the term “agency” to denote the ability of an actor to enact effect, which I apply to living and non-living objects alike. Regarding inanimate objects, this approach is derived from Hans Belting’s turn towards the “anthropology of art” with a focus on the ritual use of art, and Alfred Gell’s “abductive process” of agency. Belting, *Likeness and Presence*; Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

the artists and communities living in them to varying degrees.⁵⁸ In this dissertation, I continue and expand this important work by drawing connections between Simon of Trent and the Protestant Reformation through visual rhetoric.

1.4.3 The Artists

The bulk of this dissertation focuses on works by two sixteenth-century artists. Though I summarize their relevant biographies in each respective chapter, a few general points deserve mention here. Until the recent work of Campbell, both artists have largely been discussed in terms of their stylistic affinities and discrepancies compared to “popular” contemporary artists.⁵⁹ While Romanino and Lotto certainly acknowledged and borrowed from the “great masters” around them—which is evident in Chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation—there remains a truly innovative theological element in their works. Rather than focus on these artists as ones who experienced “anxiety of influence” regarding other artists,⁶⁰ I expand and build on Campbell’s work by

⁵⁸ Most notable and relevant to this dissertation is Campbell’s recent book, *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto’s Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019). For his earlier interventions, see Stephen J. Campbell, “On Renaissance Nonmodernity,” *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 261-294; and Stephen J. Campbell, “Artistic Geographies,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Michael Wyatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). See also Chapter 4 and 5 of this dissertation. For an interesting take on Naples and the “world cities” model, see Nicolas Bock, “Patronage, Standards and *transfert culturel*: Naples between Art History and Social Science Theory,” *Art History* 31, no. 4. (September 2008): 574-597.

⁵⁹ I acknowledge the issues with using a word like “popular” in early modern art. Much of our understanding of what constituted the preferred artists and styles of the early modern period was largely written by the very same people who preferred those artists and styles. Sixteenth-century writers like Giorgio Vasari in his *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* established a precedent for favoring Tuscan-born followers of classical antiquity, which the field of art history then perpetuated. A different early modern author or a contrasting scholarly approach may have put entirely different artists in the modern spotlight and traditional art history canon. Suffice it to say that in this dissertation, I use the term “popular” as an acknowledgement of history as it has been written, knowing that many others deserve attention for their skillful practice. In fact, that is the primary purpose of this project—to bring credit to the innovative works of North Italian artists whom Vasari never favored.

⁶⁰ For a discussion on the “anxiety of influence” see Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); for its agonistic approach to art history, see Maria Loh, *Titian Remade:*

exploring their art in agentive terms. Through a study of artistic innovation and community identity-formation, my research attempts to break free from a teleological art history by encapsulating specific moments and places in time while also putting those instances in conversation with the past and each other.

As I demonstrated earlier, the regions throughout Northern Italy did, in fact, have their own established traditions, despite being spatially located in the periphery of major urban centers. In towns ranging from La Brigue to Brescia, modes of depicting Jewishness and religious villains culminated in a consistent approach that labeled threats to Christians as specific, recognizable “others.” Over a century later, Romanino and Lotto responded to these same regional artistic modes in a way that was both artistically and theologically inventive. The major contribution of this dissertation is to show how these two artists recognized the newly emerging Church enemies in the Reformation and adapted decades of anti-Jewish visual rhetoric to support papal Rome from afar. Rather than simply couch contemporary issues in imitation of other artists, both adapted their artworks to meet the needs of local patrons in remarkably different ways.

Put simply, Romanino actively addressed theological debates by using recognizable villains and Old Testament typology to validate the Roman Church’s beliefs, and he did so in a way that explicitly announced his theological differences from other artists. In this project, Lotto’s work serves as a counterapproach. While he answered to the same conditions as Romanino during a time of social, political, and religious upheaval, Lotto adhered to an artistic path that eluded denouncing religious others and their beliefs. In the works by Romanino and Lotto’s that I discuss, the artists created visual exempla of faith that ran counter to the general beliefs regarding divine

Repetition and the Transformation of Early Modern Italian Art (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007), 10, 165.

images in the Jewish and Protestant communities. Following Walter Stephens's argument that the Reformation, Neoplatonism, and the discovery of the New World weakened Christian faith, I claim that these artists attempted to re-instill faith while refuting the other beliefs permeating Northern Italy.⁶¹

1.5 Dissertation Overview

I have divided this dissertation into four sections that trace North Italian art history from 1475 to 1550. In Chapter 2, I explore the Simon of Trent event that reverberated throughout Northern Italy. The death of this Christian child and the subsequent trial and murder of many Jews ignited a cult following and artistic response that still exists in the twenty-first century. Images of Simon quickly spread—even before the trial ended—and churches commissioned frescoes of the boy to harness some of his allegedly miraculous power for their own. Both woodcuts and frescoes of Simon depicted Jews in various ways depending on the patron's agenda. In all, however, the ultimate goal was to use visual rhetoric to link Simon with Christ, and consequently condemn all contemporary Jews.

By the turn of the century, Simon's cult waned and new artworks diminished, though he remained visibly present throughout Northern Italy. In Chapter 3, I propose that death and destruction from the Italian Wars forced Christians to turn their attention to the threats in front of them, rather than the hypothetical threat of the "perfidious" Jew. In Cremona Cathedral, Romanino visually captured this turn from Jewish to German enemies by portraying the mercenaries invading

⁶¹ Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Italy as the murderers of Christ. Chapter 4 continues a study of Romanino's work after he was fired from his contract in Cremona and migrated into Valcamonica as the Italian Wars declined and the Protestant Reformation matured. In Pisogne's Santa Maria della Neve and Breno's Sant'Antonio Abate, Romanino developed a more theologically advanced approach to addressing enemies of the Catholic Church that borrowed and redirected from exegetical rhetoric to condemn Jews and reformers alike. In both of these fresco cycles, the artist formulated innovative projects that uniquely served the communities for whom he painted, and the paintings contain multiple levels of interpretation that malign Jewish and Reformation theologies.

I turn to Lotto in Chapter 5 for a different approach to the Italian Wars, Protestant Reformation, and ongoing hatred of Jews in Catholic art. Through church altarpieces, fresco cycles, devotional paintings, and portraits, Lotto developed a theological art style that emphasized orthodox beliefs and the permissibility of divine images without visual mention of contemporary Jews or reformers, or their theologies. This chapter situates a selection of Lotto's artworks within their socio-political and religious context to reveal how his paintings remained ambiguous regarding contemporary Jews and reformers, transitioning from a focus on Christian enemies—like the Jews who allegedly murdered Simon of Trent—to a Christological focus that Simon previously embodied *sans* enemies. Lotto's lifelong history in the company of heretics, despite his continued profession as a painter of orthodox Christian art, makes him an enigmatic example to study. I argue that the same spirit that motivated his interpersonal engagements also inspired Lotto's art. Put simply, Lotto tailored his art to promote the Church *and* question her inadequacies while avoiding overt pictorial condemnation of others, like Jews and Protestants.

Together, these four chapters reveal how artists used different approaches to disguise systemic inequality and social othering; in doing so, their art expressed an evolving cultural

identity and religious fervor spanning several decades. I rely on object analysis, primary documents, and interdisciplinary Christian and Jewish studies to realign geography, theology, and local history in a way that affords agency to both the artists and the communities for whom the art was created. Through this project, I aim to produce a more coherent story of art for Northern Italy that also speaks to similar issues of social conflict and hate crimes still prevalent today.

To conclude, I must acknowledge that my research is *about* Christian (and primarily Catholic) perceptions and imaginations of Jews and others, and therefore is limited to an understanding primarily of those Christian perspectives—not of those they depicted. As Kenneth Stow explained,

“What made the confrontational depiction of the Jew so seductive was its fictitiousness. This was a competition with only one active competitor, the Christian, who alone set the rules and named the game. The Jew, from the time of Paul in Romans, was a passive player, whose game was portrayed and interpreted within the Christian’s confrontational perspective. [...] The Jew could be made to personify Christian deficiency, as well as the entirety of Christian society’s failings and flaws. The Jew, therefore, was not a real but a mythical one whose imputed nature was wholly unrelated to that of his real-life counterpart. [...] Rather, this mythical Jew incarnated an inverse Christian ideal—as, in fact, Paul had no less mythically described him at Christianity’s inception; or perhaps more precisely, he incarnated some of that ideal’s more troublesome aspects. What, then, could have

been more logical than to make Jews into the locus of all aberrant behavior, of all alien activities, and of alienation itself?”⁶²

Consequently, this Christian fashioning of the “Jewish enemy” only reveals information about Christians and their insecurities. The artworks and choices discussed throughout these six chapters in no way reflect the opinions or lived experiences of anyone identified by Christians as “others,” and the art also only includes Catholic views of Protestantism. If anyone attempts to use my research to better understand Jews or Protestants, then they risk perpetuating a Catholic-dominant narrative and erasure of non-Catholics from history.⁶³

⁶² Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 234, 238. See also Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), esp. 95-155 for a detailed discussion on Christian creation of the “Jewish enemy.”

⁶³ As an alternative, I hope that my research inspires curiosity for the realities of early modern Jews and so-called heretics, and I would encourage readers to investigate appropriate sources for this information. (e.g. Stow, cited above; Dean Phillip Bell, *Jews in the Early Modern World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008); Debra Kaplan, “Jews in Early Modern Europe: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” *History Compass* 10, no. 2 (2012): 191-206.) For those curious about Jewish art, an entire field exists and has especially developed since the exploration of Dura Europos. And innumerable resources exist covering those who led the Reformation north of the Alps; the reader needs only to choose a region or a leader of whom they are interested. These authors and many others have begun the important, necessary work of returning agency and voice to those who have been consistently repressed and silenced throughout history, and this dissertation is best considered in tandem with this other scholarship.

2.0 Northern Italy 1475-1500: The (Dis)Appearance of Simon of Trent

“...so that the ancient, savage race of the Jews may be eliminated from the whole Christian world, and remembrance of them utterly vanish from the land of the living.”

Giovanni Mattia Tiberino, 1475

2.1 Simon of Trent

During the Christian Holy Week and Jewish Passover of 1475, tragedy struck a small Alpine town in present-day Northern Italy where German and Italian cultures both existed and clashed. On Thursday evening, March 23, a toddler named Simon Unferdorben went missing in one of Trent’s German-speaking neighborhoods—the same neighborhood where the town’s three Jewish families resided. Andreas, the boy’s working-class father, suspected his son had fallen into the canal that ran near their home and subsequently drowned; a search party began the following morning. Even with Andreas’s innocuous assumption about his son’s death, rumors immediately ignited claiming that local Jews ritually murdered Simon. In response, the *podestà*, Giovanni de Salis, searched the home of Samuel Ebreo, one of three leaders in the Trentine Jewish community.⁶⁴ With the cooperation and assistance of Samuel, his wife Brunetta, and others in the Jewish community, the search party concluded Simon was not in the home and there were no

⁶⁴ The other two, Tobias, and Engle, would also be implicated in Simon’s death and trial. Samuel was chosen first, likely because he headed the largest of the three families. For more on Samuel and the families in Trent, see R. Po-chia Hsia, *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 14-25. Notably, the last name given to Samuel in this story is an Italian rendering of the word for Hebrew or Jew.

indications of foul play.⁶⁵ Afraid of the accusations and not assuaged by the results from Samuel's home invasion, the Jewish families took action to prevent themselves from being falsely accused of murder by sealing their windows and doors so the body could not be planted in their homes.⁶⁶

These efforts would be useless, however, as three days later, on Sunday, March 26, the family cook spotted the boy's lifeless body in a canal that ran under Samuel's home. Even though authorities searched the house just two days prior and despite this being the same canal in which Andreas suspected the boy had drown, the discovery implicated Samuel and the entire Jewish community in the death of Simon, and officials accused the Jews of blood libel. Torture followed, and soon Trent's Bishop Johannes Hinderbach had confessions from several Jews, as well as an alignment of Simon's death and discovery with the Passion of Christ.⁶⁷ In June, the court sentenced nine Jewish men to death for the communal accusation of murder and blood libel. Despite these deaths, the trial continued into 1476 with several more executions before it concluded. Hinderbach and his authorities spared some Jewish women and children in town under the pretense of conversion to Christianity, but others suffered under torture.⁶⁸

Due to the geographic liminality of Trent, people clashed over the validity and necessity of Simon's murder trial. In support of a trial against the Jews stood the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick III, the Duke of Tyrol, Sigismund, Bishop Hinderbach, and most of the German-

⁶⁵ Magda Teter, *Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), 49-50. There are a variety of spellings for Samuel's wife's name. The majority of sources use Brunetta, so that is what I use in this dissertation, but readers may also encounter "Grüeta," "Gruneta," and "Brünnlein" in other sources.

⁶⁶ Dana E. Katz, *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 120. There was later speculation that a Christian named Zanesus had killed the child and framed Samuel, as part of an earlier legal dispute involving Zanesus's wife, Dorothea, a midwife hired for Samuel's daughter-in-law. For this story, see Hsia, *Trent 1475*, 17.

⁶⁷ The original autopsy stated that Simon died no sooner than Saturday, March 25. By the end of the trial, this had been adjusted to align his death with Good Friday and the discovery of his body on Easter Sunday. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 59.

⁶⁸ The one person whose fate remains unclear is that of Brunetta. A 1511 poem written about the trial indicates she withstood torture, never confessed as her fellow men did, and died without seeking conversion. For more on this poem by Ubertino Pusculo, see Teter, *Blood Libel*, 76.

speaking population of Trent. To be sure, the trial itself took place in the German district of Trent, propelled by the proud German-native Hinderbach. The interrogators even manipulated all of the torture-driven testimonies to match the inflammatory pamphlet written by Hinderbach's personal physician, Giovanni Mattia Tiberino (Johannes Matthias Tiberinus), which he published before the trial started.⁶⁹ Those who opposed the trial—or at the very least, had concerns regarding its validity—included Pope Sixtus IV, many communities in neighboring cities throughout the Veneto and Lombardy, and of course, Jews along networks from Italy to Austria.⁷⁰ Among these opponents, concerns lingered about the legitimacy of Jewish ritual murder accusations writ large.

2.1.1 Boy-Murder Tales

The incident with Simon of Trent was not the first of its kind. By the twelfth century, the common host desecration tales no longer sufficed as evidence for the alleged Jewish hatred toward Christ.⁷¹ These earlier tales warned of the threatening Jewish proximity to Christian sacraments, and the accusations soon escalated to murder during the time of the Second Crusade in the 1140s. The stories always began the same—a young Christian child either went missing or died, and Christians blamed local Jews with allegations of blood libel and ritual murder. The first recorded instance of this event occurred in 1144 England, where twelve-year-old William of Norwich was found dead.⁷² The boy served as a tanner's apprentice who frequently came into contact with local

⁶⁹ For a thorough description of the trial, its supporters and opponents, and its trajectory, see Teter, *Blood Libel*, 43-88.

⁷⁰ There are records of Jewish networks as far as Austria voicing concern over the trial and offering financial support and written argument for the defense. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 84.

⁷¹ See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for a discussion on Christian host desecration tales as indicative of Jewish perfidy.

⁷² In her introduction, Teter unpacked the origins of the blood libel tale starting with William of Norwich. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 1-13. For a thorough examination of the William of Norwich case and its implications in the larger blood libel

Jewish families. Not long after the discovery of his body, Christians in Norwich leapt to the conclusion that Jews—just like the infidel of the Holy Crusades—sought to take Christian life. The original tale ends here—no recorded resolution exists. However, decades later, a monk named Thomas of Monmouth wrote what would become the complete tale. According to Thomas, a series of accusations, informants, and confessions led authorities to determine Jews crucified William as part of a yearly custom to re-enact the death of Christ during the Christian Easter celebration.⁷³

By the thirteenth century, this suspected urge to ritually re-kill Christ every year had devolved into allegations about a need for Christian blood to consume during the Jewish Passover. Accounts of children like Little Hugh of Lincoln and the singing Christian boy in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale* breathed life into these infamous claims, resulting in the deaths and expulsion of many Jews throughout England and France.⁷⁴ In each instance, the stories described brutally murdered children that when found appeared bloody and often covered in filth from the latrine or ditch into which the murderers disposed of the body. Through written descriptions, ballads, and other forms of verbal transmission, the contemporary person learned to recognize the physical afflictions of blood libel. Mitchell Merback described these characteristic wounds on the dead children—stab marks, bloodletting from veins, ripped flesh, cut penises, and so on—to be

scholarship, see Hannah Johnson, *Blood Libel: The Ritual Murder Accusation at the Limit of Jewish History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

⁷³ Teter, *Blood Libel*, 18-19.

⁷⁴ There are several ample sources that explore the individual cases of these early ritual murder tales. In particular, see R. Po-chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Alan Dundes, ed., *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Hannah Johnson, *The Critics and the Prioress: Antisemitism, Criticism and Chaucer's Prioress's Tale* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017); Beverly Boyd, *The Middle English Miracles of the Virgin* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library: 1964); Roger Dahood, "English Historical Narratives of Jewish Child-Murder, Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*, and the Date of Chaucer's Unknown Source," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 31 (2009): 125-140; Roger Dahood, "The Anglo-Norman 'Hugo de Lincolnia': A Critical Edition and Translation from the Unique Text in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS fr. 902," *The Chaucer Review* 49, no. 1 (2014): 1-38; and Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 55-109.

understood as the “indisputable signs of a “Jewish” ritual murder.”⁷⁵ Suddenly, any instance of a missing or mysteriously deceased child with physical injuries led to accusations of Jewish cannibalistic blood libel and ritual murder.⁷⁶

Through the popularity of storytelling, the reinvigorated perception of Jewish treachery rippled throughout Europe. Even with the aid of written sources, however, the majority of these accusations and tales remained primarily local events—regionally sustained cults with sparse occurrences of manuscript illuminations to accompany the tales.⁷⁷ While some allegations resulted in executions or exile, these remained singular examples. The papacy and many secular leaders upheld their asserted protection of Jews at-large, and they dealt with each incident as an outlier regarding the general Jewish population. Though Christian racism towards Jews remained, day-to-day life was largely un-impacted. This mode of dealing with boy-murder accounts remained the trend until the fateful death of Simon in the late fifteenth century.

An Italian jurist who opposed the Trent trial argued that these “fictitious” stories of boy-murders and Jewish blood libels were of the type they told in Germany and did not warrant merit in Trent.⁷⁸ Rather than differentiate the death of Simon from previous boy-murder tales, however, Hinderbach used trial records of prior German accusations as justification for blaming the Trentine Jews.⁷⁹ Soon after, the trial commenced, but the cult of Simon bloomed before the jury ruled.

⁷⁵ Mitchell B. Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom: Violence, Memory, and Visual Culture at the Host-Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 141.

⁷⁶ These accusations only applied when the missing child was from a Christian family, or at the very least, a non-Jewish family.

⁷⁷ Other images of William of Norwich and the other tales exist, but these instances take place long after the events occurred, and many are born out of the widespread effect of the fifteenth-century Simon of Trent episode. For the few early extant examples, see Heinz Schreckenberg, *The Jews in Christian Art: An Illustrated History* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 273-291.

⁷⁸ Laura Dal Prà, “L’immagine di Simonino nell’arte trentina dal XV al XVII secolo,” in *Il principe vescovo Johannes Hinderbach (1465-1486): Fra tardo medioevo e umanesimo* (Bologna: Centro Dehoniane Bologna, 1992), 462.

⁷⁹ Teter, *Blood Libel*, 106.

Locally, Christians considered the boy *beatus*, and Hinderbach spent the rest of his life trying to sway the pope to canonize Simon to no avail.⁸⁰ The timing of Simon's death and the trial benefitted those promoting the cult; the recent invention of the printing press fortuitously allowed for wider and faster dissemination of materials.⁸¹ Several woodcuts that explicitly depicted the events as they allegedly occurred accompanied these printed descriptions of Simon's death and visually imprinted the gruesome saga in the minds of viewers.

2.1.2 Proof in Prints

As soon as Hinderbach had documents about the blood libel allegations printed, they made their way into other regions of Italy and Germany. Largely published in German, these included illustrated descriptions of the events, poems, and songs about little Simon.⁸² This clever inclusion of narrative imagery meant that readers did not require reading knowledge of German to understand what took place. Unlike prior events and indictments against Jews, the Trent proceedings reached far beyond the little Alpine town in which they occurred, despite papal attempts at preventing the trial.

⁸⁰ It is important to note that the papacy did not acknowledge Simon as beatified, and certainly never as a saint, despite Hinderbach's incessant attempts through promotion of Simon's cult. Based on extant documents, Hinderbach was undoubtedly the principle promotor of the cult. While Pope Sixtus IV issued a papal bull in 1478 affirming the validity of the trial, he did not confirm the cult. However, in 1588, a resurgence in Simon's popularity led Pope Sixtus V to confirm the cult of Simon and promote liturgical services on his feast day, March 24. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 7, 61, 97.

⁸¹ Katz, *Jew in the Art*, 126.

⁸² By the late sixteenth century, Simon's geographic popularity extended with publications in Polish and were referenced in conjunction with stories of blood libel in Poland and Lithuania. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 106-108. It is important to note that publications in Italian were also circulated from Venice to Brescia, but these largely omitted Hinderbach and the trial, and instead focused on generating excitement for the cult of Simon and a call for expelling Jews from all of Christendom *en masse*. They were, however, drawn from information in the original publication by Hinderbach's physician, Tiberino. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 110.

After the initial eight executions, the trial continued with many Jewish men, women, and children still imprisoned. Pope Sixtus IV issued a decree suspending the trial and sent a Roman envoy with Bishop Battista de'Giudici of Ventimiglia to oversee the situation and intervene, if necessary. De'Giudici failed, however, as Hinderbach prevented his investigation at every turn.⁸³ Beyond the legitimacy of the trial, the pope tasked de'Giudici with assessing the body of Simon and the alleged miracles being attributed to the boy. His experience wholly contrasted with Hinderbach's cult agenda. In a letter, de'Giudici described the corpse as so putrid that it made him physically ill—an experience that directly conflicted with the miraculous claims Hinderbach perpetuated to support the cult.⁸⁴ I argue that de'Giudici's negative report on the body of Simon made Hinderbach's plan for a visual dissemination of the miracle-working boy in the guise of Christ even more urgent. On the exact day (September 6, 1475) de'Giudici sent his letter about the decomposing body to Rome, Hinderbach had printed illustrations dispersed that presented Simon's body as both incorruptible and miraculous, while implicating Samuel and the other Trentine Jews.

Among the first Simon-related works, a German-language publication by Albrecht Kunne titled *Geschichte des zu Trient ermordeten Christenkindes* detailed the events from Simon's alleged kidnapping by Tobias to his martyrdom and subsequent cult veneration, ending with a collection of miracles allegedly performed by the child posthumously (Figures 2.1-2.12). Commissioned by Hinderbach or his chamberlain and disseminated in Trent on September 6, 1475, this revolutionary booklet became the first item ever printed in Trent, as well as the first Simon

⁸³ The pro-trial cohort in Trent went to great lengths to prevent de'Giudici from doing his job, ultimately running him out of town and killing one of his servants. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 59, 64-65.

⁸⁴ Typically, a saint's body is miraculously incorruptible, as a sign of their holiness. The original letter, written to Cardinal Stefano Nardini in Rome, can be found in Pietro Ghinzoni, "San Simone di Trento 1475," *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 16 (1889): 140-142. An English translation appears in Hsia, *Trent 1475*, 72.

publication to include custom woodcuts that related specifically to the text inside, rather than stock imagery.⁸⁵ This design of elaborate text with illustrated images explicitly presented the events as objective facts that allowed Hinderbach to quell doubts about the ongoing trial, especially in light of the counter-information dispersed by de'Giudici about Simon's body.

The twelve woodcuts, while crude, easily differentiated the perfidious Jews from Christians. In all the scenes except the ninth and twelfth, Jews wear the traditional cone-shaped pointed hat and some wear money pouches secured to their belts, both of which visually segregated them from little Simon and the adult Christians that appear at the end of the series.⁸⁶ The ninth scene includes only Christians—women in veils, children, and Saint Peter, Saint Vigilio, and Bishop Hinderbach wearing their mitres and robes—and the twelfth includes Christians and converts.⁸⁷

The first eight images walk the viewer through the kidnapping, torture, and ritual blood libel of Simon at the hands of local Jews. Gathered together in a synagogue for the first scene, nine Jewish men debate how to proceed with their need for Christian blood for that year's jubilee ritual. An altar with holy book, cloth, and tablet of law—all inscribed with pseudo-script that appears more hieroglyphic than Hebrew—signal the space as a Jewish temple and distinctly “other” for Christian viewers. The artist made readers instantly aware of the identities of these men by inscribing their names on the edge of each hat: Engel, Tobias, Solomon, Seligman, Vital, Israel, Samuel, Moses, and Mayer. Though these extrinsic labels do not reappear until scene four,

⁸⁵ David S. Areford, *The Viewer and the Printed Image in Late Medieval Europe* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 170.

⁸⁶ For more on the Jewish hats and their iconography in art, see Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in the Bible Moralise'e* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 15-19. In her recent book, Lipton provides an exceptional treatment of the general depiction of Jews in medieval Christian art. Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014). See also Section 1.1 of this dissertation.

⁸⁷ St. Vigilio was the first bishop and patron saint of Trent.

to the fifteenth-century viewer they triggered a sense of autoptic authority—an awareness that these real, known people from the Trentine community existed in contemporary society.⁸⁸ The named figures in these scenes provided an authentic, eyewitness truth of their existence (and threat). Inside the synagogue amongst the debating men stands a white lamb that Engel gestures toward, suggesting that perhaps the sacrifice of this animal would be sufficient; a basket of fish sits on the floor beside him.⁸⁹ As the following pages reveal, the actors chose neither the lamb nor the fish as the solution.

In the second scene, the sinister plot is afoot, as Tobias entices Simon with a coin and then delivers the boy to the house of Samuel, also the location of the community's synagogue.⁹⁰ Here, the Jewish men glance about, ensuring the kidnapping goes unwitnessed, while the fleshy toddler smiles and follows along, clearly trusting his captors. Next, the men have stripped Simon nude and Moses circumcises him, while others casually stand about, watching and discussing the event.⁹¹ By the fourth woodcut, the men have stood Simon on a table, nude and splayed out, while they proceed to drain the boy of his blood and pinch off his flesh. Those not actively involved in the murder pass implements of torture resembling nails amongst themselves and gesture towards the child. The sacrificial knife rests alone on the table, waiting for someone to finally pick it up and end the boy's suffering. Like the first scene, the Jews have their names on their hats. If Trentine and neighboring town residents had not yet heard the names of the accused, now they

⁸⁸ On autoptic authority, see Pamela H. Smith, *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), esp. 42.

⁸⁹ These images were printed with simple black line and did not contain color, but the lack of shading implies the lamb is meant to be “seen” as white. Other Christocentric homilies and images validate this conclusion as Christ was often represented as a white lamb in scripture, Christian art, and theological discourse, and as I discuss below, this scene was meant to carry Christocentric implications.

⁹⁰ Though the figures are unnamed in this scene, the names can be deduced from descriptions in court records. Also, there are variations on the story regarding what Tobias used or did to keep Simon calm and willingly accompanying him. For these, see Teter, *Blood Libel*, 43-88. In this version of the story, a coin was depicted to entice the child.

⁹¹ Again, though unnamed, Moses is depicted in the first as the eldest, with a long flowing beard.

could clearly see those implicated in Simon's martyrdom.⁹² The composition only allowed for six men shown as Simon's murderers, all of whom were among the initial nine executed in June and depicted in the first woodcut.⁹³ I propose that the creator omitted the other three from this scene intentionally, despite all being convicted and executed for participating in the death of Simon. I suggest that the designer spared the two men named Seligman from being part of the murderous image, because they both converted and received baptism prior to their deaths. Mayer, like others, recounted the events of Simon's death while under torture, but his confession elaborated on details necessary for the success of Simon's cult. According to court records, Mayer linked the Trent event to previous "instances" of Jewish blood libel and emphasized Jewish hatred for Christ as the catalyst for all these events.⁹⁴ While no less guilty, Meyer's connection between Simon and Christ helped promote Hinderbach's cult, and I suggest this afforded his absence from the condemning image.

Scenes five and six consist of cursing the body through Talmud readings, followed by the preparation and partaking of the Passover feast, which included consumption of Simon's blood baked into the matzo. The seventh scene reveals the careless disposal of the body in the cellar, which the men then redressed and rolled into the canal. The eighth takes place after finding, undressing, and placing the body on a table for inspection. Here, a group of Christian men gather to the left, and according to the story the *podestà* kneels to inspect the body. Withdrawing into the background, four Jewish men stand to the far right watching as Moses leans forward, likely

⁹² This scene only fits six figures: Vital, Moses, Tobias, Engle, Samuel, and Israel. We know from court records that these six were included in the initial arrests. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 50.

⁹³ Moses, who was eighty years old at the time, died in his prison cell prior to the executions, reportedly by suicide. See Hsia, *Trent 1475*, 67. The other eight were executed.

⁹⁴ Hsia discussed the court proceedings at length in *Trent 1475*, 34-50. For the original documents, see *Prozess gegen die Juden von Trient* (New York: Yeshiva University Library, after June 20, 1478), fols. 19-21.

pleading their innocence. Interestingly, the Jewish figures in this series escape the typical exaggerated features that denote anti-Jewishness in premodern imagery described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. However, in this image the artist slipped in a subtle, yet undeniable reference to such physiognomic caricatures. The boy, laid bare for examination, has his stripped clothes cast unceremoniously to the floor beside him. There, his little undershirt has taken the form of a face in profile, complete with conical hat and hooked nose and chin.⁹⁵ As the *podestà* evaluates the death of Simon, the indelible sign of the perfidious Jew lurks in plain sight, condemning those to the right even before the trial has narratively taken place.

From here, the image transitions the viewer from a story of kidnapping and murder to one of holiness and retribution. In the ninth woodcut, someone has laid the young lad on an altar, nude except for the kerchief the Jews tied around his neck during his martyrdom to stifle his cries. On either side of the altar stands Saints Peter and Vigilio who bear witness to the holiness of Simon. The kneeling bishop can be identified as Hinderbach with his coat of arms on the floor near him.⁹⁶ Below, women and children have gathered, seeking healing from the boy martyr. Above the child hangs his sacred clothing along with numerous votive offerings as a testament to his alleged prolific miracles. Simon's head turns downward to the left and his left hand seems to extend out, as if reaching beyond the edge of the altar to the adoring worshipers who kneel below him. As one veiled woman raises an infant towards Simon, he, even in death, seems to smile and acknowledge the needs of these pilgrims. However, it is the kneeling youth at the bottom of the picture plane that testifies to the presumed power of Simon. At a time with various shrines and churches in Trent, this pilgrim chose to drag his mangled body to Simon for healing. The viewer,

⁹⁵ This observation is cited by Areford, though his footnote credits Sara Lipton and Kymberly Pinder for the discovery, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 183, esp. fn. 41.

⁹⁶ Katz, *Jew in the Art*, 129-130.

while admiring the veneration of Simon in this scene, cannot escape the crippled and disfigured legs of this kneeling individual, who has cast aside his hand crutches, thrown back his head, and with arms outstretched to Simon he pleads for a miracle.

The last three scenes include the torture of the arrested Jews and their execution by fire, and the decapitation of the two men who converted.⁹⁷ Together, these twelve scenes appear alongside descriptive text so that literate viewers would have no doubts regarding what each scene represented. Each image contained enough verisimilitude to the accompanying texts to imply visual truth throughout this intricately woven fiction, and the designer of this printed work intentionally linked word and image throughout the booklet. The text invited readers to look at the corresponding images and see the truth for themselves.⁹⁸ Besides convincing people of the Jews' guilt, these scenes contained deep theological implications that ignited the demand for expulsion of all Jews throughout the Italian Alpine region.

Hinderbach's primary agenda was to promote Simon's cult throughout the region. To this end, the disseminated document and accompanying woodcuts could undermine de'Giudici's description of the boy's rotting corpse and help impel a cult response. Through these images, Hinderbach visually shared the body of Simon with viewers beyond Trent's borders, inviting people to take in the boy's flesh with their own eyes. In images three, four, five, seven, eight, and nine, Simon is shown nude, and either being physically harmed or has already been bled to death. Yet in each of these scenes, the boy's body appears pristine and undamaged. Nowhere does his flesh indicate piercings, stabs, rips, tears, or gashes—all of which the story of his martyrdom

⁹⁷ In image 10, Samuel has his fleshed pulled off in the same manner of torture Simon endured. Image 11 shows the division of the executions: four men were killed the first day, another two the next, with Moses already deceased. Image 12 includes the final two executions, which took place a few days later in light of their conversion to Christianity.

⁹⁸ Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 182.

vividly described.⁹⁹ Accordingly, across all these depictions, Jews and Christians alike interact with Simon's body, and no one recoils in disgust. In the ninth scene, Simon's body, well-past his death date, rests on the altar as if merely a sleeping child, fleshy, with a full head of hair, and ready to move as soon as he wakes. Here, the image confronts viewers with the juxtaposition between Simon's supple toddler legs and the slender, broken, and twisted legs of the crippled pilgrim reaching out for a miracle. I believe that these images presented the intact, unmarred body of a little boy that persisted beyond death despite torture and the passage of time—clearly the sign of miraculous happenings—as visual evidence that would confirm Hinderbach's call for a cult and sainthood.

In addition to Simon's incorruptible—and thus saintly—body, this image set contained theological implications for the Jewish community at large. To explain the exegetical consequences of the first and fourth scenes, I argue that the artist had compositional space on the Jewish hats in the other scenes to include their names.¹⁰⁰ However, they elected not to.¹⁰¹ The text sufficiently listed the names of the Jews involved, but the first and fourth scenes needed these extrinsic labels inscribed to root the images firmly in contemporary reality and provide a sense of authority behind the creation of the images.¹⁰² I also suggest that by not depicting the Jews with caricatured physiognomy, the images appeared closer to reality, despite being crude drawings. Those living in Trent would likely have some familiarity with the faces of the accused Jews.

⁹⁹ This absence of wounds is particularly noteworthy when differentiated with the frescoes described later in this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ Or elsewhere in the compositions, for that matter.

¹⁰¹ While Kunne was listed as the printer for this booklet, the artist and author are anonymous. However, as Areford notes, the text bears a striking resemblance to Tiberino's previous accounts, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 170.

¹⁰² For more on the use of extrinsic labels to denote identity in Renaissance art, see Evelyn Welch, "Naming Names" in *The Images of the Individual. Portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 91-104.

Through “normal” faces and known names labeling them, the Kunne scenes created a strong link between the Jewish men depicted and the lived experiences of regional communities.

If we consider this in the context of classical rhetoric and memory, the first and fourth scenes fit within the *Ad Herennium*’s second model of how images reinforce memory.¹⁰³ In this classical treatise, the author suggested that,

“We ought, then, to set up images of a kind that can adhere longest in the memory.

And we shall do so if we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but active; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we ornament some of them, as with crowns or purple cloaks, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. The things we easily remember when they are real we likewise remember without difficulty when they are figments, if they have been carefully delineated.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ The *Ad Herennium* was written by an unknown author from the 80s BCE and is a classical treatise on rhetoric and persuasion that also explores mental and physical images in the art of memory retention. The text uses two models as examples: using imagery in text to suggest mental images, and using distinct physical images that are so memorable, people cannot help but store them in long-term memory. Peter Parshall used the second model to explore how the story and depictions of honoring and dishonoring Christ’s body in Passion imagery anachronistically, yet vividly align with the pictorial cues provided in the *Ad Herennium* and resulted in an affective response that heightened recall. Peter Parshall, “The Art of Memory and the Passion,” *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 3 (September 1999): 456-472. I believe that these same principles apply to the approach used in designing the woodcuts, and this will be explored in greater detail in the forthcoming book manuscript for this project, including the relationship between these images and the others discussed in this dissertation with meditative practices on Christ’s Passion. Any discussion of this kind must also acknowledge the important works of Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) and Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁴ *Imagines igitur nos in eo genere constituere oportebit quod genus in memoria diutissime potest haerere. Id accidet si quam maxime notatas similitudines constituamus; si non multas nec vagas, sed aliquid agentes imagines ponemus; si egregiam pulchritudinem aut unicam turpitudinem eis adtribuemus; si aliquas exornabimus, ut si coronis aut veste purpurea, quo nobis notatior sit similitudo; aut si qua re deformabimus, ut si cruentam aut caeno oblitam*

To make these widely disseminated woodcuts as memorable as possible, the artist (knowingly or by chance) incorporated several of these memory “tricks.” Without their stereotypical physiognomy, the Jewish figures appear with as much similitude as possible in rough woodcuts. This choice meant that viewers could imagine the figures as real people they might encounter on the street and may even have believed these depictions to be eye-witness accounts of the men’s real appearances at least regarding attire, who wore beards, and so on. While the other pages could be read as generic depictions, the first and fourth scenes insist upon a contemporary reality that the viewer shares. By providing the names of real people in these two scenes, the artist “ornamented” the characters to make them distinct, and as a result the meaning transitioned from a generalized threat of Jews to specific men that Christians ought to remember and fear.

In the first scene, viewers see local followers of the old Judaic Law discuss how to acquire Christian blood for their rituals; meanwhile, the pure, innocent lamb and the basket of fish signal the Christocentric focus that would become Simon’s martyrdom.¹⁰⁵ Like an innocent lamb, Jews chose Simon and led him to slaughter. The theological parallels with Christ are inevitable and carry a weighty implication; the Jewish men allegedly killed Simon specifically out of their hatred for Christ and in *imitatio Christi*. Then, by depicting the child *in cruce* and surrounding him by named, un-caricatured Jews in the fourth scene, the artist instantly transformed Simon into a *novello Cristo* and the victim of contemporary (non-Biblical) Jews.

aut rubrica delibutam inducamus, quo magis insignita sit forma, aut ridiculas res aliquas imagini- bus adtribuamus, nam ea res quoque faciet ut facilius meminisse valeamus. Nam quas res veras facile memini- mus, easdem fictas et diligenter notatas meminisse non difficile est. Ad Herennium: Ad C. Herennium de Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium), trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3.22.37. An English translation is available in Parshall, “The Art of Memory,” 457. See also 470-471, footnote 7, for his discussion on this translation.

¹⁰⁵ Lambs and fish were often used as symbols for Christ. This remains common today with the popular “Jesus-fish” seen on many automobiles in the United States. Christ as the “lamb of God” comes from the Gospel of John and often appears in Christian imagery as either Christ the Good Shepherd with a lamb, or a lamb as Christ, often holding a cross or bleeding into a Eucharistic chalice, as seen in Jan van Eyck’s *Ghent Altarpiece* (1432, St. Bavo’s Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium).

By using believable similitude and assigning distinct names in these two scenes, the artist made these pieces of the story visually memorable and theologically compelling. Rather than use a depiction of the Christ-lamb for the first scene or replace Christ with Simon in traditional Passion imagery for the fourth scene, the artist invented images that still invoked Christ, thus creating a new, powerful memory that related to Christ's Passion but existed wholly in the present. Then by omitting names in the other scenes, the generalized perfidy of Jews returns, transferring from a specific Christ-motivated incident into a threat for all of Christendom. For fifteenth-century Christian viewers, this message would have been undeniable—the Jewish community living amongst them allegedly acted as despicable as those who murdered Christ, and Christian children risked losing their lives as a result. The named Jews in the first and fourth scenes then make this threat memorable as lived experience.¹⁰⁶ Those in support of Simon's cult made the boy worthy of veneration and association directly with the Passion of Christ, and consequently, they called for expulsion of all area Jews.

Less than two decades later, Hartmann Schedel published his *Weltchronik*, or Nuremberg Chronicle, which included the martyrdom of Simon. This chronicle, first printed in 1493, served as a compendium of famous historical events throughout humanity.¹⁰⁷ Published in both German and Latin, this work helped spread the story of Simon far across Europe, guaranteeing the murder

¹⁰⁶ Teter drew further visual analogies between these and Christian images. For example, the circumcision of Simon to that of Christ and the Passover Seder to the Last Supper, Teter, *Blood Libel*, 130. However, I argue that the two scenes with the names included signal memory devices that directly point to the association between Christ's and Simon's deaths and thereby the implications of worshipping the boy as a *novello Cristo*. The remainder of these comparative scenes would have reinforced this idea for the more theologically astute.

¹⁰⁷ For more on the Nuremberg Chronicle, see Hartmann Schedel, *Chronicle of the World: The Complete and Annotated Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493*, ed. Stephen Füssel (Cologne: Taschen, 2001). In the late fifteenth century, Nuremberg reached a height of anti-Jewish rhetoric, including prints, frescoes, and even street plays meant to incite disgust and hatred of all Jews. These depictions were successful as the city expelled the entire Jewish population in 1499. For more on the specific events in Nuremberg, see Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 184-190 and Arnd Müller, *Geschichte der Juden in Nürnberg, 1146-1945* (Nuremberg: Selbstverlag Der Stadtbibliothek, 1968), 81-85.

and trial would not be relegated to local gossip like most of the earlier boy-murder tales. To continue visually reinforcing the tale, the artist relied on the memory-driven aspects of the initial Kunne woodcuts.

Based on the images in Kunne's booklet, the Nuremberg woodcut illustrating the Simon of Trent episode conflated the circumcision and martyrdom scenes, thus using one composite scene to emphasize Simon's similitude to the life of Christ (Figure 2.13).¹⁰⁸ Like before, Simon's body appears mostly free from wounds, but now there is evidence of damage as blood pours from the site of circumcision into the bowl on the table and small lines appear where two blades pierce his skin. Unlike the Kunne woodcuts, the artist for the Nuremberg version attempted to enhance the memorability of the image by adding Simon's injuries as striking disfigurements to which viewers would react. The artist also displayed the names of Simon's murderers in cartouches over their heads, and each wears an "ornamented" circular badge on their garments indicating their Jewishness. Six of the men crowd around the boy *in cruce*, draining him of his blood, intensified by the circumcision conducted by Moses, whose money bag dangles from his waist and is the closest item in the picture plane to the viewer, teaching audience members that part of the Christian plight included supposedly money-loving Jews. Combined, the pose, blood, and Jewish treachery perpetually link Simon and Christ. Two more men who could not fit in the scene as participants stand idly to each side gesturing towards the work being done by their brethren.¹⁰⁹

Distinct from the Kunne woodcuts, the artist included Brunetta (though here named Gruneta), Samuel's wife. However, she does not stand idly to the side as an additional voyeur;

¹⁰⁸ Michael Wohlgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff were the artists responsible for all of the chronicle woodcuts. This image is also indebted to the numerous frescoes and other images that were commissioned between the time of the Kunne woodcuts and the inception of the Nuremberg Chronicle. Several of these, which show the inclusion of Brunetta, are discussed below.

¹⁰⁹ In this image, then, eight of the nine initially executed men are present, with only one Seligman instead of two.

rather, she enters the synagogue and perpetuates the violence by bringing additional instruments of torture to the men at work—extra needles for piercing flesh and a rope for restraining, if necessary. For viewers of the chronicle, this inclusion implicated contemporary Jewish men *and women* as they posed an immediate danger to Christian children.

2.1.3 Sentenced in Sermons

After circulation of prints like Kunne's, Simon purportedly worked miracles for those who flocked to his shrine in Trent's St. Peter's Church. According to Raffaele Zovenzino, a poet working for Hinderbach, Simon "cures the lame, the deaf, and the blind."¹¹⁰ The implied parallels with Christ are again undeniable, as the gospels of both Matthew and Luke described Christ specifically healing the lame, blind, and deaf.¹¹¹ The types of miracles themselves confirmed Simon as the *novello Cristo*.

The Alpine area north of Brescia around Lago d'Iseo, known as Valcamonica, included many towns that attempted to harness the power of Simon for local benefit. The base of the region sits roughly ninety miles west of Trent and served as a hub for those traveling across central Northern Italy, north into France and Northern Europe, and south into the Italian peninsula. While the cult of Simon unquestionably spread with the aid of printed materials, local events groomed the Brescian region for cultic acceptance even before the trial started. Hinderbach's personal physician, Tiberino, wrote his initial autopsy of Simon and presented it as an address in his hometown of Brescia on April 4, 1475.¹¹² After his address, Tiberino—at Hinderbach's

¹¹⁰ "...[et hic] *claudis, surdis caecisque medetur*." Stephen Bowd and J. Donald Cullington, eds., "*On Everyone's Lips*": *Humanists, Jews, and the Tale of Simon of Trent* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012), 58-63, esp. 62.

¹¹¹ Matthew 11:5; Luke 7:22.

¹¹² Teter, *Blood Libel*, 46-47. Most of these Valcamonica and Lago d'Iseo towns were under Brescian jurisdiction.

command—printed and dispersed his findings in German, Italian, and Latin, giving an account that became the primary source for all other descriptions of the death of Simon.¹¹³ As a result, the trial and executions simply confirmed what Brescia and her territories, including Valcamonica, had already heard. It is no surprise, then, that towns such as Provaglio d’Iseo, Cervenno, Pisogne, Esine, Breno, and Bienno all commissioned frescoes of Simon shortly after the events in 1475 (Figure 2.14).

Tiberino delivered his Jewish-condemning address in a region already fraught with anti-Jewish sentiment propagated by area preachers. From their inception in the early thirteenth century, the Dominican and Franciscan Orders moved throughout the West, preaching and strengthening the Church’s anti-Jewish ideology through the guise of combating heresy and threats to Christian faith. Early Christian positions on Judaism tended towards tolerance; Augustinian polemics argued that while Jews failed to recognize Christ, their existence throughout Christendom kept the Old Testament texts alive as validation for the Gospels’ new law, and Jews served as a pool for potential converts.¹¹⁴ Undoubtedly, events such as the Crusades increased anti-Jewish sentiment, but widespread shift in lay-beliefs occurred as a result of the Mendicant Orders and their role in the Inquisition.¹¹⁵ Their extensive attack on heresy easily bled into heightened intolerance for religious minorities, Judaism included; now the monastic goal had swung from

¹¹³ Tiberino’s account of the events was written and dispersed before the trial even began; however, its contents were so readily believed that Hinderbach’s officials used the “facts” in Tiberino’s address to elicit corresponding confessions from the tortured Jews on trial. For more on the specifics of Tiberino’s account and how it influenced every subsequent document pertaining to the trial, see Teter, *Blood Libel*, especially 43-88. Ultimately, Tiberino’s address went through several iterations, elaborations, and translations. For more on the different editions of Tiberino’s account, see Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 169-170, esp. ff. 21, 25.

¹¹⁴ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Random House, 1950), 656-657 (18.46).

¹¹⁵ For a thorough discussion on the origins of these mendicant orders and their role in anti-Jewish Christian ideology, see Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), esp. 19-50. Cohen noted that it was their close affiliation with and focus on counseling the merchant class who were against local Jewish moneylenders that led to their incitement of Jews; he writes, “This situation added a dimension of immediacy to the age-old conflict between the Church and the Synagogue, and appropriately the mendicant orders assumed the leading role in that conflict shortly after they were established,” 43.

conversion to thwarting anything that obstructed the faith and theology of Christians.¹¹⁶ Those working for the Inquisition also attempted to prevent lay ownership of bibles, laymen from preaching, and anyone from engaging in religious debates with Jews in an effort to preserve faith and impede doubt from forming.¹¹⁷

As the next step in this discourse, religious leaders proposed the complete expulsion of Jews from Christendom—a command coming directly from local pulpits, attacking both Judaic religion and society.¹¹⁸ As a principal champion of this discourse, Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444), a member of the Observant order of Franciscans, or the Friars Minor, spent his career preaching, among other things, ardently against Jews and usury while insisting that Christians must break all ties with Jews. His ideology permeated throughout the order and hundreds of Observants joined him in this ethical reform agenda.¹¹⁹ Their focus included condemning all Jews while promoting the Monti di Pietà, a church-operated means of lending aimed at ending Jewish banking business and usury.¹²⁰ By undermining Jewish businesses and severing Christian economic relations with Jews, the Church could more readily expel them from their communities.

By the last quarter of the fifteenth century, a new Observant preacher gained fame throughout Northern Italy. Bernardino da Feltre (1439-1494) continued his namesake from

¹¹⁶ Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 48; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, Md.: Christian Classics, 1981), 1:2-2.10.6.

¹¹⁷ Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 50.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 52. The mendicant attack on Jewish polemics was tied to Church refutation of Aristotelian thought, and led to the Inquisition burning many Jewish texts in the thirteenth century. For more, see Cohen, *Friars and the Jews*, 51-76. For more on Gregory IX and Rabbinic legal tradition, see Solomon Grayzel, *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century*, vol. 2, 1254-1314 (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary in America, 1989).

¹¹⁹ Matteo Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo dito: Fra Bernardino da Feltre (1439-1494) e gli ebrei* (Milan: Edizioni Unicopli, 2012), 12-13.

¹²⁰ The Monti di Pietà institution began in the mid-fifteenth century in Italy and continues to function today. This started essentially as a church-led pawnshop under the guise of charity. The intent was to charge clients less interest and undermine Jewish lending, while also closing operations on Christian holidays—something Jews obviously did not do.

Siena's anti-Jewish agenda, advocating for the Monti di Pietà and expulsion of Jews.¹²¹ As he traveled throughout Lombardy and the Veneto, he preached anti-Jewish sermons despite Jewish families residing in many cities he visited, many of whom were active members of those communities.¹²² In an analysis of 120 Bernardino da Feltre sermons, Matteo Melchiorre noted that the Observant regularly mentioned Jews. While some instances involved biblical Hebrews, Bernardino did not speak of them respectfully as he claimed that all the Old Testament prophets still went to Hell and could all be linked to the evil of Judas.¹²³ He spoke minimally of these Hell-bound prophets, however, and instead Bernardino primarily preached about contemporary Jews, all heirs to Judas, and as such, complicit in the death of Christ. According to him, hate filled all Jews and a Christian sinned if they even conversed with one, let alone befriended or did business with them. To make his point, Bernardino often gave contemporary examples of Christians who opposed his beloved Monti di Pietà and favored doing business with the Jewish community instead. In one story, the plague consumed a man while on the road and dogs devoured his corpse as punishment for supporting Jews. Not only did death take the man someplace where he could not receive final sacraments, dogs denied him a Christian burial. In another Bernardino tale, the

¹²¹ Research on Bernardino da Feltre is not new, but twentieth-century anti-Semitism sparked a fresh debate highlighting the preacher's own anti-Jewish ideologies. Early scholarship painted Bernardino in a highly favorable light, as a blessed friar with an innovative economic ethic as a propagator of the Monti di Pietà and its benefit for the poor, which is evident in the extensive monograph by Father Vittorino Meneghin, *Bernardino da Feltre e i Monti di Pietà* (Vicenza: L.I.E.F Edizioni, 1974). However, Meneghin neglected the anti-Jewish thesis that threaded Bernardino's career. Four years after Meneghin's publication, Renata Segre published a work, "Bernardino da Feltre, i Monti di Pietà e i banchi ebraici," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 90 (1978): 818-833, amending this oversight and calling into question the quattrocento preacher's honorable legacy. Meneghin published a repudiation of Segre's research, and the weight of Meneghin's monograph carried into the twenty-first century. For a thorough discussion of the other scholarship relevant to this debate, see Melchiorre's introduction in *A un cenno del suo dito*, 11-22.

¹²² Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, "Economia, devozione e politica: Immagini di Francescani Amadeiti ed ebrei nel secolo XV," in *Il Francescanesimo in Lombardia: Storia e arte*, ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1983).

¹²³ Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo dito*, 157-159.

plague spared an entire city for expelling their Jewish community. Only when a local man pawned an item to a neighboring town's Jew in 1488 did the plague return for a stint.¹²⁴

In his condemnation of Jews, Bernardino claimed that those who associated with Jews, including using their services, might as well be Jews themselves. In some of his sermons, he stated some Jews wore badges and some Jews did not, arguing that even converted Jews and Christians who behaved like Jews *were* essentially Jews.¹²⁵ This polemical amalgamation of Jew and Jew-like raises an important distinction related to the identification of Jews. Based on Bernardino condemnations, a Christian could no longer solely rely on physiognomy and/or custom to recognize Jews. Instead, they must also consider the person's inclination, social circles, and way of life. For Bernardino, Jews existed everywhere, which explains why he and his associates so fervently traveled through regions like Valcamonica where a miniscule population of Jews resided outside of Brescia. *Anyone* could be guilty of being Jew-like and all culprits needed eradicated from Christendom.

Bernardino made numerous visits to Brescia where he delivered sermons and helped organize the Monti di Pietà to operate throughout Brescian territories. The core of his anti-Jewish mission, though, came to fruition during a visit to Trent. In 1473, the preacher spent ten months in Trent where officials appointed him guardian of a local convent, and he preached in the Trent cathedral on several occasions. At the same time, he became close acquaintances of Hinderbach, Giovanni di Salis who served as the Brescian-born *podestà* of Trent and judge of the trial, and Michele Carcano de Milano (1427-1484) who was another anti-Jewish Observant preacher.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo ditto*, 160-162.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 163-164.

¹²⁶ The connections between Bernardino da Feltre, Johannes Hinderbach, Giovanni di Salis, and Michele Carcano are well-established and explored; see Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo ditto*, Chapter 7. In this, he noted that during another trial in Portobuffolè, Giovanni di Salis remarked about the cheerfulness with which he persecuted Jews—both then

During this same year, a young Trentine child went missing and eventually reappeared. After he was found, Hinderbach ordered that the boy be examined for any injuries, claiming that if the child had wounds, then Jews caused the disappearance and harm.¹²⁷ Nothing further came of this incident, but the same cannot be said for the events of 1475. Early in the year prior to Simon's death, Hinderbach wrote to the head of the Observants in the region, specifically requesting that Bernardino da Feltre return to preach the year's Lenten sermons in the Trent cathedral; they granted the request and Bernardino returned to Trent in January 1475.¹²⁸

The coinciding presence of Bernardino in Trent during both incidences of child-disappearance and accusation of Jews in the community merits attention. No evidence exists of Bernardino delivering anti-Jewish sermons prior to his 1475 Lenten stay in the town. After the death of Simon, Giovanni di Salis credited Bernardino with the resolution of Simon's murder and arrest of Trentine Jews.¹²⁹ Bernardino subsequently spent the remainder of his life preaching against Jews, insisting all Christians stop associating with them—this despite reportedly great relations between the Christian and Jewish communities in Trent before 1475.¹³⁰ According to the preacher, the Trentine population suffered for their affiliation with Jews in the same way later towns would suffer from plague for the guilty act. Carcano perpetuated the same anti-Jewish ideologies while serving as Hinderbach's primary mouthpiece for spreading the cult of Simon after the boy's death. Both Bernardino and Carcano simultaneously preached about the miracles of

and previously in Trent, 176. He would later visit Bernardino when he stopped to preach in Brescia, giving alms to the convent in which the preacher stayed, 177.

¹²⁷ Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo ditto*, 167.

¹²⁸ Later, to thank the vicar for sending Bernardino, Hinderbach sent him a silver cup with some of Simon's blood. Ibid., 167-168, 179.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 166-167, 177.

¹³⁰ Records and testimony discuss the familial relationships between certain Jewish citizens and Christians in Trent. Notably, the doctor, Tobias, and Brunetta are mentioned in multiple sources as having many Christian friends in the town. Some sources sadly note that Brunetta, among others, was confident the trial would be abandoned because of their many friends in Trent. For more on these letters and accounts, *ibid.*, 166-170.

little Simon throughout Northern Italy with multiple visits to Brescia and Valcamonica.¹³¹ In some instances, local authorities blamed their sermons for inciting violence against Jews.¹³² Carcano's zealous preaching resulted in his banishment from Venice, where the doge had prohibited preaching about Simon or anti-Jewish messages, though he later revoked this decree.¹³³ Together, these two men amplified the fearmongering Tiberino had established in his address and did so in the name of Christianity. Bernardino equally condemned Jews *and* non-Jews who behaved Jew-like; I believe his ideology directly correlated with Hinderbach's commission of the Kunne booklet and the woodcuts that avoided using Jewish physiognomy to denote Jewishness. For Bernardino anyone could be guilty of Jewishness, including wayward Christians, and Hinderbach's images perpetuated that uncertainty in and around Trent, accusing local Jews and the Christians who befriended them.¹³⁴

The power of the Observant Franciscans and their rejection of Jewish people ran far deeper than a few charismatic preachers. The Milanese order rejected a Portuguese Jewish convert named Amedeo Mendes da Silva, despite Amedeo founding and decorating a convent in Borno with the

¹³¹ Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo ditto*, 173. For an idea of the extent to which Bernardino traveled and preached in a single year, *ibid.*, Appendix 2, 244-248, which tracks the Observant's sermons during the year 1493.

¹³² This was not a novel occurrence in his career; in 1488, Bernardino was expelled from Florence after his anti-Jewish sermons incited riots and resulted in a crowd-mob-led execution of a Jewish man living in Florence. Overall, the monographic literature on the life of Bernardino is riddled with contention between his pro-Christian influences and the anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence he spread. *Ibid.*, 20-21.

¹³³ This Venetian mandate was both in accordance with papal restrictions on promoting Simon's cult and with pleas from local Jews to not allow anti-Jewish preaching in town. M. Christina Bruno, "The Friar's Companion: A Franciscan Observant Vademecum in Late Medieval Italy" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2018), 255 and Teter, *Blood Libel*, 85. This was after Pope Sixtus IV issued a breve in October 1475 that forbade all veneration of Simon until his proxy, Bishop de Guidici, could determine the facts of the case in Trent. For more on this, see Teter, *Blood Libel*, 73, esp. ff. 132 and Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo ditto*, 172-173.

¹³⁴ Tied up in this notion is the apparent comfort of Simon as Tobias lures him to Samuel's home. Similarly, Thomas of Monmouth's tale of William described the boy as a frequent visitor to Jewish homes as part of his family's business. In these stories, audiences found an underlying accusation against Christian families that associated with Jews—allegedly, it was their actions and familiarity with Jews that led to the death of their children.

approval of the Milanese Sforza line.¹³⁵ In an attempt to reform the very order that rejected him, Amedeo sought to unify Christians and Jews by focusing on aspects of continuity between Christianity and Judaism to promote a peaceful co-existence.¹³⁶ His (posthumous) publication, *Apocalypsis Nova* explicated the heart of his argument and foretold of a pope who would join together with a secular ruler to restore harmony throughout the world. Amedeo clearly felt the pulse of the region while writing; control and influence in Northern Italy divided secular and religious rulers, and the trial in Trent made this division especially apparent. Despite his sage awareness, his identity as a convert incited outrage amongst the local Observant Franciscan Order, and further propagated their anti-Jewish preaching.¹³⁷

Churches and chapels dedicated to the Franciscan order saturated Valcamonica. Simply visiting a church exposed parishioners to the splendid array of images dedicated to Franciscan saints and cycles emphasizing Franciscan catechesis, with abundant Crucifixion, Deposition, and Lamentation scenes.¹³⁸ With an overwhelming presence of Observant Franciscan anti-Jewish rhetoric and visual emphasis on the human suffering of Christ in Valcamonica, local Christians made wholesale purchase into the cult of Simon. While preachers migrated from place to place, church frescoes served as a permanent reminder of the sermons they delivered. Through fixed

¹³⁵ Through his support from the Sforza family, Amedeo would end up becoming a reformer of the order, founding his own branch that was eventually dissolved in the late-sixteenth century. For more on Amedeo and his influence, see Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, "Le 'Dispute' Teologiche nell'iconografia devozionale di Raffaello," in *Raffaello e L'Europa: Atti del IV Corso Internazionale di Alta Cultura*, eds. Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico, 1990), 103-130.

¹³⁶ Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, "Il ruolo dei Francescani in Vallecmonica," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 106, no. 1 (1994): 127-139, 136.

¹³⁷ Ferri Piccaluga has suggested that further anti-Jewish visual rhetoric appeared throughout the region in more covert forms, such as *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds and Wild Animals* in Bienno's Santa Maria Annunciata, which she proposed as indicative of the story being used in anti-Jewish sermons. "Il ruolo dei Francescani," 137.

¹³⁸ Ferri Piccaluga, "Il ruolo dei Francescani," 127. Ferri Piccaluga argued that even those artworks in churches affiliated with orders other than the Observant Franciscans were still influenced by the Franciscan Order due to their overwhelming presence in the valley.

imagery of Simon, Valcamonica's laity venerated the boy as fervently as those in Trent, all of whom considered him a second Messiah dead at the hands of Jews.

2.1.4 Faith through Frescoes

The agency of prints and sermons posed an immediate danger to contemporary Jews, many of whom urged their secular leaders to defend them against these intimidations. In November 1475, Doge Pietro Mocenigo addressed Venice's mainland territories citing the recent papal brief forbidding images of Simon and added,

“No person, lay and secular of whatever station, must paint pictures on the walls or elsewhere, nor sell such pictures of the martyr or blessed [child]. Nor must anyone preach... nor sell anything written about that small child called Simon who has died at the hands of Jews in the city of Trent.”¹³⁹

Importantly, Mocenigo did not refute the accusations that Trentine Jews killed the boy, but rather, simply forbade anyone to produce arts or profit from the tale.¹⁴⁰ David Areford has aptly noted that Mocenigo mentioned images before preaching and text, highlighting the agency of images as powerful devotional objects that persuade and influence beyond the reach of authorities.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ “[C]he non dobia pensare ne far pensare in carto, in muro, ne altramente, ne vendere imagine alcuna da Martyro ne beato, ne predicar per zaratani, ne per modo de versi, overo epistole scrivere, ne scritte vendere, de quello Fantolino appellato Simono et Morto per le mane de li zudei, ne la cita de Trento.” Bowd and Cullington, “On Everyone's Lips,” 14-15. Sixtus IV's papal brief was issued in the month before Mocenigo's address and prohibited Italian princes to promote Simon's cult, spread information regarding the accusations toward the Jews, or refer to Simon as *beatus*. Teter, *Blood Libel*, 73.

¹⁴⁰ Mocenigo took this stance during the height of the events in 1475. However, as Areford noted, a 1480 poem about another alleged boy-murder victim near Treviso ends with a dedication to Mocenigo, implying a greater level of sympathy for those against Jews. For more on this event, see Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 195, and Paul Oskar Kristeller, “The Alleged Ritual Murder of Simon of Trent (1475) and Its Literary Repercussions: A Bibliographical Study,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 59 (1993):103-135.

¹⁴¹ Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 167.

Despite these warnings, the doge's pronouncement did not dissuade mainland Christians from chasing the little boy's cult. Area churches commissioned frescoes of Simon to harness a piece of his power for their town. Unlike the multipage booklets described above, space often limited fresco artists to one scene, which had to condense an entire narrative into a single, palpable image that would simultaneously inspire cultic devotion and anti-Jewish sentiment without the aid of adjacent textual commentary. The compositional solutions for Simon's tale fit within three categories: (1) depicting his martyrdom *in cruce*, (2) his corpse immediately after death or awaiting adoration, and (3) showing the boy as a triumphant martyr.¹⁴² In the twenty-five years after his death, Italian Alpine towns commissioned an excess of eighty works of art depicting Simon (Figure 2.15). Of these, patrons preferred Simon Triumphant, with forty-three works depicting the boy in this manner.¹⁴³ Those that focused on his death and martyrdom did so by borrowing from Passion imagery, as initiated in Kunne's woodcuts, showing viewers that Jews murdered innocent little Simon just like Christ.¹⁴⁴ This association validated hatred towards the contemporary antagonists and abrogated the protection secular rulers and papal bulls previously afforded Jewish

¹⁴² See Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, *Il confine del nord: Microstoria in Vallecamonica per una storia d'Europa* (Vallecamonica: BIM, 1989) for essays that expand on the different paintings throughout the region. See also Katz, *Jew in the Art*, 119-157.

¹⁴³ This data comes from the 2019 digital humanities work by Magda Teter for her book, *Blood Libel*, and is accessible at www.thebloodlibeltrail.org. Here, website visitors can set parameters on maps designed by Shawn Hill at Fordham University to explore legal evidence, literary sources, court proceedings and outcomes, and iconographic instances depicting Simon of Trent across various media. This dissertation is indebted to Teter's careful historiography of the Simon of Trent episode and its placement in the larger blood libel context of premodern Europe. To expand her work into art historical scholarship, I unpack the iconography and religious implications of these artworks and situate them within a long history of early modern anti-Jewish visual rhetoric and othering that took place in Christian churches of Northern Italy. Much of Teter's information regarding images of Simon is based on Valentina Perini's extensive research in *Il Simonino: Geografia di un culto* (Trento: Società di studi trentini di scienze storiche, 2012).

¹⁴⁴ For example, the martyrdom of Simon often depicts the child standing, almost as if willingly, and being bled to death by his surrounding Jewish captors. For more, see Miri Ruben, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 77; Katz, *Jew in the Art*, 123.

communities.¹⁴⁵ Ultimately, these frescoes fomented the Christian belief that the impious Jewish community rejected Christ and posed an immediate threat to local Christians and their children.

Pairing Simon's cult with the desire for comprehensive expulsion of Jews is evident in Tiberino's letter to poet, Raffaele Zovenzoni, which serves as the primary extant document of his 1475 address in Brescia that detailed the horrific events of Simon's abduction, murder, and ritual blood libel. In his greeting, Tiberino wrote with hope that this event, once known throughout Christendom, would incite enough rage "so that the ancient, savage race of the Jews may be eliminated from the whole Christian world, and remembrance of them utterly vanish from the land of the living."¹⁴⁶ Unlike previous instances of boy-murder that remained local affairs, the death of Simon brought about widespread demand for removal of Jews well beyond Trent.

While prints and woodcuts worked to spread the tale of Simon, they inevitably gestured back to Trent and the boy's shrine. Peripatetic sermons relocated the trauma to every local town and village where preachers spoke. Through fresco, communities built a lasting identification with the cult of Simon, ensuring danger for Jews outside Trent. For many, these frescoes sufficiently activated the cult of Simon at home. As Elia Caviolo noted in his sixteenth-century chronicle, a year after the death of Simon, a massive hailstorm nearly decimated all of Brescia's crops. In response, a painting of Simon in Brescia's Santa Maria del Carmine miraculously "shed tears from his eyes" and the entire community came to bear witness.¹⁴⁷ The boy martyr actively manifested in Brescia and throughout Valcamonica despite being nearly 100 miles from his Trentine shrine.

¹⁴⁵ Teter, *Blood Libel*, 42-43. While this event strengthened Christian prejudice towards Jews, the only notable reaction among the Jewish community was attempting to regain lost protections from secular rulers, along with composing lamentations for the Jews that lost their lives as a result of the trials in Trent. According to Teter, "this was a typical Ashkenazi response to anti-Jewish libels," *Blood Libel*, 87.

¹⁴⁶ "...et antiqua Iudaeorum rabies toto ex orbe Christiano deleatur, et de terra viventium eorum penitus memoria pereat." Bowd and Cullington, "On Everyone's Lips," 40-57.

¹⁴⁷ "i Giudei, che stavano in Trento preso ascostamente un certo putto chiamato Simone, a Venticinque di Marzo giorno della Passione di nostro Signore, l'uccisero. Qual fatto saputo si da Giovan Sala Dottore nostro gentil'huomo,

Rovato, a Brescian town just below the base of Lago d'Iseo, contains one of the earliest known frescoes in this region, completed in 1478.¹⁴⁸ Along the main nave in the Sanctuary of Santo Stefano, various church saints stand in glory, each posed alone in their own rectangular frame. Among these on the back wall of the façade, little Simon appears nude aside from a small loincloth, upon an altar where a white linen cloth gently drapes over the top, still holding the creases from where someone previously folded it (Figure 2.16). Hovering in front of his throat hangs the white kerchief the Jewish men allegedly used to choke the boy's cries, but in this image the fabric serves as a reminder, no longer a threat.¹⁴⁹ Two additions to this depiction of Simon deviate from previous visual iterations and carry substantial devotional implications for viewers. First, the boy's nudity and slightly awkward stance emphasize the two bleeding wounds on the inside of his calves; second, the child clutches a wafer of the Holy Eucharist.

Simon depicted with bloody wounds offered viewers a theologically innovative image when compared to the Kunne woodcuts that circulated throughout the region. Rather than fixate on the perfect, incorruptible corpse of the child, I argue these regional frescoes sought to emphasize the wounds he received, and especially the blood that flowed from them during his martyrdom as a means of Christocentric devotion and generalized anti-Jewish sentiment. The placement and presence of these wounds remained important; when they found Simon's body, the *podestà*,

all'hora Podesta di Trento, commando, che folsero con varij, et atroci, ma pero meritati supplicij morti. L'anno seguente ancora quasi tutto il raccolto del nostro, Contado su rovinato dalla grandine grossa quanto un'ovo di gallina. Et su vista l'immagine del Beato Simone Trentino dipinta nella Chiesa de Santa Maria de Carmini a gettar lagrime da gl'occhi. Onde la Città nostra vi concorreux anco di notte con lumi accesi a veder tal miracolo." Elia Capriolo, *Delle historie Bresciane: Ne' quali si vede l'origine et antichità della città di Brescia, come su delle prime che venissero alla fede, il numero de martiri, et de Vescovi canonizzati; Le guerre, i sacchi, e le rovine di quella, tutti i suoi Signor, et come pervenne sotto il felicissimo dominio Venetiano* (Brescia, Italy: Marchetti, 1585), 180.

¹⁴⁸ During this same year, Brescia suffered under the Plague of Mazzucco. As a result, many area churches commissioned new imagery of plague-related saints for protection and healing. Alberto Vaglia, "La pesta del 1478 a Brescia dal diario di Giacomo Melga," *Le Infezioni in medicina*, n. 2 (2011): 128-133.

¹⁴⁹ Tiberino specifically wrote in his description of the murder that Samuel used his kerchief to quiet Simon. Bowd and Cullington, "On Everyone's Lips," 51-52.

Giovanni di Salis, specifically asked Bernardino da Feltre about the boy's injuries, which the priest concluded meant the boy was killed by Jews.¹⁵⁰ According to Merback, this "cryptography of wounds"—circumcision or amputated penis, slit throat, and/or various stabs or missing hunks of flesh—allowed fifteenth-century viewers to recognize a ritual murder that presented as distinctly Jewish.¹⁵¹ In Simon's case, the interrogators tortured Trentine Jews until their testimonies accounted for every wound on the boy's body and aligned the martyrdom as *imitatio Christi*.¹⁵² In a 1481 letter to Hinderbach, poet Giovanni Calfurnio wrote that "Moses cut out and tore quivering flesh from Simon's right leg with its living blood," indicating that Simon's specific wounds had become both common knowledge and indelible signs of eyewitness accounts and invariable Truth.¹⁵³

In Rovato, Simon has flesh missing from both legs, consistent with other descriptions of his corpse.¹⁵⁴ His placement on the wall, elevated above average human height, placed those bleeding wounds directly eye-level and inescapable; to be sure, Simon's pale skin, the white altar cloth, and the white kerchief all stand as backdrop to the splattering of red blood on his legs. If viewers somehow overlooked the wounds, Simon's left hand gently gestures for them to behold his injuries. In Rovato, as in other towns discussed below, local Christians already accepted Simon's miraculous nature and as such, his wounds took center stage in fresco imagery. The martyr's blood, now holy and collected as a relic in Trent, provided the same promise as that of Christ—healing and salvation. The Rovato Simon also included a new attribute—that of a

¹⁵⁰ Melchiorre, *A un cenno del suo ditto*, 175.

¹⁵¹ Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom*, 138-139, 141.

¹⁵² Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 168-169.

¹⁵³ "...iterum Moses dextro de crure trementem execat et vivo lacerat cum sanguine pulpam." Bowd and Cullington, "On Everyone's Lips," 94-95.

¹⁵⁴ For a list of other sources notating Simon's injuries, see Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 177.

Eucharistic wafer. By standing nude and bloody in his martyrdom and clutching the transubstantiated body of Christ, Simon became a living host for visual consumption in Santo Stefano.¹⁵⁵ While art and myths earlier in the century focused on Jewish host desecration tales, Simon manifested a new iteration of that story.¹⁵⁶ Rather than simply attack a piece of blessed bread, Christians believed the Trentine Jews attacked a Christian child as a reenactment of Christ's crucifixion. In this singular image, Simon replaced the profaned host and became the *novello cristo*.

Visitors to Santo Stefano in Rovato viewed Simon as they exited the church, but they already had a predilection for venerating the child before seeing him. At the high altar, the fifteenth-century apse frescoes dedicated to Christ's crucifixion included scenes from the life of Saint Stephen, the church's namesake. According to the book of Acts, Stephen spent his life preaching to Hellenistic Jews, performing miracles, and offering conversion for those that believed.¹⁵⁷ In Rovato, the altar frescoes included *St. Stephen Preaching to the Jews* and the *Martyrdom of St. Stephen*, along with the *Crucifixion*, and the *Last Supper*. In *St. Stephen Preaching to the Jews*, Stephen stands garbed in holy vestments, gesturing toward Heaven as he delivers his message (Figure 2.17). On either side of him sit Jewish men, gesturing and debating as they process what they hear. While the Kunne images avoided caricatured physiognomy for

¹⁵⁵ This notion coincides with ocular communion, which will receive consideration in forthcoming iterations of this project. Ocular communion, which dates back as early as the writings of Thomas Aquinas, relates to the moment during Mass when the priest raises the Eucharist host for the laity to see, with the understanding that they visually consumed the host. For a brief overview of the history of this concept and its relationship to "spiritual communion," see Christopher J. Nygren, "Vibrant Icons: Titian's Art and the Tradition of Christian Image-Making" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 366-369. For recent studies of ocular communion, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp. 63-82 and 147-55; Barbara Maria Savy, *Manducatio per visum. Temi Eucaristici nella pittura di Romanino e Moretto* (Padua, Italy: Bertonecello Artigrafiche, 2006); and Aden Kumler, *Translating Truth: Ambitious Images and Religious Knowledge in late Medieval France and England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), esp. 103-159.

¹⁵⁶ These earlier host tales are described in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

¹⁵⁷ Acts 6-7.

the Trentine Jews, the artist in Rovato relied on them to denote general Jewishness. Stephen's face appears smooth, supple, and without remarkable features; the Jews around him all bear hooked or bulbous noses, deep black or long gray beards, deviously curling chins, and a variety of foreign-denoting hats and turbans. Two images over, the same black hair and beard appear on Judas in the *Last Supper*, while viewers see Christ instituting the Holy Eucharist. Together, the four scenes in this apse comprise a tale of Jewish disbelief and lack of faith that results in the murder of both Christ and later Stephen at the hands of Jews.

In Rovato, there had been no ritual murder, no trial, and no named Jews to fear. Instead, the focus here remained on the cults of the saints, their connections to Christ, and the desire for miracles that would improve daily living. Through these apse images, Jews undoubtedly persisted as the enemy of the Church, and without local events to name specific Jews, artists relied on the generalized "Jew" in Christian art.¹⁵⁸ Caricatured physiognomy and dress allowed the viewer to imagine all Jews when seeing the tormentors of Christ and Stephen—both biblical and contemporary. After completing their visit to the church, parishioners would return down the nave and on their left see Simon of Trent standing just as Stephen had on the left side of the apse. The boy martyr, now depicted as the living host, transported treacherous Jews from the lives of Christ and Stephen forward to the late fifteenth century. To Simon's right stands an image of the Virgin and Child, visually linking the martyred boys. This image arrangement taught citizens of Rovato that the Jewish threat to their religious saints remained present in their lives and all Jews posed immediate danger to their children.

This manner of Simon as a nude, bloodied boy martyr in the guise of Christ recurs throughout this region. At the foot of Lago d'Iseo in Provaglio's Monastery of San Pietro in

¹⁵⁸ See Chapter 1 of this dissertation for a discussion of these stereotypical depictions.

Lamosa, Simon as a glorious martyr appears among the frescoes; once among saints surrounding the *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, and later, alone in his rectangular frame like the Rovato Simon (Figures 2.18-2.19). In each of these, the child's depicted wounds have expanded to include bloody pockmarks all over his torso and limbs, indicative of the stabbing needles that bled him dry, and he wears the kerchief around his neck like a scarf.¹⁵⁹ The artist here elected to highlight only one leg wound—that on his right leg—in agreement with Calfurnio's letter from 1481. Rather than the Eucharistic host, these versions of Simon hold palm branches as markers of martyrdom. In the *Madonna and Child*, the boy also carries a victory standard. Standing opposite Simon on the other side of the fresco, viewers once again encountered St. Stephen as a compositional reminder that both died at the hands of Jews. In the solo fresco of Simon, the child holds the sacrificial knife that drew his holy blood, and resting on the altar at his feet lie five nails, pinchers, and a saucer for catching his blood. As in Rovato, the Provaglio images represented a threat of what contemporary Jews could do to Christian children if permitted to remain living among them.

For Valcamonica, this was the typical approach for Simon Triumphant imagery. Occasionally, the artist depicted Simon clothed among other martyrs as in Bienno's Chiesa di Santa Maria Annunciata (Figure 2.20). On the left nave wall, the boy martyr stands on a pedestal bearing his name, which prevents him from being dwarfed by the other adult saints in the scene, including Stephen, Faustino, Giovita, and Rocco.¹⁶⁰ With his left arm, Simon reaches up and grasps the standard being held by Giovita; in his other hand, he clutches a pair of pinchers. In this

¹⁵⁹ This imagery is also congruent with Saint Sebastian's arrow wounds. In light of the 1478 plague, there was likely a relationship between local fears and depicting Simon's body in the guise of other plague-saints. Notably, Jews were often blamed for disease and pestilence. For more, see David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), esp. the epilogue.

¹⁶⁰ There is another image of Simon in Santa Maria Annunciata that depicts him in the typical rectangular frame wearing same outfit and holding pinchers. Other saints in their own frames cover the remainder of the wall.

clothed image of Simon, he stands intimately close to Christ's body hanging limply on the cross, reminding viewers to make the connection between the two. The pinchers represent those used to rip off his flesh, and without visible wounds, visitors had to imagine the torture for themselves.

Many of the Simon frescoes throughout Valcamonica are attributed to the workshop of Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo, such as the one in Bienno, and as a result, they share many attributes. However, a few examples necessitate greater attention. While many patrons opted for Simon Triumphant depictions, certain churches chose scenes of his martyrdom for their version of his tale. In these, visitors saw the child suffering in derision as Jews take the boy's blood. Unlike the martyrdom scene from the Kunne woodcuts, artists of these frescoes did not depict Jews as nondescript people in Jewish hats with their names inscribed, but rather as sinister-looking, specifically contemporary Jews and Jew-like people that could be anyone living throughout fifteenth-century Alpine Italy.¹⁶¹

In the Parrocchia di San Martino in Cervero, a small chapel dedicated to the Madonna del Carmelo exists. At the altar, a massive *Crucifixion of Christ* covers the top half of the wall (Figure 2.21). Below, two scenes stand in dialectical opposition to one another: the *Annunciation* and the *Ritual Murder of Simon of Trent* (Figure 2.22). Simon, splayed *in cruce* visually repeats the image of Christ above, producing an undeniable visual rhetoric connecting the two murdered figures. The conversation continues with the *Annunciation* to the left. The Virgin faces inward, piously receiving the Holy Spirit as Gabriel (mostly damaged) delivers the news. The presence of a portentous jeweled crucifix rising out of a chalice directly between Mary and the angel and under the image of God the Father spoils any potential joy in the scene. Notably, this *Annunciation*

¹⁶¹ This was a similar trend in Simon of Trent imagery throughout regions outside of Trent. For more on the types of printed images that appeared beyond North Italian Alpine towns, see Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 184-214.

deviates from the well-established convention of Gabriel on the left and Mary on the right that aligns with reading the Latin text.¹⁶² I suggest that this right to left arrangement, instead, correlates with the Hebrew language and that of the Jews in the Simon scene to encourage a specific visual interpretation.

Despite her presence and arrest in textual accounts of the death of Simon, Samuel's wife Brunetta, did not participate as part of the murdering group in the Kunne woodcuts.¹⁶³ However, in this cycle, the Jewess appears as an accomplice to the crime. The unique orientation of the *Annunciation*—not due to compositional necessity—encourages viewers to consider the Simon panel next to it in visual conversation, rather than as two distinct narratives.¹⁶⁴ As a visual reflection to Mary across the altar wall, Brunetta lurks among the Jewish men with her back to Simon. Though the fresco is damaged, her head turns so that she can make eye contact with visitors. The contrast between the two women holds their identities in tension, and this mode of looking exposes a perceived-moral discrepancy in the hearts of Christian and Jewish women.

The right-to-left orientation of the *Annunciation* and its potential relationship to reading Hebrew text would reinforce that viewers should explicitly consider the Jewishness of these

¹⁶² There are other Italian instances of Mary and Gabriel reversed from conventional imagery, but in each of these, the choice seems to be primarily compositionally-driven—often as a means of consistency in a continuous narrative or for balance across altarpiece wings. This arrangement did occur commonly in Northern European depictions as a compositional choice, and a version of these may have appeared in this region by way of prints or copies. (For an example, see Aelbrecht Bouts's *Annunciation* (1480, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).) As I discuss in Chapters 3 and 5, northern compositions heavily influenced later artists of this region, such as Girolamo Romanino and Lorenzo Lotto. For more on Lotto's *Annunciation* that uses this same arrangement, see section 5.4.2.1 of this dissertation. Because nothing else in this chapel fresco cycle is characteristically northern in composition, I argue for a theological visual rhetoric to explain the choice in Cervenó, which was meant to inspire a specific mode of looking. However, I do not rule out that a northern example could have provided the initial idea for the arrangement. In his dissertation, Don Denny explored other theological motivations for reversed *Annunciations*, though he does not mention this instance in Cervenó. Don Denny, *The Annunciation from the Right from Early Christian Times to the Sixteenth Century*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977).

¹⁶³ Her appearance in the Nuremberg Chronicle post-dates these earlier frescoes in Valcamonica.

¹⁶⁴ The scenes on the other chapel walls, described below, each read as individual stories in the narrative, and do not refer back to one another for additional interpretation.

images and compare them as such. This comparison would have been heightened by other details in Simon's story. Those that crafted tales of the boy's death gave Simon's mother the name Mary. While Jesus's mother Mary, a Jewess herself, accepted God's divine will and agreed to raise a son that she did not conceive naturally, Brunetta willingly attended and condoned the mutilation and murder of an innocent boy—the son of another Mary—in the manner which the Virgin Mary's son, Jesus, was killed. This contrast of Jewish women and the sons of two different Marys—both allegedly murdered at the hands of Jews—I believe, encapsulated the devotional message of this small chapel. The visual rhetoric made Brunetta a necessary inclusion, and the compositional arrangement of the *Annunciation* and Simon frescoes brings the rationale for her presence to the forefront; she serves as the antithesis to a godly mother who suffers at the death of a child. The *Crucifixion* above heightens this comparison of both Marys' loss, but the Christian despair begins with the foreboding crucifix embedded within the *Annunciation*.

The other images in the space reinforce this interpretation. To enter, visitors pass through a threshold delineating the presbytery from the rest of the chapel hall. In this liminal space, the archway contains images and names of the sibyls, women who have already foretold what the visitor will witness. Male Hebrew prophets are noticeably absent. Once inside, visitors observe the life of Anna and Joachim on the left wall, and the life of Mary on the right. Above, God the Father with the Holy Spirit occupy the central space, surrounded by Church Fathers and Evangelists who silently observe these revelations below them, with scrolls of their writings fluttering around the figures.¹⁶⁵ Unlike many cycles, the artist did not present the life and Passion of Christ beyond the Crucifixion. Instead, messages of womanhood, feminine intuition, motherly

¹⁶⁵ It is possible these ceiling figures were an earlier work or were added later. Of what little commentary exists, the arch, side walls, and altar wall are all attributed to Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo and/or his workshop, with no mention of the ceiling.

desperation and sacrifice, and redemption inundate visitors of this small chapel. Simon suffering through his martyrdom represented the *novello Cristo* and provided a contemporary connection to centuries-old tales. The feminine counterpart, however, rested on Brunetta, who stood in for all Jewish women. Rather than suffer or grieve over the dying child—a response that would be congruent with the rest of the presbytery cycle—the Jewess ignores the event, engaging with the viewer, challenging them. Her unyielding cruelty embodied the Christian-perceived cold and heartless female soul of the Jewish tradition and provided a visually mirrored antithesis to Mary, the ideal Christian woman.

Compared to the earlier Kunne woodcuts, none of the Jewish figures in the Cervenò fresco bear names. Dana Katz noted that this choice removed any link between the scenes and the events/Jews in Trent, turning a specific incident into one condemning all Jews.¹⁶⁶ The story of Simon inundated Christian life so thoroughly that the artist could remove the extrinsic labels and the narrative remained clear. In terms of early modern portraiture, omitting the names reversed the typical desire for known identity¹⁶⁷ and instead altered the now-common characters into generalized enemies. This name-removal intentionally excised the story from its temporal and geographic origin, transformed and transplanted the legendary threat of Jews into any time or place, and ensured the memory of supposed Jewish threat to Christian children would live long after the incident in Trent.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Katz, *Jew in the Art*, 154.

¹⁶⁷ As Evelyn Welch explained, Renaissance frescoes that included portraits—especially group portraits—necessitated names to preserve the identity of the figures. Without those names, the people would be unrecognizable to most audiences, and with time, the stories could fade into obscurity. Welch, “Naming Names,” 91-92. In Valcamonica, artists omitted the names not to condemn the story to neglect, but rather to pluck it from its history and reimagine it in their own towns.

¹⁶⁸ Welch discussed a Milanese fresco where the intentional omission of names secured legendary “magnificence” for generations of the Sforza family. In Cervenò, the omission certainly makes the narrative enduring but for nefarious purposes rather than family glory. *Ibid.*, 96-97.

Those closely familiar with Simon's story could identify specific characters like the elderly Moses and female Brunetta without their names; however, the visual scheme in Valcamonica does not conjure up the executed Jews in Trent but makes *all* Jews complicit and dangerous. For his depictions, da Cemmo returned to earlier theological and artistic approaches for depicting Jews—the same seen in *St. Stephen Preaching to Jews* from Rovato. Here, the caricatured physiognomies previously suitable for biblical Jews once again apply to contemporary Jews. While Simon appears angelic with his soft facial features and golden hair, several of his tormentors have the same hooked or snout-like noses, pointed chins, and wide-mouth sneers seen in earlier fifteenth-century works. Some figures escape this treatment, however, despite being part of the antagonistic collective. This inconsistent use of caricatured physiognomy aligned with Bernardino da Feltre's insistence on the guilt of Jew-like people as well as Jews. Even though Simon's story involved explicitly Jewish people in Trent, the Cerveneno fresco allowed for anyone who was Jew-like—either through association with Jews or converted Jews—to be equally guilty and thus, threats to ritually murdering Christian children.

Other characteristic Jewish imagery appears in the Cerveneno scene. Moses, standing to the left, dons an elaborate hat; he and the Jew to the far right both wear lavish brocaded jackets indicative of their wealth and excess. To firmly situate the scene in the fifteenth century, the men wear the required yellow circular badge to denote their Jewishness (or Jewish-likeness, according to Bernardino). Tobias, who sits on the left of the bench and concentrates on pulling Simon's flesh from his leg, wears typical clothing for a quattrocento physician befitting of his actual profession in Trent.¹⁶⁹ Together, all these visual choices—the addition of Brunetta, the lack of names, the parsimonious inclusion of caricatured physiognomy, and the contemporary accretions—

¹⁶⁹ Laura Dal Pra, "L'immagine di Simonino," 452-453.

conveyed a message of fear and hatred of all Jews and their associates, male and female alike, and not just those in Trent.

Other area frescoes included Brunetta as an accomplice to the crime. In the now-removed fresco of the Chiesa Santa Maria della Rotonda in Pian Camuno, Brunetta stands in profile to the right of the splayed Simon, facing the elderly Jew standing opposite her on the left (Figure 2.23). In the scene, Simon has been strangled and everyone has gathered for the blood libel, though the torture has not yet begun. The older Jewish man to the left gestures towards Simon and speaks, as if giving instructions for what is about to proceed, while Brunetta holds aloft one of the many nails that will be used to pierce the boy's flesh. Six more men fill the back of the frame, some holding Simon still by restraining his wrists or tightening the kerchief around his neck. Though there is damage to the fresco, all the men appear to wear the circular badge, and everyone has fanciful hats. Many of the faces are damaged, but of those that remain, some have pointed noses and chins, long beards, or bulbous cheeks and jowls while others are spared the physical demarcations. Everyone is dressed contemporary to the fifteenth century, and, as in Cervenno, Christian visitors would see unnamed, generalized Jews as the threat to their lives.

All along Lago d'Iseo, churches commissioned these frescoes of Simon's murder. Others, such as the ones in Esine and Pisogne, appear too damaged to tell if Brunetta was present (Figures 2.24-2.25). However, in each of these, the primary characteristics for labeling Simon's murders as "generalized Jews" remain: circular badges, selective caricatured physiognomy, contemporary dress, and rich brocades. In Pisogne, the *Martyrdom of Simon of Trent* was painted directly above an image of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, again creating a visual emphasis between the two children allegedly murdered by Jews. In all these martyrdom frescoes, the message was unescapable—Simon, himself a son of a woman named Mary, suffered, and died at the hands of

treacherous Jews, just like Christ.¹⁷⁰ For Valcamonica Christian viewers, the threat of contemporary Jewish and Jew-like men and women loomed as equally as it had in Trent, and these images strengthened an already resilient anti-Jewish ideology perpetuated by sermons from men like Bernardino da Feltre.

2.2 The Decline of Simon

The opening to Tiberino's 1475 address explicitly called for the expulsion of Jews from Northern Italy.¹⁷¹ Spread of his text and the news from Trent resulted in accordingly drastic exile in towns such as Salò, Orzinuovi, and Bassano del Grappa.¹⁷² In many other areas, copycat accusations of boy-murders or attempted blood libels rose, and though most remained unproven, the accusations upended many lives.¹⁷³ One exception comes from the story of Sebastiano Novello, dubbed the new Sebastian of Christian martyrs, whose death in 1480 Portobuffolè resembled the case of Simon and resulted in the execution of four Jews.¹⁷⁴ Simon's tale ignited these continued occurrences, the Christ-like nature of the deaths, and the commentary related to them.

¹⁷⁰ While Simon's father is the one involved in the search for the missing boy, other records name Simon's mother as Mary. However, given that extant records were those preserved by Hinderbach, it is possible the name was chosen to further link the boy to the life of Christ.

¹⁷¹ Bowd and Cullington, "*On Everyone's Lips*," 40-41.

¹⁷² Anna Esposito, "Lo stereotipo dell'omicidio rituale nei processi tridentini e il culto del 'beato' Simone," in *Processi contro gli ebrei di Trento (1475-1478)*, ed. Anna Esposito and Diego Quaglioni (Padua: Cedam, 1990), 85-88.

¹⁷³ For a discussion of these and other anti-Jewish events following Trent, see Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder*; Dundes, *The Blood Libel Legend*, and Teter, *Blood Libel*, esp. 152-207.

¹⁷⁴ Kristeller, "Alleged Ritual Murder," 128-129; Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 195.

Tiberino also openly linked Christ and Simon, frequently referencing Christ's Passion throughout his epic description of Simon's abduction and ritual murder.¹⁷⁵ He also emphasized that both Simon and Christ were dichotomous children of women named Mary—Christ both human and divine, and little Simon both German and Italian.¹⁷⁶ While polemical debates on transubstantiation remained controversial, the cult of Simon filled in for the faith-based need to connect with the physical body of Christ while simultaneously calling for the expulsion of Jews.

Walter Stephens argued that these accusations and trials occurred as responses to radical doubt in matters meant to be dictated by faith, and Christians needed to use scapegoats like witches, Jews, and others to explain why God let bad things happen such as the death of a young child.¹⁷⁷ By the fifteenth century, neo-platonic thought, the discovery of new world, and the theological inquiries that led to the Reformation heightened these uncertainties in the minds of Christians and thus the need for a strong, unwavering Church response. In the small Alpine towns in Northern Italy, the local parishes used art as a fixed, visual supplement to reassure those uncertain in their beliefs and place the blame on a distinct other.

After the turn of the century, however, the pictorial popularity of Simon waned and new commissions depicting the boy drastically reduced in number. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, North Italian churches only ordered eighteen (known) Simon frescoes—less than a third of the number commissioned prior to 1500.¹⁷⁸ As Simon imagery declined, the Italian Wars

¹⁷⁵ Lines from Virgil's *Aeneid* also make an appearance. Areford, *Viewer and the Printed Image*, 169.

¹⁷⁶ Teter, *Blood Libel*, 96.

¹⁷⁷ Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 260.

¹⁷⁸ These numbers are based on the data and maps compiled by Magda Teter as part of her book project, *Blood Libel*, and Shawn Hill at Fordham University. <http://thebloodlibeltrail.org/maps/> See footnote 143 for more. The argument could be made that most churches by this point already had a fresco of Simon and no longer needed to commission them; however, churches in this area were still commissioning new artworks in general. See Nicholas Penny, *The Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings. Volume 1: Paintings from Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona* (London: National Gallery Company, 2004), and Andrea Bayer, "North of the Apennines: Sixteenth-Century Italian Painting in

emerged, combining with mounting heretical debates and intensifying Christocentric devotion.¹⁷⁹ In his anti-Jewish sermons, Bernardino da Feltre's preached against everyone affiliated with and behaving like Jews, and in doing so, made it possible to project anti-Jewish animus onto others. While visual evidence of Simon diminished, the wager of this dissertation is that the theological concerns and social anxieties that occasioned the emergence of the cult of Simon throughout Valcamonica did not subside; rather, this antipathy towards outsiders visually transmogrified from Simon into a theologically complex scheme against several populations in response to shifting historical context.

Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 60 (Spring 2003): 7–64, esp. 23–38 for examples. It is a weak argument that a church would decide to not paint another version of a favorite saint simply because they already had one. The churches with multiple versions of Simon alone demonstrates this desire for repetition. Unfortunately, scarce records and extant works limit the data and numbers, so we may never know exactly how many Simon artworks were commissioned total. What is evident, though, is a reduction in Simon-related commissions and a visual-rhetorical turn in depicting others as enemies of the Church, which I argue in the following chapters.

¹⁷⁹ For a detailed discussion on this Christocentric turn, see Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011), esp. "Re-mediations of the Altarpiece," 73–100.

3.0 The Italian Wars and Cremona Cathedral 1494-1522: The (Re)Placement of Jews

“Germans and Lutherans... they do things that even the Jews would not do.”

Pandolfo Nassino, 1527

3.1 Anti-Jewish to Anti-Protestant

The death and subsequent cult of Simon of Trent highlighted a growing distrust throughout Northern Italy among Christians—a distrust of anyone who did not believe as they did. In Valcamonica, Christians readily used Simon art to generalize an alleged crime to all Jews living amongst them and united them with those who killed Jesus. However, the events surrounding Simon’s death also took place in a region fraught with political instability and increasing theological debates. As early as the twelfth century, imperial rulers battled the papacy and city-state duchies for control of Northern Italy.¹⁸⁰ By the fifteenth century, towns like Cremona primarily vacillated between Milanese and Venetian control until the end of the century when imperial forces once again got involved. The resulting warfare carried existential implications for politics and daily life. At the same time, the Catholic Church faced one of its greatest challenges to sustaining followers and faith through the start of the Protestant Reformation, discussed in Chapter 1. These two events inextricably united to cause death and destruction throughout

¹⁸⁰ This region—like most others in the Italian peninsula—had been fought over since antiquity. However, the medieval battles that carried into the periods explored in this dissertation began in the twelfth century following Charlemagne’s earlier conquest and the rise of Holy Roman control.

Northern Italy that partially distracted from the centuries-old anti-Jewish animus and reallocated mortal and anagogic fear to a new religious “other.”

This shift does not mean that the entire Christian population softened its stance vis-à-vis the Jewish population. Rather, in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I analyze early sixteenth-century paintings to demonstrate that the North Italian response to heresy was entangled with the perception of Jews and the debate over divine images. Their response was further motivated by accusations that the Alpine towns were rural, backwards, and too naïve to spiritually function without urban aid. Artistic shifts took place in the depiction of Jews, the choice in fresco subjects, and the fact that many extant frescoes of Simon were preserved alongside new frescoes that addressed Jewish and reformer theologies. Rather than cover these earlier frescoes with new images for the Church, artists were hired to paint around or beside them, consciously keeping Simon present well into the sixteenth century as a form of publicly visible identity-making for these smaller Alpine towns.¹⁸¹ However, a transition clearly took place from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century and a long series of wars and unrest served as the fulcrum from anti-Jewish to anti-Protestant art.

3.1.1 Italian Wars

Decades before Luther’s pivotal actions upended Christian life throughout Europe, political dangers plagued the Italian peninsula. In 1494, Charles VIII of France invaded Naples and fomented what would become known as the Italian Wars, a series of power struggles over Italian territory that lasted for over sixty years. Though the warfare began as a battle over the

¹⁸¹ On socially constructed communities, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2016).

southern tip of the peninsula, the North Italian regions soon took the brunt of the onslaught as troops crossed the Alps in aid of both imperial forces and Italian defense. France and Spain battled for control over Italy, and various alliances formed and shifted over the decades of war that ensued. These treaties and threats included France, Spain, England, the Holy Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the papacy, the Duchy of Milan, and the Republics of Venice, Florence, and Genoa, among a few others.¹⁸² While history often focuses on these political entities and the battles they waged, these wars—like many others—resulted in the death and destruction of innumerable small communities, villages, and unfortified towns that rarely receive mention in historical accounts.¹⁸³

The Florentine chronicler, Luigi Guicciardini (1478-1551), provided some of our knowledge of the specific atrocities that occurred during these wars. To document the 1527 Sack of Rome, Guicciardini detailed the events that led to the imperial conquest.¹⁸⁴ The Italian peninsula, under the papacy and city-state rule, had not developed a strong military presence to defend itself. As a result, those who put up a resistance against Spanish-led imperial forces relied on for-hire Swiss mercenaries (*Reisläufer*) to supplement their own men. To mobilize quickly and bolster their own numbers, Spain used their own hired mercenaries from Germany (*Landsknechte*).¹⁸⁵ Though this was a war over territory, the contemporaneity between the

¹⁸² For a full history of the sixty-five years of Italian Wars, see Christine Shaw and Michael Mallett, *The Italian Wars 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019). For a brief version, see Stephen D. Bowd, *Renaissance Mass Murder: Civilians and Soldiers During the Italian Wars* (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2018. DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198832614.001.0001), esp. 23-46.

¹⁸³ Bowd's work, cited above, is the twenty-first century exception in the case of the Italian Wars, and explicitly focuses on the wars' effect on daily life.

¹⁸⁴ Luigi Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, trans./ed. James H. McGregor (New York: Italica Press, 1993).

¹⁸⁵ These mercenaries were a dangerous, but necessary means to win the war. For Spain, Germans intimately knew the Alpine crosses and could more easily navigate their way into Italy and avoid main thoroughfares where the defending troops anticipated them. As followers of heterodox theologies, they also found satisfaction ransacking churches, looting treasures, and destroying artworks, relics, and sacraments in retaliation against the papacy. For France and Italy, the Swiss were nearby, available, and also knew how to quickly traverse the mountains. Even though many of these men also followed reformer theologies by the second half of the wars, the defense needed them. Both groups traveled with wives, concubines, and other entourages, setting up camp and lingering in the Italian towns they pillaged when not fighting. That the German and Swiss men had no innate loyalty to either side posed a risk for

Protestant Reformation in the north and the ongoing warfare south of the Alps added a theological undercurrent for those living through the experience each day.

Both sides of the conflict brought Swiss and German mercenaries across the Alps and marched them down the Italian peninsula, and as a result, the Reformation debates that ignited following Luther's actions in 1517 became an added component to the Italian Wars. By the 1520s, reformer theology and followers flooded into Northern Italy by way of troops, besides the sermons and printed materials already circulating through the peninsula. At first, Italians may not have fully recognized the impact that Luther and his beliefs would have on the Church. However, as theological debates heated up and mercenaries streamed into Italy, the association between the political enemy and the theological threat united. Even though reformers like Ulrich Zwingli led the Reformation in Switzerland, the Swiss mercenaries caused less harm in Italy since they fought on behalf of Italians. Instead, the opposing Germans became both a physical and theological enemy.

In his description of the soldiers moving throughout the region in the 1520s, Guicciardini consistently referred to the Germans as "Lutherans."¹⁸⁶ He used the term vehemently and emphasized that the Germans were "different" from the Catholic Spanish and Italian military.¹⁸⁷ According to Guicciardini, once the Germans witnessed the Spanish torturing and killing captives

everyone. Guicciardini described instances where mercenary armies refused to follow orders due to back pay the commanders owed them, or that they did as they pleased when it came to sacking and pillaging towns and raping and murdering inhabitants. Ibid. In twenty-first century scholarship, Bowd provided a sensitive treatment of the effects of these events on civilians. Bowd, *Renaissance Mass Murder*, esp. 79-112. Both the *Landsknechte* and the *Reisläufer* shared similar fighting styles and attire, which contributed to their rivalry beyond being hired by competing opponents. On these mercenaries, see J. R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1450-1620* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1998), 62-65, 106-173. For their place (and lack thereof) in society, see Andrew Hodnet, "The Othering of the Landsknechte" (MA thesis, North Carolina State University, 2018).

¹⁸⁶ Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, 32, 65, and 115, for example.

¹⁸⁷ A large number of Italian men joined the Spanish cause and fought against their own in retaliation against political entities that had wronged them, general apathy, and/or seeking booty. Guicciardini discussed how these soldiers compared to the Spanish and Germans, *The Sack of Rome*, 110-111.

for booty and women, the Germans not only joined in but acted even more treacherous. They relentlessly mutilated and murdered like the others, but worse yet, they defiled the churches. He explained, “There was no sin or villainy that these mad and impious Lutherans did not commit.”¹⁸⁸ To the Italians suffering in these wars, the Germans did not represent just the enemy; they also became a threat to the very institution that promised Christians salvation.

3.1.2 Il Garofalo

Even as war waged throughout Northern Italy, day-to-day life continued in between major battles. Many area churches maintained their routines and commissioned art when funds would allow. As described in Chapter 2, commissions of Simon dwindled, and by the 1520s only two new paintings depicting the boy are recorded, both in the territory of Trent.¹⁸⁹ Even still, artistic anti-Jewish animus persisted throughout Northern Italy in more generalized forms. In conjunction with the Italian Wars, anti-Protestant commentary also entered the visual rhetoric inside North Italian churches.

In the town of Ferrara, just southwest of Venice on the Po River, an artist known as Benvenuto Tisi, or Il Garofalo, painted a massive fresco for the Augustinian convent of Sant’Andrea.¹⁹⁰ The commission came from Duke Alfonso I d’Este, a man with complicated practices regarding Jews living in his town. Like his predecessors, Alfonso permitted Jewish

¹⁸⁸ Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, 115.

¹⁸⁹ This information is based on the detailed cataloging of Simon of Trent artworks in Valentina Perini, *Il Simonino: Geografia di un culto* (Trent: Società di studi trentini di scienze storiche, 2012). Other works may have been commissioned that are no longer extant or documented. However, given that non-extant artworks likely existed from the 1480s as much as the 1520s, we can statistically conclude that Simon commissions did diminish even if we are forced to work with incomplete knowledge.

¹⁹⁰ For a monograph of Garofalo’s works in Ferrara, see Tatiana Kustodieva and Mauro Lucco, *Garofalo: Pittore della Ferrara Estense* (Milan: Skira, 2008).

families to reside in Ferrara and he even permitted them to operate loan banks; conversely, the duke also funded the Roman Church's competing loan system, the Monti di Pietà, which further complicated relations between Christians and Jews living in Ferrara.¹⁹¹ This commission, however, made his loyalties to Papal Rome apparent and reveals how anti-Protestant rhetoric entered visual art and became entangled with anti-Jewish sentiment by the 1520s.

The fresco depicts *The Old and New Testament* (or *Crucifix with Ecclesia and Synagoga*) (1523) and includes an array of complex iconography related to both Judaism and Reformation theology (Figure 3.1). In the center of the scene, Christ hangs on the "Living Cross," a cross with hands extending from each end of the wooden planks. Above him, God presides over Heaven as two hands spring up from the cross to interact with the gate (Figure 3.2). The one on the viewer's left (Christ's right) has unlocked the gate and an angel appears to welcome entrants. On the other side, the door remains shut. Below, a similar arrangement appears—those on Christ's right are retrieved from Limbo and will gain entrance into Heaven; on Christ's left, the fresco is damaged but once contained the door to hell, and the cross-arm kept the damned from escaping, implying they will remain there for eternity (Figure 3.3).

On either side of Christ, traditional depictions of Ecclesia and Synagoga appear.¹⁹² Ecclesia, with an orb of the world in her hand indicating her global dominion, raises her other hand to catch the torrent of blood projecting from Christ's injured side (Figure 3.4). From her grasp,

¹⁹¹ For this history and an interesting study of how this painting used allegory, surrogate violence, and Augustinian thought to win Alfonso credit with the papacy, see Dana Katz, *The Jew in the Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 69-98. For more on the Monti di Pietà in Northern Italy and its role in anti-Jewish practices, see Section 2.1.3.

¹⁹² Beginning as early as the fifth century, Christian art sometimes included personifications of the Church and the Jewish Synagogue (especially in manuscript illuminations). These were always female, normally on either side of a crucifix, and were meant to demonstrate Christianity's spiritual victory and the ultimate demise of Judaism. The versions in Garofalo's work represent the standard modes of depicting the two figures. See Timmermann, cited below, for more examples.

the stream splits into three smaller rivulets each traveling below her to metaphysically (and literally) supply vignettes of three sacraments: baptism, confession, and the Eucharist. Tucked above these, Paul preaches to a group of pagans seated around him (Figure 3.5). The architecture demarcates them from the rest of the scene and gives Paul a special section for his mission to convert others. However, the same landscape continues from behind Paul's scene into the rest of the fresco, letting viewers make the connection that if these pagans convert, they will be privy to all the sacraments and blessings that come from Christ beyond the barrier that currently separates them.

The rest of the fresco contains a bleak picture of an antiquated Judaism and the destruction of the Temple. Synagoga sits blindfolded on a scrawny donkey that has been mortally wounded (Figure 3.6). Garofalo has identified her with an inscription of "monster" and her characteristic broken staff and falling crown, and her demise looms as the cross-hand brutally impales her through the heart. Her head turns as if she tries to perceive what happens around her, but the donkey faces away from Christ and the deadly "Living Cross" and will not carry her to answers. Instead, the donkey is about to step down into an empty tomb, taking Synagoga with it as she blindly rides without agency. Behind her, the Temple of Solomon falls into ruins, and a dark ominous sky forebodes even worse is yet to come on her side of the cross. Visually opposite the sacraments, viewers see a crowd of Jews approaching a priest about to sacrifice a ram and a boy being brought for circumcision, all of whom stand around the Ark of the Covenant that held the Law of Moses. Notably, none of the figures bear stereotypical Jewish physiognomy aside from a few lengthy gray beards. The array of other Jewish attributes, including the priest and attendant's conical hats and a few turbans in the far background, meant that Garofalo did not need physiognomy to convey the figures' Jewishness.

All around the scene, various scrolls and inscriptions use Old and New Testament scriptures to reinforce the overt visual rhetoric taking place in this image.¹⁹³ Christians who accept Christ and follow the sacraments gain entrance into Heaven, and the Jews who refuse and continue to practice the laws of Judaism are allegedly Hell-bound. Stephen Campbell described this work as, “perhaps the most extreme and forthright statement of Christian anti-Judaism to be produced in Italy,” and he also situated this work within the rising concerns surrounding the Reformation.¹⁹⁴ This painting not only condemned Jews, but also sought to define “proper” Christianity as *this*, not *that*. In essence, the emphasis on the sacraments as divinely sanctioned from the spouting blood of Christ and the reclamation of Paul directly conflicted with heterodox beliefs coming out of the north.¹⁹⁵ Luther admonished the sacraments (he upheld the Eucharist, but Ulrich Zwingli and others did demote its importance), and many reformers relied on Pauline rhetoric in their attacks against the Catholic Church.¹⁹⁶ While this fresco undoubtedly attacks Judaism and meant to replace it with Christianity, the work also subtly reinforces the Catholic Church’s dominion over Old and New Testament scripture, and it asserts that the *only* means of accessing salvation and

¹⁹³ For example, large inscriptions on the fresco included, “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe,” from 1 Corinthians 1:21 on the “Christian” side and “Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood,” from Isaiah 1:13, 15 on the “Jewish” side. Other scrolls include messages such as only those written in the Book of the Lamb will gain entrance into Heaven from Revelation 21:27. Together, the written messages align with the obvious visual rhetoric of Christians being favored and saved by God and Jews condemned.

¹⁹⁴ Stephen J. Campbell, “Renaissance Naturalism and the Jewish Bible: Ferrara, Brescia, Bergamo, 1520-1540,” in *Judaism and Christian Art: Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism*, eds. Herbert L. Kessler, and David Nirenberg (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 291.

¹⁹⁵ Campbell, “Renaissance Naturalism,” 291-295. Achim Timmermann has also explored the ways in which fifteenth-century “Living Cross” images that he labels “Avenging Crucifixes” initiated the visual rhetoric seen in Garofalo’s version by addressing heresy, the schism, and Jews. Achim Timmermann, “The Avenging Crucifix: Some Observations on the Iconography of the Living Cross,” *Gesta* 40 (2001): 141-160.

¹⁹⁶ For more on the relationship between Reformation polemics and Pauline thought in art, see Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

entrance into Heaven came through participation in all of the sacraments that the Church delivered vis-à-vis the literal blood of Christ.

I want to emphasize two historical aspects related to this work. First, artists like Garofalo lived through warfare and under dukes that perpetuated Christian-Jewish animosity, and by the 1520s, the Italian Wars and the threat of heresy from the north had clearly combined and manifested as visual rhetoric in church art. I argue that the leap from anti-Jewish to anti-Protestant art organically developed in Northern Italy as a result of these socio-political events merging with religious crisis amidst the ongoing hatred of Jews. Garofalo's painting serves as evidence of this pivot from the traditional anti-Jewish rhetoric of Simon of Trent in the north to a theologically complex visual argument that continued to condemn Jews while also accounting for new theological threats to the Catholic Church. To be clear, anti-Jewish rhetoric, violence, and social issues never ceased in sixteenth-century Italy. It was during the Italian Wars that the Jewish ghettos in Venice emerged, for example. Instead, the stake of this chapter is that anti-Protestant rhetoric *merged* into anti-Jewish animus to become something that dealt with both historical anxieties and perceived contemporary threats.

Second to this point, no one copied Garofalo's work after its completion. Campbell suggested that perhaps the fresco was simply too violent to appeal to anyone else. Garofalo himself returned to this same composition a few years later in an oil painting; however, the work was once again for a church in Ferrara.¹⁹⁷ We could assume that the commission for Alfonso was so particular and local that it did not warrant attention outside of Ferrara, but that does not account for its potential potency in a region threatened by everything this artwork sought to condemn and

¹⁹⁷ Campbell, "Renaissance Naturalism," 294. The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg currently owns the second version.

defend. Instead, I suggest that this fresco embodied the same issues as another work in Northern Italy—the Cremona Cathedral frescoes by Girolamo Romani (Romanino). The difference between these two works lies in access; Garofalo’s painting existed in a monastic refectory, only seen by friars, and thus avoided possible criticism. Romanino, however, attained different results when painting a similar visual rhetoric in a publically accessible space.

3.2 Romanino

As an artist, Romanino blended theological argument with the devotional needs of his patrons amid these controversies, but his approach took time to fully mature. Born in 1485 in Brescia, he grew up during the height of Simon of Trent’s cult. While little is known about this period of Romanino’s life, by his twenties he was actively painting church frescoes and panel paintings in Brescia, Padua, and Venice. He continued to paint Christian images for patrons across Northern Italy, completing a prolific career by the time of his death in 1566.

The *oeuvre* of Romanino is well-documented; however, he has traditionally been discussed primarily in terms of style.¹⁹⁸ His physical distance from the art centers of Florence, Rome, and Venice prompted twentieth-century scholars to describe his work under a rubric in which he is

¹⁹⁸ For example, one of the foundational *catalogues raisonnés* for Romanino by Alessandro Nova (1994) attempts to stylistically situate Romanino amidst the other artists of his time and region. Many twenty-first century monographs continued this trend. Camerlengo, Chini, Frangi, and Gramatica even title their book as “*Romanino: A Painter in Revolt in the Italian Renaissance*,” (*Romanino: Un pittore in rivolta nel Rinascimento italiano*) (2006) to emphasize his deviation from what was considered “traditional” Renaissance art styles that drew from classical antiquity. See Section 1.4.1 for more on this concept of Renaissance art. These monographs and others are included in the bibliography. For earlier approaches to addressing this region’s art based on style, see Roberto Longhi, “Cose bresciane del cinquecento,” *L’arte* 20 (1917): 99-114; and Denis Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, Studies of the Warburg Institute, vol. 16 (London: Warburg Institute, 1947), 44-45.

both “peripheral” and “eccentric.”¹⁹⁹ Alessandro Nova addressed Romanino’s varying style in his thought-provoking article on the artist and the impending national language of Italy. He noted that while Romanino’s works exhibited “Titianesque formulas,” other works, such as his *Resurrection* (1526, Capriolo), become “almost a parody of Titian’s work.”²⁰⁰ Similarly, Nicholas Penny wrote that “...the heroic figure style and shadowed heads of Titian are seen, as if through a distorting glass, in the paintings of Romanino.”²⁰¹ More recently, scholarship has sought to return agency to the so-called peripheries and artists such as Romanino, but the commentary often retains a defense of stylistic choices that deviated from those of the centers.²⁰²

Contemporary critics of Romanino often degraded his work for not following popular stylistic trends, and thus style is certainly relevant to any exploration of his art; however, other aspects get overlooked because of these early style-centric theses. Relevant socio-political and religious factors often get obscured or totally omitted in these early scholarly iterations—namely that of the theological discourse around Jews, heretics, and the Reformation, as well as the intense local history that is critical to understanding the works in this region. In his chapter on

¹⁹⁹ Romanino worked in Venice during his early years, and his artworks are primarily discussed by the way in which they differ stylistically from that of the dominant Venetian style, mainly vis-à-vis Titian. In many cases, the comparisons and discussions are derogatory towards Romanino.

²⁰⁰ Alessandro Nova, “Folengo and Romanino: The questione della lingua and Its Eccentric Trends,” *Art Bulletin* 76, no. 4 (December 1994): 666. Ultimately, Nova is arguing for a correlation between the battles over style and the debates regarding regional dialects as a national language.

²⁰¹ Nicholas Penny, *The Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings*, vol.1, *Paintings from Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona* (London: National Gallery Company, 2004), xi.

²⁰² As evidence for this continued focus on artistic style and center/periphery models, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004) and David Young Kim, *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Both Kaufmann and Kim expanded on the center-periphery model by including cultural ideologies and reciprocal ecological exchange through transference and mobility. While this allows for more dynamic interactions between center and periphery, the art of the periphery remains contingent on the center. See also Section 1.4.2. For a specific focus on Romanino, style, and center-periphery, see the recent monograph: Lia Camerlengo, Ezio Chini, Francesco Frangi, and Francesca de Gramatica, eds., *Romanino: Un pittore in rivolta nel Rinascimento italiano* (Milan: Silvana, 2006). See also Andrea Bayer, ed., *Painters of Reality: The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

“Renaissance Naturalism,” Stephen Campbell moved the scholarly discourse surrounding Romanino and other regional artists in new theological directions and beyond the center-periphery model.²⁰³ He described art of sixteenth-century Northern Italy as a style of “sacred naturalism” that works “through the mediation of frames and thresholds that mark off the domain of the sacred but do not disrupt its continuity with the world from which we regard it.”²⁰⁴ Through his argument, artists such as Romanino adapted their style in such a way that “points to a strong degree of self-consciousness about the practice of imitation, making visible the procedures of expropriation and dismembering, but above all it gives the borrowing of canonical sources a playful and even subversive character.”²⁰⁵ Ultimately, this analysis preserved the notion that Romanino understood himself in relationship to the artistic centers to which he did not belong, and as such, his art can seem *about* that relationship albeit with theological underpinnings. Steps to reallocate agency to Romanino continued in Vincenzo Gheroldi’s edited volume (2015). He and several others carefully situated some of Romanino’s works in Northern Italy and avoided focus on how his work compared to those painting in the urban centers.

In his more recent work, Campbell transitioned into a new exploration of North Italian art and its theological foundations. In *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (2019), he acknowledged these earlier approaches, but instead focused on how artworks by Romanino, Lorenzo Lotto, Moretto da Brescia, and others directly contended with contemporary theological debates, especially those surrounding the validity of the Eucharist and the miracle of transubstantiation.²⁰⁶ In the current and following chapters, I expand on Campbell’s

²⁰³ Campbell, “Renaissance Naturalism,” 291-327.

²⁰⁴ Campbell, “Renaissance Naturalism,” 305.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 311.

²⁰⁶ For more on this debate, see especially Stephen Campbell, “Brescia and Bergamo, 1520-50: Sacred Naturalism and the Place of the Eucharist,” in *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago:

scholarship that recognized theological development in North Italian art. However, unlike Campbell, I focus on the ways in which Romanino and Lotto's artworks negotiated art's function in the transition from sporadic episodes of anti-Jewish rhetoric to a sustained confrontation with local heretics and the ongoing condemnation of Judaism. This chapter demonstrates that Romanino initially attempted a direct visual intervention to contend with the Italian Wars but failed according to his patrons. Chapter 4 shows how he then took this experience and, with support from the local Alpine community, molded artworks to the new theological exigencies of the sixteenth century, and thus reasserted Roman Church orthodoxy in the face of both the Jewish population and the challenge of Reformation heresies coming from Italian War mercenaries.

3.3 Cremona Cathedral

Several cities between Milan and Venice spent the better part of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries stuck in the middle of a tug-of-war among imperial powers. Of these cities, Cremona served as a prize apple that the Milanese, Venetians, French, Spanish, and Austrians all sought to control. Wars waged and ownership traded from 1406 until 1516 when Cremona achieved a small respite of freedom for eight years. Despite this independence, the city was recovering from years of struggle, plague, famine, and having been plundered by mercenaries, and many of those who

University of Chicago Press, 2019), 181-226. The final chapter of his book, though, does return the conversation to Titian and the other artists' shift in style in response to Titian's success. I also discuss Campbell's work as it relates to Lorenzo Lotto in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

had been violently enforcing the Holy Roman Empire's control from 1506 to 1516 remained living in the city.²⁰⁷

Just as Cremona was about to gain this brief independence, the local elected aristocrats, or *massari*, sought to improve their religious center and enhance civic spirit.²⁰⁸ Between 1514 and 1522, the nave walls of Cremona Cathedral became the site of one of the most extensive artistic projects in sixteenth-century Lombardy—an arrangement that included multiple artists and was heavily supervised by the *massari* from start to finish.²⁰⁹ The cycle consists of scenes from the Life of the Virgin and the Passion of Christ, culminating in a massive *Crucifixion* scene over the counter-façade. Besides the traditional Christian imagery, artists were instructed to include portraits of the *massari* throughout some of the frescoes, intensifying the local pride of the region as they sought to gain (and maintain) their freedom while permanently crediting those who made the artwork possible through visual records.

This extensive cycle for the nave walls of the cathedral has a long and challenging history that involved five artists working nearly two decades before completion. The project began with Boccaccio Boccaccino, a local Cremonese artist who had already completed paintings of *Christ in Majesty with Cremona's Patron Saints* in the church apse and an *Annunciation* on the choir arch in 1506-07 (Figures 3.7-3.8). This early emphasis on including the city's patron saints set a local agenda for the remainder of the nave frescoes that each subsequent artist sought to embody. In 1514, Boccaccino began the nave cycle with eight scenes that spanned four bays from the life of

²⁰⁷ On the history of Cremona, see *Storia di Cremona. Il quattrocento Cremona nel Ducato di Milano (1395-1535)*, ed. Giorgio Chittolini (Azzano San Paolo, Italy: Bolis Edizioni, 2008).

²⁰⁸ The *massari* were elected to a term of one year and played an influential role in all decisions made at the cathedral during their term. For information on the *massari*, see Charles Cohen, *The Art of Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone: Between Dialect and Language*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 175 and Giulio Bora, "Nota su Pordenone e i Cremonesi (e alcuni nuovi disegni)," in *Il Pordenone. Atti del convegno internazionale di studio, Pordenone, 23—25 agosto 1984*, ed. C. Furlan (Pordenone, Italy: Biblioteca dell'immagine, 1985), 153.

²⁰⁹ Cohen, *The Art of Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone*, 170. This was replacing the original twelfth-century frescoes.

the Virgin and Christ: the *Angel Appearing to Joachim*, *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, *Birth of the Virgin*, *Marriage of the Virgin*, the *Annunciation*, the *Visitation*, the *Nativity*, and the *Circumcision* (Figures 3.9-3.12). A fictitious column divides each pairing of works, so despite sharing a bay, the scenes appear self-contained.

Boccaccino painted gentle scenes full of sweet-faced biblical figures juxtaposed with angular drapery and harsh folds, and hazy atmospheres and landscapes. Many of these scenes recall woodcuts from Albrecht Dürer's *Life of the Virgin* series that circulated as individual sheets throughout Northern Italy in the years just prior to Boccaccino's work.²¹⁰ The artist borrowed the compositional arrangement and architectural background in the *Meeting at the Golden Gate* from Dürer's sheet 3, *Joachim and Anne Meet at the Golden Gate*, 1504 (Figure 3.13). To adapt this woodcut and localize the scene for the Cremona nave, Boccaccino replaced Dürer's German bystanders with figures in traditional Italian dress, including several portraits of the Cremona *massari*, and used Italian Renaissance architectural features and rolling hills reminiscent of the Alpine foothills north of the town.

The same can be said of Boccaccino's and Dürer's (sheet 10) *Circumcision of Christ*, which again included *massari* portraits and Italian architecture (Figure 3.14). Unlike Dürer, Boccaccino labeled the temple in which the circumcision takes place as explicitly Jewish by including a small plaque in the back of the scene with a Hebrew inscription that identifies the location as "The Temple."²¹¹ Boccaccino chose to use actual Hebrew (instead of pseudoscript meant to simply *look*

²¹⁰ T.S.R. Boase, "The Frescoes of Cremona Cathedral," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 24 (1956): 208-209.

²¹¹ Arthur Sabbatai Block, "Hebrew Inscriptions in Christian Art of the 16th Century: Italy and Germany" (MA thesis, University of Arizona, 1971), 27. Block labeled the inscription as "simple Hebrew," though we cannot assume most Christian visitors to Cremona Cathedral had any reading knowledge of Hebrew when many barely knew Latin. However, viewers had likely seen Hebrew letters at some point in their lives and might recognize these as legitimate, even if they could not read them.

Jewish) inside a Christian church where the majority of viewers could not read Hebrew.²¹² I suggest this choice reveals an intense attention to detail that embedded a sense of authenticity in the scenes and subsequent artists continued this approach. Additionally, Boccaccino may have hoped that Jews *would* enter Cremona Cathedral, but as Christian converts and thus read this scene as justification of their conversion—claiming that Jesus replaced Jewish law. In a region fraught with anti-Jewish beliefs, Boccaccino’s Hebrew plaque then becomes anti-Judaic visual rhetoric meant to validate and glorify Christianity.²¹³ This emphasis would become even more potent when, in a matter of years, the Reformation would challenge what it meant to be legitimately Christian; Boccaccino’s inclusion of the Hebrew plaque in a Catholic Church would reassert the Catholic Church’s Judaic ancestry and imply the true replacement of the Jewish Temple was the papal-led church.

Sometime around 1516, after Cremona’s period of relative independence had begun, Boccaccino took a break from working in the cathedral and made a trip to Rome. While he was away, the current *massari* hired two other local artists to continue working on the nave cycle. Gianfrancesco Bembo, a student of Boccaccino, completed the next bay with scenes of the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Presentation in the Temple*, both of which drew heavily from

²¹² It is also possible Boccaccino meant for Jews to enter the cathedral, which I discuss later in this section. We do not know if Boccaccino picked up this Hebrew phrase on his own or if someone advised him on the text. However, the rising interest in humanism and Christian Hebraica during this period meant that scholars were increasingly engaging with Hebrew study to further Christian biblical exegesis. For some of this history, see *Hebraica Veritas?: Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Allison P. Coudert, and Jeffrey S. Shoulson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Pinchas E. Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984); and Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1983).

²¹³ In his exploration of Pordenone’s frescoes in this cycle, discussed later in this section, Roberto Venturelli argued that the artist’s inclusion of prophets beneath New Testament scenes was indicative of anti-Jewish rhetoric in Cremona and a desire for mass Jewish conversion in the town. If this were the case, then I believe Boccaccino’s addition of Hebrew script started this implication. Roberto Venturelli, “Pordenone a Cremona: iconografie, contesti, significati,” *Venezia Cinquecento* 12, no. 23 (2002): 5-208.

Dürer's series but continued Boccaccino's incorporation of Italian Renaissance architecture (Figure 3.15). Bembo also continued the tradition of inserting *massari* portraits, but rather than Italian-ize Dürer's other figures for a Cremonese audience, Bembo retained their harsh, Germanic facial features with hatched shading that directly evoked association with woodcuts and reflected the increasing prominence of northern mercenaries living in Cremona. Compared to Boccaccino's delicate figures, Bembo's work appears crude with an earthy ruggedness that stands out. This shift is evident in the profile of Bembo's middle magus, who resembles an old, bearded man in a sketch by Urs Graf, a Swiss artist that had served as a mercenary soldier fighting in Cremona (Figure 3.16).²¹⁴

In his *Adoration of the Magi*, we see the first hints of German cynicism appearing in the cathedral. Rather than continue reverently imitating the northern prints, Bembo rotated Dürer's horse and rider forty-five degrees so that the rear of the horse greets viewers as they enter the scene (Figure 3.17). Beside the horse, Bembo removed Dürer's awed dog that joined in the adoration of the Christ Child and replaced it with a pawing swine that turns its back on the Holy Family and seems as though it may wander off to find a snack. For the *Presentation in the Temple*, Bembo appropriated Dürer's setting and cluttering of figures, but while Dürer's priest gently holds the child in his arms, Bembo's priest has no physical contact with the boy, whom, despite a room full of onlookers, shows more interest in the scraggly dog that sits in front of the altar on which he sits (Figure 3.18). For Bembo, the Son of God seemingly wanted nothing to do with the Jewish community surrounding him, which further reiterated an anti-Jewish animus in the town and

²¹⁴ For more on how Bembo (and other artists in Cremona Cathedral) responded to other artists and regional styles in the area, see Jason Di Resta, "Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone: Artistic Ambition and the Challenge of the Local" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2015), 102.

evident in the fresco cycle, and his compositional borrowings nearly make a mockery of Dürer's work.²¹⁵

While Bembo finished his two scenes, the *massari* hired a third artist, Altobello Melone, to work in the next bay of the nave. Clearly the *massari* sought something different than what they had received thus far as Melone's contract specifically stated that his works should be more beautiful than those of Boccaccino (and presumably those of his student).²¹⁶ However, Melone's contributions, the *Flight to Egypt* and the *Massacre of the Innocents*, preserved Bembo's harsh figures and amplified them (Figure 3.19). This is especially evident in the *Massacre* where gaping mouths and distorted faces reveal missing teeth, bodies unnaturally drape and bulge even in death, and dogs bark at deceased children. Together, the collective cacophony of masses and Germanic faces makes the horrific scene almost comical, recalling drunken Netherlandish paintings of vice and folly. Though we certainly cannot conclude that Bembo and Melone overtly commented on contemporary German enemies in these scenes, the visual evolution of their frescoes from the initial work of Boccaccino implies a sense of growing frustration and cynicism with the northern invaders that lived amongst them in Cremona.

As Melone finished this bay, Boccaccino returned from his trip and the *massari* contracted him for one more bay painting in the nave. This time the scene, *Christ among the Doctors*, spanned the entire bay (Figure 3.20). In response to his recent travels, Boccaccino's new composition took a cosmological approach by visually acknowledging Raphael's *School of Athens* in the Vatican

²¹⁵ In his dissertation, Di Resta took a different approach to these works, and suggested that the Germanic style encapsulated a stylistic rebuttal to Central Italian *disegno* while embodying the debase nature of Christ's enemies. While I concur that this could be one approach to exploring these images (and is certainly an argument I recapitulate in Romanino's works discussed below), it does not fully account for the deviations in scenes such as the *Adoration of the Magi* or the *Flight to Egypt*, neither of which depicted Christ's enemies. Di Resta, "Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone," 102-103.

²¹⁶ Boase, "The Frescoes of Cremona Cathedral," 209.

apartments where he had just been working. A centrally placed Christ stands in an imaginative classical architectural space, and he gestures toward his heavenly father while surrounded by learned men discussing the proclamations they have heard (Figure 3.21).²¹⁷ Unlike Raphael's dialectical commentary on philosophy, however, Boccaccino's Christ stands in for both Plato and Aristotle, theologically representing both his earthly and divine natures. Many of the figures wear fanciful hats and turbans with luxurious garments, all of which directly contrasts with the simplicity of Christ's attire to emphasize the Jewish and Turkish "other" that sixteenth-century North Italian Christians both feared and sought to convert. Unlike Bembo and Melone's previous works, Boccaccino omitted any German references—artistic or lived.

Despite Boccaccino's return, Melone still had an active contract, and so the *massari* had his work professionally assessed by peers to determine if he should continue or be replaced. Romanino served as one of the men assigned to critique Melone's work, though it is unknown whether the *massari* or Melone chose him.²¹⁸ Ultimately, the group determined that Melone should continue his work and he completed five more scenes along the opposite side of the nave.

In 1518, Melone continued the story of Christ's Passion with a *Last Supper* across the presbytery from Boccacino's *Christ among the Doctors* (Figure 3.22). To maintain visual consistency, this scene also spanned the entire bay and directly conversed with artists trained in Central Italy. Rather than turn to Rome in search of visual sources, Melone borrowed the architectural setting, figural arrangements, and gestures from Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* in the nearby Milanese convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie (Figure 3.23).²¹⁹ In the same year,

²¹⁷ Ibid., 211.

²¹⁸ Boase, "The Frescoes of Cremona Cathedral," 211.

²¹⁹ To fit within the architectural frame he had available, Melone moved two apostles to the opposite side of the table (unlike Leonardo) and added a cat and dog to balance the composition.

Melone finished four more scenes that returned to the shared bays divided by faux architectural elements. These works, *Christ Washing the Feet of the Disciples*, *Agony in the Garden*, the *Arrest of Christ*, and *Christ before Caiaphas*, continued Melone's habit of borrowing from northern and Germanic examples from artists such as Dürer and Albrecht Altdorfer, but he also incorporated trends from Italian artists (Figures 3.24-3.25).²²⁰ Unlike his previous work in the nave, these four frescoes showed a toning down of the harsh Germanic facial features and busy compositions for a series of images that appeared more Italian in design, and still included the required *massari* portraits where appropriate. Melone directly borrowed Caiaphas's chair from Raphael's *Portrait of Pope Julius II*, changing only the characteristic acorns that iconographically belonged to someone from the della Rovere family (Figure 3.26).²²¹ This imitation of Raphael's design, though, further emphasized the contemporary aesthetic within these frescoes.

For unknown reasons, the *massari* decided to hire a fourth artist after Melone finished his contract. It is unclear whether they already knew of Romanino's work or if they learned of him through his role as Melone's assessor, but in 1519, the *massari* hired Romanino to replace Melone. While the cycle already had several artists involved, the choice of Romanino remains especially significant. Despite the commission's emphasis on the local, Romanino became the first non-Cremonese artist to work in the cathedral nave. Having spent ample time in Venice as well as Brescia, Romanino gained exposure to the art styles that permeated other towns in Northern Italy, which may have appealed to the patrons especially after seeing what Boccaccino produced following his time in Rome.

²²⁰ For a discussion on the specific references used by Melone, see Boase, "The Frescoes of Cremona Cathedral," 210 and Federico Zeri, "Altobello Melone: Quattro tavole," *Paragone* 39 (1953): 42.

²²¹ Julius II was born Giuliano della Rovere, and images of oak leaves and acorns often appeared as emblematic of the family name, which translates to "of the oak." Appropriately, Raphael's chair back for the pope was capped with acorns, which Melone replaced with cylindrical adornments.

At the time of Romanino's hiring, Cremona's respite from external control had become normal life, which may have diminished the *massari's* insistence on local artists to kindle civic pride. Instead, for a town trying to maintain their newly acquired peace despite the ongoing Italian Wars, a cosmopolitan approach would visually grant Cremona an autonomous place among her invaders and defenders. As Melone's assessor, Romanino had already showed interest in Cremona's fresco cycle, and based on the works that Boccaccino and Melone produced in response to art from Raphael and Leonardo, the *massari* saw how a cosmopolitan approach to art might look in Cremona. As an outsider who still hailed from Northern Italy, Romanino offered the potential for something new in terms of regional style.²²²

The contract stipulated that Romanino would complete the remaining five bays of the cycle, while continuing to insert portraits of the current *massari* throughout.²²³ He set to work and completed four scenes across two bays within one year: *Christ before Pilate*, *Christ at the Column*, the *Crowning of Thorns*, and an *Ecce Homo* (Figures 3.27-3.28). Following the tradition established by the artists before him, each bay contained two scenes divided by a fictitious architectural element.²²⁴ Despite this, the works produced by Romanino appear quite distinct from those by his predecessors. Unlike the bold washes of bright colors that covered the previous scenes, Romanino used consistent, finite color palettes that created pops of shimmering pinks and oranges across character costumes, inviting viewers' eyes to scan from section to section, following wherever the painterly light touched. None of the facial features evoke caricatures or

²²² Churches fundamentally desired the "best" art for their walls in an effort to attract more attendees and pilgrims, which would lead to more followers, and thus, more donations. While we cannot know for sure, the prospect of Romanino's art as "new" may have compelled the *massari* to depart from local artists in the hopes of attracting attention beyond Cremonese walls. Di Resta also noted that hiring Romanino, and later Pordenone, may have been an attempt at making the cycle feel central within the culture that permeated the Italian peninsula. Di Resta, "Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone," 104.

²²³ Alessandro Nova, *Girolamo Romanino* (Torino: Umberto Allemandi, 1994), 233-235.

²²⁴ The exceptions are the two single-bay scenes by Boccaccino and Melone in the presbytery.

harsh physiognomy prevalent in northern works, nor do the faces seem sweet or dear; instead, Romanino's quick brushwork in the plaster created a sense of naturally emotive faces that neither detract from nor inappropriately alter the mood of the overall scenes. His figures, rather, enhance the pathetic nature of Christ as he endured the torment viewers were forced to observe.

Despite these differences, Romanino continued to draw his compositional arrangements from northern prints, particularly those of Dürer, but in these, he combined various works to formulate his own. Romanino's *Ecce Homo* blended two Dürer *Ecce Homo* prints, both of which Dürer completed at least a decade prior to Romanino's work in the cathedral. Likewise, Romanino's *Crowning of Thorns* merged Dürer's images of the *Crowning* with the *Mocking of Christ* (Figure 3.29). Lurking in the background of *Christ before Pilate*, resting just above a portal arch, Romanino created a classically inspired pair of reclining sculptural nudes. Compositions based entirely on Central Italian works remain absent in Romanino's scenes, but a keen eye could still spot his awareness of what constituted popular art in that region and attests to the potential desires of the *massari* in their choice to hire an outsider artist.²²⁵

For his compositions, Romanino chose the elements he wanted rather than directly copy German prints, but the most prominent non-Italian qualities that stand out come from neither Dürer's prints, nor the grotesques and absurdities present in the Cremonese works that preceded his. Instead, Romanino inserted contemporary visual references related to the Italian Wars that his audience would recognize as both northern and locally abhorrent. In doing so, he offered a

²²⁵ To be sure, these reclining classical figures are reminiscent of Michelangelo's reclining nudes in the Florentine sacristy of the Basilica di San Lorenzo, though his marble sculptures were created at least five years *after* Romanino painted in Cremona. Romanino clearly understood the current trends of recalling classical antiquity, regardless of how little he demonstrated this in his art.

challenge that his art could be theologically ambitious and distinct from a century's worth of regional artistic tropes.

Prior to the 1527 Sack of Rome, cities like Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona, and all the Alpine towns around them suffered under the presence of mercenaries for years on end. Undoubtedly, Italian territories have long been coveted by outsiders. However, the Italian Wars that began in 1494 initiated a new kind of warfare that ravaged Italian life. On the change, Francesco Guicciardini (1480-1540) of Florence wrote,

“[Before] when war did break out, the sides were so evenly balanced, the methods of warfare so slow, and the artillery so inefficient that it took nearly a whole summer to take a castle. Wars were very long, and battles ended with few or no deaths. The French invasion [from 1494], like a sudden storm, turned everything topsy-turvy. The unity of Italy was broken and shattered, and gone were the care and consideration that each state used to give to common affairs. Seeing cities, duchies, and kingdoms attacked and conquered, everyone sat tight and attended only to his own affairs. No one moved, for fear that a nearby conflagration or the destruction of some nearby place might lead to the burning and destruction of one's own state. Now wars were sudden and violent; entire kingdoms were conquered and captured in less time than it used to take to conquer a village. Sieges were successfully carried out not in months, but in days or hours. Battles were fierce and bloody. And finally, states were maintained, ruined, given, and taken away not by plans drawn up in a study, as used to be the case, but in the field, by force of arms.”²²⁶

²²⁶ Francesco Guicciardini, *The History of Florence*, (1509) trans. Mario Domandi (New York: Harper, 1970), 89.

Sixty-five years of this type of warfare made fear and chaos inescapable throughout Italy. Due to their liminal location between the invading north and the target of Rome, I argue that this ongoing exposure to mass death and suffering radically altered North Italian fixations and priorities. Whereas the local death of Simon of Trent became religious fodder for an ongoing Christian war against Jews—a hostility that remains visually present in the Cremona frescoes—the sudden warfare, pillaging, and suffering forced locals to redirect their fear and anger as an act of self-preservation. For those living in these Lombard towns, Jews that supposedly murdered a Christian boy miles away from home suddenly did not threaten the sanctity of life in the same way as mercenaries raping and murdering their families. While the German and Swiss military certainly became actual (and perceived) enemies of Northern Italians, I suggest that their heterodox beliefs about Christianity eventually situated them as complements to the alleged perfidious Jew.²²⁷

Just two years before Romanino began his work in Cremona, Martin Luther distributed his ninety-five theses against the Catholic Church. Though it took time for the implications of this event to fully reverberate throughout the Christian world, the Roman Church quickly found itself at war with reformers north of the Alps and the papacy responded within months. Carlos Eire explained that, “Within less than a year [after Martin Luther’s theses]...he was a dangerous opponent, possibly among the most formidable of all the enemies that any pope had ever faced from within the church itself.”²²⁸ As discussed in Chapter 1, these heterodox ideas soon filtered

²²⁷ After 1517, much of the Swiss presence in Italy involved fighting against the invaders, but that did not temper their abuse of the towns and villages they occupied in between battles. Despite the ethical and theological issues that resulted from Swiss occupation in Italy during the Reformation, their skill as fighters and the fact that half the nation remained Catholic resulted in the Swiss guards that still protect Vatican City today.

²²⁸ Carlos M.N. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 152.

into Italy by way of preachers, printed pamphlets, and in the minds and hearts of hired German and Swiss mercenaries fighting in the Italian Wars.²²⁹ Though we cannot know for certain how soon these mercenaries became labeled as “reformers,” we know that the confluence of these events would eventually solidify by the 1520s.

Even before the enemy armies reached the Roman gates, Italian residents everywhere had come to fear these foreign mercenaries. According to Pandolfo Nassino (1486-1553), a North Italian chronicler, over fifteen hundred immigrants had settled in the region from Lombardy to the Veneto before the Sack of Rome; he described them as “Germans and Lutherans, men so dissolute in their lives and those of the saints, that they do things that even the Jews would not do.”²³⁰ In Luigi Guicciardini’s account, he explained how these Lutherans cleverly snuck along the side roads in the Alps to enter Italy, destroyed images, relics, and sacraments (except for the Eucharist) inside churches, and pillaged and burnt every house and unfortified village along the way until they chose to set up camp.²³¹ All of these actions combined to both mimic Jews’ alleged hatred of Christianity and divine art, and their assumed general threat to daily life.

This comparison between Jews and Lutherans continued, as Venetian chroniclers claimed the damage being done in Rome came from *Landsknechte* and Jews among them, along with Spanish *marrani*, or Jews forced to convert to Christianity.²³² The immigrants of whom Nassino

²²⁹ See Section 1.2.2 for comments on the start of the Reformation and its effects in Northern Italy.

²³⁰ “*Todeschi et lutherani, homeni molto dissoluti in viver et guastar sancti, et far cos ache gli ebrei non lo fariano.*” Chronicle of Pandolfo Nassino cited in Paolo Guerrini, “Spigolature d’attualità da una cronaca del cinquecento,” *Brixia Sacra* (September-December, 1917), 181. See also, G. Bertolotti, “Tentativi di riforma a Brescia nella prima metà del 1500,” *La Scuola Cattolica* 49 (1921): 185; and Giuseppe Fusari, “L’eresia a Brescia,” in *Aspirazioni e devozioni: Brescia nel cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio (Milan: Electa, 2006), 52-53.

²³¹ Guicciardini, *The Sack of Rome*, 34-38, 55.

²³² “*cum più vilipendio che se fosseno stati perfidi pagani, avenga che fra li lanchinech, che erano da 14 millia, era ben la mittà zudei, et fra li Spagnoli, che era circa sei millia, era la più parte marani.*” Leonardo Amaseo, Gregorio Amaseo, and Giovanni Antonio Azio, *Diarii udinesi dall’anno 1508 al 1541*, ed. Antonio Ceruti (Venice: Visentini, 1884), 291.

wrote were the same mercenaries camped in and throughout Lombardy, and they remained north of the Po River as they awaited their pay and other troops to join them before their destructive descent into Rome. While we do not know for sure everyone who comprised these armies or their beliefs, those recording Italy's devastating history saw fit to label these men attacking Italian towns as Jews, fake converts, and heretics alike.

In 1519, Romanino may not have perceived the foreign mercenaries as Reformation heretics yet, but what matters is his choice to replace Christ's killers with local villains that threatened his community. Having lived through the Sack of Brescia in 1512, as well as witnessed other incursions throughout Lombardy, Romanino would have been astutely aware of the *Landsknechte*.²³³ This particular group of militiamen-for-hire became known for their extravagant costumes, which artists recorded in various prints and paintings commemorating these conflicts. A 1530 etching by Daniel Hopfer shows the extensive array of slashing and guards that covered every inch of their attire (Figure 3.30).²³⁴ From these local villains, Romanino drew his inspiration in Cremona Cathedral.

At the time of these paintings, sixteenth-century Christians increasingly focused on spiritual meditations and private devotions that concentrated on the life of Christ. Fifteenth-century works like the *Devotio Moderna* and Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* encouraged the faithful to experience in their hearts the dread, fear, and anguish of Christ

²³³ Brescia was brutally sacked by the French in 1512 leaving thousands massacred. For more on the Sack of Brescia and other surrounding battles, see Stephen D. Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City: Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1-79.

²³⁴ For a historical discussion on the costume of the *Landsknechte*, see James Laver, *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History*, Thames and Hudson World of Art Series (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 76-78. Artist Urs Graf served as a mercenary soldier known as Reisläufer and detested the *Landsknechte*, which is evident in his satirical etches of *Landsknecht* soldiers. *Urs Graf*, eds. Emil Major and Erwin Gradmann (London: Home & Van Thal, 1947), 7-14.

throughout his Passion.²³⁵ In 1519, Romanino seems to have taken this devotional practice and directly correlated it with the same dread, fear, and anguish North Italians felt because of the ongoing Italian Wars. In doing so, he saw fit to replace the tormentors of Christ with the very same men that tormented those in his life.

Of the Passion scenes in Cremona Cathedral, Melone was the first to be assigned images that involved the torment of Christ. In his 1518 *Arrest of Christ* and *Christ before Chaiaphas*, Melone followed typical conventions and portrayed the captors as general military men who wore metal armor and simple hosiery. Only a year later, Romanino's tormentors of Christ took on an entirely new visage. Rather than stock military figures or treacherous Jews, Romanino portrayed the enemies of Christ as the powerfully recognizable local *Landsknechte*. Throughout each scene, striped and slashed garments outfit the figures, and consistent bursts of shimmering pinks and oranges highlight each figure from the next. By using costuming and color placement, Romanino arranged each scene to portray those who brought Christ to Pilate, watched him suffer agonies, and presented him to the people as the very same German mercenaries that currently brought suffering to Brescia, Cremona, and the surrounding areas, and would ultimately sack and pillage Rome.

His decision to use contemporary Germans in place of biblical Jews broke with centuries of artistic tradition in Northern Italy. Early modern Christians typically held the Jewish population accountable for the arrest and death of Christ, and blamed contemporary Jews for doing the same thing to Simon. As a result, North Italian art followed a tradition of depicting stereotypical Jewish

²³⁵ For more on these devotional practices and their relation to Romanino and Lorenzo Lotto's North Italian art, see Sections 4.1.2, 5.4.2, 5.5.1, and 5.5.3 in this dissertation.

characters and caricatures in the relevant Passion scene roles.²³⁶ In an area that was already fraught with anti-Jewish beliefs and violence—as evident in the story of Simon of Trent, discussed in Chapter 2—Romanino elected to discontinue with tradition and instead depicted Christ’s Passion as if it were a wholly contemporary event. But rather than follow regional trends and blame contemporary Jews as artists did in images of Simon, Romanino visually accused the mercenaries that had been wreaking havoc in the region. In his Cremona frescoes, political assailants to the region incited the violence against Christ, not Jews. Put simply, Romanino replaced Jews with Germans that would soon become known as Lutherans, if they were not already being considered as such in 1519.

Romanino placed contemporary villains in these scenes and then designed his compositions so that characters stepped out of the fictitious space and into the nave where viewers stood. In the *Ecce Homo*, the patricians to the left of the scene, distinguished by their contemporary Italianate dress, step through a piece of broken framing, and with one shift of his weight, the forefront gentleman risks slipping out of the image entirely. Together, the bursts of shimmering color, the natural, calm faces surrounding the pathetic face of Christ, the local *Landsknechte* and *massari*, and the scene spilling into the viewer’s space all combined to amplify the civic identity and devotional power of the frescoes. Furthermore, all these artistic choices combine to heighten the visual authenticity initiated with Boccaccino’s Hebrew plaque. Instead of condemning area Jews, though, Romanino explicitly damned the Germans through overt anti-imperial visual rhetoric. Not only could visitors see the familiar faces of *massari* in the scenes, Romanino also invited them to

²³⁶ See Chapter 1 for an exploration of these Passion scene traditions and the use of Jewish symbols and caricatures to identify Christ’s tormentors as explicitly Jewish. See Chapter 2 for the ways in which these tropes carried over to depictions of Simon of Trent.

imagine those persecuting Christ as local enemies—many of whom still lived in Brescia, Cremona, and throughout Lombardy and would continue to do so for another three decades.

Romanino inserted local villains into the roles of those who murdered Christ, bringing biblical stories from antiquity immediately to the present but *without* the presence of contemporary Jews. In doing so, the artist heightened civic pride, but these depictions also made a radical polemical statement regarding good and evil. By replacing the traditional cast of Jewish characters with figures who likely themselves identified as Christian, Romanino implied that even those within the Church could be as equally villainous as those who killed the Son of God. Suddenly, the frescoes of the cathedral nave cycle linked the Jewish population already under constant fire from local Christians with anyone who threatened Italian Christians and thereby the Roman Church. Though he may not have yet anticipated the full implications of the forthcoming Protestant Reformation, Romanino's willingness to replace Christ's killers with contemporary Germans served as an artistic transition towards villainizing Protestants.

In 1520, despite (or because of) these artistic and theological shifts from his predecessors, the current *massari* unexpectedly fired Romanino from his position after completing just two of the five bays that had been contracted. They argued that they considered his contract void, as it had been signed during the previous administration, and they owed him nothing.²³⁷ While the *massari* had been replacing one artist with another, it is worth noting that none of the previously painted frescoes were changed or covered—each elected group likely wanted to put their own mark of identity on the paintings during their term by hiring the artist of their choice. And yet, the language of the new contract indicated this group sought something dramatically different in their

²³⁷ Bora, "Nota su Pordenone," 154.

next artist, Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone, whom they notably described as a *pictor modernus*.²³⁸ The precise significance of this term will become clear only when we examine Pordenone against the backdrop of his predecessors.

To finish the nave wall, Pordenone painted *Pilate Washing his Hands*, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, and the *Nailing of Christ to the Cross* across three bays (Figures 3.31-3.33). In contrast with the rest of the cycle, *massari* portraits no longer appear, the bays no longer divided into pairs of compositions, and settings no longer drew from Northern European prints. Pordenone's cast of characters also took on a distinct physiognomy when compared to those painted before his arrival. For some of the tormentors of Christ, the hulking figures of Michelangelo make an appearance. For others, Pordenone returned to earlier Po Valley traditions of depicting stereotypical Jewish characters with attributes recognizable in frescoes from the previous century that were explored in Chapters 1 and 2. However, Pordenone did not simply return to the past; he merged these traditions with an impression of the German invader to create something truly sinister.

In each scene, the faces of Christ's enemies become progressively more grotesque and animalistic. In *Pilate Washing his Hands*, the soldier on horseback who beats back the crowd has a face that points and hooks much in the same way as his helmet, and his eyes become long menacing slits. Here and in his *Christ Carrying the Cross*, Pordenone continued the tradition set forth in Valle di Susa and La Brigue—discussed in Chapter One—with generic costumes and props to indicate the Jewish figures in the scene. Yet, in the *Nailing of Christ to the Cross*, the central figure that directs the death of Christ represents a particularly unheroic invention, complete with brandished codpiece in the viewer's line of sight. As Cohen described him, "The remarkably

²³⁸ Like Romanino, Pordenone was not from Cremona. Di Resta also suggested that the paintings by Romanino were not perceived as bad, since they were not replaced. Di Resta, "Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone," 107.

characterized jowly face with twisted ear and sunken eyes is much more threatening than the cartoon caricatures of certain figures in the previous scene.”²³⁹ In this horrific display of violence that projects beyond the framing containment and into the nave, Pordenone did not turn to Jewish caricatures nor local *Landsknechte*, but a German-esque animalism. This portrayal modified the implications set forth in Romanino’s works. Rather than suggest a correlation between early Jews and contemporary mercenaries, Pordenone used both Jewish and Germanic imagery to evoke a concept of inhumanity present in all who threaten the Roman Church—theologically or literally through warfare.

There has been ample discussion regarding Pordenone’s “modernity” in terms of style. Scholars have noted that his frescoes evinced a compositional unity not present in the earlier frescoes and make multiple references to Central Italian *disegno*.²⁴⁰ While Romanino’s work in the cathedral took a *theologically* distinctive approach by using contemporary German mercenaries as those persecuting Christ and explicitly damned those occupying Northern Italy, this approach may have been too rooted in the contemporary world, and evidently the *massari* sought a different message. In Romanino’s works, he implied the modern-day villain would kill Christ again if given the chance, just like the Jews that allegedly killed Simon of Trent and threatened Christian children. Pordenone, rather, smoothed this same ideology into one that directly drew from a century-old regional pictorial tradition, while still conflating biblical Jews with modern threats.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Charles Cohen, “Pordenone’s Cremona Passion Scenes and German Art,” *Arte Lombarda*, Nuova Serie 42/43 (1975): 78.

²⁴⁰ See Cohen, *The Art of Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone*, 175-188; and Di Resta, “Giovanni Antonio da Pordneone,” 112.

²⁴¹ After Pordenone completed these three bays, he was paid to complete the nave, painting a massive *Crucifixion* on the interior façade over the cathedral’s west end, thus finishing the project. He later added a *Lamentation* below the *Crucifixion*, and Bernardino Gatti painted a *Resurrection* on the other side. For more on these additions and their placement in the timeline, see Cohen, *The Art of Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone*, vol. 2, 580-581 and Di Resta, “Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone,” 136-137, n. 108.

In his description of the town's suffering during the Italian Wars, Jason Di Resta explained that, "Playing host to hundreds, sometimes thousands of mercenary soldiers, Cremona was reduced to little more than a perverted playground for unchecked violence, inordinate taxation, and the tyranny of the French *castellani*."²⁴² Even with these horrors, Cremona did not suffer to the same extent as Brescia; despite all the occupations and vacillating control, Cremona avoided the massive amount of death and destruction seen in Romanino's hometown during the 1512 Sack of Brescia.²⁴³ Therefore, it is tempting to hypothesize that Romanino's personal ties to Brescia and his possible anticipation of the forthcoming nexus between German outsiders and heterodox theology is both what prompted his severe treatment of the *Landsknechte* in the Cremona frescoes and what made him replaceable to the *massari*. I do suggest that, like Garofalo, Romanino addressed the new local threats a little too directly. Whereas Garofalo worked in a private space a few years after the Reformation had fully ignited, Romanino's earlier work took a much more personal and visually explicit approach in a publically accessible space. While both Garofalo and Pordenone managed to finesse visual arguments against Jews *and* contemporary religious threats, Romanino removed Jews from his scenes entirely, making contemporary Germans the only enemies of Christ.

²⁴² Di Resta, "'Giovanni Antonio da Pordneone,'" 100, ft. 12.

²⁴³ Bowd, *Renaissance Mass Murder*, 229-230.

3.4 Valcamonica

According to church records, Romanino contested his dismissal from Cremona Cathedral for over two decades—even after the project was firmly completed—to no avail.²⁴⁴ He continued to paint various commissions throughout the region, but contemporaries often disapproved of his work and negatively compared him to other regional artists, such as Dosso Dossi and Titian.²⁴⁵ According to his critics, Romanino's works failed to follow classical ideals and rules in both figures and composition. In the 1530s, he left the more populated areas of Brescia and Trent and retreated into the hills where he began a series of church frescoes throughout Valcamonica—the Alpine Valley running along Lago d'Iseo.²⁴⁶ Romanino found freedom in the small hill towns of Pisogne and Breno, whose communities, like Cremona, actively sought to assert their own autonomy and significance within the shifting political and religious culture around them. Rather than select a “safe” artist who principally received praise for his works, both civic bodies subsequently hired Romanino—an artist now with a reputation for pushing theological boundaries

²⁴⁴ Maria Luisa Ferrari, *Il Romanino* (Milan: Bramante Editrice, 1961), 9-10, 30, and Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 233-234. Romanino also repeatedly attempted to take action against the *massari* for his dismissal. Mario Marubbi, “Regesto dei documenti cinquecenteschi per le ‘Storie del Testamento Nuovo,’” in *La Cattedrale di Cremona. Affreschi e sculture*, ed. Alessandro Tomei (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2001), 191-206.

²⁴⁵ Much of Romanino's time between Cremona and Valcamonica was spent painting church art, devotional images, and portraits in Brescia, Bergamo, and Asola. Many of his commissions came from the Brescian church, San Giovanni Evangelista, and I briefly discuss one of these in Section 6.1. Before his sojourn in Valcamonica, Romanino completed several major commissions in Trent, which received extensive criticism. On these, see Stefania Buganza and Maria Cristina Passoni, “Romanino,” in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 91-95. See also footnote 246.

²⁴⁶ Though not discussed in this dissertation, Romanino painted in Trent's Castello del Buonconsiglio from 1531-1532. The commission included several walls of frescoes for the Prince Bishop and Cardinal Bernardo Cles (1485-1539). Romanino painted mostly secular subjects in Trent, and worked alongside Dosso Dossi; as a result, much of Romanino's work received criticism in comparison with Dossi's work in the same building. Of note, however, is Romanino's prolonged stay in Trent where he would have been exposed to the continued popularity of Simon's cult. Shortly after this project, he worked in Valcamonica for several years, surrounded by images of Simon. These works are discussed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. For his Trent frescoes, see Ezio Chini, *Il Romanino a Trento: Gli affreschi nella Loggia del Buonconsiglio* (Milan: Electa, 1988), and *Girolamo Romanino. Confronti intorno alle mostre di Trento e Brescia, atti del convegno Cemmo di Capo di Ponte, 28 ottobre 2006*, ed. S. Marazzani (Milan: IPL, 2007).

and being stylistically different—to reinvent their visual identities in accordance with the sociopolitical needs of their communities.²⁴⁷ For Romanino, these commissions became a place to freely express his creativity without subjugation from the critics who preferred the styles and approaches of other artists.²⁴⁸

This region, like Cremona, suffered under oscillating conquest by French, Spanish, and Venetian forces. In the Bolognese pacts of December 23, 1529 between Charles V, Pope Clement VII, Ferdinand I of Austria, the Republic of Venice and the Duke of Milan Francesco Sforza, Venice reclaimed control of Valcamonica and allowed the Alpine towns a relative degree of autonomy under Brescian supervision.²⁴⁹ The resulting social and economic recovery prompted the civic bodies to invest in community revitalization, including renovations of locally owned churches.²⁵⁰ As a result, local laity hired Romanino to paint major fresco cycles in each civically owned church. Besides these commissions, the municipal leaders continued to appeal to both Brescia and Venice for full autonomy and freedom, seeing themselves as culturally different from

²⁴⁷ For a discussion on Romanino's style in relation to other artists, such as Moretto da Brescia, and the rationale for choosing Romanino over others for the Valcamonica commissions, see Vincenzo Gheroldi, "Una questione di geografia artistica," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 16-50. Gheroldi argued that it was precisely Romanino's lack of stylistic grace and his personal expressiveness that led to his Valcamonica commissions. The same characteristics that are critiqued in his Trent frescoes are exaggerated in Valcamonica. The hiring of Romanino could imply that these valley residents specifically wanted to be seen as unique from the rest of the region and artistically, Romanino's style fit their desire to differentiate.

²⁴⁸ Francesco Frangi, "Pisogne, Breno, Bienno," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. by Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 179.

²⁴⁹ Gheroldi, "Una questione di geografia artistica," 19-20. For more on the Venetian-Brescian system that ran Valcamonica, see Daniele Montanari, "Chiesa e istituzioni politiche," in *Aspirazioni e devozioni: Brescia nel cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio (Milan: Electa, 2006), 16-25.

²⁵⁰ This region suffered other disasters just prior to 1530 that also prompted this revitalization. For example, Valcamonica suffered several bouts of the plague at the beginning of the sixteenth century that lasted until 1529. For evidence of the economic revival in this area, see Oliviero Franzoni, "Cornice," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 48-50; see also, Comune di Breno, *Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno* (Breno, Italy: Grafo, 1992), 9-10.

the rest of the region.²⁵¹ After spending decades under control of so many different parties, Pisogne and Breno sought liberation—both politically and religiously.

Throughout these Alpine towns around Lago d’Iseo, witchcraft, heresy and religious dissent ran rampant. Witchcraft accusations arose early in this region, with significant persecutions beginning in the late fourteenth century. In 1506, the chronicler Elia Cavriolo described Valcamonica as

"...a place of foolish men and always abundant with witches where some say there are those who swap wives and the one who offers the less [valuable wife] adds to her a goat. He who receives it appreciates the addition of this animal as much as the other appreciates the more noble condition of the wife he has received. Such impiety was removed when the Franciscans were established there." ²⁵²

While the accusations of witchcraft steadily diminished in exchange for condemning heretics, these stereotypical opinions of Alpine citizens remained unchanged.²⁵³ In 1521 the ruling body in Venice wrote that “these poor creatures of the Val Camonica are simple people with the coarsest understanding and have no small need of preachers and prudent instruction in the Catholic faith.”²⁵⁴ Evidently, no one that controlled Valcamonica believed the little mountain towns could properly educate or care for themselves without urban intervention.

²⁵¹ Comune di Breno, *Romanino in Sant’Antonio*, 9-10. For specifics of each town’s unique cultural identity, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

²⁵² Elia Capriolo, “Chronicorum de rebus Brixianorum libri quatuordecim,” in *Thesaurus antiquitatum et historiarum Italiae...* ed. J.G. Graevius, vol. 9 pt. 7 (Leiden: Petrus Vander, 1723), col. 131. The full quote: “Est locus in agri nostril finibus, id est Vallis Monicae summitate, qui ineptis hominibus, lamiisque semper abundavit, cujus incolarum multos nunc uxores invicem permutavisse relatum est: & qui hebetiorem dabat, addebat & capram, ut non minoris capra ab accipiente, quam alteri nobilior traditae uxoris condition aestimari videretur. Quod tamen nefandum fertur amotum, ibi fundata divi *Francisci* sacra religione.” English translation in Bowd, *Venice’s Most Loyal City*, 174.

²⁵³ For a discussion on the connection between witchcraft and heresy, especially in the preaching of Bernardino da Siena, see Franco Mormando, *The Preacher’s Demons: Bernardino da Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 80-82.

²⁵⁴ Archivio di Stato, Venice, *Consiglio di dieci, misto, registro* 44, fol. 8r. English translation in Bowd, *Venice’s Most Loyal City*, 188.

In a region already inundated with outside invaders and mercenaries from the Italian Wars, Valcamonica also experienced external control from fellow Italians. These accusations of inferiority continued throughout the region often resulting in outside political authorities imposing themselves upon the valley, insisting they needed oversight to deal with the frequency of witches and also heretics.²⁵⁵ As noted in Chapter 1, reformers and other Reformation sympathizers filled Valcamonica, and anti-Jewish sentiment held firm.²⁵⁶ The locals that adhered to the Roman Church found political and theological validation against reformers when Charles V elected to travel through Valcamonica on his way home after his coronation by Pope Clement VII.²⁵⁷ Charles V notably played a role in the Second Diet of Speyer in 1529 that, among other things, prohibited Reformation practices and revoked Reformation church permissions.²⁵⁸ The term “Protestantism” then emerged to describe those who *protested* this prohibition.²⁵⁹ Charles V’s presence in Valcamonica would have fortified those who also opposed heresy and Reformation and brought pride to the region.

The ongoing threat to orthodox theology and its prevalence throughout Valcamonica invigorated civic church renovation. City officials paid special attention to decorating previously unpainted churches to contrast with the iconoclastic, white-washed Reformationist places of worship.²⁶⁰ In three Valcamonican churches, they hired Romanino to decorate previously unpainted walls. Rather than stylistic updating as was often the case in new church fresco

²⁵⁵ Both Venice and Brescian officials used the presence of witches in Valcamonica as justification for their heavy-handed ruling of the valley towns. See Bowd, *Venice’s Most Loyal City*, 174-191 for more.

²⁵⁶ Salvatore Caponetto, *La riforma protestante nell’Italia del cinquecento* (Torino: Claudiana, 1992), 210, 214-216.

²⁵⁷ Charles V was recorded to have visited Edolo and Breno in 1530. Franzoni, “Cornice,” 49.

²⁵⁸ The first Diet of Speyer in 1526 permitted freedom for reform and for states to choose the direction of their country’s religious institutions. For more on this and the second iteration that banned reform, see Eire, *Reformations*, 214-216.

²⁵⁹ Marco Rizzi, “Significati,” in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 304.

²⁶⁰ Gheroldi, “Una questione di geografia artistica,” 21.

commissions, these patrons paid for works out of theological necessity—to appear explicitly anti-Protestant and anti-Jewish in nature—and thus, exhibit their own autonomy as functioning Catholic communities. I suggest that for this same reason, Romanino did not replace or cover any of the preexisting paintings in these churches. Rather than simply update the entire nave programs, the communities hired Romanino to finish these churches while intentionally preserving the art and theological messages of the previous century. This cohesion between past and present in these fresco cycles, along with subject matter and artistic choices, reveals a distinct shift towards new theological concerns surrounding the Protestant Reformation and continuing anti-Jewish beliefs that Romanino pictorially transmogrified because of the Italian Wars. Rather than repeat Cremona with a cast of *Landsknechte*, however, Romanino painted a theologically advanced series of programs that directly commented on the region's religious concerns and met the unique needs of each town in the Alpine Valley.

4.0 Valcamonica 1534-1541: (Re)Imagining the Church's Enemy

"...inhabited by a people who are largely ignorant, goitrous, and almost entirely deformed and lacking all the finer points of civil society."

Giuseppe "da Orzinuovi," 1518

4.1 Pisogne 1534

Romanino began his sojourn through Valcamonica in the small lake town of Pisogne. Nestled between the northern edge of Lago d'Iseo and the foothills of the Alps, Pisogne was a small, humble trade town that served as a crossroads for those traveling through the rugged mountain terrain and the local mining merchants trading their wares for grains and other items not local to the region.²⁶¹ The fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *comuni* dedicated time and money to beautifying their churches and welcoming pilgrims that passed through as they traveled between the Germanic north and the Italian south.²⁶² However quaint, Pisogne (like much of this region) received accusations of having a backwards or up-in-the-hills form of ignorance that led to superstitious beliefs and dangerous heresy.²⁶³ This area historically held anti-Jewish views and

²⁶¹ Francesco De Leonardis, "Nella concitazione rumorosa di una sacra rappresentazione," in *La Via del Romanino: Dal Sebino alla Valcamonica*, ed. Gabriella Motta (Brescia: Grafo, 1996), 22-23.

²⁶² Gio Lodovico Baglioni, *Le chiesa di Pisogne* (Esine, Italy: Tipolitografia Valgrigna, 2014).

²⁶³ On the danger of superstition, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* part 2, qq 92-96. In 1512-13, Venetians Vincenzo Querini and Tommaso Giustiniani claimed that Christians were led to superstitions by Jews. Stephen D. Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City: Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 178. Carlo Ginzburg has also explored the disposition towards "mountain people" in Friuli as it related to the superstitious beliefs and heresies of a sixteenth-century miller known as Menocchio. Here, Ginzburg addressed the complexity of studying "dominant" and "subordinate" class attitudes and cultures and the often one-sided telling of

had a tradition of prosecuting witches with which the Inquisition frequently intervened beginning in the 1490s.²⁶⁴ While witchcraft allegedly permeated the entire region, the events in Pisogne reached a particularly infamous height in 1518 when the Inquisition had a total of eight women burned alive in the town square for accusations of witchcraft.²⁶⁵ A local who witnessed these executions wrote that the region was a

"place of mountains more than plains, more sterile than fertile, and inhabited by a people who are largely ignorant, goitrous, and almost entirely deformed and lacking all the finer points of civil society. Their customs are often rustic and wild, and there are few who know, let alone obey, the commandments of God. So these valley dwellers are as different from other Brescians as the Portuguese are from those of Calicut."²⁶⁶

For valley residents, belief in witches, Jewish perfidy, and the dangers of heretics provided evidence of both supernatural activity as well as the promise of something good beyond the natural world for faithful Catholics.²⁶⁷ This need for analogical assurance became especially potent given

these histories. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (New York: Penguin, 1986, reprint).

²⁶⁴ On the formation of the European witch, see Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, rev. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1991).

²⁶⁵ While condemned women may seem standard for witch accusations, this region primarily accused, tortured, and killed men as witches. What was striking in 1518 was how many were charged at once and by the end of the trials in 1520, over 100 people (men and women) had been executed for witchcraft. Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 183-191. The diaries of Marino Sanuto (or Sanudo) from 1536 also comment on the heresies prevalent in the region; see Vincenzo Gheroldi, "Una questione di geografia artistica," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 21.

²⁶⁶ Giuseppe "da Orzinuovi" to Ludovico Querini, 1 Aug. 1518, in Marino Sanuto, *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, ed. Rinaldo Fulin, Federico Stefani, Nicolò Barozzi, Guglielmo Berchet, and Marco Allegri, vol. 25 (Venice: Fratelli Visentini, 1879-1903) (Facsimile, Bologna: Forni, 1969-1970), 602.

²⁶⁷ Condemnation of both witches and Jews was often fixated on matters of the physical body—carnal relations, cleanliness and odor, and ritual murder and/or cannibalism. Stephens argued that the Reformation, among other events, seeded spiritual doubt and a lack of faith among Christians. Placing one's belief in the existence of witches (and continued belief in nefarious Jews) could renew faith while using scapegoats to strengthen the Catholic community. See Stephens, *Demon Lovers*, 7, 30, 138, 366. For the relationship between heretics and witches, see

the death and destruction wrought by outsider mercenaries in this region during the Italian Wars. Each of these outsider groups—Jews, political adversaries, and heretics—could be viewed as renegades who rejected orthodox Christianity and posed a threat to the church-crafted community identity. However, according to those outside the Alpine Valley, it was these rural mountain-dwellers who represented the primary *source* of ideas against God, thick with ignorant, superstitious beliefs and heresies.²⁶⁸ By the time Valcamonica achieved relative autonomy in 1529, towns like Pisogne had to establish themselves as politically independent, papal-loyal communities while maintaining their unique regional heritage as different from that of the larger cities that still wished to control them. To insert the town into the political and religious sphere of cities like Brescia and Venice, Pisogne needed to firmly differentiate herself from those would-be heretical polluters of the community and take a firm social stand against Jews and heretics. Visually, this self-fashioning identity project took place in civically controlled churches.

Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*, 16-59, and Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 101-132. For Jewish crimes as validation for Christian miracles, see Mitchell B. Merback, *Pilgrimage and Pogrom: Violence, Memory, and Visual Culture at the Host-Miracle Shrines of Germany and Austria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012) and Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 108-129.

²⁶⁸ Importantly, the author of the *Malleus Maleficarum* was from an Alpine town. For this and an introduction on how “fantasies of mountain peasants” led Dominicans to demonize rural heresies as a form of social intolerance, see H.R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: Penguin, 1967), 24-39. Ironically, twenty-first-century scholars still refer to early modern citizens of Valcamonica as “bumpkins.” Arno Borst pointed out that these Alpine towns were not the “hotbed of superstition” history has made them out to be; however, those stereotypes certainly existed and were a driving force behind the accusations and condemnation of rural communities by elite urban citizens. He also showed through the case of Simme Valley how the Alpine town’s fear of being controlled by those in the powerful flatlands led to their condemnation of others. In this sense, the same could be said of Pisogne and other towns discussed in this chapter; fear of losing their autonomy bred a fearfulness of anything deemed counter to mainstream Catholic ideals. Arno Borst, *Medieval Worlds: Barbarians, Heretics and Artists in the Middle Ages*, trans. Eric Hansen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 102-104; 120-122. Meanwhile, those in power in the urban centers of Brescia and Venice feared losing control. For more on how fear played such a prominent role in the European witch-craze, see Stephens, *Demon Lovers*.

4.1.1 Description of the Cycle

On a high point in the town facing the lake sits Santa Maria in Silvis, a parish church built at the end of the fifteenth century during a major building and renovation campaign throughout Pisogne.²⁶⁹ During this period, artists covered the church walls with frescoes depicting scenes of the Madonna and Child, various saints of local relevance, and a series of scenes on the *Triumph of Death* along the north wall.²⁷⁰ At the far right of the north wall, next to the presbytery, two frescoes are stacked: above, the *Ritual Murder of Simon of Trent*, and below, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with San Rocco* (Figure 2.25).²⁷¹ Though damaged today, these paintings would have been freshly visible when Romanino arrived in town to work in another church just down the road.

In 1534—over a decade after his work in Cremona Cathedral—the municipal body of Pisogne hired Romanino to decorate the remainder of another church, Santa Maria della Neve. By this time, the warring European bodies had entered the fourth decade of the Italian Wars, and the Protestant Reformation became intrinsically interconnected with the continuing political siege. As discussed in Chapter 3, both sixteenth-century chroniclers, Pandolfo Nassino and Luigi Guicciardini explicitly labeled the German *Landsknechte* as Lutherans and enemies of the Roman Church by 1527.²⁷² Beyond the physical wars, the papacy and its allies engaged in religious warfare against the reformers of the north. The 1529 Second Diet of Speyer made practicing Protestantism illegal throughout the Holy Roman Empire, and this occurred in the same year

²⁶⁹ Vincenzo Gheroldi and Sara Marazzani, *Girolamo Romanino e gli uomini di Pisogne: un percorso in Santa Maria della neve tra XV e XVI secolo* (Brescia: Grafo, 2009), 11.

²⁷⁰ For a thorough description of the church frescoes and history, see Baglioni, *Le chiesa di Pisogne*, 32-67.

²⁷¹ Along with the popularity of Simon of Trent, this region commissioned many images of plague saints, such as San Rocco, and cycles on the *Triumph of Death* as an appeal to the saints for relief from the ongoing plague outbreaks during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

²⁷² See sections 3.1.1 and 3.3.

Valcamonica received her relative autonomy and freedom during the Italian Wars in the Bolognese pacts.²⁷³ Consequently, by the time of Romanino's arrival, the Alpine residents of Valcamonica had become fully entrenched in spiritual combat against the lingering mercenaries and heretics that entered their valleys and threatened their political and religious freedom, even though the physical warfare of the Italian Wars largely no longer reached them.²⁷⁴ The added control from Venice and Brescia meant that towns like Pisogne had to fight even harder for autonomy, while simultaneously making their union with the papacy undeniable. In this chapter, I argue that much of this work visually came to fruition through Romanino's frescoes.

Built by the *comune* in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, Santa Maria della Neve served an important community role in Pisogne.²⁷⁵ The building—a small open hall structure with nave and apse presbytery—sat just outside the city center, intentionally positioned along the Strada Valeriana, an important passageway through the Alps and the juncture of main commercial routes.²⁷⁶ Because of this placement, the church became popular as a safe stayover for pilgrims and other visitors traveling along the mountain route and coming into town to trade. As part of the original building project, the apse contained frescoes with scenes from the Life of the Virgin, along with the legend of the Madonna della Neve to commemorate the naming of the church, as

²⁷³ Carlos M.N. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 214-216. See also section 3.3.

²⁷⁴ Though the wars and political issues would continue for another two decades, the occupation period of Northern Italy had largely ended. However, many of the German and Swiss mercenaries continued to reside throughout the region. Also, given the frequently oscillating control Northern Italy experienced in the decades prior as well as the ongoing threat of the Turks, those living in Valcamonica likely continued to fear future siege and destruction.

²⁷⁵ Interior brick corbels original to the structure bear the coat of arms and engravings of the Pisogne community and municipal authorities, providing evidence that this church always had civic patronage. See Franzoni, "Cornice," 64-65.

²⁷⁶ Gheroldi and Marazzani, *Girolamo Romanino e gli uomini di Pisogne*, 10.

well as other images of the Madonna and Child, Christ Pantocrator, plague saints, evangelists, and fathers of the Church, but only fragments of the *sinope* remain.²⁷⁷

Though a civic commission in origin, there remains evidence of a strong Franciscan presence in the region, including the Observants who frequently preached in the area and maintained an altar in Santa Maria in Sylvis.²⁷⁸ While no record exists of an order ever taking charge of Santa Maria della Neve, the placement of a Bernardinian monogram over the main door into the nave suggests the Observants' presence and impact (Figure 4.1).²⁷⁹ While we do not know if any religious order played a role in Romanino's fresco cycle development, I argue that the ideologies of Bernardino da Siena were evidently strong enough that the *comune* added this particular Christogram to greet visitors to the church and preserved it throughout the church's history. Of importance to this dissertation, Bernardino and his followers delivered intense anti-Jewish and anti-witchcraft themed sermons in the area that coalesce with the messages found throughout the fresco cycle in Pisogne.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ These existing decorations were in the same general configuration and style as those by Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo in Breno, discussed later in this chapter. Gheroldi, "Cantieri," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 146-147; and Marco Rizzi, "Significati," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 306. The legends say that the Virgin appeared in a dream to both Pope Liberius and a Roman layperson and used snowfall during summer to show where a church on the Esquiline Hill in Rome should be built. There are no records to indicate why this particular miraculous event was chosen for the naming of the Pisogne church, though the Alpine region certainly sees ample snowfall in the winter making it a fitting name.

²⁷⁸ For the presence of Observant Franciscan preaching in the area, see Chapter 2 of this dissertation. See also Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City*, 171-173; Salvatore Caponetto, *La riforma protestante nell'Italia del cinquecento* (Torino: Claudiana, 1992); Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 52-53; and G. Muzzarelli, *Pescatori di uomini: predicatori e piazze alla fine del Medioevo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005).

²⁷⁹ The door jambs were decorated with the *Triumph of Death*, but only fragments remain today. Above is a sculpture of the Madonna and Child surrounded by two angels, all prior to Romanino.

²⁸⁰ On this subject, see Franco Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino da Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). The reader should also refer back to Chapter 2 for a discussion on these sermons and their impact on artworks of Simon of Trent in the region. Previously, scholars took the monogram at Pisogne as evidence that the Observant Order ran the church, first argued by Passamani and continued by others. Bruno Passamani, *Romanino in Santa Maria della Neve a Pisogne* (Brescia: Grafo, 1990), 9-10. However, the recent monographic project on Romanino's three Valcamonica commissions indicates that no order

Romanino's project involved decorating the unpainted single room nave marked by transverse arches divided into three bays, as well as the new exterior porticos on the north and south sides of the church that the *comune* added to invite and accommodate the influx of pilgrims.²⁸¹ The commission involved painting a unified cycle, both inside and outside, with scenes from the Passion of Christ and images on the theme of martyrdom. Romanino certainly had a deep familiarity with this subject matter since his work on and removal from the same narrative in Cremona had haunted him for years—years, during which the Protestant Reformation gained significant ground throughout Europe, and this region especially became known for the presence of heresy in its towns. I suggest that evidence of how Romanino and his patrons responded to the shifting contours of religious affiliation and identity in Northern Italy exists throughout this fresco cycle in Santa Maria della Neve.

The cycle initially began outside in the three-bay north portico with the *Nativity*, *Procession of the Magi*, and *Adoration of the Magi* and included decorative *putti* on the ceilings (Figures 4.2-4.3).²⁸² Due to the placement of these exterior porticos, travelers along the route first encountered these scenes of journey and arrival, inviting them to pause their own expedition and ponder the mysteries of the Passion. While some travelers likely intended to visit the little church, the program may have also been meant to entice burgeoning heretics to stop and reconsider the Christian truths according to Pisogne.

ran this church and it remained civically controlled from its inception through Romanino's presence. Gheroldi Vincenzo, ed., *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica* (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015).

²⁸¹ The addition of these porticos also involved sealing the two nave windows, which gave Romanino more surface area on which to decorate inside. For schematic renderings of the changes made, see Maria Teresa Mazzucchelli and Anna Quetti, "Architetture" in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 136-139.

²⁸² Today, only the faint outlines on two *Magi* panels remain. Both are propped up inside of the presbytery. Because of the damage and loss, these images are not discussed further.

After stopping for respite on the north portico, a door led visitors into the nave.²⁸³ The rest of the cycle continued inside the church along the nave walls and counter-façade (Figure 4.4). Spanning both sides of the holy arch that leads into the presbytery, Romanino painted the *Annunciation* with Gabrielle on the left, Mary on the right, and God the Father above sending the dove down with its message of miraculous conception (Figure 4.5). Below this he included scenes of *Pentecost* and the *Deposition*. On the two nave walls and counter-façade, two registers contain the Passion scenes. The smaller bottom register contains faux-framed rectangular scenes that include *Supper in the House of Simon the Pharisee*, *Entrance into Jerusalem*, *Washing the Disciples' Feet*, the *Last Supper*, *Christ before Pilate*, *Christ at the Column*, and the *Crowning of Thorns* (Figures 4.6-4.12). Atop these scenes on the north and south walls, Romanino painted larger frescoes that fill the arcade reaching to the ceiling. These include the *Capture of Christ in the Garden*, *Ecce Homo*, the *Way to Calvary*, the *Descent into Limbo*, the *Resurrection*, and the *Assumption* (Figures 4.13-4.18). Above the door, spanning the entire upper register and surrounding the small circular window at the top, Romanino painted a massive *Crucifixion* scene (Figure 4.19).

Stylistically, Romanino's work in Pisogne (as well as the subsequent commission in Breno) displayed the height of his painterly brushwork and denial of classical ideals. His figures appear rough and humble, recalling the region in which they resided. In his article on style and dialect, Nova remarked that many of Romanino's figures and poses recalled the three-dimensional Sacro

²⁸³ This door is now sealed, and twenty-first century landscaping leads visitors to the west entrance with the Bernardinian monogram for both entry and exit. However, during the sixteenth century, the north entrance would have been the primary entrance for pilgrims visiting the space. The south portico essentially served as an overflow for travelers, and its frescoes are barely extant. Previous descriptions indicate that the images were of martyrdoms, possibly including the Holy Innocents, various saints, and the beheading of John the Baptist, along with decorative palms and putti. Gheroldi, "Cantieri," 152-153.

Monte figures in Varallo and elsewhere, and thus further tied the artist's work to the Alpine region.²⁸⁴ While one could argue that his free style in Valcamonica resulted from lax clients who did not censor him, his unique, non-Titian-esque style likely represented the Valcamonican commissioners' desire to differentiate themselves from Venice, Brescia, and even Rome. However, I believe Romanino's direct approach at visually transmogrifying German Lutherans into the enemies of Christ in Cremona Cathedral warranted him the full attention of the Valcamonican *comuni* by the 1530s.²⁸⁵

4.1.2 "Mountain Christ"

While the cycle included all the main components of the Passion story, the scenes do not appear in narratological order, and several scenes conflate details from across the Gospels.²⁸⁶ Instead, the configuration promoted a meditative experience for pilgrims to Santa Maria della Neve with themes of anticipation, the fall of humanity, and redemption that invite viewers to relive the meaning of Christ's Passion as they amble around the nave.²⁸⁷ This meditative focus on Christ became increasingly common in Christian practice—among both orthodox and reformers—arising

²⁸⁴ Alessandro Nova, "Folengo and Romanino: The questione della lingua and Its Eccentric Trends," *Art Bulletin* 76, no. 4 (December 1994): 664-679. Valcamonica almost had their own Sacro Monte. For more on this and the Sacro Monte, see section 4.2.4 of this chapter.

²⁸⁵ See Section 3.3 for a full discussion on Romanino's Cremona works.

²⁸⁶ Giovanni Vezzoli, *Gli affreschi di Girolamo Romanino in Pisogne nella Chiesa di S. Maria della Neve* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1965), 8. Previously, scholars attributed the lack of order to Romanino's eccentric character and the fact that the commissioners of Pisogne were uneducated and let the artist do as he pleased. De Leonardis, "Nella concitazione rumorosa," 25.

²⁸⁷ Passamani expanded on these themes and their relationship to each scene, as well as the connection between the themes and the culture of the Franciscans in Passamani, *Romanino in Santa Maria della Neve a Pisogne*, 13-15. Alessandro Nova also discussed the ways in which the arrangement of scenes still makes logical sense, both in terms of aesthetics and content, *Girolamo Romanino* (Torino: Umberto Allemandi: 1994), 288-289. Recently, Marco Rizzi and Giovanni Reale have added their interpretations: Rizzi, "Significati," and Giovanni Reale, *Romanino e la "Sistina dei poveri" a Pisogne* (Milan: Bompiani, 2014). For a discussion on which scenes were chosen and Romanino's continued use of Dürer's prints and themes, see Rizzi, "Significati," 307-308.

from the *Devotio Moderna* and Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* from the fifteenth century.²⁸⁸ Through these printed publications and preaching, Christians engaged in rhetorical performance by contemplating themes from the life of Christ, reflecting on their own actions, and living their lives in humble simplicity that mimicked Jesus. In Pisogne, this came naturally compared to life in the bustling cities, and the option to practice meditations on the Life of Christ through imagery existed primarily for followers of the Catholic Church. The sheer choice of painting images of Christ explicitly to cover empty walls with the intent of veneration and adoration spoke directly against both Jewish opposition to divine imagery and Reformation iconoclasm in places of worship.²⁸⁹ In Santa Maria della Neve, the timing of these frescoes amplified the Roman Church's permissibility of divine images during rising heresy, but they also carried an even deeper connection to local identity and belief.

Romanino chose to not include portraits or contemporary costumes, and yet the figures throughout this cycle still feel local. Like his experience in Cremona, Romanino painted in an area that existed post-imperial occupation and had relative freedom. However, the Sack of Rome that had occurred in the interim made these freedoms even more palpable and necessary. Rather than replicate his efforts in Cremona and use portraits of *comune* officials or treacherous *Landsknechte* to root the Passion and the threat to Christianity in the sixteenth century, Romanino developed a more theologically complex approach to address the spiritual warfare that ensued after the 1527 Sack of Rome and that would rhetorically persist beyond immediate circumstances. For Santa

²⁸⁸ For a discussion on these and their later evolutions into works such as the *Benefit of Christ*, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, and the *Mirror of the Cross*, as well as the presence of these works and their ideologies in Valcamonica, see Rizzi, "Significati," 302-310.

²⁸⁹ Refer to Section 1.3 for a discussion of these various stances related to divine imagery.

Maria della Neve, he painted a humble Mountain Christ that served the specific needs of Pisogne's mountain dwellers.

The biblical characters spanning the walls wear humble robes, cloaks, veils, and mantles, filled in with stock military characters and ruffians in torn shirts and pants. Even Christ appears modestly dressed, sometimes in a rose-colored robe, other times in a bare cloth or tattered rags. In *Washing the Disciples' Feet*, he even wears an apron. The scenes that have backgrounds all depict elevated mountain landscapes reminiscent of the region, and those without landscape have Christ soaring above viewers as if on his own mountain inside the church. With muted colors primarily in earth tones and no gilding or wealthy costumes, the entire cycle fits organically within the modest mountain mining-town community.²⁹⁰

In Pisogne, the psychology and presence of Christ appears completely different from his presentation in Cremona. In *Christ at the Column* in Cremona, Jesus stands stoically enduring the abuse he receives while looking back over his right shoulder and making eye contact with the *Landsknechte* that allow this to happen (Figure 3.27). In Pisogne, we see a daring, confrontational Christ as he pulls away from the column, prominently displaying his not-yet-damaged back flesh, inviting what is to come. Rather than stare across the composition at his accusers, Christ leans directly into the face of one of his punishers, making inescapable, glaring eye contact. The man receiving this affront appears ready to recoil, caught off guard and unsure how to respond. Undoubtedly, while the Pisogne Christ suffers, he retains a defiant agency and strength not present when Romanino painted in Cremona.²⁹¹ Amidst debates over permissibility in depicting the

²⁹⁰ There have been technical analyses and suggestions that gilded wax may have been used in some sections of the frescoes, but this has not been confirmed. Vincenzo Gheroldi, "Una ricerca sui livelli del finito" in *Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno*, Comune di Breno (Breno, Italy: Grafo, 1992), 77-105.

²⁹¹ Romanino only painted four of the Passion scenes in Cremona, but in all of the scenes the figure of Christ is stoic, pathetic, and appears mentally distant from the scenes surrounding him.

divine, the Pisogne Christ overtly asserts his presence and his power, not through heavenly glory or riches, but through human grit and will.

A similar comparison exists between the artist's two versions of the *Ecce Homo*. In Cremona, Christ stands atop a set of five stairs, surrounded by characters beside and below him that contemplate his fate, which rests in their hands (Figure 3.28). He wears the crown of thorns, holds a reed as a scepter, and has a cloak on his shoulders that those beside him raise up to fully present him to the crowd. But Jesus appears beaten, both physically and mentally, and he stands staring out of the painting, not at the viewer, but seemingly at nothing while absorbed in thought. Below him, on the bottom stair, a nude child plays with a small dog, but no one seems to notice. In Pisogne, the same figure of Christ stands above the crowd, this time on top of twelve stairs, but he appears without reed or cloak. Rather than gaze out absently, he looks directly downward at the foot of the stairs. Here, instead of a nude child and dog, we see two children in white tunics fighting with one another. The child on the left, grasping an olive branch in one hand, has his fist embedded in the tousled hair of the child on the right who tries to push and kick him away. Above the boys, standing on the fifth stair, a small dog (of the same color as that in Cremona, but much smaller), stands with his back to the viewer, gazing up at Christ. While the bottom right of the fresco is damaged, nearly erasing the child and dog, Christ clearly casts his gaze toward these figures. Without a complete image, we cannot easily assign an interpretation to the vision he witnesses below; however, the presence of an olive branch—a common reference to peace and victory—may very well embody the victory over death that Christ will soon achieve in another fresco section of this cycle. As the crowd around him debates his fate, Jesus—having already prayed to his Father in the Garden of Gethsemane and pleaded for another way to fulfill God's requirement—knows his future without any earthly sentencing necessary. The two fraught

children provide a visual embodiment of Christ's initial reluctance and despair without Jesus himself explicitly exhibiting these emotions in the moment. Through the boys, the faithful could imagine the innocent, child-like resistance and struggle he must have internally experienced in the garden. In Pisogne, Christ appears resolved and as the antithesis to Cremona's pitiful version.

This humble-yet-courageous Christ exists in the other images as well, through his attire, demeanor, and eye engagement with viewers. While Romanino did not paint the *Carrying the Cross* in Cremona, that Christ, again, looks pitiful and defeated (Figure 3.32). In Pisogne, he stands strong, not yet fallen, and challenges viewers with his direct eye contact. In fact, viewers cannot escape Christ's commanding presence, not because of divine light or holy presence but through a penetrative gaze and massive, sturdy thighs that imply he cannot be knocked down even as captors drag him along to his death. These minor changes in depiction result in a heroic, confident Christ that psychologically stands up to those who condemn him while still following God's will.

For the sixteenth-century community of Pisogne, this Christ represented a meditative experience and far more than a simple artistic recounting of the Passion. He visually reminded locals to bravely stand against one's enemies, be they foreign powers seeking control or religious others that Catholics perceived as a threat. Romanino took the most commonly told story of Christianity and made it one of Pisogne's own.²⁹² I suggest that this version of Jesus represented

²⁹² Another example of how this region commissioned artworks that were distinctly their own is the *Madonna of Paitone*. Painted by Moretto da Brescia in 1534, this painting depicts a disabled boy and his miraculous vision of the Virgin that occurred in Paitone, a province of Brescia. In it, the artist portrayed a humble Mary clad in a simple habit standing alongside the barefoot child. The composition is simple, homely, and devoid of any heavenly glory or splendor that would convey the ocular miracle that occurred. The only indication something is happening is the wind catching her robe. Rather, this was a Madonna for the people of this small, rural community; she was theirs, she looked like she belonged, and ultimately, the painting of her would work its own miracles. For a discussion on this painting, see Stephen Campbell, "Brescia and Bergamo, 1520-50: Sacred Naturalism and the Place of the Eucharist," in *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 214-215.

a profoundly human Mountain Christ for mountain people; not people of ignorance or backwards thinking like the stereotypes implied, but rather ones of a proud identity related to the land.²⁹³ His utter humanness, which lacks resplendent divinity, on display throughout the church heightened his relatability to the perils of everyday life and provided a visible, replicable illustration to Pisognians on how to live and die by Christ's example. Additionally, this visual emphasis on the humanity of Christ reiterated the Catholic argument that God made Jesus in his image, and thereby condoned earthy images of the divine.²⁹⁴ This heated debate between papal Rome and reformers found a firm defense of images in Pisogne's human Mountain Christ. To truly fight their stereotypes and gain equal footing with Brescia and Venice, though, this mountain-fresco had to also make a firm stand against religious others, which I argue is evident in the ceiling frescoes and their relationship with the *Crucifixion* scene.

4.1.3 "Sistine Chapel of the Poor"

Uniting the space as a singular marvel, Romanino capped the frescoes with a ceiling painting that transitions the viewer from the humble earthly stories around them to images of prophets and sibyls that prophesied the coming of Christ, as well as *grisaille ignudi* in front of gold-painted faux mosaic tiles (Figure 4.20). This arrangement not only participated in a long tradition of *grisaille* painting that would stage a comparison with artists such as Michelangelo, but the entire composition evokes an undeniable relationship to Michelangelo's early sixteenth-century work in the Sistine Chapel. To be sure, tourist brochures for the twenty-first century

²⁹³ Pisogne's attachment to the land extended beyond their chosen place of residence. For many, the mining in the area was their means of livelihood. The mountains provided a home, means to survive, and thus, their identity.

²⁹⁴ For another example of using the image of Christ to combat arguments against divine imagery, see section 5.4.2.

welcome visitors to Pisogne by proclaiming Romanino's work as the "Cappella Sistina dei Poveri," or the "Sistine Chapel of the Poor." This distinction, first made by Giovanni Testori in 1987, perfectly embodies the relationship between Romanino's frescoes and the *comune* of Pisogne.²⁹⁵ Romanino did not merely cite the great Tuscan master; instead, he made numerous deviations in his depiction of these figures that served the local community in ways that a replication of the Vatican masterpiece would not achieve in Northern Italy.²⁹⁶

Romanino arranged twenty-four prophets, sibyls, and other men and women of the bible across the three ceiling bays with four men and four women alternating per bay. Each figure stands or leans against faux-architectural elements, grasping an unfurled scroll that an unseen wind threatens to carry away. Additional half-bust images of prophets appear along the fictive pilasters between each bay.²⁹⁷ Romanino depicted these twenty-four ceiling figures as restless, unsettled bodies, some interacting with gestures across the space, others directing their attention intentionally toward or recoiling away from the Passion scenes below them. All of them struggle just to remain in their architectural niches, as if gravity threatens to unseat and pull them down. None of them actively write their prophecies—at their present moment, their predictions or historical roles have been completed and the outcome has already come to fruition.

²⁹⁵ Giovanni Testori, "Sotto il cielo di Romanino," in *Testori a Brescia*, ed. Associazione Giovanni Testori (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2003), 23-25.

²⁹⁶ It could be argued that for the Valcamonica communities that hired Romanino, his differentiated style was suited to fashioning their identities as distinctly their own.

²⁹⁷ Previously there were also profiles of several emperors and/or Church Fathers crowned with laurels in medallions, but these are no longer extant. Gaetano Panazza discussed them, *Affreschi di Girolamo Romanino* (Brescia: Brescia, Committee of the Exhibition of Girolamo Romanino, 1965), 54; Nova noted that they disappeared and were only rediscovered as barely remaining in September 1989, *Girolamo Romanino*, 288. With their precise identities unknown, it is impossible to determine their interpretation within the cycle as a whole. However, if they were indeed premodern emperors, there could be an association made with the glory of long ago rulers and Pisogne's desire for autonomy from present-day controlling entities. Conversely, they could represent a link between those in power who align with the authority of the Roman Church, such as Valcamonica welcoming Charles V on his journey home from Rome.

The scrolls they hold contain text in either Greek, Latin, Hebrew, or pseudo-script, some of which have deteriorated beyond legibility.²⁹⁸ Those with comprehensible languages contain mostly non-words and only give the viewer the implication of something having been written by the author.²⁹⁹ The scrolls of the eight figures in the third bay, closest to the *Crucifixion* on the counter-façade, are the only ones that contain complete, coherent words and form phrases.³⁰⁰ Each of these lines of Latin text contain messages affiliated with the character's scriptures or prophecies. When taken collectively in the context of the fresco cycle, these divinations anticipate the Crucifixion and its impact for Christians and Jews.

Starting from the northwest corner and going clockwise the eight figures include the Cumaean Sibyl, the Eritrean Sibyl, Adam, Abraham, Esther, the Queen of Sheba, King Solomon, and Daniel (Figures 4.21-4.22).³⁰¹ Unlike the other two bays that alternate male and female (MF, MF, MF, MF), this bay has them paired and alternating in twos (MM, FF, MM, FF) making them visually distinct but also aligning them for interpretive purposes. Each exists in their own faux-corner niche in the vault and engages with the space around them to varying degrees. Solomon

²⁹⁸ Panazza, *Affreschi di Girolamo Romanino*, 54. Nova refers to these as “curiosi cartiglio privi di senso,” *Girolamo Romanino*, 289.

²⁹⁹ De Leonardis suggested that the illegible scrolls may have related to the obscurity of old prophetic languages. De Leonardis, “Nella concitazione rumorosa,” 27. I would argue that this only makes sense if *all* of the scrolls were like this. Instead, the eight legible scrolls imply that the designers simply wanted to emphasize a specific message in the third bay by the *Crucifixion* and did not bother with composing legible text for the other sixteen scrolls.

³⁰⁰ A detailed description of each cartouche and its text can be found in Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 289 and Passamani, *Romanino in Santa Maria della Neve a Pisogne*, 14-15. The argument can be made that many pilgrims and lay-visitors to the space would not be able to read these Latin inscriptions. Since the church was civically designed and enhanced to specifically house pilgrims, it is not a stretch to imagine some sort of guide that led visitors around the space and aided them on the various meditations and themes on the walls before them. It is also clear in many fresco projects from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that not every detail was intended for mass consumption, and some features were legible only by clergy and other learned elite. I make no assumptions here that everyone was privy to the messages I have interpreted. I only suggest that the reader consider the many modes of communication and sharing that likely took place in the church to help everyone gain something meaningful from the cycle.

³⁰¹ The remaining sixteen Old Testament figures on the ceiling include Jeremiah, Hosea, Balaam, Isaiah, David, Malachi, Habakkuk, Jonah, and eight other women, most of whom are no longer identifiable due to the faded text on their scrolls. The exception is the Libyan Sibyl who appears in the first bay near the Virgin Mary of the *Annunciation*. Nova, and others, assume that most, if not all, of these other female figures are sibyls, rather than other women from the Old Testament. Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 287.

and Abraham look toward the scene of the *Crucifixion*, Solomon with his mouth agape at what happens before him, and Abraham trying to process what he sees with a furled brow. Adam, Esther, and the Queen of Sheba all look other directions. The Cumaean Sibyl explicitly turns her back towards the *Crucifixion*, and with her left foot raised, she exposes viewers below to her sole that threatens to come violently down upon them. Her right arm similarly swings in front of her, and if released, would pose a threat to those nearby.³⁰² The Eritrean Sibyl also looks away from the counter-façade scene while casually pointing a finger across the space. Following her gesture and the slope of the vault does not lead viewers' eyes to the *Crucifixion* as we might assume, but rather directly to Daniel. Of the eight figures, only Daniel directly gestures to the *Crucifixion* scene before him.

All eight figures vary in posture and reaction, and the messages they bear on their cartouches befit each depiction. Both the Eritrean and Cumaean Sibyls were Apollonian priestesses who Christians considered as having foretold the coming of Christ.³⁰³ As representatives of Greece and Italian antiquity, respectively, the two side-by-side may represent the shared beliefs between the Eastern and Western Christian Churches. Together, their messages foretold violent ends to infidels and old kingdoms and the rise of God's new kingdom.³⁰⁴ The Cumaean Sibyl's cartouche reads as particularly violent as it references spitting venom, an action suitable to her posture ready to unleash on anyone below her. The Eritrean Sibyl feigns interest while gesturing towards Daniel, discussed later. Abraham and Adam sit beside the two sibyls and

³⁰² An argument could also be made that she is scrambling to get further into her niche, turning as if attempting to leave the scene entirely.

³⁰³ For backstory on the sibyls and their appearance in Renaissance art, see Charles Dempsey, *The Early Renaissance and Vernacular Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), esp. 119-268.

³⁰⁴ Their cartouches read as follows: Cumaean: IN MANUS INFIDELIUM VENIET. DABUNT AUTEM DEO ALAPAS MANIBUS INCESTIS ET IMPURATO ORE EXPUENT VENENATOS SPUTOS; Eritrean: IN ULTIMA ETATE HUMILIAVIT DEUS ET MORTE PROPRIA MORTUOS SUSITABIT CUMQUE MANCIPABIT VIVET ET REGNABIT.

finish the row of figures on the north side of the bay. Their simple cartouches reference resting under a tree and the tree of life.³⁰⁵ Together, they symbolize the change taking place around them: for Christians, Jesus became both the new Adam and the New Law, replacing Abraham's covenant with God through his crucifixion on wood from a tree. Collectively, these four figures represent the collapse and replacement of the Jewish Kingdom and Judaism as a religion by Christ.

The remaining four figures amplify this message. Directly across from Abraham and Adam, viewers see Esther and the Queen of Sheba, women from the Old Testament. Initially, Esther's presence seems contradictory to an anti-Jewish message. In her story, the Jewish heroine successfully foils Haman's plot to kill her people and results in King Ahasuerus killing Haman, the enemy of the Jews, instead. Her cartouche references this event from Esther 7:10 where "...they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the anger of the king abated."³⁰⁶ Even though this represents a story of Jewish salvation in the Old Testament, Esther's placement in this context and her depiction by Romanino transform this into yet another message of Christian domination. The figure of Esther appears as though she attempts to push herself backwards into her niche. Her right leg braces against the wall and she bends at the waist, inserting herself into the void behind her. Importantly, of all the cartouches, Esther's must be read in reverse. The scroll has twisted on itself, and the letters appear as if reading them from behind where the ink has bled through the fabric.³⁰⁷ Other scrolls on the ceiling undulate and flip over, but in the legible cartouches, the words always face forward and upright for the viewer, at times

³⁰⁵ Their cartouches read as follows: Adam: *PRODUXIT DOMINUS LIGNUM VITE IN MEDIO PARADISI*; Abraham: *REQUIESITE SUB ARBORE*.

³⁰⁶ The cartouche is an abridgement of the verse: *SUSPENSUS EST IN PATIBULO ET REGIS IRA QUIESCIT*. The reference to gallows also recalls trees and wood mentioned in the other cartouches that gesture to the cross of the Crucifixion.

³⁰⁷ At some points, the letters are reversed and upside-down.

defying the actual flow of the scroll. Romanino deliberately chose a different arrangement for Esther's scroll text. With her free hand, she gestures behind her, not towards the scroll above, but just over her shoulder to the space in which she tries to escape. Everything about Esther's depiction becomes one of undoing; she tries to leave the scene, her words are reversed, her story ends behind her and no longer belongs in the space depicting the Passion of Christ. In Pisogne, Esther's book closes.

If Esther departs the narrative, then the Queen of Sheba prevents her from ever returning. According to the *Golden Legend*, when the Queen visits King Solomon, she encounters a bridge made from a tree that would one day become the Holy Cross.³⁰⁸ The legend states that she instantly recognized something mysterious about the wood and refused to cross the bridge. After returning home, she wrote a letter to Solomon, part of which her cartouche references. She says of the wood, "...upon this tree would one day be hanged the man whose death would put an end to the kingdom of the Jews."³⁰⁹ If the viewer had any question regarding the fate of the Jews according to the Pisogne fresco cycle, the Queen of Sheba's presence affirms their demise. Her figure on the ceiling appears as if she straddles the space, perhaps refusing to step on the sacred tree. In European art tradition, artists often depicted the Queen of Sheba with African features and a darker skin tone, but in Pisogne, Romanino painted her as distinctly white with light, reddish hair.³¹⁰ Though

³⁰⁸ Solomon previously tried to use the wood from the tree to build his temple, but was foiled at every attempt. Ultimately, he had the tree tossed over a stream of water to make a bridge.

³⁰⁹ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 270. LIGNO VIR AFIGEN DUS PPO MORTE IUDEORUM REGNUM ASUMENDUM EST.

³¹⁰ For more on black representations of the Queen of Sheba, see David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eds., *Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol. 3 part 1 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010); and Madeline H. Caviness, "(Ex)Changing Colors: Queens of Sheba and Black Madonnas," in *Architektur und monumentalskulptur des 12-14 jahrhunderts. Produktion und rekeption*, ed. Stephan Gasser, Christian Freigang and Bruno Boerner (Bern: Peer Land, 2006), 553-570. While there are instances where she is depicted as pale, in most of these there are still cues that indicate to viewers she should be understood as a black figure. For more on this unusual context, see Jacqueline Lombard, "Visual Languages of Race: Representing Blackness in 11th-13th Century Northern Europe" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2022).

scantly clad, she appears no different from other sibyls in the church. Instead, the white-washing of a characteristically African character adds to the localizing of this mountain-dwellers' cycle.

Solomon appears beside the Queen of Sheba as a reminder of the specifics to her story. His scroll references part of a verse from Song of Songs 8:5 that says, "Who is that coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Under the apple tree I awakened you."³¹¹ Again, he provides a reference to trees that evoke the wooden cross in the *Crucifixion* and a reminder of the bridge the Queen would not cross. The figure bears no crown to indicate his kingship, he barely keeps himself covered with his garment, and with his mouth hanging open, he appears dumbfounded at the implied effect the *Crucifixion* has on his Jewish Kingdom.³¹² Perhaps he understands the Christian revelation unfolding before him, as he appears to be stepping forward, following the direction of Daniel to get closer to Christ.

The final figure of the eight with legible cartouches represents Daniel, the only male here without a direct lineage to Christ (Figure 4.23).³¹³ Under his green mantle, Daniel wears the same rose-colored tunic that Christ wears in Romanino's Cremona and Pisogne Passion scenes.³¹⁴ Unlike his ceiling companions, Daniel sits calmly in his niche; while his lower body rotates away to prop himself in his fictive space, his upper body leans forward allowing him to gently turn his head for a direct view of the *Crucifixion*. With eyes wide open, Daniel clearly sees the scene before him, but he does not furl his brow or gape his mouth in confusion; rather, his soft, delicate features, young beard, parting tunic, and lightly rosy cheeks give the impression of a tender sadness

³¹¹ SUB ARBORE MALO SUSITAVI TE.

³¹² It is worth noting that Solomon bears an artistic resemblance to the penitent Saint Jerome. He wears a simple red robe, nothing indicative of his kingship, and his bared chest has a red spot in the center as if beating his breast with a stone in the fashion of Jerome. There are no reports or technical analyses available to indicate whether this reddish spot is original or due to aging of the fresco, so I am not pursuing the comparison at this time.

³¹³ Christ is deemed the "new Adam," but ultimately all of humanity comes from Adam in this tradition. Abraham and Solomon are both listed in the genealogy of Christ at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew.

³¹⁴ For more on exegetical correlations between Daniel and Christ, see the section below on Breno.

for what he beholds. His gesture invites viewers to join him in examining the *Crucifixion*. Daniel's right hand grasps the tail end of his scroll that reads: "Be like a tree planted by the water, which yields its fruit in season."³¹⁵ From the first chapter of Psalms, this verse and those that precede it establishes a dichotomy between the fruitful righteous and the sinners that will receive their just fate. Daniel's clothing, his location on the ceiling, his body language, the Cumaean Sibyl's gesture for viewers to look to him, and Solomon's stride towards him all indicate his importance in this space. Daniel becomes the culmination of all the ceiling prophets and sibyls around him and visibly directs the conclusion towards the *Crucifixion*. In doing so, he indicates Christ as the replacement for the fall of Judaism, as the new Adam, and as the new covenant with God. For those familiar with the stories in the Book of Daniel, the comparison between the righteousness of Daniel, that of Christ, and the salvation of the good thief on the cross directly beside Daniel would be unmistakable. This relationship becomes even more relevant in Romanino's second fresco cycle in Valcamonica, discussed later in this chapter.

These eight figures, distinct with their legible cartouches, instruct pilgrims and other visitors that Christ's Passion resulted in the fall of the old kingdom and thus, Christianity surpassed Judaism. Daniel directs everyone to the *Crucifixion* that, with the *Crowning of Thorns* and *Christ at the Column* below, reiterates Jews as the contemporary Christian enemy. Recalling the Passion scenes discussed in Chapter 1, Romanino placed symbolic references to Jews throughout these images. In the rectangular scenes below, several of Christ's tormentors wear Phrygian caps that had become iconic of Jewishness. In the *Crucifixion*, two red banners fly in the background. The one on Christ's left is blank, but the one on his right, closest to Daniel, bears the black scorpion

³¹⁵ ERIT TANQUAM LIGNUM QUOD PLANTATUM EST SECUS DECURSUS AQUARUM QUOD FRUCTUM DABIT IN TEMPORE SUO.

indicative of Jews. Daniel directs viewers to the death of Christ on the wooden cross, but also to the perfidy of Jews who do not see and accept Christ, though we are to believe that Daniel does indeed see what occurs. Tucked to the right side of the scene, men toss dice to win Christ's unmarred cloak, which served as a reminder of the indivisibility of the Roman Church amidst increasing Reformation division.³¹⁶ The awestruck Longinus and a homely Mary Magdalene, who embraces the cross so fervently that her hair winds around the wood, provide the next meditative step for viewers.³¹⁷ As the converted sinners, Longinus and Mary Magdalene invite pilgrims and visitors to admit that they, too, sinned, and they should subsequently reject false gods, heresy, Judaism, and everything in between, accepting Christ with their entire body (hair included) and soul.

Now let us return to the overall project and how this cycle converses with and differentiates from that of Michelangelo in Rome (Figure 4.24). In the 1480s, Pope Sixtus IV hired various artists to work in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, painting frescoes along the two sides of the nave walls.³¹⁸ Each side contains its own cycle, one for the Life of Moses and one for the Life of Christ. Theologically, this comparison makes sense for Christians—as Moses brought down the Ten Commandments from God and established the law in the Old Testament, Christ fulfilled the prophecies and became God's new covenant in the New Testament. To emphasize this continuity between the Hebrew and Christian books, artists arranged the frescoes to speak thematically and compositionally to one another across the chapel nave.³¹⁹ For instance, the scene of *The Trials of*

³¹⁶ De Leonardis, "Nella concitazione rumorosa," 27.

³¹⁷ Rizzi explored the hair wrapping around the wood and how it appears to intercept a trickle of blood. Rizzi, "Significati," 309.

³¹⁸ This project included notable artists from Tuscany, such as Domenico Ghirlandaio, Sandro Botticelli, and Pietro Perugino.

³¹⁹ For a thorough discussion of this visual theology at work, see John Shearman, "The Chapel of Sixtus IV," in *The Sistine Chapel: The Art, the History, and the Restoration*, ed. Carlo Pietrangeli (New York: Harmony, 1986), 22-91.

Moses directly faces that of the *Temptation of Christ*. Likewise, the *Descent from Mount Sinai* faces the *Sermon on the Mount*, and so on. The inclusion of *Christ Delivering the Keys to St. Peter* was of particular importance to Rome. The authority of the papacy came into question during the Western Schism that just ended in 1418. This scene served as a reminder that Christ gave the keys to Peter, thus making him the first pope; the image reassured Christians that the official authority of the Church was found in Rome.

By 1508, Michelangelo was called in by Pope Julius II to repaint the chapel ceiling, covering the old blue fresco and gold stars with *Creation* scenes from Genesis, other Old Testament stories, prophets, sibyls, and the ancestors of Christ (Figure 4.25). Together, these images enhanced the original message on the walls below: God created the world, those of pagan and Jewish ancestry predicted the coming of Christ, which then came to fruition. Subsequently, papal authority became the divinely appointed leader of the terrestrial Church.

Images of the Life of Christ frequently appear in early modern Italian art; however, the arrangement of prophets and sibyls above such a cycle and the inclusion of *ignudi* meant the Pisogne frescoes directly conversed with those in Rome. Because these characters specifically created this association, it is worth exploring the prophets and sibyls in Rome more closely. Along the ceiling edges, Michelangelo depicted twelve figures who all produced writing that predicted the coming of Christ (Figure 4.26). Among them are the four Major Prophets and three Minor Prophets from the Hebrew Scriptures and five sibyls from classical antiquity.³²⁰ They sit within their own faux-architectural niches, writing or contemplating their prophecies and attended by putti. In between each niche, pairs of *ignudi* stand together with bulky musculature, twisting and

³²⁰ These include Jonah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Zachariah, Isaiah, Daniel, and the Persian, Eritrean, Delphic Cumaean, and Libyan Sibyls.

turning in their restrictive space. Visitors cannot read the written prophecies depicted above them, but painted stone cartouches below bear inscriptions of each prophet's and sibyl's name. In Michelangelo's typical style, they all appear as hulking bodies, even the women. The grand figures are the largest on the entire ceiling, and their commanding presence portrays an air of authority and confidence in their work. In the Sistine frescoes, these characters play a deeply important eschatological role in the fate of humanity and the authority of the Church, and Michelangelo made that visually apparent. Consequently, the authority of the pope can be traced back to pre-Christian times while simultaneously justifying the prophets of the Judaic Hebrew Scriptures and pagan classicism as the genealogical ancestors to Christianity.

While beyond the scope of this project to discuss in further detail, the magnitude of this unprecedented commission quickly became well-known throughout Italy.³²¹ Despite its popularity, however, Romanino did not seek to replicate the Sistine frescoes on the ceiling of Santa Maria della Neve. Instead, he doubled the Sistine plan from twelve prophets to twenty-four and included major biblical characters generally not referred to as prophets, such as Adam, Abraham, and the Queen of Sheba; however, each represent important characters in the Hebrew books that form the Jewish *Tanakh*. None of Romanino's figures bear the idealized musculature or commanding presence as those in Rome, nor do the figures actively write their prophecies or enact their histories.³²² They all simply exist amidst the Passion cycle, aware of what they have already written and lived, and witnessing its fruition unfolding before them. Hosea is the exception, as he

³²¹ For additional commentary on Michelangelo's works in the Sistine Chapel, see Marcia Hall, *Michelangelo: The Frescoes of the Sistine Chapel* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002).

³²² Many of Romanino's prophetic figures are muscular and hulking (male and female), but not in an idealized sense, as his rough brushwork makes them appear more monstrous and contorted than athletic. The artist also completed a fresco cycle in Trent at the Castello del Buonconsiglio that included secular nude figures that also recall the muscular bodies of Michelangelo without directly quoting them. For more on these works, see Lia Camerlengo, Ezio Chini, Francesco Frangi, and Francesca de Gramatica, eds. *Romanino*; Nova, *Giralamo Romanino*, 270-285; and Ezio Chini, *Il Romanino a Trento: Gli affreschi nella Loggia del Buonconsiglio* (Milan: Electa, 1988).

fully turns away in his niche and viewers only see the back of his head (Figure 4.27). Seemingly, Hosea misses everything happening around him, which emphasizes his lack of awareness of the eschatological implications of the Passion scenes in relation to the figures on the ceiling.³²³ Through this arrangement, Romanino removed agency from the sibyls and Jewish actors as predictive of the coming of Christ. In Rome, those that foretell the future appear in the process of penning their visions, ruminating over what they foresee, and agonizing over what it means. In Pisogne, Romanino presented the events of the New Testament as fact, complete, and unchanging. The pagan and Jewish components to this narrative exist only for historical posterity, not continued validation, and in some instances, such as Hosea, emphasize the alleged folly of the unseeing Jews.³²⁴

If we consider Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood's definition of *substitution* as an artwork's "capacity to stand in for absent authority," then the Pisogne cycle inserted itself as referential and then vehemently resisted doing substitutive work for the Roman Sistine Chapel and Michelangelo.³²⁵ Instead, the cycle performed Romanino's distinct authorship as counter to Michelangelo and Rome, thereby affirming the autonomy and identity of Pisogne, all while subtly conjuring support for the papacy as the leader of the Church. This performative work occurred within the very temporal structure of the Sistine; Michelangelo's work was recent and Romanino completed the Pisogne cycle before Michelangelo even began the *Last Judgment* that would conclude the Vatican chapel. Romanino drew explicit attention to his imaginative source to

³²³ The Book of Hosea ultimately comments on the impending fall of Israel but contains messages of hope. In Pisogne, the fall has already happened and Hosea has no need for anything else happening around him. Romanino portrayed him as refusing to see what new covenant is being brought forward.

³²⁴ For a stimulating treatment of Jews and their (un)seeing in relation to Christ, read Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014).

³²⁵ Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 11, 29-30.

intentionally pull away from it. When we include the sixteenth-century visitors, their thoughts, and their affective responses inside Santa Maria della Neve, the artistic performance transformed into a visual exegesis of theology, identity, and personal belonging exclusive to Pisogne and her mountain-dwellers.³²⁶

In his book, Stephen Campbell outlined the ways in which Romanino's Pisogne cycle established a geographical distinction between the "hereness" of Valcamonica for locals and the "thereness" of Rome as a pilgrimage destination.³²⁷ His argument centers on Romanino's refusal to imitate the idealized bodies of Michelangelo and instead utilized "sacred naturalism" as a commentary on the different stylistic needs of Lombardy involving images of Christ as the Eucharist.³²⁸ This is one attempt to make sense of the relationship between images and theology in this region. Rather than focus on a form of naturalism, I suggest that through typology, figuration, and composition these frescoes form a deep theological framework that addressed the local history of the region beyond Reformation-driven contention over the Eucharist.

Everything in the Roman Sistine Chapel—from the early wall frescoes to the 1540s *Last Judgment* Michelangelo painted on the altar wall—while typological and related to the legitimacy of the papacy, ultimately relies on Jewish history and the Old Testament as evidence for the events

³²⁶ There are no known records or testimony of Romans traveling to Pisogne to experience the "Sistine Chapel of the Poor." This was *for* Pisogne, while the Sistine Chapel drew pilgrims and visitors from all over the Italian peninsula and beyond. Older scholarship would cite this as evidence for the exemplary nature of Michelangelo's work, but the entire gambit of this dissertation is that it simply did not matter. These paintings were designed for local use and identity-making, *not* as stylistic competition with Rome. Instead the paintings assert, "That is Rome; this is us."

³²⁷ Campbell, *Endless Periphery*, 130.

³²⁸ This borrowing and changing of artistic style in the north has also been addressed by Kirk Nickel in his dissertation. Referencing another Brescian artist, Nickel likened Moretto's amalgamation of artistic sources as evidence of a poetic response to visual art; but rather than identify this as invention, Nickel relegated Moretto to the role of conductor, harmonizing the inventions of others into one work to guide a viewer to devotion rather than aesthetic veneration. While I find merit in using poetics to explicate Moretto's approach to art and the exegetical implications, his dissertation is missing the other half of the argument—namely that in using "classically-derived" sources, yet altering them, the artist is creating additional commentary regarding the status of religious images as perpetuated by the "artistic centers" as well as claims to a local identity. See Kirk Nickel, "Alessandro Moretto and the Decomposition of the Painter's Art in Renaissance Brescia" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016).

of the New Testament and the eschatological fate of humanity. Romanino's Pisogne cycle, however, lacks the lower, quattrocento frescoes that largely do this work in Rome by uniting the lives of Moses and Christ and culminating in Christ's delivery of the papal keys to Peter. However, by visually recalling the Sistine, Romanino still made an argument for the papacy, and in the Pisogne Passion scenes, he depicted Christ as confident, knowing, divinely heroic, and of unquestionable authority—a message this community deeply needed.

Undoubtedly, the Italian Wars and the 1527 Sack of Rome deeply impacted the Catholic community throughout the Italian peninsula. However, Michelangelo painted the Sistine Ceiling frescoes long before the Sack or the start of the Reformation. As such, nothing in these images had to contend with warfare, destruction from outside invaders, or ongoing fear caused by living through imperial occupation. By the time Romanino painted in Pisogne, Valcamonica and all Northern Italy had suffered under occupation, lost lives and livelihoods, and despite recent freedoms, continued to live in a world of uncertainty—both politically as the wars continued, and spiritually as the Reformation strengthened. To design a cycle specifically for the local community, Romanino refused to simply imitate Michelangelo. Instead, he gave Pisogne a confident, heroic Christ who represents a symbolic connection to papal Rome but also overcomes turmoil without support from the past. While the Mountain Christ would provide spiritual strength in Pisogne's uncertain times, he does so *without* the authority of Judaism.

Why would the commission for this cycle even include Jewish prophets if the underlying message was one of Jewish treachery and folly? A fair question, to be sure. With Jewish families present in and around Brescia and rising heresy in the Alpine region, Romanino used images of the divine to tell visitors of Jewish crimes against Christ but also the lingering Jewish threat to Christianity. The religion's Jewish ancestry meant that the Old Testament prophets belonged in

Christian history; however, these scenes indicate that those in Pisogne considered Judaism and the Jewish Kingdom no longer valid or necessary. Early modern Christian commentary often used typology or allegory between Old Testament and New Testament stories to claim the Hebrew Scriptures as a prefiguration of Christ. Examples of this appear in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century illustrated manuscripts the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and *Biblia Pauperum*.³²⁹ This approach aligned with the teachings of Augustine who wrote that God allowed Jews to continue living dispersed around the world because their existence provided proof for the legitimacy of Christianity.³³⁰ Romanino rooted the Pisogne frescoes in this early typology and then deviated to proclaim Christian supremacy.

After his failed work in Cremona, Romanino shifted from overt depictions of contemporary German enemies to sophisticated typology that identified *all* non-Catholics as Christian enemies. In Cremona, his work implied a direct correlation between the burgeoning-reformer *Landknechte* and the Jewish population that killed Christ but failed to actually include Jews. In a sense, Romanino's Cremona Germans replaced the historically perfidious Jew. Over a decade later, we see his work in Pisogne make a far more complex argument, using commanding images of Christ that negated the need for Jewish history and proclaimed the supremacy of the true Catholic Church. The figures depicted do not include identifiable mercenaries as in Cremona, nor do they have stereotypical Jewish physiognomy as seen in the fifteenth century. Instead, I propose that he used the Pisogne fresco cycle as a typological experiment in contending with local heresy, their hatred

³²⁹ Early Christian fathers Origen, John Cassian, and Augustine used senses or modes of interpretation for understanding biblical scripture as it related to the lived human experience. These four senses of biblical exegesis are the literal, moral (tropological), allegorical (typological), and anagogical. The literal sense is essentially evident in every narrative cycle as it simply tells the story. The tropological or moral sense teaches how to live one's life in alignment with Christ. The typological sense unites the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and provides further examples in how to be Christ-like. The anagogical sense relates to eschatology and the fate of one's soul after the Last Judgment.

³³⁰ Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Random House, 1950), Book 18:46, 656-657.

of Jews, and the threat of external control and he did so by depicting the deeply religious heroes that the Jewish and reformer communities avoiding portraying.

In these depictions, he visually implied Christian supremacy over the other figures in the scenes. I believe that Romanino included many of the prophets and sibyls to demonstrate the ending of their stories. Stylistically, he painted them as the roughest, most gangly figures in the fresco cycle, as if they are fading out of existence. While Romanino was known for his loose, hurried brushwork, the other figures (Mary and Christ, especially) appear subjectively more idealized compared to the ceiling figures.³³¹ The only Jewish exception is Christ-like Daniel who shows that, according to these frescoes, the single acceptable path for contemporary Jews would be to accept Christ. For Christian visitors, the message becomes one of Christian totality and supremacy at the expense of their own religion's foundations, which Romanino made apparent through his visualization of the Mountain Christ and implied permissibility of divine images.

In Pisogne, the civic patrons chose Romanino, an artist known throughout Northern Italy for being different and refusing to replicate the styles of the popular urban artists. To fulfill his role, Romanino took a common subject and adapted it for a locally specific circumstance. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Alpine Valley of Valcamonica extends to the uppermost region of Italy, bordering Swiss and German territory where the *Landsknechte* and reformers entered the area. Consequently, those living in Pisogne had an acute awareness of their liminality between the north and the rest of the Italian peninsula, as their region experienced numerous clashes for control over Valcamonica, Brescia, Bergamo, and Cremona. Reformers made up much of these armies and

³³¹ Even with figures that are pleasing to view, the entire cycle lacks the characteristic Renaissance idealism for which Romanino was often criticized. While he was pursuing his own style and artistic identity, the town's choice to employ an artist that denied classical idealism also tempered viewers from venerating images as divine and committing idolatry. In essence, Romanino's style was perfect for Valcamonica both as a unique painterly dialect and a careful prevention of image worship.

mercenaries, bringing their heretical claims against the Church into Valcamonica. As explored in Chapter 2, Bernardino da Feltre's sermons reminded everyone that a heretic could look like anyone, and those who supported Jews or Jew-like people had equal culpability.³³² In response, Jewish persecutions, the development of ghettos, and accusations against witches in the region continued. Even though the Sack of Rome and ongoing Reformation made the threats to the Catholic Church palpable throughout Italy, the newly independent *comune* of Pisogne still faced extra criticism from the Catholic urban centers that moderated them. As a result, they needed art to provide a level of theological support of Christian beliefs and divine imagery that extended beyond mere support for the Roman Church. To achieve this, Romanino and those involved in the commission intentionally deviated from chronological Passion scenes and the iteration in Rome to develop an original iconographic program that met the needs of this humble mountain town. This typological and tropological,³³³ yet distinctly local reading of the cycle permitted visitors to contemplate the Passion of Christ and translate his human suffering to the contemporary threats they felt—both in terms of faith and social control—and provided a pathway to moral justification for the condemnation of Jews and all heterodox thinkers.

Romanino's Pisogne fresco cycle provided a meditation on the validity of the Christian faith, while simultaneously reinforcing an anti-Jewish, anti-Protestant stance. In alignment with Bernardino da Feltre, Christ's tormentors could be anyone—heretics or witches in nondescript attire or Jews and Jew-like people flying the scorpion banner. By aligning the fresco cycle's visual rhetoric with that of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Pisogne both stood with the Roman Church and

³³² See Chapter 2 for more on Bernardino da Feltre's sermons in this area.

³³³ In Pisogne, the tropological sense is present in the meditative arrangement of the cycle. For more on the tropological sense of scripture and its "circulatory" function, see Ryan McDermott, *Tropologies: Ethics and Invention in England, c. 1350-1600* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 1-86.

blatantly against heretical and Jewish ideologies, and they did so in a language that was wholly their own. A walk up the road to Santa Maria in Silvis would extend this message, as viewers would see the fifteenth-century Christ-like martyrdom of Simon of Trent and be reminded of the ritual murder that allegedly took place just miles away along their Alpine route. In Santa Maria della Neve, anyone not following the Catholic Church and embracing their Mountain Christ posed a threat.

4.2 Breno 1536-1537

Scholars do not know exactly when Romanino completed his Pisogne frescoes. Alessandro Nova estimated the completion date as 1535, but Romanino remained in Pisogne until 1536 completing other smaller works for the church and municipality.³³⁴ Meanwhile, the Reformation debates continued, including in-fighting among the various reformer factions throughout Europe. During this time, John Calvin (1509-1564) gained notoriety with his own brand of heterodox thinking while waging war against the Roman Church. By 1534, Calvin had fled France, and settled in Switzerland where he composed his famous work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. By 1536, Latin editions existed, spreading all throughout Europe.³³⁵ Calvin's theology took a direct political stance, arguing an Old Testament approach to Christianity where the faithful had fidelity only to God and secondarily to the earthly leaders that followed their creed

³³⁴ During this time, Romanino also completed secular battle scenes for the Castello Colleoni in Brescia, though the date and attribution of these deteriorated works remains questionable, and a pulpit with accompanying fresco for Sant'Andrea in Asola, which included Christ, the twelve apostles, St. Mark, and Christ at the Column (1535-1536). Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 287-297.

³³⁵ Eire, *Reformations*, 290-291.

and no one else.³³⁶ This belief implied that Calvinists would challenge any ruler of a “false” religion as part of their Christian practice. Calvin said so much when he included in his 1536 preface to King Francis I,

“That king who in ruling over his realm does not serve God’s glory exercises not kingly rule but brigandage. Furthermore, he is deceived who looks for enduring prosperity in his kingdom when it is not ruled by God’s scepter, that is, his Holy Word.”³³⁷

In the same year Calvin published his doctrine, he resided in Ferrara at the court of Duchess Renée, a protestant-sympathizer.³³⁸ Though Calvin would soon return to Geneva, his theologies had crested the Alps into Northern Italy and correlated with Romanino’s next work.

While Calvin lived in Ferrara, Romanino received another Valcamonican commission. The town of Breno sat northeast of Pisogne sixteen miles beyond the lakeshore and deeper into the mountains. Like its lakeside neighbor, Breno suffered under years of shifting military domination.³³⁹ For a period of time under Venetian control, Breno served as the de facto capital of Valcamonica and with the Bolognese pacts of 1529, the civic body retained captain-status over the valley despite still answering to Venice vis-à-vis Brescia.³⁴⁰ Breno’s quest for autonomy extended beyond civic matters, however, as the town sought independent municipal authority over

³³⁶ Eire made this association between Calvin and Old Testament theology, with Calvin’s emphasis on reward and punishment, and false idolatry. *Ibid.*, 293.

³³⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), vol. 1, 4.

³³⁸ Eire, *Reformations*, 296.

³³⁹ Breno also reeled from several bouts of the plague in the sixteenth century, a bloody sack in 1516 by a neighboring Alpine court family, multiple witch accusations, and a deadly flood in 1520. Oliviero Franzoni, “Il giuspatronato conteso la capella di Sant’Antonio di Breno tra pubblico e privato,” in *Romanino in Sant’Antonio a Breno* (Breno, Italy: Grafo, 1992), 9-10.

³⁴⁰ Simone Signaroli, “Breno. Un’epigrafe umanistica,” in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 66.

the management of their churches. The debates over Sant'Antonio, the second location of Romanino's Valcamonica works, make this power struggle most evident.

In the mid-fourteenth century, the local Ronchi family left a legacy and part of a residential structure to the municipality of Breno for the construction and use of a new church, which eventually became Sant'Antonio Abate.³⁴¹ Over the centuries, several legal battles occurred between descendants of the Ronchi family and the Breno municipality over who had the authority to appoint the church chaplain. Consistently, the pope recognized the municipality as the exclusive owners but kept the parish designation with the older Breno church, San Maurizio.³⁴² While it did not have the status of town parish, Sant'Antonio served a significant role in the public sector and authoritative identity of Breno. With its residential attachment, the little church functioned as the rural public palace and home of the captain of Valcamonica and the location of valley council meetings—many of which were held in the church proper.³⁴³

The new independence and prosperity in the mountain towns ignited civic pride and identity-building, and Breno was no exception. The economic revival led to increased population in the region and as a result, the old parish church of San Maurizio that was slightly outside of town could no longer sustain the congregations visiting her each week. In 1533, while Pisogne prepared to hire Romanino to decorate Santa Maria della Neve, the Breno municipality officially sought to relocate the Blessed Sacrament and parish activities from San Maurizio to

³⁴¹ For details on the dates of construction, see Franzoni, "Il giuspatronato conteso," 4-5.

³⁴² For these details, see Franzoni, "Cornice," 60-62.

³⁴³ Ibid. Importantly, while there was a dominant Franciscan presence throughout Valcamonica and in Pisogne, discussed previously, Sant'Antonio in Breno remained staunchly in the hands of the municipality and under their administrative control, and the Franciscans were not specifically involved here. For more on the Franciscan presence in the region, see Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, "Il ruolo dei Francescani in Vallecmonica," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 106, no. 1 (1994): 131.

Sant'Antonio.³⁴⁴ This choice also served as a power-move, changing the primary church from the twelfth-century medieval structure to one spatially affiliated with the captain of Valcamonica and the power with which Breno's civic body identified. The papacy approved the move in June of 1534 and agreed that the *comune* would remain in control.³⁴⁵ The highest governing body in Valcamonica now controlled their very own parish church. This occasioned the need for new frescoes to visually foment their identity, and the successful, unique dialectical work of Romanino in nearby Pisogne must have caught their eye.³⁴⁶

Much like Santa Maria della Neve, Sant'Antonio is a small open hall structure with nave and apse presbytery, but it lacks exterior porticos for traveling pilgrims. Instead, the church overlooks the town square, making it a central focal point for both locals and anyone visiting the town on civic business. Any meeting with the captain would inherently involve a visit to the church, making it the ideal location for a visual art program proclaiming Breno's identity. Prior to Romanino's arrival, the nave and presbytery ceiling already contained fifteenth-century frescoes. Along the nave walls, an array of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century frescoes greeted visitors, which featured saints and triumphant martyrs arranged in orderly, rectangular frames and architectural spaces as if each attended church in their own theater box. By 1562, the nave had already suffered due to the church being left open most days for public access.³⁴⁷ Today, nearly

³⁴⁴ The *comune* had been trying for decades to separate Sant'Antonio from San Maurizio's parish authority and relocate the relevant services to Sant'Antonio. Doing so would give the municipality jurisdiction over the priests, rather than their current loyalty to and appointment from Venice. These efforts formally began as early as 1485, and Sant'Antonio was freed from control by 1488. The parish activities remained in San Maurizio until 1534, when the increasing size of the congregation necessitated the change to someplace more substantial and closer to the residences in town. Franzoni, "Il giuspatronato conteso," 7-8.

³⁴⁵ Franzoni, "Cornice," 60-62.

³⁴⁶ Romanino's style in Breno continues that which was described in Pisogne to even greater success. His figures are stylistically his alone and Breno's frescoes, while barely extant, are heralded as some of Romanino's greatest work. For commentary related to his style, see Section 3.2. Suffice it to say that the Breno patrons likely wanted to replicate the artist's unique style for their own identity-distinction from Venice and Brescia, just as Pisogne did.

³⁴⁷ Franzoni, "Il giuspatronato conteso," 16.

all of these frescoes have been lost, though a few have been preserved from the fifteenth century by Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo.³⁴⁸ Among these, Simon of Trent appears twice, once nude and holding the sacrificial knife, and in the other, clothed and clutching the pliers used to pinch off his flesh (Figures 4.28-4.29).³⁴⁹ In the presbytery, da Cemmo painted the vault with the four Church Fathers and four Evangelists against a deep blue background with golden stars on the sails and pendentives (Figure 4.30). The presbyterial entryway arch includes twelve busts of various prophets, all set within faux architectural niches and surrounded by scrolls of their scriptures (Figure 4.31). Just like Santa Maria della Neve's nave, the presbytery walls had yet to be painted.³⁵⁰ The recent promotion of Sant'Antonio to parish church occasioned the *comune* to hire Romanino to decorate these otherwise empty walls.

4.2.1 Description of the Cycle

The commission involved decorating the three blank walls of the presbytery—the north and south walls, and the altar wall (Figure 4.32). The space already had an altarpiece by Callisto Piazza depicting the *Madonna and Child with Saints Sebastian, Rocco, Anthony, and Siro* (1527) and Romanino arranged his altar wall paintings around it (Figure 4.33).³⁵¹ Like the nave walls, the presbytery frescoes are damaged with large sections missing and no extant *sinope* to deduce

³⁴⁸ For more on Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo's work in this region, see M. L. Ferrari, *Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo. Fatti di pittura brescina del Quattrocento* (Milan: Ceschina, 1956).

³⁴⁹ Much of the nave frescoes are currently in a state of disrepair with sections missing entirely. The other hands of both Simons are damaged. They may have been holding other instruments of martyrdom or palm branches, much like the other triumphant Simons explored in the previous chapter.

³⁵⁰ For technical analyses and evidence that these walls were not previously painted before Romanino's arrival, see Gheroldi, "Cantieri," 156-160.

³⁵¹ The timing and choice of saints indicates this altarpiece was intended for protection against the resurgence of plague in the region. Sebastian and Rocco were popular plague saints, Siro was a regional saint, and Anthony represented the namesake of the church.

the original images. Instead, scholars have spent decades making conjectures about these narratives, and consensus does not yet exist. While the specific scenes are up for debate, I am in agreement with the many authors in the 2015 monograph on Romanino's Valcamonica works who believe all three walls depict scenes from the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament.³⁵²

In the upper third of each wall, an elevated platform provides space for fictional onlookers to observe the scenes below them. This arrangement most prominently appears on the altar wall, which features a balustrade to keep the spectators from falling as they lean over to peer down. The altarpiece divides the scenes on the altar wall, and large rectangular windows partially bisect the north and south wall frescoes. The north wall also contains a door that cuts into the lower right section of the fresco, which provided access from the captain's attached home directly into the church presbytery in the sixteenth century.

Presently, the south wall remains in the best condition, and scholars do not contest the narrative (Figure 4.34). The story comes from Daniel where King Nebuchadnezzar attempts to kill Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in the fiery furnace for refusing to worship the golden statue he erected.³⁵³ On the wall, Romanino assembled the disjointed narrative to accommodate the window and door. The story begins to the left of the window with a tall slender column, topped with a golden statue of a man (Figure 4.35). Below the column, Nebuchadnezzar's subjects gaze adoringly at the idol and clasp their hands in prayer. Below the window, two heralds blare their trumpets with puffed cheeks, making sure everyone can hear the call to bow to the new Babylonian statue (Figure 4.36). One points his horn directly to the right, drawing the viewer's gaze to a cluster of figures that occupy the most space in the scene. At the far right, King Nebuchadnezzar

³⁵² Maria Fiore, "Breno. Sant' Antonio," in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 208-209.

³⁵³ Or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

sits on his throne, back against the wall, as guards present to him the three Hebrew men who refused to bow to his idol (Figure 4.37). Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah struggle with defiant, yet anguished faces against the armed men who restrain them. As if a proxy, the man standing in the front center of the group bears the same physiognomic features as Romanino's striking images of the Mountain Christ in Santa Maria della Neve in Pisogne. The king leans forward sentencing the Three to death in the fiery furnace while their accusers sit below the throne and whisper their allegations. King Nebuchadnezzar's left hand extends forward, redirecting viewers to the far left of the wall where the story concludes with the Three in the furnace (Figure 4.38). Inside the blazing furnace, three figures stand alive, unharmed, and gazing upwards. Just outside, the two guards that delivered the Three have dropped dead from the severity of the flames. Below their bodies, two dogs bicker, and a young figure clad in white stands to the leftmost edge and gazes out at viewers. Unlike the written story, viewers do not see an angel to keep the Three cool or the resolution and freedom of the men from the furnace.

Scholarly consensus about the other narratives does not exist. On the altar wall, Romanino divided the fresco into three primary sections (Figure 4.39). The uppermost portion depicts God the Father surrounded by a swath of heavenly light (Figure 4.40). In his left hand he holds the orb of the world to indicate his reign over all, and his right hand is raised in a blessing. On either side, heraldic putti blow horns or look at God, while God gazes down to the right side of the wall with an expression that reads as sadness or displeasure. Below, two scenes appear to either side of the altarpiece panel but consistent ionic columns supporting the spectators and balustrade above unites the two scenes across the space. The right side is the most damaged with only fragments remaining; however, for nearly a century, scholars have agreed that it depicted some form of

banquet scene.³⁵⁴ A horizontally run table with food items is evident, and on either end of the table, figures stand or spring up from their seats, all with faces in shock, mouths hung agape at something that has deeply startled them. The man to the farthest right holds his drinking glass aloft, nearly spilling its contents as he reacts (Figure 4.41). On the left side of the altar wall, a group of ten (or more) figures stand (Figures 4.42-4.43). Those to the right have their backs to the altarpiece, gazing directly out at viewers. Beside them, two elderly men look miserable with lowered heads and downcast eyes. On the other side of a column, a lavishly dressed woman has her back to viewers, looking inward to the scene. The other figures are no longer discernable, but evidently Romanino did not make this a direct continuation of the banquet scene on the right—no table exists, no one appears to dine or drink, and the figures exhibit no sense of shock or surprise over what takes place.

Given that the fresco cycle consists of scenes from the Book of Daniel, the right half of the altar wall undoubtedly depicts the feast of King Belshazzar.³⁵⁵ In Daniel chapter 5, the king, successor to Nebuchadnezzar, holds a feast during which he uses the gold and silver vessels stolen from the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. This blaspheme against God results in a disembodied hand appearing and writing mysterious words on the wall that no one can read. The reactions of the figures depicted around the table feast in Sant'Antonio match the descriptions of terror that befell Belshazzar and his court. The story continues that all the wise men of Babylon came, but no one could decipher the message. The queen heard what was happening and, not part of the original banquet, enters and explains that a man named Daniel will be able to interpret the writing.

³⁵⁴ Fiore, "Breno. Sant'Antonio," 209.

³⁵⁵ Marco Rizzi, "Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno. Spunti per una lettura iconografica," in *Girolamo Romanino. Confronti intorno alle mostre di Trento e Brescia, atti del convegno Cemmo di Capo di Ponte, 28 ottobre 2006*, ed. S. Marazzani (Milan: IPL, 2007), 41-48. Fiore, "Breno. Sant'Antonio," 209.

If both the left and right altar wall scenes depict the same narrative, then the lavishly dressed woman on the left may be the queen, arriving as the elders have failed in their interpretations, and she suggests Daniel as the answer.³⁵⁶ Conversely, if Romanino designed the left and right walls as separate narratives, then the left side may represent the story of Susanna and the Elders.³⁵⁷ Here, the woman would be Susanna with the dejected-looking men as the elders who have just been proven guilty by a clever Daniel. As on the south wall, Romanino did not provide visitors with the exciting conclusions for these stories—the message on the wall has yet to be interpreted by Daniel, and, if the left includes Susanna, then the elders have yet to receive their just fate.

On the north wall only three patches of the primary scene remain (Figure 4.44). To the far left, a group of well-dressed men stand gesturing and discussing something amongst themselves (Figure 4.45). The man on the left wears a rich red cloak with golden clasp; the fabric animates itself, flowing upwards and back to reveal a large money pouch on the man's waist. He speaks to a man wearing a curved sword³⁵⁸ and headdress indicating foreign identity and exoticism.³⁵⁹ Though the head and torso of the third man in the entourage is missing, he wears the same unique

³⁵⁶ Rizzi and Fiore claimed that the left and right sides of the altar wall are of the same narrative. Ibid. Other propositions, cited above, include the judgment of Daniel just prior to being thrown in the lion's den or the capture of Belshazzar prior to his murder. Frankly, the cast of characters do not align with these suggestions. There is not a prominent female figure anywhere in the entire presbytery aside from the woman in this scene. Undoubtedly, she is important and no female roles exist in the arrest of Daniel or death of Belshazzar. The only logical conclusion is Susanna or the Queen to Belshazzar outside of the feast. Ultimately, my interpretation of this fresco cycle for the community of Breno remains the same regardless of which story is the correct identification, but I am inclined to believe it depicted Susanna and the Elders, for reasons described later in this chapter. For the suggestion of Susanna and the Elders, see Francesco Frangi, "Il ciclo di Sant'Antonio nel percorso di Gerolamo Romanino," in *Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno* (Breno, Italy: Grafo, 1992), 58-60 and Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 297-300.

³⁵⁷ It is not a remarkable suggestion that the altar wall scenes were noncontiguous in story. Romanino does something similar in Bienna where the altar wall scenes to either side of the detached altarpiece depicted different moments from the life of the Virgin. Importantly, the Bienna frescoes were painted in Valcamonica a few years after he finished in Breno. These are briefly discussed later in this chapter.

³⁵⁸ This is intentionally different from the straight short sword worn by the herald on the south wall.

³⁵⁹ James Laver, *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History. Thames and Hudson World of Art Series* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1969), 74-102.

shoes as the sword-bearer and was likely clad in a similarly exoticizing fashion. Together, the three men embody a richness and foreignness that feels distinctly out of place compared to the rest of the figures. As if to confirm a negative connotation of outsiders, a white dog jumps and aggressively barks towards the foreign men. Just above the dog, the remnants of a rearing horse and a barefoot striding man indicate figures that would have added to the dynamics of the scene. Opposite this crowd, six men and one armed horseman stand, some wearing feathered caps (Figure 4.46). While their actions are unclear, their body language and gazes indicate the man wearing a purple cloak holds their attention. He stares downward without head-covering and appears despondent.

Only fragments of the center fresco below the window remain (Figure 4.47). Scholars have vacillated over the possible narrative of this scene, largely reliant on the otherwise absent stories from Daniel.³⁶⁰ Some suggestions include a continuation of the altar wall with the death of Belshazzar, the arrest of Daniel, or Daniel in the lion's den.³⁶¹ The most recent monograph on Romanino's work in Valcamonica concluded that the scene depicts the beheading of Balthasar, with the center image described as a basin and sword.³⁶² As further evidence, Maria Fiore described several figures in the scene as having expressions indicating something horrible has been witnessed, but I am unable to find these figures.³⁶³ This interpretation as a singular scene on the

³⁶⁰ Some earlier scholars suggested that the altar wall and north walls were in fact scenes from the life of Christ with the Last Supper and Christ at the Column, respectively. Others proposed the north wall was the Entry into Jerusalem, the Betrayal of Christ, Christ accused by the Pharisees, or Christ before Pilate. For more on these earlier speculations, see Frangi, "Il ciclo di Sant'Antonio," 57-75, and Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 297-300. It is worth noting that Nova and others writing in the 1960-1990s referenced a note from 1915 that stated the church was run by Sant'Antonio Viennese monks who tended the sick, especially those afflicted by St. Anthony's fire and make a connection between that and the choice of the Three in the fiery furnace. More recent scholarship has determined that while they were mentioned as potential recipients in the Ronchi legacy, the Breno municipality took control of the funds immediately and the friars were never involved. Franzoni, "Cornice," 61-62, 66; Signaroli, "Breno. Un'epigrafe umanistica," 66.

³⁶¹ Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 298.

³⁶² This identification is discussed throughout their book, but the most in-depth description can be found in Fiore, "Breno. Sant'Antonio," 206-213, and Rizzi, "Significati," 312-313.

³⁶³ Fiore, "Breno. Sant'Antonio," 209.

entire wall also contrasts with the south wall arrangement as a non-linear continuous narrative.³⁶⁴ Instead, I agree with those that suggest this depicts a scene of Daniel in the lion's den, and I do so through both visual analysis of what remains and a comparison with the south wall narrative. In his 1965 monograph on Romanino, Gaetano Panazza explored the possibility of this scene being Daniel in the lion's den.³⁶⁵ His analysis and those that follow him rely entirely on the popularity of the scene and its otherwise absence from the cycle, and ultimately do not provide evidence for the interpretation, which I provide in this chapter. I also suggest that the version of Daniel in the lion's den depicted is not from Daniel chapter 6, which is the version normally purported, but from the apocryphal chapter 14 where Daniel is punished for defeating Bel, the priests, and the Dragon.

Beginning with the figures on the left, the well-dressed foreign representatives appear deep in discussion. All the extant faces focus on each other or gaze out at the viewer—no one pays attention to what may be happening in the rest of the scene, and as a result, they register as an isolated group. I propose the group on the left to be representative of the Babylonians who worshipped Bel and the Dragon. After King Cyrus let Daniel prove the falsehoods of these idols,

³⁶⁴ The identification of the north wall as a resolution to the altar wall is also incongruent with the south wall story of the three men in the fiery furnace, which would not fit within a sequential narrative with the other two proposed interpretations. The interpretation of this scene by Rizzi, which is explored later in this chapter, was that it is a resolution befitting a king who defied God and sends a message of warning to current leaders. However, there is no image depicting what befell Nebuchadnezzar that would align with depicting Belshazzar's fate in the same space and provide the primary mode of interpreting the cycle. While my interpretation treats the north wall as Daniel in the lion's den, the death of Belshazzar option does not drastically interfere with my conclusions regarding the chapel and fresco cycle overall. Rizzi's conclusions rely on a vernacular publication of the Old Testament and commentary by Antonio Brucioli in 1540 that briefly discussed the death of Belshazzar (slightly more than the even briefer mention of it in the actual scriptures). That Brucioli's publication occurred after Romanino painted in Breno is noted, though Rizzi suggested that part of Brucioli's work could have circulated earlier but no extant copies or discussions of those copies exist. Ibid. However, this work and others discussed below, reveal a renewed interest in the Book of Daniel as it related to contemporary politics and social life. Romanino used every bit of the south wall to incorporate all of the pertinent details from the scriptural account. Because of this, I am unconvinced that the north wall narrative came from such a briefly mentioned episode in Daniel and was filled with invented features just to cover the wall with the conclusion to the altar wall. This would also make the north wall incongruent with the south, as it would provide a resolution, when the south wall does not. This is explored further later in this chapter.

³⁶⁵ Panazza credits Araldo Bertolini with the assertion that all of the scenes must be from the Book of Daniel, but no citation is given. Panazza, *Affreschi*, 56-59, 73 n. 36.

they plotted against Daniel and the king. Their appearance could easily be described as foreign dignitaries, representing the many throughout the Babylonian kingdom that served under Cyrus. The commotion taking place beside and behind the figures on the left could have depicted any variety of scenes related to the defeat of Bel and the Dragon, or the arrest of Daniel. Like the south wall figures adoring the golden statue, these men lay the foundation for what follows.

On the right, the standing figural group wholly focuses on the downhearted man in purple who wears the most regal cloak of the bunch. The man second from the left appears similar in physiognomy and hat to the man on the far-left side of the other figural grouping. In accordance with the story, I suggest the man in purple represents Cyrus, surrounded by those counselors and conspirators against Daniel who threaten that if Cyrus does not hand over Daniel, they will kill Cyrus and his household. This aligns with the story of Daniel in the lion's den, as Cyrus considered Daniel a faithful companion and was forced to choose between Daniel's safety and his own. Those men surround Cyrus and wait to see if he will give them Daniel.

Thus far, the figures on the left and right and my descriptions could also align with the story of Daniel in the lion's den from chapter 5 where the left figures represent the satraps plotting against Daniel and the right depicts King Darius who despaired over having to submit Daniel to the lion's den. I suggest the indicator that this version comes from chapter 14 relies on the image of the king without his crown. While satraps tricked Darius into punishing Daniel in chapter 5, the decision depended on the king enforcing his own law. In that version, there is no logical reason for Darius to be without his crown, and we know from the south wall that Romanino had no qualms about painting crowns. In the story of Bel and the Dragon, the conspirators forcibly compelled Cyrus to do as he was told and give Daniel to those who threatened him. Here, Cyrus does not act as a king enforcing his decree but rather as a man who succumbs to the pressures of a vengeful

assembly and thus threatens Daniel's life. Just like King Nebuchadnezzar on the south wall, God's faithful face certain death because of a king and their refusal to worship false idols; the difference lies in the manipulation of Cyrus and his resultant despair.

Admittedly, the center section below the window has sustained the most damage and any interpretation is conjecture. However, I offer the following analysis and rendering (Figure 4.48). In what remains, two distinct detailed sections are apparent, and the background around them appears to be painted stone. To the left stands a figure in darkness behind bars, with the fabric of his clothing visible below. Beside him appears something orange, hitherto unidentifiable, though the bottom may show a paw. Outside of the darkened space to the right appears a platter held aloft by a hand, possibly containing food. I suggest that in the center of the north wall, visitors saw Daniel trapped in the lion's den and surrounded by lions.³⁶⁶ The hope for Daniel's survival comes from the plate of food offered to sustain him while he waits. Unlike the *Tanakh* collection of Hebrew Scriptures, the Roman Church's apocryphal chapter 14 of Daniel adds a visitor to the hero.³⁶⁷ After being thrown in the lion's den, the story shifts to Judea where God instructs the prophet Habakkuk to take food he has prepared for himself to Daniel in the lion's den in Babylon. In the story, Habakkuk has no idea who Daniel is but goes where God tells him and provides stew and bread in a dish to Daniel, which serves as evidence that God has not forgotten Daniel. I propose that visitors saw this event in the center of the north wall.

³⁶⁶ Some scholars have suggested that Romanino would have had such joy in painting lions that their absence here means the scene is in fact, not Daniel in the lion's den. Frangi, "Il ciclo di Sant'Antonio," 60. I propose the lions were, in fact, there, and I enjoy the thought of Romanino having fun painting them.

³⁶⁷ For detailed studies on the inclusion and exclusion of Daniel stories in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, see Robert A. Kraft, "Daniel Outside the Traditional Jewish Canon: In the Footsteps of M.R. James," in *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint: Presented to Eugene Ulrich*, eds. James C. VanderKam, Peter W. Flint, and Emanuel Tov (Boston: Brill, 2006); and Lorenzo DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature* (Boston: Brill, 2005).

Like that on the south wall, this story does not conclude with the hero freed, but hope remains. On the south wall, Romanino visually implied the miracle of the three men by depicting them unharmed amidst the flames, but the story does not come to fruition in the fresco cycle. Viewers only see the figures alive in the furnace, and the death of the guards indicates something special happens to spare the three believers. In the same way, on the north wall, Romanino does not depict the conclusion of Cyrus discovering Daniel alive and well after his time spent in the lion's den. Viewers see the man un-devoured and being fed by God vis-à-vis Habakkuk, but Daniel's fate remains visually unclear. While we cannot know for certain, like the south wall, I imagine Romanino did not include an angel in the lion's den as reassurance. Though chapter 14 does not mention one with Daniel, the scriptures state that an angel carried Habakkuk to Daniel and then back to Judea. Had Romanino elected to include the angel near Habakkuk, visitors would have clearly seen the divine intervention involved in saving Daniel. Since he omitted that psychological relief from the south wall, I believe it remained absent on the north wall as well.

In the space above all three wall scenes, crowds of people gather to watch the events unfold.³⁶⁸ Above King Nebuchadnezzar and in alignment with the golden idol on the south wall, onlookers gesture and discuss the scenes below them, while some join in with worshipping the golden statue (Figure 4.49). Above the north wall scenes, spectators debate the events taking place below them. On the left side, a monkey on a leash sits above the group and watches; its presence

³⁶⁸ Many who have written on these frescoes conjecture various identities for the spectators along the top portions of the frescoed walls, though no two authors ever agree on who the characters may be. For example, Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga suggested that the figure in red leaning on a cane in the upper right south wall is a representation of Saint Anthony, but later authors, such as Maria Fiore who wrote two decades later, are unconvinced. I am in agreement with Fiore, given that many of the figures on the upper south wall are in the process of adoring the golden statue, which Saint Anthony certainly would not be doing. Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, "Il grande vecchio padrone del fuoco: Architettura, immagini e culto nella Chiesa di Sant'Antonio Abate di Breno," in *Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno* (Breno, Italy: Grafo, 1992), 46; Fiore, "Breno. Sant'Antonio," 210. See the same article by Ferri Piccaluga regarding the trend in theatrical-esque art and the Passion plays by the Disciplinati in this region, 41.

adds to the feeling of exoticism in the foreign characters in the scene below the pet (Figure 4.50).³⁶⁹ Several of the figures seem to discuss wagers or moneylending. On the right, figures carry money bags and point down towards the center of the frescoed narrative. The money bags echo the pouch carried by the man on the far left of the main scenes (Figure 4.51). On the altar wall, viewers peer down over the balustrade, all of whom wear luxurious garments congruent with the banquet and well-dressed woman below; on the left a red and gold swath of fabric drapes over the ledge directly below a man who seems to be giving a sign of blessing to the woman below (Figure 4.52).³⁷⁰ The corner of the cloth wraps around another man's wrist, held firmly in place. Together, these upper additions to the three frescoed walls invite viewers to join their fellow painted spectators and see what takes place in the scenes around them. But the message is not simply to observe; these onlookers insist that the paintings must be studied and debated. Whereas Pisogne consisted of a meditative journey on the Passion of Christ, Breno provided a place for deep contemplation and thoughtful deliberation on the role of earthly rulers in a Christian world, recognizing and accepting Christ as the Savior, and the eschatological fate of one's soul specific to this mountain location.

³⁶⁹ Because the head of the creature is damaged, one could argue the animal is a cat instead of a monkey. Unless a domestic scene, cats often represented treachery or evil in sixteenth-century painting and frequently appeared at the feet of Judas in *Last Supper* images. In Breno, the connotation works for either animal—the exotic characters below are not to be trusted by viewers. However, cats rarely appear in early modern art on leashes, so I believe the creature in Breno represented a monkey for increased exoticism.

³⁷⁰ Rizzi suggested the cloth is a reference to the cloth of purple and chain of gold Belshazzar promised Daniel if he could interpret the writing on the wall. In the story, Daniel refuses the gifts, but the king gives them anyway. Rizzi, "Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno," 44. In a later publication, Rizzi used this as evidence for the left altar wall scene to be that of the Queen recommending Daniel to read the writing, rather than the story of Susanna. Rizzi, "Significati," 312-313. See footnote 356 in this chapter for a discussion on the possibility of Susanna.

4.2.2 Tropological Interpretation

Undiscussed in all the preceding scholarship is the very nature of this fresco cycle, taken in its totality: the choice of subjects, the mode of depiction and compositional arrangement in the space, the intended audience, and the socio-political³⁷¹ and religious context during which Romanino painted these scenes. As with most early modern fresco cycles, multiple levels of interpretation existed. On the surface, these scenes depicted the literal stories from the scriptures of Daniel. Any visitor with a basic understanding of bible stories would recognize popular tales of the Three in the fiery furnace, the writing on the wall, Susanna and the Elders, and Daniel in the lion's den. However, the messages in Romanino's cycle included tropological interpretations as well. As Ryan McDermott explained, the tropological sense necessarily goes beyond the scriptures to "a corresponding movement of the will that issues in new action."³⁷² To understand this interpretation, we must consider the implied actions for sixteenth-century visitors and how this channeled scripture into lived experience.

In the discussion on Pisogne, I noted the recent trend towards a meditative focus on the life of Christ for both Catholics and reformers. It comes as a surprise, then, that when decorating their newly appointed parish church that would regularly host the miracle of transubstantiation, Breno's civic authorities chose not to cover the walls with scenes from the life of Christ but rather stories from the Old Testament Book of Daniel. Furthermore, the choice of scenes from Daniel was incredibly unusual for the time and region.³⁷³ Very few instances existed prior to Romanino's

³⁷¹ The recent 2015 monograph on Romanino's Valcamonica work (cited above) does explore the socio-political rationale for this cycle but the authors do not do so in relationship to the other factors I present in this chapter. Their argument rests entirely on the cycle being a message of fair ruling to the captain of Valcamonica.

³⁷² McDermott, *Tropologies*, 11.

³⁷³ Even though scenes from Daniel were not commonly painted in church art during this time, Daniel literature existed that told the stories as legends outside of biblical context, thus making them well-known to followers and non-

work in 1536 that depicted scenes such as the Three in the fiery furnace outside of manuscript illuminations.³⁷⁴ The one example comes from the same year (1536) in the Palazzo Pretorio in Bassano del Grappa. In the sala dell'Udienza, Jacopo Bassano painted three oil paintings: *Christ and the Adulteress* flanked by *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace* and *Susanna and the Elders*. In this version, the Three emerge from the furnace unharmed and King Nebuchadnezzar gestures to indicate the miracle that has occurred. Together, these paintings and their location in the Palazzo di Bassano clearly point to themes of justice and a message of fair rulership to the town leaders.³⁷⁵ A similar theme exists in Breno, but it is not the only message, and notably, Christ is visibly (though not exegetically) absent in the Alpine fresco cycle.

Across all three walls of the presbytery, the frescoes presented visitors with Old Testament kings who interacted with God's chosen people and met various fates based on their actions,

followers alike. On these other instances of Daniel literature, see DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel*, 49-86. There were also Latin mystery plays of Daniel, *Ludus Danielis* and the *Historia de Daniel representanda* that included the scene of Belshazzar calling for the Jewish vessels, and *Rappresentazione di Susanna* just for the tale of Susanna and the Elders. A play including the Three in the fiery furnace was recorded in the Hagia Sophia, but no western example of this exists. J.P.A. Van der Vin, *Travellers to Greece and Constantinople: Ancient Monuments and Old Traditions in Medieval Travellers' Tales*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten Noordeindsplein, 1980), 260, n. 54. According to Alfredo Cioni, none of the known western Daniel plays were performed in or near Brescia. *Bibliografia delle sacre rappresentazioni* (Florence: Sansoni Antiquariato, 1961).

³⁷⁴ I have yet to find any examples of church wall art prior to Romanino and Bassano that depict the Three in the fiery furnace. There is a late fourth-century ivory casket in Brescia, known as the Brescia Casket or *Lipsanoteca*, that depicts scenes from Daniel, including Daniel in the Lion's Den, Susanna, Daniel Poisoning the Dragon, and possibly the three men in the fiery furnace. There has been extensive debate regarding the identification of the latter scene as the seven Maccabean martyrs, purgatory, or the Band of Korah instead of the Three. Catherine Brown Tkacz used typology to explain why the scene should be identified as the Three in the fiery furnace. *The Key to the Brescia Casket - Typology and the Early Christian Imagination* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), esp. Chapter 5: "The Enigma in the Upper Right Register," 139-167. Interestingly, the current assumption is that the casket was commissioned under the Episcopacy of Sant'Ambrogio, an avid supporter of the fight against the Arian heresy. Ibid, 17. The ivory casket is currently housed in San Salvatore, Brescia and while its provenance is vague, it was there in the 1520s when Romanino was painting frescoes of Saint Obizio for the Brescian church. Francesca Stroppa, *Santa Giulia percorsi artistici nell'agiografia monastica: L'esempio di San Salvatore di Brescia* (Brescia: Edizioni Studium, 2012), 80-83. The casket is also mentioned in Section 1.1.

³⁷⁵ Giuliana Ericani and Paola Marini, "L'adultera, Sidrac, Midrac e Abdenago nella fornace ardente, e La casta Susanna," in *Jacopo Bassano e lo stupendo inganno dell'occhio*, ed. Alessandro Ballarin and Giuliana Ericani (Milan: Electa, 2010), 64-67. Sometime in the following decade, Bernardino Lanino painted a scene of the Three in the fiery furnace in Sant'Ambrosio in Milan that mimics that of Romanino; however, in this instance the theme does not appear to be related to justice. Ada Quazza, "Repertorio delle opere di Bernardino Lanino," in *Bernardino Lanino e il Cinquecento a Vercelli*, ed. Giovanni Romani (Turin: Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, 1986), 253.

though Romanino did not provide visual access to their fates. Those familiar with scripture would know that Nebuchadnezzar radically transformed after witnessing the miracle of the Three in the fiery furnace, and though he would continue to falter, his story ends with him praising Daniel's God.³⁷⁶ The Three in the furnace would also go on to serve as administrators in Nebuchadnezzar's court. Though Belshazzar also bears witness to a miracle with the writing on the wall, he does not get a chance at redemption and is killed that very night. Cyrus ended the Babylonian captivity and freed the Jewish people.³⁷⁷ Even though no king appears in the story of Susanna, Daniel played the role of judge, proved her innocence, and justice is served. In all these stories, the underlying message remains the same: those who believe and follow God receive redemption and those who do not will perish.

These messages of justice emphasize divine over earthly power. In a space physically attached to the Valcamonica captain's home and regularly used by the magistrates of Breno, this fresco cycle could serve as a message to local authorities to guide their rule and turn "words into works."³⁷⁸ Just as in the stories from Daniel, at any moment God could give or take from those in power on earth. This same theological-political belief guided much of Calvin's interactions with rulers in Europe. Though we cannot know for sure if his particular theology had yet reached Valcamonica from Ferrara in written form, Romanino's frescoes certainly seem to contend with

³⁷⁶ In his expositions, Augustine wrote that God decreed that Nebuchadnezzar deserved to be converted by witnessing the miracle of the three men in the fiery furnace. Tkacz, *Key to the Brescia Casket*, 167; "Nabuchodonosor meruit converli, Antiochus meruit obdurari" *Sermo 301*, "In solcmnitare SS. Machabaeorum, II," caput 3 (PL 38:1380-81). Interestingly, the door from the captain's home into the presbytery cuts directly into Nebuchadnezzar's throne on the south wall, thus implying the same forgiveness would be given to the Valcamonica captain should he sin against God. This also further reiterates the ruler/justice theme of the Breno cycle for the local civic body.

³⁷⁷ If one were to argue the north wall shows Darius and not Cyrus, the interpretation still fits as his section in Daniel 6 ends with Darius praising Daniel's God.

³⁷⁸ McDermott, *Tropologies*, 12. Certainly these tropological messages would be rooted in Christian love, as described by McDermott. However, later in this section we will see that the tropological call-to-action in Breno would also incorporate hate of others as a means of self-love.

Calvin's principles. Rather than imply a correlation between the two, I suggest that the Breno frescoes acted to reclaim the scriptures that Calvin appropriated for his theology and returned them to a Catholic context. According to Eire, Calvin believed that Christians under idolatrous rule should either leave or "abstain from false worship and resist passively [...] even to the point of martyrdom."³⁷⁹ This aligns with the stories of Daniel presented in Breno. All of the characters refuse to worship false gods or sin under idolatrous rule, and all risk martyrdom for doing so.³⁸⁰ However, the placement of these frescoes in Sant'Antonio directly conflicted with Calvinist principles in two important ways: first, the sheer presence of divine imagery, with God the Father presiding over the events on the altar wall, would have been idolatrous to Calvin; second, the commission that celebrated the relocated Mass ran counter to Calvin's opinions on the Eucharist as an important but not miraculous sacrament.³⁸¹ Taken together, this cycle in Breno not only instructed local rulers how to govern under God's supervision, but it reinstated that doing so was a resolutely Catholic practice.

The reading of the cycle as a reminder to Breno's civic leaders has been demonstrated in the recent monograph on Romanino's work in Valcamonica, though their interpretation does not include the Calvinist reading I have proposed.³⁸² However, I find it deficient to assign an entire presbytery fresco cycle and its message to the town's government alone and not also incorporate the parishioners and their implied actions, especially when the relocation of regular parish activities and the Mass of the Holy Eucharist to Sant'Antonio occasioned this new cycle. I argue that the message extended to encompass contemporary political and theological events including

³⁷⁹ Eire, *Reformations*, 310.

³⁸⁰ Though the story of Susanna does not take place under an idolatrous ruler, the elders who act as false judges and sin against God by lying serve a similar role in her case.

³⁸¹ See Eire, *Reformations*, 286-317 for a detailed discussion of Calvin's theology and political ideologies.

³⁸² Gheroldi, *Romanino al tempo Dei Cantieri*, 159-160.

Breno under foreign rule and thus served the entire community and visitors, while countering reformer theologies.

The commission for these paintings took place just after the Bolognese pacts of 1529 and the region gained relative independence.³⁸³ Prior to this, Breno, like the rest of Valcamonica vacillated under control of various foreign powers ranging from Italian courts to northern rulers. On the walls of Sant'Antonio, the kings all represent foreign powers imposing their will on the Jewish people. While the message certainly reminded civic authorities to rule fairly lest God be displeased, the frescoes also served as reassurance to the community that God would save his people from and punish bad rulers if they retained their faith and lived accordingly. In Breno, Romanino conveyed this message locally through relatable characters. The three men before Nebuchadnezzar do not look calm as the scripture implies, but upset, afraid, and defiant. Romanino's choice to make the Christ-like man of the Three appear insubordinate—his neck thrusts forward as if challenging Nebuchadnezzar, and he and another struggle against their restraints—provided a direct connection to Pisogne's bold Mountain Christ who visually confronted his enemies. This emotional display also conflicted with Calvin's insistence on passive resistance under persecution. While the Three refuse to worship the false idol, the Christ-like figure also refuses to simply lay down and die.

Like Pisogne's Mountain Christ, all the Breno figures seem human and relatable through their believable actions and emotive responses.³⁸⁴ Citizens living in Breno and Valcamonica would have identified with these characters in the same way people in Pisogne did with their

³⁸³ Relative, because Valcamonica was never free. They answered to Venice vis-à-vis Brescia at this time, though for general matters the region was able to govern itself.

³⁸⁴ While locals in Breno certainly would not have personally related to the exoticized figures or the kings, they would have recognized in them the outsider threats they feared from the east and north. It is worth noting that by this point, Romanino successfully portrayed relatable figures *without* the need for *Landsknechte*.

Mountain Christ, because all experienced threats to their daily lives and needed divine reassurance. Locally, the interpretation applied to the *past*: Breno's people held firm in their faith and God delivered them from control by foreign powers; *present*: the paintings reminded new civic leaders to heed God's word or risk losing the control they had gained; and *future*: this reassured the community that if foreign rulers regained control or if their current leaders faltered, God would again deliver them if they remained faithful. These frescoes not only represented a vow of earthly freedom but also the freedom of one's soul, which I explore later in this chapter.

This promise of protection and freedom is even more pertinent to Valcamonica whose primary outside threat came from the north where Reformation developed. Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Cyrus all followed false gods and idols.³⁸⁵ In the Alpine Valley, threat from northern entities consistently loomed, but in the past, these threats at least came from (so-called) Christian kings and princes. Now those rulers could potentially be Reformationists, and thus, heretics. Furthermore, those reformers used Old Testament and Daniel commentary to their own advantage in the spiritual warfare taking place throughout Europe. Besides Calvin's Old Testament-driven theology in relation to rulers, described above, other reformers explicitly used scripture from Daniel to attack the Roman Church.

In 1524, German reformer, Thomas Müntzer, delivered an exposition on the second chapter of Daniel to the Duke John of Saxony, Crown Prince John Frederick, and other Saxon officials.³⁸⁶ In it, Müntzer frequently referenced the threat of Turks, heathens, and Jews as unbelievers and

³⁸⁵ This comparison strengthens my argument that the north wall depicts Daniel in the lion's den since the message was one of refusing to bow to false gods and would mirror that of the south wall. This conclusion works with either version, led by Darius or Cyrus, but is more palpable in chapter 14 after the defeat of Bel, the priests, and the Dragon.

³⁸⁶ Eire, *Reformations*, 197-199.

claimed that God sent Nebuchadnezzar as a bad ruler to punish those who sinned against God.³⁸⁷ He further asserted that the current Roman Church corresponded to those worshipping false gods in Daniel and should be destroyed. Ultimately, Müntzer offered himself to the duke as a contemporary Daniel, seeking a place of power and control over the religious future of the region.³⁸⁸ For Valcamonians that saw Daniel as Christ-like, Müntzer's actions could be interpreted as an antichrist seeking power instead of living a humble life.

Müntzer's sermon further validates the interpretation that the Breno patrons and Romanino used Daniel as a message for rulers. Even if Müntzer's published sermon never traveled into Valcamonica, his choice of Daniel confirms the political relevance of those scriptures. However, unlike Müntzer's ambitions to be the next Daniel, the Breno paintings lack any mention of Daniel's eventual role for each of the three kings.³⁸⁹ By depriving viewers of the conclusions for each scene, Romanino explicitly omitted the power given to Daniel. We do not see Belshazzar appoint Daniel as third ranked in the kingdom, nor do we see Daniel prosper under the reigns of King Darius and Cyrus, nor do we see Daniel's great reputation among the people after saving Susanna, nor do we see the political success that Nebuchadnezzar grants the Three after surviving the fiery furnace. At no point in this fresco cycle does Romanino encourage viewers to dwell on the political or religious successes of the narrative's heroes. Whereas Müntzer used those scriptural successes as a marketing scheme for his own future, Romanino overtly neglected them. Furthermore, if the patrons wholly intended the message for civic leaders, then Romanino would have logically

³⁸⁷ Michael G. Baylor, ed. and trans., *The Radical Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 15-17. Baylor provided an English translation. For the original, see *Thomas Müntzer: Politische schriften, manifeste, briefe*, ed. Manfred Bensing and Bernd Rüdiger (Leipzig, 1973).

³⁸⁸ Baylor, *Radical Reformation*, 26-31.

³⁸⁹ Again, Rizzi suggested that the cloth hanging from the upper left balustrade on the altar wall was indicative of the garment Belshazzar promised Daniel. "Romanino in Sant'Antonio a Breno," 44. Even if true, the items were ones Daniel rejected and in the painting he is not depicted as bearing these royal gifts. It remains that the message in Breno was not one about Daniel's power or authority as Müntzer's sermon was to the duke.

included the leadership blessings Daniel and his friends received. Romanino's decision reiterates my argument that we must look beyond the political message to leaders for a complete understanding of this cycle.

In 1530, another reformer and theologian, Johannes Oecolampadius, published an extensive commentary on Daniel chapter 3 railing against idol worship, and he ultimately likened the practices of the Roman Church and papacy to the golden statues, dragons, and other false gods mentioned throughout Daniel.³⁹⁰ Then, in 1543, yet another reformer named Philip Melanchthon published his *Commentary on the Prophet Daniel* to speak against the Turkish threat, the coming of the antichrist, and the threat of the pope to Christianity.³⁹¹ Though they would often disagree with one another, Müntzer, Oecolampadius, and Melanchthon all used Daniel to push Reformation agendas against the Church.³⁹² Melanchthon published after the scholarly dating of the Breno fresco cycle, but his work reveals that Daniel remained an important form of source material among reformers. I propose that the civic commission in Sant'Antonio responded to these

³⁹⁰ Johannes Oecolampadius, *In Daniele prophetam Joannis Oecolampadii libri duo, omnigena et abstrusiora cum Hebraeorum tum Graecorum scriptorum doctrina referti* (Basel: Johann Babel, 1530).

³⁹¹ Like Müntzer, Melanchthon also used Daniel in reference to earthly politics and cosmic intervention. Philip Melanchthon, *In Daniele prophetam commentarius* (Leipzig, 1543).

³⁹² Reformers and their use of Daniel may have also been inspired by earlier Christian preaching. Late fifteenth-century preacher Girolamo Savonarola included stories of Daniel in several of his sermons, citing Daniel as announcing the antichrist coming to persecute Christians and the Three in the fiery furnace as evidence that God would act against his own natural order to save the faithful. Anne Borelli and Maria Pastore Passaro, eds., *Selected Writings of Girolamo Savonarola: Religion and Politics 1490-1498* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 61, 73, 87, 106-107. These messages would have been also effective in Breno where heresies persisted, natural disasters such as floods and the plague ravaged the region, and the small Alpine towns found themselves caught between an increasingly reformer north and oppression by rulers in every direction. Savonarola and various mystics primed Valcamonica for spiritual renewal that gave way to heresy in Brescia and her surrounding communities, and resulted in a spiritual anxiety throughout the region. Stefana Quinzani, Angela Merici, and Laura Mignani are cited as influential mystics in the region. Fusari, "L'eresia a Brescia," 52-59. For more on the complicated relationship between Savonarola's sermons and the rising Reformation and heresies, see Giorgio Caravale, *Beyond the Inquisition: Ambrogio Catarino Politi and the Origins of the Counter-Reformation*, trans. Don Weinstein (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2017).

heterodox theologies by reclaiming the Book of Daniel for the Catholic Church and papacy and designed a cycle that went explicitly against the Reformation.

The threat of foreign control and irreverent heresies loomed over Valcamonica, but the centuries-old disdain for Jews lingered and also remains evident in the Sant'Antonio frescoes. Scattered throughout the three walls, Romanino included stereotypical motifs indicative of Jewishness—not to signify Jews in the Old Testament as explored in Chapter 1, but contemporary Jewish enemies. On the north wall, multiple characters carry large money pouches, and in the upper right, a man appears to be counting while another with a money bag waits, as if lending takes place. Lounging high above them on the top of a balustrade, a blonde toddler dressed in a white robe lounges and looks strikingly similar to the two images of Simon of Trent mere feet away in the nave of Sant'Antonio.³⁹³ The foreign attire and presence of a monkey also gesture toward the Turkish enemy threatening from the east.³⁹⁴ On the south wall, one of the counselors to Nebuchadnezzar wears a type of Phrygian cap and what was possibly a money pouch on his waist. The other counselor bears physiognomy common to Jewish enemies in Passion scenes with his rotund cheeks and bulbous nose.³⁹⁵ Similar features appear in the heralds who blow their trumpets with ruddy, severe faces and snout-like noses. However, Romanino only peppered these physiognomic and fashion characteristics throughout the scenes, rather than assigning them to every antagonist. Consequently, this allowed visitors to imagine other characters as Jew-like, Jew-

³⁹³ There is a myth that Romanino added other triumphant martyrs to the collection in the nave during his time in Breno. If this were the case, then the acceptance and inclusion of Simon of Trent is even more palpable. For the anecdote of Romanino's Saint Christopher and his too-short robe, see Nova, *Girolamo Romanino*, 299-300.

³⁹⁴ Or a cat. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottomans prompted an ongoing fear of Turkish invasion into Italy. For Pope Pius II's blaming the Turks, see R. J. Mitchell, *The Laurels and the Tiara: Pope Pius II, 1458-1464* (Garden City, N.Y: Doubleday, 1962), 123.

³⁹⁵ This would also continue the message of Bernardino da Feltre to beware of whom you trust, because they could be Jewish or Jew-like. See Chapter 2.

supporters, or as reformers, rather than just Jews alone.³⁹⁶ Importantly, none of the story heroes bear any of these traits, despite certainly being Jewish characters from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Moreover, sixteenth-century Christians often dismissed Judaism by believing in the Jewish “inability” to see the miracle of Christ and in the alleged Jewish desire for material goods and physical proof of the divine.³⁹⁷ In the south wall narrative, Romanino emphasized sinful worshipping of a tangible, visible idol as the false religion’s “proof” of existence. The absence of angels on the south and north walls further removes discernable evidence from the earthly level and again makes this a cycle about human experience and Christian faith. As a final slight against Judaism, Romanino included God the Father presiding over all these scenes, which was an entirely inappropriate choice according to typical Jewish visual traditions.³⁹⁸

As in Pisogne, we may ask a similar question: why have images of Jewish heroes in an anti-Jewish fresco cycle? One simple answer is that the decision to depict Hebrew heroes as prefigurations of Christ in imagery insulted Jewish beliefs, and simultaneously retaliated against Reformation iconoclasm by covering empty walls with divine figures. Also, while the scriptures of Daniel explicitly reference Jewish suffering and redemption during ongoing tribulation and foreign rule, God promises that if they remain steadfast in faith despite mortal peril, then he will punish nefarious rulers and redeem the faithful believers. This set of messages could serve any community and context related to subjugation under a foreign court. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions recounted the stories of Daniel over and over again, and as a result the focus shifted from

³⁹⁶ We also cannot deny the irony of visibly marking enemies as Jews in stories of Jewish heroes – see below. For a unique approach to art rendering the conditions of one’s soul through physical depiction, see Stephen J. Campbell, *Cosmè Tura of Ferrara: Style, Politics, and the Renaissance City, 1450-1495* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

³⁹⁷ Lipton, *Dark Mirror*, 1-11.

³⁹⁸ Return to Chapter 1 for a discussion on permissibility of divine images.

the ancestral faith of Jews and their homeland to one of steadfast faith and endurance during seemingly impossible adversity.³⁹⁹ All of the narratives in the Sant'Antonio cycle contain relatable and characteristically virtuous earthly underdogs that the community of Breno could rally behind and find strength, and Romanino did not depict any of them as stereotypically Jewish.

It is also worth mentioning that the Book of Daniel uniquely included several chapters originally written in Aramaic, not Hebrew.⁴⁰⁰ Though we do not know if the Breno patrons or Romanino knew this, all of the stories portrayed in Sant'Antonio come from the Aramaic sections of Daniel, creating a further distinction between these narratives and their Jewish heritage.⁴⁰¹ The Jewish *Tanakh* does not include either of the apocryphal stories of Susanna or Habakkuk delivering food to Daniel.⁴⁰² Instead, these became Christian stories commandeered for Christian exclusivity—an approach used by the early Church Fathers. Jerome wrote of Daniel as such a successful prophet that even his own (Jewish) people did not recognize his worth, and that the Jewish faithful misunderstood Daniel and his prefiguration of Christ.⁴⁰³ This accusation would reverberate through the mendicant orders and their indictments against the “unseeing” Jews.⁴⁰⁴ In Sant'Antonio, the stories had Jewish origin, but the message was one of Christian redemption and fidelity in the face of non-believers. Though the question remains: Why use Jewish stories at all when plenty of Christian tales and parables could convey similar messages, (though not to the

³⁹⁹ DiTommaso, *Book of Daniel*, 83-85. There is also the fanciful notion that Romanino suggested the subject of Daniel in honor of his primary assistant, Daniele Mori. There is, however, no evidence for this. For more on Daniele Mori as Romanino's assistant, see Frangi, “Il ciclo di Sant'Antonio,” 61.

⁴⁰⁰ Only the Book of Ezra also included this mishmash of languages in its earliest known form. *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁰¹ The oldest extant copies of the stories of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon with Habakkuk at the lion's den are Greek translations, though these were presumably written in either Hebrew or Aramaic originally. DiTommaso, *Book of Daniel*, 2-7.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

⁴⁰³ Mark Zier, “The Manuscript Tradition of the Glossa Ordinaria for Daniel, and Hints at a Method for a Critical Edition,” *Scriptorium* 47, no. 1 (1993): 3–25.

⁴⁰⁴ Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 139-141, and more recently, Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 92-97, 174-176.

same specificity as Daniel under foreign kings)? The answer to this lies in the cycle's typological interpretations, which I suggest reveal deeper Christological interpretations that exclusively served Christians throughout Valcamonica.

4.2.3 Typological Interpretation

While common for church fresco cycles to include stories from the Hebrew Scriptures, they generally existed as a prefiguration of Christ and as secondary to whatever Christological scenes the artist also painted in the space. In Breno, Romanino does not depict Christ in the presbytery at all, aside from the preexisting altarpiece with the Madonna and Child surrounded by saints—an image where arguably the Christ child is the least attention-grabbing figure of the group. Instead, his absence meant the viewer must engage in cognitive, spiritual work to find Christian meaning that takes place in the form of typological interpretation. In doing so, the cycle evolves from one telling the literal stories of the scriptures to one using the Old Testament as evidence for Christ and as validation for Catholic Christianity.

The typological mode of interpreting scripture relies on creating allegorical connections between the Old and New Testament stories.⁴⁰⁵ I previously explored this type of comparison in the Sistine Chapel discussion where events from the life of Moses compositionally juxtaposed with those from the life of Christ to reveal their allegorical relationship and the Old Testament's role in prefiguring Christ and God's new covenant. Early Christian theologians used this mode in their writings, and typological pairings between Hebrew and Christian stories also regularly appeared

⁴⁰⁵ In the sixteenth century, this became even more useful as Catholics sought to use Old Testament prefiguration as validation for Roman Church practices in defense against reformers doing just the opposite.

in art. Most common uses included stories like Jonah and the whale as prefiguration of the resurrection of Christ.⁴⁰⁶ This pairing exists in the Sistine Chapel with the prophet Jonah appearing directly above the altar wall depicting the *Last Judgment*.

Through sermons and manuscripts, clergy fed laypeople these pairings as rationale for the union of Old and New Testament scriptures and as instruction on how to imitate Christ in their own lives. Ultimately, this form of interpretation attempted to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, and further spite Jews for not accepting Jesus as the Son of God when their own scriptures allegedly prophesied the Christian revelation. The fourteenth- and fifteenth-century illustrated manuscripts the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and the *Biblia Pauperum*, mentioned above, both included images showing the Hebrew Scriptures as prefigurations of Christ and provide evidence of this scriptural interpretation form's popularity and corresponding image use during this period. In both books, the images included scenes from Daniel that Romanino depicted on the walls of Sant'Antonio in Breno.

It was a logical choice to use stories from Daniel for typological association with Christ. As previously discussed, these stories already lent themselves towards a tropological reading for the lay-officials and leaders of Valcamonica to be fair, God-fearing rulers, but they also provided ample content for prefiguring Christ. In his commentary, Jerome wrote of Daniel as the prophet who most directly spoke of and predicted Christ.⁴⁰⁷ It is no surprise, then, that Daniel stories appear frequently in the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and the *Biblia Pauperum*, giving the patrons in Breno as well as Romanino plenty of material to use.

⁴⁰⁶ Many early Christian sarcophagi used this type of imagery for themes of resurrection and eternal life. On a Roman sarcophagus frieze from 320-330, the three men in the fiery furnace appear alongside Jonah for the same typological meaning. Tkacz, *Key to the Brescia Casket*, 66, n. 9.

⁴⁰⁷ Jerome, *Commentariorum in Daniele*, prologue, II, 15-16.

The south wall scenes of the three men in the fiery furnace appear in both books. In the *Biblia Pauperum*, the corresponding page included three stories—two from the Old Testament and one from the New (Figure 4.53). On the left side, Abraham greets the three secretly divine visitors who bring God’s promise that Sarah will bear a child (Genesis 18). He kneels before them, hands clasped in prayer as he recognizes the divinity of the angels. On the right, the Three stand amid the flames in the fiery furnace. Outside the furnace, a man recoils at the heat of the flames, but the viewer can see the Three remain unharmed as they stand calmly, hands praying or gently resting on their chests. Above, King Nebuchadnezzar recognizes the miracle taking place and gestures towards the furnace. In the center of the page, the viewer sees the Transfiguration, a scene referenced in the Gospels. Christ stands upon a mountain, radiant and transfigured before Peter, James, and John, while the figures of Moses and Elijah, long since deceased, stand beside Christ and converse with him. In this moment, the disciples first recognize Jesus’s divinity. In all three images, the emphasis is on seeing and recognizing divinity and miracles when they occur directly in front of you. Taken together in the Christian tradition, these Old Testament scenes prefigure the moment when God reveals Jesus as his son and as such, Jesus replaces the Old Law of Abraham and the prophecies of Moses and Elijah.

The representation of the Three in the fiery furnace serves a different typological association in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, which included the scene from the north wall as well. In Chapter 28, an image with an angel keeping the Three cool in the furnace is arranged alongside an image of Habakkuk feeding Daniel in the lion’s den, as well as the story of the ostrich who freed its young (Figures 4.54-4.55). All three of these appear in the text following a discussion of hell and the threat of eternal damnation. This association comes from Jerome, who treated the

Three in the fiery furnace as a prefiguration of the Harrowing of Hell.⁴⁰⁸ For readers, the typological interpretation tells the faithful that they receive immunity to the dangers of hell and will be freed by divine intervention because of their unwavering belief.

The *Biblia Pauperum* also included the story of Daniel in the lion's den. Again, the pages have three scenes, two from the Old Testament and one from the New (Figure 4.56). In the first, on the left side, Jezebel sits on a throne with armed guards and threatens to kill Elijah who stands before her (1 Kings 19). On the right, the Babylonians confront King Cyrus and demand they be given Daniel, who sits in the distance reading the word of God. The center scene shows Christ before Pilate, as the ruler washes his hands clean. Each of these Old Testament stories involve God's faithful being punished by earthly rulers for their servitude and prefigure Christ's Passion for the same. Just as conspirators threatened Daniel for his persistence in worshiping the Lord, so too did the people have Christ killed for his faith and role in the new religion. In Breno, citizens would learn that despite the threat of eminent death, they must remain devout.

In another page, the king discovering Daniel alive and well in the lion's den appears on the left (Figure 4.57). The right shows the bride and her beloved from Song of Songs (3:4),⁴⁰⁹ and in the center Christ addresses Mary Magdalene in *Noli me Tangere* (John 20:17). All these stories relate to the recognition and (in)ability to touch that which is divine. The lions (and thereby the conspirators and the king) could not touch Daniel because God protected him. The beloved embraces he whom her soul loves. Christ forbids Mary Magdalene from embracing him before he has returned to God. Together, viewers receive a message of recognizing divinity and acting

⁴⁰⁸ Jerome, *Commentariorum in Daniele*, 1.3.92.

⁴⁰⁹ Song of Songs consists of poetic verses as discourse on human love. In divine terms, the bride and her lover are often interpreted as allegorizing the relationship between Israel and God.

accordingly. For those in Breno, their recognition of Christ and the true message of the Roman Church would let them embrace the Messiah and everlasting life.

In addition to these readings, both the Three in the furnace and Daniel in the lion's den served as typological associations for the resurrection of Christ. Both stories often appeared on early Christian sarcophagi demonstrating the promise of eternal life and appear on the Brescia Casket, which Romanino likely knew.⁴¹⁰ Together, their typological interpretation is one of capture, safety, and release. The Three in the furnace and Daniel in the lion's den remained ostensibly safe despite the circumstances; God kept them cool and shut the mouths of the lions, and the Babylonians who wanted them dead could not reach the heroes without putting themselves in harm's way (a deadly fire and hungry lions, respectively). Similarly, Christ stayed safe inside his tomb and could be reached by neither the living nor the dead.⁴¹¹ After a period of time, all three stories end with the captured heroes safely freed from their ordeal.

The altar wall offers two stories and two typological pairs, though combined they provide a singular anagogical interpretation. In some early Christian instances, the chaste and faithful Susanna served as a type for Ecclesia with the two elders as representative of pagans and Jews that sought to do her harm.⁴¹² For others, such as Church Father Ambrose, Susanna became a female Christ type—as she stood silent during her trial, so too did Christ before Pilate choose to not defend himself.⁴¹³ In both types, Susanna represented the divine purity of Christ and the Church. As a counter to Susanna/Ecclesia/Christ, the story of Belshazzar and the writing on the wall stood for the Last Judgment and the fate of those who could not *see* what God laid before them. In the

⁴¹⁰ For a discussion on the Brescia Casket, see footnote 374 in this chapter and Section 1.1.

⁴¹¹ Tkacz, *Key to the Brescia Casket*, 82.

⁴¹² Hippolytus of Rome, "Commentaria in Daniele 2," in *Hippolytus Werke 1.1* (GCS 1, Leipzig 1897). For more on Ecclesia and Synagoga, see Section 3.1.2.

⁴¹³ For this typological comparison and Ambrose's text, see Tkacz, *Key to the Brescia Casket*, 59, 75-76.

Speculum humanae salvationis, the image of God's handwriting on the wall directly paired with three stories from the New Testament: the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the ten talents, and the Last Judgment (Figures 4.58-4.59).⁴¹⁴ Both of the parables amount to tales of wise followers who come prepared (literally and figuratively) to final judgment and are saved, while the unwise, unprepared, and those found wanting like King Belshazzar fall to eternal damnation. Inevitably in these tales, all will be judged based on lived experiences and choices made. On Breno's altar wall, the scenes of Belshazzar and Susanna presented to visitors a typological association for the Last Judgment, where those on the viewer's left (Christ's right) receive redemption and those on the sinister side are damned.⁴¹⁵

By not including Christ, the Breno frescos radically demand that viewers make these typological connections themselves and do so using Jewish heroes in scenes capped with an image of God the Father. The Christ-like appearance of one of the three men on the south wall may have prompted viewers to start this translation.⁴¹⁶ The presence of the Church Fathers and the Evangelists on the ceiling provided the next clue to read these stories through the lens of the Catholic Church as evidence for Christ and validation for Christianity.⁴¹⁷ But not all Christians supported this form of intensive interpretation using allegory; reformer Martin Luther warned against it. In his writings, Luther condemned complicated forms of exegesis such as allegory, and

⁴¹⁴ *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Chapter 29. Matthew 25:1-12; Matthew 25: 19-30 and Luke 19: 13-24; Revelation 20: 11-12.

⁴¹⁵ Last Judgment scenes were incredibly common in the Italian cities at this point and visitors would have undoubtedly been exposed to the classic image of those on Christ's right (viewer's left) being resurrected and raised to salvation and those on his left (viewer's right) being banished to hell.

⁴¹⁶ The defiant man resembles the bold Mountain Christ's physiognomy in Pisogne. While Christ is not present, his humanness existed in the Old Testament figures of the Three.

⁴¹⁷ Tkacz drew the same inference with the portraits of the disciples on the lid of the Brescia Casket. *Key to the Brescia Casket*, 70.

instead urged his followers to only rely on the literal sense of interpretation to better understand what bible characters experienced.⁴¹⁸ On allegory and the Church Fathers, he wrote in 1532,

“I used to allegorize everything, even the toilet, but later on I reflected on the histories and thought how difficult it must have been for Joshua to fight with his enemies in the manner reported. If I had been there I would have shit my pants out of fear. It was not allegory, but it was the Spirit and faith that inflected such havoc on the enemy with only three hundred men. Jerome and Origen—God forgive them!—promoted the practice of seeking only allegories. In all of Origen there is not one word about Christ.”⁴¹⁹

An entire fresco cycle that *required* allegory to find Christ would have been unacceptable to Luther and his followers, to say the least. Not only did Breno’s municipality rectify their white walls with fresh frescoes depicting the divine, but they did so using complicated forms of exegesis that the most famous reformer railed against.⁴²⁰

4.2.4 Anagogical Interpretation

The Sant’Antonio fresco cycle served the community of Breno and the civic and lay-visitors from Valcamonica in their need for religious clarity and fervor, and the message in these

⁴¹⁸ James Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Van Ghemmert Pub. Co., 1979), 197 and n. 805. Arguably, the reformers varied in opinion and severity regarding biblical exegesis; however, those adhering to the Catholic Church perceived reformers as wholesale rejecting complex interpretation. See Richard A. Muller and John Lee Thompson, eds., *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

⁴¹⁹ Cited in McDermott, *Tropologies*, 238, from Raymond Andrew Blacketer, *The School of God: Pedagogy and Rhetoric in Calvin’s Interpretation of Deuteronomy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 225.

⁴²⁰ Importantly, Luther also avidly preached against Jews. See Eric M. Zafran, “The Iconography of Antisemitism: A Study of the Representation of the Jews in the Visual Arts of Europe 1400-1600” (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, 1973).

paintings extended beyond the tropological and typological into a lesson on salvation. In the scriptures, all these stories have a conclusion: the Three are freed from the furnace and appointed a special place in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and the king converted (for a while, at least); Daniel is freed from the lion's den, the king recognized Daniel's God, and those that plotted against Daniel and their families are fed to the hungry lions; the elders who falsely accused Susanna are stoned to death and her reputation was restored; Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall and Belshazzar died for his transgressions against God. But in Sant'Antonio, Romanino does not provide any of these redemptive conclusions to visitors. In fact, the only indication of God's presence is the figure of God the Father hovering above on the altar wall looking disapprovingly towards the *Feast of Belshazzar*. No angels protect the Three in the furnace, close the mouths of the lions, or deliver Habakkuk. Nowhere did Romanino include the culmination of each story and the relief that the scriptures deliver to readers. For visitors, the promise had to be found elsewhere. The *Feast of Belshazzar* on the altar wall provided this instruction in its very story—the message on the wall had to be read, translated, *and* interpreted and could only be done by God's faithful.⁴²¹ In Breno, visitors had to look, process, and interpret to fully understand all that Romanino's frescoes offered.

The typological readings of these scenes and their very location in Valcamonica make the eschatological message evident. If Christ's transfiguration provided physical proof of his divinity and replacement of the Old Law, then the Three in the furnace validated that truth as a truth only Christians could see. If the resurrection promised everlasting life and evidence of Christ as the Messiah, then the stories in Daniel prefigured this reality and thereby promised Christians eternal

⁴²¹ In the story, the words written on the wall were Hebrew (וְיִסְרְפוּ לְקֵת אֱנִי אֱנִי), which the Babylonian king did not read or speak. Even after Daniel read the words *mene mene tekel upharsin*, he still had to translate them for Belshazzar and then string together the meaning of God's message as it contextually related to the king. This message on the wall had layers of interpretation, and the same can be said of Breno's fresco cycle.

life. And if justice would be served at the end of time with those on the right of Christ ascending to heaven and those on the left cast away, then Susanna rose, and Belshazzar fell accordingly just as those upholding Valcamonica's laws would do. All these messages unite to affirm Christian salvation and potentially provide the same promise to any Jews who wanted to be like Daniel, Susanna, and the Three, and "see" Christ. These Christian messages could exist anywhere, but in Breno they presented a perfect union of Jewish past and promise of Jerusalem with Christian present and Valcamonica as a New Jerusalem.

In the late fifteenth century, Franciscan Observants founded the Sacro Monte di Varallo as a three-dimensional spiritual experience where visitors listened to sermons and then went on a "pilgrimage" around the site to "witness" Christ's life and Passion through life-sized sculptures and dioramas.⁴²² In its totality, the site evoked Jerusalem, bringing the holy city into the heart of the Piedmontese Valley. Nearby Christians could now avoid the dangerous journey to actual Jerusalem and make their holy pilgrimage close to home. Following the construction in Varallo, communities built other Sacred Mountain destinations, and some proposed Valcamonica as one such site. Ultimately, residents decided they did not want the influx of visitors and their Sacro Monte never came to fruition.⁴²³ Even without a Sacro Monte, the original suggestion meant that the Lago d'Iseo residents must have seen themselves as worthy of their own private pilgrimage right at home.⁴²⁴ By having these Old Testament frescoes in Breno, the conquest of Jerusalem in Daniel becomes the conquest of Valcamonica and her people. Just as God promised salvation to

⁴²² For more on the Sacro Monte in Varallo, see Alessandro Nova, "'Popular' Art in Renaissance Italy: Early Response to the Holy Mountain at Varallo," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 112-126.

⁴²³ Gabriella Ferri Piccaluga, "Le Radici Iconografiche della "Via Crucis" settecentesca nel territorio Bresciano," in *Il confine del nord: Microstoria in Vallecmonica per una storia d'Europa* (Vallecmonica: Consorzio BIM, 1989).

⁴²⁴ This is already evident in Pisogne's "Sistine Chapel of the Poor" and the aforementioned argument that it replaced a need to travel to Rome by being what the local community needed.

Daniel and the faithful in the Babylon, the citizens of Breno experienced and hoped for the same promise from God. The image of God above with the globe would reaffirm his dominion over all the earthly events past, present, and future.

This is especially fitting for a region that distrusted scholastic theology and its lack of personal, intimate religious experiences.⁴²⁵ Valcamonica, ravaged by wars and natural epidemics, needed spiritual nourishment and something that would reassure them of a better future. Romanino's frescoes in Sant'Antonio offered this. Rather than copy and continue other artistic traditions from different Italian cities, Breno's civic leaders made the commission about themselves: local and personal.⁴²⁶ By focusing on stories from Daniel that ultimately depicted Christ-like Jews, the cycle served as a de-escalation from earlier anti-other art such as Simon of Trent's martyrdom as well as Romanino's overt anti-imperialist art in Cremona. But like earlier generic images of Jews in Valcamonica's Simon of Trent paintings, Romanino made these Jewish heroes generic, visibly non-Jewish characters that viewers could imagine as themselves suffering under whatever foreign or heretical power they endured. Parishioners and visitors from the Alpine Valley would see this as a message to their leaders and a promise of their own earthly and heavenly fates right at home in their special New Jerusalem. While the threat of heresy and supposed Jewish perfidy remained, these paintings reminded locals that, like Daniel and his companions, their faith and participation in Sant'Antonio's Eucharist Mass would set them free.

⁴²⁵ The Franciscans remained popular throughout the region and the Dominicans never gained a foothold in Valcamonica's churches. Daniele Montanari, "Chiesa e istituzioni politiche," in *Aspirazioni e devozioni: Brescia nel cinquecento tra preghiera e eresia*, ed. Ennio Ferraglio (Milan: Electa, 2006), 21.

⁴²⁶ Many quattrocento and cinquecento fresco cycles in the urban cities of Florence, Venice, and Rome felt distinctly local by including contemporary portraiture, often of the elite families paying for the commission, scattered among the biblical characters as if they were witnessing the event as it occurred. Domenico Ghirlandaio's Sassetti Chapel in Santa Trinita, Florence (1480s) is an excellent example of this. This trend continued in the Cremona Cathedral nave with portraits of the *massari*, discussed in Section 3.3. In Breno and Pisogne, there are no (known) contemporary portraits.

4.3 Bienno 1540-1541

A few years following the Sant'Antonio commission, Romanino was hired for a third Valcamonica project in the small town of Bienno, just a short walk south of Breno. Franciscans ran the fifteenth-century church, Santa Maria Annunciata, until 1490 when the *comune* took over and made it a civically run institution.⁴²⁷ Like other churches in the area, the nave contained late fifteenth-century paintings by Giovanni Pietro da Cemmo. In the 1540s, the papacy granted the church independence from the curia of Brescia, so they decided to paint the otherwise white presbytery walls to celebrate.⁴²⁸ Here, Romanino painted scenes from the Life of the Virgin including the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, the *Marriage of the Virgin*, and two disputed scenes on the altar wall, which probably depict the priests asking God what to do about Mary⁴²⁹ and the *Expulsion from the Temple* (Figures 4.60-4.62).⁴³⁰ Romanino also completed a detached altarpiece for the space that has since been lost.

As it relates to Valcamonica and her tribulations, this fresco cycle is largely unremarkable aside from Romanino's characteristic style that differentiated him from Venetian and Brescian

⁴²⁷ Franzoni, "Cornice," 62-63.

⁴²⁸ Gheroldi, "Cantieri," 165-166.

⁴²⁹ This part of her story comes from the *Golden Legend* and explained that her refusal to marry and instead remain a Virgin dedicated to God went against Jewish customs and the baffled priests turned to God for guidance. The solution was to see which stick from the pool of celibate men flowered, and that would indicate the man whom God chose to be her husband.

⁴³⁰ The identification of these two scenes are the conclusions of the authors in *Romanino al tempo dei cantieri in Valle Camonica*, ed. Vincenzo Gheroldi (Gianico, Italy: la Cittadina, 2015), 176. I am more inclined to believe the scene on the right is Joachim and Anne with young Mary waiting to hear from the priests or being told they will have to convene to decide what to do regarding Mary's wishes. The child in the blue robe clearly reads as Mary as she dons the same shade of blue in the other two scenes. Anne is present behind Joachim, wearing the same attire as in the *Presentation* scene, and according to the legend, she was not present when Joachim was expelled from the temple. Joachim also lacks a goat or calf for offering. Typically, Anne meets Joachim at the gate upon his return to announce she is with child. Chronologically within the narrative, it simply makes more sense for the scene to fit within the *Presentation* and *Marriage* scenes rather than the far earlier story of *Expulsion* and no gate-meeting scene to compliment it.

artists; however, in Bienno his brushwork became tighter and more restrained than in Pisogne or Breno. The scenes adhere to commonly depicted versions of the stories, though Romanino does reuse his aerial balustrade of onlookers seen in Breno. Overt Jewishness also appears: in the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* and *Expulsion from the Temple*, Joachim presents as undeniably Jewish in his yellow robe and large money pouch dangling from his waist. Meanwhile, every other presumably Jewish man in the series escapes these visual monikers. As evidence of the Catholic Church's supposed triumph over Judaism, Anne clutches a ring of rosary beads as she watches Mary ascend the temple stairs. Despite these minor jabs at Judaism, the cycle could easily exist in any Christian church outside of Valcamonica.

Instead of continuing his theological innovations from Pisogne and Breno, Romanino made a dramatic shift to simple exegesis and avoided a narrative that blatantly condemned Jews and heretics. In the time between his work in Breno and the Bienno commission, Romanino's social circle and sphere of influence had evolved to include artists like Moretto da Brescia⁴³¹ and Lorenzo Lotto, both of whom took a vastly different local approach to portraying Christian themes during this time of religious upheaval. These interactions and new commissions in Brescia, along with the budding Counter-Reformation, likely had an impact on Romanino's theological approach to church art.

⁴³¹ Moretto da Brescia's workshop already had dominance in Brescia, and lack of work in his hometown may have contributed to Romanino's departure into Valcamonica. De Leonadis, "Nella concitazione rumorosa," 22.

5.0 Bergamo and Beyond 1513-1547: (Im)Permissibility of Divine Images

“If it is not a sin, but a good thing, that I have Christ’s image in my heart,
why then should it be sinful to have it before my eyes?”

Martin Luther, 1525

5.1 Another Approach

In 1540, Venetian Mario d’Arman needed to repay a debt to a man named Giovanni Battista Tristan. D’Arman’s uncle, an artist living with him at the time, came to his aid. For his nephew, Lorenzo Lotto painted two small portraits of Martin Luther and his wife, Katharina von Bora, which d’Arman gave to Tristan to satisfy the debt.⁴³² The subject matter of these portraits is especially noteworthy given that Lotto made his living painting Christian images for Catholic patrons, which included images of the divine that many reformers railed against. However, his willingness to paint the Lutheran family, his nephew’s acceptance of the portraits, and their acquaintance’s agreeable receipt of the works all imply a degree of heterodox curiosity, if not outright alliance. We may ask, then, how did a painter of Christian art like Lotto artistically adapt and survive the multitude of crises he experienced in sixteenth-century Northern Italy?

⁴³² Massimo Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici: Il mondo di Lorenzo Lotto tra Riforma e Controriforma*. (Laterza, Italy: Editori Laterza, 2001), 11, 14-16, 37-48. We do not know the fate of these portraits after d’Arman gave them as payment.

5.2 Lorenzo Lotto

While Romanino pushed theological and stylistic boundaries in the rural Alpine hill towns of Valcamonica, artists in and around the major cities of Brescia and Bergamo also became entangled in the spiritual war against heresy and non-believers. One such artist, Lotto, completed an extensive *oeuvre* throughout multiple cities in Lombardy, the Veneto, and the Marche regions of the Italian peninsula. Born in 1480 in Venice, he grew up in the same post-Simon-of-Trent atmosphere as Romanino, though his early years in Venice distanced him from the heart of Simon's cult. In 1475, the Venetian doge issued a mandate prohibiting art and preaching of Simon to reduce spread of the boy's cult in the *Serenissima*, which contrasted with the Venetian *terraferma* that actively promoted and venerated Simon.⁴³³ As a result, Lotto's childhood time in Venice would have lacked the exposure and popular dedication to Simon that Romanino received in Brescia. However, as a young adult, Lotto spent most of his initial artistic career in Bergamo (1513-1525), a town just thirty miles northeast of Brescia.⁴³⁴ Throughout the province of Bergamo, at least nine frescoes of Simon remain today.⁴³⁵ If Lotto had evaded knowledge of Simon in Venice, the martyred boy had an inescapable visual presence during the artist's years in Lombardy.

Scholars have dedicated much attention to Lotto's stylistic parallels (and shortcomings) when compared to more famous artists such as Giovanni Bellini, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and

⁴³³ Magda Teter, *Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020) 73, 85, and "*On Everyone's Lips*": *Humanists, Jews, and the Tale of Simon of Trent*, eds. Stephen D. Bowd, and J. Donald Cullington (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012), 14-15.

⁴³⁴ Nothing of Lotto's training is known, though most assume he was a member of a Bellini or Bellini-esque workshop in Venice.

⁴³⁵ Given Simon's popularity in the region and the ongoing preservation of his art through the sixteenth century, more images of the boy likely existed during Lotto's stay in Bergamo. For an example of Simon frescoes being maintained alongside new commissions, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

Titian, as well as Northern European artists like Albrecht Dürer.⁴³⁶ In truth, art enthusiasts and later historians largely overlooked Lotto and discarded him for the preferred art of Titian and other Venetian successsfuls.⁴³⁷ Not until the late nineteenth century did Bernard Berenson restore recognition to the all-but-forgotten artist, largely indebted to the recent discovery of Lotto's will and account book.⁴³⁸ The painter's popularity, however, remained marginalized until a 1953 exhibition in Venice brought him into visual conversation with artists like Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione.⁴³⁹ As a Venetian native, these comparisons between Lotto, Titian, and others were perhaps inevitable, and critics considered his style "odd or outlandish when measured against the great exemplars of the classical style—Raphael and Titian."⁴⁴⁰ However, as with Romanino, an emphasis on style obscures the deep theological work that went into Lotto's labor.

As Berenson, the Venetian exhibition, and a surge of scholarship in the 1980s have highlighted, Lotto took his work personally. Compared to other artists of his time and region,

⁴³⁶ For an overview of these comparisons, see Mauro Lucco, "The Figurative Sources," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, eds. David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 15-19. Lotto's use of Dürer's prints that circulated south of the Alps was similar to that of Romanino at Cremona Cathedral discussed in the previous chapter. Like Cremona, Bergamo—where Lotto spent many years—was inundated with *Landsknechte* and northern artists that accompanied them. Dürer also made multiple trips to Venice where Lotto would have encountered his circulating works. For more on the relationship between the art of Dürer and Lotto, see Terisio Pignatti, "Dürer e Lotto," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi per il V centenario della nascita*, eds. Pietro Zampetti and Vittorio Sgarbi (Treviso: Comitato per le celebrazioni lottesche, 1980), 93-97.

⁴³⁷ This neglect of Lotto was instigated by his contemporaries. Giorgio Vasari had very little to say about Lotto in his widely popular revised edition of *Lives*—in fact, Lotto is forced to share biographical space with three other lesser known artists; Pietro Aretino degraded him as an artist compared to Titian and mockingly praised him for his piety instead, about which Lotto disparagingly wrote in his accounts and letters, Lorenzo Lotto, *Libro di spese diverse (1538-1556)*, ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venice: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1969), 305; Ludovico Dolce, in a project designed to praise Titian, disgraced Lotto by writing of his improperly handled colors in painting, Mark W. Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 154-155.

⁴³⁸ Berenson resurrected a niche interest in Lotto as an artist psychologically connected to his subjects and religiously devout in his artistic practice. Berenson likened Lotto to nineteenth-century painters, believing he was remarkably modern for a Renaissance artist. Bernard Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto: An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism* (New York and London, 1895; reprint London: G. Bell & Sons, 1901).

⁴³⁹ David Alan Brown, "Introduction," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, eds. David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 1.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

Lotto signed and dated an exceptionally large number of his works, and his saints and portrait sitters all bear a conviction of individuality and verisimilitude.⁴⁴¹ This union between art and reality yoked Lotto-the-man to the spirituality and devotional aspects of his religious works and to the identity of his sitters.⁴⁴² As I discuss in this chapter, connecting personal identity and artistic practice suggests Lotto's conviction about the state of the Catholic Church and his role in it during the sixteenth century.

A great deal of personal information about Lotto is available for scrutiny; he left behind wills, letters, and an exceptionally detailed account book covering a large period in his life (1538-1556) that included transactions as well as his commentary on work, people, and life in general.⁴⁴³ Taken together, these primary resources reveal a restless, ambitious, socially frustrated, and pious man dedicated to his work and religion with a peripatetic career until his final years spent in peaceful solitude in Loreto.⁴⁴⁴ Based on these records, historians know that many of Lotto's friends and family members were reformers and heterodox thinkers, several of whom faced lengthy Inquisition trials later in their lives; some were acquitted, others fled, and a few were executed.⁴⁴⁵ Considering these associations, scholars have long debated whether Lotto

⁴⁴¹ Brown, "Introduction," 1. As discussed later in this chapter, Lotto also kept extensive account books of every debt and credit he had with friends, family, and acquaintances; these along with many letters and a few versions of his will are extant. These documents and notations help establish his personal connections with sitters, and in many cases, portray a man who was downtrodden and lonely. For these documents, see Lotto, *Libro di spese diverse*; and *Le lettere di Lorenzo Lotto e scritti su Lotto*, ed. Luigi Chiodi (Bergamo: Centre Culturale Nicolò Rezzara, 1998).

⁴⁴² This emphasis on portraying spiritual and visual realities in his art also accounts for Lotto's aversion to copying classical ideals that would have been inherently false. Bonnet addressed Lotto's "radical reaction against classicism," in Jacques Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, trans. Michael Taylor (Paris: Adam Biro, 1996), 9-12.

⁴⁴³ Lorenzo Lotto, *Libro di spese*. Chiodi, *Le lettere*.

⁴⁴⁴ Despite being Venetian, Lotto spent most of his professional career in Bergamo, Treviso, and the Marche, and though he eventually settled in Venice for a time, he continued taking commissions from patrons in his previous sites of residence. Peter Humfrey, "Lorenzo Lotto: Life and Work," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, eds. David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 5-11. His various residences included Dominican dormitories and the houses of distant relatives, friends, and colleagues.

⁴⁴⁵ His closest network of heterodox thinkers included jeweler Bartolomeo Carpan, architect Sebastiano Serlio, philosopher Giulio Camillo, writer Alessandro Citolini, and importantly, his nephew, Mario d'Arman. Renzo Fontana,

sympathized with heterodox ideologies or became a follower himself.⁴⁴⁶ Luigi Coletti interpreted his roaming as evidence of Lotto's spiritual confliction amidst reform and his inability to find (or be satisfied with) church guidance.⁴⁴⁷ Others argue that he journeyed to intentionally dodge the rising heresies throughout the region, thus providing evidence of his loyal orthodoxy.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, Luigi Chiodi and Francesca Cortesi Bosco used Lotto's letters and two residencies in Dominican dormitories as direct evidence of his Catholic allegiance and claimed that as a devout-yet-failed friar he sought monastic retreat.⁴⁴⁹ When considering his proliferate sacred art production as evidence of his personal faith, numerous scholars have used the exact same paintings as proof for both Lotto's orthodox and heterodox leanings.⁴⁵⁰ While I acknowledge the extensive arguments

"Solo, senza fidel governo et molto inquieto de la mente," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi per il V centenario della nascita*, eds. Pietro Zampetti and Vittorio Sgarbi (Treviso: Comitato per le celebrazioni lottesche, 1980), 279-297. Lotto wrote of Mario d'Arman as his "nephew," but he was actually a younger cousin. Humfrey, "Lorenzo Lotto," 9. Lotto resided with both Carpan and d'Arman in the 1540s, the time during which their alleged heretical actions occurred. After departing both homes, Lotto recorded that he left on good, amicable terms, implying that conflict over beliefs did not cause the reason for his exit, and he continued to send gifts back to the d'Arman household for years after he moved. This included the portraits of Martin Luther and his wife, Katharina von Bora, described at the beginning of this chapter. According to Lotto's account, he painted the images for d'Arman who then gave them to Giovanni Battista Tristan to pay a debt. Ultimately, we cannot know whether Lotto intended the images for d'Arman's use but he used them for his debt instead, or if they were always intended as payment to Tristan. For this account, as well as a thorough discussion on the evidence and rationale for assuming each person was a reformer or sympathizer, as well as their accused acquaintances and friends, see Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 37-48, 135-249.

⁴⁴⁶ For a succinct exploration of the debates regarding Lotto's religious beliefs and a more recent treatment of the various aspects in Lotto's life that lead scholars to believe he had some sympathy with reformers, see Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 3-36.

⁴⁴⁷ Luigi Coletti, *Lotto* (Bergamo: Istituto italiano d'arti grafiche, 1953), 8-11.

⁴⁴⁸ See Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 17 for a summation on this debate, esp. footnote 37. An argument against this would be the amicable nature with which he departed Carpan and d'Arman's homes, and the continued friendships he maintained with them afterwards.

⁴⁴⁹ Chiodi, *Le lettere*, 15-17; Francesca Cortesi Bosco, *Il coro intarsiato di Lotto e Capoferri per Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo* (Milan: Silvana, 1987), 158-160. The letters in question are primarily those between Lotto and the confraternita della Misericordia regarding the Santa Maria Maggiore intarsia panels he completed over the course of eight years. Many of these scholars' writings appear in the 1981 edited collection *Lorenzo Lotto: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi per il V centenario della nascita*, cited above. These and others are also discussed in Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 3-36. Regarding Lotto as a failed friar, there is no evidence he ever attempted to join the monastic life beyond lay-brotherhood, but in his 1546 will he requested that he be buried in the church cemetery of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in a friar's habit. Lotto, *Libro di spese diverse*, 301-305. This was replaced by another will in the 1550s that changed his burial to the Holy House of Loreto, his final home, and where he became an oblate in 1554. Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 298-312.

⁴⁵⁰ For example, Giovanni Romano, Renzo Fontana, Michelangelo Muraro, Maria Calì and Bernard Berenson all cited examples of Lotto's paintings as indicative of Reformation-support, Lutheran ideologies, and a fixation on the

on both sides of the debate, we will likely never know whether Lotto's heterodox beliefs, compassion for his heretical friends, or patron orders motivated his artistic choices, or whether Lotto simply saw these decisions as the decent thing to do at the time. I believe that this revolving interpretation using Lotto's art exposes the ambiguities in his work and necessitates a different approach to discussing his art in relation to the Reformation and the socio-political needs of North Italian patrons.

In this chapter I explore some of Lotto's works that predate his known reformer relationships and I situate these within the rising heterodox debates that filtered into the Italian territory south of the Alps. For these paintings, I argue that knowing the specifics of Lotto's personal beliefs remains unnecessary; what is evident is an obvious choice to *not* engage with religious others through visual rhetoric while still using art to address hotly debated theological topics among these varied groups of believers and nonbelievers. I then close with a few examples of his later works that reveal a continuation of my conclusions regarding his earlier paintings. This chapter is not meant to be an exhaustive exploration of Lotto's works, but a selection that demonstrates his consistency over several decades.⁴⁵¹

meditation of Christ's body that aligned with reformer writings. Meanwhile, Francesca Cortesi Bosco, Bernard Aikema, and Jacques Bonnet used the same artworks as proof that Lotto adhered to orthodox teachings and the importance of the Eucharistic sacrament. Importantly, Bonnet attributed Lotto's movements to an artist simply seeking the next big commission. Others, such as Pietro Zampetti, Francesco Colalucci, and Peter Humfrey straddled the fence and suggested that Lotto's interest in Reformation polemics was just a passing thought. For the various interpretations from these authors, see the full bibliography at the end of this dissertation, many of which also have chapters in the 1981 edited collection *Lorenzo Lotto: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi per il V centenario della nascita*, cited above.

⁴⁵¹ I have intentionally not engaged with some of Lotto's more commonly studied works. For example, dozens of scholars have specifically honed in on Lotto's drawings and letters related to the Santa Maria Maggiore intarsia commission that took place from 1524-1532. Entire books are dedicated to the exploration of these designs, and they vary between using the works and letters as evidence for his orthodoxy or for his Reformation alignment. Another point of contention relates to drawings Lotto may have done for an engraved frontispiece to Antonio Brucioli's bible translation in 1532. While not discussed here, I believe that these works—along with every other work in his *oeuvre* not discussed in this dissertation—continue to follow the same series of choices regarding religious others that I demonstrate throughout this chapter.

5.3 Early Years

Lotto spent the beginning years of his career in Treviso (1503-1506), Recanati (1506-1508), and eventually Rome (1509) before he settled in Bergamo (1513-1525) for over a decade.⁴⁵² His Roman paintings no longer exist,⁴⁵³ but in Treviso and Recanati, Lotto's work reflected typical early sixteenth-century art commissions—portraits, *sacra conversazione*, and devotional pieces that depicted saints, the Virgin, and Christ with their characteristic attributes. However, in each of these, Lotto's use of subtle symbolism and complex meanings set an interpretive foundation for his later works.⁴⁵⁴

5.3.1 *St. Vincent Ferrer in Glory, 1513*

One early Recanati work warrants attention—his painting depicting *St. Vincent Ferrer in Glory* (1513), a traveling fourteenth-century Iberian-Dominican preacher who allegedly converted many Jews to Christianity throughout Europe (Figure 5.1). The legends of the priest describe his insistence on gentle, persuasive conversion of Jews, but he also preached about ghettoizing Jews and preventing any association between them and Christians.⁴⁵⁵ His sermons incited Christians to

⁴⁵² Lotto's whereabouts between Rome in 1509 and Bergamo in 1513 remain unknown, aside from a brief return to the Marches in 1512-1513.

⁴⁵³ Apparently, his work failed in Rome and was immediately replaced. For this reason, Bonnet believed Lotto had no choice but to work in "peripheral" towns. Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 10.

⁴⁵⁴ For instance, his portrait of a *Youth with Lamp* (1508, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna) includes an oil lamp tucked away in the upper right of the composition, inviting viewers to think of the image as more than a mere portrait of a young man. The types of analysis I propose in this chapter are inspired by Stephen Campbell's discourse on twenty-first-century "logophobia" in the field of Renaissance art history. In his 2017 article, he engaged with some of these earlier paintings and Lotto's visual invention related to scriptural mysteries. I expand on his work in this chapter, using religious discourse and sermons, as well as scripture, and situate these within a Reformation context. Stephen J. Campbell, "On Renaissance Nonmodernity," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 261-294.

⁴⁵⁵ Léon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, vol. 2, *From Mohammed to the Marranos*, trans. Natalie Gerardi (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), 162-169. David Nirenberg explored in greater depth these

violence and persecution of Jews, and as a result entire Jewish communities retreated into hiding when Vincent Ferrer entered their towns.⁴⁵⁶

In Lotto's painting, the saint is carried aloft on clouds by putti. Clad in a traditional black Dominican habit over white robe, Vincent Ferrer holds an open book turned for the viewer's consumption in his left hand and gestures heavenward with his right. The legible Latin text presents a verse from Revelation, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come."⁴⁵⁷ The figure appears somewhere between standing and sitting, as if he rises from his seat to emphasize the message his slightly parted lips deliver, and his severe gaze penetrates viewers. Two putti on either side of him support his cloak, but rather than simply hold it in their hands, the figures tug and burrow into his garment as if the mere physical presence of him is weighty and captivating their spirits. More clouds spill out from a heavenly light in the sky above, and four heraldic angels gaze downward as they blow their trumpets signaling the opening of the seventh seal of the apocalypse. The scene undoubtedly represents a powerful, divinely sanctioned message of salvation and condemnation.

We cannot separate the story of Vincent Ferrer from his anti-Semitic fame. The King of Aragon wrote about the preacher's influence on Christians and their violent rejoinder towards Jews, ensuring that aspect remained a focus of his legacy.⁴⁵⁸ As I discussed in the previous chapters of this dissertation, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists had no qualms about depicting the alleged perfidy of Jews. In fact, North Italian artists frequently portrayed Jews as both the

relationships between Christians and Jews, the sermons of Vincent Ferrer, and the violent uprisings that followed in the fourteenth century. *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), esp. 127-165 and 169-170.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 166-167. For a thorough recounting of Vincent Ferrer's sainthood, see Laura Ackerman Smoller, *The Saint and the Chopped-Up Baby: The Cult of Vincent Ferrer in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

⁴⁵⁷ "TIMETE DEUM ET DATE ILLI HONOREM QUIA VENIT HORA JUDICII EUIS." Revelation, 14:7.

⁴⁵⁸ Poliakov, *History of Anti-Semitism*, 166.

enemies of Christ and the contemporary enemies of Christians. This trend of visually ostracizing Jews continued when depicting Vincent Ferrer preaching. North Italian artist Bartolomeo degli Erri painted *St. Vincent Ferrer Preaching before a Pope* (1460-1476), which includes a grand audience in attendance for the sermon (Figure 5.2). While most Venetian patricians and the papal envoy appear similarly dressed, a group of three men sitting to the right of the composition indisputably stand out. Instead of the red, black, and white garments of other audience members, these three men wear yellows and green, all donning turbans, and two with stark black hair and long beards. For viewers of this painting, these men represented the Jews that Vincent Ferrer famously sought to convert, and Erri juxtaposed them with Christians as a visible “other.”

When not shown preaching, artists typically portrayed the saint standing in glory with attributes to make him recognizable. In Venice, Giovanni Bellini painted an altarpiece dedicated to Vincent Ferrer that contains both versions of the priest (Figures 5.3-5.4). In the central panel, he stands in his Dominican habit, book held open in the same manner as in Lotto’s work. Instead of directing viewers with his other hand, he holds a glowing flame, indicative of his fiery sermons that converted multitudes, and he gazes upwards towards the *Pietà* above him. Directly below his centralized figure, the center predella panel portrays Vincent Ferrer preaching. As in Erri’s work, most of the listeners are dressed in red, black, and white, all largely uniform in attire and accessories. Tucked into the back right of the panel, two men stand listening, one of whom wears characteristic Jewish yellow, a white turban, and is bearded. On the left side of the panel, a lavishly dressed figure sits, staring down as a black animal darts in front of him. His long gray hair and bifurcated beard indicate his otherness in a crowd of otherwise plainly dressed, unbearded figures. Bellini filled this panel with figures in contemporary Renaissance dress and buildings that showed

his recognition of fifteenth-century architectural trends, but he took care to include a few Jewish figures to remind viewers of Vincent Ferrer's claim to fame.

Given Lotto's birth and early years in Venice, we can assume he knew Bellini's altarpiece. If he did not, other images of Vincent Ferrer around Northern Italy and the Marches still followed one of the two conventions seen in Bellini's version.⁴⁵⁹ For his patrons in Recanati, Lotto chose to deviate from both approaches.⁴⁶⁰ His saint appears in glory while *also* preaching, mouth open as he speaks; the presence of a bird's-eye-view landscape below would have emphasized his widespread message throughout Europe.⁴⁶¹ Even though Lotto depicted the priest while speaking, he did not include an audience. The figure's placement in the immediate foreground and intense eye-contact instead make viewers the listeners as Vincent Ferrer implores them to consider the word of Revelation and ready their souls for the coming apocalypse. Those familiar with the saint and his efforts can fill in the depiction of Jews (or any others in "need" of conversion) in their imaginations, but Lotto did not provide them as attributes. In this version of Vincent Ferrer, the artist has condemned or accused no one; instead, he designed a message meant for private, personal contemplation. I propose that this powerful work represents an early iteration of Lotto's experimental ambiguity toward religious others in his art—an approach we consistently see throughout his *oeuvre*.

⁴⁵⁹ Scholars speculate that Lotto may have passed through Florence when returning from Rome. If this were true, he may have seen Fra Bartolomeo's small fresco of Vincent Ferrer in San Marco. Here, the artist depicted the saint as a bust, holding his book and pointing to a small image of apocalyptic-heralding angels engulfed in a fiery glow.

⁴⁶⁰ Without the original commission, we do not know for certain what the patrons stipulated for the altarpiece. However, as I discuss later in this chapter, Lotto's works consistently reflect the same innovations in depicting religious subject matter, and due to the consistency between this painting and his other works, I believe the circumstances of this painting were no different.

⁴⁶¹ At some point in its history, the panel painting was cropped at the top and bottom. At the top, there may have been an emblem or indicator of God in the heavenly glow, and at the bottom (based on other Lotto paintings and the traces of green that remain), there was likely a landscape.

5.4 Bergamo 1513-1525

Northwest of Cremona and southwest of Valcamonica, the town of Bergamo served as the westernmost territory of the Venetian mainland empire. Since the middle of the fifteenth century, the city belonged to Venice, but the Italian Wars (discussed in Chapter 3) led to repeated political upheaval and oscillating control. According to Jacques Bonnet, “Between 1521 and 1524 some thirty thousand foot soldiers had marched across the territory of Bergamo.”⁴⁶² These hired German and Swiss mercenaries worked for the competing entities battling for control of Northern Italy, and they carried with them the Reformation ideas and controversies igniting across the Alps. Despite all of this, Francesco Rossi described this period of art in Bergamo as “perhaps the richest and most innovative cultural season in the Lombard city.”⁴⁶³ Among those producing art during this time, Lotto completed an extensive collection of paintings while in Bergamo, many of which account for this prolific innovation.

Lotto’s career (like Romanino’s) spanned decades of turmoil, which most notably began during his twelve-year sojourn in Bergamo. By 1509, Charles VIII’s invasion efforts cut Venice off from all her mainland territories, and Bergamo ended up in the hands of France’s king, Louis XII. This tug-of-war continued: Venice regained control, France took it back days later, Spanish troops took over, and so on; power changed hands at least a dozen times before Venice finally restored power in 1516.⁴⁶⁴ Meanwhile, just after completing his painting of *St. Vincent Ferrer in*

⁴⁶² Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 98.

⁴⁶³ “...quella che fu forse la stagione culturale più ricca e più innovativa, della città lombarda.” Francesco Rossi, ed., *Bergamo: L’altra Venezia: Il rinascimento negli anni di Lorenzo Lotto 1510-1530* (Milan: Skira, 2001), 23.

⁴⁶⁴ For this history, see *Storia economica e sociale di Bergamo. Il tempo della Serenissima. Il lungo Cinquecento*, ed. Marco Cattini (Bergamo: Fondazione per la storia economica e sociale di Bergamo, 1998), and also Christine Shaw and Michael Mallett, *The Italian Wars 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), esp. 134-160.

Glory, Lotto arrived in Bergamo chasing a profitable commission from the pro-Venetian warlord, Alessandro Martinengo Colleoni.⁴⁶⁵ Over the next decade, Lotto worked in Bergamo despite the violent onslaught to the town, and the area also experienced several instances of drought and plague during this time.⁴⁶⁶ Four years after Lotto's arrival, Martin Luther presented his ninety-five theses, heralding a rift in the Church that had been brewing for years; those in Northern Italy where Lotto now lived first felt the resultant backlash.

In all this time, the uncertainties in life must have felt palpable to Lotto. As a man dedicated to his craft, he never stopped working, completing numerous altarpieces, portraits, and other images for his Catholic patrons. All along, he would have been intimately familiar with the damage inflicted by the for-hire German and Swiss mercenaries and their heterodox beliefs—the same experiences Romanino had while working in Cremona and Brescia. Whereas Romanino remained in the Alpine region, Firpo speculated that these local miseries may have compelled Lotto's eventual departure to Venice in 1525, though he continued to take commissions from Bergamasque patrons while living in the *Serenissima*.⁴⁶⁷ During his time in Lombardy, he honed his artistic approach that took orthodox spiritual topics and expanded them to visually metaphysical levels, but he consistently avoided pictorially condemning religious others despite the atmosphere in which he lived and worked.⁴⁶⁸ His works during the final years of his stay in

⁴⁶⁵ For a discussion on this altarpiece and the ways in which the details reveal loyalty to Venice and the papacy, see Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 58-64.

⁴⁶⁶ For more on the circumstances affecting artists in Bergamo during this time, see Rossi, *Bergamo: L'altra Venezia*, 23-33.

⁴⁶⁷ Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 49.

⁴⁶⁸ Several of his Bergamo works contain complex mysteries that have yet to be fully unpacked. For example, his *Susanna and the Elders* (1517) and *Christ Taking Leave of His Mother* (1521) both contain oddities that differentiate them from other depictions of the same tales. For a summary of the unique features in these works, see Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 66-72; and Brown, Humfrey, Lucco, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 121-124.

Lombardy encapsulated the rising heretical turmoil pervading Bergamo, and Lotto focused on Christocentric devotion as his answer.

5.4.1 Suardi Oratory, 1523-1524

In only one known instance, Lotto created a direct visual accusation against heretics, naming several and depicting their fall from grace (quite literally falling off ladders). The peculiar Suardi Oratory (1523-1524) fresco cycle contains layered interpretations related to rising heresy,⁴⁶⁹ heretical challenges to the Eucharist,⁴⁷⁰ as well as impending death and destruction from area floods that carried divine significance (Figure 5.5). Giovan Battista Suardi commissioned the cycle for his family's country house chapel outside of Bergamo in Trescore. In Bergamo, Suardi played a role in supporting the town during the Italian Wars occupations and filled various leadership positions in both religious and civic groups. Consequently, he aided in the development of this fresco cycle that sat on the northeast road from Bergamo into the Alpine route toward Valcamonica.⁴⁷¹ Here, the painting served as a warning against heretical threats from the north and as an apotropaic device to prevent the prophesied great flood of 1524.

The three-wall cycle depicts an immense Christ with arms and hands extended upward; from each finger, a tendril projects and winds its way around one of ten medallions containing portraits of saints.⁴⁷² Inscriptions clarify that the tendrils signify both the blood of Christ and his

⁴⁶⁹ Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 89-98.

⁴⁷⁰ Campbell, *Endless Periphery*, 181-193; Francesca Cortesi Bosco, "Riforma religiosità arte alchimia negli afreschi di Lorenzo Lotto dell'Oratorio Suardi di Trescore," *Notizie da Palazzo Albani* (1980): 28-39.

⁴⁷¹ Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 89-91.

⁴⁷² The saints include Jerome, Apollonia, Margaret, Lucy, Ursula, Barbara, Catherine, Mary Magdalene, Martha, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, Alexander, Stephen, Sebastian, Dominic, Augustine, Francis, and Ambrose.

representation as the Church *qua* grapevine.⁴⁷³ Portraits of donors kneel below Christ, and around him, Lotto painted miniature scenes from the lives of Saints Barbara, Brigid, Catherine of Alexandria, and Mary Magdalene across the three walls. The artist's localization of landscape, agricultural details, costumes, and the inclusion of mercenaries and turbaned villains made contemporary viewers' lived experiences feel tangibly like the tragedies of the saints. Stephen Campbell has shrewdly unpacked the theological implications of this cycle; suffice it to say that the overarching theme glorifies the Eucharist and Truth of transubstantiation in defense against heresy and the ever-threatening infidel.⁴⁷⁴

Several figures on the left and right of the main fresco wall are especially of interest in this chapter (Figures 5.6-5.7). These named heretics climb ladders while wielding billhooks and sickles intending to harvest grapes from the Christ-vine. Their efforts fail, however, as the outermost saints in the vine medallions strike them down: Saint Jerome with his crucifix and open bible and Saint Ambrose with his crozier. As the figures haplessly fall from their ladders in the semblance of falling Titans,⁴⁷⁵ viewers can read several names inscribed on their rustled garments: Helvidius, Vigilantius, Jovinianus, Arianus, Sabellius, Judeus, and Paganus. On the right side, one figure does not have a legible name.⁴⁷⁶ Only Arianus maintains his grasp on the ladder, but

⁴⁷³ John 15:1-5, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing."

⁴⁷⁴ Campbell also devoted several pages to Lotto's stylistic references of Raphael, Gaudenzio, and Roman trends, and he also addressed the choice of four female saints as the embodiment of Christ's suffering body. Campbell, *Endless Periphery*, 181-193. See also Chapters 1 through 3 of this dissertation for more on the threats to this region.

⁴⁷⁵ Cortesi Bosco, "Riforma religiosità," 28-39. John 15:6, "Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

⁴⁷⁶ Given the damage to his blue garment in the fresco, it is possible the name simply faded, but he also could be unnamed.

Ambrose rears his crozier ready to impale the heretic if he climbs the final rung and then all will have fallen.

Importantly, this visual rebuke of heterodox thinkers does not include anyone contemporary to Lotto's time, despite the names of Luther, Zwingli, and others commonly known by 1524. Instead, each painted name references heretics or Church enemies from centuries prior, several of whom the Church Fathers directly excommunicated. Respectively, these named fallen men wrote against the perpetual virginity of Mary, the veneration of relics and saints, ascetic ideals, and the concept of the Holy Trinity. Three of the "names" simply refer to entire groups: those in line with the Arian (Arianus) heresy denying the divinity of Christ, all Jews through the Latin *Judeus*, (which included Judas as the heir to all Jews,) and all pagans (Paganus).⁴⁷⁷ Together, these men represented heretical ideas and unbelievers of Jesus as the Son of God, the saints, and the theological ideas conveyed in the fresco.

I want to emphasize the identity of these figures. Even when Lotto's commission directly involved commenting on rising heresy and the folly of reformers, he did not explicitly condemn living people, but rather he used experimental ambiguity to redirect audience response. Luther, Zwingli, nor any other sixteenth-century reformer receives recognition in this fresco. This is even more surprising when, according to Cortesi Bosco, some of the anti-Eucharist rhetoric contested in this fresco related to the writings of Zwingli.⁴⁷⁸ If we assume the one unnamed figure stood in for modern thinkers, we must acknowledge that Lotto still did not *name* them. He also did not physically stereotype Jews in this image. Lotto painted the figure of the "Jew" nearly out of the

⁴⁷⁷ For an overview of the Arian heresy, see Maurice Wiles, *Archetypal Heresy: Arianism through the Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), and R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: the Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005). For Ambrose's reactions to Arianism, see Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

⁴⁷⁸ Cortesi Bosco, "Riforma religiosità," 28-39.

lower picture frame, tangled with another body whose legs are all that remain in the scene. The word *Judeus* inscribed along his green stocking gives his identity, but nothing else indicates his Jewishness. Lotto composed the figure with his head fully angled back so the viewer cannot discern facial features or headgear. The fallen man does not wear yellow or a stereotypical money pouch, and despite being labeled a Jew, he bears no beard or facial hair at all. Short of including the label, nothing about the figure *appears* Jewish by sixteenth-century Christian stereotypical standards, and instead, it seems Lotto added him as an afterthought.

The work these extrinsic labels do in the scene recalls the named Jews in the Simon of Trent woodcuts discussed in Chapter 2, but in reverse. In Trescore, the figures do not represent contemporary heretics, but specific people or groups that the Roman Church labeled as enemies long ago. Whereas Valcamonica frescoes of Simon removed the Jewish names to condemn contemporary Jews writ large, this fresco *required* names so viewers would know who fell from the ladders.⁴⁷⁹ Writings of most of the named figures do not survive. Knowledge of these men's heretical beliefs only exists in Jerome and Ambrose's rebuttals. Only by providing their names would viewers be reminded of these church enemies from the early Christian era.⁴⁸⁰ I suggest that the choice to use these names alters the overall message of the fresco cycle: instead of explicitly focusing on sixteenth-century reformers, the scene emphasizes that the Church Fathers dealt with heretics once before and "defeated" them. Trescore's audience could then take heart in believing the Church would triumph yet again through any challenges to its doctrine, and the path to that

⁴⁷⁹ This conclusion draws on Evelyn Welch's work regarding Renaissance portraits. Evelyn Welch, "Naming Names" in *The Images of the Individual. Portraits in the Renaissance*, ed. Nicholas Mann and Luke Syson (London: British Museum Press, 1998), 91-104. See also Sections 2.1.2 and 2.1.4.

⁴⁸⁰ In doing so, Lotto resurrected and immortalized the four named men and followers of the Arian Heresy, even if only to show their fall.

success necessitated their continued veneration of the saints. By including these names, ironically, the fresco becomes a message of generalized heresy and the promise of saintly intercession.

This focus on the saints as victors over heresy defines the way this fresco fits in a sixteenth-century context. As Cortesi Bosco has addressed, this cycle dealt with much of the anti-Eucharistic rhetoric written by the Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli.⁴⁸¹ However, I believe Lotto's work also addressed Zwingli's admonishment of venerating saints.⁴⁸² In 1523, Zwingli explained to followers his rejection of Christian martyrs as intercessors:

"I shall not keep from you, most beloved brethren in Christ, how I arrived at the opinion and the firm belief that we need no mediator other than Christ, and also that no one other than Christ alone can mediate between God and us. [...] I read a consoling poem [...] in which Jesus complains, in a most beautiful way, that men did not seek all good in him in order that He might be a wellspring of goodness for them, a redeemer, comforter, and treasure of the soul. And then and there I was convinced that this was true indeed. Why, then, should we seek help from any creature?"⁴⁸³

In Trescore, no contemporary figure defeats heretics—only the saints intervene. Even Christ does not engage, but his presence is felt through the extension of his vine that encapsulates the Church Fathers, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and sixteen other Christian saints and martyrs. This invocation of past heresies would prompt viewers to consider sixteenth-century

⁴⁸¹ Cortesi Bosco, "Riforma religiosità," 28-39.

⁴⁸² Zwingli also railed against images and icons. Carlos M.N. Eire, *Reformations: The Early Modern World, 1450-1650* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 227-232. See also Section 1.3.

⁴⁸³ Ulrich Zwingli, *Uslegen und gründ der schlussreden oder artichlen*, in *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche werke*, ed. Emil Egli and Georg Finsler (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1905-1990), 2.217. English translation available in Eire, *Reformations*, 224.

debates while preserving ambiguity. Below and around Christ, detailed scenes from the stories of four saints remind viewers of their primacy in Catholic Church doctrine and offer both *exempla* of Christian faith and heroes on which to rely during the Reformation and other threats to daily life.

While no sixteenth-century heretics or heroes appear in the frescoes, the artist included local reminders of trauma. Among the crowds and array of characters in the saints' stories, Lotto chose to include two *Landsknechte* in their flamboyant costumes conversing in a group that also contained portraits of Suardi family members (Figure 5.8).⁴⁸⁴ However, counter to Romanino's work in Cremona Cathedral, Lotto did not make them overt enemies of Christ or the Church. In response to the murder and mayhem that German mercenaries caused in his home region, Romanino explicitly replaced the traditional perfidious Jew with *Landsknechte* as the tormentors and murderers of Christ in Cremona.⁴⁸⁵ In each scene, Romanino designated the Germans, who also represented burgeoning heresy, as the sole instigators of Christ's Passion and thereby the present-day enemies of the Catholic Church. While Lotto also acknowledged the presence of *Landsknechte* as part of his lived experience, he did so without conceiving of them as spiritual enemies of the Church, despite the increasing association between Germans and Lutherans. In the many Trescore scenes where saints are tortured and martyred, Lotto's *Landsknechte* never fill the role of tormentor. They simply exist, making the scenes feel intrinsically local and contemporary but without the theological assumptions that Romanino forced on Cremonese viewers. In the Suardi Oratory, the viewer must do the work of interpreting the figures as villains based on their lived experiences. Their identity is predicated on local knowledge and without that history, the *Landsknechte* appear simply as anonymous bodies in a large crowd. Their flamboyant attire

⁴⁸⁴ Besides the figures below the image of Christ, Lotto scattered various family portraits around all three walls of the fresco cycle.

⁴⁸⁵ See Chapter 3 for this discussion.

invited sixteenth-century viewers to notice them and consider their role, but Lotto does not explicitly portray them as murderers of Christian saints.

Lotto did provide one clue to the treachery of the two mercenaries. Of the falling heretics on the right side of the fresco, one figure has a prominent, detailed face. Sabellius has a full head and face of red curly hair—the same as the visible *Landsknechte* standing in the rightmost scene of St. Barbara's narrative. If not for their different attire and one being named, the figures could be the same person. Lotto even included the mercenaries directly beside the falling Sabellius, so viewers needed little effort to make the visual connection, and he did this, despite there being plenty of room on the wall to put the men somewhere else. The Trescore *Landsknechte* and their adjacency to Sabellius reminded viewers that these soldiers for-hire lived among Bergamasque Christians and came from outside the Italian peninsula, bringing heterodox ideas that threatened the Catholic Church just like these early Christian heretics.⁴⁸⁶ While Sabellius has fallen at the mercy of Ambrose's crozier in the fresco, these mercenaries face no immediate danger from the Church. By simply portraying the figures as conversing amongst themselves in a crowd that contained portraits of Suardi women and children, Lotto ostensibly opened the door for their redemption. In this artwork, the *Landsknechte*—like other churchgoers and patrons of the chapel—could observe the stories of the saints, their indelible connection to Christ, and become true believers, ridding themselves of heterodox ideologies.⁴⁸⁷ Here, the message was one of hope and potential. The images of people martyred for their beliefs and subsequently performing

⁴⁸⁶ Sabellius was thought to be from North Africa but settled in Rome. "Sabellius" in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, ed. Paul Lagasse, and Columbia University, 8th ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

⁴⁸⁷ Or, if we want to presume Lotto's budding heterodox beliefs, we could argue he included *Landsknechte* as no different from the Suardi patrons and any other person that could accept Christ.

miracles, as well as the repentant Mary Magdalene, would have heightened this message of penitent atonement for sixteenth-century viewers.

While Lotto does not name sixteenth-century reformers in the fresco cycle, Campbell suggested that the image of the bird catcher above the door can be seen as “reflecting the same sinister characterization of the heretic as one who sets nets and snares,” thereby representing contemporary heretics (Figure 5.9).⁴⁸⁸ Even if accurate, the figure remains cryptic and unnamed; only the most theologically learned would understand the reference. Furthermore, Cortesi Bosco alleged that the bird-catcher figure is a self-portrait of Lotto.⁴⁸⁹ While the date of this artwork precedes that of Lotto’s known heretical acquaintances, we must question if this figure did represent heretics writ-large, why would Lotto make it in his own image?⁴⁹⁰ These questions remain unanswered. I suggest, though, that the Trescore fresco cycle represented another in a lengthy career of artworks where Lotto used his artistic agency to remain theologically ambiguous regarding specific contemporaries, whatever his reasons. From the men cast down from the Christ-vine to the possible bird-catching heretic, no one living receives pictorial damnation in Trescore. Even the *Landsknechte* safely exist within the chapel walls. Lotto’s visual rhetoric did not lean into these religious controversies and their subsequent denunciation of others. Instead, as with most of Lotto’s artworks, I argue that the message relied on the viewer’s personal spiritual interpretation and belief in the power of the Eucharist and the intervention of the saints.

⁴⁸⁸ Campbell, *Endless Periphery*, 192.

⁴⁸⁹ Cortesi Bosco explains this attribution and some scholars later accept it. Francesca Cortesi Bosco, *Lorenzo Lotto: Gli affreschi dell’Oratorio Suardi a Trescore* (Milan: Skira, 1997), 11-26, 175-177. For example, Bonnet agreed with Cortesi Bosco’s argument that it is, indeed, a portrait of Lotto. Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 96. Chiodi even uses a sketch of this figure as a picture of Lotto on the cover of *Le lettere* (1998).

⁴⁹⁰ The argument can be made that it is not a self-portrait at all.

5.4.2 Holy Trinity, 1524

Towards the end of his long sojourn in Bergamo, Lotto painted an altarpiece of the *Holy Trinity* for the Bergamo church Santissima Trinità (Figure 5.10).⁴⁹¹ The commission likely came from the church's flagellant confraternity, one of many Corpus Christi brotherhoods in Bergamo.⁴⁹² Much like the frescoes in Trescore, this single panel work displays Lotto's theological innovation in response to his lived contemporary crises. The image of Christ occupies the majority of the composition; he stands seemingly supported by cloud-bearing putti and the arches of a double rainbow at his feet. Extending both hands down and outward, he reveals wounds in both palms; his exposed torso and feet display his other injuries from the Crucifixion. Head tilted to the side, he gazes directly at viewers, inviting them to look at his murdered-yet-living body. With one foot raised, it seems as though Christ might step directly out of his heavenly space and into the viewer's realm.

In this portrayal, Christ appears as both the redeemer and as a meditation on the *Pietà*. However, unlike a traditional *Pietà* with Christ's wounded body supported by Mary, this version shows him presented by God the Father. Without visual precedent, Lotto portrayed God not as an elderly man with full beard, but as a penumbra of heavenly light. Occupying the entire upper portion of the canvas, a white *sfumato* humanoid shape appears from the waist-up behind Christ

⁴⁹¹ The church was demolished in 1919, and the altarpiece is currently on display in Museo Adriano Bernareggi in Bergamo. Sometime around 1793, restoration of the painting involved cutting the corners to fit it into a new frame. Giulia Altissimo, "Trinità," in *Lorenzo Lotto*, ed. Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2011), 120.

⁴⁹² The confraternity was active in the church prior to the painting date; in 1519 they received a large donation from the local Santo Spirito consortium for the purpose of commissioning an altarpiece. Lotto's work was likely the resulting commission. Andreina Franco-Loiri Locatelli, "Le opera di Lorenzo Lotto nelle chiese della città: i contesti d'origine," *La rivista di Bergamo* 12-13 (June-July 1998), 38-39; Francesco Colalucci, "Lorenzo Lotto, e altri, nelle chiese di Borgo Sant'Antonio a Bergamo," *Venezia Cinquecento* 15, VIII (1998), 149.

with both arms raised, palms forward.⁴⁹³ Behind the figure's head and radiating outward, pulsating white light ripples throughout the yellow glowing sky in imitation of a halo. The shape implies a full head of long hair and robes cinched at the waistline, and though the outline is discernable, Lotto denied the viewer any further detail. Here, God appears only as light. In front of God's chest and directly above the head of Christ, the dove of the Holy Spirit appears, giving this altarpiece its title of the *Holy Trinity*. The presentation of the Trinity as soaring in the heavens follows a tradition set by Albrecht Dürer in his *Apocalypse* woodcuts, where an elevated view signified Saint Gregory the Great's notion of "spiritual seeing."⁴⁹⁴ For viewers in Bergamo, this set the tone of a meditative, inner experience.

The image of the Trinity occupies over eighty percent of the composition. Tucked below in the remaining space Lotto included a landscape with green wooded hillsides and farmland that extend into the distance until they meet a hazy blue skyline. As the viewer soars in the sky with the Trinity, they have the godly privilege of viewing the earth from the clouds. At the top of a hillside on the left, tiny figures depart from a farmhouse with animals while in the valley below shepherds tend their flock. Barely detectable at the bottom of the hill, a lone figure runs to the right—either to turn up the hill to the farmhouse or to continue straight to the shepherds. Despite hovering directly above the landscape, Christ does not interact with or acknowledge the earthly realm below, and seemingly none of the minute characters on earth witness the presence of the

⁴⁹³ In truth, the figure is without gender, though the hint of a cord tied around a robe is positioned appropriately for a male garment. A later painting by Lotto depicts God as male, so we can assume he maintained that tradition in this painting. It is enticing, however, to imagine a progressive Lotto that saw a genderless deity at the head of Christianity.

⁴⁹⁴ In his *Homily on Ezekiel*, Gregory said, "Truly, because we are lifted above ourselves by contemplation, we are, as it were, raised in the air." Cited in Morten Steen Hansen, "Rainbow and the Incarnation: Lotto, Correggio, and the Deluge of 1524," in *Lorenzo Lotto. Contesti, significati, conservazione*, ed. Andrea Ricci (Treviso, Italy: Zel. Edizioni, 2019), 209. See also, Gregory the Great, *Homilies on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. Theodosia Tomkinson (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 2008), 59-72; Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

Trinity above them. Together, the different pieces of the composition combine into a devotional experience only available to viewers of the painting.

5.4.2.1 Divine Imagery

Most scholarly discussion regarding Lotto's *Holy Trinity* focuses primarily on provenance and style. Based on commission records and stylistic comparisons with Lotto's *oeuvre*, the date of the altarpiece remains an estimate, but twenty-first-century consensus places it around 1524, just a year prior to his departure for Venice.⁴⁹⁵ Beyond providing evidence for this date, other analyses of the *Holy Trinity* address Lotto's style—either his northern-inspired landscape is beautiful or lacking; his light is heavenly or garish; Christ's body is befitting of a Passion cycle altarpiece or is anatomically deficient. When not debating the date or the worthiness of the painting, critical writing thinly notes Lotto's "innovative" approach to depicting God the Father as a humanoid outline of light. Spiriti went one step further, relating this depiction to the Hebrew understanding of Yahweh as visually forbidden to the human eye.⁴⁹⁶ Andrea Bayer repeated this comparison, citing Exodus 33:20 as evidence that God said humanity cannot look upon his true form.⁴⁹⁷ While Lotto's God appears to embody the verse in Exodus, those scriptures focus on humans' inability to see God's *face*, lest they perish.⁴⁹⁸ Rather, I argue that the depiction of God in Lotto's *Holy Trinity* represents the description of God provided by the New Testament and is

⁴⁹⁵ Brown, Humfrey, and Lucco, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 142-144.

⁴⁹⁶ A. Spiriti, "Rappresentare l'irrappresentabile: Dio Padre nell'opera di Lotto, Cambiaso e Busca," in *Il sacro nell'arte: la conoscenza del divino attraverso i sensi tra XV e XVIII secolo: atti del Convegno, Genova, Palazzo Balbi Cattaneo, 21-22 maggio 2007*, ed. Laura Stago (Genova: Università degli studi di Genova, 2009), 55-66.

⁴⁹⁷ *Painters of Reality: The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy*, ed. Andrea Bayer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 118-120. She also cited Deuteronomy 4:7, though that verse relates to God's omnipresence (or perhaps *shekhinah*—the dwelling presence of God) rather than his ability to be seen by humans.

⁴⁹⁸ "'But,' he said, 'you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live. [...] then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.'" Exodus 33:20, 23.

not *rooted* in the Old Testament understanding of Yahweh even though it does perpetuate the Hebrew tradition. Through his theological innovation with Pauline rhetoric and scripture from the Book of John, Lotto's painting existed in direct conversation with radical reformers like Zwingli.⁴⁹⁹

At the same time Lotto worked on this painting, Zwingli led the Reformation in Zürich abolishing Mass and inciting iconoclasm, which spread into neighboring German and Swiss cities, and mercenaries carried his ideas south of the Alps into Lombardy.⁵⁰⁰ Early in the reform movement, many people associated other heterodox thinkers with Martin Luther, and Zwingli was not exempt. The Swiss reformer repeatedly denied belonging to Luther's camp,⁵⁰¹ however, and his desire to be seen as original likely fueled his zealous activity that spread throughout Europe. One of their many debates included the use of images in church. Luther, who also vehemently debated with Andreas Karlstadt on the matter, stood against iconoclasm and largely did not address images in his sermons, claiming that faith mattered over works regarding one's salvation.⁵⁰² In a public attack on Karlstadt and iconoclasts, Luther asked, "If it is not a sin, but a good thing, that I have Christ's image in my heart, why then should it be sinful to have it before my eyes?"⁵⁰³ Zwingli, like Karlstadt, preached against images and incited iconoclastic riots in Switzerland and throughout the Alps, using scripture to argue all such art served only as idols. Following

⁴⁹⁹ "Pauline" refers to the apostle Paul and his doctrine/letters in the New Testament.

⁵⁰⁰ Eire, *Reformations*, 218-247. See Chapter 1 through 3 of this dissertation for more on the Italian Wars in this region.

⁵⁰¹ Likewise, Luther denied being associated with Zwingli. Ibid., 219.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 193. See also Section 1.3.

⁵⁰³ Martin Luther, *Werke, kritische gesamttausgabe* (Weimar, 1998), XVIII, 83 cited in *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 99-100.

intensified iconoclasm, Zwingli exclaimed, “In Zürich the churches truly gleam; the walls are so beautifully white!”⁵⁰⁴

Beyond denying images, Zwingli’s close adherence to Pauline theology prompted him to question every institutionalized religious practice for which he could not locate scriptural evidence.⁵⁰⁵ This included the ritual of Mass and preaching from prescribed canonical readings; instead, Zwingli chose to preach directly from scripture and interpret it himself. When explaining to his followers how he now delivered sermons, he wrote,

“After the Gospel according to Matthew I continued with the Acts of the Apostles to show to the church in Zürich how and through whom the Gospel had been planted and propagated. Then came Paul’s First Letter to Timothy. It seemed especially profitable for the sheep of my flock, as it contains guiding principles for the Christian Life.”⁵⁰⁶

Zwingli also repeatedly used scripture in disputes with church authorities. According to published accounts of his 1523 dialogues refuting the beliefs of a vicar and others, Zwingli often relied on scripture from the Gospel of John, referencing verses over a dozen times, and he also referenced 1 Timothy on many occasions.⁵⁰⁷ While these disputes took place north of the Alps, the ideas Zwingli used to ignite the Swiss Reformation traveled directly into Bergamo by way of

⁵⁰⁴ Oscar Farner, *Huldrych Zwingli*, vol. 3, *Seine verkündigung und ihre ersten früchte, 1520-1525* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1954), 490. This same rhetoric likely prompted the civic bodies in Pisogne, Breno, and Bienno to have their otherwise white church walls thoroughly painted with Christian narratives to not appear visually aligned with iconoclastic reformers.

⁵⁰⁵ Ulrich Zwingli, *Selected Works*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), xix-xx.

⁵⁰⁶ Hans J. Hillerbrand, *The Reformation in Its Own Words* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 119.

⁵⁰⁷ Zwingli, *Selected Works*, 40-118, 123-251. These two disputes are titled, “Acts of the convention held in the praiseworthy city of Zürich on the 29th day of January, on account of the Holy Gospel—being a disputation between the dignified and honorable representative from Constance and Huldrych Zwingli, preacher of the Gospel of Christ, together with the common clergy of the whole territory of the aforesaid city of Zürich, held before the assembled council in the year 1523,” and “Refutation of the tricks of the Baptists by Huldreich Zwingli; Huldreich Zwingli to all the ministers of the Gospel of Christ; Huldreich Zwingli’s refutation against the tricks of the Catabaptists.”

hired mercenaries.⁵⁰⁸ Here, Lotto would have been aware of heterodox thinking that challenged Mass, the Eucharist, and the use of images in church.

When referring to Christian scripture, I suggest that Lotto's *Holy Trinity* clearly embodies descriptions of both God and Christ provided in the Gospel of John and 1 Timothy—both books Zwingli frequently employed in his tirade against the Catholic Church in the years prior to and during Lotto's commission. 1 Timothy is the first of the Pastoral Epistles and consists of Paul's first letter to his student to ensure his teachings continue after he dies. In the last chapter, Paul charged Timothy with protecting the tradition he has handed down and to spread the message. Importantly, he stated that "Whoever teaches otherwise... is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words."⁵⁰⁹ A few verses later, Paul encouraged Timothy, saying to, "Fight the good fight of faith," later promising that,

"In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and *dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see*; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen."⁵¹⁰

For visitors to Santissima Trinità in Bergamo, Lotto depicted God the Father from 1 Timothy—a divine being that "dwells in unapproachable light," eternally unseen by human eyes

⁵⁰⁸ Eire discussed the beginnings of Zwingli's war on idols at length. Notably, a pamphlet by one of his followers, Ludwig Haetzer, titled, "A Judgment of God Our Spouse Concerning How One Should Regard All Idols and Images," ultimately incited mass destruction and iconoclasm in Swiss churches and beyond. Eire, *Reformations*, 227-232.

⁵⁰⁹ 1 Timothy 6:3-4.

⁵¹⁰ 1 Timothy 6:12-16, emphasis added.

except for the light itself. Unlike in Exodus where God's face simply could not be seen, Lotto's God dwells in light so intense it is as if God *is* light when presented to the human observer. Augustine reiterated this vision of God as light in his *De Trinitate*, Book 8 Chapter 2 when he wrote, "Even if by the power of your imagination you magnify the light of the sun in your mind as much as you are able, either that it may be greater or that it may be brighter, a thousand times as much or innumerable times, yet even this is not God."⁵¹¹

While God consists entirely of light, the glow and ambiance of the painting radiate from the figure of Christ. He and the rainbow on which he stands serve as the color source for the entire scene. Again, I believe Lotto relied on New Testament scripture for this iteration of Christ, this time from the Gospel of John. We already know that Lotto engaged with biblical hermeneutics in John. In the Trescore frescoes, he inventively visualized John 15 as Christ with literal branches springing from his blood-giving body in direct challenge to the heretical ideologies streaming in from the north.⁵¹² However, he relied entirely on early Christian heretics and generic nonbelievers for his visual representation, with only coded references to contemporary reformers and Jews. In the *Holy Trinity*, I argue that Lotto continued his reliance on visualizing Christ from John, and in doing so, utilized the scriptures on which Zwingli relied, but Lotto does so by aligning with the Catholic Church (and Luther) and the permissibility of divine images.

In three different instances, John wrote about Christ as light. In the opening to the book, he recalled Genesis and expanded upon it with,

⁵¹¹ Augustine, *On the Trinity, Books 8-15*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews, trans. Stephen McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6. The confraternity that commissioned this work adhered to the teachings of Augustine, so it stands to reason that the arrangement directed Lotto to consider Augustine's doctrine on the Trinity. This connection has been addressed by G. Mascherpa, "Vicende e fama della 'Paletta della Trinità'," in *Bergamo per Lorenzo Lotto, riflessioni Lombarde, atti del convegno* (Bergamo: S. Bartolomeo Cultural Center, 1980), 68; and more recently by Hansen, "Rainbow and the Incarnation," 210.

⁵¹² See footnote 473.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and *the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*”⁵¹³

As the writer, John then introduced himself,

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to *testify to the light*, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. *The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*”⁵¹⁴

Throughout the remainder of the book, John quoted Jesus calling himself the light.

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life; I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness.”⁵¹⁵

For the *Holy Trinity*, Lotto took 1 Timothy’s God-dwelling-in-light and portrayed him delivering Christ as light coming into the world.⁵¹⁶ The idea of Christ as light can also be found in Thomas Aquinas’s writings on the Trinity. In his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Aquinas responded to these verses in John by saying, “the Word of God is not a false light, nor a figurative light, nor a participated light, but true light, that is, through his essence,” and that Christ came to earth

⁵¹³ John 1:1-5, emphasis added.

⁵¹⁴ John 1:6-9, emphasis added.

⁵¹⁵ John 8:12; 12:46

⁵¹⁶ For the premodern understandings of light, consider A. Mark Smith, “Descartes’ Theories of Light and Refraction: A Discourse on Method,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 77 (1987): i-viii+1-92; Roger Bacon’s *Philosophy of Nature*, ed. and trans. David C. Lindberg (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 2-5; and Paul Hills, *The Light of Early Italian Painting* (London: Yale University Press, 1987), 11-12.

because “it was necessary that the light itself come and give the world a knowledge of itself.”⁵¹⁷ I suggest that it is this mode of understanding God and Christ that Lotto depicted.

In the painting, the figure of Christ stands as a brilliantly colorful and crisp image compared to the penumbra of God behind him.⁵¹⁸ Unlike other early modern Trinity paintings where God supports the dead body of Christ, Lotto’s God raises his hands in a gesture of action and authorization as he delivers this gift in human form. From this brilliant divine shape, the fully human and injured body of Christ steps forward as if emerging from the holy dwelling of God into a heavenly realm above earth, poised to step into the viewer’s space and into the world of humankind. This transition from God-the-unseeable to the visible son happens before the viewer’s eyes and appears sanctioned by God himself. The heavenly light radiates from Christ’s body, and Lotto made Christ the color source of the earthly realm, evident in the way the clouds seem to absorb the colors of the rainbow and Christ’s garments. Everything above the clouds and shining from Christ consists of primary colors: red, blue, and yellow—even the rainbows. Only when the light and color from Christ travel below and diffuse through the clouds into the earthly realm do secondary colors appear.⁵¹⁹ As a painter, Lotto would have been intimately familiar with mixing color palettes and the combination of primary into secondary colors. In this way, I suggest that

⁵¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. Fabian R. Larcher and James A. Weisheipl, ed. Daniel A. Keating and Matthew Levering, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 1.5 §125 and §141. For a thorough discussion on all the ways in which Aquinas explored light in Christianity, see David L. Whidden III, *Christ the Light: The Theology of Light and Illumination in Thomas Aquinas* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014) and Daniel McCormac Bennett. “Thomas Aquinas and Thirteenth-century Scholastic Method: The Case of Divine Illumination” (Ph.D. Diss, Catholic University of America, 2021).

⁵¹⁸ This arrangement aligns with premodern theories that divided light into three parts: *lux*, *lumen*, and *illumination*. In this image, God serves as *lux*, the physical source of light; Christ, then, becomes *lumen*, the radiation of God’s light into the world; the earthly realm below serves as the *illumination* of God’s divine light. For these light divisions, see Smith, “Descartes’ Theory,” 32-45. These comparisons will be explored in greater detail in forthcoming iterations of this project. For a modern discussion of painting and light in this period, see Christopher R. Lakey, “The Materiality of Light in Medieval Italian Painting,” *English Language Notes* 53.2 (Fall/Winter 2015): 119-136.

⁵¹⁹ Hansen suggested that this “strange color scheme” visually conveys a different mode of perceiving between the Holy Trinity above and the earthly realm below. “Rainbow and the Incarnation,” 209. While I agree, I believe the choice in colors is theologically intentional and artistically rooted, rather than merely “strange.”

Lotto portrayed Christ as the only mode in which viewers can *see* Christian Truth. This version of Christ is the medium from which all earthly realities derive, and from Christ's primary source, all things divine were made visible as explained in John. On earth, the purity of Christ's color and light is blended and muddled, but it exists because of him, nonetheless. According to Lotto's painting, color and perception would be lost without Christ's presence, and all that would remain would be a blinding indistinct light in heaven and darkness on earth.

The depiction of the Holy Trinity was not new; however, Lotto's version was pictorially and theologically innovative. In the *Holy Trinity*, Lotto arranged an exegetical argument that purports divine permission to create the likeness of Christ and did so in a devotional and experiential fashion for the viewer—all aspects deeply relevant to the ongoing Reformation debates felt throughout Northern Italy and the devotional manuals to encourage personal experience.⁵²⁰ When taken together, his version of God dwelling in light and Christ-as-light visualize the verse in 2 Corinthians 4:4 that reads, "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God;" and Colossians 1:15, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Though Christians consider Jesus as having been divinely born to Mary, Lotto created a visual metaphor for the entirety of Christ's being that showed the member of the Godhead as firmly depictable.

Lotto provided a counterapproach to Romanino's theological innovation—one that drew exclusively on the New Testament to avoid clashing with other communities on a basic human level. I suggest this focus on depicting God and Christ as described in the scriptures directly

⁵²⁰ See Section 4.1.2 for an introduction to these devotional books circulating in the sixteenth century. These are also briefly discussed in this chapter in Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.3.

contended with the iconoclastic debates reemerging because of the Reformation. By using the same scriptures reformers like Zwingli commanded in their debates, Lotto reclaimed the words of Paul and John, using them as support *for* divine images and in direct refutation of Karlstadt's "useless" images.⁵²¹ The literal vision of God in his dwelling of light offering Christ as the light of the world argues that God condoned images through the creation of the human Jesus. However, unlike other artists depicting the Trinity, Lotto seemed to take 1 Timothy 6:16 literally while simultaneously honoring the original Hebrew concept of an unseeable Yahweh. In this devotional image where the three parts of the Godhead are presented to viewers for spiritual contemplation, Lotto chose to *not* give God the Father human form. By the early sixteenth-century, artists conventionally depicted God the Father—as a member of the Trinity and elsewhere in religious art. Andrea Previtali's *Trinity with St. Augustine and the Blessed Giorgio da Cremona* (1517) for example, continued the Trinity tradition used by Masaccio in the *Holy Trinity* (1426-1428) that shows an elderly human God the Father supporting Christ on the cross with the dove of the Holy Spirit nearby (Figures 5.11-5.12). Lotto, instead, painted a claim in favor of divine images while respecting the early belief of an invisible God, and he did so by visualizing the same scriptures Zwingli used against the Catholic Church without ever mentioning or damning the reformer himself.

Throughout the rest of his career, God the Father only appeared twice in Lotto's painted works. A decade after the *Trinity*, Lotto painted a version of the *Annunciation* (1534-1535) that included a depiction of God (Figure 5.13). Here, the narrative involves the moment Gabriel reveals to Mary that she will bear the Son of God and the pregnancy of Jesus begins. Often, pre- and early modern depictions of this story include God as a heavenly apparition sending the Holy Spirit (or a

⁵²¹ See Section 1.3, for a discussion on the Reformation and divine images.

tiny image of the Christ child) toward Mary as she receives the news.⁵²² In Lotto's version, God appears and gestures directing his intention to the Virgin. However, unlike the *Holy Trinity* God, Lotto portrayed this Father as a visually articulated elderly male figure in billowing robes, riding on a heavenly cloud. A few years later, in a small roundel of his *Madonna of the Rosary* (1539), Lotto included God the Father beside Christ and the dove of the Holy Spirit as they offer a crown to the Virgin Mary (Figure 5.14). While the fifteen roundels represent the fifteen mysteries of the Virgin cult of the Rosary, the primary focus of the painting remains the *sacra conversazione* that takes place below with the Virgin and Child surrounded by saints. I argue that in the *Annunciation* and the *Madonna of the Rosary* roundel, Lotto did not contend with the theological debate over God's visibility. In fact, he did not have to—in the versions seen here, God does not present himself for viewer consumption. In the *Holy Trinity*, God's depiction represents his physical presence as he delivers the image of himself vis-à-vis Christ to viewers.⁵²³ Because humankind cannot look upon the true image of God, Lotto portrayed him as beyond our comprehension. For the *Annunciation* and the *Madonna of the Rosary* roundel, God does not present himself for viewing or contemplation; instead, the figure serves as a visual stand-in to tell the narrative of the Gospels and the Coronation of the Virgin.

⁵²² Interestingly, Lotto's *Annunciation* reverses the traditional arrangement of Mary and Gabriel. For more on this, see Section 2.1.4, esp. footnote 162. See also Don Denny, *The Annunciation from the Right from Early Christian Times to the Sixteenth Century*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977), 127. Denny attributed Lotto's compositional choice to Northern European art influences. Andrea Previtali (1470-1528), also working in Bergamo, similarly painted an *Annunciation* in reverse for Santa Maria Annunciata del Meschio. Rossi, *Bergamo: L'altra Venezia*, 110-113.

⁵²³ Lotto continued this approach throughout the remainder of his career. In his 1543 work, *Christ in Glory*, Lotto presents Christ's body and blood as humanity's redemption and God is nowhere to be seen.

5.4.2.2 Local Implications

The emphasis on Christ as light and protection from darkness would have powerful implication in 1520s Bergamo. Like Romanino's work in Cremona and Valcamonica, Lotto's painting provided direct, though often subtle, commentary on his contemporary lived experiences. As described earlier, the city—like many others in this region—suffered under incoming waves of mercenaries toting heterodox thinking and challenges to the Catholic Church. In Lotto's earthly realm of this painting, miniscule figures reminded viewers of their current lives in the foothills of the Alps. Given the socio-historical context of Lotto's lived experience in 1520s Bergamo, we could imagine the figures leaving the farmhouse as representing mercenaries with their newly stolen animals and booty; meanwhile the shepherds remain unaware of what has transpired, and the lone figure races in to deliver the news.⁵²⁴ Lotto relegated this scene to a minute portion of the painting, and while these realities of mortal experience continue on unimpeded, he reminded viewers to root their focus elsewhere. For those who took time to ponder these earthly interactions, the imposing image of Christ-as-light emerging from God would remind them that according to John 8:12 and 12:46, following Christ would protect them from darkness. If they had doubts about Christ's light reaching Bergamo, the image of the Holy Spirit about to soar into their space would provide a sense of relief.

Similarly, the region faced ongoing natural disasters and bouts of the plague, but just prior to this painting Bergamo avoided one anticipated tragedy. Astrologers predicted deadly flooding for Bergamo to occur in February 1524, and sermons and writings perpetuated the omen.⁵²⁵ As

⁵²⁴ These were the very same issues occurring in the farmland outside of Bergamo where Lotto painted in the Suardi Oratory.

⁵²⁵ Several sixteenth-century sources discuss the impending floods of Bergamo. Most notable are the entries from diary-writer Mario Sanuto (or Sanudo), cited in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. Ottavia Niccoli also discussed the impending disaster and explored the rituals performed to avoid the flood in "Il diluvio del 1524 fra panico collettivo

Morten Steen Hansen has astutely noted, the city prayed and processed with relics, and were ultimately spared from the threatening catastrophe; as a result, the dark clouds that threaten to rain (but do not) and the rainbow in Lotto's composition may have reminded sixteenth-century Bergamasque residents of Noah, the Great Flood, and God's scriptural promise to never wipe out humanity with a flood again.⁵²⁶ While the message of the *Holy Trinity* is undoubtedly Christian, Lotto visually acknowledged and continued Hebrew belief about the unseeable image of God in a distinctly Christian fashion and continued the promise that the Great Flood would not repeat.

5.4.2.3 The Eucharist

Like Romanino's work, Lotto's painting served as visual rhetoric for the Catholic Church's disputes with nonbelievers and made a resounding statement regarding God's approval of divine images. Through the *Holy Trinity*, Lotto encouraged Christians to contemplate the totality of God's message from the beginnings in Genesis into the sixteenth century. However, it importantly does so without reference to heretics, Jews, or their beliefs that differed from the orthodox doctrine embedded in Lotto's painting. As mercenaries and heterodox ideas moved into Bergamo, Lotto also used this painting to address reformer beliefs against the Eucharist. I suggest that once again, he relied on the Gospel of John for his visual theology and did so in a way that emphasized devotion over dispute.

e irrisione carnevalesco," in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura, convegno internazionale di studi (Firenze, 26-30 giugno 1980)* (Florence, 1982), 369-392.

⁵²⁶ Genesis 6-9. Hansen suggested the painting was an *ex voto* from the confraternity for avoiding the flood. He also went into greater detail on the possible symbolic aspects of the rainbow in Lotto's *Trinity*, which I will briefly mention include St. Basil's association between rainbows and the Trinity, and the connections between rainbows and Christ as the new covenant used in Ezekiel 1:28 and Revelation 4:3 and 10:1. Hansen, "Rainbow and the Incarnation," 207-216. Unlike the rainbow that appears in Genesis, however, Lotto's Christ strides atop two rainbows. Hansen noted that the image contains two rainbows but did not discuss the detail further. Though beyond the scope of this section, I hypothesize that the two rainbows may have signified a renewed promise from God directly to Bergamo to not flood the earth. Whereas Noah saw one rainbow during the first promise, God sparing Bergamo represented the promise renewed.

Of the Gospels, John differs in many respects from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Notably, John provided more of Jesus's public sermons and miracles, including lengthy discussions with his disciples about his divinity and forthcoming departure from (and eternal presence with) them. At several points throughout, the writer also commented on the social nature of Jesus as he lived and walked among the people and included many of the Jewish responses to Jesus as they debated and weighed his words. Because the emphasis was on knowing Christ personally and this often negated the traditions of the Jewish temple, John provided excellent material for reformers to combat the rituals and liturgy of the sixteenth-century Church. Of these debates, perhaps the most palpable throughout Northern Italy was the attack on the Eucharist.⁵²⁷ As cited earlier, Cortesi Bosco and Campbell established how Lotto directly engaged with the anti-Eucharistic rhetoric coming from the north in his Trescore frescoes, and I believe the artist continued this commentary in the *Holy Trinity*, albeit in an unexpected way.

Of the reformers, two separate camps (broadly speaking) existed regarding the Eucharist. Those following Luther believed in the literal understanding of Christ's words at the Last Supper, "Take; this is my body... This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."⁵²⁸ For Lutherans, then, the Eucharist contained the physical body and blood of Christ at each Mass—a belief that aligned with the Roman Church. Zwingli and his Swiss followers, however, believed the ritual to be purely symbolic metaphor.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁷ For more on the Eucharistic controversy and the regional awareness of these concerns, see Campbell, *Endless Peripheries*, 181-226.

⁵²⁸ Mark 14:22-24. Also in Matthew 26:26-28 and Luke 22:19-20.

⁵²⁹ For a discussion on the debates that later occurred between Luther and Zwingli on the matter, see Eire, *Reformations*, 241-244. In fact, most Reformation leaders *besides* Luther treated the Eucharist as symbolic, directly conflicting with the Catholic concept of transubstantiation.

Like Luther, Zwingli used scripture as evidence for his doctrine, which denied the Catholic miracle of transubstantiation. His argument hinged on John 6:63 when Christ said, “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”⁵³⁰ For Zwingli, this directly refuted a literal reading of when Christ says, “This is my body...this is my blood,” and allowed him to use the words “spirit” and “flesh” interchangeably when reading John as evidence of the Holy Spirit.⁵³¹ He then used this conclusion to eliminate Mass, the Eucharist, and all Catholic ritual including images that placed the focus on anything other than faith in God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Besides this scripture, John provided Zwingli with a unique argument against celebrating the sacrament. The Last Supper story—the moment when Jesus instituted the Eucharist—does not exist in John. In this version of the Gospel, the pre-Passion meal Jesus shares with his disciples occurs earlier in the narrative in the home of Lazarus, unlike the Passover celebration he has in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John’s Gospel, then, never included the moment Luther relied on for evidence of the miracle of the Eucharist.⁵³² Instead, within John’s scriptures, Jesus explained to his disciples that after he departs, the “Spirit of truth” will come to mediate, thus establishing the Holy Spirit.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ These words followed a complex conversation between Christ and his disciples about his body being the bread from heaven and them taking issue with eating human flesh. See John 6:25-63. Interestingly, Zwingli would later write that if John were removed from the bible, then “you take the sun from the world.” *Amica Exegesis*, in *Huldreich Zwinglis sämtliche werke*, 14 vols., ed. Emil Egli and Georg Finsler (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1905-1990), 5:564, 10-16; English cited in W. P. Stephens, “Zwingli on John 6:63: ‘*Spiritus est qui vivificate, caro nihil prodest*,’” in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation: Essays Presented to David C. Steinmetz in Honor of His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Richard A. Muller and John Lee Thompson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 176.

⁵³¹ Stephens, “Zwingli on John 6:63,” 177-178.

⁵³² Prior to the episode in Lazarus’s home, Jesus does speak of his body as nourishment. In John 6:56, he says, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life,” but rather than instituting the Eucharist, Zwingli would argue the section is metaphorical for spiritual nourishment. Stephens, “Zwingli on John 6:63,” 156-185.

⁵³³ John 15:25.

In Bergamo, Lotto and his patrons certainly were aware of the Eucharistic debates waging in the north, and his previous art reflected support for the Church's ritual (which also aligned with Luther's beliefs). Prior to the *Holy Trinity*, Lotto painted the Ponteranica Altarpiece (1522) for the parish church of San Vincenzo e Sant'Alessandro in Ponteranica, a *comune* of Bergamo (Figure 5.15). Both this painting and the Trescore frescoes contain undeniable references to the Eucharist and an emphasis on the gift of Christ's blood. As discussed previously, the blood of his Trescore Christ pours directly from his fingers and through metamorphosis becomes the vine from which all other Christians exist.⁵³⁴ In Ponteranica, Christ stands central in the altarpiece, displaying his wounds as they each gush blood caught in a chalice like the ones used during Mass. Once again, Lotto visually emphasized the literalism of Christ's life-giving blood, this time as the miraculously transformed wine served during the Eucharist.

In the *Holy Trinity*, Christ stands exposed with his body on display for visual consumption. His head turns gently to the (other) side, and he presents his wounds as in the Ponteranica Altarpiece, but there the similarities cease. In this version of Christ, absolutely no blood appears on or gushing from his body; instead, Lotto used gentle brushstrokes to indicate the location of the wounds. Viewers can see the Passion injuries but in this image, they appear nearly healed, as if bright scars indicate the location of the previous trauma but cause no further harm. The resulting image lacks any sense of either life-giving, flowing blood or penitent, torturous gore, and instead implies freedom from suffering in Heaven.⁵³⁵ There are other ways Lotto could have emphasized

⁵³⁴ See section 5.4.1.

⁵³⁵ This idea comes from Revelation 21:4, "Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away." While some early Christian writers assigned the Book of Revelation to John, modern scholarship recognizes that this is inconclusive, particularly based on some Revelation scriptures that imply an author much later than the time of Christ. Regardless, those in the sixteenth century may have considered it another work of John, in which case it logically follows that Lotto may lean on Revelation for his John-based work as well. Further evidence for this can be found in the rainbows—rainbows are mentioned twice in Revelation (4:3 and 10:1)

the wounds of Christ, even if not using pouring or spouting blood. In another Bergamo example, Palma il Vecchio painted an image of *Christ the Redeemer* (1520-1522) that shows Christ with minimized wounds, but rays of heavenly light stream out from each hole or gash in his body, complementing the glow that creates his halo (Figure 5.16).⁵³⁶ Even without blood, the wounds are the focus in Palma's work; Lotto, however, explicitly depicted a different post-Passion Christ.

This absence of bodily suffering seems counterintuitive given the patrons who likely commissioned this piece. The Disciplini Confraternity of Santissima Trinità emphasized physical mortification as a means of imitating Christ and gaining access to God.⁵³⁷ The group, who wore red to symbolize the shedding of blood, also wore an image of the Trinity on the front of their habits.⁵³⁸ The visual convention prior to Lotto's *Holy Trinity*, often referred to as "Gnadenstuhl iconography," included God the Father supporting Christ on the cross with the dove of the Holy Spirit nearby.⁵³⁹ These images were inherently Christocentric with Christ's suffering, dying body occupying the majority of the composition. I believe the confraternity's reliance on Augustinian literature and dedication to the Holy Trinity provided the directive for a Trinity imbued with light commission. However, the standard Gnadenstuhl iconography of the Trinity would have been

in relation to heavenly splendor. Christ's unmarred body in this image also recalls the Kunne woodcuts of Simon discussed in Chapter 2. There, Simon's uninjured body implied his sainthood.

⁵³⁶ For more on this painting, see Rossi, *Bergamo: L'altra Venezia*, 196-197.

⁵³⁷ For more on the confraternity and the church, see Brown, Humfrey, and Lucco, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 142-144. For a discussion on flagellant confraternities in general in this time/region, see Andrew H. Chen, *Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260-1610: Ritual and Experience* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), and Danilo Zardin, "A Single Body: Eucharistic Piety and Confraternities of the Body of Christ in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Texts, Images, and Devotion," in *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Boston: Brill, 2019), 109-132.

⁵³⁸ Hansen, "Rainbow and the Incarnation," 208.

⁵³⁹ Perhaps ironically, the term "Gnadenstuhl" comes from Martin Luther, which he used to describe the Seat of Mercy from Exodus 25:17-22. Later nineteenth-century art historians appropriated the term to describe Trinitarian images such as the *Holy Trinity* by Masaccio, mentioned earlier in section 5.4.2.1 in order to connect the images to the scriptures in Exodus. For more on the history of the term Gnadenstuhl and its use in eastern and western art history, see Ágnes Kriza, "The Russian 'Gnadenstuhl,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 79 (2016): 79-130, esp. 98-113.

more befitting of a flagellant confraternity who wore red to emphasize bodily suffering. Had Lotto portrayed Christ on the cross, the vision of his damaged and bloody body would have naturally aligned with the confraternity. However, Lotto did not portray Christ on the cross, nor did he include any blood or hint of suffering.⁵⁴⁰ I argue that this clear deviation from tradition was rooted in a meditative experience on the body of Christ without explicitly calling into question the reformer debate over the Eucharist's literalness.

If we again take John as our basis for Lotto's work, the *Holy Trinity* becomes the visual embodiment of Christ's words, "This is my body" from the other Gospels, but from John's version without the Last Supper—from a neutral position that neither confirms nor denies the miracle of transubstantiation. I propose that the wounds from his Passion do not evoke the body and blood as represented in the Eucharist, and instead Lotto has God present Christ for visual meditation and spiritual contemplation.⁵⁴¹ This absence of suffering combines with the double rainbow below him to recall Revelation and apocalyptic thinking.⁵⁴² Painted following a time when the people of Bergamo suffered under abuse from mercenaries and feared natural disasters, Lotto's *Holy Trinity* served as a reminder that earthly suffering would not continue in Heaven. While he could have emphasized Christ's suffering or used blood to validate the Eucharist, Lotto, instead, delivered an image focused on Christ's promise of everlasting life through him without explicitly criticizing other theologies. The dove about to soar into the viewer's space emphasizes John's description

⁵⁴⁰ My interpretation of Lotto's Christ differs from Hansen's conclusion when he stated, "Lotto's Trinity with its echoes of the 'Gnadenstuhl' iconography emphasizes the role played by Christ's sacrifice to the new covenant. This was in keeping with the flagellant confraternity's devotion to the suffering Christ." Hansen, "Rainbow and the Incarnation," 214. I conclude that Lotto's Christ is *not* suffering.

⁵⁴¹ For more on the popular devotional trend of meditations on the life of Christ, see footnote 288 in section 4.1.2 of this dissertation. My thesis for this painting, along with others discussed in this dissertation, coincides with the concept of ocular communion, which is another topic that will receive consideration in forthcoming iterations of this project. See footnote 155 in Section 2.1.4 for more.

⁵⁴² See footnote 535.

that the spirit is humankind's access to a living Christ. Though his account book details his life over a decade after this painting, we know that in 1540 Lotto would purchase at least two copies of Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi*, revealing his interest in the meditative inner devotion on Christ—a practice I believe he visually encouraged through the *Holy Trinity*.⁵⁴³

In three visually arresting components of the *Holy Trinity*, Lotto drew on Old and New Testament scripture to offer a Christian message of hope and redemption. Through the rainbow, the unseeable image of God, and the unsuffering Christ-as-light, the *Holy Trinity* reminded viewers of both God's promise to the Hebrews and his renewed presence to sixteenth-century Christians in Bergamo. While Romanino would soon harness Jewish scriptures to disavow Judaism, Lotto instead visually unified the two doctrines, thus maintaining ambiguity. Knowing Lotto's later connections to heretics and reformers, we may be compelled to believe his early works such as the *Holy Trinity* already reflected his refusal to visually engage in debates that would provide evidence against his friends and family members. This, of course, cannot be concluded without direct indication from Lotto himself.⁵⁴⁴ However, it is clear that when faced with impending doom and ongoing onslaught from outsiders, Lotto chose a different route in theological innovation than Romanino.⁵⁴⁵ Like his previous works, Lotto's *Holy Trinity* served as a devotionally driven

⁵⁴³ In 1542, Lotto's account book describes purchasing five copies of "*instituta christiana*;" and though this could have been any number of books, several heterodox books were published under the Church's radar by using that title. The title also applied to educational children's books (in the heterodox vein), which could just as easily have been gifts Lotto bought for others. (He never married or had any children of his own, as far as we know.) Firpo suggested that the 1542 purchases that took place after he left d'Arman's home imply that Lotto's reformer ideologies were not limited to his nephew but were a part of his own beliefs that continued after he left his nephew's house. Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 45, 138-141.

⁵⁴⁴ Unfortunately, Lotto's detailed account book from which much of our knowledge about Lotto-the-man is derived only begins in 1538. However, if we felt compelled to associate Lotto with any heterodox ideologies, Luther's acceptance of Christian images and the literalness of the Eucharist would be an easy association to imagine. This is perhaps clearer in later works where Lotto seems to challenge the Catholic Church on similar grounds as Lutheran thought. For example, see Section 5.5.2 of this chapter.

⁵⁴⁵ See Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation for Romanino's approach.

altarpiece, never overtly calling into question those with whom the Church (and the artwork's patrons) disagreed.

Artistically, Lotto's *Holy Trinity* was well-received in sixteenth-century Bergamo, despite modern criticisms of the work. At least three artists in the Lombard city directly referenced Lotto's work for their own iterations of the Holy Trinity or images of Christ. Giovanni Battista Moroni repeated Lotto's use of a brilliant yellow glow surrounding the *Trinity* (1552-1553), with Christ draped in red and God the Father behind him (Figure 5.17). While the Father appears more articulated, Moroni left the figure hazy as if too bright to see fully. Christ, as in Lotto's version, shows only the lingering traces of his Passion wounds, but instead of striding out into the realm of the viewer, he sits erect while cradling a globe of the world. Absent are the rainbows that situated Lotto's painting in the aftermath of the flood omens, and instead Moroni returned to the trope of associating Christ with the sun as he appears to sit directly on the rising sun behind him.⁵⁴⁶ Others such as Gian Paolo Lolmo and Enea Salmeggia would similarly repeat Lotto's innovation.⁵⁴⁷ Together, these post-Tridentine versions indicate that Lotto's *Holy Trinity* succeeded in attesting to the divine permissibility of images, the devotional power of the body of Christ, and the promise of eternal life for a Lombard audience. Consequently, his invention remained relevant for decades after he painted, extending beyond the immediacy of the Reformation debates and warfare of the 1520s and into new theological territory of the Counter-Reformation.

Lotto's visual emphasis on redemption through Christological meditation continued during his artistic career and culminated in his 1543 *Christ in Glory*, which deserves consideration in a discussion of the *Holy Trinity*, despite emerging nearly twenty years later (Figure 5.18). In this

⁵⁴⁶ Early Christian visual rhetoric often paired Christ with the sun, for reasons related to light explored earlier in this chapter, but also as a replacement of Apollo, the pagan sun god.

⁵⁴⁷ Bayer, *Painters of Reality*, 118.

painting, commissioned by Federico de' Priuli in Treviso, Christ hovers in the sky, born aloft by a host of angelic putti that also carry symbols of the Passion and a flag identifying Christ the Redeemer. From Christ's side, a stream of blood pours into a chalice. Despite this, the wounds of Christ remain barely perceptible, and his body turns so that the viewer only barely discerns that the pouring blood comes from his body. Like in the *Holy Trinity*, Christ does not suffer, but the similarities cease there. Rather than stand atop rainbows and clouds striding into the earthly realm, he seems to sink down to earth as if submerged in water. The sky above him consists of aquatic blues and jeweled greens that mimic the deep sea, his hair flows up and away from his face, and the fabric around him pools in the gentle, undulating manner of water, not billowing in gusts of wind as we might expect from a figure in glory.⁵⁴⁸ Below, putti on clouds simultaneously support and guide him further down into earthly daylight, but God the Father does not appear—as light or as an articulate figure. The bottom of the composition contains the most mysterious aspect of this painting; a nude woman sits on rocky green earth, a cloth draped over her legs (Figure 5.19). With arms extended, she gazes into what scholars speculate once represented a mirror held in her left hand.⁵⁴⁹

Taken together, the details of this painting expand on Lotto's devotional *Holy Trinity* by removing extraneous details and emphasizing Christ as meditative vision, rather than Christ as God's image on earth. By omitting a visible God the Father, Lotto presented Christ as neither divine gift nor heavenly-sanctioned image, though he clearly arrives by divine intervention

⁵⁴⁸ Similar visual comparisons could be made to floating in starry space, though Lotto certainly had no concept of weightlessness in space.

⁵⁴⁹ Unfortunately, this painting has experienced extensive damage and over-cleaning. To be sure, the pouring blood is no longer visible, though technical analysis revealed its prior existence. Likewise, the woman on the ground seems to be holding something and current assumptions identify the object as a mirror. Augusto Gentili, "The Stories, The Metaphors," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, ed. David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 40.

surrounded by putti. Christ does not interact with viewers or actively step into the earthly realm. Instead, Lotto portrayed Christ's nearly pristine body *wholly* for visual consumption as if we can see the artist's own mental devotion made manifest on the canvas.⁵⁵⁰ The nude woman below fixated on a reflection would instruct viewers to consider this painting as a visual substitute for their own internal devotion and to dwell on Christ as humanity's redemption.⁵⁵¹

In this work, Lotto took his localized, divinely sanctioned, devotional *Holy Trinity* Christ and transitioned him into a visual act of spiritual contemplation that, perhaps, even more clearly resonated with Reformation theology and practices that focused on private devotion and faith.⁵⁵² However, he did so by emphasizing Christ's sacramental blood that only Catholics and Lutherans would appreciate. This connection becomes even more apparent considering that Lotto likely used Jacopo Sansovino's fifteenth-century sculpture of *Christ in Glory* (1485) on the San Marco *Altar of the Sacrament* in Venice as his compositional reference (Figure 5.20). In this work, Christ appears stationary while supported by the same putti, surrounded by the same Passion iconography, and his blood pours into the same chalice. Lotto's work differs drastically, however, with the inclusion of the nude woman below contemplating a reflection. As if to attest to this shift, there are no known copies made of Lotto's *Christ in Glory*. While the *Holy Trinity* represented

⁵⁵⁰ This painting is another that aligns with the concept of ocular communion. See footnote 155.

⁵⁵¹ There is no scholarly consensus on who or what the woman in this painting represents—a difficult interpretation further impeded by damage. Gentili proposed she depicted a desolate humanity in need of Christ's redemption. Berenson suggested she is a symbol of the earth. Others speculate she could be a personification of primordial sins, the despair of the undeserving, Mary Magdalene, or even an allegorical image of heresy that has lost her way. Regardless, it is worth noting that Lotto did not make her identity obvious. The image invites and *necessitates* deep contemplation. For these suggested identities see, Augusto Gentili, "Per Lorenzo Lotto e i suoi contesti storici: due episodi re-documentati, tra polemica e progetto," *Artibus et Historiae* 4, no. 8 (1983): 77-93; Berenson, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 155; Anna Banti, *Lorenzo Lotto* (Florence: Sansoni, 1953), 52; Bruce Boucher, "Sansovino's Medici Tabernacle and Lotto's Sacramental Allegory: New Evidence on their Relationship," *Apollo* 114, no. 235 (September 1981), 158; Francesca Cortesi Bosco, "Lorenzo Lotto dal polittico di Ponteranica alla commissione della Santa Lucia di Jesi," in *Omaggio a Lorenzo Lotto. Atti del convegno Jesi-Mogliano, 4-6 dicembre 1981* (Urbino: Istituto di storia dell'arte, 1984), 71-72; and Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 277-280.

⁵⁵² Lotto painted this work within a year of *The Alms of Saint Antoninus*, discussed below for its criticisms of the Catholic Church.

Catholic theologies in Lotto's unique way and artists copied it multiple times, the *Christ in Glory* may have seemed too mysterious and indirect in a Catholic world moving towards the Counter-Reformation and away from "unusual" art.⁵⁵³ However, as I discuss below, Lotto never visually abandoned orthodox theology, he continued to design art that served Christians, regardless of affiliation, and he remained experimentally ambiguous regarding religious others.

5.5 After Bergamo

In December 1525, shortly after completing the *Holy Trinity*, Lotto departed Bergamo for Venice. While he does not record the reason for his departure after such a successful decade in Lombardy, many scholars assume the increasing warfare that culminated in the Battle of Pavia (1525) and the later Sack of Rome (1527) likely prompted his choice to retreat to the *Serenissima*. For the rest of his life, however, Lotto would wander between Venice and the Marches region before ultimately settling down as an oblate at the Holy House of Loreto where he worked as a resident painter—including painting numbers for pilgrims' beds—until his death in 1556 or 1557.⁵⁵⁴ Through his wills and his continued association with the Dominican Order,⁵⁵⁵ we can

⁵⁵³ The twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent in 1563 specifically called for art reform, intending church art to directly defend and clearly embody Catholic theologies. Though this occurs much later than Lotto's *Christ in Glory* painting, the Inquisition had already begun questioning artists regarding any Christian paintings that seemed unusual. No record exists of Lotto's painting being interrogated, but its moderate isolation in Treviso likely accounted for this. For these histories, see Jesse Locker, ed., *Art and Reform in the Late Renaissance: After Trent* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019); John W. O'Malley, *Trent: What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013); and *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. Rev. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1978), 217.

⁵⁵⁴ Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 298-312.

⁵⁵⁵ Before Loreto, Lotto resided in the Dominican convent of San Zanipolo while in Venice. In the two versions of his will, he requested that he be buried in a Dominican habit. While there, he painted *The Alms of St. Anoninus*, and in lieu of payment, he requested burial in the monastery. He would later move to Loreto and composed a new will requesting burial there instead.

conclude that Lotto certainly felt convicted enough by his faith to remain tied to the Catholic Church; and yet, Lotto's paintings throughout these years not only continued his emphasis on private Christological devotion (which aligned with reformer ideologies) and engagement with heretical topics without condemning others, but he also visually seemed to question some issues within the Church itself.

5.5.1 *Christ Carrying the Cross*, 1526

One of Lotto's earliest works after departing Bergamo was a devotional painting of *Christ Carrying the Cross*, though provenance records indicate he painted it for a Bergamasque patron living in Venice at the time (Figure 5.21).⁵⁵⁶ This small compressed, claustrophobic square painting depicts Jesus on the road to Calvary, carrying the cross for his crucifixion. His figure is hunched down, with one hand resting on top of the cross and the other spread along its side keeping the wooden beam upright. Clad in red and blue, little else is visible of Christ's body; however, trickles of blood appear on his forehead and stream down his cheek from the crown of thorns, and tears spill from his eyes as he gazes, pleadingly at viewers. Three delicate streams of light project from his head in the semblance of a halo. A rope hangs loosely around his neck, the leash of which extends beyond the right side of the painting held by an unseen oppressor who is just a tug away from dragging him along. Above and to his left, two visible tormentors clad in shining armor antagonize him; while weighing down the cross, one shouts directly in Christ's ear and punches him in the shoulder with a fist; the other grimaces while using one hand to grab a large lock of

⁵⁵⁶ André Chastel, "Le Portement de Croix de Lorenzo Lotto" *La revue du Louvre et des Musées de France* 4 (1982): 266-272.

Christ's hair. Though the hair hangs slack, the man's tense muscles imply that he will yank the lock at any moment. With his other hand, he supports himself on a pole that is cropped by the top of the picture, but logically represents a lance or standard. In the lower right corner, along the visible piece of the crossbar, Lotto unusually painted his signature and the date upside down.

Lotto's composition fit within a growing trend of bust-length images with Christ forced close to the picture plane, which in turn elicited a heightened emotional response to his suffering, ideal for private Christocentric devotion. Lotto's work, like many throughout Northern Italy, found inspiration in Dürer's prints such as *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1512) that depicts a compressed image of Christ surrounded by tormentors (Figure 5.22). However, a local source probably started the trend of these images in Northern Italy. Leonardo da Vinci executed a drawing with the *Head of Christ and a Hand Grasping His Hair* (1490-1495) while in Milan that then likely traveled with him during his stay in Venice (Figure 5.23).⁵⁵⁷ Shortly after, Titian painted a cropped version of *Christ Carrying the Cross* (1512) that soon after began working miracles (Figure 5.24).⁵⁵⁸ We can assume, then, that Lotto saw the work in the Scuola di San Rocco upon his 1525 arrival in Venice and immediately painted his own version of the powerfully devotional work, or perhaps his Bergamasque patron already living in Venice knew the work and specified it for Lotto to replicate. Years later, the demand for these cropped suffering Christ images continued; Romanino would paint two versions of his own for Brescian patrons (Figures 5.25-5.26). Like his

⁵⁵⁷ For more on this drawing and the possible link between it and the Titian's version, see Pietro C. Marani, "Leonardo and the Christ Carrying the Cross," in *Leonardo & Venice*, ed. Paolo Parlavecchia (Milan: Bompiani, 1992), 344-345.

⁵⁵⁸ Despite Vasari's attribution to Titian, modern scholarship credited this painting to Titian or Giorgione, and dated it 1505 to fit within Giorgione's lifetime. In his 2012 dissertation, Christopher Nygren deftly explained how this work fits with Titian's *oeuvre* and its relationship to earlier Venetian examples. Christopher J. Nygren, "Vibrant Icons: Titian's Art and the Tradition of Christian Image-Making" (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2011), 60-83. See also, Christopher J. Nygren, *Titian's Icons: Tradition, Charisma, and Devotion in Renaissance Italy* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), 25-41.

previous work in Cremona, Romanino returned to using a *Landsknecht*-based character for his tormentor of Christ in the first but portrayed Christ alone with the cross in the second.⁵⁵⁹

While a cropped image of *Christ Carrying the Cross* was not unusual, Lotto's version contains a few aspects unique to his artistic approach that increased the painting's devotional veracity and alignment with theological concerns in the 1520s. As discussed in section 4.1.2 of this dissertation,⁵⁶⁰ meditations on the life and Passion of Christ were increasingly common among both orthodox and heterodox Christians. The vernacular publications of *Devotio Moderna* and Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* from the fifteenth century encouraged readers to meditate, live their lives in mimesis of Christ's experiences, and especially to turn their minds inward in alignment with the Pauline Epistles. Those adhering to Catholic Church traditions (and some Lutherans) saw value in using devotional art as visual support for these rhetorical performances of meditation and practice. Each of the mentioned North Italian images of *Christ Carrying the Cross* would have enhanced this devotional practice, encouraging the viewer to focus on Jesus's suffering along with his willingness to continue to his death.

Lotto's work was one of the earliest (if not the first) painting he created after leaving Bergamo—a relocation that removed him from immediate harm's way during the Italian Wars. Though in Venice, his Bergamasque patron would have also been intimately aware of the dangers back home in Lombardy. The timing of Lotto's painting, then, extended beyond mere tradition and meditative focus on Christ, and invited the devotee to ponder Christ's suffering in conjunction

⁵⁵⁹ In lieu of tormenters in the 1545 version, Romanino instead added a hazy blue landscape behind Christ, forcing the devotee to focus exclusively on Christ for contemplation rather than his enemies. This choice indelibly feels akin to Lotto's lifelong approach to Christological emphases over visually condemning non-Catholics. By 1545, Romanino's works had shifted from his theological innovation in Valcamonica to a more Lottoesque approach, likely in response to the new Council of Trent and Counter-Reformation emphasis on doctrine and faith.

⁵⁶⁰ As it relates to Romanino's fresco cycle in Pisogne's Santa Maria della Neve.

with their own lived experience surrounded by foreign tormentors and those who carried different beliefs than their own. However, like before, Lotto avoided explicitly referencing contemporary enemies of the Catholic Church. The two villains in the scene, while vicious, bear no clothing or physiognomy to associate them with Jews, heretics, or even German or Swiss mercenaries (as Romanino would continue to do). Instead, the viewer can only see portions of each face, and while menacing, they are clean shaven and otherwise unremarkable. Even the large nose belonging to the figure pulling Christ's hair bears no resemblance to the traditional hooked noses or porcine snouts, both of which exist in Dürer's prints on the subject and the Titian painting from 1512. Though not common in these paintings, it is still worth mentioning that Lotto also chose to avoid banners with scorpions, bats, or other iconography that denoted Jewishness in Passion scenes, even though one of his figures potentially leans on a standard.⁵⁶¹ While artworks of Simon of Trent and artists like Romanino perpetuated depicting Jews as the enemies of Christ in this region, Lotto strayed from this tradition.⁵⁶²

Aside from neutral tormentors, Lotto's painting also emphasized Pauline rhetoric involving the cross that was intrinsically tied to Reformation thinking. Both Zwingli and Luther emphasized the cross in their reform movements. As mentioned in Section 5.4.2.1, Zwingli abandoned prescribed canons of preaching and spoke directly from scriptures, interpreting them himself. After preaching from the Gospels, Acts, and 1 Timothy, he used Galatians to continue leaning on

⁵⁶¹ See Sections 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 of this dissertation for a discussion of the symbols and their interpretations as Jewish. See Section 4.1.3 of this dissertation for a discussion on how Romanino used the scorpion banner in his *Crucifixion* scene in Pisogne.

⁵⁶² James H. Marrow's has done extensive work documenting Northern European trends regarding Passion iconography. Throughout his impressive text, he demonstrated many of the common depictions of Jews in these scenes that are discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The accepted tradition of these tropes in Northern Europe, (and in Northern Italy as demonstrated in Chapter 1), meant that Lotto made a distinct, intentional choice to *not* use this imagery. James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Ven Ghemert, 1979).

Pauline thought and to speak to contemporary issues.⁵⁶³ Paul often remarked on the cross; in his letter to the Galatians, he instructed Gentiles (Christians who were not previously Jewish) that following Jewish law was antithetical to the Christian Gospels and they should practice independent of Christianity's Judaic roots. Paul wrote,

“For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. *I have been crucified with Christ*; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”⁵⁶⁴

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians, he said,

“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power. For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved *it is the power of God*.”⁵⁶⁵

For Paul, the cross was both a tool of spiritual meditation and the source of Godly power. Like Zwingli, Luther also emphasized Pauline rhetoric, and in particular, the theology of the cross. In his early writings, he used knowledge of the cross as the mode by which Christians know God and how they achieve eternal salvation, which is evident in one of his ninety-five theses that reads, “He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross.”⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶³ Farner, *Huldrych Zwingli*, 2:298-299.

⁵⁶⁴ Galatians 2:19-20. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:17-18. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶⁶ Luther, *Luther's Works*, 39-40.

Undoubtedly, the Catholic Church also placed heavy emphasis on the power of the cross given their dedication to maintaining fragments as relics. I suggest that this important physical, mental, and spiritual relationship with the cross shared by both orthodox and heterodox Christian thinkers is the underpinning of Lotto's painting, and he depicts it from a neutral position. The viewer, like Paul, is meant to be "crucified with Christ." The cropped, close image places the audience intimately close to Christ and the cross he carries. With his blood and tears palpably near, the painting encourages sensory overload—Lotto invites us to hear the shouts of the tormentors, feel the weight of the cross, and dread the pain that is soon to follow the yanking of hair. Despite his anguish, Christ's hands delicately embrace the cross, thus accentuating it. The left hand position is a near replica of that in Dürer's version. The right, however, is unique to Lotto's composition. Here, Christ's thumb is spread wide from the other fingers. His forefinger gently touches the middle finger of the other hand, creating a complete circle embracing the cross. The other right-hand fingers all softly yet explicitly caress the wood as if it were a cherished lover and not an instrument of death. The placement of the hands alongside his head makes them and the cross they support as much the subject of the painting as Christ himself. The gesture appears so delicate with the two fingers barely touching that I believe Lotto very consciously chose this placement to draw viewer attention to the cross itself and Christ's precious treatment of the wood—wood that was about to support his dying body.

Unlike the 1512 Venetian iteration of this composition, Lotto's Christ pitifully gazes out of the painting, desperate for relief. For viewers, meditation on this painting would encourage the same misery and suffering, regardless of whether one was being led to death by tormentors or fearing death under foreign invasion. This personalized emphasis on Christ, suffering, and the burden of/redemption through the cross aligned with rhetoric on all sides of the Reformation

debates and thus discouraged no one from getting intimately familiar with Christ and the Passion. Lotto made this painting personal for not only viewers, but also himself. Artist signatures on paintings became increasingly common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as artists moved to permanently link their identities with the innovative works they created (and prevent others from taking credit for their work).⁵⁶⁷ Dürer especially gained notoriety for his signatures, using a monogram to control authenticity of his prints. As mentioned above, Lotto signed the vast majority of his works, most of which included his name and date cleverly inscribed on a nearby rock or another object in the scene but were otherwise unremarkable. In *Christ Carrying the Cross*, his signature is different, bearing theological implications. Here, Lotto inscribed his name and the year alongside the crossbar of the cross, but he painted it upside down (Figure 5.27). In this private devotional image, Lotto did not sign his name for recognition; in fact, the signature does not exist for viewer consumption. Instead, he signed his name *for* Christ.⁵⁶⁸ Furthermore, through his embodied name, Lotto ostensibly placed himself on the cross to be crucified with Christ. As evidence of his own personal piety, Lotto made this work evidence of his own devotion and as Christian *exempla* to viewers. According to the artist, to meditate and live like Christ was to put oneself on the cross *with* Christ, which was an ideology that orthodox and heterodox thinkers alike could support.

⁵⁶⁷ For more on the use of signatures in this period, see, Rona Goffen, “Signatures: Inscribing Identity in Italian Renaissance Art” *Viator (Berkeley)* 32 (2001): 303–370, and Patricia Rubin, “Signposts of Invention: Artists’ Signatures in Italian Renaissance Art,” *Art History* 29 (2006): 563–599.

⁵⁶⁸ Béguin, Bayer, and Bonnet also recognized this meaning. Sylvie Béguin, “Lotto et Venise,” in *Le siècle de Titien l’âge d’or de la peinture à Venise*, eds. M. Laclotte, and G. Nepi Scirè (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1993), 493–494; Bayer, *Painters of Reality*, 120; Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 104.

5.5.2 *The Alms of St. Antoninus*, 1542

Lotto's work in Venice and the Marches continued in much the same manner as the works described above; his works remained ambiguous regarding non-Catholics, and he gently walked the line between orthodox theology and Reformation thought. However, by the 1540s, Lotto had firmly become entrenched in reformer circles during his travels through friends, family members, and business acquaintances. The stakes of this chapter have been to demonstrate that in his early works (before known Reformation colleagues) he consistently avoided pictorial criticism of either the Catholic Church or specific contemporary reformers despite artists like Romanino explicitly making those pictorial accusations in the same region. Once in Venice, Lotto's circle expanded to include men accused of heresy.⁵⁶⁹ Following these associations, some Reformation-aligned concerns with the Church appeared in his art, albeit covertly. In the two remaining artworks I briefly discuss, I argue that while these seemingly heterodox criticisms exist, Lotto continued to carefully negotiate his visual rhetoric to avoid direct censure of anyone, and he consistently exhibited a deep personal piety only possible from someone faithful to the Catholic Church.

Sometime after Lotto painted the portraits of Martin Luther and his wife for his nephew's debt, the artist painted *The Alms of St. Antoninus* altarpiece for his beloved Venetian parish church, San Zanipolo (Ss. Giovanni e Paolo) (Figure 5.28).⁵⁷⁰ The church leaders commissioned the work

⁵⁶⁹ Though some women were mentioned in his account book (mostly family members and wives of these men), none of them were ever accused of heresy, and in some cases, they were the ones accusing their husbands/uncles/son-in-laws to the Inquisition. For an example related to Mario d'Arman and his wife and mother-in-law and Bartolommeo Carpan and his wife, see Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 37-48 and 149-165.

⁵⁷⁰ San Zanipolo was his first residence in Venice after leaving Bergamo and the location chosen for his burial in his first will, prior to his relocation to Loreto. Oldfield suggested that the commission originally began in the 1520s, possibly just before or after his arrival in Venice, but various circumstances prevented him from working on the commission until the 1540s. He ultimately requested to forego some of the payment owed for the work in exchange for his planned burial within in the Dominican church. David Oldfield, "Lorenzo Lotto, 1508-1513" *Omaggio a Lorenzo Lotto. Atti del convegno Jesi-Mogliano, 4-6 dicembre 1981. Notizie da Palazzo Albani* 13 (1984): 22-38.

for a chapel to celebrate the canonization of the saint, along with their plans to distribute alms. In the image, Antoninus—a Florentine bishop who received canonization in 1523—sits atop a throne reading a scroll he has unfurled. On either side, angels whisper the people’s supplications in his ear, and they gesture towards the gathering parishioners below them. Meanwhile, other putti pull back the red curtain on either side that reveals the scene to viewers, including a heavenly array of angels in clouds above the saint that appear to bring stormy weather. Below Antoninus, two Dominican clergymen distribute alms and receive petitions from the flock who crowd the bottom of the image. A display of luxurious books, sacks, and paraphernalia rest between the men on top of an ornate Turkish carpet.⁵⁷¹

This painting, like those before, provides evidence of Lotto’s sense of the times and his concerns related to the happenings within the Catholic Church amidst the Reformation. Of the primary indictments Luther had against the Church, three in particular helped him gain a cult-like following from laity: the sale of indulgences, the intercessory role of the papacy and clergy, and the lack of funds being redistributed to help those in need.⁵⁷² I argue that Lotto’s altarpiece addressed all three of these factors, and in doing so pessimistically supported the Church while subtly hoping for its reform.

A major contention of many reformers included the Roman Church’s sale of indulgences—a means of reducing one’s time spent in purgatory after death. Parishioners could visit specific sites, offer prayers, complete good works, or make financial donations in exchange for an

⁵⁷¹ Lotto famously painted several versions of these Turkish carpets, so much so that the design received the moniker “Lotto” carpets or Lottoesques. For more on these, see Rosamond E. Mack, “Lotto: A Carpet Connoisseur,” in *Lorenzo Lotto: Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance*, ed. David Alan Brown, Peter Humfrey, and Mauro Lucco (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 59-67.

⁵⁷² For a detailed exploration of Luther and the factors that motivated him, see Eire, *Reformations*, esp. 133-157. Zwingli agreed with Luther on the attack against indulgences, and he received massive support throughout the Swiss territory, including from those leading the Church in Zürich. *Ibid.*, 226.

indulgence. This sale of salvation for the Church's monetary gain became one of the leading foci of the reformer movements. Besides the implied financial extortion, the sale of indulgences meant that the papacy and clergy members acted as intercessors between the laity and their access to Heaven. Lotto's composition for *The Alms of St. Antoninus* encapsulates this reality and does so *without* justifying the Church's position.

When displayed, this tall altarpiece (nearly 11 feet tall) automatically places viewers among the crowding beggars and parishioners at the bottom of the composition. Towering above them, the two clergymen stand elevated and behind a solid stone wall with no gate or opening to provide access. Further above them, Antoninus sits on an elevated throne that exists within the same space as the clergymen and the angels around and above him. Another solid stone wall without opening runs behind his stone throne, effectively isolating the saint and the clergymen from the rose garden peeking from behind them.⁵⁷³ This arrangement completely blocks access to the clergymen, the saint, and the heavenly angels for viewers and the parishioners alike.⁵⁷⁴ Meanwhile, Antoninus—despite angels whispering supplications in his ears—pays the beggars no attention; his eyes remained focused on his scroll. From the viewer's perspective, his eyes appear nearly closed. I believe that according to Lotto's painting, crowding at the base of the wall and reaching up to beg for recognition is the *only* way regular Christians can access the Church, saints, or Heaven. If someone thought to sneak around from behind to gain access, the rear stone wall would deny entry. We have seen in previous paintings that Lotto knew how to place his viewers

⁵⁷³ Aikema suggested the rose garden represents the *hortus condusus* traditionally associated with Mary, thereby implying that through the Church and saint one achieves salvation. Barnard Aikema, "Lorenzo Lotto: La pala di Sant'Antonino e l'osservanza domenicana a Venezia," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 33 (1989): 132-135.

⁵⁷⁴ Firpo also recognized this visual association with reformer complaints about the separation between the Church and the people the institution served. Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 275-276.

in the same “realm” as his divine figures. In both his *St. Vincent Ferrer in Glory* and the *Holy Trinity*, the compositions place viewers soaring along with the saint and Christ (who make direct eye contact with the audience) and situate the earthly landscapes far below them. For this scene, Lotto chose to not grant viewers access to the saint through physical placement or interactive body language. Here, only the clergy and heavenly bodies can reach the saint.⁵⁷⁵ Given Lotto’s pictorial emphasis on saintly intervention in works such as the Trescore fresco cycle and based on other features of this painting (discussed below), we can interpret this restricted visual access to the saints as rather pessimistic.

Lotto’s painting also recalls a novel composition by Raphael. In his *Sistine Madonna* (1513-1514), Raphael cleverly alludes to a painting within a painting that evokes commentary on the nearby miracle-working images in Northern Italy that would be covered with curtains and revealed at special moments (Figure 5.29).⁵⁷⁶ In Lotto’s version, two putti pull back weighty red curtains that hang all the way to the bottom of the composition blocking some of the parishioners from view. If the little angels left their posts, then the curtains would fall back into place, covering the entire scene. Viewers of this painting only receive the privilege of looking because of the putti, and as a result, sixteenth-century viewers could not even consider themselves among the beggars

⁵⁷⁵ Giulia Altissimo suggested this was reflective of the top-down hierarchical nature of the Church. Giulia Altissimo, “Elemosina di sant’Antonino,” in *Lorenzo Lotto*, ed. Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2011), 138.

⁵⁷⁶ Raphael’s painting was a papal commission for Piacenza, another North Italian town, and was widely known throughout the region. For more on this work, its interpretation, and reception throughout Italy, see Andreas Henning, *Die Sixtinische Madonna: Raffaels kultbild wird 500* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2012). In Piacenza, a miraculous statue of the Virgin Mary had garnered a cult following, and subsequent art commissions reveal the ways in which communities used art to heighten and enhance the statue. In 1530, decades after Raphael’s subtle commentary on miraculous images, the patrons of Santa Maria di Campagna hired Pordenone to design a fresco cycle that would enhance cultic devotion to the *Madonna di Campagna*. Increasing the appeal and cult following was necessary to compete with other area miracle-working images and the pilgrims they attracted. As if to confirm Lotto’s cynicism, this competition for pilgrims was inherently a battle over money and donations. For a reconstruction of the economy of miracle-working images in Piacenza and Pordenone’s contribution, see Jason Di Resta, “Negotiating the Numinous: Pordenone and the Miraculous *Madonna di Campagna* of Piacenza,” *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 62 (2020): 180-207.

portrayed on the other side of the curtain. Instead, they could only access the scene at the discretion of heavenly angels. This distinction between human and angelic intervention, however, is quintessential to understanding Lotto's visual rhetoric in the image. I propose that like the miraculous paintings in Northern Italy—the 1512 *Christ Carrying the Cross* among them—Lotto's work offered viewers an opportunity to bypass earthly intercessors. As angels—not humans—pull back the curtain to reveal the scene, Lotto puts his painting in conversation with other miraculous images. While no one ever purported that *The Alms of St. Antoninus* worked miracles, I argue that by associating his work with divinely agentive paintings, Lotto reminded viewers that heaven could intercede directly on their behalf, without anyone else's involvement.⁵⁷⁷

While this composition acknowledged the intercessory role of the Catholic Church regarding salvation and access to indulgences, Lotto's depiction is not inherently negative based on this arrangement alone. However, the other inclusions to the scene reveal his sympathy toward parishioners and their unmet needs from the Church. Critics of this painting have often noted Lotto's intensely realistic portrayal of the beggars at the bottom of this composition. From his own account book, we know that Lotto described drawing these figures from life based on beggars he encountered in Venice.⁵⁷⁸ Among those turning to the clergy for help, Lotto included male beggars, women—including widows and nuns—and children. Interestingly, even the female members of the same holy cloth as the depicted clergymen plead for supplication alongside parishioners. Lotto's decision to accurately portray the meekest of Venetian society alongside the realities of nuns being separated from the alms- and indulgence-giving clergy implies a degree of

⁵⁷⁷ Lotto's message is perhaps more impactful *because* this painting was not a miraculous image, and thus did not attract pilgrims that would increase the church's coffers even more without an increase in support of those who needed it.

⁵⁷⁸ Lotto, *Libro di spese*, 236-240.

empathy, if not downright concern.⁵⁷⁹ I argue that it also gestures toward a sense of verisimilitude between what viewers see and the realities of Lotto's lived experiences. Sixteenth-century audiences would not only recognize the realities of life in these figures, but they may also spot familiar Venetians.

If these humble alms-beggars represented reality, then so too did the accruement in the scene. As the clergymen lean over the balcony to receive petitions and distribute coins, a luxurious Turkish carpet hangs over the edge of the dividing wall. Behind the men, another larger carpet covers the entire base of Antoninus's throne pedestal. On top of the carpet, cinched bags—similar to the one the almsgiver holds—sit bloated with their contents. Emphasizing the tangible closeness between the clergy and the saint, Antoninus's lavish bishop's miter and crozier lean on the same parapet. Beside these, large books fill the remainder of the space, all propped up so the viewer can see their massive size, and thus, expense. Both men wear traditional robes and habits, but rings are visible on their hands. Taken together, the space and contents in which the clergymen and saint occupy embody the same luxuries that reformers railed against.⁵⁸⁰ While a throng of hungry, ailing, and desperate people plead for aid, the Church and her clergy sit safely above with plenty of riches and wealth to spare. I suggest that Lotto intentionally used this painting to call attention to the inadequacies of Catholic Church spending and insufficient care for the poor. None of his petitioners or beggars wear jewelry—no necklaces or rings appear on anyone. One beggar does not have enough clothes to cover himself. The crowd is so full, not everyone fits within the frame and the clergyman on the right gestures to prevent crowding down below, revealing to

⁵⁷⁹ For an exploration of how this painting related to sixteenth-century concerns of pauperism and begging in Venice, see Angelo Mazza, "La Pala dell'Elemosina di Sant'Antonio nel dibattito cinquecentesco sul pauperismo," in *Lorenzo Lotto: Atti del convegno internazionale di studi per il V centenario della nascita*, eds. Pietro Zampetti and Vittorio Sgarbi (Treviso: Comitato per le celebrazioni lottesche, 1980), 347-364.

⁵⁸⁰ Mack, "Lotto: A Carpet Connoisseur," 65; Mazza, "La Pala dell'Elemosina," 351.

viewers that many more people exist outside of the composition. Through these deliberate choices, Lotto visually criticized the Catholic Church in alignment with reformer ideologies.

This choice to criticize becomes even more apparent when compared with other images of Antoninus and saints distributing alms. As a popular Florentine saint, images of Antoninus distributing alms appeared throughout Tuscany and Northern Italy.⁵⁸¹ In each of these, the saint *always* directly interacts with those in need, without clergy intercession or physical barriers. In Pistoia, the right panel of a triptych dedicated to Antoninus depicts him pouring coins from a money bag into a poor man's hat while others in need await their turn (Figure 5.30). Gian Martino Spanzotti's fresco in Turin (1525) shows the saint pausing during his studies to turn around and offer coins to two children (Figure 5.31). This pictorial type for Antoninus continued for decades across media. Giambologna sculpted a bronze *St. Antoninus Distributing Alms* (1580-1588) for the St. Antoninus Chapel in San Marco, Florence that depicts the saint providing alms to and blessing the poor, disabled individuals who have gathered at his feet (Figure 5.32).

Similar to these images of Antoninus, other saints frequently appeared in art distributing alms themselves. In the famous Brancacci Chapel, Masaccio included a scene of *St. Peter Distributing Alms* as part of his pastoral duties (Figure 5.33). Even if Lotto had no knowledge of these paintings, he assuredly knew of other images of saints distributing alms. We know Lotto spent a year in Rome working in the papal palaces where he must have seen Fra Angelico's frescoes in the same location (1447-1449). Here, the artist depicted both Saints Lawrence and Stephen distributing alms themselves amongst the faithful, again without cleric intercession (Figures 5.34-5.35). With all this exposure to the traditional trope of saints distributing alms, it

⁵⁸¹ For a thorough exploration of Antoninus's visual impact in Florence, see Sally J. Cornelison, *Art and the Relic Cult of St. Antoninus in Renaissance Florence* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

comes as no surprise that in 1532, Lotto included a scene of *Saint Lucy Distributing Her Dowry among the Poor* in his altarpiece for the Confraternity of Santa Lucia of Jesi where the saint delivers the goods herself (Figure 5.36).

Undoubtedly, Lotto *chose* to not depict Antoninus distributing alms himself. Had he done so, the saint—like the others described above—would have a visual congruency with Christ among the poor and healing the sick, and inevitably would have fit within Lotto’s typical Christological focus. His choice to deny Antoninus interaction with those in need and thereby association with Christ definitively removed the spiritual connection between worshippers and saints. In fact, Lotto’s Antoninus does not even offer the promise of connection as he ignores those around him. By adding the clergy as obstructive intercessors, Lotto explicitly called attention to the troubling hierarchy of the Catholic Church. While many of these other depictions portrayed the saints in splendid garments, Lotto’s inclusion of money sacks, a Turkish rug, and luxurious books emphasized the contemporary wealth of the Church and heightened the distinction between his inaccessible saint and those who walked among the people.

We cannot deny that Lotto made this painting for a Dominican church indelibly connected to the papacy, and he did so for a reduced wage to secure burial privileges in the same church. These are not the actions of a reformer desiring to leave the Catholic body. However, in this and other paintings throughout Lotto’s later career, we see Reformation-aligned ideas creep into the scenes. Even here, the artist does not overtly criticize anyone. On its surface, this painting honors the saint and celebrates the church delivering alms to the people. The commissioners clearly approved of the work since the painting remains in the church to this day.⁵⁸² However, as I note

⁵⁸² This is despite art historians and critics frequently referring to the composition as outdated and bizarre. I propose that if we see the composition as bizarre, then this indicates that Lotto was, in fact, adding extra commentary to the painting rather than depicting a basic image of the saint or alms distribution.

throughout this dissertation, the issues that surrounded the Reformation debates rarely segregated Christians into two distinct camps. Lotto, like many others, was perfectly capable of remaining Catholic while still questioning the human church leaders and hoping for change.⁵⁸³ Even without knowing his personal beliefs, this painting embodies the questions and concerns surrounding the Church in the 1540s that ultimately led to the foundation of the Council of Trent. The harsh realities Lotto portrayed in this painting would not even be visible if not for divine beings pulling back to the curtains to reveal these truths. Christianity remained the answer for Lotto, but according to this painting, followers could access the divine more directly than Catholic officials led them to believe. While not a miracle-working image, the painting implied the Church needed divine intervention.

5.5.3 *Fra Gregorio Belo, 1546-1547*

Despite the criticisms that seem evident in Lotto's *The Alms of St. Antoninus* altarpiece, the artist undoubtedly remained faithful to Christianity and the Catholic Church. He spent the final decade of his life painting religious images for patrons in Venice and the Marche region until he finally settled in Loreto a few years before his death. One of the last portraits he painted while in Venice was of *Fra Gregorio Belo*, a fifty-five-year-old member of the Hieronymites, known as the poor hermits of Saint Jerome; the sitter's identity is known from the inscription in the bottom right corner of the image that reads, F. Gregorii belo de Vincentia / eremite in hieronimi Ordinis

⁵⁸³ For a discussion of how this painting may have also related to internal reform within the Venetian Dominican order, see Bernard Aikema, "L'immagine della "carità veneziana,"" in *Nel regno dei poveri: arte e storia dei grandi ospedali veneziani in età moderna 1474-1797*, eds. Bernard Aikema, Dulcia Meijers, and Denis Arnold (Venice: I.R.E., 1989). Interestingly, Lotto permanently departed Venice and changed his burial arrangements, so perhaps the desired reforms never took place or did so in a direction with which he disagreed.

beati / fratris Petri de pisis Anno / etatis eius LV. MDXLVII, and is confirmed by the habit of his order (Figure 5.37).⁵⁸⁴

This work, like most of Lotto's portraits, emphasizes not only the sitter's appearance but also his identity and inner psychology. Belo stands in three-quarter view, leaning on a stone block and gazes intently out at viewers. In his left hand he holds an open book containing the homilies of Gregory the Great, Belo's namesake.⁵⁸⁵ With his right hand in a fist, he beats his breast in the guise of a penitent Jerome in the wilderness.⁵⁸⁶ Around him, a dark landscape filled with woods and brambles embody the intensity of his spiritual convention. Behind his right shoulder, a miniature Crucifixion appears on the clifftop as if viewers are privy to Belo's vision during his devotion.⁵⁸⁷ Alongside the cross, Lotto included Saints Mary, John, and Mary Magdalene each responding to the death of Christ in their own unique manner.

I close with this painting to reinforce that regardless of what scholars may impose on his beliefs, Lotto's art consistently reflected a dedication to Christ and private devotion that would

⁵⁸⁴ Despite identifying him as "of Venice," recent scholarship indicates he mostly worked in Padua, Cremona, and then in Treviso's Santa Maria Maddalena, despite being affiliated with the San Sebastiano group in Venice. Andrea Bayer, "North of the Apennines: Sixteenth-Century Italian Painting in Venice and the Veneto," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 63 (Summer 2005), 46. Bayer has also noted that Belo replaced Fra Bernardo, a former patron of Lotto and Lotto's confessor in his 1546 will. Bernardo also had connections with a group of goldsmiths in Treviso that included accused heretics. For this reason, she concluded that Lotto and his patrons all had concerns about the future of the Catholic Church. Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ Though barely visible, "Homelie d greg" appears on the spine of the book, as reported in *Italian Paintings: A Catalogue of the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Venetian School*, eds. Federico Zeri and Elizabeth E. Gardner (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1973), 40.

⁵⁸⁶ For more on the references to Saint Jerome in this painting and how it fits within Lotto's *oeuvre* of Jerome paintings, see Maurizio Giammarioli, "Fra Gregorio Belo," in *Il S. Girolamo di Lorenzo Lotto a Castel S. Angelo*, ed. Bruno Contardi and Augusto Gentili (Rome: Romana Società Editrice, 1983), 119-124.

⁵⁸⁷ Howard Hibbard was among the first to recognize that the placement and scale of the Crucifixion implies it is Belo's spiritual vision during his devotion, similar to the visions depicted in paintings of Jerome in the wilderness. Howard Hibbard, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 257. Later, Keith Christiansen concluded that the continuation of the intense background from Belo to the Crucifixion implies "the psychological unity between the background scene and the action of the main figure." This is especially relevant when compared to the devotional portraits by Lotto's contemporary, Giovanni Battista Moroni (1520-1578), who differentiated between the environment of the vision and that of the sitter. Keith Christenson, "Giovanni Battista Moroni: Portrait of a Man and Woman, with the Madonna and Child and Saint Michael," in *The Age of Caravaggio* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 72.

have impacted Catholics and reformers alike.⁵⁸⁸ The figure of Belo conveys this conviction with his gaze and gesture, encouraging viewers to do as he does and devote themselves to spiritual meditation on Christ and his Passion. I believe the saints surrounding the cross, then, demonstrate the various emotions that this practice may elicit in devotees: Mary expresses disbelief and shock, John pleads for Jesus's death to not be real, and Mary Magdalene clings to the cross in sorrow and desperation, refusing to let go (Figure 5.38). Together, the portrait and the saints remind viewers that spiritual work required emotional suffering; the skull and bones beneath the cross and the promising sun rising in the background, however, prompt Christians that such suffering leads to salvation.⁵⁸⁹ As a portrait, this painting becomes a passion-inspiring meditation on the life of Christ.

Ruggero Rugolo has demonstrated that many devotional texts, sermons, and debates relevant in the sixteenth century collide in this portrait; Belo's powerful meditation on the Crucifixion amidst a harsh landscape embodies concepts from Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi* (1418–1427), Benedetto da Mantova's *Beneficio di Cristo* (1540s), Domenico Cavalca's *Specchio di Croce* (1490), Bernardino Ochino's (1487-1564) sermons, Dominican thought, and Gregory the Great's (540-604) ideologies.⁵⁹⁰ Put simply, Lotto's portrait can be understood as a melting pot of orthodox and heterodox emphases on Christological devotion and inner faith. To be sure, scholars have attempted to use this work as evidence for both Lotto's loyalty to the Catholic Church and his Reformation sympathies. Meanwhile, Firpo suggested that the lack of

⁵⁸⁸ This is assuming the reformers in question did not mind the *existence* of the art that invited their pious response.

⁵⁸⁹ Depictions of the cross on Golgotha frequently included a skull and/or bones representing the grave of Adam from Genesis, and thus implied Christ as the replacement for Adam, the Old Testament, and God's promise for redemption of humankind.

⁵⁹⁰ Ruggero Rugolo, "Come un libro aperto. Lorenzo Lotto e Fra Gregorio Belo" in *Per il cinquecento religioso italiano: clero, cultura, società. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Siena, 27-30 giugno 2001*. 2 vols., ed. Maurizio Sangalli (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 2003), 1:205-230.

overt heterodox ideology in the image was indicative of the Catholic Church's suppression of artistic freedom in anticipation of the Counter-Reformation.⁵⁹¹ Instead, I believe that Lotto's work fits within a lifelong *oeuvre* emphasizing personal devotion and reliance on Christ while omitting visual rhetoric that might overtly condemn any side of the various debates.

Two years after finishing his portrait of *Fra Gregorio Belo*, Lotto painted another friar in the guise of a Christian saint that deserves comparison with Belo. *Friar Angelo Ferretti as Saint Peter Martyr* (1549) portrays the Dominican friar standing half-length against a plain ruddy background, dressed in his Dominican habit, holding a book of the New Testament, and gesturing downward, possibly to the palm at his elbow indicating his martyrdom (Figure 5.39).⁵⁹² In the semblance of the martyred saint, the haloed Ferretti has a cleaver lodged in his skull and a dagger protruding from his heart, but like a typical saint in glory, he exhibits no suffering.

The identity of the represented saint is significant. Peter Martyr, also known as Peter of Verona, became a Dominican preacher and inquisitor in thirteenth-century Northern Italy. According to his legend, his family adhered to Manichaeism, a heretical sect revived by the Cathars.⁵⁹³ Despite this (or because of it), Peter made it his mission in life to preach against and convert those who followed the Cathar heresy in Italy. Ultimately, a group of Cathars plotted against him and brutally assassinated him, which Lotto incorporated in this portrait through the weapons jutting from the friar's body.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹¹ The argument is that in an effort to suppress the Reformation, artists and their works were more closely scrutinized to ensure strict alignment with Catholic doctrine. Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici*, 285-288.

⁵⁹² The date of the painting corresponds to two Dominican friar portraits listed in Lotto's account book: Ferretti in Ancona and Giovanni Andrea in Venice. Most scholarship identifies the sitter as Angelo Ferretti. Bonnet, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 169-171. Though this attribution remains uncertain, I refer to the sitter as Ferretti for the sake of consistency. The interpretation presented here does not change if the identification of the sitter changes.

⁵⁹³ For the history of this saint, see Donald Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor: The Life and Cult of Peter of Verona (†1252)* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁵⁹⁴ The assassin would later convert and garner a cult following of his own. Donald Prudlo, "The Assassin-Saint: The Life and Cult of Carino of Balsamo," *The Catholic Historical Review* 94, no. 1 (January 2008): 1-21.

At first, this painting may seem contrary to much of this chapter. Lotto willingly depicted a Dominican friar in the guise of a saint who made it his life mission to convert heretics and died for his cause.⁵⁹⁵ This certainly implies a purely orthodox reading of the painting and thereby Lotto, and some have used this work as evidence of his late-life heterodox recanting.⁵⁹⁶ However, I argue that this portrait remarkably differs from that of Belo, and in doing so, reveals Lotto's artistic consistency despite the subject matter.

A portrait of this type had the potential to encourage ardent meditative focus on the New Testament and the willingness to die for one's Christian faith, but it emphatically fails to do so. Compared to Belo and his visual conviction, this portrayal lacks any sense of passion, dedication, or affective response to Christ and the Passion. This solemn portrait does nothing to achieve Lotto's typical emphasis on the personal spiritual work one must do for salvation. Here, the friar does not suffer. He has a cleaver in his skull and appears placid, but unlike a saint in glory (who would not appear suffering), Ferretti lacks divine holiness or splendor, which keeps him firmly in the earthly realm. His hand limply gestures towards the branch, stoking no fire or fervor in the viewer, and he lacks conviction in his countenance. Unlike Belo, Ferretti does not have a spiritual meditative experience based on his readings. In fact, he does not read at all. His copy of the New Testament remains closed, as if a prop and nothing more.

⁵⁹⁵ The timing of this painting also coincides with events surrounding the Florentine Vermigli, who took the name Peter Martyr after completing his Dominican novitiate in 1518. By the 1530s, Vermigli identified as a reformer, and fled Italy for Zürich in 1542 where he defended Calvinism and debated with Lutherans. Vermigli also became known for his dedication to studying Hebrew so he could read the Old Testament scriptures in their original text. Though there may be no relation between Vermigli and Ferretti's commission, it seems plausible that the Dominican Ferretti sought to reclaim Peter Martyr for the Catholics from the formerly Dominican reformer. For the history of Vermigli and his role in the Reformation, see *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations: Semper Reformanda*, ed. Frank A. James III (Leiden: Brill, 2004), and *Peter Martyr Vermigli and Italian Reform*, ed. Joseph C. McLelland (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1980).

⁵⁹⁶ See footnote 450 for a selection of some of these arguments.

During his time in Venice, Lotto likely would have been familiar with Giovanni Bellini's *The Assassination of Saint Peter Martyr* (1507) and Titian's work of the same subject (1528-1529) (Figures 5.40-5.41). These narrative versions of Peter Martyr included the severity of the assault and his devout faith until the moment of his death. In 1535, Moretto da Brescia painted a version for the Bergamo church of Saints Stefano and Domenico (Figure 5.42). Here, he emphasized the moment Peter wrote the beginning of his creed using his own blood from the cleaver wound before the assassin fatally stabbed him in the heart. Lotto could have borrowed visual tropes from these versions and made Ferretti's portrait as devotional as Belo's. A miniature depiction of the martyrdom in the background would have invited viewers to join in on a devotional meditation, much like the crucifixion in Belo's portrait. A background with angels appearing to deliver the palm of martyrdom would create a spiritual atmosphere like Belo's intense landscape. Blood-written words on a stone or blood from a wound would provide evidence of faith just like Belo's penitent Jerome-like gesture. Divine splendor would reveal the heavenly glory that awaits those willing to die for Christianity. Any of these additions would have emphasized personal devotion and spiritual union with the martyred saint and his quest against heresy. Instead, Lotto painted a portrait and little else for the viewer's spiritual consumption. It becomes a painting *about* Ferretti, rather than a portrait within a devotional device.

Lotto did not include depictions of heretics, even in a painting depicting (a man posing as) a saint who explicitly opposed heretics. Only the viewer could provide this missing element through personal knowledge of Peter Martyr's legend. We can assume the patron specified the way he wanted to be portrayed, but Lotto omitted any overt indicators of heresy. Lotto also stripped out the psychology of faith so apparent in Belo's portrait. While still a compelling likeness, I suggest that Lotto intended this painting to do nothing else. This absence of spiritual

work strengthens my claim that Lotto made paintings for *anyone* to find Christian meaning. If Lotto depicted Ferretti in the same manner as Belo, then the painting inherently would have carried anti-heterodox interpretations. An emphasis on Peter Martyr's history would have made this a painting about Church enemies and little else. It also lacks Lotto's typical focus on Christ. Had he included a Christological focus, the painting would have invited viewers to think more deeply about the portrait, just like the crucifix in Belo's portrait achieves. For personal devotion and spiritual passion, viewers had to look to *Fra Gregorio Belo* and elsewhere in Lotto's *oeuvre* where he could safely promote Christ while remaining ambiguous regarding others.

Unless we discover lost documents, we will never truly know Lotto's beliefs or reasons for his artistic choices, though arguably many of them align with Lutheran thought. However, certain conclusions are evident. Lotto remained loyal to the Catholic Church, painting for Christian patrons until his death in 1556/1557, and often spoke of himself in his account book as a faithful Christian. Despite being born during the height of Simon of Trent's cult, living through the Italian Wars, and residing with accused heretics, Lotto never explicitly referenced contemporary "enemies" of the Church through visual rhetoric and only used coded references occasionally in his art. Whereas Romanino adapted church art to reassure Catholics of victory over their enemies, Lotto chose to encourage steadfast focus on Christ—a message that would apply to anyone identifying as Christian.⁵⁹⁷ Just like *Fra Gregorio Belo*, Lotto designed art to speak to the individual Christian and inspire faith to carry them through such tumultuous times.

⁵⁹⁷ The focus on personal experience and devotion took such prominence during the Reformation debates that the Council of Trent eventually codified and defined it for Catholic followers. Louisa Matthew, "Clergy and Confraternities," in *Venice and the Veneto: Artistic Centers of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 135-136.

6.0 Conclusion

“This is not art, it is hate.”

Rabbi Abraham II, 2020

6.1 Simon of Trent in the Sixteenth Century

Immediately after being fired from the Cremona Cathedral project, Romanino received a major commission in Brescia’s San Giovanni Evangelista. Here, the artist worked alongside another Brescian painter, Moretto da Brescia, to paint a collection of scenes for the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament that took place over two phases: first in the 1520s and then in the 1540s, just after Romanino finished in Valcamonica. This series of twenty-two canvases lined opposing walls of the chapel, placing them in direct theological conversation with one another regarding divine charity and nourishment. Taken together, the paintings in this chapel used Jewish stories and prophets from the Old Testament alongside scenes from the life of Christ to provide a visual exegesis of Catholic Eucharistic theology. On the left wall, Romanino painted the *Mystical Mass*, *Resurrection of Lazarus*, and the *Supper in the House of the Pharisee*, with the Old Testament Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zachariah, Malachi, Moses, and Habakkuk, and the Evangelists Matthew and John (Figure 6.1). On the right wall, Moretto depicted the *Last Supper*, *Elijah and the Angel*, and the *Gathering of Manna* with the Old Testament Prophets David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Haggai,

Micah, and Hosea, and the Evangelists Mark and Luke (Figure 6.2).⁵⁹⁸ Stephen Campbell has aptly explored the way these paintings enacted a message of preserving and validating the Catholic version of the Holy Eucharist, and I believe the memory of Simon also lives in this chapel.⁵⁹⁹

The commission for these works came from the church's Augustinian canons, the *massari*, and the Scuola del Santissimo Sacramento—a major Eucharistic confraternity in this region.⁶⁰⁰ One of these canvases warrants attention considering the preceding five chapters. During the 1520s portion of the contract, Romanino completed the *Mystical Mass*, which serves as the main lunette canvas on the left wall (Figure 6.3).⁶⁰¹ In this scene, the miracle of transubstantiation has occurred during the Eucharist, but rather than rely on faith to believe, those in attendance witness a visual miracle. Rising out of the wine chalice on the holy altar that sits below a hanging crucifix, a nude Christ child stands surrounded by a dazzling yellow halo. A priest gestures towards the miraculous vision, as the surrounding crowd kneels, exclaims, or watches in awe. The one exception is a small blond boy that stands below the altar where a little white animal has captured his attention.⁶⁰² The kneeling adult next to the child grasps his arm as if trying to turn the boy's attention to the miracle taking place on the altar and causes the boy's hand to gesture towards the chalice. This moment of realism—a child distracted by an animal—combines with the

⁵⁹⁸ For an early description of these works, see Giovanni Testori, *Romanino e Moretto alla Cappella Del Sacramento* (Brescia, Italy: Grafo, 1975). For a recent treatment, see Barbara Maria Savy, *Manducatio per visum. Temi Eucaristici nella pittura di Romanino e Moretto* (Padua, Italy: Bertonecello Artigrafiche, 2006). For an exploration of these works in relation to others by Moretto, see Kirk Nickel, "Alessandro Moretto and the Decomposition of the Painter's Art in Renaissance Brescia" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 119-163.

⁵⁹⁹ Stephen J. Campbell, *The Endless Periphery: Toward a Geopolitics of Art in Lorenzo Lotto's Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 201-204.

⁶⁰⁰ Nickel, "Alessandro Moretto," 120.

⁶⁰¹ Depending on the source, this painting goes by several names including *Mystical Mass*, *Dispute over the Sacrament*, *Adoration of the Sacrament*, and *St. Gregory's Mass*. Regardless, all titles point to the importance of transubstantiation, the miraculous truth of the Eucharist during Mass, and the sacrament's cemented place in Catholic doctrine and salvation. See footnote 605 in this section for more on the possible interpretations.

⁶⁰² Scholars disagree on whether the animal is a dog or lamb.

contemporary dress and portrait-like figures in the scene to make this seem like a lived experience rather than a mystical tale.

Though debate remains regarding the narrative of this scene, a few suggestions warrant attention. Barbara Savy argued that the appearance of the Christ Child on the paten generically represented a pre-modern theological argument that linked the human child born to Mary with the transubstantiated body in the Eucharist and the increasing desire to visually witness the host.⁶⁰³ This iconography defended the Catholic interpretation of the Eucharist in light of rising Protestant debates and encouraged a spiritual engagement with the sacrament. I agree that Romanino's painting would have reiterated the Catholic stance on the Eucharist, given the increasingly contentious debates coming from the north. Savy also addressed the likelihood that many of the figures kneeling in the front of the scene represented actual people, and for this reason, I believe the painting carried other local elements.⁶⁰⁴

Maurice Erwin Cope proposed that Romanino's painting referenced a contemporary Brescian visionary named Maddalena Migliorati who had recently died in 1509.⁶⁰⁵ As an Augustinian lay member of Brescia's Santa Croce, Migliorati reportedly had frequent visions of

⁶⁰³ Savy's argument is rooted in a study of Aquinas's Eucharistic thought (based on Augustine) and spiritual consumption. Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 48-49.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 19-20.

⁶⁰⁵ Maurice Erwin Cope, *The Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament in the Sixteenth Century: A Study in the Iconography of the Early Counter-Reformation* (New York: Garland, 1979), 233-234. Alessandro Nova, instead, agreed with others who see the cardinal holding the papal hat as indicative of Gregory the Great and the miraculous tale associated with him. Alessandro Nova, *Girolamo Romanino* (Torino, Italy: Umberto Allemandi, 1994), 244. According to Valerio Guazzoni, the absence of Christ as Man of Sorrows in the typical Gregory story is justified because he believed Romanino's painting referenced a miraculous event that occurred in Ferrara when a Eucharistic host bled and the Christ child appeared; the same Augustinian canons that operated that church in the sixteenth century also ran San Giovanni Evangelista in Brescia. Valerio Guazzoni, *Moretto: il tema sacro* (Brescia, Italy: Grafo edizioni, 1981), 24-25, and ft. 27. This is possible, though once again Romanino has omitted the blood that would visually link the painting to that tale. What I believe is more likely is that this painting represents an amalgamation of all of these local and historical miraculous tales in an effort to bring Eucharistic truth to Brescian visitors. With the absence of the Man of Sorrows or any blood, I do believe the more recent tales of Maddalena Migliorati in Brescia would have been recognized by church visitors in the 1520s. For another discussion of these various proposals, see Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 70-71, ft. 135.

the Christ child appearing in the host during Mass.⁶⁰⁶ If this scene did represent her visions, then it would correspond with the appearance of Mary Magdalene in both of the lower scenes since she was Migliorati's namesake.⁶⁰⁷ Gabriele Neher presented this interpretation along with other local references in the chapel to argue that the cycle as a whole addressed Brescian visitors specifically.⁶⁰⁸ I agree and believe that another local figure also appears in the chapel—Simon of Trent.

As I explored in Chapter 2, North Italian artists used images of Simon as a physical and spiritual substitute for the body of Christ. Jews allegedly murdered Simon in the guise of the crucified Christ out of their hatred for the Christian savior. Woodcuts and frescoes then reiterated this connection by repeatedly comparing Simon with Christ. Though Simon is seemingly absent in this chapel, I argue that the boy's spirit had not faded completely from the region. As I demonstrated in Romanino's later Valcamonica works in Chapter 4, the artist developed a subtle approach to addressing the region's history in his art, and the same is evident in this Brescian painting. Even though this work does not overtly include Simon, the choice of a nude baby Christ standing with arms spread directly invoked the visual tradition of Simon I discussed in Chapter 2. Though this figure of Christ does not suffer, his nudity, pose, and depiction as a child replicate the images of Simon all around the region.

Romanino reinforced this mental comparison by including the small boy directly below the figure of the Christ child. The child, whose attention is directed towards the animal, has his head

⁶⁰⁶ Antonio Cistellini, *Figure della riforma pretridentina* (Brescia, Italy: Morcelliana, 1948), 163.

⁶⁰⁷ Gabriele Neher explained how the female figure to the far left dressed in red with hair exposed could serve as the visual reminder of Mary Magdalene, which aids in identifying the scene with Maddalene Migliorati and her story. Gabriele Neher, "Moretto and Romanino: Religious Painting in Brescia 1510-1550. Identity in the Shadow of *La Serenissima*" (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 1999), 183-184.

⁶⁰⁸ Other local elements relate to the original location of the chapel paintings and the priest-like display of one of the apostles in the Last Supper, among others. See Neher, "Moretto and Romanino," 148-188.

placed directly in front of a red cross that decorates the front of the altar and provides him with his own cruciform halo. The young figure's compositional alignment with the miraculous Christ child and the cross make Simon inextricably present in this scene for local viewers. Just as we saw in the fifteenth-century Rovato fresco of Simon holding the Eucharistic host, Romanino visually insisted on the similitude between Simon's death and Christ's Passion as one of "salvation-historical significance" (Figure 2.16).⁶⁰⁹

Given the sixteenth-century challenges to the Eucharist discussed throughout this dissertation, it is clear that the painting's emphasis had to be *about* Christ and the validity of the sacrament. Any overt mention of Simon might lessen the emphasis on the Eucharist and put the two martyrs at odds with one another, competing for devotion and meaning. If Simon appeared *as* Simon, then the painting risked making Christ's miraculous presence one of validating Simon instead of the Eucharist. Instead, Romanino used typological modes of interpretation to preserve the boy's power and identity in the region while emphasizing the sacrament. Savy has argued that the Old Testament scenes of divine nourishment throughout the chapel juxtapose with the Christian Eucharist in Romanino's painting.⁶¹⁰ This typological fulfillment of the Hebrew Scriptures through Christ echoes Simon's body and blood that Jews allegedly consumed, but it does so through visual allegory that directs away from Simon's literal tale and towards participation in the sacrament.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁹ Ryan McDermott, *Tropologies: Ethics and Invention in England, c. 1350-1600* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016), 88.

⁶¹⁰ Savy, *Manducatio per visum*, 3-72.

⁶¹¹ McDermott used a poetic example of Jonah as allegory for Christ to explain how "allegory is not the opposite of realism, but rather the mode according to which the real appears." *Tropologies*, 88. Following this understanding, belief in Simon's death as a literal event and allegorical type for nourishment through Christ make the life of Christ and the practice of the Eucharist more real, and gives followers hope for their own redemption. *Ibid.*, 188. See also 11-86 for this understanding of allegory.

Local visitors would see the young boy below the altar and consciously think of Simon, but rather than focus on alleged Jewish perfidy—which would diminish the typological arrangement of the chapel—Simon’s gesture indicates that participation in the sacrament is the culmination of his story. The reminder of Migliorati would encourage locals to *see* Christ in the Eucharist just as this painting reveals him and to have faith in the miracle that takes place each Mass. By threading together these stories, Romanino used local memory to reinforce the validity of the Catholic sacrament administered by priests and to counter Jewish denial and Reformation heresy.

To my knowledge, no other Eucharist painting from the early 1500s so conspicuously paired the Christ child with another child present or witnessing the miraculous event. Campbell proposed that Romanino likely used Raphael’s *Mass of Bolsena* (1512-1514) as a model but chose to invent a new composition to place greater emphasis on the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation during the rising Reformation debates; he also argued that Romanino’s central placement of the child and animal served as a visual link to everyday life and participation in Mass (Figure 6.4).⁶¹² While I do not disagree, I believe that Romanino’s decision to portray a blond toddler with the semblance of a cruciform halo directly below the nude Christ child also created a

⁶¹² Campbell, *Endless Periphery*, 202. Raphael’s version did include children, but they are tucked in the lower left section of the lunette far removed from the main scene and do not acknowledge the miracle on the altar. The Mass of Bolsena was another miraculous event involving the Eucharist in Bolsena, near Orvieto. According to the legend, in 1263 a Eucharistic host wafer bled the shape of a cross on the altar tablecloth, thus convincing a doubting priest of transubstantiation. Though a Eucharistic confraternity in Brescia would have certainly appreciated this miracle, none of the compositional features of Romanino’s painting indicate the image depicts the Bolsena event. There is no blood, no obvious reconverted priest, and the red cross on the altar clearly is part of a mosaic surrounded by gold, and not the result of blood on a tablecloth. If Romanino’s work references the visions of Maddalene Migliorati, then a new composition would be warranted anyway. Neher explored how Moretto’s *Last Supper* across from this painting also drew from Raphael’s *Mass of Bolsena* but turned it into a local Brescian version situated in contemporary reality. Neher, “Moretto and Romanino,” 168. Given that these two paintings hung in dialectical conversation with one another, this further underscores my localized reading of Romanino’s *Mystical Mass*.

“too obvious echo” that North Italian visitors would perceive.⁶¹³ Migliorati’s vision and other local references throughout the chapel would encourage this regional recognition of Simon, and together, their memory made the miracle of transubstantiation real; this gap between lived realities and salvation could be filled with priestly administration of the sacrament.

Other paintings continue this work of covertly preserving Simon throughout Northern Italy in a way that would only be meaningful to local viewers. One other example I will briefly mention is Moretto’s *Massacre of the Innocents* (Figure 6.5).⁶¹⁴ This work, also in San Giovanni Evangelista, depicts the moment in Matthew’s Gospel where King Herod orders the death of all male children under the age of two in an attempt to kill the recently born “king of the Jews.”⁶¹⁵ While mostly following the visual type of this biblical story, Moretto’s work includes one especially unique feature: a nude Christ child hovering over the main scene. He stands in a haloed mandorla of light, draped by a billowing white cloth, and holds his cross. A cartouche above him references Psalm 25:21 and labels the scene as the Innocents.⁶¹⁶

Many paintings of this story exist, such as Altobello Melone’s Cremona Cathedral fresco discussed in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.19). In these typical depictions, the narrative takes place without a soaring divine presence.⁶¹⁷ Moretto’s choice to include Christ and to depict him as a child is particularly noteworthy for this region. The divine presence visually implies the children’s

⁶¹³ For the term “too obvious echoes” see Walter Stephens, “Saint Paul among the Amazons: Gender and Authority in Gerusalemme liberata,” in *Discourses of Authority in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, eds. Kevin Brownlee and Walter Stephens (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1989), 169-200.

⁶¹⁴ For a discussion of this painting in relationship to Moretto’s *oeuvre* and other contemporary artists like Titian, see Nickel, “Alessandro Moretto,” 69-118.

⁶¹⁵ Matthew 2:16.

⁶¹⁶ Nickel discussed this cartouche and the particular scripture in relationship to the commission. Nickel, “Alessandro Moretto,” 71-72.

⁶¹⁷ Other examples that precede Moretto’s version include paintings by Giotto (San Francesco (lower), Assisi), Fra Angelo (San Marco, Florence), Ludovico Mazzolino (Uffizi), Domenico Ghirlandaio (Santa Maria Novella, Florence). In all of these, no divine intervention appears.

martyrdom and salvation in the name of Christ, but by depicting Christ as a child Moretto directly harnessed regional memory of Simon. As men murder infants and toddlers at Herod's order, the image of the Christ Child in Brescia uniquely recalls the two-year-old Trentine boy, who—like these Innocents—was allegedly murdered because of fear or hatred of Christ. Christ's white cloth preserves his modesty while mentally eliciting the one used to stifle Simon's cries. With his right arm raised and left arm grasping the cross, the Christ child mimics both the position of his and Simon's deaths. This powerful identification between Christ and Simon would be possible only in this region where the boy's cult emerged just a few decades prior. Just as in Romanino's *Mystical Mass*, Moretto perpetuated the memory of Simon and his affinity with Christ in Brescia.

6.2 Summary of the Current Project

In this dissertation, I have sought to reunite the terrible events surrounding Simon of Trent's death with the effects of the Italian Wars and the Protestant Reformation through the artworks that responded to these incidents. The paintings explored in each chapter reconnect segments of anti-Jewish and anti-Protestant visual rhetoric that continuously embodied Catholic distrust and scapegoating of those who held different religious beliefs. Artists and patrons varied in their specific needs and approaches to addressing these affairs, but in each iteration the artists had to adapt their works to accommodate the evolving "threats" to the Roman Church.

By examining artworks throughout Trent, Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona, Valcamonica, Venice, and others, I have attempted to generate a visual conversation throughout Northern Italy. Traditionally, scholarship has only explored these artists and artworks in context with each contemporaneous event and not threaded these connections across this seventy-five-year span,

despite Simon's cult, the Italian Wars, and the Protestant Reformation all dramatically affecting these same regions of Northern Italy. Scholars such as Stephen Campbell have begun returning agency to artists such as Romanino and Lotto, and this dissertation builds on that work by revealing new modes of interpreting their paintings while situating them within the region's history.⁶¹⁸

I began this dissertation by briefly establishing the history of depicting Jews in Christian art. Chapter 1 included the standard mode of portraying Jews as distinct figures with the pointed "Jewish hat," certain color choices, and eventually stereotypical physiognomies that often included animalistic features.⁶¹⁹ In addition to showing Jews negatively in Passion scenes, later myths, such as the host desecration and ritual murder tales, transformed Jews in Christian art into contemporary villains. These artistic trends continued throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Northern Italy and provide the visual foundation for the chapters that follow.

In Chapter 2, I examined the story and art of Simon of Trent throughout Northern Italy and the ways in which those formulating Simon's cult used art as propaganda both to promote Simon as a saint and condemn Jews. Trent's bishop, Johannes Hinderbach, used written descriptions and woodcuts to spread false information about Simon's death and activate religious fervor in support of the young boy's cult. Through an exploration of Albrecht Kunne's woodcuts, I proposed that the artist's emphasis on Simon's undamaged body provided visual evidence for Hinderbach's call for a cult and sainthood. Also, by choosing not to rely on stereotypical Jewish physiognomy, the woodcuts aligned with Bernardino da Feltre's sermons that anyone could be guilty of being Jew-like, including Christians that befriended or supported Jews. The inclusion of Jewish names on

⁶¹⁸ See Sections 1.4.3, 3.1.2, 3.2, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.2.2, 5.3, 5.4.1, and 5.4.2 for a discussion of Campbell's work.

⁶¹⁹ James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: A Study of the Transformation of Sacred Metaphor into Descriptive Narrative* (Kortrijk, Belgium: Ven Ghemmert, 1979), 33-42.

two of the woodcuts rooted the images in contemporary reality and increased the likelihood viewers would remember to link Simon with Christ as a *novello Cristo* and to fear Jews.

As Simon's cult spread, North Italian towns commissioned frescoes of the boy to harness some of his alleged miraculous power for their own. Rather than use stock figures with Jewish names, the frescoes throughout Valcamonica and Brescia reverted to stereotypical physiognomy mixed with contemporary dress. However, the omission of names meant these frescoes included the Jews living in Northern Italy beyond those accused in Trent. I also demonstrated that in these frescoes, the artists emphasized Simon's wounds and shed blood as a mode of Christocentric devotion and eyewitness testimony, which differed from the unmarred body seen in the Kunne woodcuts. Each local work contained additional unique interpretations. For example, I suggested that the subject choice and compositional arrangements in Cervenno's Parrocchia di San Martino invited a comparison between Jewish and Christian women, with Brunetta serving as the antithesis to Mary.

As the Italian Wars brought death and destruction to Northern Italy, commissions of Simon waned in favor of a focus on the immediate threat from Germany, which I explored in Chapter 3. Artists such as Il Garofalo and Girolamo Romanino lived and worked in the wake of Simon's death and the new threats invading Northern Italy. Romanino took contemporary events and inserted them into his Passion scenes in Cremona Cathedral. Here, sixteenth-century mercenaries known as *Landsknechte* took the place of Jews as the tormentors of Christ, which I suggested provides evidence of the artist responding to contemporary threats while possibly intuiting something theologically different from Christians coming from the same region as Martin Luther. Later in Ferrara, Il Garofalo drew more explicit connections between anti-Jewish rhetoric and the new heretical threat from the north. His work exhibits what Romanino attempted to formulate in

Cremona before the invading Germans had become explicitly labeled as Lutherans in Italian chronicles. I demonstrated that these works reveal how Catholic artists and patrons in Northern Italy situated Protestant heretics as equal to the alleged perfidious Jew.

After Romanino's dismissal from the Cremona project, the artist eventually traveled to Valcamonica where he began two theologically complex fresco cycles. In Chapter 4, I revealed how Romanino took his initial implications against heretics in Cremona and designed paintings that subtly addressed both traditional Jewish enemies and the new Protestant threat. In Santa Maria della Neve, Romanino created a "Mountain Christ" for the Alpine residents of Pisogne that used images of the divine and church art to refute heterodox thinking and provide a visual accompaniment for Christological devotion. I argued that this version of Christ gave the community a commanding savior that reinforced their own local identity and place within Catholic Christendom. I believe this cycle further reiterated Pisogne's self-sufficiency by visually recalling Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling and then blatantly refuting it through an emphasis on anti-Jewish visual rhetoric and Romanino's own anti-classical art style.

Romanino continued this work in Breno's Sant'Antonio Abate. In this fresco cycle, I proposed that the three walls provided multiple levels of interpretation for a variety of visitors. Through a literal, tropological, typological, and anagogic reading, I revealed how Romanino used stories from the Book of Daniel to instruct Breno's local leaders but also reassure citizens who had recently lived under foreign oppression. These paintings served as a promise of God's protection and redemption for the Christian faithful. I also argued that Romanino used Hebrew stories specifically for Christian salvation while slighting the Jews for whom the scriptures were originally written. In these scenes, the Jews depicted prefigure Christ and New Testament stories as foretold through Old Testament scripture. Through these interpretations, I demonstrated that the choice of

subject matter and modes of understanding directly refuted many reformers' use of the same scriptures and their beliefs regarding divine imagery.

While Romanino's work overtly—though at times subtly—contended with so-called Jewish and Protestant enemies of the Catholic Church, other artists took a different visual approach to supporting the Church during the Italian Wars and Protestant Reformation. In Chapter 5, I presented Lorenzo Lotto as a counter-example to Romanino's work and the images of Simon that proceeded them. Using a representative selection of Lotto's *oeuvre*, I showed how the artist consistently used visual experimentation to remain ambiguous regarding non-Catholics in his artworks. Despite painting anti-Jewish preachers, anti-heretical fresco cycles, and other works explicitly designed to emphasize Catholic doctrine over non-believers, Lotto never depicted stereotypical Jews or contemporary Protestants as enemies. Instead, he consistently emphasized Christological devotion and the permissibility of divine images to resolutely support the Catholic Church. Though some works indicate Lotto's dissatisfaction with current institutional practices, his paintings always invited viewers to ponder Christian mysteries and have faith in Christ.

For Romanino, the Italian Wars brought violence, desecration, and despair to his homeland in Lombardy. For the Venetian-born Lotto, heterodox-thinking friends and colleagues may have tempered his response to the rising Reformation debates. None of Romanino's or Lotto's works discussed in this dissertation included images of Simon, though several frescoes of the child existed beside or nearby their works.⁶²⁰ However, I have sought to demonstrate that the same spirit

⁶²⁰ See Section 4.2.2 and footnote 393 of that section for Romanino's subtle allusion to Simon in Breno's Sant'Antonio and 6.1 for his allusion in the *Mystic Mass*. Interestingly, for many years in recent history, Altobello Melone's depiction of Simon, discussed below, was attributed to Romanino. Both artists worked at the same time in similar regions. The wall label in the Castello del Buonconsiglio even remarks on the painting's similarity to Romanino's style. For more on the prior attribution to Romanino, see Valentina Perini, *Il Simonino: Geografia di un culto* (Trent, Italy: Società di studi trentini di scienze storiche, 2012), 169-170.

and distrust of Jews from the fifteenth century persisted throughout sixteenth-century Northern Italy and manifested in ways that also addressed Reformation heretics. Without direct, personal acknowledgement from either artist, we cannot assign Romanino or Lotto a precise religious belief.⁶²¹ However, their artworks came to fruition through a series of choices made in a particular climate, and in these works we gain a sense of what each artist was and was not willing to do in the creation of sacred imagery during a time of theological upheaval in their communities.

At the start of this concluding chapter I discussed a few paintings by Romanino and Moretto that revealed the enduring the memory of Simon in Brescia, especially in Brescia's Augustinian church of San Giovanni Evangelista. This discussion represents only a fragment of the relevant content throughout this region, which I will explore in future iterations of this project. Also, I have noted the concept of "ocular communion" and its potential relationship to works discussed in several chapters of this dissertation.⁶²² Campbell has astutely explored how Romanino, Moretto, and Lotto's works addressed the contentious Eucharist debates during the Reformation. I intend to expand further on his work by incorporating the concept of ocular communion across the seventy-five years explored in this dissertation and beyond through the Council of Trent. Lastly, a thread exists throughout these works that relates to the role of Christian women in Catholic doctrine and visual rhetoric. Brunetta in the images of Simon, Mary Magdalene's animated hair in Pisogne, Anne's rosary beads in Bienno, and the four female saints in Lotto's Trescore frescoes, among many others, all indicate the importance of portraying godly

⁶²¹ Christopher Nygren has noted that "No historical account of any artist can any longer claim to excavate and represent a singular, stable, and preexistent artistic identity." Christopher J. Nygren, *Titian's Icons: Tradition, Charisma, and Devotion in Renaissance Italy* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020), 2-3. Though we know a great deal about Lotto's life, our only access to his beliefs are sparse references to his Christian faith. Like Nygren, I believe using Lotto's art to reconstruct artist beliefs can no longer be the art historian's aim. See also Gabriele Guercio, *Art as Existence: The Artist's Monograph and Its Project* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2006).

⁶²² See Sections 2.1.4 and 5.4.2. This also applies to Romanino's *Mystical Mass*, discussed in Section 6.1.

women. I plan to further investigate the use of these women as Christian *exempla* or Jewish folly in conjunction with the regional fear of women as the root of witchcraft and superstition.⁶²³

Ultimately, the works explored in this dissertation encompass a miniscule fraction of what Italian artists created during these seventy-five years. However, I hope that the project as I have written it provides additional insight into these artists, their paintings, their patrons, and the ways in which their works were indelibly connected to one another by revealing a continuous thread of distrust and hatred towards religious others in the Catholic experience. Through Romanino and Lotto, I have elucidated how two sixteenth-century artists took the visual heritage of the fifteenth century and modified it to address contemporary issues. Far more could be said about each artwork or artist if this were a monographic project. Instead, I have tried to emphasize the value of a multifaceted approach to art history by uniting the anti-Jewish animus that facilitated Simon of Trent's cult with anti-Protestant visual rhetoric in Catholic artworks.

6.3 The Cult Continues

To conclude, I would like to briefly discuss the reach of Simon in the twenty-first century. In the Castello del Buonconsiglio museum in Trent, two sixteenth-century paintings hang side-by-side. On the left, a Northern European *Madonna and Child* (1530)—copied after Raphael's Bridgewater Madonna—depicts an intimate moment between mother and child (Figure 6.6). As

⁶²³ My understanding of the role and fear of women related to witchcraft and superstition is reliant on Walter Stephens's work, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Other important works include Brian P. Levack, *New Perspectives on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology*, vol. 2: *Witchcraft in Continental Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2001), and Rainer Decker, *Witchcraft and the Papacy*, trans. by H.C. Erik Midelfort (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

Mary cradles the young Jesus, the boy twists and rolls like an unsettled child and grasps the edge of his mother's cloak to keep from falling off her lap. Mary stares lovingly at her son with rosy cheeks that match her own, as Jesus casts his gaze toward and seemingly beyond her to an unseen subject out of the top right of the picture plane.⁶²⁴ To the right of this painting hangs Altobello Melone's painting of *Simon of Trent* (1521) (Figure 6.7).⁶²⁵ Here, a nude Simon stands in glory while holding the pincers and scalpel of his martyrdom, and his characteristic white kerchief hangs loosely tied around his neck like a scarf. With his left forefinger, he instructs the viewer to look down at the pedestal on which he stands where a row of nails have been delicately propped against the side, all balanced precariously on their tips that would have pierced his skin. In the center of the wooden box, an inscription identifies the figure as Simon and gives the year of the painting's completion. Unlike the wounded and bloody frescoes of Simon explored in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, Melone's version appears physically unharmed with no blood or injuries visible. Instead, the rosy-cheeked boy with his wavy flowing hair appears healthy and well, though melancholy as he gazes directly at viewers.

Unlike other works spaced throughout the museum, these two paintings converse with one another as they closely hang alone on the wall (Figure 6.8). Due to their proximity and placement—the *Madonna and Child* hangs slightly lower than the Simon, horizontally aligning

⁶²⁴ In Raphael's version, the Christ child more clearly returns his mother's gaze. Trent's anonymous version—depending on where the viewer stands—reads as if the child looks just below Mary and thus out of the frame. While the artist certainly could have meant to copy Raphael's composition directly, the gallery directors have taken advantage of this slightly altered focal point.

⁶²⁵ Melone's work is one of two paintings commissioned in the 1520s, both of which were for patrons in the Province of Trent. The other is an anonymous fresco in the Church of San Lorenzo in Mechel, a very small Alpine village twenty-five miles north of Trent. Like Melone's painting, the Mechel Simon stands in glory. However, instead of implements of his martyrdom, this Simon holds a Crusader flag and shield, and he stands with his foot crushing a depiction of the "defeated Jew." Due to damage, the figure of the Jew is barely visible today. For more on this work, see Perini, *Il Simonino*, 168. As a reminder to the reader, Melone was the artist that preceded Romanino in the fresco cycle at Cremona Cathedral, explored in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

the panels along a central axis—it appears as if Jesus gazes beyond his mother and directly into the face of Simon. Both paintings have distant landscapes that the edge of the composition cuts off: in the *Madonna and Child*, the scene disappears to the right, and behind Simon it vanishes to the left. Though the landscapes appear distinct and not contiguous, the spatial arrangement of the two works visually unites the compositions.

While the glance and landscapes unite the two paintings, the verisimilitude between the two boys is striking. They appear modeled after the same child with their supple rosy cheeks, light curly hair, pale skin, pristine young bodies, and haloes, and though painted by different artists in different regions, the curatorial placement makes the comparison unavoidable. A visitor unfamiliar with Christian narratives and martyrs might easily mistake the paintings as depicting the same child before reading the wall labels that name them, albeit only in Italian. This deliberate arrangement by the curators emphasizes the continuing spirit of Simon’s cult and his association with Christ.⁶²⁶

Outside of the museum, Simon lives on in the extant fifteenth- and sixteenth-century fresco cycles and other church art that visibly preserve his martyrdom, despite the cult being formally suppressed in 1965.⁶²⁷ Unfortunately, these visual cues that reinforce theological assimilation between Christ and Simon are not the only lingering aspects of that fateful event in 1475. In

⁶²⁶ I want to call attention to the Simon painting’s wall label, which states, “...la tavola raffigura Simonino, con i simboli del suo presunto martirio. Il bimbo fu ritenuto vittima di un infanticidio rituale avvenuto a Trento nella Pasqua del 1475 e di cui fu incolpata ingiustamente la comunità ebraica.” (“The panel depicts Simon, with the symbols of his alleged martyrdom. The child was considered the victim of a ritual infanticide that took place in Trent during Easter of 1475 and of which the Jewish community was unjustly blamed.”) Though the arrangement heightens the comparison between Christ and Simon, the Italian label does use the words “alleged” and “unjustly blamed” to describe the incident.

⁶²⁷ Magda Teter, *Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 2. See Perini, *Il Simonino*, for a list of all the extant Simon artworks throughout Italy. As she noted throughout the book, most of these images were never covered with plaster or new paintings, and instead have visually persisted over the centuries.

2020—while I worked on this dissertation—Italian artist Giovanni Gasparro completed a seven-foot tall oil painting depicting the *Martyrdom of Saint Simon of Trent* (Figure 6.9).⁶²⁸ This work shows Simon being martyred in the same manner as many of the works discussed in Chapter 2. Simon, splayed and held aloft by grasping arms and the white cloth around his neck, has his blood drained by an overwhelmingly large crowd of Jews. Wounds on his leg align with the earlier tales, but in this image Simon also bears a side wound that directly evokes the Passion of Christ. Sixteen figures—two of whom are women—crowd around the boy, and most of them hold instruments of his martyrdom or bowls to catch blood. Through sneers and bared teeth, many appear to be raucously laughing and taking delight in torturing the boy. Though the crowd includes seven people more than the fifteenth-century woodcuts included, two of the figures appear congruent with the original tale: the elderly Moses, here dressed as a rabbi and holding the cloth taut around the boy’s neck, and Brunetta who lurks as a voyeur in the back left of the scene. Various figures exhibit hairstyles and attire that denote their Jewishness, but Gasparro also included exaggerated hooked noses recalling earlier physiognomic stereotypes I discussed in Chapter 1. In the upper right, a lit menorah hovers aloft and seems as though it, too, is a member of the menacing group that threatens the child. One central figure with his head directly beside Simon inquisitively looks out, as if inviting viewers to join the murderous ensemble. Above the scene (but visually separate as a faux diptych), three putti scrunch their faces in despair and prepare to deliver a wreath and palm of martyrdom after Simon’s suffering ends.

Though now in a private collection, this painting caused an immediate public sensation when unveiled by the artist on Facebook. Quickly, various groups called for the social media site

⁶²⁸ Even though the cult was suppressed and Simon never beatified, Gasparro bestowed the title of “Saint” on Simon.

to remove the post as slander, though others came to the image's defense.⁶²⁹ Rabbi Abraham II urged both Facebook and the Catholic Church to intervene, stating that, "This is not art, it is hate."⁶³⁰ The painting's mere existence speaks to the ongoing power Simon has among his faithful.

Simultaneous to Gasparro's work, the Museo Diocesano Tridentino produced an exhibition titled, "L'invenzione del colpevole: Il 'caso' di Simonino da Trento dalla propaganda alla storia," which ran from December 2019 to September 2020.⁶³¹ This exhibition carefully retraced Simon's story from 1475 by using propagandistic images and text, and unabashedly made clear that the event was a tragic sham.⁶³² The exhibition was a success, winning several education awards; however the project also conjured visible reminders of persistent prejudice as people defaced the advertisement posters with anti-Jewish slurs.⁶³³ Ironically, enough parties feared that the exhibition would become an impetus for rekindling Simon's cult and further anti-Jewish rhetoric in Trent—rather than provide the necessary education to dispute the cult—and authorities ended the show, instead of letting it permanently remain as the curator had intended.⁶³⁴ If Gasparro's painting is any indication, the exhibition need not exist to perpetuate anti-Jewish rhetoric in Italy.

⁶²⁹ Donatello Baldo, "Quadro antisemita dedicato a Simonino," Osservatorio Antisemitismo, April 2, 2020, <https://www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it/articoli/quadro-antisemita-dedicato-a-simonino/>. As of December 2021, Gasparro's Facebook page no longer contains photos of this painting. Giovanni Gasparro, Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/giovanngasparroart/photos>. However, it remains on his personal art website. "Martirio di San Simonino da Trento (Simone Unverdorben)," *Dipinti*, last accessed December 21, 2021, <http://www.giovanngasparro.com/sp.php?p=996>.

⁶³⁰ "Questa non è arte, è odio." Quoted by Baldo, "Quadro antisemita."

⁶³¹ "The Invention of the Guilty. The 'case' of Simon of Trent, from propaganda to history."

⁶³² "L'invenzione del colpevole: Il 'caso' di Simonino da Trento dalla propaganda alla storia," Museo Diocesano Tridentino, last accessed December 21, 2021, <https://www.museodiocesanotridentino.it/articoli/linvenzione-del-colpevole-il-caso-di-simonino-da-trento-dalla-propaganda-alla-storia-003>. See also, Domenica Primerano, ed. *L'Invenzione del Colpevole: Il 'caso' di Simonino da Trento dalla propaganda alla storia* (Trent, Italy: Editrice Temi Sas, 2019).

⁶³³ Tomaso Montanari, "La mostra chiude i battenti". La direttrice saluta e se ne va," *Emergenza Cultura*, October 18, 2021, <https://emergenzacultura.org/2021/10/18/la-mostra-chiude-i-battenti-la-direttrice-saluta-e-se-ne-va/>.

⁶³⁴ As a result, the lead curator, Domenica Primerano, resigned. *Ibid*.

This exhibition and Gasparro's painting had their public debuts less than two years after the horrific massacre at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018, which took place just a few miles from my home.⁶³⁵ To say that this dissertation is timely would ignore the centuries of death and turmoil Jews have suffered around the world. However, since we risk considering ourselves removed from the events of the past, I hope that this project illuminates the ways in which people merely adapt and transform previous modes of hate and prejudice into new uses. As is evident through daily news coverage, the cycle continues, and images inescapably manipulate twenty-first-century thought. Though my project focuses on artworks and events from over five centuries ago, I believe it demonstrates the ways in which art history can provide meaningful insight into human engagement with and the agency of images. By recognizing the ways in which visual rhetoric perpetuates or avoids social injustice, we can move beyond reflection and take action to dispel prejudice and protect those who need it.

⁶³⁵ As those who live through events like 9/11 often say, I will never forget where I was or what I was doing on that day. For deeply moving reflections on this event, see *Bound in the Bond of Life: Pittsburgh Writers Reflect on the Tree of Life Tragedy*, eds. Beth Kissileff and Eric Lidji (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020).

Appendix A Figures

Note: The following figures have been redacted due to copyright considerations.

Chapter 1

Figure 1.1. Unknown, *Scenes from the Old and New Testament*, 360-370. Ivory, Museo Civico Cristiano, Brescia. Known as the Brescia Lipsanoteca, from the monastery of San Salvatore and Santa Giulia. Photo: Andrea Maxwell, 2019.

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Coloring not part of the original printing and dissemination. Photo: Magda Teter, <https://thebloodlibeltrail.org/images>, 2019.

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Figure 5.30. Fra Bartolomeo or workshop, *St. Antoninus Distributing Alms*, 1516. Tempera on panel, Museo Civio, Pistoia. Photo: Art Resource.

Figure 5.31. Gian Martino Spanzotti, *St. Antoninus Distributing Alms*, 1525. Fresco, San Domenico, Turin. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.32. Giambologna, *St. Antoninus Distributing Alms*, 1580-1588. Bronze, St. Antoninus Chapel, San Marco, Florence. Photo: Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, "Giambologna's Salviati reliefs of St Antoninus of Florence: saintly images and political manipulation" *Renaissance Studies* 22 (2008): 204.

Figure 5.33. Masaccio, *The Distribution of Alms and the Death of Ananias*, 1426-1427. Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.34. Fra Angelico, *St. Lawrence Distributing Alms*, 1447-1449. Fresco, Cappella Niccolina north wall, Palazzi Pontifici, Rome. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.35. Fra Angelico, *St. Stephen Distributing Alms*, 1447-1449. Fresco, Cappella Niccolina west wall, Palazzi Pontifici, Rome. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.36. Lorenzo Lotto, *St. Lucy Distributing Her Dowry among the Poor*, detail of the St. Lucy altarpiece predella, 1532. Oil on wood, Pinacoteca civica e galleria di arte contemporanea, Jesi. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 5.37. Lorenzo Lotto, *Fra Gregorio Belo*, 1546-1547. Oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 5.38. Lorenzo Lotto, *Fra Gregorio Belo* detail, 1546-1547. Oil on canvas, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo: Andrea Maxwell, 2021.

Figure 5.39. Lorenzo Lotto, *Friar Angelo Ferretti as Saint Peter Martyr*, 1549. Oil on canvas, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum of Art. Photo: Harvard Art Museum.

Figure 5.40. Giovanni Bellini, *The Assassination of Saint Peter Martyr*, 1507. National Gallery of Art, London. Photo: National Gallery of Art.

Figure 5.41. 1691 copy by Johann Carl Loth of Titian, *The Death of Saint Peter Martyr*, 1528-1529. Oil on canvas, originally in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, lost in a fire. Photo: WikiArt.

Figure 5.42. Moretto da Brescia, *The Assassination of Saint Peter Martyr*, 1530-1535. Oil on canvas, Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Chapter 6

Figure 6.1. Romanino, the *Mystical Mass*, *Resurrection of Lazarus*, *Supper in the House of the Pharisee*, with Old Testament Prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zachariah, Malachi, Moses, and Habakkuk, and the Evangelists Matthew and John, 1521-24 and ca. 1543-45. Oil on panel, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia. Photo: Giovanni Testori, *Romanino e Moretto Alla Cappella Del Sacramento* (Brescia, Italy: Grafo, 1975), unnumbered plates.

Figure 6.2. Moretto da Brescia, *Last Supper*, *Elijah and the Angel*, and the *Gathering of Manna* with Old Testament Prophets David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Haggai, Micah, and Hosea, and the Evangelists Mark and Luke, 1521-24 and ca. 1543-45. Oil on panel, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia. Photo: Giovanni Testori, *Romanino e Moretto Alla Cappella Del Sacramento* (Brescia, Italy: Grafo, 1975), unnumbered plates.

Figure 6.3. Romanino, *Mystical Mass*, 1520s. Oil on panel, Chapel of the Holy Sacrament, San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia. Photo: Giovanni Testori, *Romanino e Moretto Alla Cappella Del Sacramento* (Brescia, Italy: Grafo, 1975), unnumbered plates.

Figure 6.4. Raphael, *Mass of Bolsena*, 1512-1514. Fresco, Apostolic Palace, Vatican. Photo: Vatican Museum.

Figure 6.5. Moretto da Brescia, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1530-32. Oil on panel (transferred to canvas), San Giovanni Evangelista, Brescia. Photo: Kirk Nickel, “Alessandro Moretto and the Decomposition of the Painter’s Art in Renaissance Brescia” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 252.

Figure 6.6. Anonymous, *Madonna and Child*, 1530. (After Raphael’s Bridgewater Madonna, 1507, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.) Oil on panel, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trent. Photo: Andrea Maxwell, 2019.

Figure 6.7. Altobello Melone, *Simon of Trent*, 1521. Oil on panel, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trent. Photo: Andrea Maxwell, 2019.

Figure 6.8. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 on display in Castello del Buonconsiglio, Trent. Photo: Andrea Maxwell, 2019.

Figure 6.9. Giovanni Gasparro, *Martyrdom of Saint Simon of Trent*, 2019-2020. Oil on canvas, private collection. Photo: <http://www.giovannigasparro.com/>.

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