

**THE EVOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE IN VENETIAN PAINTING, 1475-1525**

by

**James Reynolds Jewitt**

BA in Art History, Hartwick College, 2006

BA in English, Hartwick College, 2006

MA, University of Pittsburgh, 2009

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This dissertation was presented

by

James Reynolds Jewitt

It was defended on

April 7, 2014

and approved by

C. Drew Armstrong, Associate Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Kirk Savage, Professor, History of Art and Architecture

Jennifer Waldron, Associate Professor, Department of English

Dissertation Advisor: Ann Sutherland Harris, Professor Emerita, History of Art and Architecture

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## THE EVOLUTION OF LANDSCAPE IN VENETIAN PAINTING, 1475-1525

James R. Jewitt, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2014

Landscape painting assumed a new prominence in Venetian painting between the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century: this study aims to understand why and how this happened. It begins by redefining the conception of landscape in Renaissance Italy and then examines several ambitious easel paintings produced by major Venetian painters, beginning with Giovanni Bellini's (c.1431-36-1516) *St. Francis in the Desert* (c.1475), that give landscape a far more significant role than previously seen in comparable commissions by their peers, or even in their own work.

After an introductory chapter reconsidering all previous hypotheses regarding Venetian painters' reputations as accomplished landscape painters, it is divided into four chronologically arranged case study chapters. Three of these focus on the artists identified during their own lifetimes as specialists in landscape painting in northern Italy—Tiziano Vecellio (c.1485-90-1576), Girolamo Savoldo (fl.1506-48), and Dosso Dossi (c.1486-1542). Working from a more historicized definition of landscape, my study shifts focus from questions of landscape's origins and status to a more nuanced examination of its function in private residences. Bellini's *St. Francis* is considered anew in light of humanist-inspired aesthetics as a precursor to Venetian *poesie* that celebrated an artistically self-conscious approach to image-making. Titian's youthful *Flight into Egypt* (c.1507) is analyzed for the first time in regard to its original presentation in the main reception hall of its patron Andrea Loredan's palace. Savoldo's *Temptation of St. Anthony* (c.1520) is reconsidered, on the basis of unpublished technical analysis, as a document of the artist's presence in Venice and his adaptation of Flemish landscape to suit the tastes of local

clients. Finally, a reevaluation of Dosso's *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* centering on the landscape and its theoretical implications is proposed. Dosso's painting of atmospheric phenomena embodies theories published decades later advocating painting's superiority over sculpture and the painter's god-like ability to portray all of Nature's creation. These focused analyses suggest that landscape achieved a new position in Venice from 1475-1525. Ultimately, this dissertation proposes that the goals of virtuoso landscape painting were two-fold: to enhance both the doctrinal message and delight audiences absorbed from a picture.

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## PREFACE

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Over the past seven years my family has supported me in countless ways. My parents Catherine and Charles Jewitt encouraged my appreciation of art, art history, and nature from my earliest days. Their constant love and encouragement, along with that of my brother Scott Jewitt, has helped make this PhD possible. My interest in landscape painting is owed to my grandmother Cecelia Phillips, a gifted landscapist, conservationist, gardener, and botanist in her own right. Her sensitive paintings of the Maine wilderness were my earliest experience of landscape pictures and invested me with a profound affinity for images of the natural world. Finally, I would like to thank my wife Caitlin Jewitt. This process would have been unimaginable without her. I am thankful to her, in addition, for her intelligent comments during a trip to the Minneapolis Institute of Art in the summer of 2007, at the exhibition, *A Mirror of Nature: Nordic Landscape Painting 1840-1910*, when she asked why it never rained in landscape paintings. This earnest question ultimately provided the inspiration for my M.A. thesis. Because of her unflagging encouragement, patience, generosity, sacrifices, love, and belief in me, it is to her that I dedicate this dissertation.

James R. Jewitt

April 2014

Indianapolis, IN

FOR CAITLIN, WITH MUCH GRATITUDE AND LOVE.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1525 the Venetian writer, collector, and art connoisseur Marcantonio Michiel visited the home of a nobleman in Venice where he observed an easel painting on display that he described as:

“The panel of St. Francis in the wilderness in oil was the work of Giovanni Bellini, begun by him for M. Zuan Michiel and it has a landscape nearby marvelously composed and detailed.”<sup>1</sup>

Michiel’s entry is preserved in his manuscript of *Notizie* describing art he saw throughout Northern Italy from 1521-43. His diary is a fundamental source for our knowledge of private Venetian collections and the above lines are the first known record of Giovanni Bellini’s celebrated *St. Francis in the Desert* (c.1475), now in the Frick Collection in New York (fig.1.1). Although it may not appear so, his terse report of its “landscape marvelously composed and detailed” constitutes high praise since the *Notizie* are notoriously laconic. Of the eighteen entries in which he uses the Italian word “*paese*” to refer to an image, his description of the *St. Francis* is the most evocative.

Art historians have made much of Michiel’s use of the term *paese* to label a painting of natural scenery, particularly his designation of a small picture painted by Giorgione seen in another Venetian palace as, “the small landscape on canvas with the storm, with the gypsy and

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<sup>1</sup> Marcantonio Michiel, *Der Anonimo Morelliano (Marcantonio Michiel’s Notizie d’Opera del Disegno)*, ed., Theodor Frimmel (Vienna: Carl Graeser, 1896), 88: “La tauola del San Francesco nel deserto a oglio fo opera de Zuan Bellino, cominciata da lui a M. Zuan Michiel et ha un paese proprinquo finite e ricercato mirabilmente.”

the soldier, made by the hand of Giorgio of Castelfranco.”<sup>2</sup> Viewing Giorgione’s picture today we might agree that the lush outdoor surroundings do predominate over the soldier and gypsy, thereby inverting the usual hierarchy between figures and setting existing in easel paintings at this time (fig.1.2). In his influential essay “Renaissance Artistic Theory and the Development of Landscape Painting,” E. H. Gombrich pointed to Michiel’s *Notizie* as the genesis of landscape as an independent genre of painting.<sup>3</sup> Following Gombrich, studies of landscape in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been dominated by debates over its precise origins and causes for them, many critics identifying Giorgione and his circle in Venice as inventors of what would become the modern landscape genre, even locating its roots in a single picture such as the *Tempest* (c.1507).

As Charles Hope contended, “Giorgione was one of the first artists to work almost exclusively for connoisseurs, extending the narrow range of subject matter to include new picture types such as landscapes.”<sup>4</sup> From her inspired analyses of Michiel and his *Notizie*, Jennifer Fletcher similarly underscored Michiel’s aesthetic appreciation for landscape painting as a sign of its status as a separate category of picture.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Nils Büttner in his recent survey of the history of landscape asserted that through Giorgione, “the painted landscape became an aesthetic object.”<sup>6</sup>

This tendency to emphasize the budding role of art connoisseurship—perilously close to modern art historians’ agency—as a motivating factor for the rise of landscape painting as a

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<sup>2</sup> Michiel, 106: “El paesetto in tela cun la tempesta, cun la cingana et soldato, fo de man de Zorzi da Castelfranco.” Recent literature on the painting is summarized in Marco Paoli, *La ‘Tempesta’ Svelata. Giorgione, Gabriele Vendramin, Cristoforo Marcello e La ‘Vecchia’* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> E. H. Gombrich, “Renaissance Artistic Theory and the Development of Landscape Painting,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 6, 41 (May-June, 1953), 335-360.

<sup>4</sup> Jane Martineau and Charles Hope, ed., *The Genius of Venice 1500-1600* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983), 19.

<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Fletcher, “Marcantonio Michiel’s Collection,” *Burlington Magazine*, 36 (1973), 384; Jennifer Fletcher, “Marcantonio Michiel: His Friends and Collection,” *Burlington Magazine*, 123, 941 (Aug., 1981), 465.

<sup>6</sup> Nils Büttner, *Landscape Painting—A History* (New York: Abbeville, 2006), 74.

distinct category is problematic. These models imply that an anachronistic and modern art-for-art's-sake interest existed for sixteenth-century viewers. Studying landscape in Renaissance Venice one must come to terms with its ambiguous status. It was unappreciated by art theorists until the middle of the century but collected with enthusiasm by a number of well-educated patrons. It remains difficult to define landscape as an independent genre when it barely existed as such, except in hindsight to the art historian who is able to isolate a few small paintings in which figures play a minimal or even nonexistent role compared to the wilderness setting. Reindert Falkenburg recently concluded that “Landscape as an acknowledged ‘institution’ of art—at least in the sixteenth century—is a myth imposed upon the archives.”<sup>7</sup>

Landscapes evidently played a relatively minor role even for private collectors. By far the most common images found in Venetian homes across all social classes during this period were small devotional *ancone*, or Greek-inspired icons of the Virgin.<sup>8</sup> Bertrand Jestaz has compiled a database of nearly 1,400 pictures listed in Venetian inventories throughout the sixteenth century, of which only 110 are identified as landscapes. In other words, they were 3% of total images. In comparison, a database of similar inventories made for Antwerp listed landscapes as 3% of all pictures solely for the twenty year period from 1565-1585.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Isabella Cecchini has found landscapes nearly absent from Venetian inventories she consulted prior to 1520.<sup>10</sup> Landscapes occurred more frequently in the 74 inventories made between 1523-91 that Monika Schmitter consulted in her recent study of pictures made for the reception halls of Venetian

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<sup>7</sup> Reindert L. Falkenburg, “Landscape,” *Kritische Berichte: Zeitschrift für Kunst- und Kulturwissenschaften* 35, 3 (2007), 45-50.

<sup>8</sup> Isabella Palumbo-Fossatti, “L’ interno della casa dell’ artigiano e dell’ artista nella Venezia del Cinquecento,” *Studi Veneziani*, n.s., 8 (1984), 132.

<sup>9</sup> Michel Hochmann, “Le collezioni veneziane nel Rinascimento: storia e storiografia,” in Michel Hochmann, Rosella Lauber, and Stefania Mason, ed., *Il collezionismo d’ arte a Venezia. Dalle origini al Cinquecento*, vol. II (Venice: Marsilio, 2008), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Isabella Cecchini, “Collezionismo e mondo materiale,” in Hochmann, et al., 165-192.

palaces.<sup>11</sup> By mid-century they were the most popular image-type displayed in Venetian homes, to judge from archival evidence.<sup>12</sup>

The rise in the popularity of images with detailed outdoor settings coincided with more focused theoretical consideration of them. Not until 1548 with the publication of Paolo Pino's *Dialogo di pittura* did serious discussion occur of landscape's role in the visual arts in Venice (fig.1.3). A year later Anton Francesco Doni's *Disegno* (1549) framed its relation to sculpture. Lodovico Dolce's painting manual (1557) hardly mentions this branch of imagery at all, beyond a few patches of greenery Titian painted. For example, he calls the forest setting of Titian's acclaimed *St. Peter Martyr* altarpiece (c.1527-29) for SS. Giovanni e Paolo, "a patch of landscape with several elder trees" ("una macchia di paese con certi arbori di Sambuco").<sup>13</sup> Dolce exhibits slightly more enthusiasm in a letter to Alessandro Contarini appended to the published text of his treatise. He recounts how Titian managed to paint such a lovely "plot of landscape" in a picture of *Venus and Adonis* (1554) and marvels at "the sun's wonderful rays and reflections that illuminate and gladden the whole landscape."<sup>14</sup> Dolce is clearly praising these wooded backdrops, though viewed them as pleasing accompaniments to the principal action. An extended commentary on landscape did appear in Venice later in the cartographer Cristoforo

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<sup>11</sup> Monika Schmitter, "The Quadro da Portego in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Art," *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, 3 (Fall 2011), 708. Despite conceding their important role, Schmitter does not investigate landscapes: "I will not address here the many images of the Madonna, Christ, and individual saints, nor will I focus on the many portraits, maps, and landscapes, although this is not to imply that such images could not also be ideological." Cf. her appendix, 744-46.

<sup>12</sup> Chriscinda Henry, "What makes a picture?: Evidence from sixteenth-century Venetian property inventories," *Journal of the History of Collections* 23, 2 (2011), 258.

<sup>13</sup> Mark W. Roskill, *Dolce's Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press in association with the Renaissance Society of America, 2000), 190.

<sup>14</sup> Roskill, 216: "Trovasi ancora nel medesimo quadro una macchia d'un paese di qualità, che'l vero non è tanto vero: dove al sommo d'un picciol colle non molto lontano dalla vista v'è un pargoletto Cupido, che si dorme all'ombra; la quale gli batte diritto sopra il capo; & al d'intorno v'ha splendori e riflessi di Sole mirabilissimi, che allumano, & allegrano tutto il paese"; [One also finds in the same picture a blot of landscape of such a quality that the reality is not so real: where at the summit of a small hill not very far in the distance is seen a little baby Cupid who sleeps in the shade falling directly upon his head; and around him are seen the sun's wonderful rays and reflections that illuminate and gladden the whole landscape]. As Roskill points out, Dolce was alluding to the *Venus and Adonis* now in the Prado.

Sorte's *Osservazioni nella pittura* (1580). Sorte's manual gives detailed instructions on how to paint a proper landscape vista ("come si possa imitare un paese"), as well as the more difficult painterly phenomena of sunsets, night scenes, and fire landscapes.<sup>15</sup> This increasing fascination with the naturalistic depiction of outdoor settings by mid-century is evident if we compare the frequency of Vasari's use of the term "*paese*" between the two editions of his *Lives of the Artists*: in the 1550 text the word appears 89 times, increasing in the 1568 edition to 207.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in 1584 G. P. Lomazzo wrote an entire chapter on the "Composizione del pingere & fare i paesi diversi."<sup>17</sup> By the early seventeenth century, Karel van Mander would devote a lengthy didactic poem to the principles of landscape painting in the *Grondt der Schilder-Const*, which he appended to his more famous *Schilder-Boeck* (1604).<sup>18</sup>

## 1.1 THE RENAISSANCE CONCEPTION OF LANDSCAPE

A significant advance in our understanding of the complex views toward landscape that existed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was made by Karen Goodchild in her Ph.D. thesis, "Towards an Italian Renaissance Theory of Landscape." Unjustly overlooked by art historians, Goodchild's study clarified the often competing ideologies that simultaneously relegated landscape to a low position in the hierarchy of genres but celebrated its sensuous appeal and

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<sup>15</sup> Cristoforo Sorte, *Osservazioni nella pittura* (Venice, 1580), 9r: "Hora c'habbiamo trattato del colorire sù la carta, veggiamo come si possa imitare un paese in tela à guazzo, & in prospettiva, & incominciando da i confini della notte & del giorno, veggiamo quando la bellissima Aurora, lasciato ne' liti dell'Oceano a giacere Titone il vecchio suo marito, adorna di rose, di bianchissimi gigli, & di viole, & co' capelli di finissimo oro, se ne viene innanzi à preparare il viaggio al sorgente Sole, il quale à l'Orientale Orizzonte auicinandosi, & trahendo dal mare i bagnati cavalli incomincia co'raggi i vicini nuvoletti à ferire, & indi à poco à poco à dimostrare per le vicine tenebre ancora della fuggiente notte, le nascose bellezze della terra."

<sup>16</sup> Karen Goodchild, "'A Hand More Practiced and Sure': The History of Landscape Painting in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, *Artibus et Historiae* 32, 64 (2011), 25.

<sup>17</sup> Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura* (Milan, 1584), bk.6, ch.61, 473-75.

<sup>18</sup> On this text, see Hessel Miedema, "Karel Van Mander's Grondt Der Edel Vry Schilder-Const: ('Foundations of the Noble and Free Art of Painting'), *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34, 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1973), 653-68.

technical difficulty. A major conclusion resulting from her survey, and several subsequent articles, is a more nuanced and historicized definition of landscape in Renaissance Italy rather distinct from our modern conception. Goodchild qualified Gombrich's idea that "pure" landscape was possible in this era—that is landscape "empty" of narrative subject-matter—and de-emphasized the notion of it as an autonomous genre. Instead, for Renaissance audiences what constituted landscape was any natural motif of outdoor views (sunsets, buildings, mountains) within the overall work that was supplemental to the principal action. According to her, there also existed separate aesthetic criteria to evaluate these elements.<sup>19</sup>

This model corresponds with the "patch of landscape" Dolce picked out in Titian's painting, and the "landscape nearby" the hermit saint Michiel noted in Bellini's *St. Francis*.<sup>20</sup> Sixteenth-century viewers isolated landscape as a discrete unit within the overall composition. Most revealing is Vasari's and other writers' frequent reference to landscape in the plural (*paesi*) signaling the presence of multiple ornamental components within a single work. As such, Goodchild surmises that "[Vasari's] understanding of landscape is paradoxically both more extensive and more restrictive than ours...it could include buildings and figures, and also...many types of light sources. In fact, it could include any aspect of the decorative setting of a work."<sup>21</sup> According to this framework, even Giorgione's rustic gypsy and soldier integrated into their verdant riverbank could be landscape, though Goodchild does not suggest this. In 1646, Edward

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<sup>19</sup> Karen Goodchild, "Towards an Italian Renaissance Theory of Landscape," Ph.D. Diss., University of Virginia, 1998, 14-15: "Amateur Renaissance collectors who write about landscape often do not make a distinction between the decorative arts, furnishings, and paintings. Even sixteenth-century theorists who discuss landscape in their treatises on art generally do not differentiate between the landscapes which were painted solely as outdoor views and those which were produced to adorn other subjects. Thus, as stated, to truly understand the cinquecento attitude toward such depictions, twentieth-century notions of 'pure' landscape need to be put aside."

<sup>20</sup> Titian referred to his *Pardo Venus* (begun c.1520-25; reworked 1551-2) as a "paesaggio" in a letter to Philip II of Spain in 1552, even though there is an obvious mythological subject with numerous figures, animals, and much narrative action. Landscape was therefore not a composition without figures, but rather one in which nature played a key role; see Mauro Lucco, *Tiziano e la nascita del paesaggio moderno* (Milan: Giunti, 2012), 30-31.

<sup>21</sup> Karen Goodchild, "*Lumi Fantastichi*: The Landscape Ornament of Giorgio Vasari," in *Reading Vasari*, ed., Anne B. Barriault, et al. (London: Philip Wilson, 2005), 248.

Norgate admitted in his *Miniatura* that landscape's distinction as a genre was a seventeenth-century phenomenon: "To reduce this part of painting [i.e. landscape] to an absolute and intire Art, and to confine a man's industry for the tearme of Life to this onely, is as I conceive an Invencon of these later times, and though a Noveltie, yet a good one, that to the Inventors and Professors hath brought both honour and profit."<sup>22</sup>

The conventional but ahistorical concern for genre in connection to Renaissance landscape, coupled with its near absence in archival sources, has limited studies to date. Despite a number of exciting new volumes on Venetian *collezionismo* during this period, landscape painting remains little explored.<sup>23</sup> This is partly due to the fact that barely any inventories made prior to 1520 are preserved in the Venetian State Archives. It is also because in the extant archival sources the terse entries rarely indicate subject matter, artist, or other descriptive features that would allow us to identify landscape imagery. This is unsurprising since contemporary notaries would not have distinguished a landscape as its own class of image. Consequently, there exists a gap in our understanding of landscape's role in the visual arts of Venice prior to the publication of art treatises in the middle of the sixteenth century, which Goodchild focuses upon, and before landscapes are consistently recorded in Venetian households after 1550. Still, it is now possible to shift focus from questions of origins and status to a more nuanced examination of aesthetic criteria, function, and display for which Goodchild has set the stage.

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<sup>22</sup> Edward Norgate, *Miniatura, or The Art of Limning*, ed., Martin Hardie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1919), 45.

<sup>23</sup> Olivier Bonfait, Michel Hochmann, Luigi Spezzaferro, and B. Toscano, ed., *Geografia del collezionismo. Italia e Francia tra il xvi e il xviii secolo* (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2001); Bernard Aikema, Rosella Lauber, Max Seidel, ed., *Il collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai tempi della Serenissima* (Venice: Marsilio, 2005); Hochmann, et al. This is symptomatic of critics' general disregard for collecting practices of landscape painting during this period.

There are a number of large, impressive, ambitious paintings produced by major Venetian painters, beginning with Giovanni Bellini's *St. Francis*, that give landscape a far more significant role than previously seen in comparable commissions by their peers, or even in their own work. Titian, Girolamo Savoldo, and Dosso Dossi were all recognized both in the sixteenth century and later as excelling in their depiction of landscape elements in their work and giving Venice a long recognized position in the evolution of this branch of painting in Italy. With Goodchild's more historicized framework in mind, I will reexamine the role of landscape in key easel paintings they produced between 1475 and 1525, from the time Bellini painted his large panel to when Michiel admired it. I use their exceptional works as the focus of a more detailed analysis of landscape's role in narrative and allegorical subjects, and thus offer a more nuanced account of landscape painting's role in the visual arts of Venice during a critical period in its history. What happened during this period that led Michiel to identify passages of Bellini's picture as "paese"? How did subsequent generations of artists adapt Bellini's inventive use of wilderness vistas in narrative religious paintings? What cultural and social circumstances made landscape imagery so appealing in Venice?

Critics have long recognized the fundamental contribution of artists working in northern Italy to the history of landscape painting. As early as 1935, Rezio Buscaroli devoted several chapters to major practitioners in the Veneto in his *La pittura di paesaggio in Italia*.<sup>24</sup> Various frameworks have been put forward to explain why landscape assumed a more important role in Venetian painting than in Milan, Florence, Rome, or any other Italian city in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These range from emphasis on Venice's economic and geographic position in Europe during this period to its literary traditions and political history. While the majority of these focus on the search for landscape's origins, they do provide an essential foundation for the

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<sup>24</sup> Rezio Buscaroli, *La pittura di paesaggio in Italia* (Bologna: Società Tipografica Mareggiani, 1935).

study of landscape in Renaissance Italy. The rest of this chapter will evaluate how the rise of landscape painting in northern Italy has been accounted for and outline the methods and scope of this dissertation.

## 1.2 GOMBRICH AND THE HUMANIST RECOVERY OF LANDSCAPE

Most modern histories of landscape usually begin with Max J. Friedländer's collection of essays on the origin and development of pictorial genres.<sup>25</sup> Friedländer's model depended upon a market-driven analysis that located landscape's birth across the Alps in Flanders rather than Venice. His thesis was that the boom of the Antwerp art market in the early sixteenth century created broad demand, thereby encouraging workshops to focus on specialization. This promoted new artistic freedom and novel genres such as landscape. From this emerged experts such as Joachim Patinir whose panoramic wilderness scenes succeeded as "non-ecclesiastical" religious pictures. Proof of Patinir's primacy was supposedly confirmed in 1520, when Albrecht Dürer referred to him in his diary as "der gut Landschaftmahler."<sup>26</sup>

Friedländer's market model was soon taken up by Gombrich, who shifted focus to Italy and documented landscape painting's reception in literature from the late fifteen to mid-sixteenth centuries. However, Gombrich rejected the unique conditions Friedländer claimed for Antwerp as the impetus behind early demand for landscape, instead identifying Venice as the first market for landscape in Europe. In his view, it was Venetians who cultivated not only a genre and terminology for landscape but also a theory justifying it. This interest in turn led painters across the Alps in Germany and Antwerp to specialize in such imagery in order to meet demand of

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<sup>25</sup> Max J. Friedländer, *Essays über die Landschaftsmalerei und andere Bildgattungen* (The Hague: A.A.M. Stols, 1947). An expanded English edition was published as Max J. Friedländer, *Landscape, Portrait, Still-Life. Their Origin and Development* (Oxford: Cassirer, 1949).

<sup>26</sup> Friedländer, 1949, 50.

eager Italian collectors; or in his words, “Italian artistic theory put the idea of landscape painting on the map.”<sup>27</sup>

To make his case Gombrich pointed to a number of suggestive passages from both classical Roman authors and Italian writers from the fifteenth to sixteenth century who employed a defined vocabulary for landscape imagery. This stretched back to the report of Vitruvius, who describes the practice of decorating villas with frescoed murals of landscape views in his ten books *De architectura*. This occurs in book 7, chapter 5 entitled “De ratione pingendi in ædificiis,” in the context of the decorum of ornamentation for domestic architecture. Writing some time after 17 BCE, Vitruvius reports that the ancients painted stage sets onto the walls of exedrae and that landscape was a suitable mode of decoration for the passageways of Roman buildings.<sup>28</sup> We read in Fra Giovanni Giocondo’s edition (Venice, 1511) that, “Romans adorned their walkways, because of their extensive length, with varieties of landscape, creating images from the known characteristics of particular places; for they paint harbors, promontories, seashores, rivers, springs, straits, temples, groves, mountains, cattle and shepherds...”<sup>29</sup>

Vitruvius uses the Latin word “*topiorum*” to indicate the category of image defined by distant vistas of water, land, and architecture.

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<sup>27</sup> Gombrich, 1953, 336-38.

<sup>28</sup> The *De architectura* began to circulate in Italy in the fourteenth century with Petrarch and Boccaccio, after which point the text was rapidly disseminated. The *editio princeps* was printed in Rome between 1486-92, in a rather corrupt form, with Florentine and Venetian editions following in 1496 and 1497, respectively. But it was not until the early sixteenth century that a sound philological edition appeared. On the critical fortune of Vitruvius’ text, see Lucia A. Ciapponi, “Vitruvius” in *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum*, ed., F. Edward Cranz (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1976), III, 399-409.

<sup>29</sup> Giovanni Giocondo, *M. Vitruvius, per iucundum solito castigatior factus, cum figuris et tabula, ut iam legi et intellegi possit* (Venice, 1511), 72v: “Ambulationibus uero propter spatia longitudinis, uarietatibus topiorum ornant ab certis locorum proprietatibus imagines exprimentes. Pinguntur enim portus promontoria, littora, flumina, fontes, eurypi, fana, luci, montes, pecora, pastores...” Giocondo’s text does not include a woodcut related to this passage. English translation is taken from Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, ed., and trans., Ingrid D. Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 91. On Giocondo’s edition, see Lucia A. Ciapponi, “Fra Giocondo da Verona and His Edition of Vitruvius,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984), 72-90.

These types of pictures evidently occupied a low status. But landscape could also be portrayed as a secondary feature of more grandiose paintings. In the same chapter, Vitruvius continues by distinguishing murals in which landscape is the principal element from frescos depicting stories of gods and heroes in which landscape acts as setting for the action: “some places are portrayed in monumental painting [*megalographiam*] with the likenesses of the gods or the skillfully arranged narrations of myths, such as the Trojan battles, or the wanderings of Ulysses through various landscapes, and other subjects that have been created according to nature or similar principles.”<sup>30</sup>

Vitruvius does not mention any ancient artist who might have been a practitioner of landscape painting. Fortunately, Pliny offers more information in the *Natural History*, composed less than a century later around the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Pliny identifies the inventor of the landscape genre as the ancient Roman painter Studius. The discussion occurs in a section devoted to minor genres of painting. Pliny mentions the painter Piraecius, for example, who won renown for painting humble scenes of barber shops, cobblers’ stalls, mules, edibles, and similar subjects. These are described as pleasurable images and are the classical precedent to still-life and genre scenes, which he implicitly connected to landscape. According to Pliny, the *locus classicus*, Studius was responsible for inventing landscape murals:

Nor must I neglect Studius, a painter of the days of Augustus, who introduced a delightful style of decorating walls with representations of villas, harbors, landscape gardens, sacred groves, woods, hills, fishponds, straits, streams and shores, any scene that took the fancy. In these he introduced figures of people on foot, or in boats, and on land of people coming up to the country-houses either on donkeys or in carriages, besides figures of fishers and fowlers, or of hunters or even of people gathering grapes. Among his works we know well the men approaching a villa through a swamp, and staggering beneath the weight upon their shoulders of the terrified women whom

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<sup>30</sup> Giocondo, 72v: “...nonnullis locis items signorum megalographiam habentem deorum simulacra, seu fabularum dispositas explicationes, non minus troianas pugnas, seu ulixis erationes, per topia caeteraque, qua sunt eorum similibus rationibus, ab rerum natura procreata”; and Rowland, 91. In each case, Vitruvius emphasizes the mimetic qualities of Roman landscape painting that reproduced faithful portraits of nature. As with hallway murals representing “the known characteristics of particular places,” in monumental painting the landscape backdrop, again indicated as “*topia*,” is “created according to nature.”

they have bargained to carry over, with many other scenes of like vivacity and infinite humour. He also brought in the fashion of painting seaside towns on the walls of open galleries, producing a delightful effect at a very small cost.<sup>31</sup>

Studius' paintings of landscape views are characterized by their secular and humorous quality, as well as cost-effective nature.

Pliny's list of Studius' pioneering landscape motifs corresponds to those Vitruvius describes as fashionable at the time. Pliny read Vitruvius and cited him as a source of information on painting and pigments in book XXXV of the *Natural History*. Both authors emphasize the pragmatism of landscape murals: cheap but delightful paintings that filled vast stretches of empty walls. Their overlapping employment of the Latin term *topia*, though in differing grammatical cases, is one indication suggesting that landscape was its own category of painting with an established terminology.

For Gombrich, the recognition of landscape as its own genre of painting was renewed in the mid-fifteenth century as humanist writers rediscovered these classical criteria for evaluating art. One of the most influential texts in this regard was Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, written around 1452 but not published until 1485 in Florence. That Alberti mentions landscape not in his treatise on painting, the *De pictura* (1435), but rather in his architectural treatise is telling of the genre's association at this point with building practice rather than the liberal art of painting.<sup>32</sup> As in Pliny and Vitruvius, Alberti discusses landscape imagery

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<sup>31</sup> "non fraudando et Studio divi Augusti aetate qui primus instituit amoenissimam parietum picturam, villas et portus ac topiaria opera, lucos, nemora, colles, piscinas, euripos, amnes, litora, qualia quia optaret, varias ibi obambulatium species aut navigantium terraque villas adeuntium asellis aut vehiculis, iam piscantes aucupantesque aut venantes aut etiam vindemiantes. sunt in eius exemplaribus nobiles palustri accesu villae, succollatis sponsione mulieribus labantes trepidis quae feruntur, plurimae praeterea tales argutiae facetissimi salis. ideam subdialibus maritimas urbes pingere instituit, blandissimo aspectu minimoque inpendio." The English translation and original Latin are supplied in K. Jex-Blake, *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art* (London: Macmillan, 1896), 146-49. Jex-Blake's translation utilizes Codex Bambergensis, a late 10th-century Latin manuscript copy viewed as one of the best, most complete versions of Pliny's chapters on ancient art.

<sup>32</sup> Alberti was the first humanist to study architectural treatises, though other architects certainly were familiar with Vitruvius' text slightly later, such as Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Filarete, and Loreneo Ghiberti.

as a feature of open galleries in private rather than public architecture. However, he introduces the topic by comparing painting to poetry:

Both painting and poetry vary in kind. The type that portrays the great deeds of great men, worthy of memory, differs from that which describes the habits of private citizens, and again from that depicting the life of peasants. The first, which is majestic in character, should be used for public buildings and the dwellings of the great while the last mentioned will be suitable for gardens, for it is the most pleasing of all. Our minds are cheered beyond measure by the sight of paintings depicting the delightful countryside, harbors, fishing, hunting, swimming, the games of shepherds—flowers and verdure.<sup>33</sup>

Synthesizing Vitruvius, Alberti's theory for the decoration of buildings is based on the decorum derived from the rules of poetry. He relegates nature imagery below tragedy and comedy to the satyric, which involved wilderness subjects on par with the rustic prospects Studius popularized in his paintings. He recommends that the portico of the house of a prince should be decorated with his notable deeds, while scenic landscapes with recreational activities in the countryside are reserved for private contemplation in the porticos of suburban villas. They rank low in the hierarchy of genres since they portray frivolous activities of peasants. Despite this, landscape murals could offer salubrious and pleasurable escape from the strain of more sober tasks. As such, they were again meant to mimic the panoramic views that lay outside the walls of the villa as further support of the recreational function of *villeggiatura*.

Alberti was not the only humanist-artist heavily influenced by the discussion of the art of classical antiquity recorded in Pliny and Vitruvius. In *I Commentarii* (begun c.1447), Lorenzo Ghiberti paraphrased the story of Studius: "It was Ludius who in the times of Caesar Augustus discovered the art of painting on walls, which had not been done before. He painted landscapes,

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<sup>33</sup> L.B. Alberti, *De re aedificatoria* (Florence, 1485), unnumbered, bk.9, ch.4, entitled "QUI PRIVATORUM ORNAMENTUM": "Cumque pictura et poetica varia sit: alia quae maximorum gesta principum dignissima memoratu: alia quae privatorum civium mores: alia quae aratorum vitam exprimat. Prima illa quae maiestatem habit publicis at praestantissimorum operibus adhibetur. Ultima hortis maxime conveniet, quod omnium sit es eadem iucundissima. Hilarescimus maiorem in modum animus cum pictas videmus amoenitates regionum, et portus, et piscationes, et venationes, et natationes, et agrestium ludos, et florida et frondosa."

seas, fishermen, boats, shores, greenery.”<sup>34</sup> Ghiberti’s reading of Pliny is significant since he provides vernacular equivalents for Pliny’s list of Studius’ repertoire: his use of the term “*paesi*” is a remarkably early occurrence of the word to describe painted imagery.<sup>35</sup> Studius continued as an exemplar in the cinquecento and Pintoricchio would be celebrated for, “often beautifying his images with green foliage, landscapes and cities viewed in aerial perspective, imitating the ancient painter Ludio, he in addition embellished them with many pleasing and attractive things.”<sup>36</sup>

According to Gombrich, it was above all in Venice that landscape painting was the most appreciated. Beyond citing Michiel’s use of the term “*paese*,” the chief evidence supposedly lay in Paolo Giovio’s comment about the Ferrarese painter Dosso Dossi’s works:

The elegant talent of Dosso of Ferrara is proven in his proper works, but most of all in those that are called *parerga*. For pursuing with pleasurable labor the delightful diversions of painting, he used to depict jagged rocks, green groves, the firm banks of traversing rivers, the flourishing work of the countryside, the joyful and fervid toil of peasants, and also the distant prospects of land and sea, fleets, fowling, hunting, and all those sorts of things [genus] so agreeable to the eyes in an extravagant and festive manner.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Julius von Schlosser, ed., *Lorenzo Ghiberti's Denkwürdigkeiten (I Commentarii)* (Berlin: Julius Bard, 1912), I, 28: “Ludione fu ne’ tempi d’Agusto Cesare, fu quello trouò l’arte della picture in mura, prima non si usaua. Dipigneua paesi marine pescatori nauilij liti verdure. Fu perito in questa arte.”

<sup>35</sup> As is evident throughout his text, Ghiberti is concerned with applying ancient paradigms to modern artistic practices. It is therefore possible that he evaluated scenographic landscape frescos made in his own time using the aesthetic criteria described in ancient sources. Following the admiration for naturalism espoused by ancient authors, Ghiberti proclaimed in book II of the *Commentarii* his interest in how painting (and sculpture) could most effectively be used to counterfeit nature: “In order to have the basic precepts [of art], I tried to investigate how nature manifests itself and, in order to approximate nature, how appearances reach the eye and how visual things function and in what way the theory of statuary art and of painting should be put into practice”; see Fengler, 53-54: “Conciò sia cosa ch’io abbia sempre i primi precetti ò cercato di investigare in che modo la natura procede in essa et in che io mi possa appressare a essa, come le spetie venghino all’occhio et quanto la virtù visiva à opera et come [le cose] visuali vanno et in che modo la teorica dell’arte statuaria et della picture si dovesse condurre.”

<sup>36</sup> Giovanni Battista Vermiglioli, *Di Bernardino Pinturicchio: Pittore Perugino de’ secoli XV, XVI, memorie, raccolte e pubblicate* (Perugia: Baduel-V. Bartelli, 1837), appendix 19: “Bernardinus autem et viridentibus foliis et regionibus, atque Urbibus aereo prospectu saepe adornabat, Ludium imitates antiquissimum pictorem, multisque lenociniis oblectantibus adornabat.” This Latin elegy was originally composed on the occasion of Pintoricchio’s death in 1513 and comes from Sigismondo Tizio’s *Historiae Senenses* (1506-28).

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Christopher S. Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape* (London: Reaktion, 1993), 55. The original Latin is provided in Paolo Giovio, *Pauli Iovii Opera. Gli elogi degli uomini illustri (letterati-artisti-uomini d’arme)*, ed., Renzo Merzaggi (Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1972), VIII, 232: “Doxi autem Ferrariensis urbanum probatur ingenium cum justis operibus, tum maxime in illis, quae parerga vocantur. Amoena namque picturae diverticula voluptuario labore consecratus, praeuptas cautes, virentia nemora, opacas perfluentium ripas, florentes rei rusticae apparatus, agrorum laetos fervidosque labores, praeterea longissimos terrarum marisque

In Gombrich's reading of Giovio's original Latin he translated the phrase "genus spectatu oculis jocunda" as "that genre so pleasing to the eyes."<sup>38</sup> Supposedly this stood as firm proof of the existence of landscape as an autonomous category of picture.

Gombrich was correct in detecting greater awareness of this aspect of imagery and laid critical groundwork for the study of landscape during this period. Still, Gombrich overstates his case and his thesis can be called into question for its assumption that landscape painting was moving inevitably toward "pure" landscape, that is landscape without figures. In defining his terms, Gombrich maintains that: "By landscape painting I do not mean any rendering of the outdoor scene, but the established and recognized genre of art." This insistence that there already existed a well-defined category of art anachronistically adheres to modern genre distinctions first developed in seventeenth-century academies.<sup>39</sup> Arguably, "pure" landscape did not develop until the mid-seventeenth century in the Netherlands. The admirable analyses of Italian Renaissance landscape by Gombrich, Richard Turner, and even Kenneth Clark in his seminal *Landscape into Art* (1949) were shaped by nineteenth-century aesthetic values for landscape whose origins they sought in Renaissance precursors.<sup>40</sup> Such a teleological history of images is problematic since, as Larry Silver warns in his study of the rise of landscape as a pictorial genre in Antwerp, "this kind of art history posits historical change as evolution, and its kind of evolution implies teleology,

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prospectus, classes, aucupia, venationes, et cuncta id genus spectatu oculis jucunda, luxurianti ac festiva manu exprimere consuevit."

<sup>38</sup> Gombrich, 1953, 341-47. The English word "genre" is derived from "genus," though it could also be translated as "thing," which would make it a considerably less loaded term.

<sup>39</sup> The concept of a hierarchy of genres based on different kinds of subject-matter is introduced in Giulio Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura* (c.1621), and developed in in André Félibien's *Conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture pendant l'année 1667* (Paris, 1668), and *Entretiens* (1688). See W. Stechow and C. Comer, "The History of the Term Genre," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin*, 33, 2 (1975-6), 89-94.

<sup>40</sup> A. Richard Turner, *The Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 12: "We wonder if in an increasingly secular world the artist may have turned to nature out of direct and uncomplicated love for her many joys."

seeing in the prototype the anticipation or seed of the mature phenotype, or essential body type.”<sup>41</sup>

### 1.3 LANDSCAPE’S IMPORTANCE IN VENICE

Since Gombrich’s influential essay, critics continue to connect Venice’s publishing industry with the rise of landscape painting. It was here that the *editio princeps* of Pliny was edited, translated, and printed. Both ancient texts and humanist literary projects provided a stimulus for painters to turn to landscape.<sup>42</sup> This stance has been taken up most recently by Sarah Blake McHam, who argues that Giorgione and his patrons self-consciously sought to outdo the ancient murals of Studius by creating independent easel paintings with landscape themes. She points out that Pliny’s biography of Studius attaches a warning about the paltry fame afforded to mural painters. In Cristoforo Landino’s translation, the first vernacular edition published in Venice in 1476, this caveat reads:

No artists, however, enjoyed real glory unless they have painted easel pictures, and herein the wisdom of past generations claims our greatest respect. They did not decorate walls to be seen only by their owners, nor houses that must always remain in one place and could not be carried away in case of fire. Protogenes was content with a cottage in his little garden, and no fresco was to be seen in the house of Apelles. It was not men’s pleasure to dye whole surfaces of wall.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Larry Silver, *Peasant Scenes and Landscapes. The Rise of Pictorial Genres in the Antwerp Art Market* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2. For an in-depth critique Gombrich’s model, see W. J. T. Mitchell, “Gombrich and the Rise of Landscape,” in *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed., Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (New York: Routledge, 1995), 103-118.

<sup>42</sup> Norbert Huse and Wolfgang Wolter, *The Art of Renaissance Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 322.

<sup>43</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturale*, trans., Cristoforo Landino (Venice, 1476): “Ma nessuna gloria hanno glartefici se non quegli equali hanno dipinto tavole Et per questo paiono in maggiore riverentia glantichi: Imperoche non ornavano solamente le mura alsignore della chasa ne le case lequali havessino a stare nel medesimo luogho & non potessino essere le usate deglincendii. Protogene era contento duna casetta col suo orticello. Ne era alchuna pictura nella mura dApelle. Ne piaceva dipingere tutte le mura. Ma ogni loro arte invigilava pel publico. Et el pictore era chosa commune alle terre” (unnumbered, libro 35, cap.10, entitled, VCELLI.INGANNATI.PER PICTVRA.CHE. COSA.SIA.DIFFICILLIMA. NELLA.PICTURE). English quoted in Jex-Blake, 148.

McHam's insightful survey of Pliny's reception provides an alternative theory to traditional models that have attributed landscape's development in Venice to the resurgence of pastoral literature. In the 1989 exhibition, *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape*, the curators argued that literary pastoral popularized small format easel paintings depicting episodes from Theocritus, Virgil, Ovid, and Hesiod. In their theory, neo-Latin and vernacular poems such as Sannazaro's influential *Arcadia* (1504) and Pietro Bembo's *Gli Asolani* (1505) spurred interest in landscape as a setting for pleasure. Giorgione's paintings have rightfully been read as lyrical meditations in paint of such texts. Yet his moody *Tempest* is frequently singled out as an encapsulation of the entire Venetian tradition. For example, John Dixon Hunt maintained pastoral as the dominant contribution of Venetian landscape, as did Büttner's recent survey, which concludes that: "It is as if Giorgione deliberately set out to translate the bucolic lyrics of Sannazaro and Bembo into painting, to create pictures with the elegaic tonality of Arcadian poetry."<sup>44</sup>

These claims perpetuate the romanticized notion of *giorgionismo*—the self-consciously musical, lyrical quality of painting—as the heuristic key to Venetian Renaissance landscape painting.<sup>45</sup> While a portion of works by Titian, Giovanni Cariani, Giorgione and their followers depict music-making in the countryside, this approach is reductive and too literal an interpretation, confusing subject-matter for fact. In his catalogue essay, Robert Cafritz even claimed landscape as a non-intellectual theme: "When it arose as an independent theme in early

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<sup>44</sup> John Dixon Hunt, ed., *The Pastoral Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1992); Büttner, 74.

<sup>45</sup> The "musical" and "dream-ideal" poetics of Arcadian and pastoral landscape painting are stressed in Luba Freedman, *The Classical Pastoral in the Visual Arts* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 196-203.

sixteenth-century Venetian art, pastoral landscape was the first type of imagery based on poetics that were primarily sensuous and evocative in spirit rather than discursive and intellectual.”<sup>46</sup>

Critical of Giorgione's legacy being reduced to an illustration of pastoral literature, Patricia Emison warned that “*ut pictura poësis* can be too handy an axiom,” a critique most recently leveled by Paul Holberton.<sup>47</sup>

The above literary theories have been called into question since they give much agency to individual artists and overlook the matrix of historical conditions within which the images were produced. Thus several frameworks have been proposed that investigate landscape painting's emergence in connection to the social, political, and environmental histories of Venice. One theory looks to Venice's unique position as an island metropolis governing a large mainland empire. Truly, it was a paradox that artists from an archipelago strung across the lagoon would contribute so much to landscape painting. According to Peter Humfrey, this watery environment “instilled in artists and their patrons feelings of nostalgia for the fields, woods, and hills of the *terraferma*.”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Patricia Fortini Brown has suggested that Venice's “very lack of a verdant landscape was one of the factors that made the city the birthplace of pastoral painting toward the end of the fifteenth century.”<sup>49</sup>

Artists' focus upon landscape as a pleasurable retreat paralleled the villa culture spawned on the Venetian *terraferma* beginning in the mid-quattrocento. Many patricians enjoyed the practice of *villeggiatura* in which city-dwellers retired to their country estates to escape the heat

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<sup>46</sup> Robert C. Cafritz, Lawrence Gowing, and David Rosand, *Places of Delight. The Pastoral Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1989), 18.

<sup>47</sup> Patricia Emison, “Asleep in the Grass of Arcady: Giulio Campagnola's *Dreamer*,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 45, 2 (Summer, 1992), 271; Paul Holberton, Review: “Titian and Landscape”; review of *Tiziano e la nascita del paesaggio moderno* at the Palazzo Reale, Milan (to May 20th 2012), *Burlington Magazine* 54, 1310 (May, 2012), 370-72.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 14.

<sup>49</sup> Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 16. She notes that, “Even traditional religious themes were recast in pastoral terms by Venetian artists, with the landscape playing a dominant role in a striking number of devotional images.”

of summer and outbreaks of disease it triggered. For instance, two brothers of the noble Venetian Barbarigo family declared on a 1537 tax form that they kept a house in nearby Montebelluno specifically “for times of plague.”<sup>50</sup> Rustication to countryside estates was not unique to Venice, however, and cities such as Naples, Rome, Florence, and Bologna were surrounded by land owned by wealthy city-dwellers who retired there and invested in agriculture.

Venetian clients demonstrated an uncanny interest not only in realistic views of the terrain owned outside the city, but of urban Venice itself. Recognizable topographical portraits of the city are introduced in Venetian easel painting during the early sixteenth century, most consistently in the works of Girolamo Savoldo. In at least seven of his devotional paintings, such as the *Pesaro Altarpiece* (c.1524) or London *Penitent St. Jerome* (c.1525-30) the artist includes views of the lagoon and surrounding architecture.<sup>51</sup> This fondness for inserting a familiar *veduta* surely appealed to local patrons. Savoldo’s practice is rooted in earlier devotional works such as Giorgione’s *Madonna Reading* (c.1500-1505) and Sebastiano del Piombo’s *Death of Adonis* (c.1509-1511), where impressive views of the Palazzo Ducale and lagoon basin serve as backdrop. Titian places a stunning vista of the lagoon awash in the glowing colors of sunset at

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<sup>50</sup> This document is mentioned in Philip Cottrell, “Vice, Vagrancy, and Villa Culture: Bonifacio de’ Pitati’s ‘Dives and Lazarus’ in Its Venetian Context,” *Artibus et Historiae* 26, 51 (2005), 145. The peaceful, pastoral setting suggests the curative effects departure from the city entailed in times of contagion. Boccaccio describes in the *Decameron* (I.intro.25) how flight was to some the best option to escape the plague of 1348: “Alcuni erano di piú crudel sentimento, come che per avventura piú fosse sicuro, dicendo niuna altra medicina essere contro alle pistilenze migliore né così buona come il fuggir loro davanti...e cercarono l’altrui o almeno il lor contado, quasi l’ira di Dio a punire le iniquità degli uomini con quella pistolenza non dove fossero procedesse, ma solamente a coloro opprimere li quali dentro alle mura della lor città si trovassero, commossa intendesse, o quasi avvisando niuna persona in quella dover rimanere e la sua ultima ora esser venuta.”

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter 4.

the center of his *Gozzi Altarpiece* (1520).<sup>52</sup> Added to this list of *vedute* pictures are works by Giovanni Cariani, Bonifacio de' Pitati, and Vittore Carpaccio.<sup>53</sup>

The *veduta* offered distinctive visual pleasure as a civic portrait in panoramic perspective of the archipelago and its landmarks, as well as an overview of Venice's unique geographical context. In 1500, Jacopo de' Barbari's monumental woodcut had transformed the way Venetians viewed their city (fig. 1.4). Even though in Jacopo's map Venice appears ensconced by its lagoon, the mapmaker included the distant territories of Mestre bounding the lagoon's outer rim, and the Dolomite mountains at the topmost edge.<sup>54</sup> Such views were a nearly magical glimpse of its island terrain afloat upon the sea but insulated by the nearby terraferma. The birds-eye-view no doubt inspired Carpaccio's grand *veduta* painting of the *Lion of St. Mark* (1516). Here, Venice is symbolized by the evangelist Mark's creature straddling dry ground and the shores of the lagoon with a view of the *piazzetta* and Palazzo Ducale in the background (1.5). Its hind legs remain in the water while its fore-paws alight on a landscape blooming with plants and flowers edged by woods. Carpaccio's picture embodies the divided interest of the republic during the first decades of the sixteenth century as Venetians increasingly invested in the mainland.<sup>55</sup> It speaks to the power of the *veduta* and its celebration of *venezianità*, republicanism, and above all, the Venetian sense of place borne of the water but always with its eye to the landscape.

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<sup>52</sup> Pietro Zampetti, et al. *Tiziano: La pala Gozzi di Ancona. Il restauro e il nuovo allestimento espositivo* (Bologna: Grafis, 1988), 21-22, 27.

<sup>53</sup> Giovanni Cariani, *Allegory of a Venetian Victory*, c.1517, oil on canvas, 120 x 240 cm, Rome, private collection; Bonifacio de' Pitati, *God the Father over the Piazza San Marco*, from the *Annunciation Triptych*, 1540s, oil on canvas, 191 x 135 cm, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.

<sup>54</sup> On the background of this woodcut and its influence, see Deborah Howard, "Venice as a Dolphin: Further Investigations into Jacopo de' Barbari's View," *Artibus et Historiae* 18, 35 (1997), 101-111.

<sup>55</sup> This was not new imagery since the *conchetto* of Carpaccio's picture had been captured by an anonymous poet in 1420: "The great lion has one paw in the meadow/ The other on the mountain, the third on the plain./ The fourth is set in the sea/ So as to make a wide passage"; quoted in Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity. The Venetian Sense of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 99.

Several scholars have examined how warfare promoted new consciousness of landscape by challenging this rustic ideal. In Venice during the War of the League of Cambrai (1508-17) forces allied against the republic sought to confiscate its territories on the terraferma. Deborah Howard and Paul Kaplan each suggested that this struggle for land led artists to focus on landscape as a viable subject-matter. Howard contended that Giorgione's *Tempest*, whatever its original meaning, must have served as "poignant evocation of the aftermath of the catastrophic Venetian defeat at the Battle of Agnadello" in 1509.<sup>56</sup> Kaplan saw the same painting as an allegory of Venice's struggle against Habsburg imperial armies to recapture its lost subject city of Padua.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the impact of the war figured prominently in Jonathan Unglaub's case study of Giorgione's *Concert Champêtre* (c.1510). He suggested that pastoral imagery bears a paradox since it underlines a bucolic vision of nature that had been ruined by invading armies.<sup>58</sup> More recently, this line of inquiry was taken up by Krystina Stermole in her study of the pervasive responses to the Cambrai crisis within Venetian visual culture.<sup>59</sup>

The necessary defense of Venice's mainland was only one of several historical conditions the cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove pointed to in explaining landscape painting's genesis. Cosgrove highlighted other factors such as the city's mapmaking, cartography, and publishing industries. In Cosgrove's opinion, these conditions were part of a larger sea change in Venetians'

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<sup>56</sup> Deborah Howard, "Giorgione's *Tempesta* and Titian's *Assunta* in the Context of the Cambrai Wars," *Art History* 8, 3 (Sept., 1985), 278. The first scholar to read the *Tempesta* in terms of the Cambrai conflict, however, was Peter Meller, "La 'madre' di Giorgione," in *Giorgione. Atte del convegno internazionale di studio per il 5° centenario della nascita, 29-31 Maggio 1978* (Castelfranco: Comitato per le celebrazioni Giorgionesche, 1979), 115.

<sup>57</sup> Paul H.D. Kaplan, "The Storm of War: The Paduan Key to Giorgione's *Tempesta*," *Art History* 9, 4 (Dec., 1986), 407. He further challenged the "escapist" reading of Venetian pastoral in a 2007 article focusing upon Giorgione's lost painting of wartime rape set, again, within a stormy landscape: Paul H.D. Kaplan, "Giorgione's *Assault*: War and Rape in Renaissance Venice," in Christelle Baskins and Lisa Rosenthal, ed., *Early Modern Visual Allegory* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 77-90. Neither Howard nor Kaplan are entirely convincing in their arguments, their conclusions at times reliant upon overdetermined iconographic analysis. Yet their studies raise significant questions about the relationship between landscape imagery and the tumultuous political climate in Venice.

<sup>58</sup> Jonathan Unglaub, "The 'Concert Champêtre': The Crises of History and Limits of the Pastoral," *Arion* 5, 1 (Spring-Summer), 46-96.

<sup>59</sup> Krystina Karen Stermole, "Venetian Art and the War of the League of Cambrai," Ph.D. Diss. Queen's University, 2007).

attitudes about their identity: “for the first time in the history of the maritime republic Venetians looked to the land as part of the self-definition of their state and world.”<sup>60</sup> Certainly images such as Barbari’s aerial view map helped promote a new awareness of the city and its unique geographical position. For environmental historians such as Karl Appuhn and Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, landscape painting was one activity resulting from new consciousness of the physical environment as gravely important for the republic’s well-being. Appuhn’s fascinating book on the Venetian forestry industry clarifies the intensive land management and land reclamation projects the Venetian Senate undertook during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that refashioned the republic’s relationship with its mainland.<sup>61</sup>

Another key model concerns the contacts between Venice and northern European artistic centers such as Antwerp, Nuremberg, Bruges, and other cities north of the Alps. Paintings made by foreign artists were available through northern agents and dealers that stimulated new interest amongst local painters in landscape’s role in religious art. The impact of northern graphic works cannot be overestimated. As David Rosand and Michelangelo Muraro have observed, “By the end of the fifteenth-century Venice had become the major printing center in Europe; a cross-roads of international commerce...and it became a great emporium for printed pictures as well.”<sup>62</sup> The pioneering accomplishments of Albrecht Dürer, Albrecht Altdorfer and the Danube School, and Lucas Cranach were readily available as prints. In Venice, their example was quickly absorbed and retransmitted by many artists, but particularly in the prints of Titian and

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<sup>60</sup> Denis Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape. Geographical Change And Its Cultural Representations in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (London: Leicester University Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>61</sup> Elisabeth Crouzet-Pavan, *Venice Triumphant. The Horizons of Myth*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); Karl Appuhn, *A Forest on the Sea. Environmental Expertise in Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

<sup>62</sup> David Rosand and Michelangelo Muraro, *Titian and the Venetian Woodcut* (Washington, D.C.: International Exhibitions Foundation, 1976), 11-12. Cf., 138-39.

Giulio and Domenico Campagnola.<sup>63</sup> Once again, the vitality of the Venetian printing industry facilitated the rapid spread of landscape.

In contrast to both Friedländer and Gombrich, Christopher Wood located the genesis of landscape in Altdorfer's Germany in his remarkable book *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape Painting*. As the title suggests, Wood's monograph focuses on the German artist as the inventor of independent landscape pictures empty of narrative subject matter. It was due to northern iconoclasm brought on by the Reformation, Wood believed, that new secular subjects such as landscape were born. According to Wood, Italian art theory hindered rather than promoted the genre's growth. Unlike southern Europeans, German artists were free from artistic constraints stressing decorum, the hierarchy of genres, canons of the human figure, and the adherence to classical rhetorical modes of painting that prescribed a limited relationship between the subject and its setting.<sup>64</sup> Wood does discuss the small format easel paintings in Venice of Giorgione, Dosso Dossi, and Lorenzo Lotto as counterpoints to Altdorfer's cabinet pictures.<sup>65</sup> However, since they do not exist in his view as wholly independent landscapes he is largely unconcerned with explaining their origins. A formalized theory for landscape hardly existed in Italy during the period Wood examines. Therefore his contention that German artists were free from its strictures in comparison to Venetians is an inadequate explanation for landscape's growth in each case, north and south of the Alps.

Wood's book is significant from a methodological standpoint for its shrewd reframing of the concept of landscape. He did much to question the essentialist values that in his view had

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<sup>63</sup> On Titian's graphic works, see in particular the exh. cat. *Le Siècle de Titien* (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> Wood, 64-65. Wood's theory in this case is motivated by his agenda seeking the emergence of independent landscape. He wishes to argue that landscape was non-essential to the overall structure of the picture so that he can separate it as a discrete aesthetic unit able to be appreciated as an autonomous work. Cf. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (London, 1949 [reprint Boston: Beacon Press, 1961]), xviii, who identified art theory as an obstacle to landscape's emergence as an independent genre.

<sup>65</sup> Wood, 50-57.

distorted the study of landscape painting. Like Goodchild, Wood problematized the previous literature that considered landscape as “a picture about nature,” which he argued was a nineteenth-century paradigm non-existent in the Renaissance. His criticisms were aimed at studies such as Götz Pochat’s vast *Figur und Landschaft* that used a method described only as *Naturgefühl* (“feeling for nature”) to isolate key works in the history of landscape painting.<sup>66</sup> However, his focus remains on Altdorfer whose independent landscapes done on parchment and paper are unique amongst contemporary artists north or south of the Alps during this period.<sup>67</sup>

Altdorfer’s prints likely made it to Venice but he did not travel there himself, nor were his paintings known in that city, as was the case with other artists. Still, the flow of artists and easel paintings across the Alps was an essential influence. Dürer visited Venice twice before 1510, while Jan van Scorel stayed briefly in 1520. Local patrons were eager to obtain works from foreign artists adept at exotic landscape imagery. While in town, Dürer painted his large altarpiece of the *Feast of the Rosegarlands* (1506) commissioned by the German confraternity of the Blessed Rosary for the altar of San Bartolomeo, featuring a stunning alpine vista. Scorel would paint several panoramic landscape pictures for private clients showcasing his skill in bird’s-eye-view perspective, the stormy seascape of one of these panels soon copied by Lotto.<sup>68</sup>

Beginning in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the importation to the Veneto of pictures across the Alps spurred great interest in landscape imagery. Michiel’s *Notizie* are filled with records of Flemish landscapes installed in Venetian homes. The premiere collector of Flemish art in Venice was Cardinal Domenico Grimani, who by 1521 obtained paintings by

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<sup>66</sup> Götz Pochat, *Figur und Landschaft. Eine historische Interpretation der Landschaftsmalerei von der Antike bis zur Renaissance* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1973).

<sup>67</sup> The only comparable works would be Dürer’s watercolors made en route to Venice, for example, *A Pond in the Woods*, c.1495, London, British Museum [inv. 5218-167]. However, these *en-plein air* observations are unlike Altdorfer’s finished presentation paintings in oil.

<sup>68</sup> Molly Faries and Martha Wolff, “Landscape in the Early Paintings of Jan van Scorel,” *Burlington Magazine* 138, 1124 (Nov., 1996), 727.

Dürer, Joachim Patinir, Hieronymus Bosch, Hans Memling, Gerard David, and Albert van Ouwater.<sup>69</sup> Most of these were pictures of saints in rustic wilderness settings. For instance, Grimani owned a painting by Patinir that Michiel records as, “La tela grande della S. Caterina sopra la rota nel paese fu de mano del detto Joachin,” almost certainly the panel now in Vienna of the *Martyrdom of St. Catherine* (c.1514) (fig.1.6).<sup>70</sup>

What was new about Patinir’s interpretation of this subject, derived from the medieval *Golden Legend*, was the spatial relation of the landscape setting and its dominance over the religious figures. Patinir’s elevated viewpoint, high horizon line, and horizontal format accommodates a broad panorama of mountains, harbor, and port city dwarfing the scene of martyrdom. Such *Weltlandschaften* apparently made marvelous pendants to local Venetian pictures. In 1530, the patrician merchant Gabriele Vendramin had installed in his palace panel paintings by Scorel, Jan Gossart, and Rogier van der Weyden, interspersed with landscapes and portraits painted by Giorgione, Giovanni Bellini, and Giovanni Cariani.<sup>71</sup>

As early as 1944 Guy de Tervarent noted how artists working in Venice were borrowing Netherlandish landscape motifs.<sup>72</sup> Years later, Lorne Campbell demonstrated the scope of this tradition in the Veneto and the thriving import market for Flemish and German easel paintings that existed.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, Paolo Torresan clarified the detailed knowledge Italian art

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<sup>69</sup> For an overview of Grimani’s collection, see Michel Hochmann, “La Famiglia Grimani,” in Hochmann, et al., 207-223, 244-47.

<sup>70</sup> Michiel, 102.

<sup>71</sup> For an overview of Vendramin’s collection, see Rosella Lauber, “Per un ritratto di Gabriele Vendramin: nuovi contributi,” in Linda Borean and Stefania Mason, ed., *Il collezionismo d'arte a Venezia. Il Seicento* (Venice: Marsilio 2007), 25-75.

<sup>72</sup> Guy de Tervarent, “Instances of Flemish Influence in Italian Art,” *Burlington Magazine*, 85, 501 (Dec., 1944), 290-94.

<sup>73</sup> Lorne Campbell, “Notes on Netherlandish Pictures in the Veneto in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” *Burlington Magazine*, 123, 941 (Aug., 1981), 467-473.

theorists possessed of Flemish painting, particularly landscapes.<sup>74</sup> From Walter Gibson's subsequent study of the Flemish "world-landscape" tradition inaugurated by Patinir, we know that northern Italians prized panoramic landscape pictures.<sup>75</sup>

Since these studies, the considerable extent of artistic exchange between Venice and northern Europe has been copiously documented in the compendious exhibition and accompanying catalogue *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer, and Titian*, edited by Bernard Aikema and Beverly Louise Brown.<sup>76</sup> In her essay, Brown noted Venetians' "avaricious collecting of northern landscapes" painted by Bosch and Patinir replete with craggy mountains, bonfires, nocturnal visions, and *vedute*. These visual phenomena appealed to collectors on one level because they deepened the moralizing message of religious works, and on another level for purely aesthetic reasons.<sup>77</sup> Paul Holberton has theorized that Giorgione intentionally sought to tap into this market for Flemish art by imitating its special lighting effects and emphasis on rugged wilderness.<sup>78</sup> Scholars such as Maddalena Bellavitis and Andrew Martin continue to single out Venice as an international art market where the accumulation of northern landscape paintings occurred to a greater degree than the rest of Italy.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Paolo Torresan, *Il dipingere di Fiandra. La pittura neerlandese nella letteratura artistica italiana del Quattro e Cinquecento* (Modena: S.T.E.M.-Muchi, 1981).

<sup>75</sup> Walter S. Gibson, *Mirror of the Earth: The World Landscape in Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), Ch. 3, "The View from Italy."

<sup>76</sup> Bernard Aikema and Beverly Louise Brown, ed., *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer, and Titian*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999. Extensive bibliography of this exchange is also given in Michael Rohlmann, "Flanders and Italy, Flanders and Florence. Early Netherlandish painting in Italy and its particular influence on Florentine art: an overview," in V. M. Schmidt, ed., *Italy and the Low Countries – Artistic relations. The Fifteenth Century* (Florence: Centro Di, 1999), 39-67.

<sup>77</sup> Beverly Louise Brown, "From Hell to Paradise: Landscape and Figure in Early Sixteenth-Century Venice," in Aikema and Brown, 424-31.

<sup>78</sup> Paul Holberton, "La critica e la fortuna di Giorgione: il conflitto delle fonti," in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Cinquecento*, ed. Mauro Lucco (Milan: Electa, 1999), 1037.

<sup>79</sup> Maddalena Bellavitis, *Telle depente forestiere: quadri nordici nel Veneto: le fonti e la tecnica* (Padova: Coop. Libreria Editrice Università di Padova, 2010); Aikema and Brown; Andrew John Martin, "I rapporti con i Paesi Bassi e la Germania. Pittori, agenti e mercanti, collezionisti," in Hochmann, et al., 143-63.

## 1.4 DISSERTATION STRUCTURE AND SCOPE

This dissertation is the first book-length study to examine landscape painting and its role in the visual arts of Renaissance Venice.<sup>80</sup> It considers landscape's evolution from a variety of angles, but especially makes more use of evidence about collections and display practices than previous studies have. The decision to focus on easel paintings rather than frescos is motivated by a number of reasons. Easel paintings exerted a greater influence than frescos on the development of landscape painting because they were portable, as evidenced by the great quantity of pictures imported to the Veneto from across the Alps. Another determining factor is the impact of Pliny's caveat that viewed easel painting as more prestigious than mural painting. Writing in Venice, Pino would assert that "I esteem painting in oils to be the most perfect way and truest practice," since this medium could capture the full spectrum of nature and was amenable to gradual refinements, unlike fresco painting on walls that required swift working methods.<sup>81</sup>

In reality, a strong tradition of fresco painting did not persist in Venice, even though we know that building facades were painted by artists such as Carpaccio, Titian, Giorgione, Girolamo da Treviso, and many others. Exterior fresco paintings, while popular for palace façades and to a lesser extent interior courtyards, survive on a limited basis. In his architectural treatise published in Venice Sebastiano Serlio recommended against painting landscapes on building fronts.<sup>82</sup> Compared to southern and central Italian cities such as Florence or Rome, the

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<sup>80</sup> The closest studies in this regard are Adriana Augusti, *Paesaggio nella pittura veneziana* (Trieste: Editoriale Generale, 1999); and Laura de Fuccia and Christophe Brouard, ed., "*Di là dal fiume e tra gli alberi.*" *Il paesaggio del Rinascimento a Venezia* (Ravenna: Giorgio Pozzi, 2012). The former book is a historical survey of Venetian landscape painting and foregoes scholarly apparatus such as footnotes, while the latter is an edited volume of conference proceedings.

<sup>81</sup> Paolo Pino, *Dialogo di pittura* (Venice: 1548), 19v.

<sup>82</sup> Sebastiano Serlio, *Regole generale di architettura sopra le cinque maniere de gli edifici cioè Toscano, Dorico, Ionico, Corinthio, et Composito* (Venice, 1537), which is bk. IV: "Therefore, if you have to decorate the façade of a building with painting, what is certain is that any opening which simulates sky or landscapes will not be suitable. These things break up the building—a solid and corporeal form—and transform it into a transparent one, without

damp climate of the Veneto is unsuited to frescos. In Venice plaster walls treated with pigment were susceptible to damage from constant flooding and moist salty air.<sup>83</sup>

In other cases, many of the frescoed decorations devised for villas and *palazzi* throughout the Veneto from 1475-1525 no longer exist. Countless estates and structures were razed during the turmoil of the War of the League of Cambrai and the War of the League of Cognac (1526-29). Over the course of these conflicts, many villas were set on fire either by raiding troops or as defensive measures by Venetian forces. For example, the Venetians intentionally burned patrician estates in the vicinity of Padua and Treviso in order to prevent their conversion into bulwarks by the armies of the anti-Venetian League.<sup>84</sup> This policy known as the *Guasto*, literally “the wasting,” has left no trace of what must once have been magnificently frescoed country retreats.<sup>85</sup>

This dissertation focuses on easel paintings in the private sphere where landscape played a dominant role. The same does not generally hold true in the case of public altarpieces in which the preference for outdoor settings was slower to register. For example, the usual setting for a *sacra conversazione* altarpiece before 1500 was an architectural interior with little or no view on the outside world. Although their contributions in this realm lie outside the scope of the present study, Bellini, Giorgione, and Titian did introduce impressive public altarpieces abandoning architectural backgrounds in favor of landscape settings. These used deep vistas to frame the

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solidity, like a building that is unfinished or ruined. Similarly, neither human figures nor animals in color are suitable unless one is simulating a window with people at it—and even these in calm postures rather than in bold movements.” Quoted in Patricia Fortini-Brown, *Private Lives in Renaissance Venice. Art Architecture, and the Family* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 45.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 15.

<sup>84</sup> The Paduan chronicler Giovan Francesco Buzzaccarini coldly narrates how hilly areas were leveled (“*se levò da campo*”), forests and vineyards chopped down (“*Fece una talgada a li arbori e le vigne uno milgo atorno la tera*”), and the waters of the Adige River redirected so that the territory within a mile radius of Padua was inundated. Most lamentable was the destruction of venerable edifices: monasteries, churches, and palaces were all “*rovinato*” and “*wasted*.” See bk.III, ch. I, Giovan Francesco Buzzaccarini, *Storia della guerra della Lega di Cambrai*, ed., Francesco Canton (Padua: Programma, 2010), 106-107.

<sup>85</sup> Michelangelo Muraro, *Venetian Villas. The History and Culture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 38

saints. In works such as Giorgione's Castelfranco altarpiece (c.1500) a third of the composition is devoted to views of rolling hills, hazy mountaintops, and a rustic townscape. Still, the landscape is kept firmly in the background, partially sealed off from view and the holy figures by a cloth of honor and large throne.<sup>86</sup> This more publically visible work only hinted at the greater emphasis on landscape Giorgione exhibited in pictures held in private hands.<sup>87</sup>

This study is divided into four chronologically arranged case study chapters, three of which focus on the artists identified during their own lifetimes as specialists in landscape painting in northern Italy—Titian, Girolamo Savoldo, and Dosso Dossi. Renaissance critics are oddly silent about Giovanni Bellini's activity as a landscape painter. Nevertheless, his influence in this field during his own time and for the next several generations of painters in Venice is undeniable. Giovanni spent his entire career in Venice and Titian worked there almost exclusively prior to 1530, maintaining periodic residency thereafter until his death. Savoldo was a native Brescian but became deeply influenced by early contact with the Veneto and resided in Venice from the mid-1520s until his own death in 1548. As court painter to Alfonso I d'Este, Dosso Dossi spent most of his professional life in Ferrara, though was a frequent visitor to Venice and companion of Titian. Undoubtedly, Savoldo's and Dosso's early career contact with Venetian art had a fundamental impact on their approaches to landscape.

Rather than a comprehensive survey, I have focused on areas of scholarship in which I have been able to make a significant contribution. The early careers of Titian and Savoldo, for example, are still badly in need of definition. In every case, the paintings selected for close study

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<sup>86</sup> On this painting, see Peter Humfrey, *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 236-38.

<sup>87</sup> For example, even to a sophisticated critic like Lodovico Dolce Giorgione's easel paintings were virtually unknown since they remained hidden in private residences. Dolce does not mention a single landscape painting by Giorgione, noting that by his death he had not yet received a public commission; he vaguely refers to Giorgione's creations as mostly limited to the types of images ordered for households, such as half figures and portraits. Roskill, 188: "...perche Giorgione nel lavorare a olio non haveva ancora havuto lavoro publico; e per lo piu non faceva altre opere, che meze figure, e ritratti..."

demonstrate the power of virtuoso landscape painting to further the intended message of the work. Despite their significant role in the history of Venetian landscape painting, the works in question remain overlooked for various reasons. Chapter 2 begins with a reexamination of Bellini's great *St. Francis in the Desert* (c.1475) in relation to classical poetics of landscape painting. As early as the mid-quattrocento, humanists in Ferrara and Venice had devised a framework for the aesthetic appreciation of landscape imagery based on ancient models. Traditionally interpreted as a complex web of religious symbols, Bellini's naturalistic landscape is instead considered anew as a precursor to the landscape *poesie* avidly collected during the cinquecento that celebrated an artistically self-conscious approach to image-making. This suggests that sophisticated criteria were in place to evaluate landscape as early as 1450, nearly seven decades before scholars typically have identified such terminology.

Bellini's *St. Francis* was the only privately-owned large scale landscape painting until Titian painted his ambitious *Flight into Egypt* (c.1507), which is explored in-depth in Chapter 3. Building upon exciting recent research into Venetian display practices, Titian's painting is analyzed for the first time in regard to its original presentation in the main reception hall of its patron Andrea Loredan's palace. New attention is paid to the details of Loredan's will and design of his palazzo to explain the function of Titian's grandiose landscape canvas, which to date remains largely overlooked. This detailed investigation provides broader insights into the dynamic role for landscape pictures in the Venetian domestic interior and into the basis of claims for Titian's reputation as the progenitor of modern landscape painting.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Essential to Titian's reputation as a landscape artist were his designs for prints, admittedly another aspect outside the current scope of inquiry. Titian's compositions of pastoral vignettes of countryside picnics and rustic outings were mainly disseminated through drawings, woodcuts, engravings, and etchings. More so than easel paintings, the inexpensive and widely circulating nature of prints helped to promote early appreciation of this image-type.

The early career of Titian's contemporary Savoldo and his relationship with Venice is considered in Chapter 4. Savoldo's *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (c.1520) is an evocative hybrid of Flemish and Venetian landscape styles characteristic of the eclectic imagery in vogue amongst private collectors during the first decades of the cinquecento in Venice. From new unpublished technical analysis of the picture, discussed here for the first time, it is possible to firmly identify Savoldo's Boschian source in Venice and its implications, which scholars have long speculated about but have been hesitant to seriously pursue.

Consideration of Savoldo has been limited in the past by poor documentation of his career prior to 1521 and critical disinterestedness, apart from specialist studies. His reputation has suffered due to the harsh criticism of his biographers who seemingly had no direct knowledge of his paintings. Pietro Aretino reported that by his death his works remained relatively unknown in Italy.<sup>89</sup> His pupil Pino claimed that he had attained little fame in his own lifetime. Likewise, Vasari said that Savoldo endeavored to paint only in minor genres and illusionistic fancies, such as special lighting effects, night-pieces, and unusual reflections.

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<sup>89</sup> Mentioned in a 1548 letter written by Aretino in Venice to the painter Gian Maria: "In tanto prevaletevi del ciò ch'io vaglio e posso, secondo che fareste di quel vecchione ottimo, che vi è stato come maestro e padre. So che, senza proferirgli il nome, del valente Gian Girolamo da Brescia s'intende. Certo che tra gli essercitanti il maneggiar dei colori ne le mura, ne le tele e in tavole, egli è de' rari: in fresco, a guazzo, e a olio vale, molto sa, e bene adopra; onde è peccato il pur troppo maturo dei suoi anni in la vita. Un conforto in sé tiene la di lui decrepitudine ormai il sapere egli che le belle e laudate cose da la mano uscitegli lo ravviveranno in infiniti luoghi ne lo spirito della memoria. Tal che la fama saragli, per tutta Italia al nome, più che al presente, maggiore"; quoted in Bruno Passamani, ed., *Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo, tra Foppa, Giorgione, e Caravaggio* (Milan: Electa, 1990), 324). ["Sir, my good friend, I regret...not to have been able to see some works which have come from your brush, although, I reserve the doing of both to a more convenient occasion. Meanwhile make use of whatever I have power to do and can, just as you would with that excellent old man who has been to you as master and father. Without his name being mentioned I know that the estimable Gian Girolamo of Brescia is meant. Certainly he ranks with the exceptional among those who handle colors by vocation upon wall, canvas and panel: in fresco, gouache and oil he is fine; he knows much and works well. Hence the pity of his now being all too aged. One comfort is to be found in his present decrepitude, in his knowing that the beautiful works which have come from his hand will make him live again in infinite places in the spirit of memory, so that the fame of his name through all of Italy will be greater than at present"; quoted in Creighton Gilbert, *The Works of Girolamo Savoldo. The 1955 Dissertation, with a Review of Research, 1955-1985* (New York: Garland, 1986), 43.

Because of this in Vasari's opinion he deserved little praise.<sup>90</sup> In reality, Vasari's chiding of Savoldo for being overly concerned with clever pictorial tricks instead of grand heroic subjects is a rhetorical device with little connection to reality; it was a charge Pliny leveled against Protogenes.<sup>91</sup> In general, Savoldo remains overlooked in the history of landscape painting, despite his vital contribution in works such as the *St. Anthony* that successfully adapted Flemish landscapes to the Venetian preference for narrative devotional pictures. His painting is an essential record of the openness of Venetian audiences to grotesque and experimental landscape pictures, many of which sadly are lost to us today.<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, it is only recently that scholars have begun to study Dosso's activities as a landscape painter.<sup>93</sup> However his reputation, too, has been affected by critics' mixed praise. His success at the Ferrarese court earned him a place alongside the great painters of his age according to Lodovico Ariosto in the revised third edition of the *Orlando furioso* (1532). Yet in 1557, Dolce criticized Ariosto for enshrining the Dossi brothers alongside Titian, Michelangelo, and Raphael since their style was clumsy and unworthy of mention.<sup>94</sup> Vasari echoed Dolce's slight and questioned the motivations for elevating the Dossi to such heights. He disparaged

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<sup>90</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori: nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed., Rosanna Bettarini and Paolo Barrochi (Florence: Sansoni, 1966), V, 430: "Ma perché costui si adoperò solamente in simili cose e non fece cose grandi, non si può dire altro di lui, se non che fu capriccioso e sofisticato, e che quello che fece merita di essere molto comendato." ["But because he strove only in such things [fantasies of night and fire] and did not make great things, you can not say anything else about him, except that he was fanciful and artful, and that what he did deserves to be highly commended."]

<sup>91</sup> Mary Pardo, "The Subject of Savoldo's Magdelene," *Art Bulletin* 71, 1 (Mar., 1989), 70, n.4.

<sup>92</sup> For example, Philip Cottrell called Savoldo one of the "better known, yet less influential painters of the second rank" working in Venice in the first half of the sixteenth century; Philip Cottrell, "Bonifacio's Enterprise: Bonifacio de' Pitati and Venetian Painting," Ph.D. Diss., University of St. Andrews, 2000, xxii.

<sup>93</sup> Peter Humfrey, "Two moments in Dosso's career as a landscape painter," in *Dosso's Fate: Painting and Court Culture in Renaissance Italy*, ed., Luisa Ciammitti, Steven F. Ostrow, and Salvatore Settis (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and Humanities), 201-18; Robert Colby, "Dosso's Early Artistic Reputation and the Origins of Landscape Painting," *Papers of the British School of Rome* 76 (2008), 201-231, 357-360.

<sup>94</sup> Roskill, 92: "E vi dico, che l'Ariosto in tutte le parti del suo Poema ha dimostro sempre uno ungegno acutissimo, fuor che in questa: non dico di lodar Michel'Angnolo, che è degno d'ogni gran lode: ma di poner fra il numero di quei Pittori illustri, che'egli nomina, i due Dossi Ferraresi: de' quali l'uno stette qui a Vinegia alcun tempo per imparare a dipinger con Titiano: e l'altro in Roma con Raffaello: e prefero una maniera in contrario tanto goffa, che sono indegni della penna d'un tanto Poeta. Ma questo errore sarebbe ancora tollerabile: perche si potrebbe dire, che egli dall'amor della patria fosse stato ingannato..."

Dosso by saying that Ariosto's pen had honored him more than he merited, given his lack of *disegno*.<sup>95</sup>

Vasari did acknowledge Dosso as one of the best landscapists of his time, but condemned his landscape frescos.<sup>96</sup> He reports that the Dossi were hired by Duke Francesco Maria della Rovere at the Villa Imperiale in Pesaro specifically as landscapists, or rather, "...massimamente per far paesi..."<sup>97</sup> On account of their overly boastful demeanor, Dosso and Battista were compelled by the ducal architect to complete their landscapes without assistants. The resulting frescos were supposedly so unpraiseworthy and ridiculous that the duke had their work destroyed and the walls of the chamber repainted according to designs Gerolamo Genga devised.<sup>98</sup> Of course, this is not true and their illusionsitic *vedute* at Pesaro remain as beautiful testament to their gifts in this arena.

Throughout his life Dosso maintained close connections to Venice and his approach to landscape painting is fundamentally indebted to the example of Giorgione and Titian he absorbed there. Of particular interest is his mythological canvas of *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* (c.1524), the masterpiece of his middle career and focus of Chapter 5. The picture seems to have been installed nearby bacchanals by Titian and Bellini, the latter of whose landscape Dosso was

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<sup>95</sup> Vasari, IV, 420: "...nacque il Dosso pittore nella medesima città [Ferrara]; il quale, se bene non fu così raro tra i pittori, come l'Ariosto tra i Poeti, si portò non di meno per si fatta maniera nell'arte, che oltre all'essere state in gran pregio le sue opere in Ferrara, meritò anco, che il dotto Poeta amico, & domestico suo facesse di lui honorata memoria ne suoi celebratissimi scritti. Onde al nome del Dosso ha date maggior fama la penna di M. Lodovico, che non fecero tutti i pennelli, e colori, che non consume in tutta sua vita. Onde io per me confesso, che grandissima ventura è quella di coloro, che sono da così grandi huomini celebrati: perche il valor della penna sforza infinita a dar credenza alle lodi di quelli, ancor che interamente non le meritino."

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*: "Ebbe in Lombardia nome il Dosso di far meglio i paesi che alcun altro che di quella practica operasse, o in muro or a olio o a guazzo, massimamente da poi che si è veduta la maniera tedesca."

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 421: "...per il duca Francesco Maria d'Urbino, sopra Pesero, al palazzo dell'Imperiale...fra molti pittori che a quell'opera furono condotti per ordine del detto signor Francesco Maria, vi furono chiamati Dosso e Battista ferraresi, massimamente per far paesi..."

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 422-23: "Ma qualunque si fusse dicio la cagione, non fecero mai in tutto il tempo di lor vita alcuna cosa meno lodevole, anzi peggio di quella...Scopertasi dunque l'opera de i Dossi, ella fu di maniera ridicola, che si partirono con vergogna da quell Signore: il quale fu forzato a buttar' in terra tutto quello, che havevano lavorato, e farlo da altri ridipignere con il disegno del Genga."

hired to repaint. Despite considerable critical attention on the *Jupiter*, its virtuoso landscape imagery remains unexplored. Thus a new reading centering on the landscape and its theoretical implications is proposed. More specifically, Dosso's painting of elusive atmospheric phenomena anticipates theories published several decades later in Venice advocating painting's superiority over sculpture and the painter's god-like ability to portray all of Nature's creation.<sup>99</sup>

The argument of the present study put in its strongest terms is that Venetian artists and their patrons developed virtuoso landscape painting as a branch of art capable of deepening the intellectual and spiritual message of the intended subject, long before its codification in formal art treatises. Painting occupied a privileged status in Venice. More so than any other art, its time-honored traditions were held as a source of pride. We must remember that in the introduction to Francesco Sansovino's 1562 guidebook to the visual arts in Venice the author insists on discussing painting ahead of sculpture or architecture:

...but I wish for us to begin with Painting, as a thing introduced most anciently in this City, which Sculpture and Architecture were not...We have had paintings for a very long time such as those true Portraits of Princes which are in the lunettes of the ceiling of the great Sala di Consiglio; nonetheless alive in our memory [are] Giovanni Bellini and Gentile Bellini.<sup>100</sup>

Even as the son of the famous Venetian sculptor and architect Jacopo Sansovino, Francesco conceded painting the prime spot in the pantheon of arts. It is appropriate that he identified Giovanni Bellini's primary role in this practice, and it is his inventive approach to painting that comes into sharper focus in the next chapter.

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<sup>99</sup> Craig Hugh Smyth, "On Dosso Dossi at Pesaro," in Ciammitti, et al., 241-62.

<sup>100</sup> Francesco Sansovino *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia* (Venice, 1562), 17r; "...ma voglio che noi cominciamo dal la Pittura, come da cosa che fu introdotta piu anticamente in questa Città, che non fu la Scoltura & l'Archittetura...Noi habbiamo pitture di molto tempo come ne fanno fede i Ritratti de Principi che sono nelle lunette del soffitatto della gran Sala di Consiglio, nondimeno vive nella nostra memoria Gian Bellino, & Gentile."

## 2.0 GIOVANNI BELLINI'S FRICK *ST. FRANCIS* AND THE HUMANIST POETICS OF QUATTROCENTO LANDSCAPE PAINTING

Giovanni Bellini was the most important artist in the story of Venetian landscape painting in the fifteenth century. His deep interest in landscape and its power to enhance and to expand the meaning of his pictures culminated in the great *St. Francis in the Desert*, painted around 1475-1480 near the midway point in his career, and now in the Frick Collection in New York (fig.1.1). Bellini depicts St. Francis at a rocky mountainside retreat, which fills two-thirds of the large and almost square panel.<sup>1</sup> The picture surface beyond opens onto a view of a plateau carpeted in grass and trees. A donkey and heron perch at its edge. Unfolding farther down in a valley are fields and tree-lined footpaths where a shepherd leads his flock of sheep along a riverbank winding through the middleground. Opposite its banks, fortified towns rise through the hillside crested by mountains just visible in the hazy distance. A light source emanating from the upper left corner of the composition breaks through a bank of clouds in the otherwise blue sky and casts a bright even light over the landscape.

Francis, his arms raised at his sides and palms upturned, steps forward to direct his gaze and body toward these golden rays, which seem to bend the branches of a laurel tree toward the saint. The light illuminates sparse flora growing on the mountain and in the foreground. Fig trees, creeping vines, brambles, and mosses sprout from stony crevices around Francis; a small spout gushes water in the lower left, where a kingfisher perches on a branch affixed with a *cartellino* bearing Bellini's signature (IOANNES BELLINVS). Long shadows extend behind the

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<sup>1</sup> The wooden panel measures 125 x 141 cm.

saint and from his makeshift study erected at the mouth of his cave, where a canopy of grape vines shelters a desk holding a book, skull, and tall cross hung with a crown of thorns.

Bellini's painting departs from the existing visual tradition of St. Francis in several ways. Square format images of the saint receiving the stigmata in the wilderness often featured in fresco cycles depicting scenes from his life during the trecento, and in polyptychs and predella panels during the first half of the quattrocento. For example, Giotto's frescos in the church of San Francesco in Assisi, and in Santa Croce in Florence, established the standard iconography for the subject: a haloed Francis kneeling in a barren landscape before a cruciform seraph inflicting the wounds of Christ on his feet, hands, and side (fig.2.1). Giotto's formula was soon followed by Taddeo Gaddi in his panel of about 1330 and, in the following century, by Gentile da Fabriano and Sassetta.<sup>2</sup> The cult of St. Francis was stronger in central Italy than the Veneto, and Bellini probably had little direct knowledge of these Tuscan prototypes. In general, there were few images of the saint in a landscape made prior to the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Even though the episode called for an outdoor setting, in Bellini's *St. Francis* the wilderness takes up much more space than usual. The holy figure is also much smaller in relation to his surroundings and the overall picture surface. Bellini's remarkably sharp and detailed landscape is unlike earlier treatments of the theme that included only a schematic backdrop of terrain.

Every critic writing about the Frick *St. Francis* is compelled to come to terms with its expansive wilderness, which Rona Goffen called the "second protagonist of Bellini's composition."<sup>4</sup> It is therefore somewhat surprising that Bellini's reasons for painting such an intricate landscape have attracted little comment, despite its visual prominence, and the

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<sup>2</sup> Taddeo Gaddi, c.1330s, tempera on panel, 41 x 39.5 cm; Gentile da Fabriano, c.1420, tempera on panel, Parma, Fondazione Magnani Rocca; Sassetta, c.1437-44, tempera on panel, 87.8 x52.5 cm, London, National Gallery.

<sup>3</sup> On this topic, see William R. Cook, ed., *The Art of the Franciscan Order in Italy* (Boston: Brill, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Rona Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 111.

numerous studies of the Frick picture's iconography and monographs on the artist.<sup>5</sup> To date, scholarship on the painting has focused on its subject. As such, the dense landscape panorama and its elements have been read as a complex web of Franciscan symbols relating to the saint's pious activity and supposedly included as a means to decode it.<sup>6</sup>

The spectacular setting of the *St. Francis* deserves to be considered in its own right for what it reveals about Bellini's range of secular literary and artistic sources of inspiration. Recent unpublished technical examinations of the picture reveal that the artist's initial composition contained fewer sacred devices than now, and therefore that the landscape played an even greater role. Furthermore, as we shall see, the setting suggests that Bellini was engaged with contemporary humanist debates in northern Italy about the aesthetic value of landscape painting. Unraveling the poetics of the Frick picture's landscape therefore brings into sharper focus not only Bellini's artistic intentions, but also quattrocento criteria for evaluating landscape, long before the publication of formal art treatises in Venice around the mid-sixteenth century.

The painting's present title derives from its first description by Marcantonio Michiel in 1525 in the home of the wealthy humanist merchant Taddeo Contarini as, "The panel of St. Francis in the wilderness in oil was the work of Giovanni Bellini, begun by him for M. Zuan Michiel and it has a landscape nearby marvelously composed and detailed."<sup>7</sup> Michiel's notation thus identifies the original patron as Giovanni Michiel, the learned secretary to the Council of

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<sup>5</sup> Even studies devoted to Bellini's landscape painting touch only briefly on the *St. Francis*. See for example, Felton Gibbons, "Giovanni Bellini's Topographical Landscapes," in *Studies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Painting in Honor of Millard Meiss*, ed., Irving Lavin and John Plummer (New York: New York University Press, 1977), I, 174-184.

<sup>6</sup> Alistair Smart, "The *Speculum Perfectionis* and Bellini's Frick *St. Francis*," *Apollo* 97, 135 (1973), 470-76; John V. Fleming, *From Bonaventure to Bellini. An Essay in Franciscan Exegesis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Anthony F. Janson, "The Meaning of the Landscape in Bellini's 'St. Francis in Ecstasy,'" *Artibus et Historiae* 15, 30 (1994), 41-54; Augusto Gentili, "Bellini and Landscape," in *The Cambridge Companion to Giovanni Bellini*, ed., Peter Humfrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 167-181.

<sup>7</sup> Michiel, 88: "La tauola del San Francesco nel deserto a oglio fo opera de Zuan Bellino, cominciata da lui a M. Zuan Michiel et ha un paese proprinquo finite e ricercato mirabilmente."

Ten who held this post until his death in 1513. It was presumably at that point that Contarini acquired the picture.<sup>8</sup> A 1556 inventory made after Taddeo's death, when his heirs occupied his Santa Fosca residence, lists in his eldest son Dario's chamber, "A large panel with gold brackets with the image of St. Francis."<sup>9</sup> Only recently has its subsequent provenance been securely traced by Rosella Lauber. She documented through wills that the Contarini had married into the Giustinian family. Contrary to previous doubts, this strongly suggests therefore that it was the Frick painting that Marco Boschini eulogized as "so naturalistic" in his florid poem published in 1660 after he had visited the Venetian procurator Giulio Giustinian's collection.<sup>10</sup> The *St. Francis* then passed through marriage, as Lauber uncovered, to the Cornaro family in whose palazzo Luigi Lanzi noted it in the 1790s as, "the envy of the best landscapists."<sup>11</sup>

Not until the mid-nineteenth century did Bellini's *St. Francis* gain wide attention, passing through several English collections and shown in the great 1857 Manchester exhibition.<sup>12</sup> Crowe and Cavalcaselle catalogued it in 1871 as St. Francis receiving the stigmata.<sup>13</sup> The painting retained its attribution to Bellini until Fry and then Borenius—misinterpreting Michiel's notation

<sup>8</sup> J.M. Fletcher, "The Provenance of Bellini's Frick 'St. Francis,'" *Burlington Magazine* 114, 829 (Apr., 1972), 209.

<sup>9</sup> Archivio di Stato, Venezia, Italia (Notarile, Atti, Pietro Contarini, b. 2567, 86v), "Camera di Dario Contarini," Item 1: "Un quadro grande con sue soazze indorate con l'immagine di San Francesco." A portion of the inventory is reproduced in Pieromario Vescovo, "Preliminari Giorgioneschi II: Taddeo Contarini e i Tre filosofi," *Wolfenbütteler Renaissance Mitteilungen* 24 (2000), 118.

<sup>10</sup> Fletcher, 1972, previously dismissed this connection. Marco Boschini, *La carta de navegar pitoresco* (Venice, 1660): "El serafico Padre Zambelin/ Ne rapresenta, infervoraide zelo/ Divin, e Cristo che ghe apar dal Cielo/ In forma d'un ardente Serafin./ Certo, chi vede quel si vivo afeto,/ (Robo un verseto qua de peso aponto)/ Dise: Francesco da Cristo xe ponto/ Man con man, pie con pie, peto con peto./ Quel Monte dela Verna, si eminente,/ E tanto natural a mio parer,/ Quanto el describe el gran Mafio Venier,/ Poeta venezian, cusi ecelente."

<sup>11</sup> Rosella Lauber, "'Opera perfettissima': Marcantonio Michiel e *La notizia d'opere di disegno*," in Aikema, et al., 100-101; Luigi Lanzi, *Storia pittorica della Italia dal risorgimento delle belle arti fino presso al fine del XVIII secolo* (Bassano, 1809), III, 32: "La casa grande degli Ecc. Corner...ha varj quadri della sua [Bellini's] prima maniera, e poi altri sempre più belli; fra' quali è un S. Francesco entro una folta boscaglia da far invidia a' miglior paesisti."

<sup>12</sup> Purchased c.1850 by W. Buchanan. Sir John Murray and others sale, June 19, 1852, Christie's, Lot 48, sold for £735 to J. Dingwall, Tittenhurst, Sunninghill, Berkshire. Thomas Holloway, apparently acquired with the estate of Tittenhurst. Bequeathed by him to his sister-in-law, Miss Mary Ann Driver (Lady Martin-Holloway); *Paintings in The Frick Collection: French, Italian and Spanish* (New York: The Frick Collection, 1968), II. *Catalogue of the Art Treasures of the United Kingdom Collected at Manchester in 1857* (London, 1857), 21, no.116, listed as "St. Francis in the Desert."

<sup>13</sup> J.A. Crowe and G.B. Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in North Italy* (London: John Murray, 1871), I, 159-60.

that it was begun by Bellini but finished by another artist—gave the painting to Marco Basaiti.<sup>14</sup> When Henry Clay Frick purchased the painting in 1915, Venturi reattributed the panel to Bellini, soon followed by Berenson and all subsequent scholars.<sup>15</sup> The dating of the panel has ranged from 1475-85, though a date of c.1480 is now generally accepted.<sup>16</sup>

Until now the central question addressed in studies of the Frick picture has been what episode from Francis's life Bellini represents. On the one hand, the barefoot saint's appearance in the wilderness with arms outstretched and mouth ajar in ecstasy seem to indicate his stigmatization on Mount Laverna in Tuscany, as Meiss argued in his classic essay, a view many critics adopted.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Bellini includes Christ's stigmata imprinted upon Francis's hands. The absence of the cruciform seraph who is conventionally shown administering the wounds is usually explained by the fact that the panel's top edge was trimmed at an unknown date, ostensibly omitting the seraph.

On the other hand, Clark, Turner, and Robertson determined the subject to be St. Francis singing the Franciscan hymn to the sun or Canticle of Created Things, since his lips are parted as if in song and, tucked into his belt, is a slip of paper supposedly referring to his composition of these songs. According to this line of reasoning, the subject cannot be the stigmatization since several traditional iconographic details of that particular theme are missing. Not only absent are the seraph and rays emanating from it that inflicted the wounds, but also Francis's companion,

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<sup>14</sup> Roger Fry, *Giovanni Bellini*, 1899; Tancred Borenius, *Notes on J.A. Crowe & G.B. Cavalcaselle: A History of Painting in North Italy* (London: J. Murray 1912), II.

<sup>15</sup> Adolfo Venturi, *La pittura del Quattrocento*, IV (Milan, 1915); Bernard Berenson, *Venetian Paintings in America. The Fifteenth Century* (London, 1916).

<sup>16</sup> Luitpold Dussler, *Giovanni Bellini* (Frankfurt, 1935), dated it to c.1480, but Fritz Heinemann, *Giovanni Bellini e i Belliniani* (Venice, 1962), suggested a date of 1478; Stefano Bottari, *Tutta la pittura di Giovanni Bellini* (Milan, 1963), dated it to 1480, while Terisio Pignatti, *L'Opera completa di Giovanni Bellini* (Milan, 1969), pushed it to 1480-85. For further bibliography, see Anchise Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini*, trans., Alexandra Bonfante-Warren and Jay Hyams (New York: Abbeville, 1999), 112-14, cat. no.45.

<sup>17</sup> Millard Meiss, *Giovanni Bellini's St. Francis in the Frick Collection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); Fletcher, 1972; Tempestini, 124.

Brother Leo, who witnessed the miracle. Bellini's predella scene of the *Stigmatization of St. Francis* from the *Pesaro Altarpiece* includes these features and so, the reasoning goes, should the Frick picture if it portrayed the stigmatization (fig.2.2).<sup>18</sup> This theory has since gained support as a means to explain Bellini's dense and realistic landscape permeated with mystical signs of salvation, sacrifice, and resurrection.<sup>19</sup> These proposals, while contributing much to our understanding of Franciscan iconography in the quattrocento, can be questioned since they position Bellini's picture as a conventional exegesis of religious texts—which it is, but only in part.

Through new, unpublished technical examinations of the painting conducted in 2010, it has been discovered that Bellini's first version of the composition downplayed, to an even greater degree, the religious imagery of the picture. For example, he initially omitted many of the saint's traditional attributes. Infrared reflectography reveals that the saint's cross, skull, crown of thorns, and bell visible in its present state were later additions not included in his original composition.<sup>20</sup> X-radiography analysis has conclusively confirmed, moreover, that a seraph never appeared, since the painting's top edge has only been cut by about four or five centimeters.<sup>21</sup> Curious, too, is the fact that he never intended to include the side stigmata with

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<sup>18</sup> Clark, 24-25; Turner, 64-65; Giles Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>19</sup> The theory that Francis is singing is developed in Jaynie Anderson, *Giorgione. The Painter of "Poetic Brevity"* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997), 155; and Oskar Bätschmann, *Giovanni Bellini* (London: Reaktion, 2008), 114-15.

<sup>20</sup> These findings were presented by Charlotte Hale, "Bellini's *St. Francis in the Desert*: New Discoveries," a lecture given June 8, 2011, at the Frick Collection, New York [<http://www.artbabble.org/video/frick/charlotte-hale-bellinis-st-francis-desert-new-discoveries>]. Hale's talk was delivered in association with the Frick's exhibition, "*In a New Light: Bellini's St. Francis in the Desert*," which ran May 22, 2011 through August 28, 2011. The exhibition was organized by Susannah Rutherglen, Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellow, The Frick Collection in conjunction with Denise Allen, Curator, and Charlotte Hale, Paintings Conservator, the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Technical examination of Bellini's panel was conducted March to April 2010.

<sup>21</sup> On this point, see the lecture delivered by Keith Christiansen, "Bellini's Meditational *Poesia* on the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*," May 25, 2011, Frick Collection, New York [<http://www.artbabble.org/video/frick/keith-christiansen-finding-our-way-bellinis-st-francis-desert>]. X-ray analysis shows nail heads marking where additional—though now absent—vertical supports to the panel, called battens, were once installed. The spacing of these nails from the edges of the panel strongly suggests that we are missing very little of the panel. The nails are actually closer to the bottom edge of the panel, which has not been cut, than

which Francis was conventionally shown. Thus one wonders whether this may reflect Bellini's inclination to de-emphasize the religious narrative. It is unknown when or why Bellini adjusted the composition to include the saint's meditational devices; however, they were inserted, into the final composition, presumably before its final delivery to Giovanni Michiel.

Recently it has been hypothesized that the Frick picture served as an altarpiece, or even private altar picture for Michiel.<sup>22</sup> Yet there is no indication that it served anything else than the private meditative and aesthetic purposes of Michiel.<sup>23</sup> The rather secular initial conception, though still not fully explained, seems to support the idea that it was conceived for private delectation.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, Bellini's aesthetic concerns at play in the Frick picture, rather than its devotional function, especially in its inventive landscape, have attracted little comment. That the first iteration of the picture relied more heavily on the adeptly painted light source to communicate the sacred message is highly suggestive of the landscape's particular importance.

It is only recently that scholars have begun to consider the *St. Francis* as a precursor to the Venetian pictorial tradition of *poesie*, as Bruce Cole tentatively proposed.<sup>25</sup> In *poesie*, the emphasis shifts from the canonical depiction of a subject to artistic invention and elaboration. In short, this more poetic sensibility approaches painting as an aesthetic exercise and is exemplified in the lyrical canvases Giorgione painted for the collections of Venetian connoisseurs. Soon thereafter Keith Christiansen further raised the possibility of reading the *St. Francis* along these

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they are to the top edge, which has. But the paint surface has been cut and we are missing something. Christiansen speculates that this may be about 4 or 5 cm.

<sup>22</sup> Marilyn Lavin, "The Joy of St. Francis: Bellini's Panel in the Frick Collection," *Artibus et Historiae* 56 (2007), 231-56.

<sup>23</sup> For example, Goffen, 1989, 306, n.140, dismisses the possibility that it was either intended or used as an altarpiece.

<sup>24</sup> This case is also made in Keith Christiansen, "Bellini and the Meditational *poesia*," *Artibus et Historiae* 34, 67 (2013), 9-20

<sup>25</sup> Bruce Cole, *Titian and Venetian Painting, 1450-1590* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 13-15. Cole asks whether these pictures were "commissioned for display in a private house by a patron who wanted neither narrative illustration nor an altarpiece, but rather a work of beauty and subtle emotional complexity—a sort of visual poem?" (15).

lines and specifically in relation to secular humanist literary projects. He reminds us that Bellini was:

...an artist whose father had painted for the Humanist court of Ferrara and who had been nourished from childhood on the notion that painting could aspire to be a kind of visual poetry. It is the associative, poetic aspects of landscape painting that Bellini explored in the Frick Saint Francis: a response to Netherlandish painting conditioned on the one hand by the use of naturalistic details in images as meditational stimuli and, on the other, by the Horatian ideal of painting as silent poetry...the way in which nature itself has become the subject suggests a much broader poetic tradition (something we would expect from an artist who counted poets as friends).<sup>26</sup>

Thus Christiansen rightfully draws attention here, and elsewhere, to Bellini's landscape poetics as a central concern in our understanding of the Frick picture. Yet even as they noted such possibilities, neither Christiansen nor any other scholar has further explored how such writings may have shaped the Frick painting's imagery, its reception, or subsequent display in Contarini's residence with a host of other imaginative landscape pictures.<sup>27</sup> Bellini's landscape in the *St. Francis* strongly suggests he was familiar with the type of humanist-inspired writings composed at the Italian courts, which justified and promoted feats of realism, particularly the ancient ideal of painting's rivalry with poetry and nature. Examining this relatively unexplored context helps explain how Bellini's sophisticated clientele may have enjoyed the picture's poetic evocation of nature and therefore its subsequent role in Contarini's refined collection.

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<sup>26</sup> Keith Christiansen, "Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional painting," in *Giovanni Bellini and the Art of Devotion*, ed., Ronda Kasl (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2004), 41.

<sup>27</sup> This point was raised again in Christiansen, 2013, 17: "It also reminds us of the importance of humanist-inspired, ekphrastic writing for the encouragement of a minutely descriptive style of landscape painting, as first explored in Venice by Giovanni's father, Jacopo." Yet, he instead interprets the painting using Franciscan poetry and meditational hymns.

## 2.1 LANDSCAPE AND POETRY IN FERRARA

The court of Ferrara where Giovanni's father Jacopo Bellini periodically worked was an important hub for the appreciation of landscape painting.<sup>28</sup> This took the form of collecting and patronage, but also of critical writings about landscape imagery. By the mid-quattrocento, marquis Leonello d'Este (ruled 1441-50) was importing Flemish and Italian pictures in which landscape played a prominent role.<sup>29</sup> When the traveller and antiquarian Ciriaco d'Ancona visited Ferrara in 1449, for example, he wrote enthusiastically about a painting of the *Deposition of the Cross* by Rogier van der Weyden the marquis owned. The antiquarian observed that Rogier imitated well everything in the picture, including "blooming meadows, flowers, trees, leafy and shady hills, and the decorated porticoes and gateways," as if mother nature had painted it herself.<sup>30</sup> Because of this, Rogier ranked as the outstanding painter of his time according to Ciriaco, second only to Jan van Eyck.

It is likely Giovanni knew of such works and even visited Ferrara, from which some of his knowledge of the oil painting medium derived. It has now been conclusively determined through microscopic pigment analysis that the Frick *St. Francis* is painted entirely in oils and not partially in tempera as was previously believed.<sup>31</sup> From the early 1470s Giovanni consistently shifted to the oil painting technique learned from Netherlandish painters and Italians such as Antonello da Messina trained in this medium; as is well-known, it is due to Giovanni's example

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<sup>28</sup> For example, Jacopo's drawing books show drawings related to a competition for an equestrian monument in Ferrara (Bätschmann, 33-34). For further examples, see below.

<sup>29</sup> On Leonello's patronage, see Mauro Natale, "Le arti a Ferrara nel Quattrocento," in *Gli Este a Ferrara: una corte nel Rinascimento*, ed., Jadranka Bentini (Milan: Silvana, 2004), 94-105.

<sup>30</sup> Edward W. Bodnar, ed., and trans., *Cyriac of Ancona. Later Travels* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 366: "...flores, arbores, et frondigeros atque umbrosos colles nec non exornatos porticus et propylea...non artificis manu hominis, quin et ab ipsa omniparente natura inibi genita diceret."

<sup>31</sup> Hale, 2011.

that use of this medium spread throughout northern Italy.<sup>32</sup> In regard to landscape, the Frick picture embodies the new possibilities in tonal range and subtlety of modeling the oil painting medium allowed. This is important not only in atmospheric perspective created through a gradation of hues, but also Bellini's achievement of convincing textural illusions of light and shadow falling on surfaces of water, rock, trees, and earth.

In Leonello's Ferrara resident and visiting artists competed for patronage not only with imported Netherlandish art, but also a bevy of rival painters and poets. As the humanist Angelo Decembrio reports, in 1441 Leonello asked both Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini to paint his portrait in competition with one another.<sup>33</sup> More so than Jacopo, Pisanello attracted praise for his landscape pictures painted in Ferrara where he was a frequent visitor from about 1435-1448. As Baxandall has pointed out, more laudatory poems were addressed to Pisanello than to any other fifteenth-century artist.<sup>34</sup> He was particularly renowned at court for his life-like depiction of animals and saints in countryside settings. For example, another court humanist Bartolomeo Fazio, familiar with the artist's works in Naples, summarized Pisanello's reputation as resting on such pictures:

To Pisano of Verona has been ascribed a poet's talent for painting the forms of things and representing feelings. But in painting horses and other animals he has in the opinion of experts surpassed all others...examples of his talent and art are a number of pictures on panels and

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<sup>32</sup> As Jill Dunkerton has shown, it was the Bellini family, first Jacopo, then his sons Gentile and Giovanni, who were the first Italians to exploit the secrets of oil painting in Venice, based on the model of imported works by Dieric Bouts, van Eyck, and Rogier. Jill Dunkerton, "North and South: Painting Techniques in Venice," in Aikema and Brown, 93-96.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Baxandall, "A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d'Este: Angelo Decembrio's *De Politia Litteraria Pars LXVIII*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26, 3/4 (1963), 314: "You remember how Pisanello and Bellini, the finest painters of our time, recently differed in various ways in the portrayal of my face. The one added a more emphatic sparseness to its handsomeness, while the other represented it as paler, though no more slender; and scarcely were they reconciled by my entreaties." Bellini's surviving *Virgin and Child Adored by Leonello d'Este* (c.1425-30; Paris, Louvre) lends an idea of images the painter made for and of the marquis. The Louvre picture is not an autonomous portrait of the duke, but rather positions him as a diminutive donor kneeling before the Madonna and Christ who appear in hieratic scale. Yet it is further evidence of his original work made in competition with Pisanello, which remains untraced.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Baxandall, "Guarino Pisanello, and Manuel Chrysoloras," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 193.

parchment in which there is a Jerome adoring the Crucified Christ...and also a wilderness in which there are many animals of different kinds that you would think they were alive.<sup>35</sup>

This passage derives from Fazio's *De viris illustribus* (1456) and occurs in the chapter in praise of painters ("*De pictoribus*") reflecting tastes of the Neapolitan court of Alfonso I. During the 1440s, Fazio resided in Naples where he encountered the art of Pisanello, Rogier van der Weyden, and Jan van Eyck. His works circulated broadly at the Italian courts and, in all likelihood, Venice.<sup>36</sup>

It was pictures such as Pisanello's *Vision of St. Eustace* (c.1438-42), perhaps made for a client in Ferrara, that inspired classically-minded writers at Leonello's court to compose poems in praise of the artist's naturalistic landscapes (fig.2.3). Fazio's characterization of Pisanello's "poet's talent" is a quality extolled in other literary responses. In a poem of about 1427, his Veronese compatriot Guarino da Verona, who served Nicolo III d'Este before tutoring Leonello, commends Pisanello's ability to capture noises heard in nature, including the sounds of the sea, battle and birdsong, as well as nuanced atmospheric effects and changing seasons:

...you equal Nature's works, whether you are depicting birds or beasts, perilous straits and calm seas; we would swear we saw the spray gleaming and the breakers roar... When you paint a nocturnal scene you make the night-birds flit about and not one of the birds of the day is to be seen; you pick out the stars, the moon's sphere, the sunless darkness. If you paint a winter scene everything bristles with frost and the leafless trees grate in the wind.<sup>37</sup>

Guarino's evocative lines endow Pisanello with a poet's capacity for description, his paintings even on par with nature's creation. The above passage, moreover, proclaims that his

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Baxandall, "Bartholomaeus Facius on Painting: A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of the *De Viris Illustribus*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1964), 104, 105: "PISANVS ueronensi in pingendis rerum formis sensibusque exprimendis ingenio prope poetico putatus est. Sed in pingendis equis caeterisque animalibus peritorum iudicio caeteros antecessit...Sunt et eius ingenii atque artis exemplaria aliquot picturae in tabellis ac membranulis in quis Hieronymus christum cruci affixum adorans...et item haeremus in qua multa diuersi generis animalia quae uiuere existimes."

<sup>36</sup> For the dissemination of Fazio's biographies and its circulation, see P.O. Kristeller, "The Humanist Bartolomeo Facio and his Unknown Correspondence," in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1985), II, 265-80; and "Additional Remarks on the Life and Letters of Bartolomeo Facio," 507-29.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Luke Syson and Dillian Gordon, *Pisanello. Painter to the Renaissance Court* (London: Yale University Press, 2001, 186. The authors also connect the *Vision of St. Eustace* to Guarino's verses. For the original Latin, see Baxandall, 1965, 193, n.27.

verisimilitude is so convincing that it conjures up for Guarino the sounds of the natural world. Whereas later writers dismissed the power of the visual arts for their inability to reproduce nature's sounds, it seems Pisanello stood as an exception. As we shall see, the set of criteria used to evaluate landscape painting was by no means standardized at this point.

Guarino's *ekphrasis* was a typical humanist rhetorical exercise as much about his own descriptive ingenuity as Pisanello's. Yet Guarino and his circle display an important admiration for landscape at an early date and, self-interested or not. Such testaments speak to how contemporary viewers understood similar pictorial imagery and the sensations they expected to experience when examining it.<sup>38</sup> Guarino's judgment of Pisanello may have been conditioned by his knowledge of other ancient sources that spoke of the power of painted images to compete with nature. It was Guarino who in 1419 brought to light Pliny the Younger's letters containing a description of his villa and the view from it which "seems to be a painted scene of unusual beauty rather than a real landscape, and the harmony to be found in this variety refreshes the eye wherever it turns."<sup>39</sup>

Some time before September 1443 Guarino's pupil, Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, wrote a poem typical of this sensual response to Pisanello's landscape imagery. It begins by stating that Pisanello is superior to Apelles and Zeuxis, though curiously not the ancient Roman artist Studius who reputedly invented landscape painting. Tito's poem emphasized once again how the artist manages to animate nature and inspire its auditory aspects: "How shall I tell of the living birds or gliding rivers, the seas with their shores? I seem to hear the roaring waves there, and the

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<sup>38</sup> On the relationship between Guarino, his circle, and Pisanello see Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators: Humanist observers of painting in Italy and the discovery of pictorial composition 1350-1450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 78-96.

<sup>39</sup> Pliny the Younger, Ep.V.vi, in *Letters and Panegyricus*, trans. and ed., Betty Radice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), I, 339-41. For the original Latin, see Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, trans. and ed., W.M.L. Hutchinson (New York: Macmillan, 1915), I, 380: "Neque enim terras tibi, sed formam aliquam ad eximiam pulchritudinem pictam videberis cernere; ea varietate, ea descriptione, quocunque inciderint oculi, reficientur."

scaly tribe cleave the blue water. Prating frogs croak beneath the muddy runnel...”<sup>40</sup> Basinio da Parma wrote analogous poems (1449) lauding how Pisanello depicts stars, waves, trees bent in the wind, and stags whipping up clouds of dust.<sup>41</sup> Finally, when another of Guarino’s pupils Leonardo Giustiniani presented the queen of Cyprus with a picture of a winter storm, he explained his gift by commending the painter’s supernatural imagination: “the force and power of Nature is limited in various respects; so that while Nature produces flowers only in the Spring and fruits only in the autumn, the art of painting may produce snow under a blazing sun and abundant violets, roses, apples, and olives even in winter tempests.”<sup>42</sup>

Much more important than Pisanello’s easel paintings were his frescos, which were seen and appreciated by wider audiences. It must have been these that inspired so much poetic rhapsody from Ferrarese poets. Since his murals have mostly vanished, their impact is difficult to assess. In medium, scale, and subject-matter the wall-paintings more directly emulated Studius than pictures on wooden panels such as the *St. Eustace*. Some time during the first half of the sixteenth century Marcantonio Michiel had visited Pavia and identified Pisanello as the principal artist behind the frescoed murals in the Castello.<sup>43</sup> A sense of their content comes from Stefano Breventano’s chronicle of Pavia (1570): the upper chambers and halls were painted as fictive landscapes so that the vaulting imitated the bluish heavens; many species of exotic animals roamed the countryside; and the walls were decorated with beautiful stories of hunting, fishing,

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Baxandall, 1965, 193; the original Latin provided is provided in *Ibid.*, 194, n.28.

<sup>41</sup> For this work, see Syson and Gordon, 188.

<sup>42</sup> Baxandall, 1971, 97.

<sup>43</sup> Michiel, 58: “Le pitture nel castello a fresco furono de mano del Pisano, tanto lisce et tanto risplendenti, come scrive Cesare Cesariano che fin hoggidi si pol specchiar in esse.” As Michiel states, his source was Cesare Cesariano, the Italian theorist, architect, and painter active in Milan and famous for his 1521 commentary on Vitruvius.

and other games enjoyed by the duke and duchess.<sup>44</sup> These were among Pisanello's best-known paintings.

## 2.2 CLASSICAL PARADIGMS RENEWED

Giovanni Bellini must have been familiar with the landscape pictures of his father's rival, Pisanello, and possibly the poems celebrating them. Such poetry as that above encouraged the highly descriptive mode of landscape painting Giovanni Bellini mastered dwelling on nature's ephemeral cycles and hard to represent atmospheric conditions. The response to Pisanello's landscapes demonstrate how sophisticated audiences admired the sensuous, poetic qualities of nature his father's peer evoked in landscape painting. However, the Frick picture significantly transforms Pisanello's earlier small panels. Bellini had painted pictures of hermit saints in the wilderness, but never on the scale or almost square format of the Frick panel. Its dimensions nearly triple those of the three vertical versions of *St. Jerome in the Wilderness* he made from about 1460-90 (fig.2.4).<sup>45</sup>

Thus it is tempting to consider whether the large scale and rustic outdoor backdrop of the *St. Francis* attempts to capture in an easel painting a genre typically executed in antiquity in fresco. The reports of Vitruvius, Pliny, Philostratus, and Alberti reveal that ancient Roman painters used landscape to cover broad expanses of walls within semi-public spaces in the

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<sup>44</sup> Stefano Breventano, *Istoria della antichità, nobiltà, et delle cose notabili della città di Pavia* (Pavia, 1570), 7r-7v: Le sale & camere tanto di sopra quanto di sotto sono tutte in volto, & quasi tutte dipinte à varie & vaghe istorie & lavori, i cui cieli erano colorati di finissimo azurro, ne quali campeggiavano diverse sorti di animali fatti d'oro come Leoni, Leopardi, Tigri, Levrieri, Bracchi, Cervi, Cinghiali, & altri, e specialmente in quella facciata che rimirava il Parco...si vedeva un gran salone lungo da sessanta braccia e largo venti tutto istoriato con bellissime figure le quale rapresentavano caccie & pescagioni & giostre con altri varij diporti de i Duchi & Duchesse di questo stato."

<sup>45</sup> These are in the collections of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; and the Contini Bonacossi Collection, Florence. For a discussion, see Goffen, 1989, 4-8.

home.<sup>46</sup> They were of course referring to murals rather than easel paintings. Yet Pliny included the caveat that fresco painting conferred little prestige upon its makers, advising instead that panel painting was the means to fame and glory. As he warns, in Landino's first vernacular printed translation, published in Venice in 1476:

No artists, however, enjoyed real glory unless they have painted easel pictures, and herein the wisdom of past generations claims our greatest respect. They did not decorate walls to be seen only by their owners, nor houses that must always remain in one place and could not be carried away in case of fire. Protogenes was content with a cottage in his little garden, and no fresco was to be seen in the house of Apelles. It was not men's pleasure to dye whole surfaces of wall.<sup>47</sup>

It is possible Bellini heeded Pliny's warning. In this light, the *St. Francis* fulfills in format and content the two-fold aesthetic criteria explored in humanist-inspired poetry in the Ferrara frequented by his father and teacher: identification with ancient exemplars and intense naturalism. Certainly Pliny's encyclopedia was read in Venice, as well as the Ferrarese court, and influenced the erudite discussion of art and poetry made in self-conscious emulation of the antique.

By the 1450s, it was believed that Pliny's encyclopedia contained valuable ancient theories about landscape painting. For example, Fazio certainly read the *Natural History* and even claimed that Jan van Eyck had as well, a source from which the artist allegedly refined his techniques in coloring and spatial arrangement:

Jan of Gaul has been judged the leading painter of our time. He was not unlettered, particularly in geometry and such arts as contribute to the enrichment of painting, and he is thought for this

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<sup>46</sup> See my Introduction.

<sup>47</sup> Pliny the Elder: "Ma nessuna gloria hanno glartefici se non quegli equali hanno dipincto tavole Et per questo paiono in maggiore riverentia glantichi: Imperoche non ornavano solamente le mura alsignore della chasa ne le case lequali havessino a stare nel medesimo luogho & non potessino essere le usate deglincendii. Protogene era contento duna casetta col suo orticello. Ne era alchuna pictura nella mura dApelle. Ne piaceva dipingere tutte le mura. Ma ogni loro arte invigilava pel publico. Et el pictore era chosa commune alle terre" (unnumbered, libro 35, cap.10, entitled, VCELLI.INGANNATI.PER PICTVRA.CHE. COSA.SIA.DIFFICILLIMA. NELLA.PICTURE). English quoted in Jex-Blake, 148.

reason to have discovered many things about the properties of colors recorded by the ancients and learned by him from reading Pliny and other authors.<sup>48</sup>

It is unclear whether Francesco Negro had Pliny or some other writer in mind when claimed, around 1493, that Gentile Bellini excelled in the practice of art, his brother Giovanni in its theory.<sup>49</sup> By the time Bellini painted the *St. Francis* scholars in northern Italy were becoming aware of the role of similar landscape painting techniques in ancient art. Flemish painters' fluency with landscape could, as Fazio believed, be linked to the prestige of classical artists he had read about in Pliny. As we shall see, the praise conferred upon Giovanni Bellini for his mastery of perspective related to his use of aerial and atmospheric landscape illusions described in Pliny and other ancient texts. But what knowledge, if any, would Bellini have had of the reputations of Studius and Apelles as described in classical sources? Furthermore, can we say that his works of the 1470s reflect such ideas?

What we know of Giovanni's social world does in fact indicate that he was interested in a learned discourse on painting and its theoretical aims. In general, his activities fit the shift Francis Ames-Lewis outlines in which "during the last quarter of the fifteenth century and first quarter of the sixteenth century, the artist's self-awareness and belief in his artistic abilities and intellectual powers developed rapidly."<sup>50</sup> This development is especially true in Venice, where Dürer noted when visiting in 1506 that, "Here I am a gentleman, at home I am a parasite."<sup>51</sup> Giovanni's own status and artistic intelligence was recognized by the Venetian government. In Venice he attained a salaried civic position, the *sansaria*, and in 1482, around the time he painted

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<sup>48</sup> Baxandall, 1964, 102-103: "Iohannes gallicus nostri saeculi pictorum princeps iudicatus est. litterarum nonnihil doctus. geometriae praesertim et earum atrium quae ad picturae ornamentum accederent. putaturque ob eam rem multa de colorum proprietatibus inuenisse. quae ab antiquis tradita ex plinii et aliorum auctorum lectione didicerat."

<sup>49</sup> For this and an overview of Bellini's contact with humanists, to which my own discussion is indebted, see Jennifer Fletcher, "Bellini's Social World," in Humfrey, 2004, 32-41.

<sup>50</sup> Francis Ames-Lewis, *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 272. In contrast, is Ames-Lewis's conclusion that: "There is little evidence that artists themselves were much concerned about theoretical or intellectual issues during the first half of the fifteenth century" (141).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 271.

the *St. Francis*, was granted the unprecedented privilege from the Signoria of exemption from guild membership. In effect, this freed him from strict regulations normally placed on his profession and instead allowed greater artistic freedom.<sup>52</sup>

Venetian artists painting landscape imagery would undoubtedly be influenced by an awareness of the classical precedents in this branch of painting. Vitruvius, Philostratus, and above all Pliny indelibly shaped how sophisticated quattrocento viewers formulated their understanding of art. They celebrated painters' able to convincingly simulate nature's poetic qualities, particularly difficult to represent atmospheric conditions, lighting effects, and scenery. As outlined in the Introduction, the writings of Ghiberti and Alberti were instrumental in transmitting these ideas to wider audiences. In Venice, the bequest of Cardinal Bessarion to the Venetian republic of his extensive library between 1468-74 of nearly 1,000 Greek and Latin manuscripts and incunabula made the texts of Vitruvius, Pliny, and Philostratus more widely available to resident Venetians.<sup>53</sup> Giovanni's interest in this library was likely furthered through his brother Gentile's personal relationship with Bessarion. In 1472, when the brothers shared a studio, Gentile was commissioned to paint a portrait of Bessarion (lost) for the Scuola Grande dei Battuti della Carità. This was meant to accompany a painted tabernacle containing a reliquary donated to the confraternity by Bessarion. Gentile was also hired to paint the door of the

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<sup>52</sup> On this dispensation, see Bächtmann, 30.

<sup>53</sup> See Lotte Labowsky, *Bessarion's Library and the Biblioteca Marciana* (Rome: Sussidi Eruditi, 1979), 23-60. The books were housed in a wing of the Palazzo Ducale and loaned to citizens, Bessarion's bequest maintaining that it be used for the benefit of all Venetian citizens. Labowsky reproduces the 1474 inventory of the bequest listing the following texts: no.816: "Plinii naturalis historiae, in papiro", no.817: "Eiusadem idem opus, in pergamenis" (235); no.99: "Cleomedis, tabulae persicae, Crisocine, arithmetica, et imagines Philostrati, in papiris" (197); no.597: "Philostrati vitae sophistarum, et vita Apollonii, et icones, Porphyrii de abstinentia carni, in pergamenis, novus" (224); no.681: "Arithmetica Nicomachi, Sophoclis tragedia una, in grammatica plurima, heroica Philostrati, et icones eiusadem..." (229); and no.312: "Vitruvius de architectura et Vegetius de re militari, in pergamenis" (208).

tabernacle with a further portrait of Bessarion, with the reliquary, and members of the Scuola before it.<sup>54</sup>

By the 1470s Giovanni could have read Pliny in Italian and, although his Latin was imperfect, would have known the other texts discussing classical landscape painting through his circle of *literati* in the Veneto.<sup>55</sup> Venice was the publishing hub for the *Natural History* and where it was first printed in Latin (1469) and then the vernacular (1476) with a translation by Landino.<sup>56</sup> The *eruditi* of Bellini's social world included the Paduan philosopher and collector Niccolo Leonico Tomeo, who wrote a learned commentary on Pliny and for whose family both Jacopo and Giovanni painted portraits.<sup>57</sup> Another commentator on Pliny known to Bellini was the Pesarese humanist Pandolfo Collenuccio in whose Venetian home the painter witnessed a document in 1487.<sup>58</sup>

Humanists likened Bellini to Apelles, but only as a form of generic praise and without much direct reference to his artworks.<sup>59</sup> A letter of 1474/5 to Giovanni from the writer and antiquary Felice Feliciano, a friend of his brother-in-law Andrea Mantegna, told how he equaled the greatest ancient Greek painters Parrhasius, Zeuxis, Apelles, and Polygnotus.<sup>60</sup> It is somewhat

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<sup>54</sup> Caroline Campbell and Alan Chong, ed., *Bellini and the East* (London: National Gallery Company, 2005), 43. Gentile's underdrawing suggests Bessarion sat to him, perhaps during his earlier visit to Venice in 1463-64.

<sup>55</sup> Fletcher, in Humfrey, 2004, 40, discusses Bellini's knowledge of Latin, which can only be speculated about from one extant autograph letter, his collection of books, and inscriptions on his paintings. In the latter case, the elegant Latin appended to his Brera *Pietà* (c.1467), "must have been passed to him by either a learned patron or friend."

<sup>56</sup> Sarah Blake McHam, *Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 9-10.

<sup>57</sup> Fletcher, in Humfrey, 2004, 33.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>59</sup> For these instances, see Goffen, 1989, 1-2.

<sup>60</sup> Agostino Contò and Leonardo Quaquarelli, ed., *L' "Antiquario" Felice Feliciano Veronese. Tra epigrafia antica, letteratura e arti del libro*. Atti del Convegno di Studi Verona, 3-4 giugno 1993 (Padua: Antenore, 1994), 158: "E quale secundo nei nostri secoli si vede che si apparegi al tuo splendore? E quale lingua serà che apieno canti le laude del mio Joanni e de' suoi micanti penelli? Da equiparagli a queglii de l'antiquo Parasio, di Zeusi, Apelle e Poligonio, a queglii di Mitio e Scopa, di più virtute che l'ambe mano di Prometheo o degli ferri del greco Pyrgothile. Le qual cose mi fano amarti honorare e riverire, che dov'io credia in altrui vedere l'indico pelago, di questa tua arte ho ritrovato un piccolo torrentino." Cf. Feliciano's sonnet from the 1470s demonstrating his belief that "the great" Giovanni had eclipsed "the good" Gentile: "Io sarò sempre amico a' dipintori,/ a Forte e el Marco e el Borgo mio divino,/ ma 'l gran Giovanni e 'l buon Gentil Bellino/ fian sempre digni di celesti honori:/ costor son quei, d'ogni

surprising that Studius is left off this list, perhaps an indication of landscape's as yet low status. The Triestine poet Raffaele Zovenzoni wrote an epigram in 1475 arguing that on account of Giovanni's life-like panels he could have been, like Apelles, court painter to Alexander the Great.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, Gentile Bellini made his panels so life-like that they seem to emit perfuming scents.<sup>62</sup> This may have been more than conventional praise. Giovanni knew Zovenzoni and had painted his portrait in about 1474.<sup>63</sup> Such comparisons persisted even after the artist's death in 1516. In 1532, Joachim Camerarius implicitly compared Giovanni to Protogenes and Durer to Apelles in framing their artistic rivalry.<sup>64</sup> Rather than taking these encomiums at face value, they should be considered for what they tell us about how Bellini's circle approached his art. Evidently, even if the above comments are dismissed as rhetorical praise, they demonstrate that Pliny's *Natural History* was widely read and that its paradigms were applied to Bellini's paintings.

Jacopo Bellini featured in arguably the most remarkable discussion of landscape painting and its pictorial power during this period, a text from the Ferrarese court that remains relatively little discussed in this regard. This is the dialogue written by Angelo Decembrio, a humanist who spent time in Naples, Milan, Spain, and Ferrara. His *De politia litteraria* (1462), "On literary polish," purports to record conversations at the Ferrarese court on literary, artistic, and scholarly

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altra gente fori,/ c'han tracto l'arte e preso suo camino/ di due fratelli e 'l patre lor più fino/ mastro, da farne in versi già romori" (181).

<sup>61</sup> Baccio Ziliotto, *Raffaele Zovenzoni. La vita, i carmi* (Trieste: Arti Grafiche "Smolars," 1950), 78, no.28; the poem is called *Ioanni Bello Bellino Pictori Clarissimo*: "Qui facis ora tuis spirantia, Belle, tabellis/dingus Alexandro principe pictor eras."

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 77, no.24: *Gentili Bellino Pictori*: "Gentilem Venetum Bellini sanguine magni/progenitum coelo tollite, Pierides./ Vivit enim pictis quidquid facit ille tabellis/ deque suis (mirum) spirat odor violis."

<sup>63</sup> J.M. Fletcher, "The painter and poet: Giovanni Bellini's portrait of Raffaele Zovenzoni rediscovered," *Apollo* 134 (1991), 153-58.

<sup>64</sup> Alistair Smith, "Dürer and Bellini, Apelles and Protogenes," *Burlington Magazine* 114, 830 (May, 1972), 326-29.

topics. Its interlocutors included, among others, Leonello and his tutor Guarino da Verona.<sup>65</sup>

Since Jacopo is mentioned in it he may have owned a copy, which would have made it familiar to his sons. Part LXVIII is an extensive analysis of ancient and modern art spoken in a monologue by Leonello. His point of departure in examining landscape is the folly of painters who dwell upon representing superficial ornaments of clothing, jewels, or armor. Instead, those endeavoring to portray the natural world are to be praised since its features will never fall out of style:

But the artifice of Nature is supreme, no period fashions change it. Lions, eagles, dragons and various favorite animals; woods, rivers, mountains, trees, birds, oceans, billowing seas, fish, sea-coasts, clouds in the air, towers and other things of this sort—it is these that the most skillful painters more commonly depict, and nothing outside the natural order of appearances is more suited to them.<sup>66</sup>

Leonello's foregoing catalogue lists motifs Studius specialized in painting. Many of these appear in Bellini's painting as well and correspond to the *varietà* of its landscape: portraits of livestock and water birds; minute botanical and foliage studies; and shifting clouds catching sunlight. The painter becomes, like Nature, the creator of infinite and timeless beauty. Pliny was a source for Decembrio and is cited in the *De politia* as one of the authors whose books are essential in a learned man's library. In fact, Leonello is known to have owned two copies of the *Natural History*. In a 1445 letter to the humanist Tommaso Tebaldi in Milan, the duke regretfully declined to loan out either copy.<sup>67</sup> Decembrio's treatise was an important synthesis, too, of Alberti's *De pictura* and Vitruvius' *De architectura*, though its impact beyond Ferrara may have

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<sup>65</sup> Decembrio's text existed only in manuscript (MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 1794) until it was edited and published first by Heinrich Steiner, *De politia litteraria* (Augsburg, 1540), then Johannes Hervagius (Basel, 1562). See recently, Angelo Decembrio, *De politia litteraria*, ed., Norbert Witten (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2002).

<sup>66</sup> Baxandall, 1963, 314, 316: "At quod naturae praecipuum est artificium. nulla temporum nouitate mutatur. Quamobrem Leones Aquilae Dracones. et multorum generum animantes uulgo gratiores. tum syluae / flumina / montes / arbores / uolucres / maria / fluctus / pisces littoral. aerae nubes et turres. et id genus frequentius a peritissimis pictoribus effingi solent. quibus praeter natural uestigium nihil est magis accommodatum."

<sup>67</sup> One of these was surely the manuscript Guarino da Verona completed in 1433, which his son Battista Guarino read and applied in consulting Leonello on the decoration of his studiolo. See McHam, 2013, 129-30.

been limited. Certainly visiting artists such as Jacopo would have been exposed to it and helped further its reach. We know that by 1463, Leonello's successor Borso d'Este was ordering a copy for himself.<sup>68</sup>

Even though the most gifted painters pursue landscape painting, according to the marquis painting itself is ultimately unable to compete with poetry in capturing nature's range of visual and aural pleasures. His lengthy repudiation of the painter's *ingenium*, filled with Plinian anecdotes, is worth quoting at length:

The poets, Homer and Virgil particularly, often describe the appearance of natural objects: harbors, islands, pastures, trees, wild animals, human beings and figures of every kind. And besides, those things that cannot be shown by painting but can only be perceived by the mind—things that nature alone can paint—they represent with so much accuracy that the art of the poets in description, just like that of the painters in coloring or of the sculptors in carving, may be seen as if put before our eyes. Indeed, even more clearly and subtly. For what painter could ever depict thunder and lightning, clouds and winds and the other elements of tempests as well as the poet does?...What painter has reproduced any of so many different kinds of sounds, even those of inanimate things? Or the colors of dawn, one moment red, the next yellow? Or the rising and the setting of the sun? They may try sometimes to portray these things, but in vain. Who will ever show through skill in coloring the darkness of night, or the shining of moon, the many different movements of the constellations, the changes of the time of day or of the seasons? But let us say no more of the *ingenium* of writers: it is a divine thing and beyond the reach of painters. Let us return to things that are within the capacity of the human hand.<sup>69</sup>

Leonello's series of rhetorical questions are exceptional for several reasons. First, for its time it is an extensive consideration of various subjects for landscape painting and the effect its pictorial content was expected to produce on viewers. Second, we learn that painters seem to have been tasked with portraying episodes from Homer and Virgil involving a variety of

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<sup>68</sup> Baxandall, 1963, 306.

<sup>69</sup> Baxandall, 1963, 321: "Quamobrem a poetis et ab Homero Virgilioque precipue usque adeo naturalia depinguntur. uti portuum insularum. pascuorum. arborum. ferrarum. hominum. et omnigenum corporum species. Ipsorum insuper quae pictura uideri nequeunt: sed mente precipi quae sola natura pingit tanto cum studio rferuntur. quo scilicet et ipsorum poetarum sic ars in describendo. uti pictorum in colorando. uel signariorum. in excidendo ueluti ante oculos posita discerni possit. immo uero perspicacius multo subtiliusque. Nam quae uis pictoris unquam tonitrus. fulgura. Imbres. uentos. caeterarsque tempestatum uariationes: ut poeta descriperit. Quis serpentium sibillationem / auium concentus / bellantium strepitus gemitusque cadentium / Quis tot generum sonos in rebus etiam anima carentibus. nunc purpureos nunc croceos aurorae colores orientem Solem atque cadentem: tametsi haec pictores interdum. sed frustra conentur effingere. quis noctis tenebras. lunamue lucentem. siderum denique tot uarios motus temporis et horarum terminos colorationis artificio demonstrabit. Age nunc scriptorum ingenia uti rem diuinam et pictoribus incomprehensibilem omittamus. ad ea redeundum quibus humana manus assueuit."

wilderness settings with human and animals casts. Third, painting falls short of poetry for its inability to convincingly depict weather, sounds, subtle gradations of color, varying lighting conditions, seasons, and other celestial objects; ostensibly therefore this dynamic type of landscape imagery was sought after at court. And finally, it is specifically due to painting's limited ability to represent the full range of such natural phenomena that normally ranks it lower than poetry and less expressive of artistic *ingenium*.

That being said, Bellini's *St. Francis* would seem to be a riposte to such comparisons. It serves as a *dimostrazione dell'arte* of how to effectively render the elusive poetic qualities of nature, particularly its optical delights. Indeed, the main narrative action of the painting is set in motion by the miraculous beams of light illuminating the landscape. Francis turns away from his study and texts—the written word—and faces the rapturous sunlight breaking through the clouds and laurel tree that bathe his mountain retreat. It is safe to say that, in answer to Decembrio, Bellini has convincingly captured “clouds and winds...setting of the sun...changes of the time of day.” He was careful to distinguish contrasting luminary effects in the foreground and background landscapes. This is true in the four small allegorical scenes painted to embellish a *restelo* (furnishing for holding women's toiletries) dating from the 1490s and now in the Accademia in Venice. Here the skies are streaked with the pink of sunset, overcast dullness of midday, and the rosy glow of sunrise.<sup>70</sup>

Pigment analysis of the *St. Francis* reveals that the celadon blue cast of the rocky foreground was created through the mixing of lead white and azurite pigments. Possibly this was meant to highlight the saint dressed in a drab brown habit; but it also underscores the difference between the warmer light of the pastoral backdrop and the divine light source emanating from the sky. The latter effect would have originally further showcased the virtuoso effect of light

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<sup>70</sup> Tempestini, 146-51.

falling on rock, leaves, and fabric. The green foliage, moss, and ivy dotting the rock formation would have originally appeared more verdant, their present brownish appearance due to the deterioration of the copper-containing-green glaze Bellini applied.<sup>71</sup>

Leonello's exposition on the painting of ephemeral landscape effects proved influential for courtly audiences a generation later. The topic reappeared in the literary project undertaken in Urbino by Raphael's father Giovanni Santi, *La vita e le geste di Federico di Montefeltro duca d'Urbino* (c.1492). Santi devoted a section of this work to the "Disputa della pictura." The same series of rhetorical questions is raised about the difficulty painters have in imitating morning dawn and reflections:

Who could ever portray the clear color  
Lucid and transparent of a Ruby  
In all of its pleasing splendor?  
Who is it that could paint the morning sun  
Or a mirrored water surface  
Encircled by leaves and flowers  
As perfect as the creation of Nature  
Her white lilies and fresh roses  
As lovely as she is pleased to make them?  
There is a possibility of competition: where each thing (in nature)  
Can be surpassed so as to allow no reasonable accusation (against painting)  
By a comparison of the two.<sup>72</sup>

Santi's last lines bear fleshing out, since their meaning is somewhat muddled, especially in translation. In other words, if comparisons between painting and nature must be made, it should not be done where painting is inferior, but where nature is. Santi does not elaborate, but he implies that the beauty of sunsets and watery reflections is not an arena in which painting could

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<sup>71</sup> Hale, 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Adapted from the translation in Lise Bek, "Giovanni Santi's 'Disputa della pictura'—A Polemical Treatise," *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 5 (1969), 94-95. The original Italian, 84, reads: "Chi serra quell che possi colore/ Lucido e trasparente de un Rubino/ Contrafar mai o el suo uago splendore/ Chi è quel che possi el sol in sul mattino/ Dipengere mai o un specchiar del'acque/ Cum fronde e fior uicini al lor confino/ Qual mai sì eccellente al ondo nacque/ Che un bianco giglio facci o fresca rosa/ Cum quel bel pur ch'a natura piacque/ El paragon se troua: oue ogni cosa/ Uinta riman nè si può causare/ Al paragon sufficiente chiosa/ Insuma ciò che fa cerca inganare/ Al'ochio la pictura è quel che è piano/ Tucto rileuo al senso dimostrate/ Et ciò che la natura per lontano/ O da presso dimostra cum chiar stile/ Fingere e dimostrare al senso humano."

ever surpass nature. He uses the word “*paragon*” to set up this rivalry, a term which would develop specific connotations by the middle of the cinquecento in regard to the contest between painting and sculpture but also, as in the quattrocento, between Art and Nature more generally.

### 2.3 THE AESTHETICS OF DEVOTION

Bellini explored these themes in paint not only in the *St. Francis*, but several devotional works before and after. Like it, their dynamic imagery hinges upon elaboration of landscape elements to dramatize the sacred theme and deepen its spiritual message. The first is the *Agony in the Garden* painted for an unknown patron, which marks a new sensitivity to light and atmosphere (fig.2.5).<sup>73</sup> The early morning rays of dawn break over the hills in the distance casting a suffused light over Christ and his disciples and the approaching band of soldiers. Bellini has set the episode at the moment when sunrise dispels the twilight, its pastel glow illuminating the undersides of clouds gathered upon the horizon; it adds radiance to the immaterial flesh of the cherub formed by cloud vapors who offers Christ a chalice. These details bring to mind Decembrio’s and Santi’s preoccupation with the painting of times of day and the event of sunrise as a painterly benchmark. Beyond this, its format is significant. Bellini experiments with a horizontal orientation that opens up the composition into wide vistas and broad planes suited to representing an elaborate landscape.

Painted slightly later for a funerary chapel belonging to the Venetian patrician Marco Zorzo is the second of these works, the *Resurrection of Christ* (c.1475-79) (fig.2.6).<sup>74</sup> If Christ is the protagonist of the narrative, then the dawn sky is the centerpiece of the landscape, which

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<sup>73</sup> For an overview of its history, see Bächtmann, 43-47; Goffen, 1989, 106.

<sup>74</sup> Commissioned by Zorzo for his family funerary chapel in San Michele in Isola, Venice; see Goffen, 1989, 141-42.

consumes half the large panel. The risen Christ is silhouetted against the morning light of sunrise. Bellini has painted an astonishing expanse of sky, amplifying his palette of the *Agony* from a decade earlier: those pastel hues are replaced by vermillion, cobalt, lavender, and gold. As a narrative device, the rising sun is a symbol of Christ in which nature itself bows to divine power. From a theoretical perspective, however, it neatly answers Decembrio's question about who could paint "the colors of dawn, one moment red, the next yellow? Or the rising and the setting of the sun?" The event of sunrise throws into sharp relief the myriad landscape features, its stony outcroppings and tomb, pebbled paths, and darting rabbits and sheep. Instead of a supernatural representation of Christ ensconced in a mandorla surrounded by cherubim, Bellini naturalizes the miracle. Thus it is not only the religious marvel that Bellini sets in conversation with the landscape, but also his own mimetic powers as a painter able to surpass nature's own creation.

With this in mind, there is a key attribute the *Agony* and *Resurrection* share otherwise absent from the *St. Francis* that suggests it was intended for Michiel's private residence. This is Bellini's perspectival construction in the former two works that depends upon their function—more certainly in the latter case—as altar pictures.<sup>75</sup> Although the patron of the *Agony* is unknown, Bellini was inspired by his brother-in-law Mantegna's portrayal of the same subject for the predella of his *San Zeno Altarpiece* (1457-59) commissioned for the high altar of San Zeno in Verona.<sup>76</sup> It is reasonable to hypothesize that the similarities between the panels meant Bellini's was installed as an altar picture as well. As such, Bellini structures its and the *Resurrection*'s compositions to accommodate their display at an elevated position; this technique

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<sup>75</sup> The details regarding the commission of the *Agony in the Garden* are unknown. Peter Humfrey, 1995, 64, suggests that its scale and intricacy recommend it as a commission by a private patron, though this is far from certain.

<sup>76</sup> On Mantegna's altarpiece commissioned by Gregerio Corner, see Keith Christiansen, *The Genius of Andrea Mantegna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 18-26.

of *di sotto in sù* (literally “seen from below”) means that the ideal angle is from a relatively low vantage point. For example, this is accentuated in the extreme foreshortening of the foreground objects, particularly the figures in the *Agony* and the tomb slab in the *Resurrection*. In each, moreover, we see the soles of the holy figures’ feet and, in the *Resurrection*, the underside of Christ’s risen form. Only by tilting forward their picture planes can Bellini showcase his richly detailed landscapes.

In contrast, the viewpoint of the *St. Francis* is higher, allowing us to fully survey the spacious wilderness setting into which Francis steps out. This perspectival construction strongly suggests that its execution was therefore tied to its destined location: this was perhaps the brightly lit main hall of Michiel’s home, which in Venetian dialect was called the portego, where the large panel could be discussed and admired by visitors and guests to his home. In effect, unlike the ecclesiastical panels, the *St. Francis*’s landscape is meant to be studied up close and at eye level, where Bellini’s reputation for clever spatial illusions could be fully appreciated.

As the connoisseur Michiel notes, one of the aspects of Bellini’s pictures contemporaries most commented upon was his convincing construction of space and distance. Although it may not appear so, his terse description of its “landscape marvelously composed and detailed” constitutes high praise since his *Notizie* are notoriously laconic. Of the eighteen entries in which he uses the term *paese* to refer to an image, that describing the *St. Francis* is the most evocative. In 1475, around the time Giovanni may have begun Michiel’s panel, the humanist Matteo Colacio mentioned in his “*Laus perspective*” how Bellini’s works in this practice were often universally pleasing.<sup>77</sup> Likewise, the mathematician Luca Pacioli listed Giovanni in the *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni, et proportionalità* (Venice, 1494) as one of the leading

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<sup>77</sup> Matteo Colacio, *De verbo civilitate et de genere artis rhetoricae in magnos rhetores Victorinum et Quintilianum* (Venice, 1486), unnumbered: “Bellinos venetos quorum excellentissimis operibus persaepe delector.”

painters in Venice, since his art was based on scientific foundations of perspective.<sup>78</sup> However, such commendations were probably not based upon Giovanni Michiel's picture located in his private residence, but rather upon Bellini's more public works, such as those for the Scuola Grande di San Marco.

Still, Bellini demonstrates a remarkable interest in perspective in the Frick panel. This is particularly evident in the far right quarter of the picture beginning at the rustic arbor. Infrared reflectography reveals that the lectern, book, bench, and thatched roof of St. Francis's study contain numerous revisions in the underdrawing. His adjustments signal his concern to perfect the scientific linear one-point perspective the orthogonals of these features create. Using these, conservators at the Metropolitan Museum in New York have isolated the vanishing point they form and thus the exact origin of the heavenly light source, which occurs in the upper left slightly outside the picture plane. In contrast, the rock face was underdrawn in a relatively free and loose manner with only a cursory outline.<sup>79</sup>

Be that as it may, there is a profound illusion of depth in the picture achieved through careful structuring of the landscape. Bellini's manipulation of the landscape's space intensifies the immediacy of the event. The forced perspective of the study furniture focuses attention on the foreground miracle, while the aerial perspective and deep recession of the valley positions the saint in a realm unconnected to the earthly world. Bellini invites the viewer into this fictive space where Francis communes with the divine. This power of his pictures is described by the patron's brother, Andrea Michiel. In a poem he wrote lambasting a poorly painted Christ with flawed perspective, Michiel makes the image complain that it will elicit mockery rather than devotion.

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<sup>78</sup> Luca Pacioli, *Summa de arithmetica, geometria, proportioni, et proportionalità* (Venice, 1494), 3v: "Gentilis et Johannes Bellini fratres et in pspectiva [sic]." For a discussion of Pacioli and Bellini see, Bäschmann, 36-37.

<sup>79</sup> Hale, 2011; Christiansen, 2011.

Yet had it been painted by Giovanni Bellini, “I would be much more human and more divine.”<sup>80</sup>

The same applies to the landscape of the Frick picture.

Beyond any spiritual meaning, patrons evidently delighted in detailed landscape vistas from a purely aesthetic standpoint. In fact, the painting of landscape distances became something of a staple in Bellini’s repertoire. While contracted to paint a picture for Isabella d’Este in Mantua, Bellini advised her agent in Venice that if she liked he would paint a picture with the infant Christ, John the Baptist, and “qualche luntani,” i.e. some distances, or landscape views.<sup>81</sup> Convincing perspective in pictorial composition was a praiseworthy feature even in images of landscape. It was up to the painter to re-order and improve nature’s haphazardness through *artis*. Presumably Giovanni learned this from his father. A sonnet by the Venetian humanist poet Ulisse Aleotti praised Jacopo’s “eminent intellect” and parity with “the divine Apelles and noble Polyclitus who had perfected nature.” Aleotti’s poems recording the elder Bellini’s artistic activities in Ferrara became widely known, including one commemorating his victory in Leonello’s portrait competition.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, some time before 1440, the Venetian physician and natural scientist Giovanni Fontana wrote a now lost treatise (*De arte pictoria*) on the art of painting for Jacopo Bellini.<sup>83</sup> The treatise laid out rules for using light and dark colors in painting in order to create

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Fletcher, in Humfrey, 2004, 41: “mi farà assai piu umano e piu divino.”

<sup>81</sup> For this correspondence, see J. M. Fletcher, “Isabella d’Este and Giovanni Bellini’s ‘Presepio,’” *Burlington Magazine* 113, 825 (Dec., 1971), 708

<sup>82</sup> This poem, *Ulixis – Pro Jacobo Bellini pictore*, is reproduced in Giuseppe Biadego, *Variazioni e divagazioni a proposito di due sonetti di Giorgio Sommariva in onore di Gentile e Giovanni Bellini* (Verona: Franchini, 1907), 8-9: “...divo Apelle et nobel Policlito/ che se natura t’ha facto perfecto.” For the portrait sonnet, see pp.10-11.

<sup>83</sup> Marshall Clagett, “The Life and Works of Giovanni Fontana,” *Annali dell’Istituto e Museo di storia della scienza di Firenze* 1, 1 (1976), 8; and 19-23, cat. nos.7, 8. It was in his book *De trigono balistario* (1440) and *Liber de omnibus rebus naturalibus* (MS. 1454, published Venice, 1544) that Fontana (c.1395–1455) mentioned the *De arte pictoria*. As he explained in the latter text, he had written it for Jacopo Bellini, whom he described as “a distinguished Venetian painter.”

the appearance of three-dimensional effects. Fortunately, a summary of the text survives and records Fontana's instructions on how to:

...apply bright and dark colors, with a system that not only the parts of a single image painted on a surface should seem in relief, but also...they should be believed to...seem miles away from the men and animals and mountains also placed on the same surface. Indeed the art of painters teaches that near things should be colored with bright colors, the far with dark, and the middle with mixed ones.<sup>84</sup>

Although the treatise is lost, its dedication to Jacopo indicates his interest in resolving the problems of conveying depth through geometric and atmospheric perspective, concerns borne out in his innovative drawing albums, as well as his son's and pupil's paintings.<sup>85</sup>

The elevated and sweeping view of the Frick picture suggests Bellini knew van Eyck's *Stigmatization of St. Francis* (c.1430-32) brought to Venice in 1471 by a Bruges pilgrim en route from the Holy Land (fig.2.7).<sup>86</sup> Christiansen believes this tiny panel inspired Bellini, for he borrows its rock formation for his own composition of the subject. Even if Giovanni did not know van Eyck's picture, the pleasure afforded by his and other landscape *vedute* was recorded by a court humanist familiar with his pictures. Fazio discusses several of the Bruges master's lost works, all with prominent landscape elements. The first was a *mappamundo* executed in such perfect scale that the viewer could calculate the precise distance between land masses: "His is a circular representation of the world, which he painted for Philip, Prince of the Belgians, and it is

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass 1250-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 94. The relevant text in the original Latin of the quote above is provided in Clagett, 22-23, n.66: "Ab hac naturali experientia ars pictoria optimos canones accepit, ut in libello ad iacobum bellinum Venetum pictorem insignem certe descripsi, quibusque modis colores obscuros et claros apponere sciret, tali cum ratione, quod non solum unius imaginis partes relevatae viderentur in plano depictae, verum extra manum vel pedem porrigere crederentur inspectae, et eorum quae in eadem superficie hominum, animalium vel montium equantur quaedam per miliaria distare apparenter atque eiusmodi. Ars quidem pingendi docet propinqua claris, remota obscuris mediaqua permixtis sub coloribus tingi deberi."

<sup>85</sup> On Jacopo's landscape drawings, see Colin Eisler, *The Genius of Jacopo Bellini: the Complete Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), 122-138, plates, 33-44.

<sup>86</sup> Van Eyck's panel, known in two version, each of which was owned by Anselme Adornes, is discussed in Christiansen, 2004, 37-38: Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Johnson Collection, c.1428-29, oil on wood, 12.5 x 14.5 cm.; and Turin, Galleria Sabauda, c.1435, oil on vellum transferred to panel, 29 x 33 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

thought that no work has been done more perfectly in our time; you may distinguish in it not only places and the lie of the continents but also, by measurement, the distances between places.”<sup>87</sup> This accords with Fontana’s recommendation for indicating deep recession.

Ostensibly this would have been a large painted panel showing the known continents, oceans, seas, and coasts, and therefore evoking the bird’s-eye-view common in Flemish topographical landscape painting. As opposed to scientific linear perspective developed by Brunelleschi and Alberti in Florence, northern artists employed a non-linear, or non-scientific method achieved through observation rather than rigorous mathematical measurements. Painters such as van Eyck achieved the illusion of depth and recession through gradations of hues and diminution of scale in their landscape backgrounds. To indicate far distance, Flemish painters also sometimes employed aerial perspective, also referred to as atmospheric or color perspective. This created the effect of hazy and distant hillsides, ports, and bustling cities by slightly blurring focus and lightening hues.

Van Eyck’s wall-map is related to the next work by him Fazio describes, a lost bathing scene of nude women owned by Ottaviano della Carda in Urbino. The scene was set in an interior chamber but punctuated by incidental landscape details and simulated distant views of terrain, architecture, and water—all evidently affording as much pleasure as the naked bathers: “In the same picture there is a lantern in the bath chamber, just like one lit, and an old woman seemingly sweating, a puppy lapping up water, and also horses, minute figures of men, mountains, groves, hamlets and castles carried out with such skill you would believe one was

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<sup>87</sup> Baxandall, 1964, 102-103: “Eius est mundi comprehensio orbiculari forma. quam philippo belgarum principi pinxit. quo nullum consumatius opus nostra aetate factum putatur. in quo non solum loca situsque regionum. sed etiam locorum distantiam metiendo dignosca.”

fifty miles distant from another.”<sup>88</sup> These topographical features correspond with those discussed in Vitruvius and Pliny and it is likely Fazio self-consciously emulates these ancient sources to describe modern efforts he observes in landscape painting. Similarly, van Eyck’s perspectival construction—the illusion upon which his deeply receding landscape hinges—supposedly derives from Pliny and other classical authorities on art. Ostensibly van Eyck’s fame at the court of Urbino rested upon such pictures. Santi would praise Jan for his inimitable coloring in oil painting and, as Fazio noted, skill in perspective. In book XCI, the “Disputa della pictura,” Santi wrote that:

In Bruges the most lauded among the others were  
The great Jan and his disciple: Rogier  
Who were excellent and clearly skilled  
In this art [of perspective] and in the mastery  
Of coloring they have been so excellent  
That they have surpassed reality many times.<sup>89</sup>

The verses alluding to Netherlandish painting formed part of Santi’s argument on the importance of perspective. For Santi it was not the slavish imitation of nature that elevated painting but rather its basis in scientific principles such as geometry and perspective. It seems the landscape portions of van Eyck’s paintings represented, to a degree, his mastery of perspective. For some viewers it did not seem to matter that his pictures failed to display the more rigorous scientific perspective developed by Piero della Francesca or Brunelleschi based on orthogonals converging at a single point, which is not possible anyway in pure landscape. It was apparently instead van Eyck’s constructed illusion of depth in cartographic and topographical imagery upon which, like the Bellini family, one aspect of his fame rested.

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<sup>88</sup> Baxandall, 1964, 102-103: “In eadem tabula est in balneo lucerna ardenti simillima et anus quae sudare uideatur. catulus aquam lambens. et item equi hominesque perbreui statura. montes. nemora. pagi. castella tanto artificio elaborate ut alia ab aliis quinquaginta milibus passum distare credas.”

<sup>89</sup> Bek, 85-86: “A Brugia fu fra gli altri più lodati/ El gran Jannes: el discepul Rugiero/ Cum tanti di excellentia chiar dotati/ Ne la cui arte el alto magistero/ Di colorir son stati sì eccellenti/ Che han superati molte el vero.”

## 2.4 COLLECTING LANDSCAPE *POESIE*

It was within such a milieu of *eruditi* that Bellini worked in Venice and to which his patron of the *St. Francis* Giovanni Giacomo Michiel belonged. Both men were members of the Scuola Grande di San Marco, Michiel serving as the Grand Guardian. The confraternity's ranks then included numerous leading artists—the Vivarini, Antonio Rizzo—several doges, discerning *cittadini* collectors such as Michele Vianello, and patricians, namely Bellini's patron Giacomo Dolfin, who owned a fine library of humanist and classical texts.<sup>90</sup> Unfortunately, few details regarding Giovanni Michiel are known, except what can be gathered from civic documents, Sanudo's diary, and unpublished letters. Fletcher ascertained that he was trained in law and learned in philosophy ("Doctissimo in Filosofia"). His aforementioned brother Andrea wrote satirical and burlesque poems, but also *laude* much like those glorifying Pisanello which praised "the sublime and excellent hand of Giovanni Bellini."<sup>91</sup> Little is known about Michiel's artistic patronage beyond the *St. Francis*, except that he owned an illuminated manuscript by Jacometto, which Marcantonio Michiel recorded in the house of Francesco Zio.<sup>92</sup> Recently, Lauber discovered that a picture of *St. Jerome in the Desert* was installed in his funeral chapel. This has tentatively been identified as Bellini's version of the theme in the Uffizi, though is far from certain.<sup>93</sup>

In the end, a fuller sense of the appeal of the *St. Francis* and its classically-inspired landscape imagery can be had from its display context in Taddeo Contarini's palace. Judging from Michiel's notes, it was installed next to Giorgione's landscape of the *Birth of Paris*

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<sup>90</sup> Fletcher, in Humfrey, 2004, 21-24.

<sup>91</sup> Biadego, 16: "Ma la sublime ed eccelente mano/ di Gioan suo fratel ch'è qui vicino,/ mi smacca assai più che lingue non fano." His apology of Giovanni's art indicates he knew his paintings first-hand, such as the *St. Francis*.

<sup>92</sup> Fletcher, 1972, 209.

<sup>93</sup> Lauber, in Aikema, et al., 101.

(untraced, though known through Teniers's seventeenth-century copy) (fig.2.8).<sup>94</sup> According to Michiel, this mythological canvas had the distinction of being one of Giorgione's first works. It seems to have displayed his signature sensitivity to landscape enlivened by subtle atmospheric effects, in this case soft crepuscular light lending a warm glow. Apparently Contarini esteemed landscape pictures such as the *St. Francis* in which unusual lighting was a major narrative element, since he also owned three other works by Giorgione displayed in adjoining chambers. The first was one of the mysterious "nocte," or night-pieces, left in Giorgione's studio at his death.<sup>95</sup> The others were his "large painting in oil of an inferno with Aeneas and Anchises," perhaps representing the *Burning of Troy*, and his large *Three Philosophers*, which Michiel once again lauded as a marvelously composed landscape (fig.2.9).<sup>96</sup>

This latter work is in spirit a secular pendant to the Frick *St. Francis*. As Michiel notes, its figures "contemplate the rays of the sun," represented as a vibrant sunset/sunrise in the center of the landscape in the background. Their meditation mirrors Bellini's hermit who faces the solar miracle upon which the narrative and composition of the landscape hinge. In each, the solar effects are contrasted by the opaque darkness of a large cave at whose mouth figures and fig trees occur. The dimensions of the Vienna painting (123 x 144 cm) are nearly identical to that of the Frick, though about eighteen inches were trimmed from its left edge in the eighteenth

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<sup>94</sup> Michiel, 88: "La tela del paese cun el nascimento de Paris, cun li dui pastori ritti in piedi, fu de mano de Zorzo da Castelfranco, et fu delle sue prime opere."

<sup>95</sup> Taddeo's *Aeneas and Anchises* may have been, as Alessandro Nova proposed, one of the two "nocte," or night-pieces Isabella d'Este tried unsuccessfully to acquire from Giorgione's studio immediately following his death in 1510. The marchesa had written from Mantua to her agent in Venice, Taddeo Albano, ordering him to recover from among Giorgione's things, "una pictura de una nocte, molta bella et singolare." Albano regretfully replied that Conatirini was not willing to sell the painting at any price since he had commissioned it specifically for his own enjoyment; Alessandro Nova, "Giorgione's *Inferno with Aeneas with Anchises* for Taddeo Contarini," in Ciammitti, et al., 41-62.

<sup>96</sup> Michiel, 86: "La tela a oglio delli 3 phylosophi nel paese, dui ritti et vno sentado che contempla gli raggi solari cun quel saxo finto cusì mirabilmente..."; and Michiel, 88: "La tela del paese cun el nascimento de Paris, cun li dui pastori ritti in piede, fu de mano de Zorzo de Castelfranco, et fu delle sue prime opere." The original dimensions of the *Three Philosophers* were about 149 x 189 cm. (Anderson, 317).

century, meaning the rock face was once as prominent as in the *St. Francis*.<sup>97</sup> This would suggest that Taddeo might have commissioned Giorgione to paint his own landscape as a sort of artistic conversation with Bellini's. He may at some point have displayed them together.

The contents of Taddeo's other rooms further speak to his interest in secular rather than religious art, which may explain why Bellini's rather worldly scene of rustic stigmatization appealed to him. He owned a picture of horsemen by the Brescian painter Romanino and another of three nude women, almost certainly the Three Graces, painted by Palma Vecchio.<sup>98</sup> In the same room were further Bellini paintings of Christ Carrying the Cross and a Nude Woman, the latter of which has been identified as Bellini's *Woman with a Mirror* (1515) (2.10).<sup>99</sup> As with the *St. Francis*, this picture suggests Taddeo delighted in landscape imagery, since it contains a detailed vista visible out the window behind the woman. This sunset *veduta* filling a quarter of the picture recalls Fazio's praise of Jan van Eyck's landscape views of, "mountains, groves, hamlets and castles carried out with such skill you would believe one was fifty miles distant from another."

By his death in 1516 Bellini was unanimously believed to be the greatest Venetian painter, and it could be that Contarini acquired his paintings by the artist because of their prestigious authorship. If he did obtain the *St. Francis* by 1513, its evocative vision of nature inspired by humanist poetics would have complemented his other classically themed landscapes by Giorgione in their shared evocation of ancient landscape modes. This fits not only with how humanists in Bellini's circle framed his art and artistic identity, but also the tenor of his other works in Contarini's collection. In a remarkable study of the *Woman with a Mirror*, Sarah Blake

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<sup>97</sup> Anderson, 1997, 155.

<sup>98</sup> Michiel, 88; Vescovo, 118.

<sup>99</sup> Anderson, 1997, 150. Listed by Michiel, 88, as "El quadretto della donna retratta al natural insino all spalle fu de mano de Zuan Bellino." This is listed in the 1556 Contarini inventory as: "Un quadro grandeto con sue soazze intorndo dorado con una Donna che si [g]uarda in specchio" (Vescovo, 118).

McHam has convincingly shown that Bellini identifies himself as a new Apelles through a series of clever artistic devices, including the landscape.<sup>100</sup>

What we know about Contarini's humanist and intellectual activities certainly align with such interests. He frequented the circles of leading Venetian *litteratri* such as Pietro Bembo, Aldus Manutius, and the latter's Greek editor Marcus Musurus. One of his sons, Pietro Francesco, wrote a commentary on Aristotelian philosophy. The 1556 inventory of his eldest son Dario's possessions lists two chests full of books and manuscripts about the humanities and philosophical subjects. Taddeo, as well as his son Girolamo, frequently borrowed classical codices and manuscripts from Cardinal Bessarion's library, including works by Appianus, Gallienus, Homer, and others.<sup>101</sup> While none of these discuss landscape painting, they suggest a learned basis for the classical themes his picture collection explored.

Although Renaissance critics were relatively silent about Giovanni Bellini's activity and subsequent impact as a landscape painter, his paintings make his contribution clear. While studies to date view the landscape of the *St. Francis* as a matrix of Franciscan symbols meant to be deciphered, its more secular pictorial conventions have remained overlooked. It seems this imagery engages with sophisticated humanistic debates concerning landscape painting known to Bellini through his father and learned social contacts who compared him to the great artists of antiquity. Taddeo's insertion of Bellini's *St. Francis* into his collection of atmospheric landscape paintings provides a reliable sense of its aesthetic appeal to its earliest owners. It was perhaps at Taddeo's urging that his brother-in-law Gabriele Vendramin came to own Giorgione's *Tempest*

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<sup>100</sup> Sarah Blake McHam, "Reflections of Pliny in Giovanni Bellini's *Woman with a Mirror*," *Artibus et Historiae* 29, 58 (2008), 151-71.

<sup>101</sup> On their borrowing history, see Labowsky, 139-41. Anderson, 1997, 148-51, provides an overview of Taddeo's cultural patronage; "Nelle altre do case libri diversi de humanita, et filosofia de grandi, et de piccolo stampadi, et scritti a penna" (Anderson, 150).

and the large album of lead-point drawings made by Jacopo Bellini.<sup>102</sup> This does not prove that Giovanni Michiel used it in the same way. Instead, he and Bellini created a picture whose landscape could be discussed for its poetic, classically grounded evocation of nature's rivalry with the arts. Ultimately this unprecedented focus on an artistically self-conscious approach to landscape paved the way for the imaginative *poesie* of Giorgione and Titian. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, it would be Giorgione's and Bellini's pupils and followers—Palma Vecchio, Sebastiano del Piombo, and above all Titian—who would further the possibilities of landscape painting and its professionalization.

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<sup>102</sup> Michiel, 106: "El libro grande in carta bombasina de disegni de stil de piombo fu de man de Jacomo Bellino."

### 3.0 REVISITING ANDREA LOREDAN'S *PORTEGO*: THE FIRST DISPLAY CONTEXT FOR TITIAN'S *FLIGHT INTO EGYPT*

Giorgio Vasari describes Titian's ambitious *Flight into Egypt* in his draft biography of Titian written in the 1560s, locating it in the hall [*sala*] of the Venetian patrician Andrea Loredan's palace.<sup>1</sup> According to Vasari, Titian painted this large canvas shortly after his collaboration with Giorgione on the frescos for the German merchants' warehouse on the Grand Canal in Venice, the Fondaco de' Tedeschi:

After which work he painted a large picture with life-size figures, today in the hall of Messer Andrea Loredan, who lives in San Marcuola; the picture shows Our Lady on the journey to Egypt, in the middle of a great forest and with landscapes that are very well painted, since Titian had devoted many months of work to making such things, and had for this purpose kept in his house several Germans, excellent painters of landscapes and vegetation. Also in the woods in that picture he painted many animals, drawn from life, which are truly natural and almost lifelike.<sup>2</sup>

Vasari's information about Venetian art can be unreliable, but here his detailed description implies first-hand knowledge. Vasari visited Venice three times, the last of which occurred in 1566 when he reported spending considerable time in Titian's studio; it is feasible that he saw

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<sup>1</sup> Vasari composed his *Lives of the Artists* (1550) over a series of years beginning in 1546, though Titian's *vita* does not appear until the expanded and revised second edition published in 1568. At that point it was customary only to write biographies of artists who had died, the exception in Vasari's first edition being Michelangelo. By the second edition of the *Lives*, Titian's international fame warranted his inclusion despite the fact that he was still alive. On these issues, see Charles Hope, "The Historians of Venetian Painting," in Martineau and Hope, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Vasari, VI, 156: "Dopo la quale opera fece un quadro grande di figure simili al vivo, che oggi è nella sala di messer Andrea Loredano, che sta da San Marcuola. Nel qual quadro è dipinta la Nostra Donna che va in Egitto, in mezzo a una gran boscaglia e certi paesi molto ben fatti, per avere dato Tiziano molti mesi opera a fare simili cose, e tenuto per ciò in casa alcuni tedeschi, eccellenti pittori di paesi e verzure. Similmente nel bosco di detto quadro fece molti animali, i quali ritrasse dal vivo, e sono veramente naturali e quasi vivi."

Loredan's picture during one of these trips.<sup>3</sup> Its location in the main reception hall, which in Venetian palace architecture is called the portego, was a semi-public space used to greet visitors. According to Vasari's chronology, Titian would have painted the *Flight into Egypt* in 1507, a date generally accepted by scholars, since Vasari situates its commission after the Fondaco frescos.<sup>4</sup> Long unrecognized and virtually invisible in the storage rooms of Hermitage Museum for many years, the painting has recently undergone extensive conservation and reemerged from a period of long neglect by most Titian scholars (fig.3.1).

Vasari does not specify Andrea Loredan as the original patron, probably because the Andrea he met neither built the palace nor commissioned the art decorating it. Instead, it was that Andrea's father's cousin and older namesake, Andrea di Nicolò Loredan, from whom the younger Andrea known to Vasari inherited the *palazzo* in San Marcuola and its contents (fig.3.2).<sup>5</sup> No other more likely candidate has emerged than Andrea di Nicolò Loredan as the original patron. Moreover, the date assigned to the *Flight* coincides with the construction of Loredan's palace near San Marcuola, an occasion that would have led him to order pictures. The commission of such a grand landscape painting (206 x 306 cm) so early in Titian's career—Vasari alleged he was 18 years old, while Titian's friend Lodovico Dolce claimed he was “not even twenty at the time” of the Fondaco frescos—marks it as a pivotal work in his professional

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<sup>3</sup> Vasari's contact with Venice is discussed in Patricia Lee Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 11, 18, 129, 244-45, 375. His first visit was in 1541 at the invitation of Pietro Aretino to make scenery for his comedy *La Talanta*. In 1545, Vasari was in Rome allegedly touring sites with Titian. Vasari next visited Venice in 1563, then again in 1566 during his extensive tour of Italy made while preparing the second edition of the *Vite*. According to the final section of his *Life of Titian*: “When Vasari, the author of this history, was at Venice in 1566 he went to visit his dear friend Titian, and he found him, despite his great age [76], busy about his painting, with his brushes in hand. On that occasion Vasari took great pleasure in conversing with Titian and looking at his works” (Vasari, VI, 172).

<sup>4</sup> However, Giorgione was paid for the latter work in 1508, meaning Vasari may have confused the year. Vasari describes the *Flight into Egypt* within the section of Titian's biography beginning with the line, “Ma venuto poi l'anno circa 1507,” and ending “L'anno appresso 1508...” Possibly Loredan ordered the picture in 1507 and Titian delivered it in 1508.

<sup>5</sup> The Andrea Vasari met was Andrea di Alvise Loredan. The family tree is given in Roberta Martinis, “Ca' Loredan-Vendramin-Calergi a Venezia: Mauro Codussi e il palazzo di Andrea Loredan,” *Annali di architettura* 10-11 (1998-99), 57, appendix 7. For the construction of Loredan's palace and his will, see below.

trajectory.<sup>6</sup> Added to this is the fact that the order came from one of Venice's most prestigious noble families at the time, Andrea's distant relative Leonardo Loredan serving as Doge from 1501-21. This opportunity produced the earliest surviving large-scale canvas of Titian's career and among the largest religious or narrative scenes on canvas or panel he ever painted. However, the circumstances surrounding the picture's commission and subsequent display remain enigmatic and merit further investigation.

Until recently scholars were hesitant to accept the *Flight into Egypt* as a work of Titian, given its apparent early dating but advanced landscape composition. Its stiff doll-like figures awkwardly flattened and out of scale with their surroundings were viewed as incompatible with the youthful Titian's precocious manner. Critical opinion changed in 2012 following an intensive eleven year conservation conducted on the painting at the Hermitage. Cleaning removed layers of discolored varnish and mold from the picture allowing us to see the extent of Titian's landscape in its original splendor.<sup>7</sup> Vasari's assertion about German assistants can almost certainly be discarded since not until 1513 is any sort of collaboration by Titian documented.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the technical analysis revealed working methods wholly consistent with Titian's and does not show evidence of another hand. The canvas has now come to be regarded instead as proof of Titian's role as the progenitor of modern landscape painting. It marks in Mauro Lucco's opinion, "a fundamental advance in the affirmation of landscape as the real protagonist of a

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<sup>6</sup> Vasari, VI, 155: "A principio dunque, che cominciò seguitare la maniera di Giorgione, non hauendo piu che diciotto anni..." Titian's birthdate is uncertain and it could be that he was in his early twenties; yet Vasari's comment perceives it similarly to how art historians do today: as a work signaling Titian's artistic prodigy. Roskill, 187: "non havendo egli allora a pena venti anni."

<sup>7</sup> The Hermitage Museum's most recent conservation initiative for the picture was undertaken from 1999-2011. This restoration project is discussed by the Hermitage's Curator of Venetian Painting: Irina Artemieva, "New Light on Titian's 'Flight into Egypt' in the Hermitage," *Burlington Magazine* 154, 1306 (Jan., 2012), 4-11.

<sup>8</sup> In this year, the Council of Ten granted Titian two assistants to aid in executing a grand canvas for the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Palazzo Ducale; these were two young painters named "Lodovico de Zuane da Veniexia," and Luca Antonio Busati, the latter of whom was a disciple of Giovanni Bellini. The commission was for a painting of the *Battle of Spoleto*, finally finished in 1537 but destroyed by fire in 1577. These documents are discussed in Giorgio Tagliaferro, et al., *Le botteghe di Tiziano* (Florence: Alinari, 2009), 27.

picture,” since it was made on a scale for which there was no contemporary analogy in Venetian art.<sup>9</sup> The Hermitage lent the painting for exhibitions in 2012 in Venice and London, where it was billed at the National Gallery as “Titian’s first masterpiece.”<sup>10</sup> The curators for the Accademia show underscored its position as not only the most ample landscape painted in sixteenth-century Venice, but all of Italy.<sup>11</sup>

The holy family shown in the immediate foreground of the panoramic canvas is not quite fully “life-sized” [*simili al vivo*] as Vasari remembered them to be. Joseph and the Virgin astride a donkey with Christ in her lap parade from left to right led by a youth carrying their traveling equipment. Instead of the Egyptian desert they pass into a grassy clearing in the forest. The meadow beneath them is carpeted with flowers and plants. On the right, a tall tree provides shade for a fox and vulture perched upon a stump. Just beyond lies a stag, flock of sheep, and bull. A copse of green trees—their once vibrant green canopies suffering from paint loss, abrasion, and deterioration of the copper resinate to its present brownish cast—extends through the middleground across three-quarters of the picture. It mostly screens a cloudy blue sky and stream-fed pond visible just beyond. Several goats wander in its woods, one stands on its hind legs to chew low leaves; nearby sit two youthful shepherds conversing with an older armored man. The pair has evidently brought a herd of goats and sheep to graze in the meadow, since several more of these animals settle close by. Beyond them on the right a hilly vista extends to the horizon punctuated by craggy mountains resembling Titian’s native Dolomites.

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<sup>9</sup> Mauro Lucco, “Sacred Stories,” in *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and the Renaissance of Venetian Painting*, ed., David Alan Brown, et al. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2006), 106; Lucco, 2012, 22. Cf. Artemieva, 8.

<sup>10</sup> See the accompanying catalogue by the former curatorial assistant at the National Gallery, London, Antonio Mazzotta, *Titian: a fresh look at nature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Irina Artemieva and Giuseppe Pavanello, ed., *Tiziano. La Fuga in Egitto e la Pittura di Paesaggio* (Venice: Marsilio, 2012), 72: “La *Fuga in Egitto* è il paesaggio di più ampio respiro non solo della pittura veneziana, ma in generale di quella italiana dell’inizio del XVI secolo, realizzato nel format tradizionale del telero veneziano.”

Since the picture was located in Loredan's private *palazzo* it apparently attracted little attention and Vasari is the only sixteenth-century source to discuss it.<sup>12</sup> It is recorded next by Carlo Ridolfi in 1648 in the same palace, which at that point had passed to the Grimani family, as a picture by Titian of the holy family passing through Egypt, "and within the grass where they are journeying there are many animals surrounding their Lord; and there is a very naturalistic curtain of trees, and beyond a Soldier and shepherds."<sup>13</sup> A landscape of the Flight into Egypt by an anonymous artist is listed in the "galleria" in the palace's inventory around this time but is probably too small to be the *Flight* in St. Petersburg.<sup>14</sup> The Hermitage picture was still there in 1660 when Marco Boschini rhapsodized about Titian's "beautiful and natural landscape./ A picture, which to all who saw it, kneeled:/ A picture raising him to the highest Fame:/ A picture which every Painter admired, and which they called/ A work not human, but rather divine."<sup>15</sup> Thus by 1663, when Martinioni published his revised edition of Sansovino's guidebook, he commented on its "astonishing beauty, celebrated by many writers."<sup>16</sup> That Ridolfi and Boschini were shown the work suggests that during the seventeenth century it was still installed in a space

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<sup>12</sup> Surprisingly, it is unmentioned by Dolce or Pietro Aretino who gathered facts directly from the artist. Yet Venetians were much slower to write biographies and guidebooks to the art of their city; Ridolfi, the Venetian equivalent of Vasari, wrote about the latter only by the mid-seventeenth-century.

<sup>13</sup> Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte* (Venice, 1648), I, 139: "Con l'intrapresa maniera lavorà nel porticale di casa Calergi, hor Grimana à Sant'Ermacora alcune armi, ed due figure di virtù; e per la medesima Casa fece un quadro à oglio di nostra Donna col figlio in seno, che passa nell'Egitto, seguita da San Giosepe, un Angelo guida il giumento, e per le herbe passeggiano molti animali corteggiando il loro Signore: e vi è una Cortina d'alberi molto naturale, e lontano un Soldato, e Pastori."

<sup>14</sup> Inventory of Vincenzo Grimani Calergi at Ca' Grimani Calergi, 4 June 1647, Item 4: "un paesetto della Madona che va in Egitto"; Archivio di Stato, Venezia, Italia (Giudici del proprio, Mobili, reg. 209, f. 96r). The inventory is discussed in Borean and Mason, 338-40. Apparently this has escaped notice in the literature.

<sup>15</sup> Boschini, 1660, 306: "Ma in quel Palazzo, dove a pien canal/ Và'l corso de le barche a riverirlo,/ Ghè un quadro de Tician, che a proferirlo/ Forma no' trovo a la materia ugal./ L'è in la Casa Grimana gloriosa,/ Dove de cortesia vien con eccesso/ Prencipi regalai molto ben spesso,/ E con pompa sublime, e generosa./ La Maria co'l Babin, co'l Vecchiarello/ Fuze la tirania del crudo Erode./ Quela Terena Trinità se gode/ Là, in t' un Paese natural, e belo./ Quadro, che ogn'un, che'l vede el se ghe inchina:/ Quadro in alzà sù l' ale de la Fama:/ Quadro, che ogni Pitor l'aprecia, e'l chiama/ Opera humana nò, ma ben divina./ Quadro el più singular tra i singulari,/ Ratificà da celebri scrittori./ El Redolfi, con altri, fà stupori:/ E po' basta che'l lauda anca el Vasari."

<sup>16</sup> Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima, et singolare*, ed., Giustiniano Martinioni (Venice, 1663), 375: "L'Abbate Grimani, e fratelli, frà l'insigni Pitture, tengono un Quadro di mano del gran Titiano, doue è rappresentato l'andata della Vergine in Egitto, con Christo Bambino, e San Giosepe, che per la sua marauigliosa bellezza, viene celebrato da molti Scrittori."

accessible to visitors, almost certainly the portego. Indeed, the only other works Ridolfi notes in the palace are frescos Giorgione painted on the waterside entrance portico on the Grand Canal.

Some time in the eighteenth century the *Flight into Egypt* was sold to Count Brühl of Dresden, and eventually purchased by Catherine the Great in 1768. It is thereafter continuously documented in Russian royal palaces and storage facilities until 1924, when it entered the collection of the Hermitage.<sup>17</sup> Art historians have been unable to ascertain when Brühl obtained the picture, until now. It has gone unnoticed that it appears in a 1730 inventory of Loredan's San Marcuola palace—by that time the Ca' Grimani Calergi—along with Sebastiano del Piombo's *Judgment of Solomon* in the “galleria,” again almost certainly the portego (fig.3.3).<sup>18</sup> Thus it can only have left Venice after 1730.

By 1920 both Berenson and Ernest Liphart, Keeper of the Hermitage Picture Gallery, had assigned the *Flight into Egypt* to Paris Bordone, while Frizzoni preferred an attribution to Giovanni Cariani. Having re-read Vasari and Ridolfi, however, Liphart revised his opinion and gave the painting instead to Titian.<sup>19</sup> Erica Tietze-Conrat brought the picture to wider attention in 1941 when she repeated the theory of Titian as its author.<sup>20</sup> Whereas curators at the Hermitage have traditionally accepted this attribution, the painting was until quite recently ignored by Italian art historians or dismissed by Anglo-American ones.<sup>21</sup> This changed when Pedrocco

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<sup>17</sup> It was in the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in 1769-94, then Tauride Palace, and from 1863 until 1920 displayed in the Gatchina Palace. The most complete provenance is provided in Artemieva, 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Inventory of Francesco di Vincenzo di Zuanne, 11 January, 1730, Item 70b: “Due Quadri grandi bislonghi uno col Giudicio di Salamon, e l'altro con Maria Vergine che va in Egitto con soaze d'Intaglio dorate” (Archivio di Stato, Venezia, Italia (Notarile, Atti, b. 7131, ff.291-315v). The inventory is briefly discussed in Isabella Cecchini, “Grimani Calergi, collezione,” in Borean and Mason, 278-279. However, Cecchini does not discuss the painting in relation to the 1730 inv. Filippo Pedrocco, *Ca' Vendramin Calergi*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Venice: Marsilio, 2004), 90, mentions that the *Flight* does not appear in 1738 inventory and assumes therefore that “this painting had been sold some time prior to 1738,” but does not specify when.

<sup>19</sup> Artemieva, 4-5, with further bibliography provided.

<sup>20</sup> Erica Tietze-Conrat, “A Rediscovered Early Masterpiece by Titian,” *Art in America* 29 (1941), 144-51.

<sup>21</sup> Tamara D. Formichova, *The Hermitage Catalogue of Western European Painting. Venetian Painting Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Florence: Giunti, 1992), 331, cat. no.253, with further bibliography. As late as 1999, Paul Holberton questioned this hesitancy to attribute the *Flight into Egypt* to Titian as a work datable to the first decade

rejected previous attributions to Titian's younger followers and gave it to the master himself, as did Joannides in his exhaustive study of Titian's career before 1518. Joannides went further and underlined its distinctive vision of nature within Titian's early artistic training: "landscape was a central preoccupation of Titian...he was both an extremely skillful and innovative landscapist, even before he developed his powers as a figure painter."<sup>22</sup>

It is only recently that scholarship on Titian's *Flight* has shifted focus from issues of style, attribution, and dating to new questions. In the 2012 London exhibition, Mazzotta drew attention to Titian's adaptation of landscape motifs from German prints for his cast of animals and intricate blooming plants (fig.3.4).<sup>23</sup> Artemieva preferred to locate Titian's painting within the context of the new "devotio moderno" introduced by Giorgione that popularized intimate spiritual narratives set in outdoor landscapes, such as his *Allendale Nativity* (Washington, D.C., National Gallery) and *Adoration of the Magi* (London, National Gallery) (fig.3.5).<sup>24</sup> Titian's debt to the latter painting is apparent from x-rays of the Hermitage *Flight* that reveal the presence of a figure group beneath the present composition of Joseph and Mary in adoration of Christ corresponding to Giorgione's Washington picture.<sup>25</sup>

Even as they acknowledge its revolutionary qualities scholars have mostly left unexplored several key questions at stake in Titian's dynamic *Flight*. For example, Joannides is

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of the cinquecento: Paul Holberton, "La critica e la fortuna di Giorgione: il conflitto delle fonti," in *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Cinquecento*, ed., Mauro Lucco (Milan: Electa, 1999), III, 1039. In his *catalogue raisonné* Wethey attributed it to an anonymous follower of Giovanni Bellini: Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian. The Complete Edition* (London: Phaidon), I, 171-71.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Joannides, *Titian to 1518: The Assumption of Genius* (New York: Yale University Press, 2002), 39. Most recently, Titian's authorship was denied by Charles Hope, "At the National Gallery," *London Review of Books* 34, 10 (24 May 2012), 22-24.

<sup>23</sup> Mazzotta, 31-51. In Venice small engravings and woodcuts of *Flight* subjects made by German and Netherlandish artists such as Martin Schongauer (1473), Dürer (1504), Lucas van Leyden (c.1506), and Albrecht Altdorfer (1513) were readily available. Mazzotta's stated goal is "to distill from this painting the influences of Titian's contemporaries, and to understand its relationship with key works by Titian himself" (7).

<sup>24</sup> Artemieva and Pavanello, 76-77.

<sup>25</sup> The results of the technical analysis are reported in Artemieva and Pavanello, 77; Artemieva, 7-11; and Joannides, 39, who had access only to preliminary unpublished results of infrared reflectography and x-radiograph images.

among the few scholars to question how the painting's original display context influenced its final design. Noting the original underlying scene of the *Adoration*, he hypothesized that the canvas served as part of a Marian cycle of paintings destined for some religious building, such as the sidewall of a chapel dedicated to the Virgin. Supposedly, this initial commission was aborted by Titian or cancelled by the patron, at which point Titian offered the picture to Loredan who was then constructing a new *palazzo*. According to Joannides, this helps explain both its massive size and sacred theme, which he deems "an odd subject for an isolated painting in the secular setting of a family palace."<sup>26</sup> Weakening Joannides's theory is the fact that Loredan seems to have acquired another painting of nearly identical dimensions and biblical subject at the same time as Titian's *Flight*: Sebastiano's aforementioned *Judgment of Solomon* (Kingston Lacy, c.1507-10; 208 x 315 cm), for Ridolfi recorded both pictures in Loredan's former palace.<sup>27</sup> Titian's and Sebastiano's works seem to have been among the first commissions of such large canvases for a private residence in Venice.

To date, the presentation of Titian's *Flight into Egypt* within the portego has been tentatively accepted without further consideration of the implications of its display there.<sup>28</sup>

However, I believe that it is precisely this context that provides the key to our understanding of the picture. Writing of Sebastiano's *Judgment*, Hirst observed that, "The ambitious character of the Kingston Lacy painting raises what is probably the most acute problem which any chronicler of Sebastiano's career has to face: that of its purpose and context."<sup>29</sup> The same could be said of Titian's *Flight* that most likely served as its pendant, and Artemieva admitted that, "One question

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<sup>26</sup> Joannides, 43-44.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Hirst, *Sebastiano del Pimobo* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 17-20; Filippo Pedrocchi, *Ca' Vendramin Calergi* (Venice: Marsilio, 2004), 55. Further supporting them as pendants are similarities in the physical properties of the canvases themselves, which are typical in density and weave of those coming out of Giorgione's workshop. In each case, the pictures are made up of three bands of canvas stitched together (Artemieva, 11).

<sup>28</sup> Hirst, 17-20; Mauro Lucco, "Sacred Stories," in Brown, et al., 106; and Schmitter, 2011, 699.

<sup>29</sup> Hirst, 17.

remains unresolved, regarding the [painting's] first owner, Andrea di Nicolò Loredan"—in other words, the details surrounding its commission and display.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, despite a number of exciting new studies on Venetian *collezionismo* during this period, Loredan's art collection remains largely unexplored.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, focus on Titian's own motivations, the incomplete documentary evidence for the painting, and its stylistic properties have brought us no closer to understanding the picture's genesis and its purpose. It is curious that the *Flight* has never been related to what we know about Loredan, who dedicated much of his energy and resources to the building and decoration of his palace. Titian was at the time an unknown teenage painter likely open to the aesthetic tastes of his wealthy noble patron. This is not to discount Titian's innovative approach to the canvas, but rather refocus attention on Loredan's agency and the specific display context that likely dictated the commission and its imagery.

Titian's picture fits within the category of the large-format "quadro da portego" that developed to suit shifting Venetian palace architecture during this period. Lucco postulates that artists began to paint large-size canvases in the beginning of sixteenth century for reasons "more social than artistic." This was because lavish domestic residences were increasingly designed with rooms geared toward social interaction and with "semi-public self-aggrandizement" in mind, namely the portego.<sup>32</sup> Monika Schmitter further clarified the parameters of this image-type in the early sixteenth century which, as we shall see, the *Flight* exemplifies on all accounts.

Through new attention to Loredan's will, it is now possible to explain with a higher degree of

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<sup>30</sup> Artemieva, 11.

<sup>31</sup> See Bonfait, et al.; Aikema, et al.; Hochmann, et al. This is symptomatic of critics' general disregard for collecting practices of landscape painting during this period.

<sup>32</sup> Lucco, in Brown, et al., 106. Lucco connects Titian's *Flight* to Loredan's portego as a rationalization for its size, but inexplicably dates it to 1512. He raises the idea that such paintings, especially landscapes, could offer pleasurable escape for their owners, but does not develop this idea.

certainty the picture's continuous documentation in the portego of this palace, as well as Loredan as its original patron. Focusing for the first time on Loredan's cultural activities as a lens through which to read Titian's canvas, we come to a better understanding of its ambitious pastoral landscape and themes of journey, safe arrival, and retreat.

### **3.1 ANDREA LOREDAN'S PATRONAGE AND THE CA' LOREDAN**

Andrea di Nicolò Loredan was born in 1450 into a wealthy noble family. In 1485 he married the daughter of another prominent Venetian clan, Maria Badoer, but produced no heirs. His career in civic life, military affairs, and management of mainland territories can be followed from Sanudo's reports and archival sources. In 1502 he was elected Savio di Terraferma and then podestà to Brescia in 1504. The following year he was a Savio of the Consiglio, the judicial board of the Venetian government, and a member of the collegio responsible for evaluating reconstruction designs for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi after it burned in 1506. Also in this year he attained the prestigious duty of Capo dei Dieci.

During the War of the League of Cambrai (1508-17), Loredan had been dispatched to Friuli in 1507 as a lieutenant, but refused the Senate's command to return there in 1509. This affront led to his enforced temporary retirement to the island of Mazzorbo in the Venetian lagoon. He soon returned to favor and served again as Capo from 1509-10. By 1511, he was in Udine where he successfully quashed a peasant revolt, earning an appointment as provveditore generale, or district governor, in Padua in 1513. At this time the Senate ordered him to join the Venetian army encamped near Vicenza to rally a defense against invading Spanish and German troops. It was due to the dangerous nature of this assignment that Loredan hastily made his will in June 1513. His fears were soon answered and he died in battle in Vicenza several months

later. According to his last wishes, he was buried in a large chapel in the church of San Michele in Isola whose construction he helped finance.<sup>33</sup>

Loredan's reputation and legacy rest on his magnificent palace constructed in Cannaregio on the Grand Canal. Francesco Sansovino singled it out in *Venetia città nobilissima* (1581) as one of the four finest in the city. No documents for its commission survive but the design and architecture are now unanimously accepted as the work of Mauro Codussi (fig.3.6). Loredan's planning for the structure stretch back to 1481 when he bought some buildings once occupying its plot in the vicinity of San Marcuola for 592 ducats. The palace does not appear in Jacopo de' Barbari's 1500 bird's-eye-view map of Venice but seems to have been underway by 1502, to judge from construction records.<sup>34</sup> Codussi died in 1504 but it is likely his eldest son Domenico saw the project through to the end. The *Diarii* of Girolamo Priuli refer to the palace as already completed in 1509, and it was probably finished slightly earlier in 1507-1508. The residence's conspicuous ostentation, built during wartime crisis, was mitigated by an inscription on the façade: NON NOBIS D[OMI]NE NON NOBIS –“Not unto us Lord, Not unto us.” This passage derives from Psalms 115 and is completed with the line, “But unto Thy name be glory given.” The credo sought to legitimize overtly public displays of magnificence by rededicating them, at least in appearance, to the public good.<sup>35</sup>

Around 1507 when Titian painted the *Flight into Egypt* construction on Loredan's palace was either wrapping up or already done. In any case, he knew that the palace would possess three porteghi in the finished ground plan: one on the *piano terreno* to be used for storage and one

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<sup>33</sup> This synopsis of Loredan's life and career is drawn from several sources, where references to the proper archival documents can be found: Martinis, 44; Loredana Olivato Puppi and Lionello Puppi, *Mauro Codussi* (Milan: Electa, 1977), 222; Pedrocco, 2004, 13-14.

<sup>34</sup> Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 222.

<sup>35</sup> Brown, 2004, 33. Cf. 231, and the similar inscription placed on the entrance portal to the Palazzo Grimani, remodeled in the 1530s: “GENIO/ VRBIS/ AVG(usto)/ VSVIQ(ue)/ AMICO/RUM” – To the glory of the city and for the use of friends.

each on the first and second *piano nobile* (fig.3.7). As the largest and most public spaces in the residence they were of central concern and may have been the first rooms for which he ordered pictures and other furnishings, perhaps even in advance as seems to be the case with Titian's and Sebastiano's paintings.

Loredan's other known commissions do not directly help to clarify any motivations for commissioning the *Flight*, except that he clearly favored younger artists then working in Giorgione's circle.<sup>36</sup> It was Giorgione who frescoed the ground floor atrium of the palace with allegorical figures of Prudence and Diligence, leading Anderson to conclude that, as with the façade inscription, "the image of [Loredan's] patronage seems very carefully calculated to show his political virtue."<sup>37</sup> Evidence of this also comes from Loredan's support of the public campaign to renovate the Camaldolese abbey church of San Michele in Isola in the Venetian lagoon. It was through this project (1469-80) that he came to know the future architect of his palace, Codussi, who had been contracted to oversee the church's rebuilding. Since Loredan was the principal benefactor the monks granted him the honor of burial rights in the capella maggiore.<sup>38</sup>

Loredan likely became acquainted with Titian after the painter won the commission to paint frescos for the Fondaco de' Tedeschi. Loredan had served as one of the judges for the mural competition who awarded the commission to Titian and Giorgione. Loredan must have been impressed since Giorgione was invited to fresco the portico of his palazzo, while it seems Titian was asked to paint a large canvas for the interior. Loredan was mindful of façade

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<sup>36</sup> Dolce labels Titian as Giorgione's *discepolo* [disciple]. However, Giorgione is said to have grudgingly admitted to his friends that it was his pupil and not he that made the *Judith* fresco for the Fondaco façade: "Onde Giorgione con grandissimo suo dispiacere, rispondeva, ch'era di mano del discepolo; ilquale dimostrava già di avanzare il Maestro..." (Roskill, 186). Joannides, 26, believes the two shared a studio, a proposal which accounts for mutual influences found in their works and often indistinguishable techniques and style prior to 1510.

<sup>37</sup> Anderson, 1997, 346.

<sup>38</sup> Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 182.

decoration and it seems he asked Titian to incorporate a decorative motif from his palace front into the Hermitage *Flight*. This is the eagle perched on a tree stump and placed prominently in profile in the right foreground (fig.3.8). No mention is made of this bird in the biblical or apocryphal accounts of the Flight into Egypt. However, eagles were part of Loredan's public identity and appear conspicuously on his palace façade facing the Grand Canal. Nine large eagles are carved in deep bas-relief in the entablature frieze above the second *piano nobile*. They remain highly visible with no other decoration surrounding them. They strongly resemble Titian's eagle, particularly in the angle of their necks (though their wings are spread on the façade) and are further evidence that Loredan was the original patron of the Hermitage *Flight*.<sup>39</sup>

It was also around 1507-1508 that the Council of Ten ordered a large canvas from Giorgione for its Audience Hall in the Palazzo Ducale, and it could be that Loredan came to know Titian through his older mentor.<sup>40</sup> By 1508, however, Titian had attracted the attention not only of the Loredan but other elite aristocratic families in Venice. One was a member of the Barbarigo family, who was so pleased with his portrait Titian painted that he helped secure the Fondaco commissions, as Vasari informs us.<sup>41</sup> Another was Jacopo Pesaro for whom he probably worked as early as 1506.<sup>42</sup> Titian may also have known Andrea Loredan through his teacher

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<sup>39</sup> Pedrocco, 30, reads them as republican symbols of virtue, as do Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 165; they do not mention them in relation to Titian's painting. If the eagle in Titian's painting is meant to evoke those found on the façade, the palace must have been complete by the time he painted the *Flight*, or at least this portion of the façade.

<sup>40</sup> Though the commission is recorded in several documents (between August 1507 and January 1508), we do not know the subject of this large canvas or its fate, though it must have been Giorgione's most important public commission. For these documents, see Sylvia Ferino-Pagden and Giovanna Nepi Scirè, ed., *Giorgione. Myth and Enigma* (Milan: Skira, 2004), 24-25. This work was almost certainly destroyed in one of the fires that gutted the palace in 1574 and 1577, including the Sala dell'Udienza.

<sup>41</sup> Charles Hope, "Titian and his Patrons," in Susanna Biadene and Mary Yakush, ed., *Titian. Prince of Painters* (Munich: Prestel, 1990), 77-78; Hope does not mention Loredan. For Pesaro, Titian painted the votive picture of *Jacopo Pesaro Presented to Saint Peter by Pope Alexander VI* (c.1503-1507, 145 x 183 cm; Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten).

<sup>42</sup> Antonio Mazzotta, "A 'gentilhuomo da Ca' Barbarigo' by Titian in the National Gallery, London," *Burlington Magazine* 154 (Jan., 2012), 12-19.

Giovanni Bellini, who painted Leonardo Loredan's portrait around 1501-1502, now in London in the collection of the National Gallery.

### 3.2 THE VENETIAN *PORTEGO* AND ITS CONTENTS

Patricia Fortini Brown has emphasized the portego as a uniquely Venetian room with strong ties to the social life and identity of its owner. It is located on the *piano nobile* of a Venetian palace and extends like a spine the entire length of the house from front to back, with smaller private *camere* branching off its main axis. The Palazzo Loredan, now the Ca' Vendramin Calergi, exemplifies this type (fig.3.9). It possesses two upper porteghi as well as a more modest ground-floor version, affording a grand entrance for those entering by water or walkway. It was the equivalent of the grand "*sala*," as Vasari described it, or *gran salone* elsewhere. The upper portego was the most public room in the house and, as Vincenzo Scamozzi declared, a space for grand entertaining: "to receive relatives at the time of weddings, and to have banquets and celebrations."<sup>43</sup> In the 1540s, the architectural theorist Sebastiano Serlio defined the adoption of the portego plan in Venice as "the universal custom of the city" in his treatise on domestic architecture.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the Renaissance *studiolo*, *camerino*, or *scrittoio*, which existed as private spaces for study that gradually developed into repositories for princely collections, the portego remained a highly social space connected to patrilineal honor.<sup>45</sup>

In practical terms the upper portego made sense as a picture gallery. It was removed from the perpetual dampness and flooding to which ground floors were susceptible. It was also the best-lit space and during the daytime awash with natural light. In Venice where plots of land

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<sup>43</sup> Brown, 2004, 71.

<sup>44</sup> Bk. VI; Brown, 2004, 67.

<sup>45</sup> On these private spaces, see Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study. Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

were at a premium and buildings shared walls or had only narrow spaces between them, the portego was the best room to display artworks. Indeed, Schmitter has identified 74 household inventories composed from 1523-99 listing pictures in the portego.<sup>46</sup> In the Ca' Vendramin Calergi, now operating as the Casinò Municipale, the combination of glazed windows and gallery on the front bring fresh air and light into the interior of the large hall. For these reasons, as Brown notes, the portego typically functioned as “a breezeway and solarium of sorts” in what could otherwise be a dim existence in the side chambers of the palace.<sup>47</sup> For these reasons, landscape painting would have been especially amenable to the room’s associations with fresh air, openness, respite, elevated views, and sunlight—all or which were already determined by the architectural design.

A vital connection existed between Titian’s *Flight into Egypt* and the San Marcuola palace from what we know of their combined history. Over the course of several changes in ownership of the palace, renting of its rooms, and leases the painting remained.<sup>48</sup> Only Vasari specifies its location as the portego, yet no other space would have been suitable for a picture of such a scale and format; the portego was almost certainly the room designated as the “galleria” where it is recorded in 1730. The painting’s rootedness in the palace resulted from a clause in Loredan’s will. It indicated that at his death all his wealth and possessions should pass to his wife Maria; upon her death, they would transfer to Andrea Loredan II, the son of his first cousin

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<sup>46</sup> Schmitter, 2011, 744-46.

<sup>47</sup> Brown, 2004, 63.

<sup>48</sup> Full ownership history is outlined in Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 222-23; and Pedrocchi, 58-59. In 1521 at the death of Maria Badoer, the palace passed to Andrea Loredan II; 1556 death of Andrea Loredan II, custody passed to his brother’s Lorenzo’s sons, that is, his nephews Alvise, Domenico, and Antonio Loredan; 1566 the brothers were renting it out, along with small adjacent houses; 1581, the Venetian Signoria dissolved the trust forbidding the sale of the palace; sold to Henry, Duke of Brunswick; 1583 purchased by William III, Duke of Mantua; 1586-87 Catherine Doria, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, won a suit returning the palace to her, since it had been promised to her in the will of her father; 1589 sold at auction to Vettor Calergi, who at that time was renting the *piano nobile* of the palace anyway; passed to his daughter Marina Calergi; 1634 death of Marina, went to her son Antonio Grimani; 1739 death of Vettore Grimani Calergi passed to Nicolò Vendramin.

Alvise, and then on from “male heir to male heir, *ad infinitum*.” He also established a trust for the palace stipulating that all the furnishing could be sold, except the collections of paintings, tapestries, and statues: “I want to say these words, that all the furnishings in the house may be sold: and turned into money, apart from its ornaments of paintings, tapestries and marble statues.”<sup>49</sup> These were ordered to be left in the palace forever, “to embellish the house, or rather the homeland.”<sup>50</sup>

This legally binding pronouncement allows us to infer, I believe, that the painting had been in the portego since its initial installation there around 1507. Since the painting could not be sold, this also explains why it does not appear earlier in the succinct 1533 testamentary will of Andrea’s widow or later wills of his heirs.<sup>51</sup> Not until 1581, long after Vasari saw it, was the trust Loredan put in place protecting the palace and its contents dissolved by the Venetian Signoria. At that point, ostensibly it had become such a fixture in the portego that subsequent inhabitants left it be. Thus it seems even as other movables were rotated or emptied from the portego, the interconnectedness of the *Flight into Egypt* with this display context was acknowledged by the parade of subsequent owners from the early cinquecento to later settecento.

Even though Loredan’s initial trust over the palace and its contents expired in 1581, Marina Calergi established a new trust in her will of 1634 when she resided there. This “*fedecommesso*” was another legal settlement prohibiting her heirs from auctioning off the

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<sup>49</sup> Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 222: “El ditto mio stabile, e possession da poi la morte de la mia cara consorte voio la sia de Andrea Loredan del sopradito Alvixe conditionatamente, che la vada de heriede in heriede maschoi ad infinitum fino se ne troverà, e non se ne trovando nel più proximo, che sia in cha Loredan, ed essendone difficoltà chi el fusse per tuti quelli de cha Loredan, che vano a conseio a bossoli et balote, sia deliberato de chi habi ad est. Et volio, che mai non la si possi vender nè impegnar, et segurar dotte, ne far alguna obligation possibile, ma che sempre la resti in cha Lordan...Volio etiam dir queste parole, che tutti i mobeli de caxa siano venduti: et fato denari, eceto i suoi ornamenti de quadri, tapezarie statoe de marmorio in discreptione di mie comissarii per ornamento di la caxa, anzi di la patria...”

<sup>50</sup> All the relevant lines of Loredan’s will are reproduced in Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 222, and discussed in Pedrocco, 2004, 14. Neither mentions Titian’s *Flight* in relation to it.

<sup>51</sup> These documents are discussed in Martinis, 59, n.37.

*palazzo* and its furnishings. The trust stood until the death in 1729 of Vincenzo Grimani Carlergi, her last direct heir. By 1738, the family palace and art collection had been divvied up amongst a distant Vendramin grandnephew and his relatives, at which point Titian's *Flight* apparently had been sold since it appears in Vincenzo's 1730 post-mortem palace inventory but not in the 1738 document.<sup>52</sup>

That a landscape of any size be displayed in the portego prior to 1520 was rare. Yet we have an incomplete record since very few inventories of Venetian homes made prior to 1511 exist.<sup>53</sup> Surviving accounts from before 1520 demonstrate that the portego's contents typically included portraits or images of the Madonna, racks of weapons, or domestic furnishings.<sup>54</sup> More inventories from the middle of the sixteenth century make it clear that landscape pictures were commonly found there; Venetians were filling their porteghi with "quadri di Fiandra," some of which were landscapes representing the Four Seasons.<sup>55</sup> In 1549, for example, Bortolo de Liesina displayed in his lower portego a Flemish painting of this subject.<sup>56</sup> Likewise, Simone Landino placed a cycle of *The Four Seasons* and the *Ark of Noah* by Jacopo Bassano's workshop in his "portego de sotto," while a series of four landscapes hung in the "portego del soler de sopra"; another lower chamber sported "otto quadretti piccolo de paesi."<sup>57</sup> These accord with Sansovino's observation that portego decorations, including wall-hangings, tapestries, and

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<sup>52</sup> For Marina's will, see Olivato Puppi and Puppi, 224. On the 1738 inventory, see Pedrocco, 90.

<sup>53</sup> Henry, 255-57.

<sup>54</sup> Schmitter, 2011, 705-708.

<sup>55</sup> The inventories of Bortolamio Fontana (1571) and Marino Foscarini (1570) list "quadri di Fiandra" in their porteghi (Michel Hochmann, "Le collezioni veneziane nel Rinascimento: storia e storiografia," in Hochmann, et al., 30-31. Cf. Schmitter, 2011, 708.

<sup>56</sup> Recorded in his "Casa al confine di Sant'Antonio," Archivio di Stato, Venezia, Italia (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Cancelleria inferiore, Miscellanea notai diversi, b.38, n.3), Item 4: "Un quadro a paesi fiamengo."

<sup>57</sup> Recorded in his "Casa in San Gregorio," Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Cancelleria inferiore, Miscellanea notai diversi, b.43, n.59 (inventario di Simone Lando, 10 gennaio 1585): in the *portego de sotto*: "Le Quattro Stagioni," and in the portego "del soler de sopra": "Quattro tellereti depenti de paesi sopra le porte."

*spalliere*, were changed “according to the time and season.”<sup>58</sup> Thus Loredan’s selection of his portego for the destination of Titian’s *Flight* is an early instance of displaying landscapes there that would become more common several decades later.<sup>59</sup>

With this in mind, one model for the Hermitage painting was certainly the luxurious tapestries wealthy Venetians hung on their walls. For example, Zuanantonio Venier owned Raphael’s famous tapestry of the *Conversion of St. Paul*, which he seems to have displayed in his portego.<sup>60</sup> Often more modest textiles of floral motifs were found. In 1530 the wealthy *cittadino* merchant Nicolò Duodo owned numerous “spalliere a verdure”—wall-hangings of greenery—stuffed into sixteen chests in the *camera grande* of his palace that overlooked the garden. Brown has calculated that the amount of fabric all together ran 222 feet. Another 1530 inventory of a Venetian citizen similarly lists a number of “spallieri a verdure” and “spallieri a verdure con paesi,” that is, tapestries with pastoral or rustic scenes.<sup>61</sup> Paintings often served as less expensive substitutes for these more costly wall-hangings imported from across the Alps. This may be relevant since Artemieva notes that the spatial relationship between the figures and landscape in the Hermitage canvas, as well as the palette, “make Titian’s painting more like a tapestry.”<sup>62</sup> Her observation gains credence if we consider Titian’s meadow carpeted with flowers sporting a marvelous array of animals. Along with the holy family, their flattened, heraldic appearance mimics the imagery typical of textiles found in the portego.

The numerous animal portraits Titian included also serve a narrative purpose. They derive from the account of the Flight into Egypt as told in the apocryphal gospel of Pseudo-

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<sup>58</sup> Brown, 2004, 86.

<sup>59</sup> From c.1550 until the end of the century, landscapes became the most popular subject to be displayed in Venetian homes. As inventories during this period indicate, these were clustered in groups of 4-10—in some cases up to 30 or more—in various *camerini*. See Henry, 258.

<sup>60</sup> Schmitter, 2011, 716.

<sup>61</sup> On these inventories, see Brown, 2004, 85.

<sup>62</sup> Artemieva, 10.

Matthew. Fleeing Herod's wrath, the holy family ventures into the wilderness where they encounter many beasts who bow down to the divinity of the infant Jesus:

Similarly, lions and leopards worshipped him and accompanied them in the desert. Wherever Mary and Joseph went, they preceded them; showing them the way and inclining their heads, they worshipped Jesus...The lions traveled with them and with the oxen and donkeys and the pack animals that carried their necessities, and they hurt none of them while they remained. They were tame among the sheep and rams which they brought with them from Judea and had with them. They traveled among wolves and they were not frightened...<sup>63</sup>

One of Titian's great revelations early on was recognizing the theatrical potential of the natural landscape in his religious paintings. This was a notion learned from Bellini but which his pupil fully realized. Titian allots a significant role to nature and its cast in his religious paintings in order to add drama and to direct the narrative. The humble mien of the animals sets a reverent tone well-suited to a reception hall. All eyes are on the traveling holy family who stand-in for the actual visitors Loredan welcomed into his palace: the soldier breaks off his conversation with shepherds to glance at the family. The fox has skittered to the meadow's edge, propping his paws on a tree trunk and leaning forward in anticipation to observe the wayfarers; sheep cock their heads toward them as does the youth leading their caravan. Jesus himself directs his gaze outward toward the viewer/visitor. The bull in particular stands as if frozen staring back at the audience. They all communicate a sense of immediacy and tensed excitement at the holy family's arrival.

Clearly some license is taken and not all the animals appear, while others are added. Titian's addition of the eagle, appearing conspicuously in the foreground and un-integrated into the landscape, is probably Loredan's heraldic device. Joseph seems to point toward it. His gesture, entirely unmentioned in the literature, is in fact multilayered. He points the way forward for the caravan and at the same time draws attention to Christ. He also indicates the rather

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<sup>63</sup> David R. Cartlidge and David L. Dungan, *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (New York: Collins, 1980), 101.

conspicuous clump of foliage and tree stumps, further highlighted by the eagle and fox that perch upon them. Growing amidst them are bright red poppies, symbols of Christ's passion. Joseph's gesture works as a narrative device that also deepens the spiritual message by reminding viewers of what lies at the end of Christ's journey. In Christian doctrine, life was a pilgrimage that ultimately ended with death.

### 3.3 SAFE ARRIVAL AND RETREAT IN THE *PORTEGO*

Schmitter identifies several key traits of the *quadro da portego* that were dictated by the social decorum of the space. These include: an unusually large scale (at least around 145 x 250 cm) and horizontal orientation befitting the hall's status and large inner wall-spaces; a narrative subject-matter with multiple figures; and finally, a theme addressing travel, safe arrival, or hospitality, which reflects the function of the *portego* as a reception hall for visitors and guests.<sup>64</sup> The holy family's escape through the Egyptian wilderness certainly accords with this framework. The theme of safe arrival is an especially suggestive attribute linking Titian's *Flight* to the *portego*. As Schmitter writes, these paintings "functioned as talismans, welcoming and bidding farewell to visitors and family members coming and going from the house."<sup>65</sup> Aikema has suggested that many of the large canvases for private Venetian clients produced by the Bassano workshop from 1560-90 were likely destined for the *portego*. A number of these are Old Testament episodes whose principal theme is journey into the wilderness: Jacob's Journey, The Journey to the Promised Land, and Abraham's Journey.<sup>66</sup> In this way, another popular image for the *portego*

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<sup>64</sup> Schmitter, 2011, 699-701. In practical terms, the theme of travel relates to the *portego* as the central spine of house that inhabitants would be walking through continuously throughout the day.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 714-15.

<sup>66</sup> Bernard Aikema, *Jacopo Bassano and His Public. Moralizing Pictures in an Age of Reform ca.1535-1600* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 84-91, 153.

was St. Christopher, the giant who ferried the Christ child over a river, and who later became patron saint of travelers. This saint held special appeal for Venetians who constantly navigated the city's network of water-crossings.

Rylands rightly proposed Palma Vecchio's *The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel* (c.1515) as a portego picture and its theme of hospitality and greeting accords with Schmitter's model (fig.3.10).<sup>67</sup> Palma's pupil Bonifacio de' Pitati likewise painted his *Dives and Lazarus* (c.1535-40) for the portego, as Cottrell suggested, for it concerns the charity bestowed upon a beggar arriving in the courtyard of a lavish Venetian villa.<sup>68</sup> These themes are unlike Titian's more tranquil first composition of the *Adoration* now hidden in the Hermitage canvas. One explanation for why he abandoned this initial subject may be that it simply did not fit the decorum of the portego, which called for an energetic scene with a strong narrative thrust. The underlying *Adoration* mirrors Titian's two smaller versions of this subject in St. Petersburg (c.1505; 49 x 39.5 cm) and Raleigh (c.1505; 19 x 16 cm), whose format and meditative mood suggest them as private altar pictures in a bedchamber or studiolo (fig.3.11).<sup>69</sup> The disparity between these modest panels and the grandiose Hermitage canvas underscores the degree to which the intended display context influenced the conception of the work.

Beyond the specific constraints of the portego, Loredan's motivation for a landscape emphasizing safe passage connects to his own professional experiences. Duty frequently led him to embark on journeys through the Venetian terraferma. As provveditore generale (literally "he who sees to things") and lieutenant in the Venetian army, Loredan was responsible for protecting mainland territories in Friuli, Padua, and Vicenza during the period of wartime hostilities in

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<sup>67</sup> Dresden, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie, 146.5 x 250.5 cm.; Philip Rylands, *Palma Vecchio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 83, 218.

<sup>68</sup> Philip Cottrell, 2005, 131-50.

<sup>69</sup> Artemieva and Pavanello, 75-76; Artemieva, 9; Formichova, 279, cat. no.215.

which travel was in fact dangerous. As Unglaub writes of Venetian pastoral painting in general, “Landscape functions equivocally in these works: although it provides a shady retreat for music making, its unreal, mirage-like quality intensifies the misfortune of those compelled to abandon their land and leisure through civil strife.”<sup>70</sup>

That Loredan would relate his own personal experiences to the biblical Flight into Egypt is unsurprising, for contemporary sermons encouraged Venetians to identify with the holy family. Fra Roberto Caracciolo’s homily in the *Specchio della Fede* published in Venice in 1495 compared Joseph’s and Mary’s tribulations to faithful worshippers’ own pilgrimage of life. One Venetian patrician, Pietro Contarini, composed a lengthy poem, the *Christologus peregrinorum* around 1513 even envisioning himself as a fellow traveler on the Flight into Egypt.<sup>71</sup> It was a highly personal story for Contarini and he owned four versions of the subject painted by Girolamo Savoldo.<sup>72</sup> Surely Loredean could relate.

In truth, the landscape in which Titian’s family finds themselves little resembles Egypt, for there is not one obelisk, camel, or even palm tree that German printmakers usually inserted to signify the Egyptian desert. Instead, they have emerged from the woods into a soft meadow. This pleasance is unlike the desert setting of Vittore Carpaccio’s *Flight into Egypt* (c.1505-15), or the inhospitable thicket Dürer and Schongauer portrayed (fig.3.12). In contrast, Titian has opened up the dense space of German prints. Even in such a large canvas it is remarkable how much of the picture surface is given over to “empty” space of fields, sky, and vista. This quality of pleasurable retreat relates to Lucco’s observation about one use of portego pictures: “As

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<sup>70</sup> Unglaub, 46.

<sup>71</sup> On these texts, see Beverly Louise Brown, “Travellers on the Rocky Road to Paradise: Jacopo Bassano’s Flight into Egypt,” *Artibus et Historiae* 32, 64 (2011), 201, 203, 205.

<sup>72</sup> Contarini inhabited a well-appointed palace and was dedicated to poor relief. His will directed that Savoldo’s pictures be installed in his funerary chapel in SS. Apostoli. Creighton Gilbert, “Newly Discovered Paintings by Savoldo in Relation to their Patronage,” *Arte Lombarda* 96-97 (1991), 37-41.

opposed to public history painting, these new *portego* canvases...stress aspects that delight the eye and mind, providing an escape from the everyday, like the invented landscapes in Virgil's *Eclogues* or the *Arcadia*.”<sup>73</sup> These attitudes were expressed by Titian's future patron, Gabriele Vendramin, for whom he painted a large family portrait in the 1540s that probably hung in his *portego*.<sup>74</sup> Although not referring to his *portego* directly, Vendramin in his will admonished his heirs to cherish his art collection since he had taken much care to acquire it, and that it had “brought a little peace and quiet to my soul [*riposso et quiete di hanimo*] during the many labors of mind and body that I have endured in conducting the family business.”<sup>75</sup> As we know, Andrea Loredan equally valued his paintings and forbid the removal of his collection.

Loredan viewed his palace as a retreat from the active life of a government official and officer, who in 1509 had refused military service in Friuli. We must remember that flanking the water gate entrance to Loredan's palazzo reads the inscription “*Domus/Pacis*”—House of Peace. Titian's painting aided in creating this sanctuary. The painted pastoral *locus amoenus* with running streams and lush fields must also have evoked another space nearby Loredan cultivated: the palace courtyard, original to Codussi's plan, complete with a Roman style well-head, still *in situ* (fig.3.13).<sup>76</sup> Both the *portego* with its picture gallery and courtyard green space fulfilled the need for *otium* amidst bustling urban Venice.

This large rectangular courtyard is located just north of the *piano terreno* *portego*, which provides direct access to it; a land entrance is possible from Calle Vendramin. Gardens were not unusual in the city and Loredan's courtyard at the very least must have provided an outdoor area

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<sup>73</sup> Lucco, in Brown, et al., 106.

<sup>74</sup> This is the *Vendramin Family* portrait (London, National Gallery). Its classification as a *portego* picture is suggested in Jill Dunkerton, Susan Foister, and Nicholas Penny, *Dürer to Veronese: Sixteenth-Century Painting in the National Gallery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 109.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in David Chambers and Brian Pullan, with Jennifer Fletcher, *Venice. A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 428-29.

<sup>76</sup> Plausibly this was another of the marbles Loredan's heirs were prohibited from liquidating from the palace.

for recreation planted with greenery. The treatise writer Giovanni Maria Memmo viewed these *giardini* as vital to a gentleman's residence:

Try to have a large and spacious courtyard, and a beautiful garden adorned with various and delicate fruits, herbs, and flowers of many kinds, qualities, and fragrances, because for the citizen, who spends a good part of his life in the palace, such things will be of no small enjoyment and recreation...the garden, the loggia, and the courtyard will take away a great part of worries and boredom that are part of human affairs.<sup>77</sup>

Although paintings were not typically part of the ensemble, this private oasis was a tangible counterpart to the pastoral wilderness Titian depicted. His picture may even have been intended to evoke Loredan's garden, to bring the verdant outdoors within the confines of the palace. In watery Venice a beautiful plot of land, whether real or painted, held an undeniable appeal.<sup>78</sup>

That Titian conceived his youthful *Flight into Egypt* as a *quadro da portego* destined for the main reception hall of Loredan's *palazzo* is virtually certain, but in many respects this work is an anomaly in his career. Up to 1508, its landscape meant for a private home was unmatched by any previous painter in sheer scale, breadth, and ambition. The only possible antecedents were Bellini's great Frick *St. Francis* and Giorgione's *Allendale Nativity*, each of which afforded a large portion of their pictures to open countryside overshadowing the religious cast. Since their original display contexts remain unknown Titian's picture proves all the more valuable for our understanding of landscape painting's role for elite patrons such as Loredan. It seems likely therefore that Bellini's and Giorgione's pictures were portego pictures as well.

Still, the agency afforded to Titian in his revolutionary picture needs to be qualified. Without a patron who shared and approved of his vision, the picture would never have been commissioned or displayed. More emphasis should be placed on Loredan's motivations and the

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<sup>77</sup> G. M. Memmo, *Dialogo del Magn. Cavaliere M. Gio. Maria Memmo* (Venice, 1563), 80-81; English text quoted in Brown, 2004, 48.

<sup>78</sup> On gardens during this period, see John Dixon Hunt, *The Venetian City Garden: Place, Typology and Perception* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2009), 20-66.

architectural and social aspects inherent in his palace portego that dictated the final design of the *Flight into Egypt*, and even its subject-matter. The social function of the room meant it easily doubled as a convivial space to discuss art, and it is possible to imagine Andrea Loredan II explaining to Vasari, perhaps along with other visiting connoisseurs, the details surrounding his relative's commission from the young Titian. Yet we still know so little about the contents of Loredan's art collection beyond his portego pendants painted by Sebastiano and Titian. Their integral relationship with the portego, however, was apparently part of both their original conception and charm for later owners of Loredan's palace. Besides the paintings' aesthetic suitability to this room, from a legal standpoint their continuous display there, at least until 1581, was mandated by Loredan's will that prohibited their removal or sale. This stipulation was renewed in Marina Calergi's 1634 will and enforced until 1730.

In the end, Titian's *Flight into Egypt* should be taken as a firm statement in its own right about the emerging role of landscape painting in Venetian art at a time when formal theories about it were scarce. Its promotion of landscape as a powerful vehicle for spiritual narratives within the Venetian home encouraged the production of similarly themed paintings. Titian would continue to draw upon the array of pastoral motifs first devised in this painting, as would his followers.<sup>79</sup> It substantially altered the depiction of Flight subjects in Venice. Its evocative treatment helped popularize the related subject-matter of the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* in Venetian art amongst Bellini's other followers such as Andrea Previtali, and Titian's own pupil Paris Bordone.<sup>80</sup> In turn, Bonifacio's pupil Jacopo Bassano's several versions of the *Flight into*

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<sup>79</sup> Joannides (38) has traced fifteen details originating in the *Flight* that recur in Titian's later oeuvre, ranging from human physiognomy and species of trees, to poses of soldiers and shepherds, and the panoramic vista.

<sup>80</sup> Andrea Previtali, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, c.1510, oil on canvas, 116.8 x 141.6 cm, Oxfordshire, Faringdon Collection, Buscot Park; Paris Bordone, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, c.1520-30, oil on canvas, transferred from panel, 49 x 69 cm, London, Courtauld Institute of Art; Paris Bordone, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1527-30, oil on canvas, 155 x 235 cm, private collection. Philip Cottrell has identified seven paintings of the *Rest on the Flight* produced by the workshops of Palma Vecchio and Bonifacio de' Pitati from 1515-50: Cottrell, 2000, figs. 2.20,

*Egypt* are indebted to Titian's prototype.<sup>81</sup> Added to this are the three imaginative treatments by the Dossi workshop, and the Brescian painter Girolamo Savoldo's four versions deeply influenced by his residency in Venice.<sup>82</sup>

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2.48, 2.51, 3.10, 3.17, 3.52, 6.4. More properly, however, these pictures represent the holy family in a landscape accompanied by multiple saints. These were presumably made on spec and customized to include the patron or name saint of their respective buyers. Cariani's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt with St. Anne* represents a similar contribution to this variant of the *Flight* theme, made during his second Venetian period after 1520, when Palma's workshop began to popularize the subject (Rodolfo Pallucchini and Francesco Rossi, *Giovanni Cariani* (Bergamo: Silvana, 1983), cat. no.25, 114-15). Thus they seem to relate more closely to *sacre conversazione* image-types, rather than the more narrative image of Titian's earliest large canvas.

<sup>81</sup> Jacopo Bassano, *Flight into Egypt*, c.1542, 157.5 x 203.2 cm, oil on canvas, Toledo Museum of Art; Jacopo Bassano, c.1545, oil on canvas, 123.2 x 196.2 cm, Pasadena, Norton Simon Museum.

<sup>82</sup> For example, Battista Dossi, *Flight into Egypt*, c.1520-30, oil on panel, 62.2 x 80.7 cm, Coral Gables, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami (for the other versions, see Colby, 204). Savoldo, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, c.1525, 87 x 124 cm, Milan, private collection. On Savoldo's three smaller versions, see Passamani, figs I.11, I.12, I.13, I.14

#### 4.0 IMITATION AND INNOVATION: GIROLAMO SAVOLDO'S

##### *BOSCHIAN TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY*

And beyond this may he [the painter] greatly delight in becoming skilled and worthy in [painting] landscapes, something at which the Northerners are very gifted, the reason being that they simulate the landscapes they inhabit, which on account of their wildness produce the greatest pleasure. But we Italians are in the the garden of the world, a thing more delightful to look at than to depict; however I have seen miraculous landscapes by the hand of Titian, far more graceful than those of the Flemish. Messer Girolamo [Savoldo] of Brescia was most learned in this area: I once saw from his hand certain sunrises with solar reflections, certain nocturnes with a thousand of the most ingenious and rare depictions, all of which gave truer images of these things than the Flemish [painters].<sup>1</sup>

-- Paolo Pino, 1548.

Girolamo Savoldo was the artist to most successfully blend Flemish and Venetian styles of landscape painting in the second decade of the sixteenth century. By his death in 1548, his biographer and pupil Paolo Pino enthusiastically reported how Savoldo had come to surpass northern artists through his special gift in painting night-pieces and exotic lighting effects. No other painting exemplifies Pino's observation better than Savoldo's iconographically puzzling and undated *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, painted for an unknown patron and now in the Timken Museum of Art in San Diego (fig.4.1). With the exception of Bernardino da Parenzo's and

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\* NB: This essay will refer to archival material contained in the conservation and curatorial files of the Timken Museum of Art, San Diego. These documents will be cited using the abbreviation TMA proceeded by their identifying file number, as catalogued by the Timken Museum of Art.

<sup>1</sup> Pino, 29v-30r: "...e dietro à ciò ami grandemente il farsi pratico, & valente nelli lontani d'il che ne sono molto dotati gli oltramontani, & quest'avviene perche fingono i paesi habitati da loro, i quali per quella lor selvatichezza si rendono gratissimi, ma noi italiani siam nel giardin del mondo, cosa piu dilettevole da vedere, che da fingere, pur io hò veduto di mano di Titiano paesi miracolosi, & molto più gratiosi, che li Fiandresi non sono. Messer Gierolemo Bresciano in questa parte era dottissimo, della cui mano vidi già alcune aurore con rifletti di sole, certe oscurità, con mille discrittioni ingeniosissime, & rare, le quale cose hanno più vera imagine del propio, che li Fiamenghi."

Michelangelo's small panels of this subject, Savoldo's treatment of this typically northern theme was virtually unprecedented for an independent easel picture in Italian art.<sup>2</sup> Despite its key implications for landscape painting in Venice and Savoldo's career, the *Temptation* remains little known outside specialist circles.<sup>3</sup>

Savoldo presents a horizontal landscape divided in half at the center by a large rock formation that extends beyond the upper edge of the picture field. On the left, an elderly barefoot saint dressed in a black cassock, white scapular, and skullcap flees from right to left across the barren foreground. A sunny stretch of fields unfolds in the middle distance behind him where a walled monastery sits at the base of a craggy outcropping, a steep mountain rising into cloudy blue skies above. On the right, a host of bizarre hybrid creatures occupy a nocturnal landscape backlit by a burning city on the horizon. The saint glances backward at this hellish terrain he has escaped: plumes of smoke and bright flames shoot into the sky dotted with flying demons. Some humanoid devils cavort around a ruined tower in the right foreground and operate artillery, while other tiny figures pass along an icy river in the middleground of the hellscape. Near the central rockface a sinister hellmouth gapes open, illuminated from within by a burning ship steered by dark figures.

Pino's report that Savoldo excelled in the depiction of bonfires and nocturnal scenes for which the Flemish artists Hieronymus Bosch and Joachim Patinir had become famous omits an important detail. What Pino does not say is that Savoldo directly copied such motifs from the

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<sup>2</sup> Bernardino da Parenzo, *Temptation of St. Anthony* (c.1496, oil on panel, 46.4 x 58.2 cm, Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj); Michelangelo, *The Torment of St. Anthony* (c.1487-88, Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum). There were earlier panels of this subject in Italian art, such as Sano di Pietro, *Saint Anthony Abbot Tormented by Demons* (c.1435-40, New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery). However, these were conceived as part of larger polyptychs rather than autonomous pictures.

<sup>3</sup> Due to its fragile condition it has rarely been loaned for exhibitions. For example, the Timken painting was not loaned for the major 1990 Savoldo exhibition, where Bruno Passamani noted its omission: "L'assenza di quest'ultima opera sarebbe stata grave lacuna per il capitolo delle influenze fiamminghe e in particolare di Bosch..." (Passamani, 16).

northerners' pictures owned by private collectors in Venice. His Timken *Temptation* has always been connected with Bosch's pictures in Venice since it was first published in 1963 in two separate studies. Boschetto dated it to c.1515-20 and noted that with it Savoldo sought to prove himself at an early stage in his career in every aspect of painting, that is landscape, figure, and still-life.<sup>4</sup> Gilbert similarly concluded it was "so obviously an experiment" in a variety of modes, particularly the blending of minutely detailed Flemish realism and more painterly Venetian techniques, though inexplicably dated it to the mid-1530s.<sup>5</sup> Jacobsen was the first to pinpoint specific quotations from northern artists Savoldo made, namely how a number of creatures in the San Diego *Temptation* derive from the *Last Judgment* triptych painted by Bosch's workshop, now in Bruges (fig.4.2). He also demonstrated that the ghostly demons in Savoldo's very similar *Temptation of a Hermit Saint*, now in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow, derive from a 1506 print by Lucas Cranach (fig.4.3).<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Jacobsen observed that Savoldo copied not only the monsters but also the bipartite composition of Bosch's moralizing landscape divided between paradise and hell. He proposed that this triptych may have been somewhere in northern Italy for Savoldo to copy, a theory Slatkes corroborated, each dating the Timken's *Temptation* to the 1530s.<sup>7</sup> Following suit, Gould underscored Savoldo's reliance on Bosch's pictures owned by Cardinal Grimani in Venice, yet preferred a date of 1521 coinciding with Savoldo's documented presence in the Veneto and Michiel's record of Grimani's art collection in that year.<sup>8</sup> Brown pushed the date

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<sup>4</sup> Antonio Boschetto, *Giovan Gerolamo Savoldo* (Milan: Bramante, 1963), unnumbered, figs. 14-18.

<sup>5</sup> Creighton Gilbert, *Major Masters of the Renaissance. A Loan Exhibition of the Poses Institute of Fine Arts* (Waltham, MA: Poses Institute of Fine Arts, Brandeis University, 1963), 23-24, cat. no.16. In contrast, Gilbert cited the Moscow *Temptation* as "certainly an early work."

<sup>6</sup> Michael A. Jacobsen, "Savoldo and Northern Art," *Art Bulletin* 56, 4 (Dec., 1974), 530-34.

<sup>7</sup> Leonard J. Slatkes, "Hieronymus Bosch and Italy," *Art Bulletin* 57, 3 (Sept., 1975), 343-44.

<sup>8</sup> Cecil Gould wrote the entry found in Agnes Mongan, et al., *Timken Art Gallery. European and American Works of Art in the Putnam Foundation Collection* (San Diego: Putnam Foundation, 1983), 76, cat. no.29.

back to around 1527 noting its similarity to northern landscapes in Venetian collections documented around that time.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast, in the major Savoldo retrospective in 1990 much emphasis was placed on artistic models besides Bosch available to the artist in Venice. Gregori drew attention to the preponderance of anonymous Flemish landscapes in the private collections of Francesco Zio, Andrea Odoni, and Cardinal Domenico Grimani featuring craggy mountains and exotic infernos.<sup>10</sup> A more nuanced reading of the Timken landscape's physiognomy was made by Ebert-Schifferer, who compared Savoldo's rock formations and birds-eye-view perspective of progressive colors (from brown to green to blue) to Patinir; his mountain vistas in bluish *sfumato* to Leonardo; and the figure of the fleeing saint to Bellini's National Gallery *St. Peter Martyr* (c.1507) (fig.4.4).<sup>11</sup> Frangi preferred to reinstate Bosch as an influential model, particularly the Netherlandish master's *Female Saint Triptych* (c.1504, Venice, Palazzo Ducale) likely owned by Cardinal Grimani.<sup>12</sup>

Further complicating matters was Lucco's attention to Venetian influences. He suggested that the rotating head of the saint reflected not only Bellini's figure of St. Peter Martyr but also that of the man behind St. Anthony in Titian's fresco of the *Miracle of the Restored Foot* (1511) in the Scuola del Santo in Padua.<sup>13</sup> Titian's influence also had been suggested by Frangi, who rightly noted the resemblance of the fiery *Orpheus and Eurydice* (c.1509-11) to Savoldo's composition and therefore dated it to around 1512 (fig.4.5).<sup>14</sup> In contrast, several scholars believe the picture may have been painted in Savoldo's native Brescia. It went unnoticed that the saint is

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<sup>9</sup> Aikema and Brown, 444-45.

<sup>10</sup> Mina Gregori, "I temi della luce artificiale nel Savoldo e le radici lombarde di Caravaggio," in Passamani, 88.

<sup>11</sup> Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, "Il Savoldo e il Nord. Un processo di appropriazione, in Passamani, 71-77.

<sup>12</sup> Francesco Frangi, *Savoldo. Catalogo completo dei dipinti* (Florence: Cantini, 1992), 38-39, cat. no.6.

<sup>13</sup> Mauro Lucco, "Recensione *Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo: tra Foppa e Caravaggio*," *Osservatorio delle Arti* 5, 88-93.

<sup>14</sup> Frangi, 11-12, also echoed Patinir and Leonardo as possible influences.

dressed in the costume of a Carmelite monk instead of his usual brown sack cloth until Brown's study proposing that the picture was made for a Carmelite congregation in Brescia.<sup>15</sup> Aikema affirmed its supposed Brescian origins, though along different lines, by linking its imagery to macaronic verses popular in that city.<sup>16</sup>

To sum up the current literature, scholars have advanced a number of conflicting interpretations for Savoldo's Timken picture to account for its eclectic landscape. Many of these theories prove questionable since the imagery they connect to Savoldo's panel resembles it in only a general manner and cannot be conclusively located in Venice. The impact of Leonardo, who visited Venice for just a few months in 1500, or Patinir whose works are recorded in Venice only in 1521, cannot have been that significant to Savoldo.<sup>17</sup> Admittedly, the artist's poor documentation hinders any study of his art during this period since his birth dates and early career activity remain obscure. For this reason, Jacobsen's discovery of a direct source for the San Diego *Temptation* is a crucial piece of evidence that merits further investigation. The Boschian imagery Savoldo reproduced provides a key clue, unexplored to date, about the picture's dating and possibly Savoldo's whereabouts when he painted it.

With the aid of new unpublished technical analyses conducted on the *Temptation of St. Anthony*, and renewed attention to inventory sources, it is now possible to identify Savoldo and his specific sources in Venice with a higher degree of certainty. Close examination of the painting reaffirms his direct dependence upon the Bruges *Last Judgment*, which I link for the first time to Cardinal Grimani's art collection. X-ray imaging and pigment analysis confirm a

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<sup>15</sup> Aikema and Brown, 444-45.

<sup>16</sup> Bernard Aikema, "'Stravaganze e bizzarie de chimere, de monstri, e d'animali': Hieronymus Bosch nella cultura italiana del Rinascimento," *Venezia Cinquecento* 11, 22 (2001), 111-135. Aikema hypothesizes that Savoldo's interest in Bosch was linked to the linguistically irreverent phenomenon of macaronic verse, and to the most outstanding burlesque poet, Teofilo Folengo; he speculates that Folengo became acquainted with Bosch's art during the poet's stay in Brescia, through contact with Savoldo, who supposedly was also in Brescia.

<sup>17</sup> Carlo Pedretti, "Leonardo a Venezia," in *I tempi di Giorgione*, ed., Ruggero Maschio (Tivoli: Gangemi, 1994), 96-109.

number of changes to the saint's costume which call into question current theories that the painting was made for an ecclesiastical patron in Savoldo's native Brescia. Instead, its exotic imagery, technical execution, and format strongly link it to private Venetian household collections favoring landscape pictures with spectacular lighting effects, and indeed Venice was the most plausible artistic center where Savoldo could have copied the particular Boschian motifs evident in the panel.

In this way, this chapter expands Frangi's and Ebert-Schifferer's speculation that the *Temptation* was destined for some refined palace where it may have been mixed with authentic northern landscape paintings.<sup>18</sup> It explores in more depth and with attention to further household inventories the context outlined by Gregori of Venetian collections with inferno imagery. It also extends Lucco's assertion, made in the most recent study of the painting but never elaborated upon, that "the method of constructing the narrative in the San Diego picture is characteristic of Venetian painting in the early decades of the Cinquecento."<sup>19</sup> The recent addition to Savoldo's *oeuvre* of a panoramic *Crucifixion* (c.1515) further speaks to his early career training as a student of the human figure and landscape. Finally, the analysis culminates in a reevaluation of Savoldo's reputation in Venice around 1520, which according to Pino rested upon his landscapes.

#### 4.1 SAVOLDO'S ACTIVITY TO 1530

Throughout his life Savoldo is referred to by himself and others as Brescian, though to date no local archives have yielded his name. Instead it is in Parma in 1506 where he is first documented by the painter Alessandro Araldi. By then he was already an independent master and Araldi

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<sup>18</sup> Frangi, 12; Ebert-Schifferer, in Passamani, 74-75.

<sup>19</sup> Lucco, in Brown, et al., 136-39, cat. no.23.

recorded offering hospitality to “magistro Hieronimo de Savoldis Brixia.”<sup>20</sup> By 1508, a letter mentions him as residing in Florence, where he is also listed in the matriculation register of the *Arte dei Medici e Speciali di Firenze*.<sup>21</sup> No works deriving from this period survive. Panazza reasoned that Savoldo could have moved to Venice as early as 1512 having fled the sack of Brescia in that year.<sup>22</sup> The next record of Savoldo’s activity is his signature on the *Hermit SS. Anthony and Paul* (Venice, Accademia), identifying himself as Brescian and dated 1520 (fig.4.6). It is believed that this latter picture, along with its pendant of identical dimensions in Washington of *Elijah Fed by the Raven*, may have been commissioned from a Carmelite monastery, to judge from its large wooden support and the veneration of these saints as precursors to this religious order.<sup>23</sup>

Slightly more information has come to light following this twelve-year lapse between Savoldo’s entrance into the painter’s guild in Florence and his completion of the *Hermit Saints* picture. Secure evidence exists documenting his continuous residency in Venice from 1521 until his death in 1548. A 1521 contract records payments to him for finishing an altarpiece left incomplete by one of Bellini’s followers, Marco Pensaben, the *Madonna and Child with Saints* altarpiece (1520; San Nicolò, Treviso, *in situ*).<sup>24</sup> This is a relatively conventional *sacra conversazione*; its meditative mood is conveyed through the staid dignity of the holy figures

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<sup>20</sup> Passamani, 316: “...magistro Hieronimo de Savoldis Brixia pictore tunc temporis residenti in civitate Parme.”

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 316-17; letter sent from Pietro d’Argenta in Rome to Giansimone Buonarroti, brother of Michelangelo, recording in the city “nostro maestro Ieronimo dipintore da Bressa”; “Die s[ecund]a decembris 1508 Johannes Jeronimus Jacopi d[o]m[ini] pieri de savoldis de brescia pictor ad presens incivitate Flor[entie] volens venire ad magistratum dicte artis et poni et scribi in matricula inter alios indicta arte matriculatos etc promisit etc iuravit etc debet solvere flo[renos] duodecim sigili.”

<sup>22</sup> Gaetano Panazza, in *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>23</sup> Each measures approximately 168 x 135 cm: Savoldo, *Elijah Fed by the Raven* (c.1520; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art). Passamani, 317: the inscription reads, “opus Jouan...Jeronim.../brixia de Savoldis 1520.”

<sup>24</sup> See Passamani, 317-18, for this document, where he is listed as “maistro Zan Ieronimo depentor.” He is referred to in the records of expenses as “un depentor in aiuto de fra’ Marco,” which as Schmitter points out, reveals that he was a virtually unknown assistant in the workshop of an obscure painter: Monika Schmitter, “The Display of Distinction: Art Collecting and Social Status in Early Sixteenth-Century Venice,” Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1997), 82.

placed within an airy classical porch, offering a generic view of open sky. The 1524 contract for Savoldo's subsequent and more inventive altarpiece of the *Madonna and Child Attended by Saints Peter, Dominic, Paul, and Jerome* (also called the *Pesaro Altarpiece*) identifies him specifically and repeatedly as living in Venice (fig.4.7).<sup>25</sup> Savoldo conspicuously highlights his affiliation with the city in the imagery of the picture, which includes a remarkable landscape *veduta* of the Venetian lagoon and urban architecture framed by the Dolomites (fig.4.8). Further wills attest to his presence in Venice throughout the 1520s.<sup>26</sup>

By 1532, Michiel recorded in the house of Andrea Odoni in Venice pictures of a *Large Nude Reclining* and the *Clemency of Scipio* he attributed to Savoldo.<sup>27</sup> These pictures remain lost and therefore cast no light on when Savoldo may have moved to Venice. However, they indicate his working for serious *cittadini* collectors such as Odoni, who owned antiquities and paintings by leading artists in Venice: Titian, Giovanni Cariani, Lorenzo Lotto, Bonifacio de' Pitati, and Palma Vecchio.<sup>28</sup> It was also in 1532 that Savoldo is recorded in a testamentary document as living in the *fondamenta nuova* near the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.<sup>29</sup> He may have been a resident there as early as 1526, when he made his will in Venice, and since the background of his *Penitent St. Jerome* commissioned in the following year features a distinctive view of this district, its church, and the lagoon (fig.4.9).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Passamani, 318: "...magistrum Iohannem Hieronymum de Savoldis de briscia pictorem habitorem in Venetiarum..."; "...Gio.Girolamo Savoldo da Brescia pittore in Venezia..."

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 319. In 1526, he made a will in Venice, perhaps on the occasion of marrying his Flemish wife. The 1527 will of Pietro Contarini stipulates four paintings by Savoldo be installed in his chapel in SS. Appostoli, Venice: "Item lasso li mie quatro telleri de la madona che va in Egipto, facto per man de mistro zuan hier.o pictor da bressa, a la dicta capella per ornamento de quella, et non per altro."

<sup>27</sup> Michiel, 84: "La nuda grande destesa da driedo el letto fu de man de Hieronimo Savoldo Bressano"; "La tela della giovine presentata a Scipione fu de man de Gierolimo Bressano."

<sup>28</sup> On the contents and display of Odoni's collection, see Monika Schmitter, "'Virtuous Riches': The Bricolage of Cittadini Identities in Early-Sixteenth-Century Venice," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 57, 3 (Autumn, 2004), 939-61.

<sup>29</sup> Passamani, 320-21.

<sup>30</sup> *Penitent St. Jerome*, c. 1526-32, oil on canvas, 120.4 x 158.8 cm (London, National Gallery), discussed in Passamani, 156-59, cat. no.I. 23. This is one of eight works Savoldo signed and is identifiable with the St. Jerome

## 4.2 PROVENANCE

The Timken Museum's *Temptation of St. Anthony* can be securely traced only to 1960, when it was sold at auction by the English collector William Dean to Agnews in London; at that point it was first attributed to Savoldo and its subject identified as "The Temptation of St. Anthony," without any indication of a possible date.<sup>31</sup> In 1963 it was loaned for an exhibition at the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, and in 1965 acquired by Walter Ames of the Putnam Foundation in San Diego and temporarily loaned to the Fogg Art Museum.<sup>32</sup> From 1967 until the present it has remained in the collection of the Timken Museum of Art, whose board of trustees has rarely loaned it for exhibition.<sup>33</sup>

Since its rediscovery, it has always been related to Savoldo's *Temptation of a Hermit Saint* in Moscow, which bears many similarities. Fiocco first drew attention to the Moscow painting in 1956, identifying its subject as the *Temptation of St. Anthony*.<sup>34</sup> Noting its quotation from Raphael's *Fire in the Borgo* fresco, he dated it after 1515. This dating has rarely been questioned and a decade later Gilbert supported it as "certainly an early work."<sup>35</sup> Much more critical dissent has sprung up around the identity of the saint, whose red robes would logically indicate St. Jerome rather than Anthony Abbot, as several scholars noted.<sup>36</sup> Yet as with the Timken *Temptation*, as we shall see, Savoldo was perhaps more concerned with constructing an

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commissioned by the Averoldi family in 1527; the Brescian Altobello Averoldi served as papal legate in Venice during this period.

<sup>31</sup> Sotheby and Co., *Catalogue of Old Master Paintings and Drawings* (Wednesday Apr., 27th, 1960), 16, lot. 91.

<sup>32</sup> Gilbert, 1963, 23-24, cat. no.16; letter July 12, 1965, Fogg Museum to Morgan Guaranty Trust Company [Timken Museum of Art 65002CU\_19650712], hereafter TMA.

<sup>33</sup> Letter February 21, 1967, Fogg Museum to Walter Ames [TMA 65002CU\_19670221].

<sup>34</sup> Giuseppe Fiocco, "The Flemish Influence in the Art of Gerolamo Savoldo," *The Connoisseur* 138 (1956), 166-67.

<sup>35</sup> Gilbert, 1963, 23-24.

<sup>36</sup> The saint's reidentification as Jerome is suggested in: Lucco, 1990, 91; Lucco, ed., *La pittura nel Veneto. Il Cinquecento* (Milan: Electa, 1996), I, 82-83; Frangi, 37; and Aikema and Brown, 444-45, cat. no.116.

evocative landscape setting than replicating a precise hagiographic episode in order to unfold the narrative drama.

This lack of firm provenance for the Pushkin and Timken works stems from Savoldo's relative obscurity outside of the Veneto during his lifetime, and near anonymity soon after his death. The *Temptation* in Moscow was attributed to Pieter Bruegel in the nineteenth century when it was recorded in Genoa.<sup>37</sup> To the shallow ownership history of these two hermit pictures we can now add slightly more depth. It is possible to locate the Pushkin picture in Genoa even earlier than has been possible to date, since the 1701 Balbi inventory records a *Temptation* by Bruegel almost certainly identical with the Moscow panel.<sup>38</sup>

Neither the patron nor any owners of the Timken picture prior to 1961 have been identified with certainty that could provide clues to its unusual imagery. During the seventeenth century some of Savoldo's works were attributed to the more well-known painter Dosso Dossi. Noting this confusion, Fredericksen suggested that the Timken picture can be identified in the 1639 inventory of Charles II of England listed as: "A landscept of St Anthon: temptacon, don by Dorsey, Ma[ntuan] peece." This Mantuan provenance links it to the 1627 sale of Ferdinando Gonzaga containing an anonymous picture of "Un quadretto sopra l'asse dipintovi tentationi di S. Antonio..." No such painting by Dosso survives and, as Fredericksen points out, virtually no other candidates exist beyond Savoldo since an artist working in Venice did not paint this subject again until Veronese in the 1550s.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Passamani, 154-55, cat. no. I.22; first noted in the collection of the marchese Paolgirolamo Pallavicini in Genoa in 1818, ascribed to anonymous Flemish master, then sold in 1899 with attribution to Pieter Bruegel; sold some time before 1917, when it was cleaned and attributed to Savoldo.

<sup>38</sup> Piero Boccardo and Lauro Magnani, "La famiglia dei Balbi: la committenza," in *Il Palazzo dell'Università di Genova. Il Collegio dei Gesuiti nella strada dei Balbi* (Genoa: Università degli Studi di Genova, 1987), 84, Item 36: "Altro della tentatione di S. Antonio Abbate con varie figurette del Brughel."

<sup>39</sup> Burton Fredericksen, "Collecting Dosso: The Trail of Dosso's Paintings from the Late Sixteenth Century Onward," in Ciammitti, et al., 386, 396, n.69. Fredericksen plausibly accounts for the larger dimensions of the picture in the 1639 inventory (114.3 x 154.9 cm) by suggesting that this measurement must include the frame.

If Frederickson's theory is correct that the panel was mis-attributed to Dosso, it is possible to identify an even earlier record of a painting plausibly identifiable as Savoldo's San Diego picture. The 1592 inventory of Lucrezia d'Este, duchess of Urbino, mentions a *St. Anthony* by Dosso installed in her oratory in Ferrara.<sup>40</sup> However, it remains unclear how her picture may have entered the Gonzaga collection in Mantua. Pictures similar to Savoldo's were collected at the Estense court in Mantua. The Istrian painter Bernardino da Parenzo painted a *Temptation of St. Anthony* resembling Savoldo's *Temptation* in Moscow while working for Isabella d'Este during the 1490s. (fig.4.10). Brown has suggested that Savoldo knew Parenzo's work and implies that the Bresican painter may have been in Mantua prior to 1520.<sup>41</sup> There is no record of Savoldo there, and the correspondence between his and Parenzo's works may simply stem from their mutual use of Cranach's woodcut of this subject. Additionally, it could be that Parenzo's *Temptation* is the work attributed to Dosso in the 1592 inventory. Further research would be necessary concerning both the earlier provenance of Lucrezia's collection and dispersal of Ferdinando's collection to corroborate the author of the as yet mysterious picture listed in these inventories.

### 4.3 SAVOLDO'S FIRST LANDSCAPE PAINTING

The recent discovery of a previously unknown work by Savoldo has clarified his interests during the early stages of his career, chief among them Flemish and German landscape imagery of the type owned in private collections in Venice. Gregori's addition to his *oeuvre* of a *Crucifixion*,

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Frederickson does not mention it, but his theory is more tenable since Ferdinando also owned a copy of Savoldo's *Gaston de Foix*; see Alessandro A. Luzio, *La Galleria dei Gonzaga* (Milan, 1913), 122, Item 1103c: "Nove quadertini d'asse dipintovi nove teste d'aritrati in uno una donna pelosa, nel 2o Consalvo Ferrando, nel 3o Caston Fois..."

<sup>40</sup> Paola della Pergola, "L'Inventario del 1592 di Lucrezia d'Este," *Arte Antica e Moderna* 7 (Jul.-Sept., 1959), 344, no.28: "Un quadro di Santo Antonio di nome del Dosso cornisato di noce."

<sup>41</sup> Beverly Louise Brown, "Two schede for Savoldo," *Paragone* 50, 587 (1999), 91.

which she dates to c.1515, has been accepted by scholars as among his first surviving works (fig.4.11).<sup>42</sup> Its detailed background vista corroborates Pino's assertion that Savoldo "was most learned" in landscape painting. Aikema and Brown observe that the harbor backdrop shows his interest, and "near competency," in Flemish panoramic landscape backgrounds.<sup>43</sup> In their view, Patinir's three landscapes in Cardinal Domenico Grimani's palace perhaps each contained a *Weltlandschaft* that Savoldo would have mimicked in painting his own distant harbor in the background of the *Crucifixion*. Michiel recorded Patinir's pictures in 1521 as landscapes of the *Tower of Nimrod*,<sup>44</sup> *St. Jerome in the Desert*,<sup>45</sup> and the *Martyrdom of St. Catherine*,<sup>46</sup> the latter of which could be the painting now in Vienna (fig.1.5).

Yet scholars' emphasis on Patinir's bird's-eye-view landscapes as a prototype for the *Crucifixion* is problematic. Patinir's works are recorded in Venice later than the time Savoldo allegedly painted the *Crucifixion*. The latter's marine *veduta* with an encroaching storm does resemble a frequently used device from the Antwerp master. However, it is unclear where Savoldo could have seen pictures by him in Italy in 1515, since Patinir matriculated as a painter in Antwerp in this very year.<sup>47</sup> Even Patinir's *St. Catherine*, the most likely candidate for one of Grimani's pictures, is unlike the more assured and monumental backdrop of mountains and hazy blue sky of Savoldo's later San Diego landscape.

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<sup>42</sup> Mina Gregori, "Savoldo ante 1521: riflessioni per una inedita Crocifissione," *Paragone* 587 (Nov., 1999), 47-85. This attribution and date is accepted by Brown, 1999, 86-89; Bernard Aikema, in Aikema and Brown, 21; and Andrea Bayer, ed., *Painters of Reality. The Legacy of Leonardo and Caravaggio in Lombardy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 136, cat. no.44.

<sup>43</sup> Aikema and Brown, 1999, 21.

<sup>44</sup> Michiel, 102: "La tela grande della torre de Nembrot, cun tanta uarietà de cose et figure in un paese, fo de mano de Joachin, c(arta) 113." This untraced picture has been identified as the *Tower of Babel*, which was listed in Andrea Vendramin's collection as a *Torre di Babele* attributed to Lambert Sustris. It is now attributed to Jan van Scorel (c.1520-22, Venice, Galleria Franchetti, Ca' d'Oro); see Bellavitis, 298, cat. no.25.

<sup>45</sup> Michiel, 102: "El S. Jeronimo nel deserto è de man de costui" (102). Perhaps the *Landscape with St. Jerome* (c.1516; Galleria Franchetti, Ca' d'Oro, Venice) once owned by Lucas Rem; see Bellavitis, 292, cat. no.24.

<sup>46</sup> Michiel, 102: "La tela grande della S. Caterina sopra la rota nel paese fu de mano del detto Joachin" (102).

<sup>47</sup> Alejandro Vergara, *Patinir: estudios y catálogo crítico* (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2007), 19-45, and for his matriculation documents, 363-73.

In any case, with the *Crucifixion* Savoldo clearly began to ponder complex spatial arrangements for landscape dependent on deep recession and distant prospects. The city painted in the middleground, here symbolizing Holy Jerusalem, blends more convincingly with the watery backdrop beyond than Patinir's rather artificial compositions that convey distance through harsh tonal progressions from brown to green to blue. Savoldo's carefully delineated architecture of church facades, bell towers, and spires anticipate the urban portraits of Venice inserted into the backgrounds of his pictures in the 1520s. This would be a favorite motif Savoldo employed throughout his career. Beyond the aforementioned examples of the *Pesaro Altarpiece* and *London St. Jerome*, portraits of Venice and its lagoon figure prominently in Savoldo's *Flight into Egypt* (c.1527), the *Portrait of a Lady (Allegory of Justice)*, and several versions of *Mary Magdelene at the Tomb*—in total seven works.<sup>48</sup> These conspicuous *vedute* surely appealed to local clientele and signposted the painter's chosen city of residence from about 1521 onward.

Instead of Patinir, more plausible sources for Savoldo around 1515 were imported German graphic works. The mourning figures and mounted soldiers in the *Crucifixion* are borrowed from prints of this subject by Dürer and Cranach.<sup>49</sup> Savoldo repeatedly inserted figures and poses from German prints in conceiving his compositions at this point in his career. As Jacobsen discovered, Savoldo cribbed creatures from Cranach's woodcut of the *Temptation of St. Anthony* (1506) for the *Moscow Temptation* (fig.4.12).<sup>50</sup> It is possible Savoldo was in Venice by 1515 given his quotation from German prints, which were more readily available in Venice than

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<sup>48</sup> For the *Flight* (Milan, private collection), see Passamani, 132-4, no.I.14; Frangi, 77-78, cat. no.21; and Gilbert, 1991, 40. For the *Portrait of a Lady*, once in the Presenti Collection in Bergamo but now lost, though known through photographs, see Passamani, 16. For the *Magdalene*, see Pardo, 1989, 67-91.

<sup>49</sup> Bayer, 136, cat. no. 44.

<sup>50</sup> Jacobsen, 530.

anywhere else in Italy.<sup>51</sup> Dürer had visited Venice twice by then, first from 1494-95 and again from 1505-1507. However, similar woodcuts were circulating in Florence and Mantua as well and do not confirm Savoldo's presence in Venice.

Still, the reception of Dürer's prints is one reliable model for understanding the appeal of Savoldo's *Crucifixion* and paintings of hermit saints in the wilderness. Dürer's prints with highly detailed landscapes were prized amongst collectors and other artists, as several Venetian art manuals report. Anton Francesco Doni lists prints in his possession by Martin Schongauer, and Dürer's *Adam and Eve*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Eustace*, *Melancholia*, and *Passion* series (fig.2.3).<sup>52</sup> Most of these feature ample outdoor settings and it was such imagery that Sabba da Castiglione recommended for decorating private residences: "adorn them with prints, either copperplate or woodcut, made in Italy or elsewhere, but particularly those from the hand of Albrecht Dürer."<sup>53</sup> Sabba's *ekphrasis* of receiving a new Dürer print from Germany captures the exuberance with which collectors approached such objects: "with delight and great pleasure I admired and considered the figures, the animals, the perspectives, the buildings, the distant views and landscapes, and the other marvelous descriptions..."<sup>54</sup> If Lodovico Dolce is to be believed, no less an artist than Raphael hung Dürer's engravings in his studio and "enjoyed them immensely" and "without shame."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Fritz Koreny, "Venice and Dürer," in Aikema and Brown, 240-49.

<sup>52</sup> Anton Francesco Doni, *Disegno* (Venice, 1549), 52r: "Io l'ho tenuta nel mezzo de parecchie carte intagliate una per mano di messer Martino maestro d'Alberto Duro; ho poi d'Alberto l'Adamo, il San Girolamo Santo Eustachio, la maninconica & la passione..."

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Peter Thornton, *The Italian Renaissance Interior* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 52.

<sup>54</sup> Sabba da Castiglione, *Ricordi* (Venice, 1554), 81b: "...mi era mosso à vedere una carta nuovamente venuta dalla Germania, di Alberto Durieri certo divina, & mentre che con diletatione & piacer grande mirava & considerava di quelle, le figure, gli animale, le prospettive, li casamenti, li lontani, & li paesi & altre maravigliose descrizione da fare stupire..."

<sup>55</sup> According to Dolce, these prints equaled or even surpassed in realism any painting: "E per testimonio di cio vi affermo, che l'istesso Rafaello non si recava a vergogna di tener le carte di Alberto attaccate nel suo studio, e le lodava grandemente. E, quando egli non havesse havuto altra eccellenza, basterebbe a farlo immortale l'intaglio delle sue stampe di rame: ilquale intaglio con una minutezza incomparabile rappresenta il vero & il vivo della natura, di modo, che le cose sue paiono non disegnate, ma dipinte; e non dipinte, ma vive" (Roskill, 120).

#### 4.4 SAVOLDO'S TECHNIQUE AND SOURCES

Recent technical examinations conducted on the San Diego painting reveal that Savoldo's working method generally matches techniques current in Venice in the first decades of the sixteenth century. The painting is executed in oil on wooden panel, which was transferred to its present composite panel at some point prior to 1960.<sup>56</sup> That Savoldo selected a wood support has long been viewed as his attempt to self-consciously emulate Flemish artists who invariably painted on panel. This surface supposedly allowed him to achieve the meticulous detail found in Bosch's monstrous landscapes.<sup>57</sup> This is a theory that should now be discarded. Venice had pioneered the use of canvas, but panel was still preferred by patrons who could afford it for its greater permanence. The wooden support is further indication of Savoldo's ambition with the Timken picture for which he chose the best materials. We must remember that both Giovanni Bellini and Titian executed oil paintings on panel around this time, and it is precisely two such works of theirs in this medium that Savoldo evokes in the San Diego *Temptation*: Bellini's London and Courtauld versions of the *Death of St. Peter Martyr* (1507 and 1509, respectively) and Titian's *Orpheus and Eurydice* (c.1508-11). The dimensions of the Timken picture are in fact midway between these paintings.

From Bellini and Titian Savoldo learned to effectively arrange figures and landscape to develop a forceful narrative. How he may have come to know these works is unclear since the

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<sup>56</sup> In 1973, the conservation files first note the possibility that the present wooden panel was transferred from a previous wooden support [TMA 65002CO\_19811102]. This is more certain from an examination conducted May 23, 2006 [TMA 65002CO\_20060523], the report of which states: "The painting was originally executed on a wood panel that has been removed in a past restoration. It has been transferred to a newer composite with veneers, presumably to keep it flat."

<sup>57</sup> For example, Gilbert, 1963, but repeated by later commentators as well.

early provenance of each is unknown. Despite this, several features are startlingly similar.<sup>58</sup> From Bellini's works Savoldo managed to adapt the rather unusual postures of each saint, perhaps as an homage. Savoldo's figure is uncannily close to the stooped and backward glancing saint who flees over barren ground with outstretched arms. Even more closely reproduced are St. Peter's splayed legs bent at ninety-degree angles with the knees pointing leftward.

Likewise, the near identical match in composition between the *Orpheus and Eurydice* and Timken pictures is impossible to ignore. Each is split between verdant and hellish halves, keeping in mind that the once green landscape surrounding Eurydice has substantially darkened to its current ochre cast.<sup>59</sup> Following Titian, Savoldo anchors the foreground with a figure clad in billowing white drapery and fleeing a fiery inferno with a backward glance. The same spatial arrangement is found in each between the figures, distant hellscape, and tall central rock formation sprouting saplings. Savoldo's borrowing from Titian of this latter seemingly incidental motif is striking, since neither Patinir nor Bosch includes young trees in the similar crags that appear in their pictures. Finally, Savoldo inserts a mountain vista beyond the saint framed by the same horseshoe-shaped screen of trees employed by Titian. Thus the matching imagery, when combined with the choice of support, meshes with Venetian rather than solely Flemish models that sometimes eschewed *istoria* in favor of spectacular visual effects.

Savoldo's blending of Venetian and Flemish approaches was not limited to iconography alone. The paint surface is thin and smoothly applied in most places with transparent glaze throughout as characteristic of both Venetian and Flemish painters of this period. Vasari reported

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<sup>58</sup> The location of Bellini's pictures in the sixteenth century is unknown, though it has been speculated that they were made for an ecclesiastical patron and therefore may have been installed in church accessible to the public; see Jennifer Fletcher and David Skipsey, "Death in Venice: Giovanni Bellini and the Death of St. Peter Martyr," *Apollo* 133, 347 (Jan., 1991), 4-9. Titian's painting can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see G.C.F. Villa, et al. *I grandi veneti: da Pisanello a Tiziano, da Tintoretto a Tiepolo; capolavori dall'Accademia Carrara di Bergamo* (Milan: Silvana, 2010), 94-95, cat. no.29.

<sup>59</sup> Lucco, 2012, 99, cat. no. 14. Titian's painting was probably used as a *cassone* panel or inset for domestic furniture, which may explain his choice of support in this instance.

Titian's and Giorgione's tendency for a heavily worked picture surface, though this is typically found in Titian's later paintings. More revealing is Vasari's mention of their freely improvised approach to composition, which has since been confirmed by modern technical analysis.<sup>60</sup>

Savoldo's thick application of paint is much more suited to canvas rather than panel and suggests his familiarity with Venetian landscapes that typically lack any sort of preparatory underdrawing.<sup>61</sup>

X-rays made of the painting in 2007 provide further clues to the Savoldo's knowledge of the more painterly approach to composition customary in Venice (fig.4.13).<sup>62</sup> It appears he followed the particularly Venetian practice of freely improvised oil painting, especially in the figure of the saint, which contains several revisions to the scapular and cassock at the sleeves, wrist, waist, collar, and lower hem (fig.4.14). In the x-ray, it is evident that Savoldo adjusted the figures of the hands from a previous orientation originally more parallel to the ground. Also visible in the x-ray is a ruined windowed tower beneath the saint's robes, similar to that on the hell side, which Savoldo painted out in the final version. This may account for the saint's somewhat awkwardly hunched posture and overly flowing gown that hide the precise

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<sup>60</sup> Vasari, VI, 155: "Ma venuto poi l'anno circa 1507. Giorgione da castel Franco, non gli piacendo in tutto il detto modo di fare, comincio a dare all sue opere piu morbidezza, e maggiore rilievo, con bella maniera; usando nondimeno di cacciar si avanti le cose vive, e naturali, e di contrafarle quanto sapeva il meglio con i colori, e macchiarle con le tinte crude, e dolci, secondo che il vivo mostrava senza far disegno: tenendo per fermo ch il dignere solo con i colori stessi, senz'altro studio di disegnare in carta, fusse il vero, e miglior modo di fare, et il vero disegno." [But about the year 1507, Giorgione da Castelfranco, not being satisfied with that mode of proceeding began to give to his works an unwonted softness and relief, painting them in a very beautiful manner; yet he by no means neglected to draw from life, or to copy nature with his colors as closely as he could, and in doing the latter he shaded with colder or warmer tints as the living object might demand, but without first making a drawing, since he held that, to paint with colors only, without any drawing on paper, was the best mode of proceeding and most perfectly in accord with the true principles of design.]

<sup>61</sup> For Giorgione's popularization of this practice, see Anderson, 1997, 98-125. In the early sixteenth century, artists in Venice and much of northern Italy began to abandon wood and instead adopt canvas as the principal surface on which to paint.

<sup>62</sup> The painting was x-rayed and composite photographs made of this imaging during conservation conducted May 29 - December 6, 2007 [TMA 65002CO\_200712]. Ames granted permission to have the painting x-rayed in 1966 when it was on loan to the Fogg Museum, yet images from this neither exist nor are mentioned in the scholarly literature. Inquiries I made at the Fogg archives turned up no x-ray images. Letter Oct. 11, 1966 from Joseph S. Spiegel, Harvard University, to Walter Ames [TMA 65002CU\_19660811]; Letter Oct. 19, 1966 from Walter Ames to Joseph S. Spiegel, Harvard Univ. [TMA 65002CU\_19660819].

configuration of his legs. These changes are visible since Savoldo's initial sketches, or *pentimenti* (thoughts), were made in lead white paint, which is a chemically dense pigment and therefore appears clearly in x-radiography.<sup>63</sup> The various bonfires are other heavily impasted passages and strongly suggest his familiarity with Titian's technique; their vertical spume-like character is in fact quite different than the curtain of flames Bosch preferred and resembles the fires of Hades in the Bergamo *Orpheus*.

With the x-ray we can say with even more confidence that Savoldo knew the *Last Judgment* triptych originating in Bosch's workshop, of uncertain provenance, and now in Bruges. It is impossible to know if he worked directly from it or a drawing made after. Regardless the underpainting in lead white shows signs of precise and meticulous transfer of even the smallest details of the phantasmagoric hell-scape (fig.4.15). To the borrowings from this triptych Jacobsen cited, we can add one further motif once part of the composition but painted out in the finished version.<sup>64</sup> This is the reflective metal helmet set on wheels with a studded ramp, placed in the central panel of the *Last Judgment* just right of center. It is visible in the x-ray in the far lower right corner now occupied by a glass fish with legs (4.15). The miniature studs of the previous device can still be seen with the naked eye. It also seems that a rounded, tiered tower originally stood where Savoldo's central rock formation is now: this was once

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<sup>63</sup> X-radiographic studies of paintings expose underlying paint layers by recording the density (atomic weight) of the various materials. Dense materials like lead white paint in skies, flesh tones, and white drapery create white areas on the film; less dense areas appear grey or black. Such studies are able to discern *pentimenti*, or changes, to paintings. The application of x-radiography analysis is discussed in Lois R. Ember, "Incredible Colors: Scientific investigations unmask the secrets of 16th-century Venetian painters' palettes," *Chemical and Engineering News* 84, 37 (Sept., 2006), 31-34. Ember does not mention Savoldo, but does discuss Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*.

<sup>64</sup> Jacobsen, 533. It is worth recounting the specific borrowings here. Savoldo has taken the beast of burden with dangling ears and baskets slung over its sides found in the center of the main Bruges panel, reversed it, and placed it emerging from the central rock formation in his composition. Also in the center panel of the triptych, there is a cowed head in profile with part of a man projecting from its mouth; this motif occurs in the Timken painting in the right corner, near the ruined architecture, which also may be taken from Bosch. Two more creatures from this panel are borrowed, namely the winged fish swallowing a man and the red hooded humanoid perched near Savoldo's saint and reading a book; Savoldo even reproduces the scattered limbs. Finally, a crawling old woman wearing a white cape from the central panel of the Bruges picture reappears in the lower right of Savoldo's.

perhaps the ornate paradise fountain on Bosch's left wing, or tented cabinet-like structure in the center panel. Unfortunately, the x-ray image is unclear due to improper chemical treatments imposed on the panel when it was transferred to a new support. Therefore further imaging is needed to clarify the imagery of the previous composition.<sup>65</sup> In this regard, I suspect infrared reflectography, which detects preliminary underdrawing, would be especially useful.

In contrast to the carefully copied Flemish monsters, the idyllic landscape on the left contains no such preliminary sketching. Indeed, the brushy application of paint in the clouds and mountain slopes appears improvised. This conforms to what we know of Savoldo's working method once he is securely documented in Venice after 1521. A good example of this technique is his *Pesaro Altarpiece* discussed above, which contains a Flemish-style *veduta* of the Venetian lagoon and basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. Recent technical analysis revealed that the landscape was the only portion of his enormous altar panel painted completely without underdrawing. This may have resulted from the flexibility of Savoldo's contract with the monks stipulating that, "the skies, landscapes and views be made according to him and as he saw fit."<sup>66</sup> The contract is the first to identify Savoldo as a resident Venetian and he showcases this, in part, by way of the landscape. It is undoubtedly the most inventive section of the altarpiece. It demonstrates, as first glimpsed in the San Diego picture, his ability to produce a fluid and painterly description of light, sky, air, and water even on panel (as opposed to canvas). By 1537

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<sup>65</sup> Prior to its acquisition by the Putnam Foundation, a wax resin transfer adhesive was applied and, probably at the same point, a polyvinyl acetate varnish, as confirmed by pigment analysis conducted in 2001 [Orion Analytical, project 961, Aug. 10, 2001, p.3]. Both the adhesive and varnish are unable to be removed because of the instability of the picture surface resulting from these detrimental treatments [TMA 65002CO\_20071206].

<sup>66</sup> Mariolina Olivari, *Giovan Gerolamo Savoldo. La pala di Pesaro* (Milan: Electa, 2008), 16. The relevant text of the contract is found in Passamani, 318: "Item chel manto et panni de la Madonna sia de boni colori et fini et maxime lo azurro oltra marino, datei cum tre mani et cussi colorire li volti et panni de fini et boni colori; Et similmente li aeri, paesi et perspectivi secondo accadera farse, et come ad luy parera."

Savoldo gained a reputation for such speciality vistas and the clerics at Santa Croce in Brescia stipulated that their altar picture he was painting include a “landscape and citadel.”<sup>67</sup>

#### 4.5 GRIMANI’S BOSCHIAN TRIPTYCH TRANSFORMED

No such obvious Venetian landmarks occur in the San Diego *Temptation*. Still, a sophisticated viewer would have undoubtedly recognize Savoldo’s references to imported Flemish and locally produced art in prominent Venetian collections. Foremost amongst these was the Grimani collection, which by 1528 contained several paintings by Bosch of the *Temptation of St. Anthony*.<sup>68</sup> These were likely side-wings separated from the *Hermit Saints Triptych* and *Female Saint Triptych* donated to the Venetian State and which remain today in the collection of the Palazzo Ducale (figs.4.16, 4.17).<sup>69</sup> On one hand, Savoldo seems to have reproduced Bosch’s nocturnal visions in these panels of burning cities filled with demons for the right side of the San Diego picture. On the other hand, Bosch’s stationary hermits bear little resemblance—in costume or demeanor—to Savoldo’s fleeing saint.

As Jacobsen noted, Savoldo’s direct source for the monsters is the Bruges *Last Judgment* triptych.<sup>70</sup> How did Savoldo come to know it? It is possible he used a print made after the Bruges work engraved by Bosch’s follower Alart Duhomeel. Duhomeel was from Bosch’s hometown of

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<sup>67</sup> Destroyed during WWII; quoted in Passamani, 321: “...et fatte cum bonissimi et finissimi colori secondo la exigentia deli figuri et nel campo de ditti figuri gli debba fare qualche laudabile (payse et citade) cose...” [parenthetical words crossed out in pen in the MS of contract].

<sup>68</sup> Brown, in Aikema and Brown, 444, notes these without comment.

<sup>69</sup> Pio Paschini, “Le collezioni archeologiche dei prelati Grimani del Cinquecento,” *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia V* (1926-1927), 182: “Un quadro tentation de s<sup>o</sup> Antonio in tella del bosch mezano”; and “Un quadro grande tentatio di santo Antonio dil bosch in tella.” Bellavitis assumes that one of these was Bosch’s *Female Saint Triptych* and that it was probably transferred from Marino Grimani to the Venetian State in 1528; see Bellavitis, 174 cat. no. 2. However, it is not recorded there until Boschini’s guide book, *Le ricche minere della pittura veneziana...* (Venice, 1664), 24.

<sup>70</sup> Aquilin Janssens de Bisthoven, *Stedelijk Museum voor Schone Kunst (Groeningemuseum Brugge)* (Brussels, 1981), I, 68-84.

's-Hertogenbosch and made rather generic engravings of the *Last Judgment* in the first years of the sixteenth century; however, no print of the Bruges triptych is known.<sup>71</sup> It is much more likely that Savoldo saw the original somewhere in Venice, since he replicates not only individual monsters but also the same palette of deep reds, purples, and blues in their clothing and ornamentation.

Domenico Grimani is the best candidate for owning the Bruges triptych and in fact a polyptych fitting this description is recorded in the possession of his heirs. The 1528 Grimani inventory cites “A Flemish picture with two wings [of the] Last Judgment.”<sup>72</sup> This untraced painting has heretofore been believed to be the central panel of a four-winged polyptych Michiel saw in 1521 in the Palazzo Grimani. There he recorded by Bosch an “inferno with monsters” and “canvas of dreams.” Scholars have suggested that these two pictures, along with the identically sized panels of *The Ascent to Heaven* and *Terrestrial Paradise*, served as wings to a central panel depicting the Last Judgment, which, though unmentioned by Michiel, is supposedly the Flemish Last Judgement cited in the 1528 Grimani inventory above.<sup>73</sup> These four panels remain at Palazzo Grimani and are collectively referred to as the *Four Visions of the Hereafter* (fig.4.18).<sup>74</sup>

Even as scholars challenged this reconstruction, to date no connection between the Grimani *Last Judgment* and Bruges triptych has been made.<sup>75</sup> That the *Hereafter* panels were its

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<sup>71</sup> In general, see Susan Fargo Gilchrist, *The Prints of Hieronymus Bosch. A revision of Hieronymus Bosch, son art, son influence, ses disciples* (San Francisco: Alan Wofsy Fine Arts, 2002). For Savoldo's use of prints, see Gianvittorio Dillon, “Savoldo e l'incisione,” in Passamani, 228-29, III.6a.

<sup>72</sup> Paschini, 182: “Un quadro con due sportelli fiandrese iudecio di christo.”

<sup>73</sup> Michiel, 102: “La tela del inferno cun la gran diuersità de monstri fo de mano de Hieronimo Bosch”; and “La tela delli sogni fo de man de linstesso.” The arguments for this reconstruction are discussed in Aikema and Brown, 432-34, cat. no.111.

<sup>74</sup> The extensive analysis undertaken by the international Bosch Conservation Research Project, inaugurated in 2010, is invaluable for the study of Bosch in Venice (<http://boschproject.org/>).

<sup>75</sup> Both Bellavitis, 113-14, and Aikema, “Hieronymus Bosch and Italy?” in Jos Koldeweij, Bernard Vermet and Barbera van Kooij, ed., *Hieronymus Bosch. New Insights Into His Life and Work* (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans

wings can be called into question for several reasons. First, the 1528 entry lists two wings rather than four. Second, no central panel is mentioned by Michiel as accompanying Bosch's four vertical panels, meaning they likely were not integrated as a cohesive polyptych. And finally, at 88 centimeters high the *Hereafter* group stands roughly half as tall as the Bruges *Last Judgement* panels produced in Bosch's shop. Thus there is a very good chance that the Flemish polyptych at Palazzo Grimani in 1528 was the Bruges work, and that Savoldo was able to study it soon after arriving in Venice.

Despite these rote borrowings, Savoldo introduces a number of innovations from his Flemish source that exploit the landscape as a narrative device. First of all, he transfers the monsters to the context of a hermit saint in the wilderness image-type extremely popular at the time in Venice. Savoldo has also liberated the landscape from the context of the triptych, the common format for Bosch's landscape imagery in Venice.<sup>76</sup> He lowers the horizon and switches from a vertical to horizontal format to open up a stage-like space for action, much like Titian's and Bellini's compositions. He retains the traditional division between paradise and hell but condenses them into a unified plane. In effect, this creates a moralizing landscape contrasting the saint's path of salvation toward the monastery with the dire pitfalls of sin he shuns. This communicates an easily graspable spiritual lesson in a more dynamic fashion than Bosch's abstruse web of *diablerie*.

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Van Beuningen 2001), 30, expressed doubt but do not mention the Bruges triptych. Aikema contends that Grimani acquired his Flemish paintings from the Antwerp publisher Daniel van Bombergen, who was active in Venice from 1516-49. According to this theory, Bombergen bought unsold pictures from Bosch's estate after the artist's death in 1516 and, soon thereafter, resold them to Grimani.

<sup>76</sup> Some of these changes in Savoldo's approach are characteristic, more generally, of the changing format for altarpieces. In the first decade and a half of the sixteenth century, one witnesses in Venice a decline in the number of polyptychs and gradual increase in narrative altarpieces confined to a single picture field with detailed landscape backgrounds, as the newer generation of artists led by Giorgione, Sebastiano, and Lorenzo Lotto came to work alongside Bellini, Carpaccio, and Cima. See Humfrey, 1993, 7.

Yet Savoldo's picture significantly departs from the textual accounts of St. Anthony's *vita*. Nowhere in the life of Anthony does he flee from demons; instead his biography tells of his steadfast endurance at the hands of torturing devils.<sup>77</sup> The popular thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* recounted how "[Anthony] bore countless trials inflicted by demons." The saint's various encounters with evil temptations are narrated as ecstatic visions in which Anthony "saw the whole world covered with snares." Usually prints of Anthony's torment, such as those by Schongauer and Cranach, select an isolated trial of faith to depict. For example, their works capture the moment when "Anthony was carried aloft by angels, but demons were there to bar his way."<sup>78</sup>

Savoldo's representation of Anthony fleeing was rare but neither unprecedented nor without textual basis. Anthony does run away from a lump of gold Satan placed in his path. This trap was set to tempt the hermit to covet earthly possessions while he was living in a mountainside retreat in the wilderness. Anthony's biographer St. Athanasius tells how: "Anthony marveled at the size of this piece of shining metal and quickly ran all the way to the mountain, as if he were escaping from a fire. After crossing the river, he found there a deserted fort full of venomous animals."<sup>79</sup> Zanobi Strozzi painted a literal interpretation of this passage upon a small panel. It shows Anthony, one arm outstretched in dismay, fleeing through a rocky landscape (fig.4.19). This almost certainly formed part of larger polyptych with scenes from the life of St. Anthony Abbot.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Also noted by Lucco, in Brown, et al., 2006, 137.

<sup>78</sup> For these incidents, see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, ed., Eamon Duffy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 94.

<sup>79</sup> Carolinne White, *Early Christian Lives* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 17.

<sup>80</sup> This panel has been widely—but mistakenly—attributed to Fra Angelico. See Lawrence Kanter and Pia Palladino, *Fra Angelico* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2005), cat. no.19, 104-105.

Rather than a straightforward representation of a single event, Savoldo has combined several of Anthony's tribulations in order to strengthen the didactic, narrative thrust. His flight from the cave in the picture perhaps alludes to another incident in the *Golden Legend*, "when he was living hidden away in a tomb, a crowd of demons tore at him so savagely that his servant thought he was dead."<sup>81</sup> Savoldo envisions this incident together with Athanasius's vivid metaphor characterizing Anthony's speedy flight as that of one escaping an inferno. This flaming landscape would have held deeper significance for contemporary audiences. St. Anthony Abbot was venerated during this period for protection from skin diseases such as gangrene and ergotism that produced skin eruptions which felt like fire on the skin. The latter ailment caused dramatic hallucinations and came to be known as "St. Anthony's fire." Those afflicted found solace in Anthony's sufferings of demonic apparitions in the wilderness.<sup>82</sup> It therefore became customary on the Venetian mainland on the eve of the saint's feast day on January 17<sup>th</sup> for the pious to build an enormous pile of wood called "St. Anthony's bonfire."<sup>83</sup>

Savoldo evidently sacrificed hagiographic accuracy in favor of producing an image meant to elicit awe as well as piety. This further suggests that the commission for the Timken picture was unconnected to a confraternity, monastery, or religious house that ostensibly would have mandated a stricter interpretation of Anthony's iconography. It is unlikely that Savoldo consulted an ecclesiastical adviser, moreover, since he took the further liberty of dressing the saint in a Carmelite habit rather than the conventional brown sackcloth of a desert hermit. His costume is unlike Anthony's depiction in Savoldo's *Hermit Saints Paul and Anthony*, and Parenzo's *Temptation*, where the saint is dressed in a dark brown surplice with a tan cloak

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<sup>81</sup> Voragine, 93.

<sup>82</sup> Nancy A. Corwin, "The Fire Landscape: Its Sources and Its Development from Bosch through Jan Brueghel I, with Special Emphasis on Mid-Sixteenth Century Bosch 'Revival,'" Ph.D. Diss, University of Washington, 1976, 116-19. Fire landscapes were much less common in Italy than Antwerp during this period.

<sup>83</sup> Lucco, in Brown, et al., 2006, 137.

underneath. Perhaps Savoldo selected the black and white vestments because the traditional drab colors would have blended too seamlessly into the background. Evidently such considerations entered into his mind since the virtuoso handling of the saint's swirling white scapular visually projects the saint against the otherwise dull backdrop of earth.

On the other hand, it has been claimed that the unusual costume of Savoldo's saint may stem from the fact that the painting was indeed ordered for a Carmelite congregation in Brescia.<sup>84</sup> Further supporting this idea may be the fact that Anthony is shown barefoot, an atypical feature for the hermit. This possibly alludes to the discalced order of Carmelites, or "scalzi," who would gain prominence in Italy. However, this reformed order was not established until the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Traditional sects of Carmelites did have a strong presence in Venice. The oldest confraternity of women among the Carmelites was the sisters of Venice, admitted in 1300. Moreover, the earliest printed Carmelite doctrine was issued in Venice in 1507.<sup>85</sup>

The question of the *Temptation's* original patron remains vexingly unanswered and is further complicated rather than resolved by technical examination. Microscopic pigment analysis of the saint's robes has revealed the presence of red lake. Thus it would seem that his cassock was once red, or a deep purple, rather than black.<sup>86</sup> This confirms what is already visible to the eye but has escaped comment: reddish hues showing through the black surface layer of paint. This is most evident along the hem and right knee of the garment, as well as the edges of the skullcap. In raking specular light, but especially in the x-ray, it is clear that a thick layer of paint was applied to the cassock and cap. This raised topmost layer, which we now know is azurite, is

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<sup>84</sup> See introductory section of this chapter above.

<sup>85</sup> There were prominent Carmelite congregations and confraternities in Venice during this period, such as Santa Maria del Carmine. The reformed discalced Carmelite order that formed around the cult of St. Teresa of Avila was established by the 1590s. On this history, see Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity: Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), especially the author's Introduction and Ch. I, "The Carmelites, c.1187-1530," 1-42.

<sup>86</sup> [Orion Analytical, project 961, Aug. 10, 2001, p.2].

unlike the smoother surrounding picture surface and seems to have been added later. The degradation of this pigment from dark blue to its present dull black color possibly occurred when the picture surface was heated for re-adhesion and transfer from its previous wooden support to its current composite panel.

The revisions to the composition and saint's costume, as well as the liberties taken with the narrative, indicate a degree of iconographic looseness echoed in Savoldo's other early hermit picture in Moscow. In this picture, the saint has been identified as Jerome since he wears red robes. However, the principal episode of his torture is confusingly drawn directly from Cranach's print of the *Temptation of St. Anthony*. It may be that the patron of the Timken panel changed mid-course and Savoldo was compelled to alter the identity of the hermit from Jerome to Anthony. Perhaps he overpainted the robes from red to black at the same moment he switched the position of the hands to more conspicuously angle toward the monastery, alluding to Anthony's role as the founder of monasticism. In any event, the imprecision in the identifying attributes, particularly the new evidence about the robe color, leaves the question of the original patron open.

#### 4.6 LANDSCAPE *EXOTICA* IN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

It is difficult to imagine the monstrous and fiery imagery of Savoldo's *Temptation* scene in an ecclesiastical setting in Venice during this period. One is hard pressed to identify any similar grotesque images installed in a public church.<sup>87</sup> Despite the fact that some of Bosch's triptychs may have served as altar pictures, his paintings owned in Venice were avidly collected by educated patrons who appreciated them as much for their pictorial as devotional qualities. In

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<sup>87</sup> This was not the case in northern Europe. For example, Matthias Grünewald's Isenheim Altarpiece (1515) made for the hospital order of St. Anthony in Isenheim, Germany, features a scene of the *Temptation of St. Anthony*.

addition to his aforementioned triptychs, Cardinal Grimani possessed by Bosch “a canvas of a Sea storm with the whale that swallowed Jonah,” and by Patinir, “a large canvas of the Tower of Nimrod with much variety of things and figures in a landscape.”<sup>88</sup> Taddeo Contarini’s impressive landscapes painted by Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione filled with marvelous optical effects have already been discussed in Chapter 2. Anonymous pictures of St. Anthony tempted by demons are listed in Venetian inventories in this period, such as that owned by Antonio Foscarini in 1530, but it is impossible to conclusively link Savoldo’s panel to any of them.<sup>89</sup>

The Timken picture demonstrates the remarkable degree to which private Venetian connoisseurs were open to landscape pictures combining pastoral with grotesque imagery. Savoldo was instrumental in blending local landscape traditions with the taste for northern exoticism, which his contemporaries recognized as one of his specialties. His innovations were acknowledged by his biographers, though they seem to have had no direct knowledge of his works. Even Pino expressed only vague, second-hand praise for Savoldo’s paintings of “certain nocturnes with a thousand of the most ingenious and rare depictions,” which does resemble the bizarre nighttime hellscape of the Timken *Temptation*, but only in a superficial sense.

Some of Savoldo’s pictures of “night and fires” were noticed by Vasari, who added him to the second edition of the *Vite* (1568) following a tour of northern Italy in 1566. Vasari observed that:

Many works by the hand of Giangirolamo Bresciano [Savoldo] are to be seen in Venice and Milan, and in the said houses of the Mint [in Milan] there are four very beautiful pictures of night and fires; and in the house of Tomaso da Empoli in Venice there is a Nativity of Christ simulating

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<sup>88</sup> Michiel, 102: “La tela della Fortuna cun el ceto che ingiotte Giona”; “la tela grande cun tanta uarietà de cose et figure in un paese”

<sup>89</sup> Michiel, 90: “Li dui quadretti in tavola a oglio, luno del S. Antonio cun li monstri, laltro della nostra donna che va in Egytto, sono opere Ponentine.”

night very beautifully, and there are some other things of similar *fantasie*, of which he was a master.<sup>90</sup>

Vasari's vague reference to masterful "*fantasie*" Savoldo painted in Venice remains tantalizingly enigmatic. Could it refer to the Pushkin or Timken paintings? The phantasmagoric imagery of the two hermit saints landscapes would certainly fit this theme, but again only in a general sense. Still, his comment matches what we know of Savoldo's reputation for such works in Venice gleaned from other contemporary sources.

One highly suggestive piece of evidence supporting the idea of Savoldo's *Temptation* as a private commission in Venice comes from Michiel's *Notizie*. In 1521, Michiel saw in the house of Francesco Zio "the canvas of Cupid who sits with a bow in his hand in hell, made by the hand of Giovanni Cariani."<sup>91</sup> Modern translations of the *Notizie* elide the fact that Michiel had trouble with the attribution of this work. In the manuscript copy of his notes, he initially assigned it to "Jacopo Palma Bergamasco." This first name is crossed out and written above it is "Zuan Hieronimo Bressano," that is, Savoldo. He apparently changed his mind a third time by crossing out Savoldo's name and ultimately filling in Cariani's.<sup>92</sup> Michiel's hesitancy could be chalked up to the fact that his account of collections was based on cursory notes and he may have had difficulty remembering particular works and their authors. Yet it also demonstrates how Savoldo's reputation in Venice was partially based on his fiery landscape pictures set in hell.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, it suggests at least three artists were believed to be capable of producing works with monstrous Flemish landscapes.

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<sup>90</sup> Vasari, V, 430: "Di mano di Giangirolamo Bresciano si veggiono molte opere in Vinezia et in Milano, e nelle dette case della Zecca sono quattro quadri di notte e di fuochi, molto belli; et in casa Tomaso da Empoli in Vinezia è una Natività di Cristo finta di notte, molto bella, e sono alcune altre cose di simili fantasie, delle quali era maestro."

<sup>91</sup> Michiel, 94: "La tela del Cupidine che siede cun l'arco in mano in un inferno, fo de man de Zuan Comandador"

<sup>92</sup> Frimmel's edition tracks these emended attributions in a footnote: 94, n.2.

<sup>93</sup> No images fitting this description are known. However, Michiel initially dated the entry for Zio's house to 1512, the date assigned to the Timken *St. Anthony*.

It is unknown where Cariani's inferno painting hung in Zio's palace. It is reasonable to hypothesize that it was placed in the portego, since this is where Zio's nephew Andrea Odoni hung the canvas when it passed to him upon the death of Zio.<sup>94</sup> Michiel records "in portego" of Odoni's Dorsoduro palazzo, "the picture of hell with the cupid holding the bow by the hand of Giovanni Cariani."<sup>95</sup> Zio's early patronage of young foreign artists—Savoldo was from Brescia and Cariani came from Bergamo—is notable. The painting Zio owned by Savoldo was acquired, at the latest, in the same year he painted a public altarpiece in nearby Treviso. Though mostly noted for his antiquities collection, Odoni apparently was also interested in unusual landscapes that enterprising but unestablished painters apparently were hired to paint. Lotto's portrait of Odoni, shown in his studio surrounded by antique fragments, has led many to concentrate on his sculpture collection instead of these landscapes (fig.4.20).<sup>96</sup> Yet he possessed exotic inferno paintings that he placed alongside more sober history paintings.

The decoration of Odoni's portego demonstrates a remarkably visible role for landscape at an early date. By 1532 he had even acquired another hellscape by a Flemish artist to serve as a pendant to Cariani's picture inherited from his uncle. Apparently Michiel could not identify the author of this other Flemish inferno and noted it as, "The canvas of monsters and hell in the Flemish manner was by the hand of \_\_\_\_." This suggests a Bosch-like image in the vein of Cardinal Grimani's northern landscapes.<sup>97</sup> By 1555, when Andrea's brother Alvise inherited Palazzo Odoni, "un quadro grande...del purgatorio," likely Cariani's original picture owned by

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<sup>94</sup> Though not as wealthy as noble collectors such as Andrea Loredan or Taddeo Contarini, Odoni was involved in the affairs of the State and spent some income on amassing his collection. He served the State as a top tax collector for the *Dazio dil vin* (office in charge of wine) and owned property on the mainland in Oriago and Miran, to the southwest of Mestre, towns which fell to invading anti-Venetian troops by 1513. On Odoni's career and background, see Schmitter, 2004, 939-941.

<sup>95</sup> Michiel, 84: "Linferno cun el Cupidine che tiene l'arco fu de man de Zanin Comandador, et è la tela [che] hauea Francesco Zio."

<sup>96</sup> When his paintings are discussed, however, they have been given as evidence of his emulative collecting tendencies: Schmitter, 2004, 961.

<sup>97</sup> Michiel, 86: "La tela delli monstri et inferno alla Ponentina fu de mano de..."

Zio, was still being displayed in the portego.<sup>98</sup> This fiery imagery was complimented by “a canvas with Vulcan in front of the forge” located in a nearby chamber and which must have shown a flaming furnace.<sup>99</sup>

Other pictures in Odoni’s portego included Savoldo’s aforementioned *Continence of Scipio* and Cariani’s *History of Trajan*, lofty themes from Greek and Roman history, as well as a copy after Giorgione of *St. Jerome in the Desert by Moonlight*.<sup>100</sup> At first glance this seems an eclectic mix of works. However, several themes are recognizable. The Vulcan painting was likely *Venus at the forge of Vulcan*, illustrating the request for arms from *Aeneid* 8, which has strong martial overtones and would have reinforced the other classical call-to-arms subjects above. Such a scene also served as a pretext for the representation of dazzling light effects, as in Domenico Beccafumi’s *Venus and Cupid with Vulcan* (c.1530) (fig.4.21), which offers a sense of Odoni’s original picture. The glowing bonfires of Beccafumi’s forge are clearly inspired by Flemish pictures of hell. Considering Giorgione’s nocturnal *Jerome* and the two hellscapes, we can conclude that Odoni owned a group of landscapes with spell-binding luminary effects.

Several years after Michiel, Aretino visited Odoni and marveled at how the chambers, loggia,

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<sup>98</sup> Georg Gronau, “Beiträge zum Anonymus Morellianus,” in *Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der venezianischen Kunst aus dem nachlass Gustav Ludwigs*, ed., Wilhelm von Bode et al. (Berlin, 1911), 63. This is significant since it is the only painting whose subject is indicated (even if vaguely); the other eleven pictures in the portego are simply inventoried as, “Quadri in ditto portego n° XI, videlicet sette piccolo et quatro grandi.” In other words, the purgatory subject—either Cariani’s cupid with inferno or the Flemish inferno with monsters—must have been arresting.

<sup>99</sup> This picture is unmentioned in previous Odoni inventories and therefore perhaps acquired by Alvise (Gronau, Item 84): “Un quadro de tella davanti el foger, con un Vulcan.”

<sup>100</sup> Michiel, 86: “El San Hieronimo nudo che siede in un deserto al lume della luna fu de mano de...ritratto da una tela de Zorzi da Castelfrancho.” Though untraced, a sense of the dramatic pictorial effects of Giorgione’s nocturnal landscape is given by Titian’s poetic canvas of the same subject completed a year prior in 1531. Jan Gossart also experimented with such themes after his return to Mechelen from Rome, a period when he was working for Italian clients such as Antonio Siciliano from Milan. Gossart’s *Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane* (c.1510) is the most relevant image; see Maryan Ainsworth, *Man, Myth, and Sensual Pleasure: Jan Gossart’s Renaissance: The Complete Works* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010), 192. For Titian’s painting (Paris, Louvre), see Wethey, I, 133, cat. no. 104.

and portego of his *casa* in Dorsoduro were “so well kept, tapestried, and splendid,” containing, “such rare paintings.”<sup>101</sup>

Flemish paintings were difficult to obtain and Odoni’s mix of authentic northern landscapes and locally produced variations was one of the best collections of landscape pictures in the city. By the middle of the sixteenth century importing northern art to Venice from markets in Antwerp and Bruges was notoriously difficult and restricted by the Venetian painter’s guild.<sup>102</sup> From 1553-54, the Fleming “Matteo Fiammingo” was accused of selling “foreign painted canvases and other foreign painted works” in Venice, violating guild statutes against such unauthorized sales by non-Venetians.<sup>103</sup> This limitation on the availability of Flemish pictures made them even more desirable amongst collectors. In the 1550’s, Willem van Santvoort acquired a group of paintings from Hieronymus Cock that he shipped to Venice; all of the landscapes sold, but apparently not the figure paintings, which seem to have held less appeal.<sup>104</sup>

Returning to Savoldo’s Timken *St. Anthony* with this in mind, we have a surer sense of the type of educated patron to whom its imagery appealed. Rather than an ecclesiastical commission, therefore, it is almost certain that the Pushkin and Timken pictures, so attuned to the latest modes of landscape painting popular in Venice, were made for private collectors. As late as 1521, Savoldo was still working as an assistant to a mediocre follower of Bellini. Thus it is reasonable to assume these earlier hermit panels were painted when he first arrived in Venice, before he could command more well-placed public commissions. The Flemish and German motifs Savoldo employs were incorporated into the landscapes to vividly synthesize a spiritual lesson about escaping from sin to attain salvation. They also evoked the pleasurable aspects of

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<sup>101</sup> Monika Schmitter, “Odoni’s Façade: The House as Portrait in Renaissance Venice,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 66 (September 2007), 308.

<sup>102</sup> Campbell, 1981, 467-8.

<sup>103</sup> Louisa C. Matthew, “Working Abroad: Northern Artists in the Venetian Ambient,” in Aikema and Brown, 69.

<sup>104</sup> Aikema and Brown, 426.

landscape serious connoisseurs prized. As Marco Mantova da Benavides observed, “in a beautiful Flemish painting [there appears] a variety of...landscapes, rivers, fires, and other small things.”<sup>105</sup> By combining a bucolic vista with a nocturnal Boschian hellscape, Savoldo signaled his competency in two fashionable styles of landscape painting north and south of the Alps. In fact, he emulated each so well that at one point an owner of the Moscow *Temptation* had sawn the panel down the middle, presumably to appreciate each half as an autonomous landscape.<sup>106</sup>

The Timken painting can reasonably be accepted as a work of around 1520. Yet we should reconsider claims citing it as evidence of Savoldo as a “portavoce” (spokesman) for Patinir and Bosch, as Frangi argued, or ape of Bellini and Titian. Nor should we read it simply as “an homage to Bosch” as has been argued.<sup>107</sup> The imagery of the San Diego picture put an innovative stamp on the Boschian triptych it borrowed from by transforming its landscape to satisfy Venetian tastes for religious art. Savoldo successfully extracted a dynamic narrative from Bosch’s chaotic and recondite polyptych while preserving its enthralling *bizzarrie*. It serves as an invaluable record of what must have been similar inferno pictures painted by Giorgione and Cariani that have sadly vanished. It is, moreover, revealing of the type of picture foreign artists could be asked to produce in Venice for private patrons before embarking on more lucrative commissions for churches. The Flemish-style landscape of the Timken picture served as essential training that culminated in the extraordinary *veduta* of his Pesaro altarpiece, the masterpiece of Savoldo’s early career.

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<sup>105</sup> Marco Mantova da Benavides, *Discorso sopra i dialoghi di M. Speron Speroni* (Venice, 1561), 3: “...anzi la varietà diletta sommamente, come agli ochi di cui guarda una bella dipintura fiaminga, ove si varietà parimente d’huomini, di animali, di paesi, di fiumi, di fuochi, e di cosi simili, nelle quali sono maestri i fiaminghi maraviglioso e maggiormente perche eglino piu che non fanno i dipintori Italiani, si forzano a piu potere coll’arte diligintissimamente imitar la natura.”

<sup>106</sup> Fiocco, 166.

<sup>107</sup> Agnes Mongan and Elizabeth Mongan, *European Paintings in the Timken Art Gallery* (San Diego: Putnam Foundation, 1969), 32, cat. no.8.

Savoldo's choice to insert Boschian motifs into a scene of St. Anthony's tribulation probably stemmed from the fact that this was a typically northern subject that Venetian patrons expected to contain such hellish imagery. Yet the *Temptation's* landscape functions as more than the "contorno" (bywork) Ebert-Schiffeler held it to be, for it is precisely the moralizing tension between hell and paradise that Savoldo vividly manipulates to animate the spiritual drama of salvation.<sup>108</sup> We know from a rare 1517 description of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych that the exoticism of such panoramic visions of hell and paradise dumbfounded and delighted Italian audiences in equal measure. When shown this triptych in the palace of the Count of Nassau in Brussels, the Italian diarist and traveler Antonio de Beatis marveled at its panels of, "different bizarre things, in which are depicted seas, skies, forests, fields, and numerous other things...with the utmost naturalism, things so pleasing and fantastic that they cannot be clearly described in any way to those who had not seen them."<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Ebert-Schiffeler, in Passamani, 71-77.

<sup>109</sup> E. H. Gombrich "The Earliest Description of Bosch's Garden of Delight," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (1967), 403-404: "Ce son poi alcune tavole de diverse bizzellerie, dove se contrafanno mari, aeri, boschi, compagne, et molte altre cose...con molta naturalità, cose tanto piacevole et fantastiche che ad quelli che non ne hanno cognitione in nullo modo se li potriano ben discrevere."

## 5.0 PAINTING THE *PARAGONE*: DOSSO DOSSI'S *JUPITER PAINTING* *BUTTERFLIES AS AN ALLEGORY OF PITTURA*

Dossi Dossi (1486-1542) is among a handful of artists identified during his own lifetime as a landscape painter. He is documented first in Mantua in 1512 before settling the following year in Ferrara, where he spent the majority of his career as court artist to dukes Alfonso I and Ercole II d'Este and members of their court. Along with his brother and collaborator Battista, the Dossi headed a busy workshop in Ferrara. Their known projects included frescos for various ducal residences; designs for tapestries, theatre sets, festival decorations, banners, coins, and tableware; and the embellishment and varnishing of carriages and barges. Much of this ephemeral output has vanished. The surviving easel paintings attributable to their shop demonstrate a high regard for imaginative allegorical and religious subjects, some with rustic wilderness settings.<sup>1</sup> Pictures such as Dosso's *Three Ages of Man* (c.1515) attests to his deep immersion in the art of Giorgione and Titian, and he is known to have made at least five trips to Venice before 1520 (5.1).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For his early career, see Peter Humfrey and Mauro Lucco, "Dosso Dossi in 1513: a reassessment of the artist's early works and influences," *Apollo* 147 (Feb., 1998), 22-30. For an overview, see Peter Humfrey, "Dosso Dossi: His Life and Works," in Peter Humfrey and Mauro Lucco, *Dosso Dossi: Court Painter in Renaissance Ferrara* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 3-16.

<sup>2</sup> This medium-size pastoral allegory is similar to Titian's canvas of the same subject, known in three versions. When Vasari saw Titian's version in Venice made for Milian Targone (c.1513; Duke of Sutherland collection, on loan to National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh), he commented on its "most beautiful landscape": "Tornato poi Tiziano a Vinezia, fece per lo suocero di Giovanni da Castel Bolognese, in una tela a olio, un pastore ignudo et una forese che gli porge certi flauti perché suoni, con un bellissimo paese." See Peter Humfrey, "The Patron and Early Provenance of Titian's 'Three Ages of Man,'" *Burlington Magazine* 145, 1208 (Nov., 2003), 787-91.

However, it is only recently that scholars have begun to study Dosso's reputation as a landscape painter.<sup>3</sup>

Dosso's success at the court of Ferrara has been accounted for in part by his ability to dramatize wondrous effects in painting that competed with the productions of other artists and humanists working for Duke Alfonso by 1524. Alfonso's preference for subjects from ancient myth and history is well known and it has long been believed that Dosso painted his so-called *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* for the duke around this time (fig.5.2).<sup>4</sup> This celebrated picture, now in the collection of Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow, continues to perplex scholars in its bold approach to artistic self-staging. Despite using a known literary source, Dosso exercised a degree of artistic license in translating the episode to paint, the significance of which has led to a host of conflicting interpretations. Still, art historians are unanimous in acknowledging the technical bravura and poetic inventiveness of Dosso's *Jupiter* that rank it among his most ambitious works.

The picture is first documented in 1659 in Venice at the Palazzo Canciano of the distinguished collector Count Lodovico Widmann (1568-1638) as, "Giove che dipinge farfalle di Dossi di Ferrara 350."<sup>5</sup> Giustiniano Martinioni likewise recorded it in Widmann's gallery in his revised 1663 edition of Francesco Sansovino's guidebook to Venice. He attributed it to Dosso and identified its subject as "Jupiter, who paints Butterflies, with Virtue, who asks for an

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<sup>3</sup> Humfrey, in Ciammitti, et al., 201-18; Colby, 201-231, 357-360.

<sup>4</sup> In the most recent study of the picture, the curators at Wawel Castle conclude that it was undoubtedly painted for Alfonso I d'Este; see Maria Skubiszewska and Kazimierz Kuczman, *Paintings from the Lanckorónski Collection from the 14<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries in the Collections of the Wawel Royal Castle* (Krakow: Wawel Royal Castle, 2010), 109-115, cat. no.27. Felton Gibbons, *Dosso and Battista Dossi. Court Painters at Ferrara* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 212-214, cat. no.78, firmly dated it to the mid-1520s—accepted by nearly every scholar since—on stylistic grounds and cited its sure draftsmanship, coloring, and anatomical precision as signs of his mature work. Gibbons discusses other datings in the literature, which placed it as early as 1513 and as late as 1600.

<sup>5</sup> The inventory is reproduced in Fabrizio Magani, "Il collezionismo e la committenza artistica della famiglia Widmann, patrizi veneziani, dal Seicento all'Ottocento," *Memorie, Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 41, 3 (1989), 35, Item 17.

audience, whose coming is impeded by Mercury. The fable is from Lucian, but very well expressed by the Painter.”<sup>6</sup> Marco Boschini had corroborated this subject and its source in Lucian in 1660, though he was referring to a free variant of Dosso’s picture made by the seventeenth-century Emilian painter Luca Ferrari.<sup>7</sup> The painting appeared next in 1857 in the collection of Michelangelo Barbini’s widow in Venice. It is unknown at what point it then entered the collection of Daniel Penther, the curator of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Penther died in 1887 and a year later it was bought at auction in Vienna by Carol Lanckorónski. The canvas suffered through a tumultuous ownership history during WWII, after which it was temporarily given to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, and ultimately its present home at Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow in 2000.<sup>8</sup>

Dosso sets the scene of his large canvas (112 x 150 cm) aloft in the clouds where three figures sit side-by-side in a row. On the left is Jupiter dressed in long tangerine robes, identifiable by the bundle of thunderbolts laid at his feet, and seated at a canvas on which he is painting the inchoate form of a butterfly. Next to him is nude Mercury who clenches his caduceus in one hand and with the other draws his finger to his lips. He turns over his shoulder to direct this gesture at a kneeling maiden wearing an elegant golden costume with garlands of blooming flowers ringing her arms, neck, and head. Behind the figures Dosso has painted a panoramic landscape extending vertically through three-quarters of the picture surface. The air

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<sup>6</sup> Sansovino, 1663, 376: “La galleria de Conti Vidmani, è delle stupende della Città, e frà le cose insigni, e singolari...Del Dossi, si vede un Giove, che dipgne Farfalle, con la Virtù, che chiede audienza, che li viene impedita da Mercurio. La Favola è di Luciano; ma molto ben’espressa dal Pittore.”

<sup>7</sup> Boschini, 1660, 565: “Luca da Rezo mostra de fo’ man/ Giove, che i Calalini forma l’ale,/ E lassa la virtù da drio le spale;/ Conceto del Filosofo Lucian./ Mercurio assiste a cusi gran facende:/ Perche i Dei de i mortali hà sempre cura./ Defendendo le zuche da l’arsura. Gran favori del Ciel! chi hà rechie intende.”

<sup>8</sup> The provenance is discussed in detail in Skubiszewska and Kuczman, 109-10. The Nazis captured and retained the painting from 1939 until 1947, at which point it was restored to the Lanckorónski family in Vienna, who gave it to the Kunsthistorisches Museum in 1951 in exchange for permission to take the rest of their collection out of Austria. In 1999, the court of Justice in Vienna ruled to return the painting to the Lanckorónski family, and the following year the Lanckorónski Foundation officially bestowed it upon the Polish State Art Collection, housed at Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow.

takes on a bluish green cast from the dark thunderstorm passing through on the left. Dappled sunlight falls over green hills, groves, and eclectic architecture on the right. Its brilliance sharply illuminates the foreground gods and produces the colorless rainbow arching over the trio and disappearing behind Jupiter's canvas.

The fundamental study of Dosso's Wawel painting is Julius von Schlosser's 1900 essay that linked its iconography to a precise textual source. Schlosser showed that the fable believed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to have been written by Lucian was actually penned by L.B. Alberti as one of his Latin *Intercenales*, or "dinner pieces" (begun 1437).<sup>9</sup> This is Alberti's short dialogue "Virtus" between Mercury and Virtue, who has arrived at the gates of Olympus to complain to the gods. While walking through the Elysian Fields accompanied by philosophers, poets, artists, and other wise men of antiquity, Virtue had been accosted by Fortune who tore her clothes and cast her into the mud. Distraught by this abuse, Virtue attempted entry to the heavens to plead her case to Jupiter. However, she has spent a month waiting at the threshold of Olympus as all the gods pass her by and offer excuses not to help her: they are "busy taking pains to see that pumpkins blossom in season, and that butterflies are born with beautifully painted wings."<sup>10</sup> Mercury listens to her pleas, but warns that even the gods are beholden to Fortune's whims. Therefore it would be wise for Virtue to hide herself until Fortune's wrath subsides. In the end, a dejected Virtue resolves to "hide eternally...excluded from heaven."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Julius von Schlosser, "Jupiter und die Tugend: Ein Gemälde des Dosso Dossi," *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 21 (1900), 262-70. This was further developed in Schlosser, "Der Weltenmaler Zeus: Ein Capriccio des Dosso Dossi," in *Ausgewählte Kunstwerke der Sammlung Lanckoroński*, ed., Wilhelm von Bode (Vienna: A Holzhausen, 1918), 49-54.

<sup>10</sup> Compare to the Italian translation in Nicolo da Lonigo, *I dilettevoli dialogi, le vere narrationi, le facete epistole di Luciano*... (Venice, 1529), 26v "Alcune siate fiato dicono che li Dei sono occupati a fare che le Zucche in tempo conveniente fioriscano. Alcuna volta che hanno cura vedere che li Parpaglioni nascano con le sue ale ben dipinte."

<sup>11</sup> L.B. Alberti, *Dinner Pieces. A Translation of the Intercenales*, ed., and trans., David Marsh (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1987), 21-22.

Commentators on the picture beginning with Schlosser have attempted to account for a number of obvious changes Dosso made when translating the pseudo-Lucianic fable to paint. He has added an elegantly dressed figure of Virtue, rainbow, panoramic landscape, and the figure of Jupiter painting butterflies, an activity Alberti assigned to the gods at large. Dosso's new iconographic scheme serves no narrative purpose and departs from other known representations of Alberti's "Virtus." These include Benedetto Bordone's illuminated manuscript (Venice, 1494), the woodcut illustrations for the 1525 edition of Lucian published in Venice, and Dosso's own quite literal representation of the story he painted later in monochrome frescos at the Castello del Buonconsiglio in Trent (1530) (figs.5.3, 5.4).<sup>12</sup>

Noting these unusual motifs, Schlosser emphasized Dosso's inclination toward poetic invention. Indeed, as early as 1663, Martinioni had noted that while the story came from Lucian, it was "very well expressed by the Painter," implying a degree of artistic license. Whitfield expanded Schlosser's proposal by identifying five editions of the "Virtus" published in Venice beginning in 1494 and consequently available to the artist.<sup>13</sup> D'Ascia showed that manuscripts of the "Virtus" circulated in Ferrara during this period.<sup>14</sup> In accounting for Dosso's inventive imagery, Luisa Ciammitti has suggested a number of literary sources that Dosso drew upon in devising his picture, chief among them Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum liber*, not published until 1531 but circulating in manuscript ten years earlier. Ciammitti convincingly related the maiden's depiction to Alciati's emblem "Anteros sive Amor Virtutis," which shows Virtue crowned with

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<sup>12</sup> On these other images, see Giancarlo Fiorenza, *Dosso Dossi: Paintings of Myth, Magic, and the Antique* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008), 29.

<sup>13</sup> J.H. Whitfield, "Leon Battista Alberti, Ariosto, and Dosso Dossi," *Italian Studies* 21 (1966), 16-30. In fact, there were even more and the *editio princeps* is truly 1472.

<sup>14</sup> Luca D'Ascia, "Humanistic Culture and Literary Invention in Ferrara at the Time of Dosso Dossi," in Ciammitti, et al., 309-32.

garlands.<sup>15</sup> Thus there is no reason to believe the maiden is anyone other than Virtue originally cast in Alberti's dialogue and corroborated by Ciammitti's discovery.

Various allegorical interpretations have been put forward for Dosso's highly original imagery. In particular, scholars have been hard pressed to account for Jupiter's unprecedented depiction as a painter. Friederike Klauner presented a detailed analysis in which Jupiter stood for artistic creativity, Virtue human morality able to overcome misfortune, and Mercury the enlightened protector of the arts and artists.<sup>16</sup> Klauner also proposed an astrological reading in which the figures represent their respective planets, with Virtue as a sign of Virgo. She surmised that Jupiter was a self-portrait of Dosso and that the picture illustrated his horoscope: the conjunction of the planets with Virgo occurred in 1489 (supposedly Dosso's birthdate) and again in 1529, the date Klauner proposed for the picture. Gibbons accepted Klauner's *recherché* explication of the iconography and the maiden as the astrological Virgin.<sup>17</sup> Emmens subsequently read it as a political satire in which Jupiter (having put aside his thunderbolts) stands for Francis I, who in 1512 allied with Ferrara during the War of the League of Cambrai.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, Maurizio Calvesi hypothesized that Dosso means to compare the art of painting to the magic of alchemy.<sup>19</sup> Focusing on the maiden, Biasini saw her as Iris goddess of the rainbow whose attribute Dosso includes. Instead of a self-portrait, Biasini identified Jupiter as Alfonso

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<sup>15</sup> Luisa Ciammitti, "Dosso as a Storyteller," in Ciammitti, et al., 83-112. Ciammitti also refers to the Venetian edition of Alberti's dialogue published in 1525 and Marsilio Ficino's *In Mercurium Trismegistum*, the latter of which was apparently known to the Ferrarese scholar Celio Calcagnini.

<sup>16</sup> Friederike Klauner, "Ein Planetenbild von Dosso Dossi," *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 60 (1964), 137-60.

<sup>17</sup> Gibbons, 1968, 212-214, cat. no.78.

<sup>18</sup> Jan A. Emmens, "De Schilderende Iupiter van Dosso Dossi," in *Miscellanea I.Q. van Regteren Altena* (Amsterdam: Schelteme en Holkema, 1986), 52-54.

<sup>19</sup> Maurizio Calvesi, "A noir (Melancholia I)," *Storia dell'arte* 1-2 (Jan.-June, 1969), 168-74.

d'Este, patron of the arts in Ferrara.<sup>20</sup> Most recently, the curators at Wawel Castle have attended to the classicizing figure group in order to ascertain Dosso's supposed Roman models.<sup>21</sup>

While these studies have uncovered a range of cultural influences for Dosso, they provide little insight into the picture's theoretical context. An exception is André Chastel's notable assertion that Dosso intended a sort of eulogy of painting. In his view, since Dosso dressed the maiden not in filthy rags as Alberti had her but rather in a flowery costume and graciously addressing Mercury, the painter meant to identify her as Rhetoric. Thus Mercury, with his hushing gesture, becomes Harpocrates god of silence who prevents Rhetoric from interfering with the silent art of painting, able to vividly express wondrous images without words. For Chastel, Dosso translated the fable's message from a caveat against ignoring Virtue to the context of the *paragone*—the comparison between the sister arts of rhetoric and painting—the painter clearly siding with his own profession.<sup>22</sup>

In a work so clearly about the act of painting, as nearly every commentator has acknowledged, it is surprising that this essential aspect remains largely unexplored.<sup>23</sup> As Peter Humfrey observed, “a central theme is certainly the art of painting itself,” confirmed in part by the high degree of technical virtuosity. Humfrey continues, lamenting that the significance of Jupiter's activity remains frustratingly hidden: “the representation of Jupiter as a painter, a role not mentioned in the dialogue, is intended to carry some allegorical message about the art of painting...On the other hand, the precise reasons for the various other departures from the text, the precise message the picture is intended to convey, and even whether Dosso had precise

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<sup>20</sup> Giorgia Biasini, “Giove pittore di farfalle: Un'ipotesi interpretative del dipinto di Dosso Dossi,” *Schifanoia*, 13-14 (1992), 9-29.

<sup>21</sup> Skubiszewska and Kuczman, 111-13.

<sup>22</sup> André Chastel, “Signum Harpocraticum,” in *Studi in onore di Giulio Carlo Argan* (Rome, 1984), I, 147-53.

<sup>23</sup> The earliest proposal of it as an allegory of painting is Carlo Gamba, “Il palazzo e la raccolta Horne a Firenze,” *Dedalo* I (1920), 181, who suggests it as a possible pendant to Dosso's *Allegory of Music* (c.1523; Florence, Horne Collection). Cf. Friederike Klauner, ed., *Katalog der Gemäldegalerie* (Vienna, 1960), I, 44, where the subject of the picture is interpreted as the “Discovery of Painting.”

intentions in these matters all remain open to question.”<sup>24</sup> Farinella’s thoughtful essay has since affirmed the centrality of these issues for Dosso.<sup>25</sup> In the most recent study of the painting, Giancarlo Fiorenza began to address how Dosso is concerned with presenting an allegory of painting, or in his words, “a self-conscious experiment in pictorial eloquence.”<sup>26</sup> Fiorenza’s remarkable analysis is the first to devote serious attention to the landscape, suggesting how Dosso’s inclusion of certain elements alludes to the act of painting, such as the storm, rainbow, and winds.

Even as Humfrey, Fiorenza, and others identify the picture as an allegory of painting, no serious attempt has been made to substantiate this claim.<sup>27</sup> It remains necessary not only to discover numerous allusions to this theme apparent in the imagery, but also to clarify their relation to lively debates in sixteenth-century Italian art theory clearly at play. These concerned the rivalry between sculpture and painting, and the issue of universality—the painter’s godlike ability to portray nature—embodied, above all, in the depiction of atmospheric phenomena. In uncovering Dosso’s theoretical aims, this chapter builds upon both Chastel’s study linking the Wawel picture to the *paragone* and Fiorenza’s emphasis on the artist’s rhetorical intentions. That Dosso would make a picture so self-consciously about painting as an intellectual pursuit is not surprising; rather, it accords with the changing status of painting in Italy as it became more closely associated with the liberal arts from the late fifteenth through sixteenth centuries. Artists themselves were instrumental in this process. As studies by Francis Ames-Lewis and Catherine

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<sup>24</sup> Humfrey, in Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 170, 173.

<sup>25</sup> Vincenzo Farinella, *Dipingere farfalle. Giove, mercurio e la virtù Dosso Dossi: un elogio dell’otium e della pittura per Alfonso I d’Este* (Florence: Polistampa, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> Fiorenza, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Humfrey and Fiorenza are largely concerned with resolving the identity of the maiden as Virtue (Humfrey) or Flora (Fiorenza). Fiorenza concludes that Dosso’s canvas represents the changing of the seasons from spring to summer as an allegory of cycles of Este authority, and that Dosso’s main concern is challenging contemporary viewers to recognize his superior pictorial telling of the textual source (48). In the end, his interpretation relies heavily on esoteric iconographical analysis, the type of methodology he purports to eschew. Similarly, Farinella renews the identification of Alfonso as Jupiter and the subject as an allegory of Este patronage.

King have shown, painters endeavored to make images exploring art-making as an intellectual and theoretical pursuit.<sup>28</sup>

## 5.1 JUPITER AS *DEUS ARTIFEX*

Dosso's highly original representation of Jupiter painting is a detail found neither in Alberti's text nor in any earlier pictorial work. Similar subjects called for the portrayal of artists in the act of painting, such as *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*, which celebrated the patron saint of this art, or self-portraits of painters at their easels. Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, for example, seems to have combined these latter two themes in a panel dating from 1515, though it was likely unknown in Dosso's Ferrara (fig.5.5).<sup>29</sup> Dosso's inventive designation of Jupiter as a painter cleverly draws upon the god's own mythical powers as a creator. In essence, he compares divine and artistic practices, elevating painting's simulation of nature to the god-like ability to bring forth natural objects into being. Schlosser first noted this metaphor and dubbed Jupiter the "Weltenmaler," reading his painterly activity as a symbol of godly creation.<sup>30</sup>

Dosso's conceit derives from contemporary painting treatises available at the time. A lengthy defense of painting opens Book II in Alberti's own *Della pittura* (1436) where he reasons that this art contains "a divine force" and deems it the gods' greatest gift to mortals.<sup>31</sup>

One particularly suggestive source that has heretofore escaped notice is Francesco Lancilotti's

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<sup>28</sup> Ames-Lewis; Catherine E. King, *Representing Renaissance Art, c.1500-1600* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). Cf. Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture. The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), especially her introductory ch., "The Social Status of the Artist in the Renaissance," 1-9.

<sup>29</sup> On this painting, see King, 59-61.

<sup>30</sup> Schlosser, 1918, 49. Cf. Woods-Marsden's observation that, "The performing artist must no doubt have identified with the depicted artist; Dossi here compared the creations of his *mano* with those of Jupiter..." (226-27).

<sup>31</sup> L.B. Alberti, *Della pittura* (Florence, 1436), 18-19: "Percioche ella ha veramente in se una certa forza molto divina"; "Credo anchora, che gli huomini debbano riconoscere per un grandissimo dono, che la pittura habbia dipinto gli Dei, iquali sono riveriti da le genti." Vasari makes a similar claim in the *proemio* to the *Vite*, when he describes God as the first artist who created man in his image.

*Tractato di pictura* (1509) in which Jupiter's creation of the universe is portrayed as a painter at work:

Prima a pictar nel cel Giove, el tonante,  
La luna, el sol, le stele, i dei e raggi  
Lucidi, ch'escon dalle luce sante:  
L'aria di poi e come par che caggi  
Folgor, grandine, pioggia, troni e lampi,  
Nugoli, venti, uccei d'acque e selvaggi:  
Di poi la terra e monti e colli e campi  
Gl'huomini, le città, le fiere e boschi  
Polvere, fummo, pietre, fuochi e vampi:  
L'acqua di poi dove si reonoschi  
Pesci, nave, galee, grippi e liuti  
Con procelle e tempeste a' tempi foschi.<sup>32</sup>

Lancilotti's emphasis on thunder, rain, wind, and lightning echo Jupiter's attributes. They are, too, natural phenomena Dosso is at pains to recreate in his humid landscape illuminated by flashes of light from a passing storm that produce a rainbow, which is oddly monochrome.

Even more prominent than Jupiter is the figure of Mercury. His placement in the composition derives as much from his part in Alberti's fable as his special role as the protector of the artists. In astrological and mythological handbooks from antiquity through the Renaissance Mercury was associated with *ingenium* and personal talent. He therefore was believed to be the patron of artists, who in turn depended upon his gifts for inspiration.<sup>33</sup> Jacopo de' Barbari took the god's caduceus as his engraver's mark in prints he produced in Venice around 1500, as did Alciati for his personal *impresa*.<sup>34</sup> In the Wavel picture Mercury is the axis upon which the action revolves and serves as an intermediary between the inquiring maiden and painting Jupiter;

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<sup>32</sup> Francesco Lancilotti, *Tractato di pictura* (Rome, 1509), lines 82-91.

<sup>33</sup> See the chapter in King, 191-235, "Mercury as protector of artists: from astrology to mythology." Cf. the allegorical picture by Hendrik Goltzius, *Mercury as Patron of the Arts* (Self-Portrait?), c.1611-13, Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum.

<sup>34</sup> Alciati's *impresa* is analyzed in Paolo Giovio, *Dialogo dell'impresie militari e amoroze di Paolo Giovio Vescovo di Nucera* (Rome, 1555), 136. The association between Jupiter and Mercury is furthered in Alciati's *Embelmatum liber* (Augsburg, 1531), particularly in the motto VIRTUTI FORTUNA COMES ("good Fortune attendant on Virtue") illustrated with the device of Mercury's caduceus. The gloss indicates that it is formed by twin snakes and the horns of Almathea, the she-goat that nursed the infant Jupiter, which became the horn of plenty. Alciati tells how the caduceus "thus indicates how material wealth blesses men of powerful intellect, skilled in speaking."

he allows the artist to compose undisturbed by frivolous cares. In this regard, several scholars have pointed out how Mercury's hushing gesture alludes to Horace's maxim describing painting as mute poetry.<sup>35</sup> Sophisticated audiences would have recognized such visual puns. Lodovico Dolce would make this point clear in his *Dialogo della pittura* (Venice, 1557) in which one of the interlocutors observes, "the resemblance you note between the poet and the painter is fitting, in that some men of parts have called the painter a 'mute poet,' and the poet a 'speaking painter.'"36

Some of Dosso's allusions to *pittura* are more obvious but have gone unmentioned. For instance, Dosso simply underlines the artistic equipment to a remarkable degree. Jupiter has laid aside his typical instrument with which he paints the sky—the bundle of sparking thunderbolts at his feet—and instead holds not one but four paintbrushes in total (fig.5.6). The god's grip on his maulstick and brush visually rhymes with Mercury's grasp on his caduceus and furthers the latter's identification as protector of painting. Furthermore, Jupiter's palette is meticulously rendered and shows over ten pigments on its surface, some of which have been mixed in preparation for painting the reddish ochre bodies of butterflies.

Additionally, the canvas at which the sky god sits is quite large and nearly as tall as its maker. Virtually every commentator on the picture has described Jupiter as poised at an easel when in fact no such apparatus is apparent. Instead, the god's canvas appears magically suspended in mid-air. As Fiorenza has noted, "The 'canvas' on which Jupiter paints is actually a piece cut from the sky itself, with no need for stretcher bars or a tacking margin."<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the canvas has been primed with a bluish green layer of paint matching the tempestuous backdrop of sky behind the figures. Pursuing this further, we can say that Dosso's clever blending of Jupiter's

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<sup>35</sup> Woods-Marsden, 226; Fiorenza, 38. Chastel, 90-92.

<sup>36</sup> Roskill, 97.

<sup>37</sup> Fiorenza, 23.

canvas with the sky has the effect of merging the simulated landscape with the actual landscape. In effect, this collapses the boundary between pictorial invention and reality, and between art and nature.<sup>38</sup> Thus it is by painting that Jupiter brings forth the butterflies into being, his canvas indistinguishable from the material world itself.

## 5.2 PAINTING TEMPESTS

The luminous storm that both Jupiter and Dosso have painted relates to the god's particular control over the thunder, rain, and lightning, as in Leon Davent's engraving of *Jupiter Squeezing Rain* (1540s), where he wrings moisture from swollen stormclouds.<sup>39</sup> It further compares Dosso's bravura painting with divine activity by alluding to the classical *exemplum* about the difficulty of painting weather. The painting of storms stretched back to Pliny's anecdote about Apelles' ability to depict such un-paintable phenomena: "Dipinse [Apelles] anchora le cose che non si possono dipignere. Tuoni baleni & saette."<sup>40</sup> Pliny said that Apelles wrote a treatise on painting, thereby making him a model for theoretically minded painters. This fact stood out to fifteenth-century artist-humanists such as Ghiberti, who repeated Pliny's anecdote in his own commentaries on art.<sup>41</sup> Paolo Pino would add in his *Dialogo di pittura* (1548), the first in Italy to seriously consider landscape painting, that Apelles had achieved a near impossible task by accurately capturing the evanescent phenomena of sunlight and tempests.<sup>42</sup> The painting of

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<sup>38</sup> Pino, 16r, listed landscape as a tenet of good "*inventione*," recommending that the painter "ornar l'opere con figure, animali, paesi di prospettive..."

<sup>39</sup> Henri Zerner, ed., *The Illustrated Bartsch, Italian Artists of the Sixteenth Century: School of Fontainebleau*, vol. 33 (New York: Abaris, 1979), 54, no.326.

<sup>40</sup> Pliny the Elder, unnumbered, libro 35, cap.10, entitled, VCELLINGANNATI.PER PICTVRA.CHE. COSA.SIA.DIFFICILLIMA. NELLA.PICTURE.

<sup>41</sup> Schlosser, 1912, 23: "Et lui [Apelles] fece più alla pictura che tutti gli'altri. Compose libri impublico continenti della doctrina della arte della picture et in essa arte fu nobile et principaua la bellezza e' lla perfectione."

<sup>42</sup> Pino, 13r: "Se legge in Plinio, & altri di Apelle cose molto ammirande, & appresso di me come impossibili, imperò che si dice, ch' ei fingeua come propri i raggi del sole, & dipingeva il baleno, & i lampi tanto al vero simili,

storms as a virtuosic practice, as exemplified in the Wawel picture, would remain a topic of discussion throughout the sixteenth century in learned discourses on painting by Giovanni Andrea Gilio,<sup>43</sup> Vincenzo Danti,<sup>44</sup> and Cristoforo Sorte,<sup>45</sup> to name a select few.

This ancient benchmark evolved into a rhetorical formula that writers used to praise Renaissance painters without much direct reference to their work. However, it took on particular meaning in Alfonso's Ferrara. Dosso's humid and stormy landscape is a vivid riposte to Angelo Decembrio's question in the *De politia litteraria* (1462): "what painter could ever depict thunder and lightning, clouds and winds and the other elements of tempests as well as the poet does?"<sup>46</sup> Dosso's predecessor as court artist, Ercole de' Roberti, was praised by the chancellor of the University of Ferrara, Daniele Fini, for a large painting of Jupiter armed with thunderbolts amidst flashing stormclouds and turbulent winds.<sup>47</sup> In Dosso's own time, the humanist Celio Calcagnini wrote an epigram to Dosso's now-lost portrait of Duke Ercole II d'Este, comparing the painter's mimetic talents to Apelles: "Apelles of Cos represents Phaethon in a painting, but

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ch'imprimeva timore ne riguardanti, come cosa molto difficile, anzi imitabile, per ch' à tal luccidezza non servono i colori, ne ancho l'uomo affissarsi in quelli sì, che ne apprendi buona informazione, per esser tanto i baleni subiti."

<sup>43</sup> Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Due dialoghi. Nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie* (Camerino, 1564): "Apelle fu il primo che dipinse le pioggie, le tempeste, i folgori, i tuoni, le grandini e le nevi"; quoted in Paola Barocchi, *Trattati D'Arte Del Cinquecento. Fra Manierismo e Controriforma* (Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1960-62), I, 244., II, 22.

<sup>44</sup> Vincenzo Danti, *Trattato delle perfette proporzioni* (Florence, 1567): "I misti imperfetti poi, che dicemmo generarsi nell'aria, i quail si possono tra i corpi solidi annoverare, saranno la neve, la brina, le nuvole e le nebbie... E i nuvoli e le nebbie sono vapori raccolti e ridotti a termine di potere risolversi in acqua, e massimente le nuvole, che a questo fine particolare si generano... Laonde si potranno (ancorché vero sia che possono essere pefetti et imperfetti) ritarre in quell modo che si veggiono, per le reazioni che nel proceso de' nostri ragionamenti si diranno"; quoted in Barocchi, I, 244.

<sup>45</sup> Cristoforo Sorte, *Osservazioni nella pittura* (Venice, 1580): "...sono soggetti tanto particolari e propii del giudicio e della mano del pittore, che non si ponno né esprimere, e meno insegnare, se non che in fatto ciò l'operazioni dimostrano... Laonde non solo le cose presenti e da lui vedute, ma le già passate per molti secoli, o vere o favolose ch' elle si sieno, e molto meglio talora che non sono nelle carte descritte, quasi naturali e vive e poco meno spiranti, si vedrebbe col pennello giudiciosamente a rappresentare... Così farebbe quelli delle tempestose fortune di mare, quando le misere navi da sùbi et oscurissimi nuvoli vedono loro..."; quoted in Barocchi, I, 292.

<sup>46</sup> Baxandall, 1963, 321: "Nam quae uis pictoris unquam tonitrus. fulgura. Imbres. uentos. caeterarsque tempestatum uariationes: ut poeta descriperit."

<sup>47</sup> This is recorded in the poem "In laudem Herculis Grandis pictoris rarissimi" (1490s): "Fecit idem nostri pictura novissima Grandis,/ Quae veterum formis anteferenda fuit,/ Qui nubes, pluvias, agitata tonitura ventis/ Pinxit, et ermato fulmina torta Iovi,/ Et noctis tenebras, et veri splendida solis/ Lumina, terrarum quicquid orbis habet/... Quadrupedes, volucres, pisces, mare, fulmina, montes..." (lines 5-15); see Silvio Pasquazi, *Poeti Estensi del Rinascimento* (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1966), 97.

cannot represent the light and rays. Thus, my prince, Dosso may be able to represent your face, but cannot represent your virtue and character.”<sup>48</sup> This barb was meant to advocate for the poet’s power over that of the painter. Still, it points to the extent to which Apelles and his artistic reputation impacted on sophisticated discussions about art at the Ferrarese court.

Dosso’s inclusion of the tempestuous landscape serves a purpose beyond the narrative. It underscores not only Jupiter as *deus artifex*, as outlined by Lancilotti, but also Dosso’s own recreation of Nature’s “earth and mountains and hills and fields,/ people, cities, beasts and trees.” Even though the mythological scene supposedly takes place in the Olympian realm of the gods, as indicated by the bank of clouds in the foreground, a third of the picture surface is filled with a landscape once considerably more lush and brilliant than in its present state. This atmospheric vista connects neither with Alberti’s tale nor the foreground action supposedly occurring aloft in the heavens. Instead, it speaks to the painter’s own god-like power. In Venice, Pino concluded that it was in fact the painter’s sensitivity to rendering atmospheric phenomena that made him akin to the poet: “Painting is that poetry that causes us not only to believe but to see the sky adorned with the sun, the moon, and stars, the rain, snow, and the clouds caused by the winds, the waters and the earth. It causes us to delight in the variety of spring, in the charm of summer, and to hug ourselves again at the representation of the cold and damp season of winter.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in Fiorenza, 212, n.21. Fiorenza, however, does not relate it to the Wavel painting or to Dosso as a landscapist.

<sup>49</sup> Pino, 10r: “Questa è quella poesia, che vi fa non solo credere, ma vedere il cielo ornato del Sole della Luna, & delle stelle, la pioggia, e neve, le nebbie causate da venti, l’acqua, & la terra. Vi fa dilettere nella varietà de primavera nella vaghezza dell’estate, et restringervi alla rappresentazione della freda, & humida stagion del verno. Con tal arte si sono ingannatigli animali.”

### 5.3 UNIVERSALITY AND LANDSCAPE

The painting of storms and especially landscape imagery were believed to be key tenets of universal painting, or rather, the painter's ability to convincingly render all of Nature's and God's creation. Leonardo was mindful of universality and argued that landscape, although low in the hierarchy of genres, was not to be ignored. It was what made the painter akin to God. In one section of his notebooks, though edited by his follower Francesco Melzi, Leonardo observes, "If the painter wants to see beauties with which he will fall in love, he is a lord who can generate them...he is their lord and God." He enumerates a variety of landscapes and weather conditions the painter freely recreates—deserts, shady retreats, mountains, seashores—in sum, "whatever there is in the universe by essence, presence, or imagination, the painter has it first in his mind and then in his hands."<sup>50</sup> Leonardo critiqued his fellow Florentine Sandro Botticelli for neglecting this and, in particular, his shortcomings in landscape painting:

He is not universal who does not love equally all the elements in painting, as when one who does not like landscapes holds them to be a subject for cursory and straightforward investigation—just as our Botticelli said such study was of no use because by merely throwing a sponge soaked in a variety of colors at a wall there would be left on the wall a stain in which could be seen a beautiful landscape...And the painter in question makes very sorry landscapes.<sup>51</sup>

These passages remained hidden since Leonardo's notebooks were not published until 1651. They are nevertheless typical of other erudite painting manuals comparing artists to God. In Venice, Dolce wrote that, "Painters have always been deservedly appreciated, for it appears

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<sup>50</sup> Claire J. Farago, *Leonardo da Vinci's Paragone. A Critical Interpretation with a New Edition of the Text in the Codex Urbinas* (New York: Brill, 1992), 195-97: "Se'l pittore vol vedere bellezze che lo innamorino, lui è signore di generarle...lui ne signore et Dio. Et se vol generare siti e desserti, lochi ombrosi o foschi ne' tempi caldi, lui li figure e così lochi caldi ne' tempi freddi. Se vol valli, se vole delle alte cime de monti scoprire gran campagne...vol vedere li alti monti, o delli alti monti le basse valli e spiagge et, in effetto, ciò che ne l'universo per essentia, pressentia, o imaginatione, esso l'ha prima nella mente e poi nelle mani."

<sup>51</sup> Martin Kemp, "Leonardo and the Idea of Naturalism: Leonardo's Hypernaturalism," in Bayer, 72: "Quello non sia universale che non ama equalmente tutte le cose che si contengono nella pittura; come se uno non li piace li paesi, esso stima quelli essere cosa di breve e semplice investigazione, come disse il nostro Boticella, che tale studio era vano, perché col solo gittare d'una spugna piena di diversi colori in un muro, esso lasciava in esso muro una macchia, dove si vedeva un bel paese...E questo tal pittore fece tristissimi paesi." The original Italian is quoted in 73, n.27.

that they surpass the rest of humanity in intellect and spirit, daring as they do to imitate with their art the things which God has created, and to put the latter before us in such a way that they appear real.”<sup>52</sup> Gian Paolo Lomazzo would further connect landscape and universality in his art treatise (1584) by officially proclaiming Titian as the first modern landscape painter. This was partially due to his ability to paint every unpaintable thing, such as thunder, lightning, and rain, as Pliny claimed of Apelles: “The first among the ancients to express in landscape painting lightning, thunderbolts, seas, and thunder was Apelles, and among the modern Italians it was Titian, who in landscape expressed everything possible to be represented with that art.”<sup>53</sup> Thus Lomazzo considered Titian’s depiction of weather to be a defining skill.

#### 5.4 DOSSO AS LANDSCAPIST

It would be useful to pause and consider Dosso’s reputation as a landscape painter at this point. Whereas Lomazzo proclaimed Titian to have mastered every aspect of landscape painting possible, he confined the Dossi brothers’ abilities to the realistic simulation of “receding woods illuminated from within by rays of sunlight” (“il duo Dossi nello sfuggimento di boschi con raggi del Sole che per entro lampeggino”).<sup>54</sup> Dosso almost certainly learned such techniques during his numerous visits to Venice, Dolce even contending that Dosso “remained here in Venice for a time to learn to paint with Titian.”<sup>55</sup> He is first recorded in Venice in 1513 to buy pigments, and

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<sup>52</sup> Roskill, 112: “Meritamente furono sempre stimati i Pittori: perche e’ pare, che essi d’ingegno e di animo avanzino gli altri huomini: poi che le cose, che Dio fatte ha, ardiscono con l’arte loro d’imitare, e le ci appresentano in modo, che paion vere.”

<sup>53</sup> Lomazzo, 1584, 474: “Il primo che frà gl’antichi esprimesse nel far paesi i folgori, i baleni, i mari, & i tuoni, fù Apelle, e frà i moderni Italiani è stato Titiano, che ne i paesi hà espresso tutto quello che con tal arte è possibile à rappresentarsi.”

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Dolce reports that Battista went to Rome to study with Raphael, while Dosso had gone to Venice to train with Titian; Roskill, 92: “i due Dossi Ferraresi: de’ quali l’uno stette qui a Vinegia alcun tempo per imparare a dipinger con Titiano: e l’altro in Roma con Raffaello.”

from 1516-19 is documented as visiting the city at least once a year to purchase art materials for commissions for Alfonso d'Este.<sup>56</sup> Dosso's observation of Titian's landscape style was furthered during the Venetian artist's several visits to Ferrara from 1516-29 to complete or deliver pictures for Alfonso's famed *Camerini d'Alabastro*, containing marble reliefs and a series of paintings on pagan subjects. The two seem to have developed a friendship beyond their professional duties, since they traveled together to Mantua in 1519 to examine the art collection of Alfonso's sister Isabella d'Este.

Testimony of Dosso's landscape pictures is given by Alfonso's court historian and biographer, Paolo Giovio, in his biography of Raphael composed around 1527. Giovio commends Dosso for what he labels as his "*parerga*," or rather, the details supplemental to the central pictorial composition. More specifically, Giovio defines these as the delightful features of the landscape affording a pleasurable experience for the viewer:

The elegant talent of Dosso of Ferrara is proven in his proper works, but most of all in those that are called *parerga*. For pursuing with pleasurable labor the delightful diversions of painting, he used to depict jagged rocks, green groves, the firm banks of traversing rivers, the flourishing work of the countryside, the joyful and fervid toil of peasants, and also the distant prospects of land and sea, fleets, fowling, hunting, and all those sorts of things so agreeable to the eyes in an extravagant and festive manner.<sup>57</sup>

In 1522, Giovio visited Ferrara on a diplomatic mission and was probably shown Dosso's work-in-progress for Alfonso's *Via Coperta* (his covered walkway outfitted as picture galleries) upon which his above opinions were formulated. By this point Dosso had been paid for some of the sixteen "Quadri de Paesi" painted for Alfonso's bedrooms in the ducal apartments—none of

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<sup>56</sup> For these documents, see Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 281-82.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Wood, 55. The original Latin is provided in Paolo Giovio, *Pavli Iovii Opera. Gli elogi degli uomini illustri (letterati-artisti-uomini d'arme)*, ed. Renzo Merzaggi (Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1972), VIII, 232: "Doxi autem Ferrariensis urbanum probatur ingenium cum justis operibus, tum maxime in illis, quae parerga vocantur. Amoena namque picturae diverticula voluptuario labore consecratus, praeruptas cautes, virentia nemora, opacas perfluentium ripas, florentes rei rusticae apparatus, agricolarum laetos fervidosque labores, praeterea longissimos terrarum marisque prospectus, classes, aucupia, venationes, et cuncta id genus spectatu oculis jucunda, luxurianti ac festiva manu exprimere consuevit."

which have been securely identified.<sup>58</sup> Following Giovio, Vasari identified Dosso as “the best landscape painter working in Lombardy”—mistaking the region of his principal activity—“after the German manner of painting became known in Italy.”<sup>59</sup> This reputation led modern scholars to identify Dosso as the artist responsible for the first repainting of the landscape of Giovanni Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods* (1514), commissioned for Alfonso’s *camerino*.<sup>60</sup> A second round of adjustments were subsequently made by Titian resulting in the version known to us today (fig.5.7).<sup>61</sup> On one hand, the landscape’s prominence in the Wavel canvas may simply showcase a mode in which Dosso clearly excelled and was called upon to exercise at court. On the other hand, his pairing of the landscape with the painting Jupiter, in a picture so self-consciously about the art of painting, strongly suggests an engagement with the principles of universality outlined above.

Dosso’s imaginative landscape in the *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* remains relatively ignored by critics who place much more emphasis on the significance of the figure group. For example, Humfrey commented that “the landscape is reduced to a distant backdrop...Perhaps the only discernible novelty is the particular effect of placing bright yellow dabs of foliage against a

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<sup>58</sup> Colby, 210, observes that a 1598 inventory lists 16 “Quadri de Paesi” installed in a frieze here; in 1608, when they were transferred to Modena, they were attributed to the “mano de’ Dossi.”

<sup>59</sup> Vasari, IV, 420: “Ebbe in Lombardia nome il Dosso di far meglio i paesi che alcun altro che di quella pratica operasse, o in muro o a olio o a guazzo, massimamente da poi che si è veduta la maniera tedesca.”

<sup>60</sup> Dosso’s intervention was first proposed by John Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara: A Study of Styles and Taste* (London: Phaidon, 1956), 48-51. Further technical studies of the painting subsequently conducted by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and published in 1990 largely corroborated the theory that Dosso repainted the *Feast*’s landscape soon after its completion in 1514. For a conjectural reconstruction, see David Bull and Joyce Plesters, *The Feast of the Gods. Conservation, Examination, and Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1990), Studies in the History of Art, vol. 40, 31-32, 38; and David Bull, “The *Feast of the Gods*. Conservation and Investigation,” in *Titian 500*, ed., Joseph Manca (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1994), Studies in the History of Art, vol.45, 367-73.

<sup>61</sup> That another artist adjusted Bellini’s original composition had been recognized since Vasari. In his life of Bellini, Vasari maintained that the *Feast of the Gods* was a “work not having been able to be completely finished, because of [Bellini’s] old age, and was dispatched to Titian, being more excellent than all others, so that it could be finished” (Vasari, VI, 158). Yet neither Vasari nor any other sixteenth-century source mentions the participation of Dosso. For further corroboration of Dosso’s intervention and a reconstruction, see David Alan Brown’s catalogue entry on the painting in Biadene and Yakush, 198-99, cat. no.19; and David Alan Brown, “The *Pentimenti* in the *Feast of the Gods*,” in Manca, 295-96.

dark sky.”<sup>62</sup> Yet we know from recent technical examination that the background landscape was more brilliant than in its present state, since much of the original glazing has worn away. The dark glazes in the trees have been lost, exposing the blue substrate.<sup>63</sup> This has resulted in an overly bluish cast in the landscape, evidently masking its once verdant and glowing appearance. In its original state, flashes of sunlight sparkling on still wet trees and breaking through branches would have been more apparent, fulfilling Lomazzo’s observation about this hallmark of the Dossi workshop. A sense of Dosso’s original intentions occurs in the best-preserved section to the left of Jupiter’s canvas, where a variegated pattern of highlight and shadow fall around the copse of trees as it filters through the thick stormy air.

## 5.5 THE *PARAGONE*

The painting of such bravura *parerga* had theoretical implications beyond the concept of universality, since landscape painting played a key role in the *paragone* debate. This term, from the Italian “comparison,” refers specifically to the rivalry of the arts of painting and sculpture. During the sixteenth century polemical comparisons between the visual arts frequently took place in erudite circles and art manuals. Modern critics have at times considered these arguments as superficial, rhetorical formulas. Still, the body of texts dealing with the *paragone* provided an essential forum to discuss artistic procedures in theoretical terms.<sup>64</sup> For Dosso working in a courtly environment of competing painters, sculptors, and poets, this rivalry possessed particular significance.

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<sup>62</sup> Humfrey, in Ciammitti et al., 209. Cf. his similar summation in Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 173: “the reduction of the landscape to a spatially unrelated background.”

<sup>63</sup> These results are discussed in Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 172.

<sup>64</sup> This definition is adapted from Claire Farago, “Paragone,” *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed January 12, 2014  
<<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T065290>>.

The *locus classicus* for the *paragone* occurs in Philostratus the Elder's *Eikones* (in Latin *Imagines*). Philostratus was a Greek rhetorician active during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries CE. In the *proemio*, he lays out a comparison between painting and sculpture, concluding that painting proves more versatile for its ability to capture nature's illusory effects:

There are many forms of plastic art... while painting is imitation by the use of colors; and not only does it employ color, but this second form of art cleverly accomplishes more with this one means than the other form with its many means. For it both reproduces light and shade and also permits the observer to recognize the look, now of the man who is mad, now of the man who is sorrowing or rejoicing...it knows chestnut and red and yellow hair, and the color of garments and of armor, chambers too and houses and groves and mountains and springs and the air that envelops them all.<sup>65</sup>

The *Imagines* were popular at the court of Ferrara in the mid-quattrocento, to judge from the lending records from 1457-60 of the Estense library. These show that several courtiers borrowed "uno philostrato" and "uno Filostrato in vulgare" during this period.<sup>66</sup> Eventually, a Greek edition was published in 1503 by the Aldine press in Venice. Soon afterwards, Isabella d'Este commissioned her own Italian translation through Mario Equicola from Demetrios Moschos.<sup>67</sup> Alfonso consulted a copy that had been borrowed from Isabella in devising the program of his *camerini*, Isabella complaining in 1515 that he had not yet returned it.<sup>68</sup> As is well-known, the *Imagines* provided the inspiration for pictures Isabella would commission for her private

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<sup>65</sup> Philostratus the Elder, *Imagines*, ed. and trans., Arthur Fairbanks (London: Putnam and Sons, 1931), bk.1, proem., 3-5.

<sup>66</sup> Ruth Webb has suggested, however, that these were more likely to have been texts of Boccaccio's epic poem the *Filostrato*, and that a vernacular translation of the *Eikones* would have been rare at this time. The 1468 inventory of Cardinal Bessarion's library in Venice contained a Greek manuscript of the text of *Eikones*, growing to three copies by 1474. We know from letters that manuscripts of the *Eikones* were circulating in Italy as early as the 1430s. From 1447 to 1492, copies are listed in private libraries in Florence, Rome, Venice, and Padua. The Paduan humanist Pietro da Montagnana, who taught at University of Padua beginning in the 1440s, produced a bilingual Latin and Greek manuscript. During the reign of Pope Nicholas V (1447-55), one copy is listed in the Vatican registers in Rome, which by 1481 had expanded to three copies. The 1492 Medici inventories in Florence list a copy. On this topic, see Ruth Webb, "The Transmission of the *Eikones* of Philostratos and the Development of *Ekphrasis* from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance," Ph.D. Diss, University of London, Warburg Institute, 1992, 144-46, 154.

<sup>67</sup> Webb, 159-60.

<sup>68</sup> Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 34.

chambers, as well as the *camerini* Alfonso planned to outfit with paintings by Titian, Raphael, Dosso, and Michelangelo along themes described in its pages.<sup>69</sup>

Dosso would have known the *Imagines* and his *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* engages on a number of levels with the *paragone*, as it developed in cinquecento art theory. Beyond the picture's numerous allusions to the power of *pittura*, this becomes evident if we closely consider the relationship between the three seated gods in colorful attire and the landscape backdrop. Dosso has manipulated the foreground light source to throw the figures into sharp relief; their bodies, especially Mercury's, are spot-lit and carefully modeled with subtle gradations of chiaroscuro to create hard stony outlines, an effect enhanced by the dark landscape. Klauner insightfully linked the arrangement of figures seated one behind another to sculptural reliefs on antique Roman sarcophagi.<sup>70</sup> Fiorenza extended this logic and ingeniously observed how they evoke the marble relief sculptures Antonio Lombardo made for Alfonso's *camerini* in the Castello Estense. Lombardo's sculptures of *Mars* (c.1515-20) and *The Forge of Vulcan* (1508-1512) clearly provided inspiration for Dosso's depiction of Mercury (figs.5.8, 5.9).<sup>71</sup> This is evident in the former, where the poses of crossed legs, backward glance, and *contrapposto* mirror Dosso's god. Dosso replicates the torsion of Mars' torso causing his abdominal muscles to bulge, as well as the god's mantle fluttering in the wind. Rather than overshadowing the subtle luminary effects of the landscape, the sculptural quality of the figures creates a pointed dialogue between the gods and their setting.

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<sup>69</sup> Stephen J. Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 208-11, 253.

<sup>70</sup> Klauner, 1964, 140.

<sup>71</sup> Fiorenza, 26. Some scholars attribute the former work to sculptors in Antonio's circle, such as his son and collaborator, Aurelio, or the sculptor Giammaria Mosca. See Alison Luchs, *Tullio Lombardo and Venetian High Renaissance Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 120, cat. no.10.

Dosso's intention to engage with the *paragone*, unexplored by Fiorenza or any other scholar, helps explain his emphasis on the landscape, which stood as essential evidence arguing in favor of the painter's superiority over the sculptor.<sup>72</sup> A key clue to Dosso's inclination is contained in the dialogue itself. It is surely no coincidence that in Alberti's dialogue, Virtue was strolling in the Elysian Fields with not only several ancient philosophers but also the sculptor Polykleitos, the sculptor and painter Phidias, and the sculptor Praxiteles before being accosted by Fortune.<sup>73</sup> Alberti does not say, but possibly the presence of artists and orators implied they were debating the relative merits of painting, sculpture, and rhetoric in effectively portraying the stories of myth and legend.

It is not surprising that Dosso boldly invoked sculptures from Alfonso's various *camerini* in his picture—it may even have been encouraged. Alfonso carefully curated his *studio dei marmi* and *studio dei pitture* as an intimate dialogue between sculptures and paintings displayed there. Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (c.1520-23) painted for this latter space quotes from the recently excavated ancient Roman *Laocoön*, as do Lombardo's sculptures. In turn, Titian's paintings borrow poses from Lombardo's *Forge of Vulcan*. Other pictures in the *camerini* conspicuously included fine vessels and ceramics in Alfonso's collection.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, we know that Titian's bacchanals commissioned by Alfonso were directly based on Philostratus' *Imagines*, the classical source for the *paragone*.<sup>75</sup> Farinella convincingly argued, moreover, that when conceiving the Wavel canvas Dosso specifically had in mind the *proemio* of the *Imagines*, which claimed that “the invention of painting belongs to the gods—witness on earth all the

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<sup>72</sup> The degree to which Dosso's picture engages with the *paragone* has gone unnoticed by critics, save Chastel, who instead connected it to rivalry between painting and rhetoric.

<sup>73</sup> Whitfield, 18-19, notes that this cast varies across Latin editions from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>74</sup> Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 38-39.

<sup>75</sup> On the contents of these rooms, see Alessandro Ballarin, ed., *Il camerino delle pitture di Alfonso I* (Padua: Bertonecello, 2002), I, especially the essay “I camerini di Alfonso I. Catalogo delle sculture e di dipinti: studio dei marmi, studio delle pitture, 355-401. Ballarin neither locates Dosso's *Jupiter* here, nor discusses it.

designs with which the Seasons paint the meadows, and the phenomena we see in the heavens...wise men invented it, calling it now painting, now plastic art.”<sup>76</sup>

As opposed to masking his copying of Lombardo’s sculptures, Dosso makes plain that his figures depend upon these marble prototypes. They are carefully set side-by-side as if, in Ciammitti’s opinion, “they were playing cards laid down on a table to tell a story” with their identifying instruments laid out in clear view.<sup>77</sup> She believes this makes the figures legible for audiences. Undoubtedly, however, viewers would have recognized Dosso’s sculpted models to an even greater degree than us, and his picture may even have been ordered to be displayed alongside Lombardo’s marbles in Alfonso’s chambers in the *Via Coperta* used as an art gallery.<sup>78</sup> It is clear that the painter wishes to show each figure in full and in contrast from one another: despite the compressed space and close interaction, none of their forms overlaps. With this in mind, a further purpose aimed at the pointed rivalry between media is almost certainly at play.

The best explanation for the figures’ arrangement is that Dosso sought to demonstrate his aptitude in the three major modes of figure painting demanded from sixteenth century painters. Dolce outlines these types in his discussion of figure painting in Raphael’s time. These included: the nude, the foreshortened figure, and the draped figure. In Dolce’s dialogue, Aretino reasons with his Tuscan companion, Fabrini, “that Raphael knew how to do every type of nude well,

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<sup>76</sup> Farinella, 43-44, but does not mention the *paragone*. Farinella, 22, preferred to locate Dosso’s *Jupiter* in the pleasure villa (“delizia”) Alfonso constructed on the tiny island in the Po River affectionately known as the *Boschetto*. He argues that the butterfly theme was an important part of imagery of this villa. Yet this narrow iconographic emphasis overlooks the painting’s message as a whole.

<sup>77</sup> Ciammitti, in Ciammitti, et al., 99.

<sup>78</sup> Unlike Farinella, I believe Dosso’s picture was displayed in Alfonso’s *camerini* in the *Via Coperta*. The mythological cycle of pictures there were directly taken from the *Imagines*; on the inspiration of Philostratus for the decorative program, see Ballarin, I, 119-20. Dosso surely meant to initiate a dialogue with Lombardo’s sculptures we know were displayed in adjoining chambers.

whereas Michelangelo achieves excellent results with only one type”—i.e. the nude.<sup>79</sup> The first type, as Fabrini insists, is the classicizing nude: “I believe that it should be derived (as you have said) from the life and from statues of ancients.”<sup>80</sup> Aretino counters that beyond this, “The great Raphael also knew how to show the figures in foreshortening when he wanted this, and could do it to perfection.” The “clothed figure” (l’uomo vestito) is the third and final type put forth. However, Fabrini interjects: “Say no more on this subject; for I know Raphael’s draperies come in for higher praise than those of Michelangelo, the reason perhaps being that Raphael attended to the clothing of figures more intensively, and Michelangelo to the execution of nudes.”<sup>81</sup>

The figure types Dolce outlines correspond perfectly to Dosso’s cast: Jupiter (draped figure), Mercury (classicizing nude), and the maiden (foreshortened figure) whose limbs, particularly her right arm, are shown in sharply foreshortened perspective. Dolce was not the only theorist to outline these figure types. Pino makes a similar argument in regard to “*compositione*,” which he identifies as one of the four principles of painting: “it imitates foreshortenings well, the noblest portion of our art; it simulates drapery well, without confusing the folds, and by always suggesting the nude underneath it gives great relief to the whole, and this is the spirit of painting.”<sup>82</sup>

Dosso’s exposition of these figure paradigms has not been mentioned by critics.<sup>83</sup> Although not published until 1557, Dolce’s theory about figure painting summarizes earlier beliefs that would have influenced Dosso. It may be that Dosso learned such techniques directly

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<sup>79</sup> Roskill, 174.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 175. As we have seen, Dosso may fulfill this by copying Lombardo’s sculptures, themselves modeled after the antique.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>82</sup> Pino, 15v: “...contrafà ben gli scurci, parte piu nobile nell’arte nostra, figne ben li drappi senza confusione di pieghe, sempre accennando il nudo sotto dà gran rilievo al tutto, & quest’ è lo spirito della pittura.”

<sup>83</sup> Andrea Bayer has, however, found echoes of Jupiter’s in Raphael’s fresco of this god in the spandrel of the Loggia di Psiche (1518) at the Villa Farnesina in Rome: Andrea Bayer, “Dosso Dossi and the Role of Prints in North Italy,” in Ciammitti et al., 229.

from Raphael, for a letter of 1520 shows them to be personal acquaintances. He could equally have learned them from his brother Battista Dosso, who is recorded in Raphael's workshop in 1520, though had returned to Ferrara after the master's death in August of that year. Scholars believe Dosso himself possibly visited Rome some time before 1512 when he may have painted the landscape of Raphael's *Madonna of Foligno* (c.1511-12); its fugitive effects of mist, a comet, and rainbow are indeed characteristic of the Dosso's manner, as displayed in the Krakow picture (fig.5.10).<sup>84</sup>

In any event, we know from x-radiographs of the *Jupiter* canvas that Dosso tirelessly refined the poses, outlines, gestures, and finer details of the figures. For example, the maiden's skirts were once much shorter and bared her legs, while the musculature of Mercury's torso went through many subtle revisions.<sup>85</sup> These adjustments may stem from Dosso's care in precisely copying Lombardo's marbles. They also indicate his struggle to master the human form, showing simultaneously the three ideal types of figures in a way sculpture could not.

Still, which visual aspects appealed to sophisticated viewers in 1520s Ferrara was not always the same. Giovio took more delight in the pleasing, seemingly improvisational details of landscape painting than the array of figures, even though the latter presumably required more studied *disegno*:

It pleases me much, these pleasant paths with which we see the discourse of our argument, not so differently than in a painted picture, where one praises not the figures rendered with elegance in conformity with the criteria of the painter, as much as the details [*parerga*] in the background rendered always smaller in succession according to the laws of perspectival views, in which there are hunts, woods, springs, shepherd's huts and figures composed of moving clouds, that are painted with unrehearsed richness of ornament by a hand expert in detaining the eye of the spectator in pleasant dissimulation.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Humfrey and Lucco, "Dosso Dossi in 1513," 27-28; Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 61-62.

<sup>85</sup> The x-rays, originally made at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, are reproduced in Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 174.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Colby, 219, n.77.

Giovio's comment is from the *Dialogus de viris et foeminis aetate nostra florentibus* (composed 1527) and occurs in a passage on rhetorical improvisation. It is at odds with Dolce's prioritization of figure painting and complicates our modern inclination to focus on the figures alone in Dosso's *Jupiter*. Similar to Giovio, Lomazzo maintains that the particularly elusive quality of landscape made its representation difficult and that, unlike figure painting which is able to be taught, landscape painting was a divine gift afforded to few painters.<sup>87</sup>

Over the course of the sixteenth century a number of arguments developed to support painting's superiority to sculpture. It trumped sculpture, as Baldassare Castiglione would determine, since it more realistically counterfeited in full color all of Nature's creation:

Parvi poi che di poco momento sia la imitazione dei colori naturali in contrafar le carni, i panni, e tutte l'altre cose colorate? Questo far non pò già il marmorario, né meno esprimer la graziosa vista degli occhi neri e azzurri, col splendor di que' raggi amorosi. Non pò mostrare il color de capegli flavi, no' l splendor dell'arme, non una oscura notte, non una tempesta di mare, non que lampi, & saette, non lo incendio d'una città, no' lo nascere dell'aurora di color di rose con que raggi d'oro e di porpora; non pò in somma mostrare cielo, mare, terra, monti, selve, prati, giardini, fiumi, città né case; il che tutto fa il pittore.<sup>88</sup>

This passage from *Il libro del cortegiano* was not published until 1528, though Castiglione's fictional dialogue is set at the court of Urbino in 1507, the author composing his text shortly thereafter. It is thus suggestive of the erudite discussion of the visual arts characteristic at northern Italian courts such as Ferrara.

Clearly the concept of universality is central to the *paragone* and Castiglione underscores sculptors' inability to paint dark night, tempests at sea, lightning, and thunderbolts—all of which Dosso includes in the Krakow picture.<sup>89</sup> This issue was examined at length in the *Due lezioni*

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<sup>87</sup> Lomazzo, 1584, 473 (bk.VI, 61): "Per certo difficilissima opra è il rappresentare i paesi con l'artificio che si gli ricerca, per il vedere & sfuggimenti suoi; la quale è una gratia particolare data à i pittori...Et à ciò bene esprimere bisogna havere una gratia particolare & un dono divino, perche per principale che sia uno, nel fare le figure, non può acquistare questa arte se non hà gratia naturale di dimostrargli, come è auvenuto al maggior pittore che sia stato frà moderni & a molti eccellenti che sono restati esclusi."

<sup>88</sup> Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano* (Venice, 1528), unnumbered.

<sup>89</sup> Leonardo makes a similar argument, see Farago, 265-67.

(1549) written by the Florentine humanist and theorist Benedetto Varchi. Although ultimately ruling in favor of sculpture, Varchi summarizes the counterarguments advocated up to that point for the superiority of painting. Citing the example of Apelles, Varchi noted that chief among them was the painter's claim to universality and the representation of "those things that cannot be painted, that is thunder, flashes of lightning, and thunderbolts; and moreover fires, special lighting, air, smoke, breath, clouds, reflections...and other things that sculptors cannot make."<sup>90</sup> Varchi's reporting of this stance derived from a questionnaire he solicited from prominent Florentine artists. In this case he has adopted the arguments from Vasari's response letter. Unsurprisingly, Vasari had sided with painting and argued that coloring, abetted by judicious *disegno*, was the key to capturing expressive qualities in art.<sup>91</sup>

In reality, sculpture occupied a higher status than painting in the visual arts during this period, as Varchi reminds his readers. His rebuttal in the treatise to advocates of *pittura* is three-fold: that sculpture was more revered by ancient Greeks and Romans; that it is more eternal than painting; and that painting relies upon optical deceit, such as pleasing but intellectually inferior tricks of coloring, making it therefore less noble.<sup>92</sup> In Venice, Anton Francesco Doni published his *Disegno* (1549) the same year as Varchi's text in part as a defense of sculpture, and as a response to Pino's treatise on painting from the previous year. In Doni's view, the praise

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<sup>90</sup> Benedetto Varchi, *Due lezioni di M. Benedetto Varchi* (Florence, 1549), 93: "Argomentano ancora, la pittura essere motlo piu universal, cioè potere imitare la Natura in tutte le cose, percioche oltre il potere contraffare tutti gl'animali, & tutte l'altre cose, che si possono toccare, fanno anchora tutte queel, che si possono vedere, alle quali non aggiugne la Scultura, onde Plinio diceva d'Apelle, ch'egli aveva dipinte quelle cose che non si potevano dipingere, cioè i tuoni, baleni e saette. Fanno ancora fuochi, lumi, aria, fumi, fiati, nugoli, riverberi...et altre cose, che non possono fare gli scultori."

<sup>91</sup> Vasari's letter was published along with those of Varchi's other respondents as an appendix to the *Due lezioni*, 123: "...in muri e tavole, di colore e disegno, ci fa vedere gli spiriti e sensi inelle figure e le vivezze di quelle, oltre contraffà perfettamente i fatti, i fiumi, i venti, le tempeste, le piogge, i nuvoli, le grandini, le nevi, i ghiacci, i baleni, i lampi, l'oscura notte, i sereni, il lucer della luna, il lampeggiar delle stelle, il chiaro giorno, il sole e lo splendor di quello...Dove qui lo scultuore duro sasso si pelo sopra pelo non può formare." On Varchi, see Leatrice Mendelsohn, *Paragoni: Benedetto Varchi's Due Lezioni and Cinquecento Art Theory* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982).

<sup>92</sup> Varchi, 97-99.

conferred upon landscape painting was an insufficient justification for the merits of *pittura*. Like Varchi, he believed landscape was based on deception (“*ingannare*”) and visual pleasure rather than the intellectual and tactile delight to be had from sculpture.

The *Disegno* takes the form of a dialogue between four interlocutors—Art, Nature, the sculptor Silvio Corsini, and Pino as the champion of *pittura*. In discussing the *paragone*, Art echoes the opinion of the sculptor that a painter’s imitation of celestial things is not bound by his materials as is the case in sculpture, and thus his smearings on canvas and walls are nothing but clever lies. Pino counters this with the now familiar argument that painting ephemeral natural phenomena is difficult and miraculous.<sup>93</sup> According to him, sculpture cannot show lustrous lighting effects, storms, or beautiful landscapes.<sup>94</sup> Silvio counters that more delight is to be had in an object (such as a fountain) of the proper material than an infinite number of paintings only imitating such things, the material thing being much preferred over a painted substitute.<sup>95</sup>

Turning back to Dosso’s picture with this mind, we can see that justifications for painting versus sculpture were hotly disputed. In the *Jupiter Paintintg Butterflies* there is a clear attempt to reproduce with the nighttime storm-scape not only all that sculpture cannot achieve, but also the sensuous qualities of Lombardo’s marble reliefs. Dosso’s struggle to simulate all that sculpture lacks, as well as the tactility and texture of marble itself, anticipates the objections raised by Varchi and Doni. Unlike the *pittore* Jupiter’s warm-toned skin, Dosso gives a pale cast to the flesh of the maiden and Mercury. Their skin simulates the cool polish of marble the figures both derive from and compete with. In fact, Dosso used diverging preparations of pigment under

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<sup>93</sup> Doni, 1549 12r: “Voi non mi avazerete gia, (che è cosa difficilissima) nel dipingere un mare con le tempestose onde, & con le sue rive, & porti & variate sorti di navili, che dentro vi surgono; & parte di essi con una horribil tempesta si profundino; & parte dalla furia del vento ne sien portati a terra che certo pare opera maraviogliosa.”

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 12v: “La scoltura non aggiugne gia, a mostrare i lustri, & gl'ardori de fuochi, ne i vampi, o i vapori: & questi son tanto facili, che in ciascuna arte non si stimano. Produce anchora il pittore, lontani & bellissimi paesi con tante varietà di colorate forme di fiori, & altre herbe, & frutti, fiumi & fontane dipinte con mirabil arte.”

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 12v: “...piu eccellenza tiene una sola fonte fatta in propria forma con alcuno ornamento di materia, che infinite dipinte non sono.” Silvio gives the example of the “palazzi delle Vigne de prelati” in Rome.

the figure of Jupiter than for Mercury and the maiden, likely to achieve this contrast in flesh tone.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, upon close inspection we see that Dosso delineates thick veins in Mercury's upraised forearm, indicative of careful anatomical study, but also mimicking the striated veining naturally found in marble. Sculptors typically eschewed blocks of stone with such impurities in favor of the cleanest white marble possible. But here Dosso wishes to convince us of the skin's closeness to marble, as well as his power to counterfeit its textural, mottled quality.<sup>97</sup> He seeks to surpass rival sculptors working for Alfonso by embellishing Mercury with details only possible in painting: the feathered wings, rainbow-colored headgear, and mantle stirred by gusty winds. That Dosso would choose Lombardo's marbles to initiate a rivalry makes sense considering Lombardo once sculpted figures painted by Apelles, namely the Venus Anadyomene.<sup>98</sup>

## 5.6 COLORE AND LANDSCAPE PAINTING

One facet of the *paragone* alluded to so far but not discussed in-depth is the technique of effective coloring, an issue Dosso refers to in several ways. Landscape painting and color were closely linked in Renaissance art theory as two vital aspects absent from sculpture, each mutually enhancing the other. Pino maintained that one tenet of good "*colorire*" was "imitating well fire (done with difficulty), distinguishing the water from the air."<sup>99</sup> Dolce advised that the principal challenge of proper coloring lay in imitating the softness and shades of flesh, as well as shiny fabrics. Arguably, Dosso achieves this with Mercury's nude body and the figures' vibrant

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<sup>96</sup> A dark black-brown preparation underlies Mercury and the female figure, while under Jupiter's orange cloak is a white lead preparation; see Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 174.

<sup>97</sup> The simulation of marble is rather evident, but we know that Alfonso purchased a large quantity of various cast and sculpted statues in 1517 to display in his *camerini*, including small bronzes, medals, coins, and antiquities. See Jadranka Bentini, "From Ercole I to Alfonso I: New Discoveries about the *Camerini* in the Castello Estense of Ferrara," in Ciammitti, et al., 362.

<sup>98</sup> Luchs, 128-31, cat. no. 12.

<sup>99</sup> Pino, 17r: "...imitar ben il fuoco (il che tengo per difficile), distinguer l'acque dell'aere..."

draperies done in rich vermilion, gold, ruby, and chartreuse. He also predicts Dolce's recommendation that a good colorist should "know how to simulate the darkness of night, brightness of day; lightning, fires, gleamings, water, earth, rocks, grass, trees, leaves, flowers...all as if alive."<sup>100</sup> In the same section on *colore*, Dolce goes on to praise Raphael, the exemplar of universal painting, since he knew how to represent every sort of object through marvelous coloring better so than Michelangelo, which in the end made Raphael the superior painter.<sup>101</sup>

Dolce's championing of *colore* and denigration of Michelangelo stems from the author's pro-Venetian bias. It further relates to the polemic of his treatise meant to privilege the painter's *ingenium* over that of the sculptor—and the primacy of Venetian *colore* over Tuscan *disegno*. This was essentially a debate over whether the value of painting lay in the idea (*concetto*) originating in the artist's mind (i.e. *invenzione*), which he explored through drawings made prior to the painting's execution, or in the more lifelike imitation of nature, achieved through color and the process of painting itself.<sup>102</sup> Dolce ultimately lauds Titian, Dosso's close partner, as the consummate Venetian painter and, along with Raphael, as the supreme colorist of his time.

Lomazzo explicitly connected Titian's coloring to his landscape painting, since such subjects drew upon facility in *colorito*: "Titian colored with the most pleasing manner mountains, planes, trees, forests, shadows, lightings, the floodings of seas and rivers,

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<sup>100</sup> Roskill, 154: "Cosi la principal difficultà del colorito è posta nella imitation delle carni, e consiste nella varietà delle tinte, e nella morbidezza. Bisogna dipoi sapere imitare il color de' panni, la seta, l'oro, & ogni qualità cosi beni...saper fingere il lustro delle armi, il fosco della notte, la chiarezza del giorno; lampi, fuochi, lumi, acqua, terra, sassi, herbe, arbori, frondi, fiori, frutti, edifici, casamenti, animali, e si fatte cose tanto a pieno, che elle habbiano tutte del vivo, e non satino mai gliocchi di chi le mira."

<sup>101</sup> Roskill, 178: "Superò nel colorito il gratiosissimo Rafaello tutti quelli, che dipinsero inanzi a lui, si a olio, come a fresco, & a fresco molto piu...Ne parlerò altrimenti del colorito di Michel'Angolo: perche ogni un sa, che egli in cio ha posto poca cura, e voi mi cedete. Ma Rafaello ha saputo col mezzo de i colori contrafar mirabilmente qualunque cosa, e carni, e panni, e paesi, e tutto cio che puo venire inanzi al Pittore."

<sup>102</sup> Claire Pace, "Disegno e colore," *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online* (Oxford University Press, accessed January 18, 2014) <<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T022879>>. For an overview, see Thomas Puttfarcken, "The Dispute about 'Disegno' and 'Colorito' in Venice: Paolo Pino, Lodovico Dolce and Titian," in *Kunst und Kunsttheorie 1400–1900*, ed., Peter Ganz, et al., *Wolfenbütteler Forschungen* 48 (Wiesbaden: Harrosowitz, 1991), 45–99.

earthquakes, lightning bolts, animals, and all the rest belonging to landscapes.”<sup>103</sup> It is in Lomazzo’s chapter “Della virtù del colorire” where he presents a *paragone* list of all the things of God’s creation artists should be able to paint.<sup>104</sup> Even the Tuscan Vasari was forced to concede in the *Lives* that on account of his coloring Raphael excelled Michelangelo as a universal painter. Dolce’s account forms the basis of Vasari’s *paragone* list of features Raphael painted demonstrating his superiority as a colorist, including weather, landscapes, nudes, and odd lighting effects. This concession is uncharacteristic of Vasari who never missed an opportunity to heroize Michelangelo. Thus his admission of the sculptor’s weakness in the realm of *colore*—that “art does not consist in the depiction of nude bodies alone”—perhaps speaks to his fundamental belief in the power of *pittura*, already expressed in his letter to Varchi.<sup>105</sup> Even by 1546 when Vasari had responded to Varchi’s art survey, the catalogue of landscape motifs exemplifying *invenzione* in coloring had become a *topos* in the defense of painting.

Dosso’s mythological picture precedes the theoretical debates circulating in Venice that would later be codified in art treatises by mid-century. But it was contact with Venice that may have led the Ferrarese artist to paint a visual counterpart to the *paragone*. For example,

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<sup>103</sup> Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea nel tempio della pittura* (Milan, 1590), 50: “Et spetialmente esso Titiano hà colorito con vaghissima maniera i monti, i piani, gli arbori, i boschi, le ombre, le luci, & le inondationi del mare, e di i fiumi, i terremoti, i sassi, gli animali, & tutto il resto che appartiene à i Paesi.”

<sup>104</sup> Lomazzo, 1584, 188 (bk.III, i): “E trà gli elementi mostra i lucignuoli [lamps], le fiamme, l’acque, i fonti, le nubi, i lampi, i tuoni; & le pietre, & in ciascheduna si contengono quasi tutte le virtù del colorire lequili tacerò in questo loco concludendo solamente questo; che tanta è la virtù del colorire, che non vi è cosa alcuna corporale da Dio create che per ella non si posta rappresentare come se versa fosse.”

<sup>105</sup> Vasari, IV, 206: “...si fece eccellente in tutte le parti che in uno ottimo dipintore sono richieste. Ma conoscendo nondimeno che non poteva in questa parte arrivare alla perfezione di Michelagnolo, come uomo grandissimo giudizio considerò che la pittura non consiste solamente in fare uomini nude, ma che ell’ha il campo largo, e che fra i perfetti dipintori si possono anco coloro annoverare che esprimere bene e con facilità l’invenzioni delle storie et i loro capricci con bel giudizio...A questo, si come bene andò pensando Raffaello, s’aggiugne lo arric[c]hirle con la varietà e stravaganza delle prospettive, de’ casamenti e de’ paesi, il leggiardo modo di vestire le figure...Considerò anco quanto importi la fuga de’ cavalli nelle battaglie, la fierezza de’ soldati, il saper fare tutte le sorti d’animali, e sopra tutto il far in modo nei ritratti simigliar gl’uomini che paino vivi e si conoschino per che eglino sono fatti; et altre cose infinite, come sono abbigliamenti di panni, calzari, celate, armadure, acconciature di femmine, capegli, barbe, vasi, alberi, grotte, sassi, fuochi, arie torbide e serene, nuvoli, piogge, saette, sereni, notte, lumi di luna, splendori di sole, et infinite altre cose che seco portano ognora i bisogni dell’arte della pittura.”

Giorgione had endeavored to paint a picture explicitly engaged with the *paragone*. Both Pino and Vasari report that he painted a picture of a man whose image was reflected in several mirrored surfaces, so as to offer a complete view in the round the figure. In this way, and “to the perpetual confusion of sculptors,” he “wished to show that a painter could make an entire figure seen in just one glance, which was something a sculpture could not do.”<sup>106</sup> Vasari includes the detail that Giorgione had debated the finer points of his picture with several sculptors gathered along the Rialto in Venice.<sup>107</sup> Giorgione’s painting may have been known to Dosso, and Peter Humfrey has suggested that Dosso’s figure of St. George in the *Costabili Polyptych* may refer to this famous lost picture.<sup>108</sup>

Additionally, scholars now believe that Titian’s so-called *La Schiavona* was meant as a similar entry in the theoretical *paragone*. In this portrait, the female subject rests her hand on a marble parapet containing a bust of a woman in profile sculpted in relief, presumably the same figure. Titian displays his ability to simulate marble, flesh, and varying simultaneous views of the same woman.<sup>109</sup> The inclusion of these motifs advocated, as in the Wawel picture, for

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<sup>106</sup> Pino, 27v: “Costui à perpetua confusione de gli scultori dipinse in un quadro un San Georgio armato in piedi nelle istreme sponde d’una fonte limpida, & chiari nella qual tràsverberava tutta la figure in scurzo fino alla cima del capo, poscia havea finto uno specchio appostato à un tronco, nel qual riflettava tutta la figure integra in schena, & un fianco. Vi finse un’altro specchio dall’altra parte, nel qual si vedeva tutto l’altro lato del S. Georgio, volendo sostentare, ch’uno pittore può far vedere integramente una figura à un sguardo solo, che non può così far un scultore...” Pino had the figure as St. George, while Vasari (IV, 46) indicated simply a nude male figure: “...Giorgione--che era d’opinione che in una storia di pittura si mostrasse, senza avere a camminare a torno, ma in una sola occhiata tutte le sorti delle vedute che può fare se non mutando il sito e la veduta, talché non sono una ma più vedute--, propose di più, che da una figura sola di pittura voleva mostrare il dinanzi et il didietro et i due profili dai lati: cosa e’ fece mettere loro il cervello a partito. E la fece in questo modo. Dipinse uno ignudo che voltava le spalle et aveva in terra una fonte d’acqua limpidissima, nella quale fece dentro per riverberazione la parte dinanzi; da un de’ lati era un corsaletto brunito che s’era spogliato, nel quale era il profile manco, perché nel lucido di quell’arme si scorgeva ogni cosa; da l’altre parte era un specchio, che dentro vi era l’altro lato di quello ignudo: cosa di bellissimo ghiribizzo e capriccio, volendo mostrare in effetto che la pittura conduce con più virtù e fatica, e mostra in una vista sola del naturale più che non fa la scultura. La qual opera fu sommamente lodata et ammirata per ingegnosa e bella.”

<sup>107</sup> For further discussion of this episode, see Rona Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002), 61-66.

<sup>108</sup> Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 101, cat. no.6.

<sup>109</sup> However, it has gone relatively unnoticed that a further aspect of the picture, subsequently painted out by the artist, was a view through a round portal on the rear wall of a stormy marine landscape. This painterly vista may

painting as an exemplary branch of art. But it is Dosso's tempestuous landscape in particular framing his sculptural figures that he uses to invoke the *paragone*. Correggio would propose a similar set of contrasts between sculpture, the nude body, and immaterial rainstorm in his stunning *Jupiter and Io* (c.1530) painted for Duke Federico II Gonzaga at the court of Mantua. In Correggio's canvas, the sky-god Jupiter takes the form of a dense raincloud enveloping his lover in a sexual embrace. As with Dosso's mythological picture, Correggio's figure of Io derives from a sculpted model, this time the famous "Ara Grimani," a Hellenistic bas-relief then in a private antiquities collection in Venice.<sup>110</sup> Contemporary viewers would have delighted not only on an intellectual plane by discovering these painters' sources, but also on a purely visual level as they marveled at the translation of sculpture into flesh and the tension between solid and diaphanous forms.

Consequently, it was contact with Titian's circle that inspired Dosso to experiment with atmospheric landscapes. He became fond of painting storms and bizarre lighting effects, such as those found in the *Portrait of a Gentleman* (c.1520), the *Awakening of Venus* (c.1525), the *Della Salle Altarpiece* (1527), and London *Adoration of the Magi* (mid-1530s) (fig.511).<sup>111</sup> The impact of the Venetian improvisational approach to composition is apparent in technical studies of Dosso's paintings. As in Giorgione's *Tempest*, Dosso frequently added or subtracted figures from his composition as he developed it for what seem like purely pictorial reasons. Conservators working on the Wawel picture have commented that, "rethinking was the rule

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have demonstrated to a further degree Titian's ability to paint tricky natural phenomena such as sea, tempest, and air in comparison to sculpture: Cecil Gould, "New Light on Titian's 'Schiavona' Portrait," *Burlington Magazine* 103, 701 (Aug., 1961), 334-40.

<sup>110</sup> David Ekserdjian, *Correggio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 284-87.

<sup>111</sup> On these works, see Felton Gibbons, "An Emblematic Portrait by Dosso," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), 433-36; Alessandro Ballarin, *Dosso Dossi e le favole antiche: Il risveglio di Venere* (Bologna: Rolo Banca, 1999); and Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 9-11.

rather than the exception in Dosso's art."<sup>112</sup> In this way, his method follows Giorgione's lead in working out compositions on the canvas rather than with preparatory drawings.

This painterly approach is reflected in Dosso's preliminary sketch for the *Jupiter* found when the canvas was relined in 1964. It was discovered that the artist had begun the canvas with only a schematic underdrawing of the principal figures, rapidly executed with the tip of a paintbrush. The heavily loaded pigment has seeped through to the underside of the canvas and is now visible on the other side. This rather rudimentary approach to composition is confirmed in x-rays made of the picture, which show that this sketchy underdrawing was relied upon solely as a rough guide.<sup>113</sup> Dosso made many adjustments to the poses and silhouettes of his figures, characteristic of Giorgione's reliance on *colore* in composition. Indeed, Jupiter paints his butterflies directly on the canvas, perhaps mimicking Dosso's own methods.

### 5.7 "COLORE METEOROLOGICO"

Nearly every critic to discuss the *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* has commented upon Dosso's bold coloring, a matter of taste surely refined through his partnership with Titian and time spent in Venice. However, it is unlike Titian's shimmery palette in works like the *Bacchus and Ariadne* (c.1520-23) made for Alfonso's *camerini*. Dosso's saturated but less natural *colorire* depends more on local color and may have evolved as means to differentiate himself from Titian in competing commissions. Dosso's imposing sculpted nudes clad in colorful draperies are contrasted with the more airy coloristic effects of the landscape which, unmentioned in the textual source, demonstrate his powers as a painter. Above all, it is Dosso's insertion of the

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<sup>112</sup> Andrea Rothe and Dawson W. Carr, "The Technique of Dosso Dossi. Poetry with Paint," in Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 53, 55-64.

<sup>113</sup> Humfrey and Lucco, *Court Painter*, 58, 173. Infrared reflectography of Dosso's other paintings reveals that he habitually employed no extensive underdrawings.

rainbow that underscores painting's superiority over sculpture as a thing impossible to recreate in hard stone. Biasini, naming the maiden as Iris, explained the rainbow's inclusion as a device identifying this goddess. However, Iris does not appear in Alberti's dialogue and the rainbow is clearly linked with Jupiter rather than the maiden.

Spashing directly onto his canvas, the rainbow's dull tones correspond to those of the butterfly wings Jupiter is painting. Thus Dosso implies how the god is using colors found in nature's own palette in forming the butterflies. His painting of variegated and iridescent wings is analogous to Dosso's own depiction of the rainbow's prismatic colors. Instructions for painting its tricky optical effects are found as early as 1300 in one medieval craftsmen's handbook, and its depiction became emblematic of the painter's craft.<sup>114</sup> Angelica Kauffman would employ a conceit similar to Dosso's in her *Allegory of Color* (1779) (fig.5.12). In Kauffman's canvas, perhaps a self-portrait, the personification of *colore* raises her arm close to the rainbow as if she were painting it herself, or dipping her paintbrush in it as though it were her palette of pigments.<sup>115</sup>

Further evidence for the rainbow as a hallmark of *colore* in Venetian art is provided by a rare discourse on rainbows published in Venice. Antonio Brucioli's *Dialogi* (1537) contains a series of dialogues on topics in natural philosophy. These occur as conversations amongst leading figures in Venetian society, including humanists, nobles, philosophers, and artists. The interlocutors for dialogue 19, "Dell'arco celeste," are the nobleman Mario Visconti, architect Sebastiano Serlio, and none other than Titian (fig.5.13). This is one of the longest dialogues in

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<sup>114</sup> Mark Clarke, *Mediaeval Painters' Materials and Techniques. The Montpellier Liber diversarum arcium* (London: Archetype Publications, 2011), 127-28, where advice occurs for depicting "towers," "Woody parts of trees," "the earth and mountains," a "rainbow," and "flowers and leaves."

<sup>115</sup> The *Allegory of Color* was one of four allegorical ovals Kauffman painted for the ceiling of the lecture hall of the Royal Academy's new rooms at Somerset House, designed by William Chambers, from 1778-80. These ovals, representing *Color*, *Design*, *Composition* and *Genius*, are now in the vestibule of Burlington House, London, the Royal Academy's home from 1869. See Angela Rosenthal, *Angelica Kauffman: Art and Sensibility* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

the series, drawing upon the best Aristotelian natural philosophy to consider the rainbow's causes, its composition, appearance, and optical marvels. Brucioli undoubtedly selected Titian for this topic due to his renowned expertise as a painter. He was considered the leading colorist and adept at painting unusual atmospheric and lighting conditions such as sunsets, as Aretino and Lomazzo would note. Brucioli informs his readers that Titian makes Nature more beautiful with his art in the proportion and coloring of his figures.<sup>116</sup> Evidently this qualifies him to discuss rainbows.

Indeed, the dialogue is set in Titian's house, presumably his studio, where he unveils a painting of a rainbow to the assembled interlocutors as a means of introduction to their topic.<sup>117</sup> Within the conceit of the dialogue his picture serves as a vital illustration of the principles they will be debating. Titian is made to say that he possesses little understanding of the rainbow from a scientific perspective, knowledge of which it seems will allow him to better his art. The poet John Keats would later allege that Newton destroyed the beauty of the rainbow by demystifying its scientific principles, yet Titian does not express any of that sentiment.<sup>118</sup> Serlio proceeds to instruct Titian how this understanding will lend spirit and direction to the painter. (Why an architect is better informed on rainbows is never explained!) They discuss the spectrum of hues visible in a rainbow; its position in the heavens; its formation from the reflection of solar and stellar rays; its resulting mirror-like but immaterial substance; its composition of aqueous and

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<sup>116</sup> Antonio Brucioli, *Dialogi di Antonio Brucioli di naturale philosophia* (Venice, 1537), III, 32v: "Entriamo qua signori, questa è la casa di Tutiano, quel tanto nominato dipintore, che voi desiderate di vedere, il quale con la arte fa apparere la natura piu bella, & tanto la supera nelle proportioni delle membra, & colori delle figure, quanto la natura supera lui, nel dare a quelle lo spirito, & il senso, & quello col quale ei ragiona è Bastiano architetto, il quale nella architettura tanto a dentro intende, che nessuno del suo secolo si è lasciato andare avanti, sedete, ne interrompiamo il loro ragionamento."

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*: "Tut. Noi da questo Arco celeste, che io ho ritratto in questo quadro, eravamo infino à hieri venuti à trattare di esso, & perche noi fummo impediti, lasciammo il dirne, & hora vi ci eravamo, rimessi, appartenendo esso arco non poco alla prospettiva della quale ha non picciola cognitione qui."

<sup>118</sup> On this topic, see Richard Dawkins, *Unweaving the Rainbow: Science, Delusion, and the Appetite for Wonder* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 38-40.

airy mist; certain atmospheric conditions encouraging the formation of rainbows; and finally, the factors affecting its size and coloration.<sup>119</sup>

In all likelihood this studio-visit was a fiction invented by Brucioli as a pretext for an exposition on natural philosophy. Yet, whether fabricated or not, the dialogue presents a remarkable portrait of Titian and his art that rings true. Titian did host gatherings in which various learned guests convened at his residence in Venice in the late 1530s. On one such occasion, he entertained Aretino, Sansovino, the Latin grammarian Francesco Priscianese, and the playwright Giacomo Nardi for a dinner party. When the weather drove the guests from Titian's courtyard garden, they moved indoors to examine his pictures and drawings, as Priscianese reported.<sup>120</sup> This would have been Titian's house at the Biri Grande in Cannaregio where he resided, when in Venice, from 1531 until his death. Here he stored unfinished paintings and set up his studio as a sort of "casa-laboratorio."<sup>121</sup>

The question remains: why did Dosso fashion such a drab rainbow? Its two shades of yellow shot through with ochre hardly reproduce the full spectrum of colors. It could be that the particular glazing or pigments Dosso employed have deteriorated from their original brilliance, leaving visible only the near monochrome *imprimatura* beneath. Yet other passages in the composition display the full hues of nature, such as the garlands of bright flowers ringing the maiden's arms and head, and Mercury's rainbow-feathered headgear. One suggestive clue lies in Brucioli's dialogue. As Serlio explains to Titian, rainbows were believed to be generated by two

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<sup>119</sup> Brucioli, 32v-35v.

<sup>120</sup> Chambers and Pullan, 180: "On 1 August I was invited to celebrate the kind of Bacchanal which, I know not why, is called *ferrare agosto*, so that for most of the evening I argued about it in a delightful garden belonging to Messer Titiano Vecellio, the excellent Venetian painter (as everyone knows)...Here, before the tables were set out, because the sun despite the shade was still making his heat much felt, we spent the time looking at the lifelike figures in the excellent pictures which fill the house and in discussing the real beauty and charm of the garden, which everyone marveled at with singular pleasure. The house is situated on the far end of Venice by the edge of the sea, and from it one sees the pretty little island of Murano and other lovely places."

<sup>121</sup> Giorgio Tagliaferro, et al., 55.

colors—red and green—rather than the full spectrum of visible hues they produced.<sup>122</sup> It was the mixing of these elemental colors with the sun’s rays and aqueous water that made the “*colore meteorologico*” seen in rainbows.<sup>123</sup> Dosso’s muted two-tone rainbow is not red and green but instead an ochre color perhaps meant to reflect the admixture of these two colors. Whereas Flemish painters represented the rainbow’s full range of visible hues from red to violet, as in Memling’s panel of *St. John on Patmos* (1479, Bruges, Memlingmuseum), central Italian painters before Dosso employed the same limited tones of brownish yellow found in his *Jupiter Painting Butterflies*. For instance, the rainbows in Pintoricchio’s fresco in Siena of the *Departure of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini* (c.1506), and Raphael’s *Madonna of Foligno* (c.1511-12) are limited to green, yellow, and ochre.

With this in mind, Dosso’s muted rainbow may reflect current scientific thought circulating in Italian treatises such as Brucioli’s. It is easy to imagine conversations similar to those Titian’s rainbow portrait spawned taking place amongst *eruditi* of the Ferrarese court assembled in front of Dosso’s Wavel canvas with its vivid meteorological imagery. The *Jupiter* picture therefore may have competed not only with the works of rival poets, painters, and sculptors, but also the resident humanists serving Alfonso versed in the latest natural philosophy.<sup>124</sup> Dosso conveys how his own capability as a colorist outshone both Nature and Jupiter, the two supreme artificers, for the most intense colors occur not in the rainbow but rather in the gods’ robes. These deep greens, oranges, and golds remind us of the painter’s presence and

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<sup>122</sup> Brucioli, 32v: “Bast. Perche in esso arco sono duoi colori, il rosso, & il verde, de quali, il rosso si fa dall’humido infiammato, & significa la natura acqnea nō piu sopravanzare à quella del fuoco, avvegna che essa natura del fuoco habbia nell’arco assai del suo valore. Et il colore verde è causato dalla virtu acquosa in digesta, onde significa anchora, che la natura del fuoco non al tutto prevaglia all’acqua per simile causa...”

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 34v: “Bast. Voi hauete à sapere primieramente, che in duoi modi si fa il colore, ò dalla mistura della prima qualita, il quale appare nel corpo perfettamente misto, ò nella sua superficie, ò dalla mistura della luce, ò dal lume, ò da razzi, con lo opaco acqueo, & questo si dice colore meteorologico...”

<sup>124</sup> For these figures, see Franco Bacchelli, “Science, Cosmology, and Religion in Ferrara, 1520-1550, in Ciammitti, et al., 333-54.

his role as the third “universale” artificer able to recreate the works of both gods and Nature. In Alberti’s words, “The virtues of painting, therefore, are that its masters see their works admired and feel themselves to be almost like the Creator.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Alberti, 1436, II, 19: “La pittura ha dunque queste lode, che quegli, che sono ammaestri in essa, quando veggiono ammirare l’opre loro, allora si conoscono esser molto simili a Dio.”

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

The foregoing chapters demonstrate that landscape assumed an important role in Venetian painting from 1475-1525. It is clear from greater attention to display practices and inventory evidence that landscape painting was a major concern in the visual arts of Venice, even before formal theories were published in the mid-sixteenth century. What constituted “landscape” for fifteenth- and sixteenth-century audiences was broader than our modern definition. It evolved as an integral pictorial component appreciated according to its own aesthetic framework. Artists recognized its two-fold potential to deepen the doctrinal message and delight audiences absorbed from the overall work. For the first time in Italy private collectors hung large easel paintings with detailed outdoor settings in prominent locations within their homes, such as the portego or other semi-public chambers serving as picture galleries. This highly visible role within the home speaks to the significance painted images of the landscape held for Venetians, who understood it as an intellectual as well as pleasurable mode of painting.

This dissertation confirms the cinquecento reputation of Giovanni Bellini, Tiziano Vecellio, Girolamo Savoldo, and Dosso Dossi as gifted landscapists and indeed innovators in this field. Rather than view them as inventors of a genre, however, it is more accurate to say that they developed landscape as an effective storytelling device prior to Pino’s treatise published in 1548, and Lomazzo’s and Sorte’s subsequent texts. Their large format easel paintings made for the collections of wealthy educated patrons were exceptional occasions for landscape. These may not have been representative of most privately commissioned pictures for the domestic interior

that were of more modest dimensions and maintained the conventional dominance of figure over setting. To date, the limitations of archival sources make it nearly impossible to know the contents of Venetian homes prior to 1520.

Venice's international printing industry facilitated the spread of graphic images and books. As the foregoing chapters demonstrate, however, one implication of this dissertation for future studies should be the body of contemporary literature we use to interpret landscape imagery produced in Renaissance Venice. Landscape was inspired by literary projects, but much earlier than has been suspected and according to a range of humanist texts that have received little attention in connection to it. The insistence of scholars to point to pastoral literature as the primary explanation for the emergence of the Venetian landscape painting tradition proves too reductive. In contrast, this dissertation has shown that some criteria for evaluating landscape were in place by the mid-fifteenth century at the Italian courts. Court culture offered an atmosphere where artists were encouraged to experiment with unusually themed paintings. For Venetian artists such as Jacopo Bellini, Ferrara was free from the constraint of guild regulations and conventional tastes of the mercantile class clientele found in his native city.<sup>1</sup>

For these reasons, Venice's contact with Ferrara is quite significant. Ferrara, like Venice, was a hub for the appreciation of Netherlandish art in the mid-quattrocento. The reception of landscape painting in the ekphrastic poems of Guarino and his pupils employed by Leonello d'Este acknowledge its pictorial power at a remarkably early date. Through his father Jacopo, Giovanni Bellini likely became familiar with humanist literary projects in Ferrara. During the 1470-80s when Bellini painted the *St. Francis in the Desert* he belonged to educated humanist circles in the Veneto and counted poets and philosophers amongst his patrons. It is therefore no

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<sup>1</sup> On this topic, see Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist. On the Ancestry of the Modern Artist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

surprise that during this period his work begins to reflect the marvels of ancient landscape painting as described in humanist manuscripts circulating in the 1450-60s. Bellini was often compared to ancient painters such as Apelles and Zeuxis renowned for feats of realism such as sunrises, aerial perspective, and panoramic outdoor views. More emphasis should be placed on the circulation and reception of relevant humanist texts in Venice such as the extensive library of Cardinal Bessarion, which contained the works of Philostratus, Pliny, and Vitruvius.

Furthermore, the literary projects of Giovanni Fontana, Angelo Decembrio, Bartolomeo Fazio, and Giovanni Santi provided not only an impetus justifying landscape as a worthy practice, but also a reliable sense of the aesthetic framework Bellini's contemporaries used to evaluate his paintings. In this regard, the influence of Pliny's encyclopedia and its endorsement of easel painting as a prestigious practice were crucial. Bellini's great innovation for Venetian art lay in detaching landscape from the context of mural painting and transitioning it to portable easel paintings destined for ecclesiastical and domestic buildings. Much remains unknown about the circumstances of the original commission for the Frick *St. Francis*, so the degree to which the patron Giovanni Michiel influenced this choice in format and support certainly merits further investigation. Despite our limited knowledge of its genesis, the *St. Francis* stands as a key precursor to the Venetian *poesie* image-type celebrating artistic elaboration and invention. This does not imply that a full-fledged genre existed for landscape in the last quarter of the quattrocento. Rather, painters such as Bellini were aware of the evolving appreciation of landscape and were driven to experiment with its imagery based on its status in classical antiquity

The example of Bellini's *St. Francis* was soon absorbed by younger painters. We must remember that it came to be installed in Taddeo Contarini's palace with other impressive

landscape pictures based on classical texts. Giorgione's *Three Philosophers* and *Allendale Nativity* adapt its composition of figures before a dark cave in an expansive wilderness. The stature of Bellini's picture meant it was probably installed in Contarini's portego, a location virtually certain for Titian's large canvas of the *Flight into Egypt*, also made for a wealthy patrician. The case of Titian's *Flight* painted around 1507 demonstrates that landscape played a major role in the Venetian domestic interior at a considerably earlier date than has previously been assumed. This is significant since Michiel's *Notizie* document private works only beginning in 1521 and rarely indicate the precise room. The *Flight into Egypt* must have hung in Andrea Loredan's portego, one of the new spaces for large-scale canvases. The shift toward Venetian palace architecture with large porteghi in the early sixteenth century changed the display practices for furnishings such as portable pictures. Titian's picture was among the first *quadri da portego* that evolved to suit this room's social function. This brightly-lit and airy hall with open views on the Grand Canal made it ideal for a picture gallery

The portego also evolved into a room conducive to works of several media with vegetal and floral motifs, such as tapestries, painted textiles, and decorative *spalliere*. Titian's *Flight* evidently served as prototype for the diverse landscape imagery concentrated here by mid-century. Little has come to light about the rest of Loredan's art collection or motivations behind his patronage. The few details we do know about his professional career and planning of his palace allow us to hypothesize about the purpose of Titian's picture. The pastoral landscape emphasizing safe travel and retreat matches the overall scheme of Loredan's residence, which established a peaceful haven from his public affairs, military service, and frequent journeys throughout the terraferma. In this latter sense, Titian's painting reaffirms the traditional escapist function held for pastoral. However, Unglaub's theory pertains as well, since it emphasizes how

pastoral imagery both reminds one of the vicissitudes of warfare even as it alleviates its attendant anxieties.

Venetian audiences were receptive to a wide array of landscape-themed pictures beyond the pleasantries of pastoral, as Savoldo's more grotesque *Temptation of Saint Anthony* makes clear. Working with the example of Bellini and Titian in mind, Savoldo employed landscape as a powerful narrative device. His picture cleverly exploited the vogue for both phantasmagoric Flemish inferno scenes and bucolic countryside views. It remains an indispensable record of similar inferno landscapes by Giorgione and Giovanni Cariani that have sadly vanished. Savoldo's Boschian creatures reproduced in the picture accord with Holberton's theory that Venetian painters intentionally sought to brand their works with bizarre Flemish imagery that would distinguish their works in the marketplace.

Savoldo's distinctive transformation of northern landscape imagery underscores the preference in Venice for religious art with a clear didactic narrative. Rather than aping existing Flemish landscapes, Savoldo strategically altered his Boschian source. It is now virtually certain this was the Bruges triptych owned by Cardinal Grimani. One cannot underestimate the delight contemporary viewers took in Bosch's pictures, which were jealously sought in northern Italy. It is likely that Pino credited Savoldo with surpassing Flemish painters who endeavored to paint similar subjects because the Brescian painter injected clear narrative action into his work. This organizing principle meant to deepen piety was one key difference Venetian artists attended to that differentiated their landscapes from those painted across the Alps by artists in Antwerp, Regensburg, and 's-Hertogenbosch.

Savoldo eventually found success in Venice and established residency there, whereas Dosso was a frequent visitor but remained tied to his court patrons in Ferrara. Nevertheless, the

Venetian concern for landscape and techniques for painting it that Dosso absorbed were put to extraordinary ends in his *Jupiter Painting Butterflies* created for Alfonso I d'Este. This picture reveals how the competitive court culture of Ferrara that had fueled competition between Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini persisted in Dosso's day; he employed landscape painting as an effective mode to distinguish himself and his craft in comparison to rival painters, sculptors, poets, philosophers, and even Nature. The allegorical message of the *Jupiter* hinges upon Dosso's masterful depiction of ephemeral atmospheric phenomena and luminous scenery, which art theorists would advocate as properties unique to painting that made it superior to other media. This anticipates an essential tenet of the *paragone* justifying painting's intellectual and theoretical value. Much earlier, critics had praised Bellini's use of artistic *ingenium* to improve upon nature's creation by imbuing it with artifice and order. The competition between Art and Nature centering upon landscape preoccupied not only authors of classical antiquity, but also Renaissance writers and artists who recovered its role in the arts from 1475-1525.

Thus the case studies in this dissertation begin and end in Ferrara. One noteworthy theme recurring throughout therefore is Venetian painters' continual artistic exchange not only with northern art, which art historians have long recognized, but also the progressive court culture in Ferrara sustained by Estense rulers. Jacopo Bellini worked for Leonell d'Este, while Giovanni, Titian, and Dosso were hired by Alfonso I. Coincidentally, all of the latter artists indirectly collaborated on one picture, the celebrated *Feast of the Gods*, largely finished by Giovanni but the landscape of which was subsequently repainted by Dosso then Titian. In essence, the importance of this picture cannot be overestimated since it embodies the contributions of three generations of landscape pioneers.

Savoldo is not known to have worked in Ferrara that we know of, though the earliest known owner of his *St. Anthony* in the Timken may have been Lucrezia d'Este. Such exotic landscape imagery was appreciated in Mantua, where Isabella d'Este's son Federico II Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, also a patron of Titian, acquired similar fire pictures. In May 1535, the Ferrarese stone engraver and medalist Matteo del Nassaro, having recently returned from Flanders, offered to Federico 300 Flemish paintings described as "beautiful landscapes on panel and linen." Federico bought 120 of them, among which were represented "nothing but landscapes on fire which seem to burn one's hands if one goes near to touch them."<sup>2</sup> References to these pictures in the various Gonzaga inventories are tantalizingly enigmatic. It is feasible that they were acquired as "authentic" pendants to Savoldo's Venetian-style improvisation of the Flemish specialty of fiery hell-scapes, yet further research is certainly needed to substantiate this possibility.

One limitation of this study is its attention to private images. The large-format easel pictures under discussion did exert an immediate impact outside of collecting circles, as can be seen in changes in the composition of public altarpieces. Therefore a promising future direction would be to expand the present focus to examine the implications of landscape's increasing role in public religious art through the pioneering works of Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, and their peers. There were a number of artists working in Venice such as Cima da Conegliano, Marco Basaiti, and Giovanni Cariani, not identified as landscape painters in their own time but who employed landscape as a major narrative component in pictures for churches during the first decades of the

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<sup>2</sup> Gibson, 38. Some of the paintings were later acquired by Isabella d'Este. By 1538, twenty-two of them had been reinstalled by Giulio Romano in Isabella's apartment in the Corte Vecchia, including a *Fall of Troy*, another popular fire landscape subject; see Clifford M. Brown, "Pictures in the Ducal Palace in Mantua, among Them a Collection of 'Quadri de Fiandra,'" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 44, 1 (1981), 53-61. It seems that Giulio acquired some of the Flemish fire landscapes for his own art collection; a 1562 inventory of his collection, inherited by his son, Raffaello Pippi, lists a "quadro grande...della città di Sodoma et Gomora con fiamme e fuoco." This untraced, anonymous painting was displayed in the "*camera deli quadri*"; see Guido Rebecchini, *Private Collectors in Mantua 1500-1630* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2002), 220.

sixteenth century. Their altarpieces furthered the shift in the public sphere initiated by Bellini, Titian, and Giorgione toward spiritual stories offset by the bucolic topography of the Veneto.<sup>3</sup>

Recently scholars have begun to reevaluate the phenomenon of Venetian *collezionismo* during the sixteenth century. Yet the main focus has remained on antiquities, portraits, and devotional images, with the role of landscape attracting little attention. Focus on the former art objects keeps scholarship focused upon elite models and well-known cases such as the Grimani, Vendramin, and Contarini families described by Marcantonio Michiel. Thus future archival research in the Venetian Archivio di Stato should focus special attention upon the more modest and unfamiliar art collections. For example, the inventories documented in the *Cancellaria Inferiore, Miscellanea di notai diversi* remain a promising yet somewhat overlooked resource for our understanding of privately owned goods.<sup>4</sup> A systematic survey of their records would provide fresh statistical data concerning the presence and location of landscapes within the Venetian domestic interior, supplementing the conclusions drawn in this dissertation. As Maddalena Bellavitis's valuable catalogue of northern canvases in Veneto collections shows, there is still much archival work required to trace the provenance of landscapes made by Patinir, Bles, and Bosch, and their followers and imitators. Ostensibly, these pictures were already present in private collections in Padua, Treviso, Verona, Bassano del Grappa and were subsequently absorbed as public institutions were founded.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See my Introduction. For example, Cariani's most important early public work, the San Gottardo Altarpiece (c.1517-18, Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera), commissioned by the Scuola di San Giuseppe for the Church of San Gottardo. More than half of its composition is consumed by a detailed landscape setting: Pallucchini and Rossi, 130-31, cat. no.55. Cima's contributions as a landscape painter have been recently reevaluated in the exhibition with accompanying catalogue, Giovanni Carlo Federico Villa, et al., *Cima da Conegliano: Poeta del Paesaggio* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> The *Miscellanea di notai diversi* is comprised of just over 700 property inventories made between the years 1497 and 1630. On its composition, character, and past studies utilizing its data, see Henry, 255-56.

<sup>5</sup> For examples, see Bellavitis, 345, cat. no.30; 351, cat. no.31; 451, cat. no.46; 457, cat. no.47; 535, cat. no.60; 549, cat. no.62.

With regard to display practices for landscape in the Veneto, a more extensive study of its uses in city-homes versus country villas is needed. Villas in the Veneto were often decorated with pastoral frescos celebrating rustic leisure activities such as hunting, fishing, and festive banquets, as found at the Villa Imperiale, Pesaro; Villa Barbaro, Maser; and Palazzo Trevisan, Murano. It was a practice recommended by Pliny and Alberti for relief from fever.<sup>6</sup> Anton Francesco Doni notes in *Le ville*, written in Venice in the mid-1550s, that Flemish landscapes were suitable for the private courtyard of a gentleman's villa, a place of recreation and relaxation. These frescos were located in, "Una Corte chiusa con le mura attorno tutta dipinta di Fiaminghi paesi."<sup>7</sup> In contrast, my study indicates that urban palaces seem to have been the most suitable location for inventive easel pictures, since the city was too damp for frescos. In general, the extent to which landscape's display patterns influenced architecture needs further attention: it was architectural treatises such as Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* and Serlio's *De perspective* (1545) that helped legitimize this imagery in decorative programs.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, explorations of landscape traditions beyond the Veneto in artistic centers such as Florence, Milan, Naples, and Rome would certainly enhance and complicate the conclusions drawn in this dissertation. Venice was not the only city with a thriving international art market. By the middle of the sixteenth century in Rome for example, we know landscapes were popular with wealthy prelates with an eye to expenditure on art. The recent discovery of the inventory of Cardinal Rodolfo Carpi da Pio's Roman palaces have shed light on the significant role landscape

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<sup>6</sup> Viewers are delighted, Alberti writes in *De re aedificatoria* (1440's), by loggias of country homes adorned with "pleasant landscapes or harbors, scenes of fishing, hunting and bathing, or country sports and flowery and leafy views," reviving the ancient belief derived from Vitruvius that the sight of rural scenery alleviated the strains of city life ["Hilarescimus mairuom in modum animus cum pictas videmus amoenitates regionem, et portus, et piscationes, et venationes, et natationes, et agrestium ludos, et florida et frondosa"]; quoted in Goodchild, 1998, 50-51].

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Anton Francesco Doni, *Le ville di Anton Francesco Doni*, ed., Ugo Bellocchi (Modena: Aedes Muratoriana, 1969), 46.

<sup>8</sup> This point is mentioned by Gombrich, 1953, 358, and Rosand, in Cafritz, et al., 26, but never fully accounted for. The reference is to Serlio's woodcut, "*Della scena satirica*," depicting a rustic landscape. Goodchild, 1998, 141-44, discusses writings about mural landscapes in villas.

paintings served in the decorative program of his residences by the middle of the sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Pio's 1564 inventory records more than twenty landscapes: five each painted by Herri met de Bles and Jan van Scorel's pupil Maarten van Heemskerck, as well as others by anonymous "fiamenghi." The paintings installed in Pio's rooms displaying his antiquities (*camere delle anticaglie*) focused upon the theme of fire. While some derived from biblical or mythological narratives, others were apparently no more than *capricci* of imaginative visual effects, *vedute*, and topographical *prospettive*.

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<sup>9</sup> Claudio Franzoni, et al., *Gli inventari dell'eredità del cardinale Rodolfo Pio da Carpi* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2002); Elena Filippi, "'Certe belle anticaglie da presso e da lontano...'. La presenza neerlandese nella collezione di Rodolfo Pio," in *Alberto III e Rodolfo Pio da Carpi: collezionisti e mecenati*, ed., Manuela Rossi, et al. (Udine: Museo Civico da Carpi, 2004), 122-135.

## 7.0 EPILOGUE

The mid-1520s are more than an arbitrary endpoint for this study examining the importance landscape assumed for artists, patrons, and collectors in Venice. The year 1526 marks a transitional moment in Venetian art. By this time, the void left by the deaths of Giorgione (d.1510) and Giovanni Bellini (d.1516) had been filled by a younger generation of painters headed by Titian. In this year, we believe Savoldo established permanent residency in the city, since he was married and made his will. Evidently he found success since Michiel observed a few of his works in private collections in the 1530s. These were large canvases of the *Clemency of Scipio* and a large *Reclining Nude* of the type Giorgione popularized, unfortunately neither of which can be traced.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Dosso's trips to Venice had ceased by this point and he instead accepted commissions in Pesaro, Modena, and Trent. Whereas he had visited the city annually from 1514-19, he did not journey there again until 1541, the year before his death.

It was likely in 1526 that Titian received the commission for his grand *Death of St. Peter Martyr* altarpiece for SS. Giovanni e Paolo, which he completed by 1530 though sadly was destroyed by fire in 1867. It is a pity to have lost such an important monument in Venetian painting and one in which we know Titian realized the full potential of landscape as a poignant narrative device, to judge from sixteenth-century prints such as Martino Rota's reproducing its composition (fig.7.1). The scene of martyrdom unfolds at the edge of a dark forest. St. Peter lies prone on the ground beneath his assassin who stands over him wielding a dagger. Peter's companion flees toward the viewer, shooting a backward glance over his shoulder. Both monks

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<sup>1</sup> Michiel, 84.

direct their gaze at two putti holding a palm of martyrdom and descending in a jet of heavenly light breaking the clouds and through the canopy of trees overhead. This radiance casts a dappled light over the otherwise dark interior of the coppice.

After the Hermitage *Flight into Egypt*, landscape had continued to be a central preoccupation for Titian from 1510-1515, a mode he was given the opportunity to pursue in several commissions for easel pictures made for Venetian clients. The earliest of these is the Dresden *Sleeping Venus* made for Gerolamo Marcello. Giorgione painted the figure but Titian was allegedly responsible for its Arcadian landscape.<sup>2</sup> For Giovanni Ram, he painted the *Baptism of Christ* (c.1512); Michiel praised the latter's landscape as especially beautiful.<sup>3</sup> When Vasari saw Titian's slightly later *Three Ages of Man* (c.1513), made for Milian Targone, he commented on its "bellissimo paese."<sup>4</sup> The reception of these works indicates how viewers appreciated Titian's landscapes as separate aesthetic units within the overall composition.

The *Death of St. Peter Martyr* marks a significant transition for landscape's role from collector's cabinet to the public sphere. Landscape is truly elevated to the second protagonist of the picture enlivening the spiritual message. As one scholar put it: "Unprecedented even in Titian's own work is the degree to which nature, especially in the form of the thrusting, windswept trees, was seen to participate in the human and religious drama, further underscoring

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<sup>2</sup> Michiel, 88: "La tela della Venere nuda, che dorme in uno paese cun Cupidine, fo de mano de Zorzo da Castelfranco, ma lo paese et Cupidine forono finiti da Titiano."

<sup>3</sup> Michiel, 106: "La tavola del San Zuanne che bapteza Christ nel Giordano, che è nel fiume insin alle ginocchia, cun el bel paese, et esso M. Zuan Ram ritratto fin al cinto, et cun la schena contra il spettatori, fo de man de Titiano."

<sup>4</sup> Vasari wrote that, "Tornato poi Tiziano a Vinezia, fece per lo suocero di Giovanni da Castel Bolognese, in una tela a olio, un pastore ignudo et una forese che gli porge certi flauti perché suoni, con un bellissimo paese" (quoted in Humfrey, 2003). Added to this is Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* (1514, Rome, Galleria Borghese), likely commissioned by the secretary to the Venetian Council of Ten, Niccolò Aurelio, as a marriage picture. Its low elongated format accommodates a panoramic landscape resembling the Paudan countryside and hometown of Aurelio's bride, Laura Bagarotto, on the terraferma; see Joannides, 2001, 187-89; and Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 122-24.

both the tragic violence and the transcendent glory of martyrdom.”<sup>5</sup> Yet it probably would have been unthinkable for Titian without the example of Bellini, Dosso, and Savoldo, as well as the skills he refined in his own previous paintings destined for private homes. These more modest compositions contained valuable lessons on exploiting landscape as a means to dramatize doctrinal content.

From the few surviving documents relating to the *St. Peter Martyr* commission, we know that Titian’s picture was ordered to replace an outmoded fifteenth-century polyptych.<sup>6</sup> The clerics of SS. Giovanni e Paolo wished for an inventive altar picture made by a painter versed in the latest artistic styles. In order to achieve this they set up a competition and special board to evaluate entries.<sup>7</sup> Titian’s motivation to produce an innovative image was likely spurred by the competitive nature of the commission, for Pino tells us that Titian beat out the rival painter Palma Vecchio to win this prized job. Ridolfi would add that Pordenone also submitted a design.<sup>8</sup> Titian’s energetic, single-field composition set in a shadowed woods employed the type of virtuoso landscape imagery found, as we have seen, in private residences up to that point. Since Titian won the rights for the altar image, his successful translation of this vision of

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<sup>5</sup> Humfrey, 1993, 315.

<sup>6</sup> Sansovino, 1562, 23v, attests that Titian’s altarpiece replaced an earlier one the author attributed to Jacobello del Fiore (fl. c.1400-1430s): “...quella [palla] di S. Pietro martire, prima di Iacomello dal Fiore, & poi rifatta del tutto da Titiano pittore illustre.” From what we know of Jacobello’s similar works, this would likely have been a neo-Gothic multi-panel altar picture with a decorative gold background and ornate moldings.

<sup>7</sup> These documents are discussed in Humfrey, 1993, 315. They record an appeal by the board of the confraternity of SS. Giovanni e Paolo (dated 1525), which included Palma Vecchio, petitioning the Council of Ten to replace the (unknown) painter first commissioned to execute the altarpiece, since he was deemed inadequate by the officers; instead, they requested permission to have the very best painter for the task, able to paint “beautifully and perfectly.” Permission was granted and Titian was assigned the task.

<sup>8</sup> Pino, 32v. He does not describe the painting, but rather refers in passing to how Titian and Palma Vecchio competed to obtain the commission, a process Pino approves of: “In questo caso, voglio, che lui venghi al duello della correntia, & fare un’opera per uno, ma con patto, che sia ammessa la più perfetta, come già volse far Giacomo Palma con Titiano nell’opra de san Pietro martire qui in Vinegia.”

landscape to the altarpiece format evidently fulfilled the church clerics' desire for a cutting-edge picture.<sup>9</sup>

Titian's fame came to rest on the *St. Peter Martyr* and it was installed in one of the most prestigious churches in the city, home to the tombs of numerous doges. It was universally held to be Titian's masterpiece and attracted much praise.<sup>10</sup> Aretino is the first to mention it and reports the reactions of two sculptors visiting Venice who remarked that the terror of the figures was aptly echoed in the landscape.<sup>11</sup> Dolce praised its "patch of landscape with several elder trees," while Vasari was struck by the beams of light filtering through the trees that not only captured the moment of divine martyrdom but, "which light up the whole landscape, which is very beautiful."<sup>12</sup> In essence, this miraculous light source deepened the devotional mood while also illuminating the *paese* filled with intricate plant studies Titian painted in the foreground at eye-level.

In the seventeenth century, the *St. Peter Martyr's* landscape was one of several novel aspects singled out for praise, along with its heroic male figures and emotional power to move the audiences. Ridolfi was inspired to paint his own verbal picture of its sinister woods bathed in shadow and flashing sunlight.<sup>13</sup> Boschini wrote how it seemed, "the great Titian painted it with

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<sup>9</sup> The evolution of altarpieces and *pale* from trecento polyptychs to single-field pictures with dominant landscape settings is aptly documented in Carpaccio's painting of a interior church showing several of these installed in what seems like chronological order on the side wall: Vittore Carpaccio, *Apparition of the Crucified of Mount Ararat in Sant'Antonio di Castello Church*, c.1512, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.

<sup>10</sup> A cogent survey of the reception of Titian's picture is Norman E. Land, "Titian's *Martyrdom of St. Peter Martyr* and the 'Limitations' of Ekphrastic Art Criticism," *Art History* 13, 5 (Sept., 1990), 293-317.

<sup>11</sup> The sculptors are Benvenuto Cellini and Il Tribolo, the latter of whom the letter is written to; Pietro Aretino, *Lettere* (Venice, 1538), I, unnumbered: "...Che mirabil groppo di bambini è ne l'aria, che si dispicca dagli arbori, che la spargono de i Tronchi e de le foglie loro; che paese raccolto ne la semplicità del suo natural, che sassi erbosi bagna la acqua, che ivi fa corrente la vena uscita dal pannello del divin Titiano."

<sup>12</sup> Roskill, 190; Vasari, VI, 160-61.

<sup>13</sup> Ridolfi, 150-51: "Hor consideriamo la famosa tavola di S. Pietro Martire, posta nella Chiesa de' Sãnti Giovanni, e Paolo, che l'Autore...emulare con arte rarissima la natura...Lo avvenimento è rappresentato nel principio di folto bosco d'annose quercie, e d'altre piante ripieno, che formano de' rami loro ombrosa cortina per riparo del Sole...e si tiene dall'universale, che non si possino meglio comporre, proponendosi egli tal'hora l'imitatione delle cose celebri antiche, molto bene da lui conosciute...& il proprio sito d'una boscaglia, ove di lontano nelle cime de'monti (allhor,

Nature's brush, and nothing more," and "that landscape, which forms its setting,/ Nature does not know how to make more beautiful,/ He who sees it will not believe that any brush/ produced it, being so exquisite."<sup>14</sup> The picture becomes a pretext for Boschini to discuss Titian's gifts as a landscape painter, and he goes on to enumerate a litany of special effects that Titian could simulate.

Titian's intertwining of setting with story had achieved a perfection that was simply not to be outdone.<sup>15</sup> When the Flemish painter Livio Mehus sought to create an allegory of painting, he invoked the *St. Peter Martyr* as an authoritative icon. Mehus's so-called *Genius of Painting* (c.1650), made in Florence, is a self-portrait of the artist seated at an easel upon which he is painting a copy (assisted by a putto, or *genius*) of Titian's famous altarpiece (fig.7.2).<sup>16</sup> For later generations Titian's innovative altar picture in Venice had come to embody unparalleled mastery in the art of painting.

Even though the *St. Peter Martyr* has vanished, the written reception of its imagery provides valuable insight into the role landscape assumed in Venetian painting by 1525. Viewing experiences of the picture reflect a conception of landscape quite different from our own modern genre distinctions. Educated authors and ostensibly Titian's public recognized its wooded setting as an integral narrative component, yet also one to be held apart and scrutinized as a patch of

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che sparita l'Aurora bianca, e vermiglia) incomincia à sorgere à poco à poco il sole, strisciando di dorati tratti l'azzurino Cielo, havendo tolta per apunto quella veduta da monti del Cenedese, che vedena dalla propria habitatione."

<sup>14</sup> Boschini, 1664, 217: "Segue la sempre più meravigliosa tavola de S. Pietro Martire, ch'è dipinta dal penello della Natura il gran Tiziano, e tanto basti"; Marco Boschini, *La carta del navegar pittoresco* (Venice, 1660) [reprint, ed. Anna Pallucchini, 1966], 29: "E quel paese, che forma quel sito,/ Che la Natura no 'l sa far più belo,/ Chi el vede no puol creder che 'l penelo/ L'abia formà, per esser sì esquisito."

<sup>15</sup> It is probably this work Bellori had in mind when writing about Annibale Carracci's powers as a landscapist. He maintained that Annibale had surpassed all past and present artists in landscape up until his time, with the exception of Titian, who still stood as foremost in designing and coloring them. G.P. Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori, et architetti moderni* (Rome, 1672), 87: "Non si deve tacere la lode de' paesi dovuta à questo maestro, che hoggi sono in essemplio nell'electione di siti, havendo egli per lo più imitato vedute dilettevoli di villaggi pastorali; e così nel colorirli, come nel disegnarli con la penna hà superato ogn'altro, eccettuando Titiano, che è stato il primo in tal sorte d'imitatione."

<sup>16</sup> Madrid, Museo del Prado, c.1650, oil on canvas, 70 x 80 cm [inv. P07754].

scenery with its own artistry and beauty. Titian's thoughtful arrangement of the landscape to maximize the dramatic potential was a lesson absorbed from Bellini and his peers in Venice in the early decades of the sixteenth century. In adapting landscape from the portego to the altar, he ingeniously retains its delightful qualities that reinforced the painter's power as a storyteller. By 1548, looking back at how landscape had migrated from private picture collections to the public spotlight, Pino could confidently declare that, "This specialty is very natural to the painter, and a source of pleasure to himself and to others."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Pino, 30r: "Questa parte nel pittore è molto propria, & dilettevole à se stesso, & à gli altri..."

## APPENDIX A

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Images of figures omitted due to copyright restrictions.

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1510, oil on panel, 99.5 x 60.3 cm (central panel), 99.5 x 29 cm (each wing). Bruges,  
Groeninge Museum.
- 4.3 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *Temptation of a Hermit Saint (Vision of St. Jerome?)*,  
1515, oil on panel, 58 x 86 cm. Moscow, Pushkin Museum.
- 4.4 Giovanni Bellini, *The Assassination of St. Peter Martyr*, 1507, oil and tempera on  
wood, 99.7 x 165.1 cm. London, National Gallery of Art.
- 4.5 Titian, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, c.1508-1510, oil on canvas, 39 x 53 cm. Bergamo,  
Accademia Carrara.
- 4.6 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *Hermit Saints Paul and Anthony*, 1520, oil on panel,  
165 x 137 cm. Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.
- 4.7 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *Pesaro Altarpiece (Madonna in Glory with Angels and  
Saints)*, c.1524, oil on panel, 475 x 307 cm. Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera.
- 4.8 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *veduta* of Venice and its lagoon (detail of fig.4.7).
- 4.9 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *veduta* of lagoon and district of SS. Giovanni e Paolo,  
detail from the *Penitent St. Jerome*, oil on canvas, 121 x 160.4 cm. London, National  
Gallery of Art.

- 4.10 Bernardino da PARENZO, *Temptation of St. Anthony*, c.1496, oil on panel, 46.4 x 58.2. Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj.
- 4.11 Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, *Crucifixion*, c.1515, oil on panel, 94 x 72 cm. Monte Carlo, Maison d'Art.
- 4.12 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Temptation of St. Anthony*, 1506, woodcut, 40.4 x 27 cm. London, The British Museum.
- 4.13 Composite x-radiograph (detail of fig.4.1).
- 4.14 X-radiograph showing Savoldo's revisions to outline of St. Anthony (detail of fig.4.13)
- 4.15 X-radiograph showing lower right surface (detail of fig.4.13).
- 4.16 Hieronymus Bosch, *Female Saints Triptych*, with left wing showing *Temptation of St. Anthony Abbot*, c.1504, oil on panel, 104 x 119 cm (entire triptych, open state). Venice, Palazzo Ducale.
- 4.17 Hieronymus Bosch, *Hermit Saints Triptych*, with left wing showing *Temptation of St. Anthony Abbot*, c.1505, oil on panel, 86 x 29 cm (each side panel). Venice, Palazzo Ducale.
- 4.18 Hieronymus Bosch, *Four Visions of the Hereafter*, c.1500-1503, oil on panel, 88.5 x 41.5 cm (each panel). Venice, Musei Civici Veneziani.
- 4.19 Zanobi Strozzi, *Temptation of St. Anthony*, c.1445, tempera on panel, 20 x 28 cm. Houston, Museum of Fine Arts.
- 4.20 Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Andrea Odoni*, c.1527, oil on canvas, 104 cm x 116.6 cm. London, Royal Collection.

4.21 Domenico Beccafumi (attributed to), *Venus and Cupid with Vulcan*, c.1530, oil on panel, 128 x 96.5 cm. New Orleans Museum of Art.

5.1 Dosso Dossi, *Three Ages of Man*, c.1515, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 118 cm. New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.

5.2 Dosso Dossi, *Jupiter Painting Butterflies*, c.1524, oil on canvas, 112 x 150 cm. Krakow, Wawel Royal Castle.

5.3 Anonymous Venetian printmaker, *Virtue, Mercury, and Fortune*, woodcut illustration from Lucian, *I dilettevoli dialoghi* (Venice, 1525), 23r.

5.4 Dosso Dossi, *Jupiter, Mercury, and Virtue*, c.1530, fresco. Trent, Castello del Buonconsiglio, Sala del Camin Nero.

5.5 Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*, 1515, oil on panel, 118 x 81 cm. Bern, Kunst Museum.

5.6 Dosso Dossi, Jupiter's paintbrushes, mahlstick, and palette (detail of fig.5.2).

5.7 Giovanni Bellini (with later interventions by Dosso Dossi and Titian), *Feast of the Gods*, 1514, oil on canvas, 170.2 x 188 cm. Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art.

5.8 Antonio Lombardo (or circle of), *Mars*, c.1515-20, marble, 44.9 x 36.8. Modena, Galleria Estense. Inscription (in translation): "I, Mars, cannot make war well unless I remove my clothes."

5.9 Antonio Lombardo and workshop, *The Forge of Vulcan*, c.1508-1512, marble, 83 x 107 cm. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum.

5.10 Raphael, *Madonna of Foligno*, c.1511-12, oil and tempera grassa on wood transferred to canvas. Rome, Pinacoteca Vaticana.

5.11 Dosso Dossi, *Portrait of a Gentleman (Angelo Perondoli?)*, c.1520, oil on canvas, 89.1 x 118.1 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.

5.12 Angelica Kauffman, *Allegory of Color*, c.1779, oil on canvas, 130 x 150.3 cm. London, Burlington House.

5.13 Dialogue XIX, “DELL’ ARCO CELESTE,” from Antonio Brucioli, *Dialoghi* (Venice, 1537), 32v. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

7.1 Martino Rota (after Titian), *Death of St. Peter Martyr*, c.1582-83, engraving, 37 x 27 cm. London, Victoria and Albert Museum.

7.2 Livio Mehus, *Genius of Painting*, c.1650, oil on canvas, 70 x 80 cm. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

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