

Il Libro dei Miracoli:
Intersections of Gender, Class and Portraiture in
Italian Multimedia Votive Sculpture, 1450-1630

by

Jennifer Adams

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Diane Wolfthal, Co-chair
Julie Codell, Co-chair
Juliann Vitullo

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ABSTRACT

Multi-media votive sculpture, made from wax, papier-mâché, wood, terracotta and textiles, is a long-neglected subject of study in early modern Italian art history. This dissertation focuses on an unparalleled seventeenth-century manuscript, the *Libro dei miracoli*, which reproduces in watercolor a number of the lost multi-media votive statues that once populated the church of S. Maria della Quercia in Viterbo. The names of votaries, along with a description of their miracles, accompany the watercolors and present an invaluable source of information that allows for this first comprehensive study of votary identity. Abundant archival material maintained by S. Maria della Quercia, situated within larger historical events and cultural trends, informs this dissertation which explores the democratic nature behind votive statuary effigies. The offerings granted male and female members of all socio-economic classes in early modern Italy the extraordinary opportunity to act as patrons of art. Moreover, the sculptures, and watercolors after them, were individualized representations of votaries that can be considered a form of portraiture available to rich and poor alike.

DEDICATION

I dedicate these pages to to my husband, Chris, whose love, strength, and tremendous sacrifice allowed me to complete this project; to my parents, George and Joan Pendergrass, who continually exhibited unwavering support of my academic meanderings; and to Francesca, *la mia anima, la mia vita, e il mio cuore*.

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Without the substantial assistance of Dr. Gianfranco Ciprini in Viterbo I could not have completed this study. I am grateful for his patient replies to my endless questions and the warm generosity he showed me when sharing his lifetime of research on our beloved Madonna della Quercia.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.S.F.	Archivio di Stato di Firenze
A.S.M.Q.	Archivio Storico del Convento di Santa Maria della Quercia
A.S.V.	Archivio di Stato di Viterbo

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The year 1467 was a busy one for the Madonna della Quercia. Early in the fifteenth century an image of the Madonna and child, painted on a tile by a local artist known as Monetto, was secured among the branches of an oak tree located alongside a well-traveled road on the outskirts of the central Italian city of Viterbo. Viterban women began praying to this Madonna della Quercia (Madonna of the Oak), but it was not until the fall of 1467 that devotion for her significantly increased. In September of that year a man from Viterbo, pursued by his enemies and fearing for his life, paused at the base of the oak holding the Madonna's image to ask for her help. Hearing his prayers the Madonna della Quercia intervened: he was made invisible and his assailants passed him by. Also in September a procession of 160 residents from Siena carried out a vow made to the Madonna della Quercia by offering her a large silver votive lamp in exchange for help the Madonna provided in ending their suffering from an earthquake that had struck their city the month prior on August 22. Soon, according to Niccolò della Tuccia, whose fifteenth-century chronicles of the city of Viterbo and its surrounds detail the attachment to this Madonna, "all the Viterban people and all the Patrimony came together in devotion" of her.¹ The increase in pious attention for the Madonna della Quercia, from both locals and foreigners alike, prompted a small chapel to be built around her perch in the oak tree; shortly after, in

¹ "...tucto el populo vitorbese et tucto el Patrimonio concourse ad quella divotione..." Niccolò della Tuccia, Codice riccardiano n. 1941; see Attilio Carosi and Gianfranco Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia* (Viterbo: Cassa di Risparmio della Provincia di Viterbo, 1993), 2.

September of 1468, construction began on a church dedicated to her. Fervid affection for this Madonna continued to grow, and the church quickly filled with many types of devotional offerings, including life-size votive statues that came to be regarded as the “joys, and ornaments of the church.”²

Early modern votive sculpture was a highly visible and decidedly public manifestation of gratitude resulting from a personal encounter between votary and intercessor. In the case of the Viterban statues, the practice of offering a life-size, figural offering made in fulfillment of a vow, known as an *ex-voto*, to the Madonna della Quercia spanned many socio-economic classes: at the church of S. Maria della Quercia the votive statues of Popes Paul III and Gregory XIII hung in the same room as the votive statue offered by Fabbrisio di Dionisio, a fisherman from the city of Gradoli.³ Irrespective of an individual’s social standing, the statues were purchased from an artisan specializing in wax, a *ceraiuolo*, who likely used a fairly generic form for creating the body, but then manipulated the outer appearance of the statue so that it resembled the votary. The exchange of money between client and artisan, in addition to the likely say the client had in the production of the final product, defines the votary a patron and the votive statues commissioned works of art. Moreover, the votaries represented by the finished statues were recognizable by their simulacrum’s physical characteristics; in short, the statues constituted a type of portraiture. In a culture marked by distinct social

² “le gioie, et ornamenti” A.S.M.Q. vol. 113, c. 53.

³ Other sites of well-documented statuary votive offerings do not share the range of class that occurred in Viterbo. These cases – the extant votive multi-media statues in Santa Maria delle Grazie in Curtatone and the lost votive sculptures of Santissima Annunziata in Florence -- will be discussed later in this chapter.

and economic strata, artistic patronage was generally contained to the moneyed classes. The votive statues of Viterbo, however, represent an extraordinary anomaly in early modern Italian artistic production as they were purchased by men and women of varied socio-economic classes from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries.

The ephemeral materials that comprised early modern multimedia votive sculpture have not allowed for many examples to survive today. A few instances in Italy are still extant: the votive statues in S. Maria della Grazie in Curtatone provide an idea of what the Viterban statues could have looked like, and the statues of the *sacri monti* in the Piedmont region of Northern Italy, although not votive offerings, are comprised of materials similar to what was used in Viterbo. Clues to the appearance of the Viterban statues can also be observed in the museum associated with S. Maria della Quercia and inside the church itself. Two multimedia statues, individual parts of statues likely dating to the sixteenth century, and a Nativity scene dating to the sixteenth century, offer further evidence to the visual understanding of the lost statues.

Equally rare are depictions of votive offerings in paintings and prints found in Catholic and formerly Catholic areas of Western Europe.⁴ Only a handful can be located on the Italian peninsula. The best known Italian example

⁴ Representations of votive offerings in paintings and prints outside of Italy are equally rare. Some German and Austrian examples include a wing of the altar of Sankt Wolfgang in Pipping, dating to c. 1480, which depicts pilgrims and their offerings at the tomb of Saint Wolfgang. Among the ex-votos left at the tomb are arms, legs, weapons, and a small-scale human figure. A woodcut executed by Hans Weiditz in the early sixteenth century shows Saint Anthony standing in front of a church on which has been hung votive limbs, votive children, and other votive offerings. Another German woodcut, executed by Michael Ostendorfer c. 1519, illustrates throngs of pilgrims heading to the New Church at Regensburg carrying large votive candles; other offerings in the form of farm tools hang from the church's architecture.

may be the small, votive panel painting that Titian included in the lower right corner of his *Pietà* dating to 1576. Another Venetian artist, Vittore Carpaccio, represented abundant votive offerings suspended inside of the monastery of St. Antonio di Castello in the work titled *The Apparition of the Ten Thousand Martyrs*, dating to c. 1512. Large votive ships hang from the ceiling beams and abundant smaller offerings dangle over the altar on the left of the image. In the early sixteenth century Francesco Cagnoli, working in the Northern Italian city of Baceno, executed an illusionistic fresco over a doorway in the church of San Gaudenzio. The painted votive offerings, taking the forms of limbs, organs, full-size figures, tools, materials, and one ox, were executed to create the effect that they were escaping the fresco's frame of illusionistically-painted architecture. The oxen's hooves dangle below the image's frame, and the nails upon which the illusionistic cloth hangs are also placed outside of the delineated picture space. Another fresco, dating to 1630, by the Viterban artist Angelo Pucciatti in the church of S. Maria della Quercia depicts votive offerings in the shape of anatomical parts and small-scale human figures hanging from the oak that holds the Madonna's image. Simone Martini's panel, dated 1317, portrays St. Louis of Toulouse raising a small figural ex-voto to the heavens, and a panel from around 1400, in the manner of the Pisan artist Turino Vanni, displays votive heads, hands, limbs, and breasts hanging above the altar of St. Margaret of Antioch. A similar display of votive offerings suspended over a saint's tomb is visible in a panel from the Sardinian School, dating 1400-1500, that illustrates pilgrims at the tomb of St. Eligio.

What provides the closest visual understanding of votive statues in general, but specifically the statues of Viterbo, is an unparalleled manuscript, the *Libro dei miracoli*, compiled between 1619-1690. Watercolor images, executed primarily by the amateur artist Vincenzo Panicale, recreate many of the lost statues that once adorned the walls and hung from the ceiling in the church of Santa Maria della Quercia. Explanatory texts, predominantly composed by the church's sacristan, Tommaso Bandoni, detail the situations surrounding the miracles and accompany most of the images created by Panicale. The manuscript provides an encyclopedic compendium of the church's statues and is matchless in the Catholic world: it is the only document of its kind that catalogs this popular form of artistic and pious expression. Only three scholars have examined the manuscript. Attilio Carosi and Gianfranco Ciprini published a study in which the entire manuscript is reproduced, along with information relating to the origins of the church and the waxworks in Viterbo, without offering analysis of the objects. The recent Venetian exhibition, *Avere una bella cera*, featured wax sculpture produced in Venice and Italy and displayed the *Libro dei miracoli*. The exhibition's curator, Andrea Daninos, provides only a brief summary of Carosi and Ciprini's earlier work when presenting the manuscript in the exhibition catalog. None of the scholarship explores the artistic and cultural relevance of the watercolors and the statues on which the watercolors are based. The scant literature on the *Libro dei miracoli* reinforces the difficulties associated with interpreting objects that are not embraced by the art historical canon.

This dissertation contributes to the widening dialogue on veristic, multimedia sculpture in early modern Italy. It centers on the lost votive sculpture of S. Maria della Quercia and the extant evidence that allows the twenty-first century observer to recreate the sculptures and re-inscribe them aesthetically, historically and culturally into early modern Italy. The content of the *Libro dei miracoli* – images and narratives -- provides the bulk of the evidence surrounding the sculptures. Abundant administrative records maintained by the church of S. Maria della Quercia further support the considerations of the sculptures and manuscript.

The present study will address another understudied subject relating to early modern art: patronal opportunities available to the non-elite in early modern Italy. It argues that the characterization of a patron of art, traditionally ascribed to “courts, churches, aristocratic, and merchant families, [...] religious orders and confraternities,”⁵ can be widened to include the ordinary votaries of the Madonna della Quercia. Of course the evidence of patronal activities, preserved in the historical record of archives, letters, wills, *libri di ricordanze*, and the objects themselves, favors the elite: both individuals and collective groups, such as guilds and religious organizations, were highly concerned with tracking their belongings and chronicling their business, economic, and spiritual endeavors.⁶ Greater access

⁵ Binski, Paul and Christopher F. Black . "patronage." In *The Oxford Companion to Western Art*, edited by Hugh Brigstocke. *Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t118/e1998> (accessed August 12, 2012).

⁶ For the personal writings of merchants and bankers see *Merchant Writers of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Vittore Branca, trans. Murtha Baca (New York: Marsilio, 1999); Leon Battista Alberti, *The Family in Renaissance Florence Books One – Four (I libri della famiglia)*, trans.

to wealth further facilitated their opportunities to act as patrons of art.⁷ Those of less means, contrarily, did not always have rates of literacy or financial means comparable to their wealthy counterparts,⁸ but there is evidence that they used art. An Italian art market for prints, beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, undoubtedly served the poor and laboring classes as well as wealthy individuals.⁹

Renée Neu Watkins (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 2004); Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957).

⁷ Patronage of early modern Italy is an expansive subject which has received abundant analysis. Recent studies on patronage include Richard E. Spear and Phillip L. Sohm, *Painting for Profit: the economic lives of seventeenth-century Italian painters* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2010); Jonathan Katz Nelson and Richard Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Tim Parks, *Medici Money: banking, metaphysics and art in fifteenth-century Florence* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005); Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons: social identity and the visual arts in Renaissance Florence* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004); *Reading Texts and Images. Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Art and Patronage in honor of Margaret. M. Manion*, ed. Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), in particular the essays by Louise Marshall, "Reading the Body of a Plague Saint: Narrative Altarpieces and Devotional Images of St. Sebastian in Renaissance Art," 237-272 and Dagmar Eicherger, "Close Encounters with Death: Changing Representations of Women in Renaissance Art and Literature," 273-296; Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1997); Mary Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (London: John Murray, 1996) and *Patronage in Renaissance Italy from 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: John Murray, 1994); Catherine E. King, *Renaissance Women Patrons* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 1998); Bram Kempers, *Painting, Power and Patronage*, trans. Beverley Jackson (London: Penguin Group, 1992).

⁸ See Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy* (Westport, Conn.; London: Greenwood Press, 2001), 135-140 for the extent of literacy and schooling in Renaissance Italy; Richard Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 324 for a breakdown of daily wage rates of laborers, wallers, and foremen in the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries; the entirety of chapter six considers working conditions, salary and wages, and the standard of living of laborers in renaissance Florence, 287-350.

⁹ Understanding the pricing of prints is crucial to recognizing who was able to purchase them. Michael Bury reports that the cost of prints in seventeenth-century Rome depended on when they were sold. For example, prints sold on a holiday or during a celebration could be priced low in order to out-sell the competition. See Michael Bury, *The Print in Italy, 1550-1620* (London: British Museum Press, 2001), 45. Sara F. Matthews Grieco notes that a "modest" bookseller working in Rome during the late sixteenth century owned prints of the Virgin and child; she also reports that women originating from all social classes purchased and used chapbooks that were reasonably priced. See "Persuasive pictures: didactic prints and the construction of the social identity of women in sixteenth-century Italy," in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 285-314, in particular 286.

Despite the ephemeral materials used to create the votive statues, they were executed with a high level of skill and imbued with extraordinary detail and thus can be defined as works of art that were available to be purchased by a wide range of socio-economic classes.

An examination of issues surrounding patronage leads to the exploration of votary identity. Elite votaries, like elite patrons, have been the recipients of art historical study. For example, Tommaso Inghirami, who part of the intellectual elite in Rome during the early sixteenth century, a cardinal, and a man who sat for a portrait painted by Raphael, commissioned an artist from the school of Raphael to paint a votive panel which expressed his gratitude for surviving an accident involving a cart drawn by oxen. The image depicted on the votive panel is sophisticated: the cardinal, trapped under the cart, has recognizable features, and the ornate, classical architecture is convincingly rendered with one-point perspective. The cardinal's status as an influential Roman, along with his exceptional ex-voto, has led to analysis by scholars like David Freedberg.¹⁰ The identities of average votaries, however, remain unexplored. This study is the first to undertake the task of understanding the identities of ordinary, non-elite

Keith Moxey, citing Bruno Weber, relates that “the average price of an illustrated broadsheet varied between four and eight pfennig” in sixteenth-century Germany. In order to understand the value of a currency it is necessary to find its value in relation to other items critical to the cost of living. Again, citing Weber, Moxey writes that “in 1522 two pfennig would have bought six eggs or three herrings, or one sausage or half a liter of cider, at a time when a master mason earned twenty-eight pfennig and his assistant twenty-four pfennig a day.” It is reasonable to assume that artisans would have been able to afford the price of an illustrated broadsheet. Keith Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989), 23, citing Bruno Weber, *Wunderzeichen und Winkeldrucker 1543 – 1586* (Dietkon-Zürich: University Graf, 1972), note.71.

¹⁰ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 149, 152.

votaries. The investigation of the Viterban faithful utilizes the explanatory texts that accompany the watercolor images in the manuscript. These accounts are mines of information that offer clues to the cultural, economic, and religious environments in which the votaries were immersed. An examination of the narratives will expose parallels to literary and biblical sources, in addition to calling attention to the traces of oral culture inherent in the manuscript.

The products of visual culture that depict individuals, singly or in a group, with identifiable physical characteristics, such as recognizable facial features and particular attire, are known as portraits. A sitter's identity is reinforced when other visual or written sources support the individual represented by the painting, print, or statue. Viterbo's lost votive statues, recorded by the *Libro dei miracoli*, bear these attributes. Early modern sources have labeled votive statues as portraits, and while modern-day studies have acknowledged the earlier classifications, none have truly examined the relationship between votive offerings and portraiture. The present study is the first to consider the votive statues of Viterbo as portraits of distinct individuals.

Methodology

The methodology for this dissertation is informed by visual culture studies, in particular the scholarship of Keith Moxey.¹¹ A visual studies approach

¹¹ See Keith Moxey, *The Practice of Persuasion: Politics and Paradox in Art History* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press, 2001); the introduction to Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors, and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation*, 1-9; Moxey and Michael Ann Holly, *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Culture* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2002), Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Moxey, *The Subjects of Art History:*

allows the art historian to examine objects not traditionally embraced by art history's canon. Roberta Panzanelli's discussion of "popular" and "vernacular" art is useful in defining the votive sculpture of S. Maria della Quercia and the watercolors made after them.¹² Paula Findlen's scholarship on the early modern culture of collecting is useful in identifying the purpose of the manuscript.¹³ Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of social capital and cultural capital further reinforce my discussion of patronage.¹⁴ The analysis of the manuscript's narratives adopts the questions asked by Natalie Zemon-Davis in her study which examines the pardon tales and letters of remission submitted to authorities by sixteenth-century members of the French working class.¹⁵ She situates the court documents into larger literary traditions, oral story-telling, rituals, and historical events.

Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Norman Bryson and Michael Ann Holly, *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations* (University Press of New England [for] Wesleyan University Press, 1994), and Norman Bryson and Michael Ann Holly, *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

¹² See Roberta Panzanelli, "Beyond the Pale: Polychromy and Western Art," in *The Color of Life: Polychromy in Sculpture from Antiquity to the Present* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008), 2-14.

¹³ Paula Findlen, "Possessing the Past: The Material World of the Italian Renaissance," *American Historical Review* 103, No. 1 (Feb. 1998): 83-114.

¹⁴ See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J.G. Richardson (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Press, 2000), 241-258; "The Aristocracy of Culture," in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 1-96.

¹⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987).

Votive Sculpture: The Literature

Whereas scholarship of non-sculptural votive offerings, such as painted ex-voto panels and offerings made from silver and other precious metals is abundant, the body of literature dedicated to votive sculpture is quite small.¹⁶ In 1902 Aby Warburg was the first to utilize unpublished information relating to the production of votive sculpture in Florence, reporting on the genre's composition, workshop practices, the artists and artisans involved in votive sculpture production, how the sculpture was presented in the church of Santissima Annunziata, and what happened to the sculptures after their popularity waned.¹⁷ Writing soon after Warburg, Julius von Schlosser studies the medium of wax and its uses in creating portrait busts. His research, however, refers only to illustrious individuals.¹⁸ Scholars have located and analyzed archival records relating to the

¹⁶ In general, votive panel paintings have been examined as folk art, with the objects primarily revered as forms of local heritage. Studies for individual sites of votive offerings in Italian churches flourished in the 1970s and 1980s. Paolo Toschi lists all the sites in Italy that contain votive offerings and additionally provides the quantity and type of votive object at each location in *Bibliografia degli ex-voto in Italia* (Florence: Olschki, 1970). Grazietta Guaitini and Giulio Busti provide an exhaustive classification of all the types of misfortunes depicted in their study of the votive painted ceramic tiles offered to the Madonna dei Bagni, outside of Deruta, in *Gli ex-voto in maiolica della Chiesa della Madonna dei Bagni a Casalina presso Deruta* (Florence: Nuova Guaraldi Ed., 1983). Another extensive study representative of the scholarship on painted votive panels during this period is by Antonio Ermanno Giardino, titled *Per grazia ricevuta: le tavolette dipinte ex voto per la Madonna dell'Arco: il Cinquecento* (Naples: Ci.esse.ti cooperativa editrice, 1983). This volume documents the abundant votive offerings brought to the sanctuary of Madonna dell'Arco outside Naples. Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck approaches the ex-voto as a distinct genre whose formal characteristics can be codified into universal categories. His work focuses on painted votive panels. Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Ex Voto Zeichen, Bild Und Abbild Im Christlichen Votivbrauchtum* (Zurich: Freiburg, 1972).

¹⁷ Aby Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie. (1902)" In *Aby Warburg, The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 435-450.

¹⁸ Julius von Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax" in *Ephemeral bodies: wax sculpture and the human figure*, ed. Roberta Panzanelli (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 172-303.

Benintendi family.¹⁹ Fabio Bisognosi addresses the appearance and frequency of wax sculpture mentioned in the miracle books associated with saints.²⁰ Roberta Panzanelli explores all types of wax effigies produced in Renaissance Florence to demonstrate the popularity of this artistic form that has been ignored by the art historical canon. Her analysis considers the offerings to the Madonna of the Annunziata, life and death masks, and portrait busts.²¹ David Freedberg examines the reception of sculptural votive offerings by early modern viewers.²² The exhibition catalog associated with the restoration and display of a handful of S. Maria delle Grazie's votive statues addresses the history of the sanctuary and questions relating to pilgrimage and popular art, in addition to an in-depth consideration of the statues themselves.²³ Meghan Holmes examines the relationship between idolatry and figural votive offerings.²⁴

¹⁹ Clifford M. Brown, "Little Known and Unpublished Documents Concerning Andrea Mantegna, Bernardino Parentino, Pietro Lombardo, Leonardo da Vinci and Filippo Benintendi. (Part Two)," *L'Arte*, nos. 7-8 (1969); Gino Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze nei secoli XV-XVI e la famiglia Benintendi," *Rivista d'arte*, no. 9 (1916-1918): 124-142.

²⁰ Fabio Bisogni, "Ex voto e la scultura in cera nel tardo medioevo," in *Visions of Holiness: Art and Devotion in Renaissance Italy*, ed.s. Andrew Ladis and Shelley E. Zuraw (Athens, GA: Georgia Museum of Art, 2001), 66-91.

²¹ Roberta Panzanelli, "Compelling Presence: Wax Effigies in Renaissance Florence," in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax sculpture and the human figure* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 13-39.

²² Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, in particular chapter 7, "The Votive Image: Invoking Favor and Giving Thanks," 136-160, and chapter 9, "Verisimilitude and Resemblance: From Sacred Mountain to Waxworks," 192-145.

²³ Maria Grazia Vaccari, ed. *Mira il tuo Popolo: Statue votive del Santuario di Santa Maria delle Grazie* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1999).

²⁴ Megan Holmes, "Materiality, memory and cult," in *The Idol in the Age of Art*, ed. Michael W. Cole and Rebecca Zorach (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 159-181.

Hyperrealism in Sculpture: Problems and Questions

Early modern votive sculpture draws from sculptural traditions rooted in wax, papier-mâché, wood, and terracotta, media that have generally been overlooked by the art historical canon because of the simplicity and ephemeral nature of the material, their perceived “unrefined” quality, and the hyperrealistic details of the finished works, despite evidence that techniques tending towards extreme naturalism using the afore-mentioned media were valued by early modern artists and theorists. In his *Life of Andrea Verrocchio*, Vasari praises the illusionistic outcome of the votive offerings created by Verrocchio and Orsino Benintendi, a famed Florentine wax worker, for their client Lorenzo de’ Medici. Vasari reports that the waxed cloth used to execute the offering’s clothing was “arranged so beautifully that nothing better or more true to nature could be seen,” and the overall effect of the ex-votos was “so lifelike and so well wrought that they seem no mere images of wax, but actual living men.”²⁵

In the varied sculptural environment of early modern Italy works characterized for their idealization and naturalism were created alongside objects marked by hyperrealism. These two traditions are evident in works produced by a single artist. The high polish on and idealized rendering of the sensuous and youthful body of Donatello’s bronze David, dating to the 1430s, is contrasted to the naturalism of his polychrome wood statues of St. John the Baptist, dating to 1437 and the later Mary Magdalene, executed c. 1457. Differentiated from

²⁵ Giorgio Vasari, from the “Life of Andrea del Verrocchio,” *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Philip Jacks (Westminster, MD: Random House Adult Trade Publishing Group, 2005), 203.

David, the two saints are depicted with unkempt hair, emaciated, and wrinkled. St. John the Baptist's left eye partially closes while the wide right eye stares out at the viewer, and Mary Magdalene seems to be missing teeth. Admittedly, the canon does not dismiss all veristic art, evidenced in the previous example of Donatello, because he is considered to be one of the Western world's "great artists." Other works that can be similarly characterized by their hyperrealism often fall by the wayside of traditional art history if they were executed by lesser-known artists.

Roberta Panzanelli accurately contends that the canon's aversion to realism in early modern sculpture is rooted in the Renaissance idea that ancient Greek and Roman marble statues, which modern-day analyses have shown to have originally been painted, were monochromatic.²⁶ The revival of ancient forms during the Italian Renaissance was often reproduced in monochrome, and the writings of Leonardo da Vinci and Vincenzo Borghini express support of colorless sculpture.²⁷ Panzanelli argues further that despite archaeological discoveries in the eighteenth century that documented the historic use of polychrome in ancient Greece and Rome, contemporary art historians who embraced ancient sculpture, like Johann Joachim Winckelmann, ignored the evidence. The purity of form eclipsed the illusionism of color. Georges Didi-Huberman offers an alternative interpretation to explain why the art historical canon veers away from highly naturalistic art. The material – in this case wax

²⁶ Roberta Panzanelli, "Beyond the Pale: Polychromy and Western Art," 8-9.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

that has been illusionistically painted – is too real. It degrades quickly, possessing none of the longevity of a marble or bronze sculpture, and it renders fine detail in a highly lifelike manner that triggers uneasiness in the viewer.²⁸

Contextualizing Multimedia Sculpture in Early Modern Italy

While examples of multimedia sculpture in early modern Italy are abundant, they receive a disproportionately small amount of scholarly attention and are occasionally derided by “prominent” art historians. Frederick Hartt finds it “surprising” that Alberti names Luca della Robbia, a member of the Florentine family that produced polychrome terra-cotta tondi, in the introduction to *Della pittura* “since Luca della Robbia does not seem to belong in the same league as Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello, and Masaccio,” the other artists mentioned by Alberti.²⁹ Fortunately a number of scholars do not share Hartt’s disregard for the della Robbia family or other artists who worked in plural media.³⁰ The production of polychrome wooden statues was widespread in the wooded areas of

²⁸ Geroges Didi-Huberman, “Viscosities and Survivals. Art History Put to the Test by Material,” in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax sculpture and the human figure* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 154-169, in particular 154-156.

²⁹ Frederick Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, fourth ed. (New York: Harry M. Abrams, 1994), 242.

³⁰ See John Pope-Hennessy, *The Study and Criticism of Italian Sculpture* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), in particular Chapter 9 and *Luca della Robbia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); Joachim Poeschke, *Donatello and his World: Sculpture of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1993); Fiamma Domestici, *Della Robbia, A Family of Artists* (Florence: SCALA, 1993); Giancarlo Gentilini, *I Della Robbia e l’arte nuova della scultura invetriata* (Florence: Giunti, 1997); Giancarlo Gentilini and Liletta Fornasari, *I Della Robbia: il dialogo tra le arti nel Rinascimento* (Milan: Skira, 2009);

Northern Italy and regions in Central Italy.³¹ Articulated wooden statues that were dressed with clothing participated in processions in Tuscany.³² The tradition of placing actual clothing on statues was also practiced in early modern Rome.³³ Guido Mazzoni's painted terracotta lamentation groups in Modena and Naples, charged with high emotion and hyperrealistic detail, serve as another critical aesthetic and cultural reference for the Viterban votive sculpture.³⁴

Among the abundant examples of early modern multimedia Italian sculpture, three locations provide the closest links to the lost Viterban votive

³¹ See Max Seidel, *La scultura lignea di Giovanni Pisano* (Florence: Edam, 1971); Enrico Castelnuovo and Marco Bellabarba, *Imago lignea: sculture lignee nel Trentino dal XIII al XVI secolo* (Trent: Temi, 1989); Paolo Venturoli, *Studi sulla scultura lignea lombarda tra Quattro e Cinquecento* (Turin: U. Allemandi & Co., 2005); Pinacoteca nazionale di Siena, *Scultura dipinta: maestri di legname e pittori a Siena, 1250-1450* (Florence: Centro di, 1987); Sarah Blake McHam, *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Alessandro Parocchi, *Donatello e il potere* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1980); *The Color of Life: polychromy in sculpture from antiquity to the present*, ed. Roberta Panzanelli (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2008); Fulvio Cervini and Guido Tigler, "Dalle Alpi al Levante. La diffusione mediterranea di sculture lignee piemontesi-aostane alla fine del XIII secolo," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 41. Bd., H. 1/2 (1997), 1-32.

³² Two life-size articulated wooden sculptures reside in the Museo di Palazzo Taglieschi in the small Tuscan hill town of Anghiari. One sculpture is a female saint made of painted wood, dating to the fourteenth or fifteenth century. She wears a simple, long dress; likely the clothing is not original. Unlike the dressed statues of the Sacro Monte at Varallo, this female saint does not have real hair; rather her hair is sculpted from wood and painted. The second articulated wooden sculpture in the museum is of Saint Francis, dating to the seventeenth century, is life-size and carved from poplar. He wears a simple robe of wool, linen and cotton that is opened to reveal his body underneath. Painted undergarments cover the statue's genitalia and the marks of his stigmata are visible on his hands and feet. I am unable to provide images of the statues because of the strict no photograph policy of the museum and the highly watchful eye of a docent who directed me through the collection.

³³ See Amarilli Marcovecchio, "Il culto delle statue vestite a Roma in età pontificia," *La Ricerca Folklorica*, no. 24 (Nov. 1991): 63-71.

³⁴ For an overview of terracotta sculpture in early modern Italy see *Earth and Fire Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova*, ed. Bruce Boucher (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2001); Panzanelli, 1999 and 2008; Timothy Verdon, *The Art of Guido Mazzoni* (New York: Garland Pub., 1978) and "Guido Mazzoni in Francia: nuovi contributi," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 34, nos. 1/2 (1990):139-164; Adalgisa Lugli and Guido Mazzoni, *Guido Mazzoni e la rinascita della terracotta nel Quattrocento* (Turin: U. Allemandi, 1990); Jan Chlibec, "A Description of Guido Mazzoni's Lamentation in Venice by a Bohemian Traveller in 1493," *The Burlington Magazine* 144, no. 1186 (Jan., 2002): 19-21.

statues. Two sites contain extant sculpture: the multimedia statues of the Sacro Monte at Varallo in the Lombardy region of Northern Italy and the votive statues of the basilica of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Curtatone, a small town outside of Mantua. The lost votive offerings once filling the churches of Orsanmichele and Santissima Annunziata in Florence provide the third contextual example.

Sacro Monte at Varallo, Piedmont

The Sacro Monte at Varallo is situated in the alpine foothills of Italy's Piedmont region, erected as an alternative pilgrimage site for the faithful who were unable to make the much longer and true pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Founded in 1486 by Friar Bernardino Caimi of the Order of Observant Franciscans, the Sacro Monte at Varallo is comprised of a series of chapels whose interiors recreate moments from Christ's life and Passion and were arranged sequentially so that the pilgrims, originating from all socio-economic classes, could experience the progression in exact order of the original sites in Jerusalem.³⁵ In 1493 there were only four chapels; the number grew to 28 sites by 1514, and today 44 chapels comprise the complex of buildings. The interior of the Varallo chapels is

³⁵ Roberta Panzanelli contends that after Caimi's in 1493 his original program for the site, originally intended to be an exact replica of the sites in Jerusalem, began to change. The subsequent chapels erected in Varallo did not always find their exact counterpart in Jerusalem. See Panzanelli, *Pilgrimage in hyperreality: Images and imagination in the early phase of the "New Jerusalem" at Varallo*, Ph.d. diss. University of California Los Angeles, 1999, 132-133. ProQuest (AAT9939091).

Treatment of the Sacri Monti of the Piedmont region has traditionally been regarded by art historians as an innovative endeavor that was the result of its principal artist, Gaudenzio Ferrari. Roberta Panzanelli's dissertation of 1999 delivers a thoughtful and thorough reinterpretation of the Sacro Monte at Varallo. She disassociates it from the "great artist" model of traditional art history which constructs artistic endeavors as the result of single artist-geniuses. Rather, Panzanelli interprets the chapels as the collaborative effort of a series of artists who continued to build upon the ideas of earlier artists.

decorated in a range of two- and three-dimensional media that engages the viewer both emotionally and spiritually: the frescoed walls present a backdrop to the life-size, multimedia statues that recreate the characters from the events of Christ's life. Created out of wood and terracotta, the statues are painted and finished with an extreme illusionism that likely parallels the realistic outcomes of the Florentine and Viterban votive statues: real hair peeks from underneath head coverings and grows as beards and moustaches, and actual clothing covers the figures' bodies. Men, women, children, and animals are positioned in a variety of dramatic poses and a range of expressions mark their faces. The drama of the scene is further encouraged by the recreation of vicious and bloody wounds, again similar to what was witnessed in Viterbo.

Attributed to Gaudenzio Ferrari and dating to c. 1510, the statue of *Christ on his way to the Praetorium* is an example of the highly realistic sculpture found in Varallo. An actual branch of thorns encircles Christ's head, and Christ's hair and beard, also real, are long and unkempt. The thorns, which continue to prick Christ's head, cause blood to stream down his face and body; his torso and legs are equally marred by wounds and scratches. Christ's hands are raised in prayer at his chest and a brown cape of coarse fabric drapes over his shoulders and arms. The statue captures Christ mid-step as he is led by a chain encircling his neck to his trial before Pontius Pilate. Varallo's statues, many of which were executed approximately concurrently to the Viterban effigies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are an important extant visual source for identifying the realistic physical aspect of the statues produced in Viterbo.

Santa Maria delle Grazie, Curtatone

Situated at one end of a long, rectangular-shaped piazza, the sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Curtatone, outside of Mantua, holds just under 60 multimedia votive sculptures. Whereas the display of the Curtatone statues differs from the presentation of votive offerings in the Florentine votive sites, discussed below, and the Viterban votive offerings, the range of representations of individuals originating from all parts of the social strata, created from poor materials, is noticeably similar to the Viterban offerings.

The Franciscan church originated as an ex-voto, offered in 1399 by Francesco Gonzaga I, to a miracle-working image of the Madonna already located at the site that would eventually become the church. His offering, one of many to the Madonna delle Grazie, was made to express gratitude for the end of a plague that had killed numerous inhabitants in nearby Mantua. In 1517 the Franciscan friar Francesco da Acquaneira came up with a genial idea to display and venerate the countless offerings to the Madonna that had accumulated over the years. He designed the decorative scaffolding, painted Pompeian red, which contours the single nave of the church. It provides an aesthetic structural support for the two rows of figural ex-votos; additionally, it creates a frame for the statues that differentiates them as separate, artistic entities. The scaffolding's conception occurred the same year as Martin Luther's break with the Catholic Church. While there is no clear connection between the two events, the Catholic orders in Italy certainly were aware of the anti-Catholic sentiments brewing to the north. It

cannot be dismissed that the decision to display the objects dedicated to the miracle-working Mary was in defense of the Catholic religion.

Thousands of smaller wax ex-votos are adhered to the surface of the scaffolding. These small votive offerings, ranging from two to three inches in length, take the shape of swaddled babies, hands, hearts, faces, breasts, buboes, and shell-shaped pilgrim badges. Yellow in color, the wax ex-votos contrast with the reddish surface to which they cling, causing the objects to be even more visible. As a whole they appear as repeating organic patterns on the scaffolding and contribute to the overall decorative element in the church.

The design and display of the votive statues additionally recalls the early modern culture of collection.³⁶ Churches traditionally have been sites of collection that housed reliquaries, devotional objects, and precious jewels. Reliquaries at the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie include a fragment of the rope used to tie Jesus to the cross, a piece of wood from his cross, part of Mary's veil, and a number of bones from various saints and martyrs.³⁷ The Gonzaga family may have also begun a collection of curious natural objects during the sixteenth century: Ferdinando Gonzaga, the duke of Mantua from 1612-1626, created the Galleria delle Metamorfosi to display his family's assemblage of curiosities.

³⁶ See Paula Findlen, "Possessing the Past: The Material World of the Italian Renaissance" and *Possessing Nature. Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: a new history of the Renaissance* (New York: Nan A. Talese, 1996).

³⁷ Attilio Zanca, "Proposta di interpretazione di un raro complesso votivo," in *Mira il tuo popolo: statue votive del Santuario di Santa Maria delle Grazie: Mantova, Palazzo Ducale, 11 febbraio-2 aprile 2000* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1999), 44.

Acquanegra also is responsible for creating the small votive offerings in wax and the larger votive statues, although he likely received assistance from other monks as he was in his 80s around the year 1520.³⁸ The statues were constructed of an inner wooden support structure over which layers of paper and cloth, bonded together with starch and animal glue, were draped. Next the exterior was prepared with a layer of gesso and animal glue, and finally the figures were painted. The statues are of two dimensions: some are almost life-size, other are smaller. Many statues were executed to be viewed in the round, despite their placement in a niche that prevented the back of the statue from being seen; others, however, were not constructed in the round and remain unfinished on the back.

Most of the surviving information about the sixteenth century statues and the friar-artist Acquanegra comes from Ippolito Donesmondi, also a brother of the Franciscan order. In 1603 he composed the history of the church and its votive decorations, *Historia dell'origine, fondatione et progressi del famosissimo Temio di S. Maria delle Grazie in campagna di Curtatone fuori di Mantova*, after Margaret of Austria, the daughter of emperor Charles V, visited the sanctuary in 1598 and requested an illustrated book that she could take back with her to Spain in order to maintain the memory of her visit. Donesmondi admits that he had to rely on the memories of the oldest friars in the church to compose his history as

³⁸ Donesmondi names Acquanegra, who was “already 80 years old or so,” (“già ottanta anni o sono, in circa”) around the year 1520, as the one who decided to create and arrange the small, wax votive offerings in a decorative manner on the scaffolding. Reported by Carlo Prandi, “Il Santuario e il suo pubblico, storia e modello,” in *Santa Maria delle Grazie : sei secoli mantovani di arte storia e devozione*, ed. Giuseppe Papagno (Mantua: Editoriale Sometti, 1999), 54.

there were not many documents that recorded precise information on the illustrious pilgrims who had left their offerings at the church.³⁹

Each statue represents a distinct personality, both socially and physically. Similar to the statues in Viterbo, the Curtatone offerings represent individuals from a range of socio-economic classes who had both local and foreign origins. Popes, kings, emperors, princesses, noble men and women, a self-portrait of Brother Acquanegra, a variety of individuals from different religious orders, soldiers, condemned criminals, and an executioner stand side by side on the wooden scaffold and exhibit myriad physical characteristics. The viewer witnesses beards of all varieties and lengths, full and thin moustaches, hairstyles, dress, hats, weapons, armor, wrinkles, warts, expressions of fear, reverence, contentedness, and a range of positions and gestures. It is important to note that the statues underwent an extensive restoration in the 1990s. Certain garments are original but repainted: during the restoration process the restorers found some of the earliest clothing to be in fairly good condition, likely thanks to the layers of material and grime added to the statues over time.⁴⁰ When the original garments were not present or too deteriorated to be recovered, the restorers attempted to make them historically accurate using archival evidence or traces of the original costume found on the object.

³⁹ Carlo Prandi, "Il Santuario e il suo pubblico, storia e modello," in *Santa Maria delle Grazie : sei secoli mantovani di arte storia e devozione*, 54. The importance of oral memory will be addressed in later chapters as Tommaso Bandi also relied on oral accounts of miracles when composing the narratives in the *Libro dei miracoli*.

⁴⁰ Anna Bianchi, Ilaria Conti, Paolo Cremonesi, Alessandro and Sebastiano Genovesi, Giulia Rossi, and Loredana Zoni, "Le sculture e l'impalcata: problemi e metodi di intervento per i manufatti polimerici," in *Mira il tuo popolo*, 65.

One statue, dating to the sixteenth century and attributed to Brother Acquanegra, represents a man condemned to death. Kneeling under a wooden structure, a rope encircles his neck and the moment captured is just before the rope would be pulled taut. He gazes solemnly out to where the congregation of the church would stand. Shortly-cropped hair and the first signs of returning facial hair characterize his youthful, unlined face. His clothing appears expensive: the epaulettes of his doublet are detailed, gold paint resembling embroidery decorates his doublet, and further decoration adorns his pantaloons. His right hand, crossed over his heart, holds a votive tablet painting of the Madonna and child in a touching gesture that indicates his enduring devotion.

Adhered to the scaffolding underneath each niche is a tondo upon which the narrative explanation for the miracle depicted above is written. The combination of image and writing is characteristic of painted votive panel paintings (further discussed in chapter 3), and the narratives of S. Maria delle Grazie recall both the explanatory papers attached to some of the Viterban statues and the narrations that accompany the watercolors in the *Libro dei miracoli*. Absent from the narratives in Curtatone are the names of the votaries, apart from some instances of celebrated votaries like Pope Pius II and Emperor Charles V.

It has been suggested that the idea for Curtatone's votive statues originated in Florence. Francesco II Gonzaga was familiar with the Florentine tradition of life-size, figural votive statues: he offered his wax effigy to the Madonna of the Annunziata in the fifteenth century and may have encouraged a

similar practice at S. Maria delle Grazie.⁴¹ His wife, the Isabella d'Este, also left her offering for the Madonna of the Annunziata in 1507. The Gonzaga may have also been familiar with the art and concept of the Sacro Monte at Varallo: both religious sites were administered by the Franciscan order, and Mantua and Varallo share a relatively close proximity to each other. Finally, in 1482 Paolo Attavanti, a Servite from SS. Annunziata left the order to work for the Gonzaga in Mantua and may have shared his knowledge of the Annunziata's figural ex-votos with his new employer.⁴²

Florence: Orsanmichele and Santissima Annunziata

Votive offerings at early modern Florentine churches served civic, political, religious, and artistic purposes; furthermore, information pertaining to the city's ex-votos is well documented and the objects are among the most studied votive offerings in Italy. Two churches in early modern Florence were the most prominent recipients of votive effigies: the church of Orsanmichele and the Basilica of Santissima Annunziata. The offerings produced for these two sites are particularly important for this study because of strong connections between the artists employed by the Florentine and Viterban waxworks.

⁴¹ See Renzo Margonari, "L'interno. Arte colta-arte popolare. L'impalcata. Guida alla visione." in *Santuario della Madonna delle Grazie presso Mantova*, eds. Renzo Margonari and Attilio Zanca (Mantua: Gizetta, 1973), 102.

⁴² "Attavani, Paolo (al secondo Francesco)," Alberto Maria Ghisalberti, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 4 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1962); Aristide Serra, O.S.M., "Memoria di Fra Paolo Attavanti," in *Bibliografia dell'Ordine dei Servi*, vol. I, eds. Giuseppe Besutti and Aristide Serra (Bologna: Centro di Studi O.S.M., 1971), 232; see Holmes, "Ex-Votos: Materiality, Memory and Cult," 171.

Orsanmichele

Before the Basilica of Santissima Annunziata became Florence's most popular votive offering site, the church of Orsanmichele and its miraculous image of the Madonna were major recipients of votive effigies. Orsanmichele is a unique space that historically mixed religious and civic functions. Its earliest origins were that of a thirteenth-century female monastery that included agricultural land. In the mid-thirteenth century a small oratory was erected dedicated to San Michele Archangelo, and in the late thirteenth century the church was transformed into the home of Florence's grain market.⁴³ An image of the Madonna created in the late thirteenth century watched over the merchants and customers of the market. Known as the *Madonna del Popolo*, she earned a reputation for her miracle-working abilities and soon Orsanmichele became not only a center of commerce but also a site of popular devotion. In his chronicle of early fourteenth-century Florence Dino Compagni mentions the "many wax images" left for the *Madonna del Popolo*.⁴⁴ This popular devotional practice was the subject of scorn for some authors. In the fourteenth century, Franco Sacchetti derides the practice of leaving *ex-votos* at Florentine churches. "And I the writer," he sneers in Novella CIX of his compilation of stories detailing

⁴³ For the history of Orsanmichele see Carl Brandon Strehlke, *Orsanmichele and the History and Preservation of the Civic Monument* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2012); Trevor Dean, *The Towns of Italy in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000); Diane Finiello Zervas and Paola Grifoni, *Orsanmichele a Firenze* (Modena: F.C. Panini, 1996); John Henderson, *Piety and Charity in Late Medieval Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁴⁴ Dino Compagni, *Cronica: Delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suoi* (Milan: Biblioteca universale Rizzoli, 1982), 193.

fourteenth-century Florentine life, the *Trecentonovelle*, “just saw a man that having lost his cat, vowed, if he were to find her, would send her [image] in wax to our Lady of Orto San Michele, and so he did.”⁴⁵ His mockery of the popular practice of leaving votive effigies underscores how diffuse and, at times, distorted the custom had become, and in his words, “every day votive effigies like these are made, which are more idolatry than Christian faith.”⁴⁶ After a fire destroyed the grain market in 1304, the space was converted back to an ecclesiastic entity. Rebuilding of the church began in 1337. The miraculous image of the *Madonna del Popolo*, destroyed in the fire, was replaced in 1347 with Bernardo Daddi’s panel painting of *Madonna delle Grazie* and continued to receive devotional offerings.

Santissima Annunziata

In the first half of the fifteenth century popularity for the Orsanmichele Madonna waned and a crisis of religious fervor overcame the miraculous image of the Madonna inside the basilica of Santissima Annunziata. Sachetti acknowledges the shift in votive offerings to the Annunziata in a letter that

⁴⁵ Sachetti was an author and poet, in addition to serving in public office in Florence and other Italian cities. “E io scrittore vidi già uno ch’aveva perduto una gatta botarsi, se la ritrovasse, mandarla di cera a nostra Donna d’Orto San Michele, e così fece.” Franco Sacchetti, *Trecentonovelle* (Rome: Salerno, 1996), 330-331. Unless otherwise noted all translations are by the author.

⁴⁶ “Di questo boti e di simili ogni dí si fanno, li quali sono più tosto una idolatria che fede cristiana.” Ibid, 330.

condemns the priests for “encouraging harmful superstitions”⁴⁷ by allowing ex-votos to be placed in churches. He continues, disparaging those who “abandon all [the other Madonnas]” in favor of the Madonna of the Annunziata. The quantity of ex-votos “placed and stuck” to the walls of the Annunziata became so numerous that “if the walls had not been recently reinforced” both the walls and the roof would have fallen down.⁴⁸

Among the numerous effigies offered to the Madonna of the Annunziata was one recognized by every Florentine: the ex-voto of Lorenzo de’ Medici. During High Mass on April 26, 1478, political rivals of the Medici family attempted to kill both Lorenzo and his brother, Giuliano di Piero, in the basilica of Santa Maria dei Fiori. The assassins succeeded in killing Giuliano, but Lorenzo de’ Medici, with a stab wound to his neck, survived the attempt on his life. Giorgio Vasari, in his 1568 publication of *Le vite degli artisti*, describes the three life-size votive effigies ordered by Lorenzo’s friends and family to express their gratitude for Lorenzo’s security after the attempt on Lorenzo’s life. One figure, draped in the bloody clothes Lorenzo wore during the attack, was placed in the church of the Chiarito nuns on Via San Gallo, in front of the miracle-working crucifix.⁴⁹ The second ex-voto wore a *lucco*, the costume of affluent Florentine

⁴⁷ Noted by Guido Mazzoni, *I bo’ ti della SS. Annunziata in Firenze; curiosita storica* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1923), 21.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ “...una delle quali è nella chiesa delle monache di Chiarito in via di S. Gallo, dinanzi al Crucifisso che fa miracoli.” Vasari, *Le vite*, 179.

citizens, and was placed in the basilica of Santissima Annunziata.⁵⁰ The Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi received the third votive offering that was placed in front of that church's miraculous Madonna.⁵¹

Vasari's account of Lorenzo de' Medici's votive effigies provides clear details of the ex-voto production process and the physical appearance of the offerings. The statues commissioned for Lorenzo de' Medici were made by Orsino Benintendi, part of a renowned family of Florentine wax workers,⁵² with the "help and guidance of" Andrea del Verrocchio.⁵³ Vasari details the elaborate process by which the ex-votos were made:

the skeleton within of wood...interwoven with splint reeds, then covered by waxed cloth folded so beautifully and aptly that nothing better, or more true to nature, could be seen. Then he made the heads, hands and feet with wax of greater thickness, but hollow within, and portrayed from life and painted in oils with all the ornaments of hair and everything else that was necessary, so lifelike and so well-wrought that they seem not to represent men made of wax, but so lifelike, as one can see in each of the said three [statues].⁵⁴

⁵⁰ "...è in lucco, abito civile e proprio de' fiorentini; e questa, è nella chiesa de' Servi alla Nunziata..." Ibid, 180.

⁵¹ Vasari describes the connection Lorenzo and his grandfather, Cosimo, had with the city of Assisi. Lorenzo repaired the street leading from S. Maria degli Angeli to the basilica of S. Francis of Assisi and also restored the fountains built by his grandfather. "La terza fu mandata a S. Maria degl'Angeli d'Ascesi, e posta dinanzi a quella Madonna. Nel qual luogo medesimo, come già si è detto, esso Lorenzo de' Medici fece mattonare tutta la strada che camina da S. Maria alla porta d'Ascesi, che va a S. Francesco, e parimente restaurare le fonti che Cosimo suo avolo aveva fatto fare in quel luogo." Ibid.

⁵² See Gino Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze nei secoli XV-XVI e la famiglia Benintendi," 124-42.

⁵³ Vasari, *Le vite*, 179.

⁵⁴ "facendo dentro l'ossatura di legname, come altrove si è detto, et intessuta di canne spaccate, ricoperte poi di panno incerato con bellissime pieghe e tanto acconciamente, che non si può veder meglio, né cosa più simile al naturale. Le teste, poi, mani e piedi, fece di cera più grossa, ma vote dentro, e ritratte dal vivo e dipinte a olio con quelli ornamenti di capelli et altre cose secondo che bisognava, naturali e tanto ben fatti, che rappresentavano non più uomini di cera, ma vivissimi, come si può vedere in ciascuna delle dette tre." Ibid, 180.

Lorenzo de' Medici's votive offering at the Annunziata was one of many effigies of illustrious individuals that populated the church. The votive statues that adorned the church's walls, arches, columns, and rafters presented a sampling of elite individuals from Florentine society and those originating from beyond the city's borders.⁵⁵ Santissima Annunziata's votive offerings were not displayed in the unique and genial scaffolding utilized at S. Maria delle Grazie, yet similar to the deliberate arrangement of figures in Santa Maria delle Grazie, the effigies at the Annunziata were organized chronologically and according to rank. One side of the church displayed the effigies of noble Florentines wearing lay clothing.⁵⁶ The other side of the church held the sculptural offerings of memorable foreigners: popes, cardinals, aristocrats, emperors, kings, and other nobles.⁵⁷ Captains, mercenaries, soldiers and famous warriors were in another area.⁵⁸ One prominent effigy offered by a foreigner to the Annunziata's Madonna came from Isabella d'Este. Her husband and ruler of the northern Italian city of Mantua, Francesco II Gonzaga, had earlier established a familial connection to the church of the Annunziata by funding the building of a chapel and making offerings in the form of a silver portrait of himself and a wax statue of himself. Isabella

⁵⁵ Contrary to the range of individuals originating from many socio-economic classes in Viterbo, on January 20, 1401, the Florentine Signoria mandated that only citizens, "uomo di Repubblica," who ranked high enough to hold membership in a senior guild were allowed to offer an ex-voto at the Annunziata. Adreucci, quoted by Aby Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," 204, 219.

⁵⁶ "...con lucchi e vesti talari adosso alla civile." Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore, *Firenze città nobilissima* (?; Forni, 1684), 286.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

commissioned Filippo Benintendi to create her effigy, which led to controversy: it took over two years for Isabella to pay for the statue. Filippo wrote a letter to the Marchesa, dated December 25, 1507, kindly beseeching her to settle her two-year-old debt to him for “one of the most beautiful images that there is and placed in one of the most beautiful locations” in the church.⁵⁹ Benintendi’s letter indicates the discounted price he asked for the effigy, 25 gold ducati.⁶⁰ “If it had been anyone else,” he notes, “he would have paid 50 ducati.”⁶¹

Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two explores archival, written, and physical evidence in order to recreate the long-neglected statues of S. Maria della Quercia. The detailed records maintained by Tommaso Bandoni while serving as sacristan of S. Maria della Quercia are a font of information relating to some of the original statues, providing evidence about moneys exchanged and materials used. Some of Bandoni’s writings in the *Libro dei miracoli* additionally offer clues to the original appearance of the statues. This chapter will explore the connections between the wax workers of the famous Florentine Benintendi family and their relatives working in Viterbo. Administrative records of the church of S. Maria

⁵⁹ “Fa ora circa due anni che la S. V. venne qui a Firenze alla Annunziata e che mi facesti fare una imagine a vostra similitudine che è delle belle magine che vi sieno e fatta porre nel più bello luoco che sia in quella chiesa...” Maria Grazia Vaccari, “Arte popolare: livelli e dislivelli nelle emmagini votive,” in *Mira il tuo popolo*, 59-61; Mazzoni, *I bo’ ti della SS. Annunziata in Firenze: curiosita storica*, 23.

⁶⁰ Mazzoni, *I bo’ ti della SS. Annunziata in Firenze: curiosita storica*, 23.

⁶¹ “...che se fussi stato un altro n’arebe voluto duc. 50.” Ibid.

della Quercia indicate that members of this family executed some of the figures in an extant nativity scene still housed in the church today, and an examination of these life-size, multimedia statues points to a likely resemblance between them and the lost votive statues. Two additional extant multimedia figures housed in the church's museum, along with various structural parts that likely came from votive statues, provide further evidence for the statues' appearance.

The purpose of Chapter Three is to introduce the *Libro dei miracoli*. In this chapter I locate this singular manuscript in greater early modern cultural movements: the culture of collecting and encyclopedic thought of early modern Italy, and the culture of Counter Reformation art in Italy. Although the manuscript is a prized possession of the church of S. Maria della Quercia, I consider the ways that it served as a practical object used for reference. This chapter examines the artist, Vincenzo Panicale, and the author, Tommaso Bandoni.

Pictorial and textual analyses of the manuscript's watercolors and texts, along with an exploration of votary identity, begin in Chapter Four. This chapter examines a selection of three images and related texts depicting female votaries. The representation of women in the manuscript demonstrates that women originating from a range of classes purchased votive statues and can be regarded as patrons of art.

Chapter Five explores four representations of men originating from distinct socio-economic classes, disproving the notion that portraiture is an artistic genre reserved for the elite and moneyed classes. Additionally, the narratives

accompanying the images in this chapter are particularly rich in information that allows for a deep investigation into votary identity.

In Chapter Six I analyze a number of parallels to popular religion and literature found in two images and narratives. This chapter demonstrates how wide-reaching cultural influences leave their mark in religious testimonies.

Chapter Seven concludes the dissertation by exploring the theory that votive statues can be regarded as a type of portraiture available to both genders from all socio-economic levels of early modern Italian culture. The traditional definition and function of a portrait will be compared to the ex-votos presented in earlier chapters. Whereas the visual portrayal of the votaries is simultaneously generic and specific, the text accompanying the image clearly identifies the votary by name and place of origin, it focuses on the unique actions of that individual and the hardship he or she faced that led to the offering made to the Madonna della Quercia. By problematizing the canonical understanding of portraiture, the genre is able to expand and include members of all socio-economic classes.

Chapter 2

RECREATING THE VITERBAN EFFIGIES

In the scholastic niche of early modern votive sculpture the lost effigies of a few Florentine churches have received considerable attention. The archival mining and analysis of Aby Warburg, Julius von Schlosser, Gino Masi, and Guido Mazzoni at the beginning of the twentieth century first brought attention to the lost works, and investigations of them have been revived by several scholars in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.⁶² Prior to this present study the connection between the waxworks of Florence and Viterbo remained unexplored. Investigating the relationship both sheds light on a major center of sculptural votive offerings that flourished in Viterbo and further reinforces the widespread popularity of votive statuary in the early modern period. Conversely, the abundant records of the lost Viterban statues, which include information on their construction, cost, who purchased them, their placement in the church, and of course the watercolor reproductions of them, enriches established scholarship of the Florentine votive practice. After examining the link between the Florentine

⁶² See Aby Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 435-450; Julius Von Scholsser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2008), 172-303; Gino Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze nei secoli XV-XVI e la famiglia Benintendi," *Rivista d'arte* 9, no. 2(1916/1918): 124-142; Guido Mazzoni, *I bo'ti della SS. Annunziata in Firenze; curiosità storica* (Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1923); for recent works see Roberta Panzanelli "Compelling Presence: Wax Effigies in Renaissance Florence," in *Ephemeral Bodies*, 13-39; Georges Didi-Huberman, "Viscosities and Survivals," in *Ephemeral Bodies*, 154-169; Fabio Bisogni, "Ex Voto e la Scultura in Cera nel Tardo Medioevo," in *Visions of Holiness* (Athens, GA: Georgia Museum of Art, 2001), 66-91; Megan Holmes, "Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult," in *The Idol in the Age of Art*, ed. Michael W. Cole and Rebecca Zorach (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 159-182; Alfredo Bellandi, "Plasticatori e ceraioli a Firenze tra Quattro e Cinquecento," in *Le arti fiorentine: la grande storia dell'artigianato* (Firenze: Giunti, 2003), 186-223; Robert Maniura, "Ex Votos, Art and Pious Performance," *Oxford Art Journal* 32:3, 2009, 409-425; Andrea Daninos, ed, *Avere una bella cera, Le figure in cera a Venezia e in Italia* (Milano: Officina Libraria, 2012).

and Viterban waxworks, this chapter will look at the presence of the Benintendi family in both cities, and concluding with an analysis of the lost sculptures' physical characteristics and similarities they may have shared with extant objects.

Early Ties between Florence and Viterbo

On December 8, 1468, the custodians of affairs related to the Madonna della Quercia's miracles, *i santesi*, agreed to open a wax workshop, *bottega della cera*, next to the church of S. Maria della Quercia that would serve the increasing numbers of faithful who wanted to express their gratitude at that Marian shrine. Viterban civic authorities granted two artisans specializing in wax, Giovanni del fu Petruccio Cifarella and his son, Battista, the right to build and operate the workshop, but which would still be overseen by the church's *santesi*.⁶³ The contract between the city and the artisans obliged the two men to observe certain conditions: the workshop was required to have at least 100 pounds of wax on hand at all times, in addition to being well-stocked in all other goods; Giovanni and his son were permitted to hire additional workers who would be paid by the *santesi* and Giovanni; a person whom Giovanni and his son trusted could temporarily operate the workshop should the two owners fall ill; the workshop needed to have a safe, closed by two separate locks, where monies paid for votive objects would be kept, with one key maintained by Giovanni and his son and the

⁶³ A.S.V., Notarile di Acquapendente, no. Benigno fu Ludovico Benigni da Camerino, prot. 172, cc. 98- 100.

other guarded by a *santese*; and every month the profits earned by the workshop would be split between Giovanni and the church of S. Maria della Quercia.⁶⁴

The popularity and ingenuity of Florence's sculptural wax effigies had a wide reach in the fifteenth century, witnessed in the numerous offering left to the Madonna of the Annunziata by both Florentines and foreigners alike. Viterbans may have learned of the Florentine practice for that same reason; alternatively, Viterbo's geographic proximity to Florence, or communication between ecclesiastic organizations, brought knowledge of the statues to Viterbo. An entry in the accounting records of S. Maria della Quercia, dating to September 7, 1500, reports that a brother of the church, Antonio della Scappella purchased a number of items for the waxworks while in Florence: "a baby made of wood, two wooden heads, a female [form] in wood: these are models to create wax statues."⁶⁵ By the year 1500 Florence's culture of wax votive statuary was fully-established as wax workers had been producing effigies since at least the early fifteenth century. Workshops would have been equipped with the provisions necessary for their manufacture. The practice in Viterbo, however, was younger than its counterpart to the north; the administrative entry confirms that as the only workshop in town it relied on the Florentine market to furnish some of the items required to generate the statues.

⁶⁴ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 7.

⁶⁵ "...a dì 7 settembre 1500, et più per cose [che] comperò frate Antonio della Scappella a Firenze per la sacrestia et per la ponticha della cera, cioè...un bambino di legno, du capi di legno, una feminella di legno: queste sono forme da formare imagine di cera." A.S.M.Q. vol 152, c. 226.

The Benintendi

In 1518 the administrative records of S. Maria della Quercia indicate that Niccolò Benintendi earned a monthly salary of five gold ducats in the workshop associated with the church, but the history of the Benintendi began well over a century earlier in Florence. The earliest-known member of the Benintendi family occupied with wax working in Florence is Jacopo (the elder), likely born in 1377;⁶⁶ the last members of the family to practice the art of wax craft were born in the early sixteenth century. Known also by the surnames of del Ceraiuolo (of the Wax workers) and Fallimmagini (the Image makers), the family owned multiple workshops that were located on the Corso Adimari and the Via de' Servi, close to the church that became famous for its figural votive offerings, Santissima Annunziata. Florentine tax records indicate that the Benintendi lived near the church of Santa Croce.⁶⁷ The family's success is further confirmed by membership of some of its members to the guild of Physicians and Pharmacists (*Arte dei Medici e Speziali*).⁶⁸

Particular members of the Florentine Benintendi stand out for achieving a significant amount of fame, among them Orsino (b. either 1432 or 1440) who was named by Vasari in the *Life of Andrea del Verrocchio* as the creator of Lorenzo de' Medici's three life-size wax effigies that he requested after the attempt on his life by members of the Pazzi family. Additional effigies made by Orsino for other

⁶⁶ E. J. Pyke, *Biographical Dictionary of Wax Modellers* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973), 12.

⁶⁷ Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze," 126.

⁶⁸ A.S.F., Ancisa GG, c. 590 t.; c.f. Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze," 126 and Alfredo Bellandi, "Plasticatori e ceraioli a Firenze," 192.

illustrious patrons include Pope Alexander VI, a king of Navarre, and Ladislaus VI, King of Hungary.⁶⁹ Filippo Benintendi (b. 1449) completed an effigy for Isabella d'Este, and a clay effigy of Giovanni de' Medici has been attributed to Orsino's son, Antonio Benintendi.

The first mention of the Benintendi in Viterbo is in May of 1517 when the account records of S. Maria della Quercia indicate "two gold ducats paid to wax worker master Mariotto [who] brought his son Benintendi."⁷⁰ A second reference indicates that Niccolò Benintendi received a monthly salary of five gold ducats in 1518.⁷¹ Before the arrival of the Benintendi in Viterbo ownership of the workshop passed from the original proprietor, Giovanni, to the Dominican order that was responsible for the church of S. Maria della Quercia; at a later date, however, ownership of the workshop must have been handed to the Benintendi. Tax records from the workshops located "to the right of the Church's exit" ("*a man'dextra al uscir' di Chiesa*") show that Domenico Benintendi paid taxes between 1553-1565,⁷² and in 1568.⁷³ The records from 1570 plainly confirm that

⁶⁹ For effigies executed by Orsino see Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze," 132-133 and 141-142; see also E.J. Pyke, *Biographical Dictionary of Wax Modellers*, 12. The Benintendi are among the most celebrated wax workers in Florence, but certainly not the only artists to work with wax.

⁷⁰ "...ducati due d'oro paghati a maestro mariotto ceraiuolo...portò Benintendi suo figliolo..." A.S.M.Q. vol. 117, c. 15.

⁷¹ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 9.

⁷² The specific year of this particular document which lists "Domenico fiorentino" of the "bottega di cera" is unclear, but it is part of a series of tax records dated from 1553-1565. *Catasto delle botteghe nel Campo Graziano dal 1553-1565*, vol. 109, c. 88. The document also lists the numerical amount paid in tax, 1138, but the currency is not indicated in the document. A later tax document, dating to 1570 (see note 12), specifies the currency owed to the municipal authorities as *scudi*; likely the amount of 1138 is also *scudi*.

“Domenico di Bastiano Benintendi, Florentine, resident of Viterbo, must give [...] 45 *scudi* for the year.”⁷⁴ Domenico’s payment of taxes indicates that his workshop was independent or semi-independent of the church. In 1609 the last of the Viterban *ceraiuoli*, master Matteo, left for Naples to become a hermit.⁷⁵ His departure reflects a decline in popularity of life-size votive offerings, also confirmed by Vasari in his *Vita* of 1568 when he wrote that at the time the practice of life-size votive effigies was going out of style.⁷⁶

Physical Qualities of the Statues

Written and Visual Evidence

Vasari provided a lengthy description of the composition of the Florentine votive offerings (previously discussed in Chapter 1), describing an internal structure comprised of wood and supported with splint reeds that was next covered with waxed cloth; the heads, hands, and feet of the sculptures were made with wax of varying thicknesses, but left hollow.⁷⁷ Real hair and clothing completed the life-like character of the effigies. Body parts were formed using molds, confirmed by the afore-mentioned entry in S. Maria della Quercia’s

⁷³ “Domenico di Bastiano Benintendi fiorentino habitat in Viterbo, debbe dare al [...] scudi quarantacinque/ano.” *Catasto delle botteghe nel Campo Graziano*, vol. 109, c.137 and 138.

⁷⁴ *Catasto delle botteghe nel Campo Graziano*, vol. 110, c.137 and 138.

⁷⁵ *Catasto delle botteghe livellate nel Campo Graziano dal 1595-1619*, vol. 111, c.50 and 51. It is unclear whether this master Matteo was part of the Benintendi family.

⁷⁶ “Questa arte, ancora che si sia mantenuta viva insino a’ tempi nostri, è nondimeno più tosto in declinazione che altrimenti, o perché sia mancata la divozione o per altra cagione che si sia.” Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1966, 1568), 178.

⁷⁷ Vasari, *Le vite*, 179; see note 54, Chapter 1.

administrative records which describes the wooden molds that were purchased for the Viterban waxworks. The Viterban records also reveal additional facts about the materials used for constructing the effigies. Documentation regarding one of the church's major votive sculptures, the effigy of Giovanni Battista Spiriti, lists an array of items purchased for the work:

...gesso, various types of nails for part of the wooden structure, glue, rosin for the clothing fabric,...gold and silver swords, linseed oil, nails for the horse, thick pieces of leather for reinforcement, a pair of stirrups, a pair of spurs, a bridle, the belt and brass for part of the iron and the structure, that is to say under the base and bars for the brushes, a mold for the spear...⁷⁸

The actual clothing in which the statues were dressed personalized the effigies and increased their veristic character. Vasari informs his readers that one effigy of Lorenzo de' Medici was dressed in *lucco*, a sleeveless garment worn by wealthy Florentines. The *ceraiuoli* did not typically create the clothing and instead purchased actual garments from tailors or *rigattieri*, second-hand clothing sellers. On December 20, 1480, Pagholo di Zanobi Benintendi acquired a *cioppa foderata* for 20 lire from Bastiano, a *rigattiere* in the Mercato Vecchio.⁷⁹ Another document also confirms that the *ceraiuoli* typically did not make the clothing which dressed the figures. A contract between the Vicar of the church of Santissima Annunziata and Archangelo di Zoane di Benintendi specifies that the *ceraiuolo* would "paint and color the said images at his own expense, providing

⁷⁸ "...gesso aguti di più sorte per parte di legname per cholla pece greca per la tela del vestito dellomo cholori di piu ragioni oro et argento spade olio di linoseme chode di chavallo fogli grossi pelle pel fornimento, un paio di staffe un paio di sproni una brigl[i]a il cinto et bolloni d'ottone per parte di ferro et tavolatura c[i]oe sotto la base et spranghe per pennegli stagnuolo fattura di spade..." A.S.M.Q. vol 116, c. 65:

⁷⁹ A.S.F., Conv. Cit. F^a cit. c. 170t.; see Masi, "La ceroplastica in Firenze," 139.

hair, beards, and all other items pertaining to the painter's work except for fabrics."⁸⁰

Early modern sources regard wax effigies as both pleasing and unsightly. Filippo Benintendi's letter to Isabella d'Este describes her effigy as "one of the most beautiful images that there is," and also situated in prime location in the church of Santissima Annunziata.⁸¹ It cannot be forgotten that Filippo had an agenda when corresponding with Isabella d'Este: in defining her effigy as beautiful he promoted himself, his talent, and his craft. Moreover, his correspondence was an attempt to obtain money owed to him. Vasari praised Orsino Benintendi's effigies of Lorenzo de' Medici for being "so lifelike and so well wrought that they seem no mere images of wax, but actual living men."⁸² Whereas some critics admired the naturalistic qualities of the effigies, other individuals were offended by the verisimilitude. The "painterly eye" of the Florentine artist Lodovico Cardi, known as "il Cigoli," was so upset by the papier-mâché limbs suspended in the shops selling ex-votos on the Via dei Servi that he found a different route to arrive at church of Santissima Annunziata.⁸³

⁸⁰ "Item che le dette ymagine le debia depingere e cholorire a sue spexe e de suo cholori e sue chapigliare e barbe e tute l'altre chosse che apartengono al depintore salvo che lavorare di brocato." A.S.F., SS. Annunziata, No. 48, "Ricordanze 1439-1484," fol. 13^r ff.; see Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," 205-206.

⁸¹ "...e delle belle magine che vi sieno..." Mazzoni, *I bo'ti della SS. Annunziata in Firenze*, 23. For the full text of the quote see Chapter 1, note 59.

⁸² "...che non si può veder meglio, né cosa più simile al naturale." "... naturali e tanto ben fatti, che rappresentavano non più uomini di cera, ma vivissimi..." Vasari, *Le vite*, 179.

⁸³ Related by Filippo Baldinucci, *Opere di Filippo Baldinucci* (Milan: Società tipografica de' classici italiani, 1808-1812), 5:147; see Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 230 and note 22, 243.

The artistic value of the full-size effigies cannot be based on perceived beauty; rather, the skill required to fashion a votive figure, along with the process and work that went into its creation, denotes it as a work of art.

Nativity Scene in S. Maria della Quercia

The watercolors in the *Libro dei miracoli* present intricate visual details of the statues' physical appearance in a two-dimensional format. Perhaps the closest three-dimensional, sculptural source for the lost Viterban statues can be found in the figures populating a Nativity scene in the church of S. Maria della Quercia.⁸⁴ Work on the scene, which is placed in a large niche along the left side of the nave, began in 1545. The niche, with walls made to resemble rough stone, houses eight figures and one animal: currently (as Nativity figures are often rearranged) Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus sit along the left side of the niche, and across from the holy family, on the right side of the space, stand the three Magi. Two angels appear to hover above both groups of figures, and a donkey lies to the right of Joseph.

It is unsure whether the present figures in the Nativity scene are original. The exposed flesh of the figures – faces and hands – is smooth and glossy and may be made of wax, terracotta, or carved wood that was later painted. An annotation in the records indicates that the donkey is carved of wood by a

⁸⁴ For an overview of the history of Nativity scenes on the Italian peninsula see Michele Ruggiero, *Il presepe italiano: storia di un costume* (Turin: Il capitello, 1988).

carpenter (*legnaiolo*) known as Master Silvestro.⁸⁵ Differing from what is known of the votive sculptures that occupied nearby spaces, the figures of holy family and the Magi have painted hair rather than real hair. Mary, and the two angels situated above the central figures, however, have hair that appears to be real, or, if not real, comprised of some sort of fiber. All the scene's figures wear real clothing.

Administrative records dating to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries indicate that the original statues of Mary and the sleeping infant Jesus were fabricated in the Tuscan town of Lucca at the monastery of San Domenico and were made of paper (*cartone*), likely meaning papier-mâché.⁸⁶ Another infant Jesus that was also used in the Nativity display was made of terra cotta by artisans in Florence in 1569.⁸⁷ The records tell us that the original terra cotta baby Jesus broke and was replaced by one that was “not very nice.”⁸⁸ An annotation dating to 1635 likely relates to the two angels presently in the display. It indicates that Tomaso Bandoni, the same man who authored the narrations in the *Libro dei miracoli*, “had two beautiful angels made for the Nativity scene that cost 12 scudi...all the cost was handled by his sister, Donna Maria Bandoni.”⁸⁹

⁸⁵ A.S.M.Q. vol 351 c. 102.

⁸⁶ “La Madonna del presepio insieme con quell bambino che dorme...tutti di cartone vennero da Lucca lavorate nel monasterio di S. Domenico...” A.S.M.Q. vol 113, c. 16.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “1635 Ricordo come il P.F. Tomaso Bandoni predicatore generale sacrestano fece fare dui angeli belli per il presepio che costorno scudi 12...tutta la spesa la fatta sua sorella donna Maria Bandoni.” A.S.M.Q. vol. 113 c.74.

Domenico Benintendi contributed a figure of a young Saint John the Baptist (san Giovannino) to the Nativity scene, for which he received a payment of 50 *baicchi*.⁹⁰ Presumably Domenico's figure is lost.⁹¹ Presumably the multimedia nature of the existing statues corresponds to the physical characteristics of the lost votive sculptures. Domenico and his fellow wax workers would have been creating votive statues concurrently to the production of the Nativity figures, and his familiarity with one commission may have been reflected in his other work.

Placement and Duration of the Effigies

The arrangement of the Viterban votive sculptures may have been influenced by placement of the Florentine statues in the church of the Annunziata. Panicale's watercolors in the *Libro dei miracoli* depict the figures standing on a wooden platform that was then attached to some sort of surface, likely a wall, in order to display the effigy. References to a related display mechanism utilized in Florence date to 1447 and perhaps serve as the inspiration for Viterbo's practice. While the Viterban platforms appear to be plain wood, holding only one figure, the statues in Florence were sometimes grouped together on a large rostrum

⁹⁰ "A di detto [17 aprile 1561] a M. Domenico ceraolo b.50 per un s. Giovannino che sta nel presepio..."A.S.M.Q VOL 351 C.102.

⁹¹ A figure of child, dressed in a brocaded garment with lace-trimmed sleeves with actual curly blond hair, is in the church's museum. The statue appears to be made of plaster: one finger is broken, exposing an unfinished, hard, white material. Likely this figure is not the original one by Domenico Benintendi as its eyes appear to be made of glass, suggesting that it is an object made long after the sixteenth century. My analysis of the figures is based on a series of high-quality photographs; I have not had the opportunity to view the objects in person.

“designed to hold the many votive offerings and images.”⁹² The rostra not only served as a supports to display the statues, but also as a decorative element: they were created by the “best-known craftsmen” and embellished by painters.⁹³

Votaries, perhaps only those deemed sufficiently elite, had a say in the placement and visibility of their offerings. Santissima Annunziata’s administrative records note a member of the congregation who made an offering of a pinchbeck frontispiece (*frontispitio d’orpello*) for the church’s Falconieri chapel.⁹⁴ Unhappy with the placement of a pedestal that supported figures of illustrious men on horseback and blocked the frontispiece, the congregant went to the church Fathers and asked that the pedestal be moved to ensure a clear view of his offering.⁹⁵ In Viterbo the large, elaborate effigy of Gio. Battista Spiriti was placed in front of the church’s high altar. While there is no evidence that Spiriti shared his opinion with the church fathers about his effigy’s placement, it can be assumed that the amount the votary paid for the statue – 2.5 large gold ducats -- afforded it a prime location in the church. Similarly, Bandoni writes in his publication of 1628 about miracles performed by the Madonna della Quercia that the extravagant statue of the noble Roman votary Celsi (discussed in Chapter 5)

⁹² “...fu fatto per la multitudine de’ voti e imagini,” A.S.F., SS. Annunziata, no. 59, doc. 19, “Notizie delle cose memorabilia del convento e chiesa della Nunziata,” fol. 11; see Warburg, “The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie,” 205.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Pinchbeck is an alloy of copper and zinc that resembles gold but is significantly less expensive.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

was placed close to the effigy of Pope Paul III. The offerings of affluent votaries were clearly given special treatment.

In addition to their placement on decorative rostra, ex-votos were also suspended from the cupola of Santissima Annunziata by April of 1488.⁹⁶ Some of Viterbo's effigies may have also dangled above the heads of its congregation, particularly the offerings that depict votaries hanging from ropes and cords. An author known only as A.C., writing in 1845 of the votive statues that still decorated S. Maria della Quercia in Viterbo, described a sight that must have been similar to Santissima Annunziata during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries:

...[the church's] moldings and beams are populated by votive statues and figures in full relief that for the most part are life-sized, made from fabric, wood and similar cheap materials.... Their characteristics are varied, and at times curious, so you see one such who has his head under a sinister cleaver, another such example covered in rocks, one pierced by arrows and swords, one whose breast is split open with wounds, etcetera. One can also see the statues of some of the highest pontiffs, and [a] cardinal in the act of praying, and composed of the same modest material. It is even true, nevertheless, that today this type of offering has ended, but also time with its relentless polishing disfigures and destroys those fragile works, that are often because of decay removed from the temple and progressively subside in number.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ April 1488, Pagolo di Zanobi Benintendi was paid for ex-votos he made, noted in Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," 206, from Pagali Manuscript, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms. II. I. 454: "Notizie dei ceraiuoli e lavoratori d'imagini di Cera in Firenze."

⁹⁷ "...cioè i cornicioni, e sporte sono popolati di statue e figure in pieno rilievo pur votive di grandezza per lo più natural formate di tela, legno e simili economiche materie atte piuttosto a dimostrar la devozione, che la ricchezza degli offerenti. Le attitudine sono varie, e talora curiose, poiché vedi un tale che sta col capo sotto una mannaia patibolare, un tal altro coperto di pietre, uno trafitto da strali e da spade, uno col seno squarciato da ferrite ec. Vedesi l'immagine di qualche sommo pontifice, e cardinali in atto di orare, e composte di tal modesta materiali. È pur vero, però, che oggidì non solo è cassata quella specie di oblazioni, ma anche il tempo con la sua lima incessante deturpa e distrugge quei fragili lavori, che sovente a causa di decadenza son rimossi dal tempio e decrescono progressivamente di numero." A.C., "Il santuario, il borgo, e le fiere della Quercia presso Viterbo," in *L'Album*, anno XII (Rome:?, 1845).

This excerpt from the nineteenth-century report on the Viterban church not only illustrates the arrangement of the figures, it also confirms the accuracy of Panicale's watercolors. The passage identifies the effigy of Celsi, along with another watercolor in the manuscript of Lorenzo da Mantova who appears buried under large rocks.

The ex-votos of Viterbo survived much longer than their counterparts in Florence. To the dismay of its congregation, the figural offerings of Santissima Annunziata were removed in 1665.⁹⁸ Viterbo's offerings were likely destroyed in 1863 when major renovations to the church's interior began.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ottavio Andreucci, *Il fiorentino istruito nella Chiesa della Nunziata* (Florence: M. Cellini, 1857), p. 287; see Warburg, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," 207.

⁹⁹ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 9.

Chapter 3

THE LIBRO DEI MIRACOLI

The administrative books for S. Maria della Quercia report that by October 6, 1608, the ex-votos in the church were poorly preserved. Little space remained in the basilica to display the effigies, and of the 70 that were attached between the church's interior columns, most were broken.¹⁰⁰ The votive statues were missing "some main thing, like [the] head, arms, hands, feet, and in reality the Convent was soon to be without them."¹⁰¹ The degradation of these popular offerings, that were the "joys, and ornaments"¹⁰² of the church, prompted the church's head sacristan, father Tomaso Bandoni, to recommend the creation of a book that would reproduce the "foremost effigies of the church."¹⁰³ Bandoni's annotation in the institution's administrative books contends that: "when an effigy broke, and went all to dust, one could remake [it] with the model painted in the book, that shows the reality of how they are."¹⁰⁴ During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries S. Maria della Quercia was among the most famous sanctuaries in Italy and attracted great numbers of pilgrims and visitors, from whom the church likely earned a considerable revenue. Maintaining the sculptures kept the popularity of

¹⁰⁰ "Tutti l'attacati fra le colonne n. 70, quali erano buona parte dal tempo rotti, mancando a tutti qualche cosa principale, come testa, braccia, mani, piedi, che in vero al Convento ne rimaneva in breve tempo privo di essersi." A.S.M.Q., vol. 113, c. 43v.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² "le gioie, et ornamenti" A.S.M.Q. vol. 113, c. 53.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

the sanctuary alive and ensured the future arrival of pilgrims and the probably monetary contributions they would bring to the church.

On July 25, 1619 the minor Viterban artist, Vincenzo Panicale, was paid six *scudi* for his labor as “painter” of the *Libro dei miracoli*.¹⁰⁵ He was the first of a number of artists and authors that would work on the text. The manuscript, which is 222 pages long, includes depictions of votaries executed by four hands: Vincenzo Panicale from 1619-1620; Brother Raimondo Ciucci from the mid-seventeenth century until 1690; and two anonymous artists who added 13 sketches at undetermined dates. Four authors composed the manuscript’s texts: Brother Tomaso Bandoni in 1624; Brother Alberto Navi in 1659; Brother Raimondo Ciucci in 1686; and the final entry in the manuscript, written by Doctor Sebastiano Caracciolo, dates to April 24, 1690.

My analysis of the *Libro dei miracoli* will focus on the watercolors executed by Panicale, which are accompanied by texts composed by Brother Tomaso Bandoni. I base my choice on the fact that the majority of the manuscript’s images are composed by Panicale; he was the original artist hired to complete the job of cataloguing the church’s votive statues; many of his watercolors depict votive statues; and, in my opinion, Panicale’s images are more interesting than those completed by the three later artists.

¹⁰⁵ A.S.M.Q. vol. 113 c. 53.

Defining the *Libro dei miracoli*

Texts that record the miracles performed by saints are found throughout medieval and early modern Italy and are good sources of written information about votive offerings. The *Vita Prima* and the *Tractatus de miraculis* of Saint Francis, both written by Tommaso da Celano in the thirteenth century, refer to wax votive sculptures that had either been promised to Saint Francis or brought to St. Francis' tomb.¹⁰⁶ The *Liber miraculorum* of Antonio da Padova, composed from 1369 to 1373, notes that “wax statues... hung around the saint's altar.”¹⁰⁷ Lacking illustrations, these books left the reader to personally envision the appearance of the effigies. The visual record of votive offerings found in the *Libro dei miracoli* of S. Maria della Quercia, therefore, is truly unparalleled. No other document of its kind provides a pictorial compendium of votive statues that populated churches in early modern Catholic cultures.

The *Libro dei miracoli* can be loosely compared to model books of the late medieval and Renaissance periods in Italy as it was intended to serve as a manual for future artists who would be hired by the church to repair or rebuild damaged votive offerings.¹⁰⁸ A clearer parallel can be drawn between the *Libro dei miracoli* and the culture of encyclopedic cataloguing of the early modern

¹⁰⁶ Bisogni, “Ex voto e la scultura in cera nel tardo medioevo,” 68-69.

¹⁰⁷ “statue di cera...pendono intorno all'altare del santo...”, *ibid*, 69.

¹⁰⁸ Nigel J. Morgan, et al. "Pattern book." In *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T065801> (accessed March 14, 2012)

period.¹⁰⁹ The combination of images and related explanatory texts in the *Libro dei miracoli* corresponds to the same format Cesare Vecellio employed for his 1590 compendium of clothing from around the world, *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri due*. Although lacking explanatory text, Ambrogio Brambilla's 16th-century print of itinerant laborers in Rome, *Ritratto di quelli che vanno vendendo e lauorando per Roma*, also serves as a contextual reference point for the Viterban manuscript as it presents an all-encompassing pictorial archive of labor occurring on Roman streets. The *Libro dei miracoli* is a text that functions on a number of levels: a guidebook for repairs, an encyclopedia of horrific injuries, a dictionary of weapons, a summary of the Madonna della Quercia's numerous interventions, and a reminder of the power of that particular Madonna.

A number of encyclopedic texts were published in Viterbo beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, ranging from an exhaustive description of every member of the entourage that accompanied the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I de' Medici, to his coronation in Rome in 1570 to a text that recorded all the reasons to love and hate wine.¹¹⁰ There is no way to know whether Bandoni, who asked for the creation of the manuscript, was familiar with what was published in

¹⁰⁹ A number of studies consider early modern collection and cataloguing practices. See Margaret T. Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), in particular chapter five, "Collections of Customs: Modes of *Classification* and Description," 162-206; Paula Findlen, "Possessing the Past: The Material World of the Italian Renaissance," 83-114; Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods*; Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

¹¹⁰ See Dennis E. Rhodes, *La Stampa a Vierbo "1488"-1800* (Florence, L.S. Olschki, 1963).

Viterbo, but he must have possessed general knowledge of the print industry as he published five books about the Madonna della Quercia from 1628-1640.

Initiated during a period of Catholic renewal in which the Catholic Church defended its use of imagery against the ideas of Protestant reformers, the *Libro dei miracoli* can be defined as a document that reproduces and valorizes “proper” Catholic imagery. The quick spread of Protestantism in Northern Europe was precipitated by the German Augustan monk Martin Luther who, in 1517, nailed his *95 Theses* on a church door in Wittenberg. His manifesto primarily railed against the Catholic Church’s practice of granting indulgences, among other decadent practices perpetrated in Rome. Luther’s philosophies additionally condemned the veneration of saints, relics and so-called idols in Catholic art. In response, Catholic officials undertook an effort to answer the Reformation’s claims. The Council of Trent, spanning from 1545 – 1563, established changes that furthered Catholic orthodoxy in all aspects of Catholic doctrine and life, in addition to reinforcing Catholic practices that had been in use for centuries. During the period of time after the Council of Trent, known as the Counter Reformation, the arts, under stricter supervision, continued to serve as an ecclesiastic tool used to promote messages of the Catholic Church. Rudolf Wittkower succinctly summarizes three major qualities of Counter Reformation art. Images needed to be characterized by “(i) clarity, simplicity, and intelligibility, (ii) realistic interpretation, and (iii) emotional stimulus to piety.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Rudolf Wittkower, Joseph Connors, and Jennifer Montagu, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750, I. Early Baroque*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 1.

Truthful, believable detail that evoked an emotional response is characteristic of Panicale's watercolors which are filled with blood, wounds, weapons, and genuine displays of piety. The graphic narratives that accompany the watercolors are additionally wholly representative of the spirit of the times. Support of popular piety was another aspect of Counter Reformation doctrine. A segment of the Twenty-fifth Session of the Council of Trent, titled "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of Saints, and on Sacred Images," supports the practice of calling upon saints for help with religious concerns, and is clearly observed through the collection objects dedicated to popular religious devotion at sites like S. Maria della Quercia. Gabriele Paleotti, a cardinal, the Archbishop of Bologna, and philosopher, even intended to dedicate a chapter of his unfinished manual that enumerated the tenants of Counter Reformation art, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane*, to votive offerings. The inclusion of a chapter dedicated to the ex-voto attests to the widespread nature of votive offerings and the importance they held in Early Modern culture.

The *Libro dei miracoli*, measuring 425 x 290 mm. and composed of paper bound by a leather cover, functioned as a utilitarian object.¹¹² By 1619 paper could be purchased at a reasonable price while parchment and vellum remained more expensive options for manuscript production.¹¹³ The cover of the manuscript is plain: a few faint, decorative lines are impressed in the leather

¹¹² Panicale "painted in a book of real paper," A.S.M.Q., vol. 113, c. 43v.

¹¹³ Paul Johnson notes that "[e]ven in England, which was backwards in the [paper] trade, a sheet of paper (eight octavo pages) cost only one penny by the fifteenth century." *The Renaissance, a Short History* (New York : Modern Library, 2000), 17.

which could be closed by simple metal buckles. The images are executed in watercolor and ink with some charcoal underdrawings, the text is written in ink, and unlike more costly illuminated manuscripts, the paper in the *Libro dei miracoli* is unprimed. No other decorative elements or embellishments of any kind adorn the manuscript's folios.

When compared to other manuscripts commissioned by the church it appears that the *Libro dei miracoli* served practical purposes. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the church's Dominican leaders commissioned a number of illuminated choir books that were used by priests during specific rituals on religious holidays.¹¹⁴ These liturgical objects would have been seen by the entire congregation, or at least by those individuals seated close to the altar, and needed to be of a quality that equaled the beauty of the church's newly-completed choir.¹¹⁵ The church leaders commissioned foreigners – illuminators from Florence -- to execute the lavish books rather than employ local artists from Viterbo.¹¹⁶ Unlike the simple cover of the *Libro dei miracoli*, the leather covers of the choir books are impressed with geometric patterns and adorned with ornate brass decorations. Every folio in each book is illuminated on prepared vellum with intricate designs in ink, watercolor, gouache, and gold leaf.

¹¹⁴ A.S.M.Q. vol 152, c. 233: "Et addi XVI decto baiocchi XXVIII per fornimento del psalterio et graduale et altri libri."

¹¹⁵ Two Florentine woodworkers, Francesco di Domenico di Zanoi del Tasso and Giuliano di Giovanni, called il Pollastra, were hired in 1510 by the priors of S. Maria della Quercia to construct a new choir in the church. Work was completed in 1513. A.S.M.Q. Vol 353, c. 19; Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 3, note 3.

¹¹⁶ One of the Florentine artists, Brother Euatachio (1473-1555), illuminated choir-books for the convent of S. Marco in Florence. Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 9.

In 1576 brother Vittorio d'Arezzo, S. Maria della Quercia's head sacristan at that time, chronicled the expenses paid for the books. By that same year the church had commissioned 14 choir books that cost a total of 660 *scudi* and 90 *baiocchi*. The hefty sum of money spent on the books tremendously exceeds the six *scudi* Panicale received as payment for executing 103 watercolors and clearly demonstrates the difference in material and value between the *Libro dei miracoli* and other church-commissioned texts. Despite the practical nature of the *Libro dei miracoli*, the church regarded it with enough importance to store it alongside other precious ecclesiastic items. All of S. Maria della Quercia's texts were housed in the sacristy, and an inventory of the church's silver and other possessions, dated 1625, lists "a painted book of miracles" among the objects owned by the institution.¹¹⁷ It is clear that the manuscript was neither a luxury item nor intended for public view, yet simultaneously it was a critical record of the objects for which S. Maria della Quercia was celebrated.

One additional characteristic of the manuscript supports the theory that it was envisioned for practical use. Most of the narratives accompanying the watercolors (and I refer to only the narratives authored by Tomaso Bandoni, although the texts written by the three other authors share similar qualities) are characterized by an informal, conversational quality as opposed to a more formal, literary style, implying that Bandoni intended the *Libro dei miracoli* to serve as a vernacular chronicle of events rather than a more elaborate work of literature.

¹¹⁷ "1625, Inventario di tutte l'argenterie e robbe appartenenti alla chiesa e sacrestia...un libro di miracoli dipinti." A.S.M.Q. vol. 113, c. 63.

Bandoni learned of the accounts of the miracles in various ways: at times he indicates direct contact with the actual votary or with individuals who knew the votary, or, more frequently, Bandoni references the *relatione*, or written account, attached to the statue which explained the votary's miracle story. For example, Bandoni writes in his account of Benedetto Pesciatelli del Castello Santo Angelo di Visse that he read the *relatione* that was written in 1515.¹¹⁸ It is uncertain how Bandoni altered, if any, the original text of the *relatione* when composing his own narratives. Equally uncertain is the authorial identity of the accounts that accompany the statues. The votary, if he or she were literate and educated, may have written the account; a learned member of the church presents another possibility for authorship. A notary is another potential author of the *relatione*: after promising Saint Andrea Corsini a votive offering of a wax head in exchange for his help in healing her left arm and ear, Mona Betta of Prato, in 1440, paid a notary to authenticate her testimony.¹¹⁹ Variations in spelling, punctuation, and style inherent to Bandoni's passages suggest that he copied all or parts of the *relatione* when composing his own narratives.

A comparison of corresponding passages that relate the miracle of a noble man from the Roman Celsi family from the *Libro dei miracoli* and Bandoni's 1628 publication, *Scelta d'alcuni miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran Signora Madre di Dio, detta e nominate la Madonna della Cerqua di Viterbo*, reveals the

¹¹⁸ "La relatione veduta da me F. Tom[as]o nel voto 1515 fu il fatto alli 28 di di Maggio." *Libro dei miracoli*, 74.

¹¹⁹ Notarile Antecosimiano (Paolo Dieciaiuti), Archivio di Stato, Florence; see Megan Holmes, "Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory, and Cult," 163.

differences in narrative voice, style, punctuation, and grammar and further point to the practical, rather than literary, nature of the document.¹²⁰ Contrasting the passages in the original Italian language facilitates clearer recognition of the differences.

Libro dei miracoli:

Uno di casa Celsi nobile romano stando in Castello di Santo Angelo di Roma prigione si raccomandava ogni dì più volte alla Madonna della Quercia di Viterbo nella quale haveva posta tutta la causa sua parendoli d'essere innocente da morire a torto ma convinto da falzi testimoni et dale pene, e prigionia diede inditio d'essere colpevole onde sentenziato a morte e posto il capo sotto la manara cascò bene due volte sopra del collo ne mai lo ferì, havendo in bocca Madonna della Quercia e voi et al vostro figliolo mi raccomando che senza colpa il moro; il che udito dalli circostanti fu levato et di nuovo esaminato si trovò l'al sua innocentia, quale fece il voto che in chiesa si vede et si diede lode a Dio di questo fatto così stupendo: et io F. Tom[as]o ho inteso che fusse il padre del Sig. Hortentio Celsi raccontato da Monsignor Vicelegato di Viterbo dicento questo è il mio parente, et di casa mia 1544.

A man from the noble Roman Celsi family, in the prison of Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome, prayed multiple times every day to the Madonna della Quercia of Viterbo in whom he placed all his hopes since he believed himself to be innocent, unjustly sentenced to death but convicted by false testimonies, and prison gave the impression that he was guilty so he was sentenced to death, and he placed his head under the *mannaia* [blade], it fell on his neck nice and hard two times but it never injured him, since he said "Madonna della Quercia, I pray to you and your son that I am dying without blame;" the people around him heard him and he was taken down and [his case] was looked into again, he was found innocent, he offered an effigy that one can see in the church and he praised God for this splendid event: and I F. Tom[as]o Bandoni understood that it was the father of Sig. Hortentio Celsi, as told by Monsignor Vicelegato from Viterbo, saying that "this is my relative, he is from my family," [in the year] 1544.

1628 publication:

L'anno 1544 un Sig. Nobile Romano, che per false accuse de' suoi avversarij, fu sentenziato alla morte, e venuto il tempo di porre il capo sotto la mannaia, disse

¹²⁰ Additional examples of the remnants of oral discourse in Bandoni's narratives will be examined in the following chapters.

chiaramente, che lui non era colpevole di tal morte, per quello che era imputato, che però ricorreva al tribunal di Dio, e della sua santissima madre della Cerqua, raccomandando il suo spirito ad ambedue. Gli furono bendati gli occhi, e posto il collo sotto la mannaia come è consueto, il boia tagliò la corda, e cascò la mannaia sopra del detto Signore, ma non l'offese, poiché non tagliò pur un capello; allhora con voce alta disse, Madonna della Cerqua voi sapete la mia innocenza, se vi piace fate che sie liberato, e chiedendo la liberation non fu chi parlasse a suo favore, dando la colpa al carnefice che non havesse bene accomodata la mannaia; fu ricaricata la seconda volta e tagliata la fune, si vidde il ferro arrivar al collo a piombo, che haverebbe tagliato qual si voglia collo di bue, e con tucto questo il ferro non tagliò la carne, ma solo li fece un poco di rosso sopra del collo, onde tutti stupiti, di questo fatto, l'attribuirono a miracolo et a divotione, che il ditto paziente havea alla Madonna della Cerqua. Fu rimesso in prigione e riveduta meglio la causa, si trovò ch'era innocente, e gl'accustori come falsari furono puniti, e si diede lode a Dio, e alla sua Madre, di così glorioso prodigio; et al presente a mano destra vicino alla statua di Paola terzo si vede la sua statua con il collo sotto la manara.

In the year 1544 a noble Roman sir, who for false accusations by his adversaries, was sentenced to death, and the time came to place his head under the blade, he clearly stated, that he was not guilty of such a death, for that which he was charged, and therefore he turned to God's tribunal, and that of his saintly Mother of the Oak, and implored both of them for help. His eyes were blindfolded, and his neck was placed underneath the blade as is customary, the executioner cut the cord, and the blade fell down upon the said Sir, but it did not hurt him, it did not even cut a hair; then he said out loud, Madonna della Cerqua, you understand my innocence, if you like make it so that I am freed, and in asking for his freedom [non fu chi parlasse a suo favore], blame was given to the executioner who didn't set up the mannaia very well; it was loaded a second time and the rope cut, one saw the blade land squarely on his neck, that could have sliced the neck of an oxen, and with all of this the blade did not cut his skin, but it only made a bit of red on his neck, therefore everyone was astonished by this occurrence, they attributed it to a miracle and to devotion, that the said inmate had [the help of] the Madonna della Cerqua. He was placed in prison again and his case was re-examined, it was found that he was innocent, and the lying accusers were punished, and he praised God, and to his Mother, for working wonders, and presently to the right, close to the statue of Paolo III one sees his statue with his neck under the blade.)

Celsi's narrative of 1628 is conspicuously longer than the account in the *Libro dei miracoli*. The additional length is owed to Bandoni's inclusion of

abundant detail and speaks to a possible quickness in recording the miracle in the *Libro dei miracoli*. Bandoni clearly did not aim to compose a masterpiece in the *Libro dei miracoli*; rather, he likely transcribed a concise version of the miracle, still with enough detail to understand the story behind the votive statue and serve as a reference for the future. For example, in the *Libro dei miracoli* narrative Bandoni writes that the *mannaia*, or blade, twice “fell nice and hard on his neck but never injured it,” while the 1628 publication brings a level of suspense to the story absent from the earlier version. In the 1628 narrative Bandoni describes the executioner cutting the rope but the blade “did not even cut a hair”; later the executioner cuts the rope holding the blade a second time and the blade, which was so strong it could have decapitated an oxen, falls squarely on Celsi’s neck, leaving only “a bit of red on his neck.” André Vauchez contends that the accounts of a saint’s miracles that were compiled into a book, a *liber miraculorum*, were often of “greater literary than juridical interest.”¹²¹ Bandoni’s chronicle of the Madonna della Quercia’s miracles in the 1628 publication appears to fall along the same lines.

In the 1628 version of the Celsi miracle Bandoni gave more thought to punctuation and grammar than in the *Libro dei miracoli*. Whereas Celsi’s account in the *Libro dei miracoli* is composed into one long sentence that mimics a verbal re-telling of the event, the 1628 report is divided by punctuation that allows for the introduction and closure of ideas. The grammar Bandoni employs in the 1628

¹²¹ André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 35.

version is more formal and literary than the grammar used in the *Libro dei miracoli*. In the Italian language the subjunctive mood expresses doubt, uncertainty, hope, fear, possibility, and opinions, and it is a tense that, according to Giuseppe Pittàno, has historically been utilized more by educated rather than uneducated individuals.¹²² Bandoni uses the imperfect subjunctive in the *Libro dei miracoli* account only one time when he writes in reference to himself, stating that it was himself, “io F. Tom[as]o,” who understood the person was Hortentio Celsi’s father: “ho inteso che *fusse* il padre del Hortentio Celsi” (my emphasis). In the 1628 version, however, Bandoni repeatedly uses more literary grammar with many instances of the subjunctive mood: “se vi piace fate che *sie liberato*,” “non fu chi *parlasse*,” and “non *havesse* bene *accomodata*” (my emphasis). Although no evidence exists regarding his formal education, Bandoni was clearly a learned man who would have been instructed in proper literary grammar, while the votaries or third parties he interviewed to obtain information about the miracles may or may not have received education.¹²³ Finally, Bandoni removes all forms of direct address to the readers in his texts published after the *Libro dei miracoli*. His removal of self from the text parallels a cultural shift away from orally-based narratives to historical narratives written in prose that, as Juliann Vitullo contends, were works “in which ‘authors’ displayed their individual

¹²² Pittàno, Giuseppe, *Conoscere la lingua* (Milan: Mondadori Bruno Scolastica, 1989), 592-593.

¹²³ The narratives that accompany illustrious individuals, like the Popes and Gio. Spiriti are exceptions in the manuscript. Compared to non-illustrious individuals depicted in the *Libro dei miracoli*, these narratives are characterized by greater length and written with formal grammar and a more literary style.

knowledge to achieve their own social and economic advancement.”¹²⁴ While Bandoni, a devoted sacristan of the church of S. Maria della Quercia, likely did not compose and publish a number of books chronicling the miracles of the Madonna della Quercia for pure financial gain, his decision to write the history of his beloved Madonna in a formal, literary manner aligns himself with cultural trends and presents the miracles of the Madonna della Quercia as recorded facts. The *Libro dei miracoli*, therefore, can be considered a record of religious testimony with the author, Tomaso Bandoni, serving a dual purpose as a notary who recorded the facts and as a witness who attested to the truth of the report. The major differences between the two accounts points to the fact that the *Libro dei miracoli* served as a reference source instead of a literary work.

Vincenzo Panicale

Little is known about Vincenzo Panicale’s life and whether he was a professionally-trained artist. Administrative records from S. Maria della Quercia indicate that between the years 1619-1620 Panicale painted the majority of images in the *Libro dei Miracoli*.¹²⁵ The church’s records also indicate that ten years prior to commencing work on the manuscript he was employed by the

¹²⁴ While Vitullo’s study specifically references narrative techniques in the Italian Carolingian epic, her findings nevertheless can be applied to the literary qualities of Bandoni’s 1628 publication. Juliann Vitullo, *The Chivalric Epic in Medieval Italy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 98.

¹²⁵ An annotation dated June 6, 1620 in the basilica’s administrative books states that Panicale started during the time of Father Lector Felice de Rossi, serving as prior of the basilica from 1617-1619, and finishing the book during the time of Father Angelo Colli who began his service as prior in 1620. A.S.M.Q. vol. 113, c. 43.

church. From October 1608 until January 1609 Panicale painted some of the architectural elements of the nativity scene, in addition to the figures of the magi.¹²⁶ In addition to executing most of the manuscript's watercolors and contributing to the nativity scene, Panicale also restored damaged ex-votos. Panicale may have been the only artist in the city who knew how to repair the votive offerings as the last of the *votari*, Master Matteo, had left Viterbo for Naples in 1609.¹²⁷ The basilica's administrative records detail that

on June 6, 1620 Panicale began to recoup, by hand, many of the statues almost reduced to dust on the left side of the church, almost all [of them] and also those on the right side [of the church] that are attached [to the structure], even though he didn't make them, there would not be any of these effigies, and even though it took master Vincenzo Panicale three months, only he knows how to restore them [and] how they were made.¹²⁸

Panicale's hands-on familiarity with the statues may correlate to the abundance of specific detail in his watercolor renderings of the figures.

Additionally, Panicale was among the recipients of the Madonna della Quercia's grace. Bandoni, in 1631, and Vincenzo Peroni, in 1685, both chronicle

¹²⁶ "Ottobre [1608] Pagamento a M. Vincenzo Panicale per il presepe... a di detto [28 novembre 1608] per accomodare il presepio et dipingere la facciata delli concii fra colori et pittura scudi dua et b ottanta portò M.Vincenzo Panicale...Dicembre 1608 pagamenti a M. Vincenzo Panicale per accomodare i Magi...A di detto [6 gennaio 1609] al pittore mastro Vincenzo Panicale per...accomodato li Magi b.80." A.S.M.Q. vol. 170 c. 214 – c.214 v.

¹²⁷ A.S.M.Q., vol. 11, C. 50.

¹²⁸ "...alli 6 giugno 1620 si compì di risarcire molti voti con statue quasi ridutte in polvere a mano manca della Chiesa, quasi tutti et anco quelli a mano dextra che stanno attaccate, che se non si faceva questo, non vi saria quasi niuno de voti, che però s'è tenuto un tre mesi maestroVincenzo Panicale, che lui solo li sa racconciare come vanno fatti." A.S.M.Q. vol. 113, c. 43.

his miracle.¹²⁹ The two authors describe how the house in which Panicale slept, in the Laziale town of Montalto, collapsed in the middle of the night. Panicale found himself buried in the rubble, but after praying to God and the Madonna della Quercia he was saved. Bandoni and Peroni report that the artist later commissioned his effigy, “covered in rocks,” and brought it to the church where it was “seen for many years after.”¹³⁰ His personal relationship to the Madonna della Quercia provides another possibility for why he was hired to illustrate a book about this Madonna’s miracles and restore the damaged votive sculptures.

The Images

There are a total of 143 images in the manuscript and of those 18 are not accompanied by text. Vincenzo Panicale executed 103 images, 37 were painted by Raimondo Ciucci, and 13 images were completed by the two unknown hands. Panicale’s images are clearly distinct from the other three hands in the *Libro dei miracoli*. His work can be identified through his use of color, style in rendering the figures, and the placement of one particular visual element in most of his images. The colors are deep and saturated, with crisp lines in ink that define the

¹²⁹ Tomaso Bandoni, *Corona ammirabile de Miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran Signora Madre di Dio detta la Madonna della Quercia* (Todi:?, 1631); Vincenzo Peroni, *Miracoli, e gratie della Madonna della Quercia di Viterbo* (Viterbo:?, 1685).

¹³⁰ “Nel 1609 un certo Vincenzo Panicale Viterbese Pittore, ritrovandosi in Mont’Alto à dormire in una casa, circa due ore di notte gli rovinò sopra, mà egli si raccomandò à Dio, & alla Madonna della Quercia sua Avvocata. Corse molta gente per disotterarlo, stimando tutti, che di già fosse morto, essendo stato in quella maniera già cinque hore, mà à lui gli pareva di dormire, e fù ritrovato vivo, e senza lesione alcuna. Fece la sua statua coperta di pietre, che si vede al presente, e doppo visse molti anni.” Peroni, *Miracoli, e gratie della Madonna della Quercia*, 113). Bandoni’s account is essentially identical, except that he indicates Panicale’s effigy was placed at the altar of San Carlo, “dinanzi l’Altare di San Carlo.” Bandoni, *Corona ammirabile*, 76.

shapes. Differing from Panicale, Raimondo Ciucci painted images in transparent washes of mainly pastel colors. Ciucci does not delineate his figures using black ink; rather, softer lines of deeper color saturation outline his shapes. Images composed by the two unknown hands in the manuscript are finished drawings in red chalk and a watercolor sketch in black and grey.

The physical appearance of the individuals executed by Panicale is almost identical. Their faces, whether male or female, are generic representations. While other physical variations do occur among the figures – facial hair or bare-faced, differing hair length, style, and color – the faces are for the most part similar. All of Panicale's votaries share identical deep, black eyes, uniform noses, and a dark mark of color under the mouth indicating the chin. A number of Panicale's figures have matching poses, and, moreover, the same inaccuracies in anatomy and shape are repeated in multiple figures. For example, the illustrations of La Savia, Livia, Pollidoro di Bastiano, Francesco di Domenico Berti, and Giovanni di Paulo each depict the votaries similarly posed with disproportionately large left shoulders. It is possible that these six votaries all suffered from a physical deformity that caused them to have an enlarged left shoulder. Panicale's poorly-executed foreshortening of the feet of some of the figures, such as La Savia, may also point to a lack of formal training or simply that he was an artist of mediocre quality.

Contrarily, there are clear positive aspects to Panicale's style. His images are filled with rich, minute detail that another formally-trained artist may have overlooked. Panicale painted the watercolors in 1619-1620 during the beginning

of the artistic movement known today as the Baroque. A number of Panicale's contemporaries working in Rome produced paintings characterized by idealized forms that were bigger and better than nature could create on her own. Guido Reni's frescoed ceiling of the Casino dell'Aurora in Palazzo Rospigliosi, dating to 1613-1614 and any number of canvases or frescoes executed by Annibale Carracci during the 1590s and the first decade of the seventeenth century exhibit figures to which the previous description applies. Panicale was hired by the church of S. Maria della Quercia to illustrate a manuscript whose purpose was to record the votive statues in the church that were disintegrating. The manuscript would serve as a manual for future artists who would repair the statues; in order to return the statues to their original condition the reproductions of them had to be very detailed. Panicale achieved this goal by embracing naturalistic detail and forgoing the idealization that marked the artistic production of some of his contemporaries. For example, Panicale's representation of Bartolomeo di Selvestro's statue illustrates the circular structure placed around the figure's head to which the rocks that injured the miner were attached. Even the smallest details of the sculptures' construction were added to the images.

Panicale's figures are characterized by contrast: they are simple and unsophisticated, yet simultaneously filled with complex detail. The viewer is able to discern specific items of clothing, weapons, and varying types of wounds in the images. Panicale's reproductions of statues even include the platform erected to display the figures in the church, further reinforcing the idea that Panicale intended to recreate as faithfully as possible the statues. Also compelling for their

drama, the watercolors display multiple stab wounds, dripping blood, and horrified expressions that contribute to the creation of a gripping scene. The book served as a manual for rebuilding and restoring damaged votive offerings and therefore the reproduction of abundant detail was critical to the manuscript's function.

Three additional characteristics serve to identify Panicale's images. His watercolors occupy the even-numbered pages in the manuscript, apart from pages 2, 4, and 6 that were originally left blank by Panicale and later used by Ciucci. All but eight of the images executed by Panicale also contain a few brushstrokes of a warm yellow hue, at either the top right or top left corner of the folio, that suggest the presence of the Madonna della Quercia. The golden light shines toward the recipient of the miracle who always turns his or her head toward the otherworldly illumination. Finally, the majority of Panicale's backgrounds are bare, whereas Ciucci places his figures in an elaborate setting.

The specific visual precedents that Panicale looked to when composing his images are unclear. Illuminators of manuscripts traditionally engaged in copying other manuscripts as a form of practice, yet there is no record of whether Panicale participated in that activity. He certainly was aware of mainstream artistic techniques of sixteenth and seventeenth century Italy, as noted above, but he was not entirely successful in employing them in an effective manner.

The manuscript's images duplicate six votive types: statues, panels, paintings on canvas, effigies in silver, and objects. Reproductions of frescos from the Chostro della Cisterna in S. Maria della Quercia and from Viterbo's seat of

government, the Palazzo dei Priori are found in the manuscript, along with scenes that depict miracles performed by the Madonna della Quercia. Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck proposes a standard visual formula into which all pictorial votive offerings can fit. He asserts that “there is probably no comparable form that enjoys the same structural consistency and provides more effectively valid a mode of signification, in terms of its centuries-long use in the most various cultures and language groups, at all social levels of the Catholic world, and at all conceivable aesthetic levels.”¹³¹ The visual characteristics of his classification include:

- 1: the representation of the heavenly operative, whether miraculous image, divine being, saint, or holy place
- 2: the depiction of the figure who turns to the heavenly domain, and of those who present him to it, set him contact with it, or pray for him
- 3: the event or condition that was the cause of initial communication between earthly personage and divine person or symbol
- 4: the inscription that records condition, event, or hope ¹³²

Although the votive statues of S. Maria della Quercia do not fall under Kriss-Rettenbeck’s categorization of painted ex-voto panels, ¹³³ we can assume that the representations of the votaries in the *Libro dei miracoli* are faithful to the original subject since the manuscript was intended as a guide for recreating

¹³¹ Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Ex Voto*, (Zürich, Freiburg i. Br.,) Atlantis (-Verlag, 1972), 164; see David Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 153.

¹³² David Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 153, from Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Ex Voto*, 155.

¹³³ The original statues at S. Maria della Quercia were accompanied by a paper with text explaining the miracle attached to them (discussed in Chapter 1). Inscriptions that record the miracle experienced by the votary accompany the votive statues of S. Maria delle Grazie in Curtatone. Although it is outside the scope of my dissertation, these two instances of writing associated with votive statues allow a broader range of votive types to be included in Kriss-Rettenbeck’s formula.

damaged statues. The scenes in the manuscript differ slightly from the standard formula used for painted votive panels, but Panicale and the later artists did employ the basic pictorial ex-voto formula when recording the statues in the manuscript. Instead of including a visual depiction of the Madonna della Quercia, Panicale indicates her divine presence through the use of a few brushstrokes of warm yellow pigment in the corner of a page. In most cases the votary acknowledges her existence by turning his or her head in the direction of that illumination. The images depict the misfortune suffered by the individual or the event when the adverse situation occurred, but a few images represent the votary in prayer and without injury. Explanatory text accompanies most of the watercolors and details the situation that led to the votary to call upon the intervention of the Madonna della Quercia. Panicale was surely familiar with traditional painted votive offerings as the walls of S. Maria della Quercia, beginning in the fifteenth century, were populated with painted votive panels.

Image and Text

Only one hand that contributed to the *Libro dei miracoli*, Raimondo Ciucci, both executed the images and penned the accompanying text. Vincenzo Panicale composed none of the prose that accompanied his watercolors, and in turn, Tomaso Bandoni did not execute any of the manuscript's images. The text occupies the space below the image in most of the manuscript's illustrations. In some cases there is no text, in other instances the text is squeezed onto any blank area on the page, and in a few examples the text is so lengthy that it continues on

to the facing page. Apart from the last entry in the *Libro dei miracoli* that is composed in Latin, the captions are written in vernacular Italian. By the first quarter of the seventeenth century it was commonplace for administrative documents to be written in the vernacular rather than Latin.¹³⁴

A fairly uniform structure organizes the text: the individual receiving help from the Madonna della Quercia is identified, the setting is established, and a detailed explanation of the individual's misfortune follows. The victim then calls upon the Madonna della Quercia for help, and this sometimes includes the individual's promise to deliver a votive offering to the Madonna. Next the individual's misfortune is reversed, and finally the text recounts the year, and often the date, of when the individual brought his or her effigy to the church.

Text and image always correlate in the manuscript. The inscription, as David Freedberg succinctly states, "ensures direct linking with the wonderful event, just in case picturing fails."¹³⁵ In the *Libro dei miracoli* the captions are crucial to the manuscript's overall function as they define and detail the events that precipitated the creation of the votive offerings. Freedberg further emphasizes the picture "convey[s] that linkage even more assuredly than words"¹³⁶ since the image can survive on its own as a visual account of the

¹³⁴ The fourteenth century witnessed a shift from Latin to vulgar Italian in written legal documents. In 1302 the leaders of the masons' guild in Bologna asked city leaders to compose documents in Italian so that everyone in the city (who was literate) could understand them. Bruno Migliorini and Ignazio Baldelli, *Breve storia della lingua italiana* (Florence: Sansoni, 1964), 95. This book provides a general history of the history of the Italian language.

¹³⁵ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 155.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 155.

adversity suffered by an individual. Without text the illustrations of the *Libro dei miracoli* certainly confirm Freedberg's latter affirmation. Furthermore, the saturation of details in the manuscript's images and inscriptions serves a functional purpose as a guide for rebuilding damaged statues and additionally reinforces the fundamental significance of a votive offering by providing specificity and accuracy.¹³⁷ The watercolors in the *Libro dei miracoli* assume their own votive quality, perhaps intentionally or perhaps unintentionally.

Tomaso Bandoni

Little is known of Bandoni's early life. He served as head sacristan of S. Maria della Quercia three times: 1602-1605; 1607-1609; and 1619-1659.¹³⁸ As the head sacristan Bandoni was in charge of maintaining the church's possessions, such as sacred vessels and vestments used during worship.¹³⁹ Bandoni's career at S. Maria della Quercia seems to have surpassed the caretaker role as he also carefully maintained intricate records in the church's administrative books. He was a prolific author, and the love he felt for his Madonna della Quercia is clearly evident in the number of books he published concerning his church's sacred mother. In 1624-1625 he finished the texts in the *Libro dei miracoli*, and from

¹³⁷ Ibid, 155.

¹³⁸ A.S.M.Q. vol. 113 c.36v, c.41, c.42v, c.43v, c.52, c.76v.

¹³⁹ "sacristan" *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. © Oxford University Press 2005. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Arizona State University. 23 March 2012 <http://www.oxford-christianchurch.com/entry?entry=t257.e6024>

1625 until 1640 he completed six volumes that focused on the miracles of the Madonna della Quercia.¹⁴⁰

It is unsurprising that Bandoni, like Panicale, was a recipient of the Madonna della Quercia's divine intervention. Ciucci completed the image and account of Bandoni's miracle in the *Libro dei miracoli*, relating that

Brother Tomaso Bandoni sacristan of the [church of the Madonna] della Quercia, who brought to light two books about the miracles of the Blessed Virgin, found himself ill with a continuous fluctuating fever for 10 days straight, he was 73 years old; but praying to this Blessed Virgin his Advocate on the eleventh day his fever went away and on the twelfth [day] he felt as though he had never been ill.¹⁴¹

Nicolo Maria Torelli's 1725 account of Bandoni's miracle relates that the Madonna della Quercia personally came to inform Bandoni that "this time you will not die."¹⁴² Neither Bandoni nor any of his later biographers mention that the sacristan offered a votive effigy to the Madonna della Quercia. Perhaps his offering came in the form of the numerous texts he wrote about his beloved Madonna.

¹⁴⁰ *Scelta d'alcuni miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran Signora Madre di Dio, detta e nominate la Madonna della Cerqua di Viterbo* (1625), an autographed manuscript that served as the basis for his 1628 publication of the same name; *Scelta d'alcuni miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran Signora Madre di Dio, detta e nominate la Madonna della Cerqua di Viterbo* (Viterbo:?, 1628); *Corona ammirabile de Miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran Signora Madre di Dio detta la Madonna della Quercia* (Todi:?, 1631); *Paradiso Terrestre della Madonna santissima della Quercia di Viterbo, fiorito di gratie e frutti miracolosi novelli* (Viterbo:?, 1634); *I fiumi Quattro del Paradiso Terrestre surgenti dal vivo fonte e tegola della Madonna della Quercia di Viterbo, manifesti per le continue gratie e miracoli* (Viterbo:?, 1636); *Relatione della miracolosissima imagine della Madonna della Quercia, nelle cervaie di Fucechio* (Lucca:?, 1640).

¹⁴¹ "Il P.M. Fra' Tomaso Bandoni sagrestano della Quercia, che ha mandato il luce dui libri delli miracoli di questa Santissima Vergine, si ritrovò infermo di febbre continua con gran flusso per 10 giorni continui, essendo di 73 anni; ma ricorendo a questa Santissima Vergine sua Avvocata l'undecimo giorno se li parti la febbre e duodecimo si trovò come si non fusse stato infermo." Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 127.

¹⁴² "...questa volta non morirai." Nicolo Maria Torelli, *Miracoli della Madonna della Quercia di Viterbo e la sua istoria* (Venice:?, 1725), 162.

Chapter 4

FEMALE VOTARIES

The act of a woman bringing a votive offering in exchange for help received from a saint is not unusual. The records of St. Louis of Toulouse's canonization indicate that in 1297 a woman who had promised a wax image to the saint "bought the image and brought it to the blessed Louis."¹⁴³ Canonization records composed in the early fourteenth century for another saint, Chiara da Montefalco, report that two mothers pledged to the saint "an image in wax weighing the same as said child."¹⁴⁴ Nicola da Tolentino's canonization records, also from the early fourteenth century, provide abundant information about votaries who brought wax statues to the saint's tomb, including a mother, Giovanna, who promised to offer "a wax image in the shape of her daughter" to Saint Nicola in exchange for the saint's help in curing her daughter's limp, and two other mothers, Miluccia from San Severino and Gentiluccia from Truschia, who presented wax images the same length as their sons.¹⁴⁵ Franco Sacchetti, in the *Trecentonovelle*, writes of a wife who promised a wax votive offering formed into a bottle of wine to the Madonna of the Annunziata. Alone for a few months while her husband served as podesta

¹⁴³ "...emit ymaginem et portavit eam beato Ludovico," *Processus canonizationis et legendae variae sancti Ludovici O.F.M., Analecta Franciscana*, VII, (Florence: Quaracchi, 1951), 166, lines 11-13; see Bisogni, "Ex-voto e la scultura in cera," 70.

¹⁴⁴ "...unam ymaginem de cera ad pondus dicti pueri," Enrico Menestò and Silvestro Nessi, *Il Processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, (Scandicci, Firenze: Nuova Italia, 1984), 398, line 3 and 399, lines 31-32; see Bisogni, "Ex-voto e la scultura in cera," 75.

¹⁴⁵ "...et offerret ymaginem cere ad modum unius puellae," Enrico Menestò and Silvestro Nessi, *Il Processo di canonizzazione di Chiara da Montefalco*, text XXXV, 163, lines 76-77, c.f. Bisogni p. 77; and *ibid*, text XXXIX, 168, lines 22-23 and text CLX, 385, lines 59-60, see Bisogni, "Ex-voto e la scultura in cera," 75.

of a nearby town, the woman offered her husband's "very fine"¹⁴⁶ wine to her confessor, a friar at the church of Santissima Annunziata, who had fallen ill and requested some wine "that he liked"¹⁴⁷ as a cure for his sickness. Although the wife was fearful of her husband's anger after having been told to leave his wine untouched, the monk reassured her that an offering to the Madonna of the Annunziata would resolve any issues that may arise from the monk's indulgence: "Entrust yourself and give an offering to this [Madonna of the] Annunziata of ours and leave it to her."¹⁴⁸ Her husband returned home, remembering neither the "bottle, nor the wine,"¹⁴⁹ and the wife expressed her gratitude for the Madonna's help by having the simulacrum made and leaving it for her in the church. While Sacchetti's chronicle of the episode, based on events he claims to have witnessed in Florence, mainly serves to reveal his opinion of a popular practice that he feels has grown excessive and devoid of its original pious spirit, his account confirms female participation in the donation of votive offerings.

Images portray women praying at altars adorned with ex-votos, despite the infrequency of visual depictions of votive offerings in Western art. A scene from the life of Saint Margaret of Antioch, executed around 1400 in the manner of the Tuscan painter Turino Vanni, reveals a number of women in various states of prayer and mourning surrounding the saint's tomb. Votive offerings taking the shape of heads, hands, legs, feet and breasts hang above the tomb directly over the

¹⁴⁶ "finissimo," Franco Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle*, novella CIX, (Salerno: Roma, 1996), 329.

¹⁴⁷ "che li piasse," Ibid, 329.

¹⁴⁸ "...raccomandati e botati a questa nostra Annunziata e lasica fare a lei." Ibid, 330.

¹⁴⁹ "...né di questa botte, né del vino..." Ibid, 330.

supplicants' heads. In a painting made by the Sardinian School between 1400-1500 a woman, accompanied by a man and child, kneels in prayer at the tomb of Saint Eligius. Like the ex-votos seen in the Turino painting, the offerings formed into heads, legs, organs and one full-size infant also hang from the arched architectural element behind the saint's tomb. Two Northern European prints show women praying at shrines populated with votive offerings. Michael Ostendorfer's woodcut that dates to c. 1519, *Pilgrimage to the New Church at Regensburg*, displays throngs of men and women praying to a miracle-working statue of the Madonna and Child. Abundant ex-votos hang from the church's exterior architecture. A woodcut dating to the early sixteenth century by Hans Weiditz shows Saint Anthony standing in front of a church upon which votive offerings shaped as children, limbs, and other objects hang. Kneeling in prayer next to the saint is a devout woman. Although the afore-mentioned women are not depicted actively bringing offerings to a miracle-working saint, their close physical proximity to the ex-votos associates them with such offerings.

Whereas the previously-discussed ex-votos were similar to ready-made objects, likely produced in multiples using standard molds,¹⁵⁰ the statues offered to the Madonna della Quercia were larger in size, individualized, and executed from a plurality of media. As established in Chapter 2, these objects are not only manifestations of personal devotion and gratitude: the votive sculptures of Viterbo are works of art that were produced from a relationship between a patron – in this case the votary – and the sculptor. This is the first study that considers a

¹⁵⁰ An annotation in S. Maria della Quercia's administrative records notes that a brother from the church purchased molds in Florence for the waxworks in Viterbo. See chapter 2, note 4.

sculptural votive offering to be a byproduct of patronage. The votive practice in Viterbo broadens the concept of patronage and allows for a more profound interpretation of the practice, making the consumption of original, unique works of devotional art available to elite *and* non-elite individuals. Even more nuanced in the case of S. Maria della Quercia because of the number of female patrons who participated in the popular religious practice.

Before exploring the female patrons of Viterbo the question of how to define patronage must be addressed. Most art historians agree that patronage of artistic endeavors in early modern Italy was based on a long-term relationship that benefitted both parties involved.¹⁵¹ Domenico Ghirlandaio's association with the Sassetti family resulted in a number of works produced for the affluent banking family, including the frescos decorating the Sassetti family chapel in the church of Santa Trinita in Florence and a portrait of Francesco Sassetti and his Son Teodoro. Pope Julius II's connection to both Michelangelo and Raphael resulted in multiple commissions for both artists in early sixteenth century Rome. Titian executed several portraits of members of the Gonzaga family, among them renderings of Isabella d'Este and her son Federigo Gonzaga. A definition of patronage which is based on the longevity of relationships leads to the first

¹⁵¹ This opinion is shared by Mary Hollingsworth in *Patronage in Renaissance Italy from 1400 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: John Murray, 1994) and Bram Kempers in *Painting, Power and Patronage. The Rise of the Professional Artist in the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Beverley Jackson (London: Penguin Group, 1992). Jill Burke utilizes an anthropological definition and indicates "a long-term relationship of mutual benefit between two parties." *Changing Patrons*, 6. Patricia Simons' approach is more relevant to the present study. She proposes a more malleable definition of patronage, one that is "more fluid and less deterministic." See "Patronage in the Tornaquinci Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence," in *Patronage, Art and Society Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 221-250.

problem: the patron-artist relationship was not necessarily a long-term accord and could result in one single transaction. Domenico Ghirlandaio completed the high altarpiece for the church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti; it was the only work he executed for the foundling hospital. Domenico, along with his brother, Davide, were also employed by Pope Sixtus IV to contribute to the frescos decorating the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel; similar to the panel Domenico executed for the Ospedale degli Innocenti, he completed only the frescos in the Sistine Chapel for Pope Sixtus IV.

Regardless of the length of the relationship, the term “patron” implies an association of two parties in which one party hires the other party to produce a work informed by the first party’s wishes. This is evident in the contract for the afore-mentioned panel executed by Ghirlandaio for the church of the Ospedale degli Innocenti. It states:

Be it known and manifest to whoever sees or reads this document that, at the request of the reverend Messer Francesco di Giovanni Tesori, presently Prior of the Spedale degli Innocenti at Florence, and of Domenico di Tomaso di Curado [Ghirlandaio], painter, I, Fra Bernardo di Francesco of Florence, Jesuate Brother, have drawn up this document with my own hand as agreement, contract, and commission for an altar panel to go in the church of the abovesaid Spedale degli Innocenti with the agreements and stipulations stated below, namely:
This day 23 October 1485 the said Francesco commits and entrusts to the said Domenico the painting of a panel which the said Francesco has had made and has provided; the which panel the said Domenico is to make good; and he is to color and paint the said panel all with his own hand in the manner shown in a drawing on paper with those figures and in that manner shown in it, in every particular according to what I, Fra Bernardo, think best; not departing from the manner and composition of the said drawing; and he must color the panel at his own expense with good colors and with powdered gold on such ornaments as demand it, with any other expense incurred on the same panel, and the blue must be ultramarine of the value of about four florins the ounce; and he must have made and delivered complete the said panel within thirty months from today; and he must receive as the price of the panel as here described (made at his, that is, the said Domenico's

expense throughout) 115 florins if it seems to me, the abovesaid Fra Bernardo, that it is worth it; and I can go to whomever I think best for an opinion on its value and workmanship, and if it does not seem to me worth the price, he shall receive as much less as I, Fra Bernardo, think right; and he must within the terms of the agreement paint the predella of the said panel as I, Fra Bernardo, think right; and he shall receive payment as follows --the said Messer Francesco must give the abovesaid Domenico three large florins every month, starting from 1 November, 1485 and continuing after as is stated every month three large florins. And if Domenico has not delivered the panel within the abovesaid period of time, he will be liable to a penalty of fifteen florins; and correspondingly if Messer Francesco does not keep to the abovesaid monthly payment he will be liable to a penalty of the whole amount, that is, once the panel is finished he will have to pay complete in full the balance of the sum due.¹⁵²

The contract specifies the individual desires of the patron: that the artist should follow a pre-established composition and use particular colors; it establishes the price to be paid to Ghirlandaio; and it indicates the date by which the panel must be completed. Denoting the individual who pays for a work of art as simply a “purchaser” does not account for the interplay of ideas shared between the individual who funds the item and the individual who executes the item. In the case of the votive statues in Viterbo, the sculptor was required to create an object that was highly personal and distinct. Mimesis was imperative: the objective of a votive object was to fully imitate the votary’s physical ailment which prompted her to seek help from the intercessor. The most common variety of votive offering in the early modern period was a wax object molded into the form of an appendage (hand, leg, foot), breast, bullae, or organ (heart, kidney); in Viterbo the problems were marked on a life-size replication of the votary’s figure. Simulating the injured or diseased body part brought material form to the votary’s prayers

¹⁵² The translated contract is reproduced in Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 6.

and ensured that the intercessor recognized it was the votary who made the offering. In order to craft a likeness to the votary it was imperative that the sculptor understand the votary's story, be familiar with his or her physical appearance, and identify the votary's socio-economic standing. Santa Maria della Quercia's administrative books indicate that one of the votaries, Gio. Battista Spiriti, "contributed to the cost" of purchasing materials for his statue which included gesso, wood, fabric, a gold and silver sword, and linseed oil, among many other items.¹⁵³ While the church records are not as specific as the contract for Ghirlandaio's panel, it indicates that the votary was aware of the materials used for his statue and approved them because of the payment he presented to the sculptors for their work.

The second drawback to current definitions of early modern Italian patrons is that they favor individuals with money. Most scholars writing on the subject consider only "elite" individuals as patrons of art.¹⁵⁴ In the last decade the Medici family and its patronage was the focus of eleven texts.¹⁵⁵ The wealthy Gonzaga, Sforza, Este, Strozzi, Tournabuoni, and Rucellai families are also the recipients of ample scholarship.¹⁵⁶ Focusing solely on the artistic endeavors of elite patrons denies a large section of the population that commissioned art the

¹⁵³ A.S.M.Q. vol. 116, c.5, dated September 18, 1507.

¹⁵⁴ An exception to this is Catherine E. King's work on women patrons. In her study she addresses works of art patronized by women originating from the middle classes. See *Renaissance Women Patrons* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), in particular 3, 10, and chapters seven and eight.

¹⁵⁵ I base this number on a search performed on the Worldcat database.

¹⁵⁶ I also base this number on a search performed on the Worldcat database.

title of “patron” because they were not sufficiently elite, or wealthy, or socially-recognized.

Scholarship of early modern women patrons of art shows them bound by societal, and, at times, legal rules.¹⁵⁷ This study draws on Catherine E. King’s excellent observations of female patrons in early modern Italy in the explanation of Viterban female votaries. Whereas certain aspects of women patrons in Viterbo coincide with established female patronal practice, others are entirely unique. Early modern Italian objects ordered by female patrons are few and were often funded by wealthy women. Donna Andreuccia Acciaiuoli, widow of Mainardo Cavalcanti who served as the military Marshal of the Queen of Naples, directed the building of a funerary chapel in Santa Maria Novella for her assassinated husband.¹⁵⁸ A wealthy wife in Padua, Maddalena dei Teruncelli commissioned a life-sized statue of the Madonna and Child for the church of Santa Maria dei Servi.¹⁵⁹ The *Libro dei miracoli* does not appear to represent women of extreme wealth. While some may have been affluent, like La Savia (discussed below), none are depicted in the same way as the manuscript’s elite men: no woman is represented in profile, seen in the images of high ranking religious officials and elite laymen, nor are any women pictured with accessories that contributed to the narrative of the votary’s story, such as the horse ridden by

¹⁵⁷ Women were required to have their husband’s permission to pursue patronal activities on their own. Wives of exiles, in areas ruled by Lombard and Roman law, were not required to have the consent of a male guardian in order to execute a commission. King, *Renaissance Women Patrons*, 3.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 100-103.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 52-53.

Giovan Battista Spirti or Celsi's execution device. King identifies collaborative commissions as a way for women of lesser social means to participate in patronal activity.¹⁶⁰ Contrary to King's findings, at the church of the Madonna della Quercia, most of the offerings are individual endeavors offered by a solitary woman. Of significant importance is that the statues women offered bear no physical differences from those offered by men. While King contends it was rare for a laywoman to commission a full-length effigy of herself, and to the scholar's knowledge no laywoman commissioned a portrait bust for herself or another woman, in Viterbo both lay men and women commissioned life-size, full-length portrait statues.¹⁶¹

In Viterbo, the phenomenon of women acting as agents in purchasing and designing their own votive effigies for a public space counters the typical understanding of female patronage. When early modern women in Italy acted as patrons they were encouraged to fund works intended for the private sphere: inside the home or other private family spaces. The public space of a church, however, was one that accommodated women. Women attended mass and went to church to pray; it was additionally a site of rituals surrounding important moments in a woman's life, such as churching rituals that blessed and purified a mother after a child's birth.¹⁶² A curious mix of idealized and unidealized

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 3, 10, and chapter eight.

¹⁶¹ King reports that women occasionally commissioned full-size effigies of men but not for themselves. Some laywomen patrons paid for effigies of themselves that rested on the floor or to the side of a tomb. Ibid, 7.

¹⁶² See Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "Churching, a women's rite," in *The reformation of ritual* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997). It is also important to note that early modern women were not

representations that solicited a viewer's attention, the effigies were models of piety that concurrently displayed brutal injuries. Certainly the shocking displays of both genders would have drawn copious attention. The statues of Viterbo merge sanctioned female behavior with a woman's extraordinary reach beyond cultural and social boundaries.

Of the nine female votaries represented by Panicale in the manuscript, the accompanying text identifies eight who brought their effigies on their own. In the clearest example of a woman bringing her effigy, Bandoni specifies that it was the female votary, Lucia di Domenico Rosa from the central Italian city of Vetralla, who offered her large effigy to the Madonna della Quercia: "Lucia portò il suo voto grande..."¹⁶³ Whereas the majority of votive offerings were commissioned by the individual who personally experienced the miracle, effigies at times were offered on behalf of the votary by a third party. Bandoni's narrative of Margarita di Fabbiano Rosa indicates that the perpetrators of the crime committed against her made an offering of a statue on her behalf.¹⁶⁴

Following are three analyses of female votaries portrayed by the *Libro dei miracoli*. La Savia, the focus of the first analysis, was chosen because her image

permitted to move freely through the space of a church. Male and female members of the congregation were sometimes segregated in different areas of the church in order to discourage lustful feelings, as shown by Margaret Aston, "Segregation in the Church," in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1990); see also Diane Wolfthal, *In and Out of the Marital Bed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 76.

¹⁶³ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex-voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 201.

¹⁶⁴ Julius von Schlosser contends that the earliest records of votive sculptures in wax were from Germany, dating to the eleventh century. He notes that the count Folmar von Elsass made a votive offering in the form of "a statue of wax of his weight" on behalf of his mute servant. Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 227.

is only one of two instances in the manuscript that includes the representation of children; additionally, the story of her miracle is ripe with dramatic elements. A number of broader socio-cultural trends can be identified in the miracle story of the second votary chosen for this chapter, Lucia di Francesco Pieraccini. The selection of D. Cecilia Casceloni for the third analysis was made because unlike the other female votaries in the manuscript, Cecilia was never accused of immoral behavior and instead was celebrated for her honorable actions.

La Savia

Image

There are a number of firsts in Panicale's rendering of La Savia from Viterbo: this watercolor is the first portrayal of a female votary in the manuscript; it is the first depiction of a votive statue comprised of two figures; and it is the first of only two depictions of children in the manuscript. Panicale offers a dual-view of La Savia which renders the image even more complex: to the left side of the folio the viewer receives a frontal view of La Savia and her infant son, Giovan Battista, and to the right of the folio is a view of the votary's back. The original statue was displayed in the church on a wooden pedestal that would have been attached to either a wall or a column; Panicale's replication of the pedestal in his watercolor of La Savia confirms the display mechanism. It is puzzling that the artisans who crafted the statue would have created a work that was intended to be seen in the round, as is suggested by the dual view of detailed elements in the watercolor, when only the front and sides of the statue would have been viewable

from its positioning against a solid surface. Perhaps La Savia requested that the artisans reproduce the truest likeness of her injuries in her votive offering, including wounds that would not be visible to the viewers. Panicale's decision to display a dual-view of La Savia verifies that detail elements were part of both the front and back of the statue.

Horror marks this image. The terror experienced by La Savia, visible in her wide eyes and open mouth, is reinforced by her son's identical expression. Her hair is uncovered and disheveled, and blood cascades down her face from the four stab wounds in her scalp. Throughout the manuscript Panicale renders stab wounds in the same manner, and we can assume that the artist faithfully reproduced the stylistic choices of the *ceraiuoli* in his watercolors. Each wound is represented by a separate weapon entering into the individual's body. In the case of La Savia, the frontal view shows her with 10 weapons penetrating her figure and one weapon striking Giovan Battista, and the rear view reveals 14 weapons assailing her. The repeated picturing of the weapons contributes to the gruesome nature of the victim's injuries.

The manner in which Panicale illustrates the stab wounds in his images, and by extension, the way the *ceraiuoli* executed the wounds in their statues, recalls martyrdom scenes of St. Sebastian. Images of the martyr show him as a young man with his hands bound behind him, lashed to a tree or column, with one or multiple arrows piercing his body (Piero della Francesca, Polyptych of the Misericordia, *Sts. Sebastian and John the Baptist*, 1445-1462, tempera on panel; Andrea da Murano, Polyptych, c. 1478, tempera on wood). The repetition of

weapons and wounds in Panicale's watercolors echoes the portrayals of St. Sebastian that depict him with multiple arrow injuries. We can only hypothesize possible sources to which the *ceraiuoli* and Panicale looked. The collection of hagiographies written by Jacobus de Voragine around 1260, known as *The Golden Legend*, achieved huge popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and could have served as a foundation for St. Sebastian representations. It reports that Sebastian "was surrounded by arrows, like a porcupine with quills"¹⁶⁵ Two images of St. Sebastian located near Viterbo also may have served as visual sources for the *ceraiuoli*. The church of San Biagio in the city of Corchiano, at a distance of 23 miles from Viterbo, houses a fresco of St. Sebastian by the Master of Corchiano dating to the second half of the fifteenth century.¹⁶⁶ St. Sebastian's mostly naked body is riddled with arrows in a way that resembles the weapons and wounds rendered by Panicale. The Museo Nazionale in Tarquinia, a town located 28 miles from Viterbo, contains a fifteenth century panel painting of St. Anthony Abate Enthroned between St. Roch and St. Sebastian by Monaldo Trofi, also known as Trufetta or Monaldo Còrso.¹⁶⁷ Although this rendering of the saint displays him having only two wounds, as compared to the dozens of wounds suffered by the Corchiano Sebastian, it is nonetheless a representation of plural

¹⁶⁵ *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine*, trans. and adapted by Ryan Granger and Helmut Ripperger. (Arno Press: Longmans, Green & Co, 1941), 104.

¹⁶⁶ Little is known about the Master of Corchiano other than he was a follower of Lorenzo da Viterbo. Both painters were active in Viterbo during the second half of the fifteenth century. See Italo Faldi, *Pittori viterbesi di cinque secoli* (Viterbo: Cassa di risparmio della provincia di Viterbo, 1970), 26-32, 190-194.

¹⁶⁷ Italo Faldi reports that Monaldo Trofi was of Corsican origins but was a resident of Viterbo. Mario Signorelli dates Monaldo's birth to 1481; Faldi, however, contends that Signorelli's date is too late and suggests a birth date that is at least 10 years earlier.

injuries on a single body. In Florence Giovanni del Biondo executed a triptych with scenes of the life of St. Sebastian for the basilica of S. Maria del Fiore, dating to the 1370s. The rendering of the saint on the center panel is particularly gruesome, displaying the martyr riddled with abundant arrows. As S. Maria del Fiore was the main church in Florence, it is possible that members of the Benintendi family, who left Florence for Viterbo around 1517 to work as *ceraiuoli* in the waxworks associated with S. Maria della Querica, were familiar with the image; they also could have known the St. Sebastian images located near Viterbo. Contrarily, the stylistic choices of the Florentine *ceraiuoli* to display repeated wounds and weapons could have also been their own invention.

La Savia's body leans to the right in a contrapposto stance as she protectively grasps her swaddled son in both hands over her left breast. Two stab wounds in her right forearm and wrist, close to her baby, appear to be defensive wounds that she would have received protecting herself and Giovan Battista, alluding to her maternal duty to safeguard her child.¹⁶⁸ La Savia was unable to prevent her child from being injured: Giovan Battista is stabbed in his head, and blood drips down his forehead, cheeks, neck, and body.

Panicale's technique draws from Italian Renaissance and High Renaissance sources. He adds three-dimensionality to La Savia's figure by hinting at the shape of her body underneath the draped fabric of her long dress.

¹⁶⁸ Kathleen M. Brown and Mary E. Muscari, *Quick Reference to Adult and Older Adult Forensics: A Guide for Nurses and Other Health Care Professionals*. (New York: Springer Science+Business Media, 2010), 28. Defensive wounds often occur on the hands and forearms when the victim has raised them to protect the head and face, or to deflect an assault.

The folds fall in such a way on the skirt of her dress that indicate the presence of legs, which is particularly visible from her rear view. Her left leg extends back and the fabric of her dress drapes snugly over her left calf, revealing its muscular shape. She is not a dainty woman; rather, La Savia is a monumental figure with broad shoulders, muscular arms and large hands, reminiscent of Michelangelo's frescoed sibyls on the Sistine Chapel's ceiling. There are some technical inconsistencies, primarily in proportion, in Panicale's execution of this watercolor. The votary's hands are poorly rendered: they are proportionally too large for her body and lack definition. La Savia's left shoulder and bicep appear grotesquely large in the frontal view of her figure; from the back, however, her left arm is not disproportionately-sized. Her arms and hands are also proportionally too large for her body. Panicale's attempt at realistic foreshortening additionally falls short: from behind La Savia's feet appear truncated and without depth.

Despite Panicale's shortcomings in technical skill, he successfully charges his images with abundant, recognizable detail. The type of weapon used to injure La Savia and Giovan Battista is clearly discernable as a dagger because of its short, slim blade.¹⁶⁹ La Savia's dress is a *gamurra* in a golden yellow hue with a square neck, long sleeves, and a skirt that covers her ankles. The *gamurra* was a simple article of clothing made of wool or silk for women from all classes.

Jacqueline Herald describes it as something "both functional and informal, being

¹⁶⁹ It was a common weapon worn by men of all classes. Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life The Medieval World*, vol. 2 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2004), 350.

worn on its own at home, and covered by some form of overgarment...out-of-doors or on a more formal occasion.”¹⁷⁰ The text accompanying La Savia’s image relates that the votary was inside her home when she received her injuries, further establishing the garment to be a *gamurra*. Panicale additionally includes specific detail in the infant Giovan Battista’s swaddling clothes. Violet swaddling bands decorated with what appears to be a white ornamental trim, possibly lace, tightly encircle the young child.

Lacking archival information about La Savia, further inquiry of her identity relies on the visual evidence presented to the viewer in Panicale’s watercolor. The white decoration embellishing the swaddling bands can be considered an indication of La Savia’s, and by extension, her husband’s wealth. Poor children were swaddled in plain cotton cloths; children from wealthy families, however, wore swaddling clothes decorated with embroidery, pattern, and occasionally jewels.¹⁷¹ A swaddling band from Italy, dating to 1575-1600, exhibited in London’s V&A Museum of Childhood boasts a decorative trim comprised of lace and embroidery that is similar to the rendering in the manuscript.¹⁷² Fabric color serves as another potential indicator of wealth. The dark yellow-orange hue of La Savia’s *gamurra* may or may not have been created with an expensive dye. If the dye was made from saffron, an imported spice, the

¹⁷⁰ Jacqueline Herald, *Renaissance Dress in Italy 1400-1500* (London: Bell & Hyman; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1981), 217.

¹⁷¹ Jill Condra, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing Through World History*, 48.

¹⁷² V&A Museum of Childhood website, <http://www.museumofchildhood.org.uk/collections/clothing/swaddling-band/>, accessed 4/3/2012.

cost of the cloth would have been high; the expenditure for the cloth would have been lower if, instead, a lower-cost material, like a yellow-flowering plant, was used to produce the dye.¹⁷³ The violet color of Giovan Battista's swaddling clothes may have been produced by *perssi* dyes which were among the most expensive in early modern Italy.¹⁷⁴ The use of expensive swaddling clothes, items that were easily, and frequently, soiled again suggests the potential wealth of La Savia's family. An analysis of her image must also consider the possibility that her presentation in the original statue may have been idealized at either her request or by the *ceraiuoli*. Joanna Woods-Marsden thoroughly examines how sitters for portraits in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries sought control over their visual representations. Isabella d'Este was delighted with the likeness produced of her by Francesco Francia, declaring that his art had made her "considerably more beautiful than nature."¹⁷⁵ Woods-Marsden also reports that the heightened naturalism of Andrea Mantegna's group portraiture was not always enthusiastically received by the sitters. She cites Ludovico Gonzaga's comment that while "Andrea is a good master in other things, in portraiture he could have

¹⁷³ Carole Collier Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence: families, fortunes and fine clothing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 99.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 102. Frick reports that woolen cloth colored in *perssi* cost "17 to 20 florins for 100 pieces," ranking second after the cost of dark blue, or *pavanazzo*, dyed woolen cloth that cost "25 to 28 florins for 100 pieces."

¹⁷⁵ "... l'arcte vostra assai più bella che non ni ha che non ni ha facto natura..." Letter from Isabella d'Este to Francesco Francia, Mantua, November 25, 1511, Archivio di Stato di Mantova, Archivio Gonzaga, busta 2996, libro 29, c. 72r, published in Alessandro Luzio, *La Galleria dei Gonzaga* (Rome: Bardi, 1913), 212; c.f. Joanna Woods-Marsden, "'Ritratto al Naturale': Questions of Realism and Idealism in Early Renaissance Portraits," *Art Journal* 46, no. 3, Portraits: The Limitations of Likeness (Autumn, 1987): note 4, 214, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/777034>.

more grace, he does not do so well.”¹⁷⁶ While votaries did not pose for the artisans who executed their effigies, their aim was to purchase a votive object that, as Freedberg states, was “the most exact copy possible” of the votary and the situation that surrounded his or her miracle.¹⁷⁷ Based on the watercolor’s visual clues, La Savia appears to be from an affluent family.

Text

In the city of Viterbo there was a woman called La Savia, above all beautiful and virtuous, she gave birth to her husband’s son, now one month old who she took care of, and her husband had been away from Viterbo for a few months, and upon returning home his wife went to meet him with his son in her arms; to which her husband said: “Who’s son are you carrying?” His wife responded: “He is ours;” her husband added “How can he be mine since I’ve been away for so many months,” and thinking that the baby was at least four months old [since he] was nice and big he said “you have dishonored me,” he did not want to listen neither to his wife’s reasoning nor to his relatives’ [reasoning] and stabbed his wife 25 times and when he thought his wife was dead he turned to the baby [and said] “And you, little Donkey, I still want to kill you” and after receiving a stab to his head the little one-month-old angel spoke: “Oh, father, why do you strike me, I am your son” he said, and he did not speak after that. Then the father asked for forgiveness from God and from the Madonna della Quercia, his wife survived and his son was then the town crier, known as Giovan Battista. This Savia was extremely devoted to the Madonna and there is her statue in the church: and I F. Thom[as]o B[andoni] have conversed with those who had met these people: it happened in 1499.1512 (the year of the statue).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ "E vero che Andrea e bon maestro in le altre cose, ma nel retrare poria havere più gratia e non fa cussi bene." Letter from Lodovico Gonzaga to Zaccaria Saggi, Mantua, November 30, 1475, ASMAG, busta 2894, libro 50, c. 39, Woods-Marsden, “ ‘Ritratto al Naturale’ ,” 210 and note 21, 215.

¹⁷⁷ Freedberg, *Power of Images*, 157.

¹⁷⁸ “Nella città di Viterbo occorse che una donna chiamata la Savia bella sopra modo et honesta havendo partorito uno figliolo del suo marito già di uno mese quale teneva in collo et essendo stato il suo marito alcuni mesi fuora di Viterbo ritornato alla casa la moglie li va incontro con il suo figliolo in braccio; alla quale disse il marito: di chi è questo figliolo che hai in braccio? Rispose la moglie è il nostro; soggiunse il marito come è il mio che sono stato tanti mesi fuora et pensando che il figliolo avesse almeno quattro mesi essendo bello et grosso disse tu mi hai fatto disonore, né alle ragioni della moglie né delle congnate volendo dare orrecchie diede 25 pugnalate alla moglie et quando si pensò che la moglie fosse morta si vortò al figliolo et tu Muletto ancora ti voglio uccidere, et havendo una pugnalata ricevuta in capo parlò il putto di uno solo mese: ah padre perchè mi percuoti sono tuo figliolo ne parlò più. Al’hora il padre chiedendo perdono a Dio

The dual nature of woman is a prominent subject among the narratives of the *Libro dei miracoli*. Evidenced in all types of early modern cultural production -- visual arts, literature, religious sermons, philosophical texts – woman was often defined as either a duplicitous temptress, like the corrupt daughter of Don Simone’s friend, or as virtuous and honorable, seen in La Savia’s narrative. Beauty and virtue, the hallmarks of a good woman according to early modern Italian literary and biblical standards, are among the first qualifiers that Bandoni employs to define La Savia. Francesco Petrarca’s collection of poetry, the *Canzoniere*, dedicated to his beloved, Laura, is fecund with his commendations of Laura’s virtues. Laura’s beauty surpasses that of all other women; Petrarca is ashamed for not having discussed Laura’s beauty enough; there exists no vessel large enough able to “hold so much virtue and so much beauty together;”¹⁷⁹ and Laura’s “gentle ways” are characterized by “Virtue, Honour, [and] Beauty.”¹⁸⁰ Writing before Petrarca, Dante Alighieri does not hesitate to elaborate the virtues of his beloved, Beatrice, in the *Vita Nuova*. Her good qualities are capable of erasing offense and her “beauty is proven by her example.”¹⁸¹ These examples

et alla Madonna della Quercia campò la moglie ed il figliolo quale poi fu trombetta di Viterbo chiamato Giovan Battista. Questa Savia era devotissima della Madonna et c’è la sua statua in chiesa: et io F. Thom[as]o B[andoni] ho rgonato con chi haveva cognosciuto questa gente: occorse nel’anno 1499.1512.” Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 148.

¹⁷⁹ Francesco Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996), Sonnet 29, 47.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, Canzone 211, 309.

¹⁸¹ Canzone XIX, Dante Alighieri, *Vita nuova*, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), 27.

make it clear that conceptions of beauty rely on a woman's good moral character in addition to outward physical attractiveness.

Biblical examples of good women emphasize their righteous moral character. Setting forth the criteria of the ideal wife, Proverbs 31 explains that she is industrious, charitable towards those in need, a successful manager of her household, and is a "woman who fears the Lord."¹⁸² A woman's honor in the Bible is also closely linked to her ability to bear children; female infertility is regarded as shameful. Genesis 30 relates the difficulties Rachel experienced with infertility while her sister, Leah, gave birth to six sons. At the end of the chapter God allows Rachel to become pregnant and she declares that "God has taken away my disgrace."¹⁸³ Panicale's image of La Savia holding her infant son, along with Bandoni's written description of La Savia's motherhood, work in tandem to define her as honorable. La Savia's narrative depicts her as a model of good behavior and high moral character; her prominent figuring in the church, both in her statue and in the frescoed version of her miracle in the Chostro della Cisterna, additionally served as a visual reminder of proper female comportment.

Female votaries in the manuscript may have read the bible or books of prayers;¹⁸⁴ it is more likely, however, that knowledge of religious life would have come from popular sermons, religious imagery, and other cultural manifestations of spiritual life. They may have witnessed the public performance of confraternal

¹⁸² Proverbs 31:30, New International Version.

¹⁸³ Genesis 30, New International Version.

¹⁸⁴ See Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: 1300-1600*, in particular chapter 4, "Girls and Working Class Boys in School," 87-110.

organizations, such as hymns and lauds recited by *laudesi*, hymn-singing companies, or the prayers of a confraternity dedicated to comforting felons on their execution day.¹⁸⁵ Popular religious theater, like the *sacra rappresentazione*, may have been something familiar to votaries like La Savia. Developing in Florence during the fifteenth century and spreading throughout the Italian peninsula, the *sacra rappresentazione* dramatized biblical stories using actors who spoke in the Italian vulgate. It was performed in public spaces, like town squares or churches, and used quotidian, realistic elements that allowed the spectators to relate to and interact with the subject matter.¹⁸⁶

Bandoni's manuscript of 1625, containing a slightly different version of La Savia's story than the one found in the *Libro dei miracoli*, further confirms the votary to be a good woman. The author describes La Savia as nursing her son when her husband, "jealous, and furious, without merit" arrives home.¹⁸⁷ Breastfeeding was a subject frequently addressed in Italian advice manuals of the sixteenth century. Lorenzo Gioberti stresses the benefits of maternal breastfeeding in his manual *Errori Popolari*. He maintains that the mother-child bond will be stronger when a mother nurses her infant, in addition to the positive

¹⁸⁵ Lauro Martinez, *Strong Words. Writing and Social Strain in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), 39-42.

¹⁸⁶ See *Three Florentine sacre rappresentazioni: texts and translations*, translation and introduction by Michal O'Connell (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011) and *Sacre rappresentazioni del Quattrocento*, ed. Luigi Banfi (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1974).

¹⁸⁷ "un marito geloso, et furioso, senza dovere" Bandoni, manuscript of 1625, folio 30.

effects the infant receives from his or her mother's milk.¹⁸⁸ Friar Girolamo Mercurio criticizes mothers who cruelly exile their children to the home of a wet nurse, arguing that even wild animals suckle their own young,¹⁸⁹ and the humanist Matteo Palmieri declared "noble mothers who refuse to nurse their children deserve their hatred."¹⁹⁰ Along with advice manuals, instructions about breastfeeding came in the form of popular sermons. In the early fifteenth century Bernardino of Siena cautioned parents against sending their infants to a wet nurse who potentially "has evil customs or is of base condition" as the infant would be compromised by suckling from her.¹⁹¹ It was commonly believed that a woman's breastmilk conveyed her moral qualities, and an infant consuming a dishonorable woman's milk would certainly acquire those unfavorable traits. Also in the fifteenth century Leon Battista Alberti contributed his opinion on the subject of breastfeeding in the first book of *Libri della famiglia*, a collection of dialogues that stress fifteenth-century middle class values. Lionardo, a participant in the dialogue who assumes the voice of the modern, forward-thinking man, states: "If I were to have children, I would not take up the job of looking for a wetnurse other than their own mother," and he continues, asserting that "...I can believe that

¹⁸⁸ Rudolf M. Bell, *How to Do It: guides to good living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 126.

¹⁸⁹ Girolamo Mercurio, *La Comare*, book 1, chapter 24, 104-108; cf. Bell, *How to do it*, 127.

¹⁹⁰ Matteo Palmieri, *Della vita civile* (Florence: ?, 1528), 15.

¹⁹¹ Quoted by Margaret R. Miles, "The Virgin's One Bare Breast," in *The Expanding Discourse: feminism and art history*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York, NY: IconEditions, 1992), 30.

everything provided by nature is good...”¹⁹² While certain groups in early modern Italian society, like the nobility, those aspiring upward social mobility, or women who were forced to work and could not care for the nutritive aspects of raising an infant, hired wet nurses to come to their homes, or, less frequently, sent their children to live with wet nurses, it was more common for mothers of all classes to nurse their own children.¹⁹³ La Savia, a seemingly affluent woman who nourished her infant with her own breast milk, is part of the breastfeeding majority, and moreover, she embodies proper motherly conduct.

Two miracles take place in La Savia’s narrative: first, La Savia fully recovers after enduring 25 stab wounds. The second miracle, even more extraordinary than La Savia’s return to health, occurs when the one-month-old infant, Giovan Battista, speaks to his father. The version of La Savia’s story in Bandoni’s manuscript of 1625 clarifies that it was the Madonna della Quercia who prompted the infant to verbally halt his father’s attack.¹⁹⁴ Giovan Battista’s precious utterance to his father recalls biblical infants that spoke. Joseph of

¹⁹² “Quanto se io avessi fanciugli, io non mi piglierei quella fatica di cercare altra nutrice che la loro medesima madre... pure io posso credere dalla natura sia bene a tutto provveduto...” Leon Battista Alberti, *Della famiglia*, Book 1 (Turin: G. Einaudi, 1980), 34.

¹⁹³ Whereas J.B. Ross and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber argue that it was the norm for middle-class urban families in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to send their infants away for a period of time, usually two years, to be nourished by a hired wet nurse, Rudolph M. Bell clearly and accurately articulates the faults he finds in the statistical calculations they performed on their analysis of archival materials. Bell argues, based on his analysis of Ross’ and Klapisch-Zuber’s numbers, that the percentages of families sending their children to live with wet nurses was significantly lower than what Ross and Klapisch-Zuber report. See Rudolph M. Bell, *How to Do It*, 124-137, in particular note 20, 323-324. Lucia Sandri examines women, some of whom had nursing children that were sent away to a wet nurse, employed as wet nurses at the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence during the fifteenth century. See “L’assistenza nei primi due secoli di attività,” in *Gli Innocenti e Firenze nei secoli: un ospedale, un archivio, una città*, ed. Lucia Sandri (Firenze: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1996), 65-69.

¹⁹⁴ “La Madonna fece parlare quel putto d’uno mese...” Bandoni, manuscript of 1625, 79.

Caiaphas, the Roman-appointed high priest of Jerusalem who sent Jesus to be executed by Pilate, relates that Jesus spoke to his mother, Mary, when he was in the cradle: “I am Jesus the Son of God and the Word of God and you have given me birth just as the angel Gabriel told you. My Father sent me for the salvation of all the Earth.”¹⁹⁵

Bandoni, writing about the miracle 120 years after it took place, relies on the oral testimony of secondary sources for his passage. In his narrative he attests that “I F. Thom[as]o B[andoni] have conversed with those who had met these people: it happened in 1499.” Both the church and Bandoni regarded the sacristan as a reliable authority and a worthy judge of character: despite the seemingly preposterous nature of an infant gaining the ability to speak coherently, Bandoni’s judgment to believe the witnesses he interviewed went unquestioned. Viterbans were familiar with La Savia’s miracle: a frescoed representation of her miracle is among the images that decorate the Chostro della Cisterna, indicating the importance of her miracle in the formation of the Madonna della Quercia’s fame. It is possible that Bandoni, along with the individuals with whom he spoke, drew from the lore surrounding La Savia’s miracle when conveying her story. Compared to other narratives composed by Bandoni La Savia’s story is notably longer and of a higher literary quality, which suggests that an established story may have been culturally present. The miracles of Don Simone and Giovan Battista Spiriti (both of which are discussed in later chapters) also seem to have

¹⁹⁵ Stevan Davies, *The Infancy Gospels of Jesus* (Woodstock, Vt.: SkyLight Paths Publishers, 2009), 64.

had a cultural presence in Viterbo. Similar to La Savia, their narratives are more lengthy and literary in nature, and their miracles are also pictured in the Chiostro della Cisterna. La Savia's account in the *Libro di miracoli* underscores a fundamental change in the way memories were conserved during the early modern period. The oral culture of the past, which relied on the verbal retellings of collective memory, shifts to a formally documented history that is sustained on paper.¹⁹⁶

Livia di Francesco Pieraccini

Image

Panicale presents another dual-view of the votary in his representation of Livia di Francesco Pieraccini. She wears a long, reddish- orange colored *gamurra* belted at the waist with a high, round neck from which peeks the small detail of her white *camicia*, which she wears as an undergarment underneath the dress. All the women depicted by Panicale in the *Libro dei miracoli* wear garments equal in modesty to those of Livia, fashioning themselves as upright women who respected cultural and legal customs. Likely the female votaries understood that the placement of their offerings in a religious setting necessitated a discreet costume; it is also probable that the women understood the legal ramifications of wearing unsanctioned garments. Sumptuary laws enacted in fourteenth and fifteenth century Bergamo, Florence, Brescia, Genoa and Perugia forbade women

¹⁹⁶ For the shift from oral to written culture in the early modern period see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the world* (London; New York: Methuen, 1982) and Juliann Vitullo, *The Chivalric Epic*.

from wearing clothing that revealed abundant décolletage.¹⁹⁷ A law enacted in Florence in 1427 addresses two motivations behind the legislation directed at women: extravagant spending and immodesty. In the decree the Signoria aimed “to restrain and hinder the unbridled excess of women’s clothing and ornaments in order to reduce immoderate expenses and so that respectability and modesty might shine more brightly.”¹⁹⁸ Moreover, all the female votaries illustrated by Panicale, apart from one woman, were accused of infidelity that was later disproven with the assistance of the Madonna della Quercia. Their choice, therefore, to be depicted in the original statue wearing discreet apparel reinforces their honorable qualities. Livia’s pose further points to her correct behavior: her hands are raised in prayer at her chest and her eyes and face lift upward to the left towards the golden light that indicates the presence of the Madonna della Quercia.

Similar to Panicale’s rendering of La Savia, the representation of Livia exhibits characteristics of Italian High Renaissance art. The artist creates an illusion of volume through the use of light and shadow, visible in the shading on Livia’s neck and the white highlights on her left knee in the frontal view of the votary, and on her left calf in her rear view. Also like La Savia, technical flaws

¹⁹⁷ Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 62- 63. The fact that a law was written did not mean that the sumptuary violations stopped occurring. It is also important to remember that different audiences called for different presentation of clothing. Cesare Vecellio’s compendium of clothing, *Habiti antichi, et moderni, di tutto il Mondo*, published in 1598, was addressed to an affluent Venetian audience. It depicts the “Elderly Venetian Lady” wearing a low-cut dress that exposes ample décolletage. Wearing similar dress and revealing an equal amount of her bosom is the “Venetian prostitute in wintertime.”

¹⁹⁸ Ronald E. Rainey, “Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence” (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1984,) 431-32.
<http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/docview/303350873?accountid=4485> ProQuest (AAT 303350873).

mark Livia's image. The votary's body left shoulder is disproportionately large for her body and appears distorted. Viewed from behind, Livia's feet appear unnatural and lack depth. Several parallels between the portrayals of Livia and La Savia further indicate that Panicale utilized a pattern when creating his images. The women share similar positioning of their heads and identical misshapen shoulders; La Savia's disfiguration, however, is concealed by the placement of her infant son. Almost identical hairstyles complete the similarities shared between the representations of these two women.

The weapon used to injure Livia appears to be a dagger because of its short blade. A variety of daggers are seen throughout the manuscript: this particular example boasts a round pommel, a handle decorated with a spiral wrap, and flared crossguards. Like the small detail of Livia's *camicia*, the assortment of weaponry features presents rich, identifiable detail to the viewer. The watercolors serve as a useful visual source for the material history of fifteenth through seventeenth century Viterbo.

Text

Livia di Francesco Pieraccini from Sutri [was] accused by her mother-in-law of loving men other than her husband, [the mother-in-law] knew very well to tell her son, who, returning home and seeing her [Livia] at the window, [who] was waiting more for her husband than [wanting] to be seen by other men, was injured with six wounds behind her shoulders, one in her breast, two in her left arm and one in her head, and she was left for dead, Livia's mother ran to her and many other neighbors and relatives, and all together they called the Madonna della Quercia from Viterbo and promised an offering which, as if she were awakened from sleep, said "the Madonna della Quercia saved me from death," she healed

quickly and recognized her own innocence and brought her large effigy, this was in the year 1522 on the 8th of May.¹⁹⁹

The theme of honor is one that is woven throughout most of the narratives in the *Libro dei miracoli* and figures prominently in this account. Ensuring a woman's honorable comportment seeped deeply into early modern life: state-sponsored legislation regulated female dress and female movement in public areas; religious sermons reminded both men and women of perceived female weakness and the help they needed when it came to preserving their honor; moralists also reminded their reading audience of proper female behavior. Connected to all these opinions was the subject of female honor. In this narrative Livia's honorable conduct is directly linked to that of her husband: dishonorable acts perpetrated by her would taint not only her husband's reputation, but also the collective reputation of the house and family. Livia's mother-in-law, one of the family's guardians of female chastity, made sure to alert her son, the paterfamilias, to his wife's alleged indiscretions with other men. Improper behavior within a family points to a weak family leader; consequentially, a weak man is viewed as vulnerable and his reputation, which is equated to social prestige and identity – in essence, his masculinity -- is questioned.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Livia di Francesco Pieraccini da Sutri accusata dalla sua suocera che volesse bene ad altri che il suo marito, seppe tanto bene dire al suo figliolo che ritornato a casa et vedendola alla finestra più per aspettare il marito, che per essere veduta d'altri fu ferita con sei ferite dietro alle spalle, una nel petto due nel braccio sinistro et una in capo et fu lasciata per morta, corse la madre di Livia et molte altre vicine et parenti e da tutte insieme si chiamava la Madonna della Quercia di Viterbo et fu votita quale come fusse svegliata dal sonno disse la Madonna della Quercia mi ha liberate dalla morte, sanò in breve et si cognobbe l'innocentia sua et portò il suo voto grante questo fu l'anno 1522 alli otti di Maggio. Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 158.

²⁰⁰ David G. Gilmore, *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association, 1987), p11.

Suspected adultery was only one of Livia's indiscretions: Livia waited for her husband's arrival at the window of their home. Windows and doorways have long been regarded as sites that provoked anxiety about a woman's sexuality.²⁰¹ A woman's chastity, secured by the walls of her home, could easily be compromised if a man with improper intentions were to cross the boundary; conversely, a woman passing through the boundary of a window or doorway into public spaces risked engaging in dishonorable conduct. As Diane Wolfthal has shown, a number of Italian moralists of the early modern period furthered this line of thought: Francesco da Barberino, addressing noblewomen, urges them to avoid windows and balconies; San Bernardino reminded men to punish women who stood near a doorway; and a character from Leon Batista Alberti's *Libro della famiglia* suggests the only way to control a woman's sexuality is to keep her shut deep inside the family home.²⁰²

Women who did appear in a dwelling's liminal spaces were often prostitutes. Situated at a window or door, they would display themselves as merchandise to be purchased and could easily call out from the window or door, engaging them in conversation. Garzoni reports that the prostitutes of Venice, in order to afford their luxurious lifestyles

²⁰¹ Cynthia M. Baker addresses the subject of architecture and sexuality in the essay "Bodies, Boundaries, and Domestic Politics in a Late Ancient Marketplace," in *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 391-418; Diane Wolfthal devotes a chapter and an essay to concerns surrounding the liminal spaces of doorways and windows. See "The Woman in the Window," in *In and Out of the Marital Bed: Seeing Sex in Renaissance Europe*, 74-119 and "The woman in the window: licit and illicit sexual desire in Renaissance Italy," in *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Allison Levy (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 57-76.

²⁰² Wolfthal, *In and out of the Marital Bed*, 78.

show themselves at the windows, they make themselves seen on balconies and turn an eye to whomever passes by, they gesture with their hands, they beckon with a look, they banter with their face, they speak with their tongues, they laugh with their mouth, bend at their waist, they call, pray, persuade, and yell for [men] to enter.²⁰³

Nanna, a fictional courtesan from Pietro Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, reinforces Garzoni's observations of Venetian prostitutes. As a young girl her mother placed her near a window so that potential male suitors passing by on the street below would be able to see her.²⁰⁴ Display in windows was not restricted to illicit women: Wolfthal contends that honest women of marriageable age were also known to display themselves in a window as a means of finding a mate.²⁰⁵ Livia was neither a prostitute, nor a young unmarried woman hoping to attract a husband, thus provoking her husband and family's anxieties about her behavior. It is clear that she understood the social mores surrounding women presenting themselves at windows since the narrative states that she was "waiting *more* for her husband than [wanting] to be seen by other men (my emphasis)." The use of the word "more" raises the question of Livia's intention when she placed herself at the window and may suggest that Livia wanted to be seen from the window. The existence of a rule, law, or social more cannot be equated with compliance

²⁰³ "Per questa sola cagione si mostrano alle finestre, fanno vedersi su i balconi, giran d'occhio à chi passa, gestiscono con la mano, acennano col guardo, motteggiano col viso, parlano con la lingua, ridono con la bocca, si storcono con la vita, chiamano, pregano, suadono, gridano che s'entri." Tomaso Garzoni, *La piazza universal di tutte le professioni nel mondo* (Venice:?, 1605), 598.

²⁰⁴ Pietro Aretino, *Ragionamenti*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Ballantine, 1971), 113.

²⁰⁵ Diane Wolfthal, "The woman in the window: licit and illicit sexual desire in Renaissance Italy," in *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Alison M. Levey (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT : Ashgate, 2010), 64-65.

with it; rather, a relationship based on agreement and compromise exists between the regulation and the individual. Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen contend that

“persons and cultures do not so much obey norms as work with them. As people bargain over the value and meaning of things, they can hew to, approximate, or flout their rules. There is room in life for interpretation and choice, for norms are multiple, often inconsistent, and never unanimous. Their very contradictions give a culture and its denizens the elbow room with which to maneuver through the myriad shocks of daily life.”²⁰⁶

Lucia’s narrative exposes her agency: by defying social customs as she presents herself at a window, and by personally commissioning a votive offering, Lucia is an active participant in her life.

The means by which the Madonna della Quercia was called upon in this narrative differs from other narratives. Whereas the victim of misfortune is typically the one who engages the Madonna, here Livia is unable to call out because her attack has “left her for dead.” Livia’s attack occurred at her home in the city of Sutri, a small, densely-populated hillside town whose Etruscan origins extend back at least to A.D. 400. The closely-packed structures certainly facilitated the quick spread of news, accounting for the immediate arrival of a number of people after the assault, including Livia’s mother, relatives, and neighbor. Collectively, “tutte insieme,” the group prayed to the Madonna della Quercia and promised an effigy to her in exchange for the return of Livia’s health. Despite the collective nature of the prayer, the narrative indicates that Livia brought her votive offering to the church on her own. Bandoni does not mention

²⁰⁶ Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, “Open and Shut: The Social Meanings of the Renaissance Italian House,” *Studies in the decorative arts* 1(Fall/Winter 2001): 62.

in the text that he spoke to Livia or those who knew her, neither does he mention that he looked to the account (*relazione*) attached to the statue as he does in other narratives. The narrative notes that Livia brought her offering on May 8, 1522, long before Bandoni would have been born. Likely Bandoni relied on an attached narrative to compose Livia's story.

D. Cecilia Casceloni

Image

Similar to other women Panicale depicts in the manuscript, Donna Cecilia Casceloni wears modest attire, but, as usual, Panicale includes varied and specific detail that distinguishes her appearance from depictions of other female votaries. A two-toned, tiered *gamurra* covers Cecilia's frame. Most of the garment is a shade of pale pink and ends at Cecilia's knees. Based on the shadow running along the garment's left side, the top tier of the *gamurra* appears to be longer in the back. Golden yellow fabric is visible on Cecilia's lower legs. Long sleeves conceal her arms and a belt, colored the same pale pink color of the garment's top tier, cinches the dress at her waist. The square neck on the garment is original in this image and does not appear on any other female apparel in the manuscript. Atop Cecilia's loose blond hair rests a blue brimmed hat and black shoes cover her feet. Her hands are raised to her chest in a gesture recalling prayer as she looks to the left towards the light of the Madonna della Quercia. Cecilia's body takes on an S-shape in the image with most of her weight resting on her right leg in a *contrapposto* stance. Shading in folds of her skirts indicates

her physical form underneath the garments, particularly the shape of her right leg. The light emanating from the Madonna della Quercia illuminates Cecilia's face while leaving the left side of her neck and body in shadow. The use of shading in Cecilia's image indicates that Panicale understood light and shadow and suggests he may have received artistic training.

A single sword injures Cecilia, entering her body from the right side of her back and exiting her figure from the middle of her abdomen. Blood cascades down her dress from the wound, yet her face does not disclose any pain she may experience from her injury. While Bandoni's text explains that Cecilia was hurt while defending her husband from an attack, Panicale's image of the votary reveals nothing of her heroic act: the only mark of her heroism in the watercolor is the stab wound. Neither the artists who created the original votive statue, nor Panicale, drew from contemporary portrayals of heroic women when composing the statue and watercolor. Imagery of Judith beheading Holofernes was widespread on the Italian peninsula during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with a number of examples produced near Viterbo in central Italy. Donatello's bronze statue of Judith, dating to c. 1446-1460, captures the moment immediately prior to Holofernes' death: Judith is poised to swing the large blade in her right hand down to Holofernes' neck. The statue was likely originally commissioned for the Medici gardens; it was later moved in front of the Palazzo dei Priori in 1494 and was viewed by the Florentine public. Ghiberti included another bronze rendering of Judith on the border of the east baptistery doors, known as the Gates of Paradise. Executed between 1381-1455, Judith raises her sword high in a

triumphant pose while clutching Holoferne's head in her left hand. Botticelli executed three images of Judith: one work, dating to the late fifteenth century, portrays Judith triumphantly holding Holoferne's head in her left hand. A second painting, dating to 1467-1468, depicts Judith and her servant, who bears the load of Holoferne's head on her own head, after the attack. The third image, dating to 1470-72, shows the Assyrians discovering Holoferne's decapitated body. A fresco dating to the fifteenth century in the southern Tuscan town of Sansepolcro shows two scenes from Judith's life: in one portrayal she holds a sword and Holoferne's severed head (which is obscured by extensive damage to the fresco), and the second depiction displays the act of Judith decapitating the Assyrian general. Michelangelo included a scene of Judith and her servant leaving with Holoferne's head on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, dating from 1508-1512. In 1546 Enea Vico published an etching after Michelangelo's Sistine scene of Judith which points to the cultural diffusion of the image. The list of artists working in and around Central Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries who created images of Judith continues: Il Sodoma, Parmigianino, Beccaffumi, Matteo di Giovanni, Pollaiuolo, Vincenzo Tamagni, and Vasari are among the many artists who represented scenes from her life. Cecilia's rendering in a votive statue and watercolor, depicting her in a moment of prayer, focus on her pious connection with the Madonna della Quercia rather than her heroic act in defense of her husband.

Text

In 1500 on the 28th of May D. (Lady) Cecilia Casceloni from Nettuno, wife of Michele, known as the Smasher, ran to her husband to help him while he was fighting with some of his enemies, and entering with courage to free her husband [who was] in the middle of the swords, was hit by one of [the enemies] with a thrust that passed from one side to the other, and she had the Madonna della Quercia on her lips and she said “help,” and her husband was freed, and here her divine grace appeared immediately, so that her husband was not injured anywhere and said Cecilia recovered quickly, everyone believing her to be dying and on her way out: so because of such memorable grace she brought her effigy, it is among one of the big primary ones that you can also see.²⁰⁷

The account of Cecilia’s miracle is singular in the *Libro dei miracoli*: she is the only woman included among Panicale’s images and Bandoni’s narratives whose injuries were not the result of perceived improper behavior. Instead the narrative celebrates the honorable act Cecilia demonstrated towards her husband when she fearlessly, “with courage,” thrust herself among assailants who were attacking her husband.

Laila Abdalla shows how saints and early scholars of Christianity valued women with masculine traits: it was because they assumed masculine traits, and overcame their weak, feminine characteristics, that they were able to succeed. A woman, whose body and anatomy restrict her spirituality, according to medieval scholars, can “either...submit to the superior direction of a male or personally...overcome what is feminine and enact what is masculine about

²⁰⁷ “Nel 1500 alli 28 di Maggio D. Cecilia Casceloni da Nettuno moglie di Michele detto il Fracassa mentre che il suo marito stava combattendo con alcuni suoi nemici corse per aiutarlo, et entrata con coraggio per liberare il marito in mezzo delle spade, fu da uno di quelli con una stoccata passatole il fianco da una parte al altra, quale havendo in bocca la Madonna della Quercia che li desse aiuto, et liberasse il suo marito ecco che comparse di subito la divina gratia, che il marito non fu ferito in alcuna parte e detta Cecilia sanò in breve, da tutti tenuta moribonda e spedita: onde di tale gratia ricordevole portò il suo voto tra quelli principali grandi anco si vede.” Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex-voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 218.

herself.”²⁰⁸ By entering the battle between her husband and his enemies, Cecilia exhibited virtue, strength, and faith in God and the Madonna della Quercia – all qualities traditionally assumed to be masculine.

Cecilia’s heroic intervention recalls literary traditions of powerful women. Moderata Fonte, praising the virtues of women, writes in her first work published in 1581, *Tredici canti del Floridoro* that throughout history women have succeeded in the military life, even surpassing men in their abilities.²⁰⁹ Long before Fonte, in the mid-fourteenth century, Giovanni Boccaccio compiled 106 biographies of renowned women, *De mulieribus claris*. His praise of women at times calls attention to their masculine attributes: Artemesia, the Queen of Caria, is “a woman exceptionally capable of masculine vigor, daring, and military prowess;” Penthesilea, an Amazonian queen, “overcame the softness of her woman’s body” in order to defend the city of Troy in battle; by maintaining her virginity Marcia, the daughter of Varro, “conquered the sting of the flesh, which occasionally overcomes even the most illustrious men;” and the poetess Cornificia “rose above her sex” to reach a level of “excellence few men have equaled.”²¹⁰ Warrior women also figure in Italian chivalric epics from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries. Galaziella, a character appearing in various epics, is the

²⁰⁸ Laila Abdalla, “Theology and Culture: Masculinizing the Woman,” in *Varieties of Devotion*, ed. Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2003), 18-19.

²⁰⁹ “Sempre s’è visto, e vede (pur ch’alcuna / Donna v’abbia volute il pensier pore) / Nella milizia riuscir più d’una, / E ‘l pregio, e ‘l grido a molti uomini torre...” cited from the translation by Valeria Finucci (Bologna: Mucchi, 1995), 61-62.

²¹⁰ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Famous Women*, trans. Virginia Brown (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), Artemesia 237; Penthesilea 129; Marcia 275; Cornificia 355.

daughter of Penthesilea and Agolante, a Saracen king. Juliann Vitullo reports that she is an aspiring warrior who “sighs in disappointment because she would like to participate and defeat” male jousting contestants.²¹¹ Continuing a family tradition of warrior women, Galaziella’s daughter, Formosa, also enters into battle with men.²¹² The lives of Penthesilea, Galaziella, and Formosa were all cut short: some versions of their stories depict them dying in battle, in childbirth, or at the hands of a scorned lover.²¹³ Cecilia, contrarily, does not meet the same fate thanks to the help of the Madonna della Quercia.

The previous three accounts of women living near the city of Viterbo in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are likely representative of the lives of common women throughout the early modern Italian peninsula. Despite attempts by men to quell a woman’s voice through religion, law, and social customs, women acted independently, particularly visible in their ability to commission original works of art for public display.

²¹¹ Juliann Vitullo, *The Chivalric Epic in Medieval Italy*, 66.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 68.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 66-68.

Chapter 5

CLASS

Although early modern Italian art portrays individuals of all socio-economic classes, from representations of the ruling elite, the emerging middle classes, and the poor and destitute, it was typically the moneyed classes who commissioned and or purchased those depictions. The originality of the *Libro dei miracoli*, and the statues that it represents, is owed, in part, to its depiction of votaries originating from a range of socio-economic levels in early modern Italian society and the say they had in their self-fashioning.

A commonality shared by the votary portrayals in the *Libro dei miracoli* is that they seem to stay to their class: a fisherman does not alter his self-presentation to appear as a king, nor does a carpenter commission a statue in order to resemble a nobleman. This was not always the case in the self-fashioning of individuals in early modern Italy: at times men and women wanted to appear different, and better, than reality. Already noted in the previous chapter, Isabella d'Este appreciated a portrait that rendered her more "beautiful than nature."²¹⁴ The practice of idealizing the subject of an image is seen repeatedly in self-portraits of painters and sculptors. Debates over the social standing of the early modern painter and sculptor included, on one side, the argument that the work they performed with their hands defined them as manual laborers, their involvement in retail trade equated them with common shopkeepers, and their

²¹⁴ See chapter 4, note 32.

lack of intellectual training.²¹⁵ Individuals who participated in the arts, however, believed their imagination (*ingegno*) and study of the liberal arts, like mathematics, warranted a high social standing for their group.²¹⁶ Self-portraiture of artists and sculptors allowed them to construct their own image which, Joanna Woods-Marsden contends, “projected [their] aspirations...for a change in the status of art and hence a change in their own personal social standing.”²¹⁷ Domenico Ghirlandaio, wearing fine garments and standing with his hand on his hip in a position which indicates strength and power,²¹⁸ placed himself, alongside his brother and brother-in-law, in the foreground of a fresco he executed for the Tornabuoni Chapel in S. Maria Novella, the *Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple*. Ghirlandaio’s clothing, stance, and physical proximity to a remarkable biblical event present the artist and his family members as prominent individuals in Florentine society. In another example, Leon Battista Alberti cast his self-portrait on a bronze plaquette, showing himself as a young man in profile.²¹⁹ In addition to recalling ancient Roman coins of Caesar, the practice of casting small-scale portrait medals was generally limited to the ruling classes. Alberti’s

²¹⁵ Peter Burke, *The Italian Renaissance Culture and Society in Italy* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986), 80-81.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-80

²¹⁷ Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1.

²¹⁸ Joneath Spicer examines the significance of the gesture made by Ghirlandaio in the fresco in “The Renaissance Elbow,” in *A Cultural History of Gesture*, eds. Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1992) 84-128.

²¹⁹ Woods-Marsden provides a complete analysis of Alberti’s plaquette in *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 70-77.

decision to craft his likeness in a format reserved for those in power suggests that he sought to improve his social status.

The votaries of Viterbo likely commissioned statues that truthfully represented their social standing: the purpose of a votive offering was to be as true-to-life as possible in order to ensure direct linkage between the helpful intercessor and the individual in need of assistance. Another motivation for the accord between a votary's visual presentation and his or her actual class standing may have been sumptuary legislation. Enacted by lawmakers to maintain social and economic stability, sumptuary statutes at times considered the well-being of a municipality's inhabitants, as stated by a law enacted in Siena in 1412. The decree stresses the importance of creating "provisions to restrain superfluous expenditure from our citizens' purses, both rich and poor, for her own preservation and for the utility and honor of the commune."²²⁰ Alternatively, sumptuary legislation could function as a repressive force whose objective was to uphold distinct socio-economic hierarchies during a period of increasing opportunity for social mobility. A chronicler from the city of Brescia confirms the social anxieties surrounding individuals who aspired to a higher class, writing that:

builders, blacksmiths, grocers, shoemakers and weavers dressed their wives in crimson velvet, in silk, in damask and finest scarlet; their sleeves, resembling large banners, were lined in satin or marten, that only suits kings and queens, on their heads glittered pearls and the richest of crowns, chock-full with gems; I myself saw wives of shoemakers wearing stockings of gold cloth and dresses

²²⁰ C. Mazzi, "Alcune leggi suntuarie senesi del secolo XIII," *Archivio storico italiano*, fourth series, 5 (1880), p. 143; see Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500*, 41.

embroidered with pearls, with admirable skill embroidered with gold, silver and silk.²²¹

Jane Bridgeman's re-reading of sumptuary legislation views the laws as an additional means of taxation on luxury goods and wealthy individuals.²²² If a laborer in Viterbo were to present himself in fine clothing instead of dress appropriate to his class, it could fuel speculation among municipal authorities who may then pursue the votary for violating a law.

In order to understand the differences between votive statues commissioned by elite and non-elite individuals, an analysis of an elite votary will first be considered, followed by analyses of three non-elite votaries.

A Man from the Celsi Family

Image

Panicale's watercolor representation of the votive statue given to the Madonna della Quercia by a member of the Celsi family is an example of a large, elaborate, and undoubtedly costly offering commissioned for the church of S. Maria della Quercia. The illustration provides the manuscript's first example of a

²²¹ "...fabbrì, ferrai, pizzicagnoli, calzolai e tessitori vestivano le mogli di velluto cremisino, di seta, di damasco e scarlatto finissimo; le loro maniche, somiglianti ad amplissimi vessili, erano federate di raso o di martora, che ai re soli s'addicono, sulla testa splendevano perle e corone ricchissime, zeppe di gemme; io stesso viddi spose di calzolai portare calze di panno d'oro e vesti ricamate con perle, con mirabil arte intratessute d'oro, d'argento e di seta." A. Cassa, *Funerali, pompe, conviti* (Brescia: Stab. Unione Tip. Bresciana, 1887), 61-62; see Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200-1500*, 81.

²²² Jane Bridgeman, "'Pagare le pompe': why Quattrocento sumptuary laws did not work," in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), 209-226. Bridgeman argues that men and women of fifteenth-century Italy ignored sumptuary laws, instead opting to pay a fine levied against them in order to continue wearing the prohibited garment or jewelry.

structure accompanying a figure; it additionally is the first instance of a figure's face portrayed in profile.

Panicale's image captures a moment charged with drama: the member of the Celsi family (referred to as Celsi from this point forward) kneels in front of the *mannaia*, or the execution device that is known today as the guillotine. Blindfolded with his hands secured behind his back, Celsi is represented at the moment just before his execution. He bends forward at the waist and his head is positioned on a wooden crossbar, under the ominous blade that will soon decapitate him. Bandoni's publication of 1628 provides further information about the Celsi ex-voto, relating that "presently one sees the statue with its head under the blade."²²³ His statement affirms Panicale's loyalty to the original subject as the watercolor visually echoes Bandoni's written description of the statue.

Bandoni's narrative is required to identify the man pictured in the watercolor as a member of the noble Celsi family, yet even without Bandoni's written qualifiers the image clearly depicts a man of means. Creating a life-sized replica of a *mannaia* alone points to the cost involved to execute the offering. The archives of S. Maria della Quercia report the payment given to the *ceraiuoli* for another elaborate statue in the church, that of the Viterban colonel Gio. Battista Spiriti, thus providing an idea about the potential expense of the Celsi statue. Gio. Battista Spiriti paid the *ceraiuoli* 2.5 large gold ducats, only a partial

²²³ "et al presente a mano destra vicino alla statue di Paolo terzo si vede la sua statua con il collo sotto la manara." Bandoni, *Scelta di alcuni miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran Signora Madre di Dio* (1628), 96.

payment for his statue that features the sword-wielding votary atop a life-size galloping horse.²²⁴

Celsi's clothing additionally offers clues to the votary's socio-economic status. He appears to wear a dark-colored garment known as a *saio* or *saione*, a sixteenth-century article of clothing that Isabella Campagnol Fabretti reports to have a "marked waist and a longish skirt [that] went at least to mid-thigh and often reached the knees."²²⁵ The *saio* was one of the many layers of clothing worn by a man. Covering the doublet, a close-fitting garment that was fitted and stuffed to provide volume and warmth, the *saio* was designed with short sleeves around 1520 that allowed the sleeves of the doublet underneath to be visible.²²⁶ Celsi's sleeves appear to be made of a textured fabric with more prominent decoration at the shoulders. Giovan Battista Moroni's portrait of *A Gentleman in Adoration*, dating to around 1560, depicts a similar sleeve with a decorated shoulder and textured fabric. The elaborate sleeves of early modern male costume were part of an overall emphasis of the upper body.²²⁷ Moreover, sleeves were visual signals of wealth and functioned, along with all the other components of an individual's attire, as a sartorial display of a family's high

²²⁴ "Et ducati dua baiocchi LXVIII ½ e quali sono per patre della metà di più spese facte nel chavallo...G.B., Spiriti contribuì alla spesa con ducati 2,5 d'oro larghi," A.S.M.Q. vol. 116 c. 5, September 18, 1507.

²²⁵ Isabella Campagnol Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance", in *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing through World History*, vol. 2, 41.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 41.

²²⁷ Lawrence Langer, *The Importance of Wearing Clothes* (New York, Hastings House 1959), 88-89; see Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 158.

social status. Wealthy families wore their wealth on their bodies: Carole Collier Frick reports that it was not uncommon for an affluent Florentine family to spend 40 percent of its total wealth on clothing.²²⁸ The black hue of Celsi's clothing reflects the preference of members of the court, beginning in the fifteenth century, for black clothing. Isabella Campagnol Fabretti contends that Spanish cultural influences on the Italian peninsula in the mid-sixteenth century also contributed to the fashion of wearing black and dark colors among members of the upper classes.²²⁹ The contrasting color of Celsi's blue *calze*, or leggings, to his dark *saiò* appears to be a customary part of early modern Italian dress as *calze* were often brightly colored.²³⁰ Celsi, along with most of the other votaries pictured in the manuscript, wears shoes. Footwear was uncommon in the early renaissance as the *calze* were soled with either a piece of felted wool or leather that served as protection for the feet; in the late fifteenth century, however, shoes made of leather, velvet, and silk textiles came into use.²³¹ It is clear that Celsi's attire is expensive, fashionable and of the times.

Major inaccuracies in Panicale's attempt to create realistic depth and foreshortening mark this image. Panicale depicts the outer structure of the *mannaia* in a plane parallel to that of the viewer, yet the wooden block securing the weapon's blade, which in theory should be on the same plane as the outer

²²⁸ Frick's conclusions are based on an extensive examination of the personal diaries and inventories of three wealthy Florentine families: the Parenti, the Pucci, and the Tosa da Fortuna. Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 108-114, 180.

²²⁹ Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," 40.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 41.

²³¹ See Herald, *Renaissance Dress in Italy*, 227 and Fabretti, "The Italian Renaissance," 44-45.

structure when viewed from this perspective, is depicted in deep shadow on the right side. No shading darkens the exterior right side of the *mannaia*. Furthermore, Celsi's body is situated so that the viewer receives a full profile view of his face and a three-quarter profile view of his body when in reality, based on the positioning of the *mannaia*, the viewer should receive Celsi's frontal view. Multiple light sources add to the image's confusing composition: the shadow on the ground cast by Celsi's body indicates that the sun is directly overhead, yet the shadow on the left post of the *mannaia* appears to be made by a light source shining from the left side of the folio. Panicale places a wash of golden color that indicates the presence of the Madonna della Quercia in the folio's upper-left corner, and perhaps he intended for there to be two light sources, one coming from the Madonna's mystical glow and the other from the sun, but none of Panicale's other images in the manuscript contain shadows caused by the Madonna's supernatural light. Likely it is Panicale's mediocre technique that is the cause for the light source confusion.

Celsi's depiction in profile may be explained by comparing his image to those of other important votaries in the manuscript who are also pictured in profile. In the *Libro dei miracoli* only the most illustrious individuals are modeled kneeling and in profile: Sig. Giovanni Rinaldo Monaldeschi, accompanied by his familial coat of arms, kneels with his head and hands raised in prayer; Pope Paul III, Pope Gregory XIII, five cardinals, one monsignor, and one Viterban magistrate share identical positioning to that of Signor Monaldeschi. Images of male rulers depicted in profile have a long history, extending back to

ancient Roman coins. Julius Caesar was the first living ruler whose profile image was placed on coinage, a decision that would secure his physical identity throughout the vast Roman Empire. The revival of classical sources in the early modern period reintroduced the practice of minting coins and executing medals with a ruler's portrait in profile. A medal made of Lorenzo de' Medici, prominently displayed in Sandro Botticelli's *Portrait of a Youth with a Medal*, dating to around 1475, simultaneously associated the Florentine leader with the power of classical rulers and recalled his own civic authority. Painted portraits commissioned by rulers, like Piero della Francesca's profile rendering of the Duke of Urbino, dating to c. 1472, also recalls ancient coins.

After the year 1500 the trend of portraying male subjects in profile fell out of style, apart from donor portraits that continued to depict them in profile, like the donors flanking the frame of Masaccio's *Holy Trinity* fresco in the church of Santa Maria Novella, and the donors who kneel on either side of the enthroned Madonna and child Titian's *Pesaro Altarpiece*. Celsi can be considered a donor to the Madonna della Quercia and to the church of S. Maria della Quercia as he purchased the original multi-media statue from the *ceraiuoli* and undoubtedly contributed his opinions about the final outcome of the statue to the artisans. Additionally, Bandoni's narrative identifies Celsi as a member of a noble family, therefore it would be appropriate that his representation for both the statue and the watercolor be executed in profile.

Text

A man from the noble Roman Celsi family, in the prison of Castel Sant' Angelo in Rome, prayed multiple times every day to the Madonna della Quercia of Viterbo in whom he placed all his hopes since he believed himself to be innocent, unjustly sentenced to death but convicted by false testimonies, and prison gave the impression that he was guilty so he was sentenced to death, and he placed his head under the *mannaia* [blade], it fell on his neck nice and hard two times but it never injured him, since he said "Madonna della Quercia, I pray to you and your son that I am dying without blame;" the people around him heard him and he was taken down and [his case] was looked into again, he was found innocent, he made an offering that one can see in the church and he praised God for this splendid event: and I F. Tom[as]o Bandoni understood that it was the father of Sig. Hortentio Celsi, as told by Monsignor Vicelegato from Viterbo, saying that "this is my relative, he is from my family," [in the year] 1544.²³²

Celsi's offering to the Madonna della Quercia attests to the far-reaching knowledge of the Madonna della Quercia's miracle-working powers. The majority of the offerings chronicled in the *Libro dei miracoli* came from individuals originating from Viterbo and the many small towns in its immediate vicinity, yet a handful of the manuscript's recorded offerings were brought by votaries from the distant cities of Siena, Volterra, Florence, Pisa, Bologna, Mantua, Parma, and Rome. The Roman Celsi may have gained his knowledge of the Madonna della Quercia through the strong connection that existed between Viterbo, a city that was part of the Papal States, and Papal Rome. Viterbo became the home of the papal court from 1261 until around 1280. During that time the

²³² "Uno di casa Celsi nobile romano stando in Castello di Santo Angelo di Roma prigionie si raccomandava ogni di più volte alla Madonna della Quercia di Viterbo nella quale haveva posta tutta la causa sua parendoli d'essere innocente da morire a torto ma convinto da falzi testimoni et dale pene, e prigionia diede inditio d'essere colpevole onde sententiatto a morte e posto il capo sotto la manara cascò bene due volte sopra del collo ne mai lo ferì, havendo in bocca Madonna della Quercia e voi et al vostro figliolo mi raccomando che senza colpa io moro; il che udito dalli circostanti fu levato et di nuovo esaminato si trovò lal sua innocentia, quale fece il voto che in chiesa si vede et si diede lode a Dio di questo fatto così stupendo: iet io F. Tom[as]o ho inteso che fusse il padre del Sig. Hortentio Celsi raccontato da Monsignor Vicelegato di Viterbo dicendo questo è il mio parente, et di casa mia 1544." Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 174.

conclaves of Gregory X (1271-73), John XXI (1276), and Martin IV (1282) were held in Viterbo, and popes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries continued to visit the city for shorter periods of time. It is not surprising, due to the geographic proximity and the religious and political connections between the two cities, that a Roman citizen called upon the Madonna della Quercia for help.

While the narrative identifies the votary as a member of the Celsi family, his specific identity is not clarified by Bandoni. The author includes oral testimony of a third-party, Monsignor Vicelegato from Viterbo, to verify the miracle and confirm the votary's identity. Contrasting with the manuscript narrative, Bandoni does not introduce any outside sources to the Celsi account in his 1628 publication, perhaps because, as previously discussed in this chapter, he intended for the 1628 work to be more literary in scope than the *Libro dei miracoli*.²³³ The traces of oral testimony in the *Libro dei miracoli* point to a residual reliance upon oral history that was employed by Church officials to confirm miracles. D.R. Woolf points to examples of early English church history of the twelfth century. The medieval English historian, William of Malmesbury, took what he "heard from credible authority" as factual evidence for his writing, and another twelfth-century English chronicler, Orderic Vitalis "learned from the oldest monks and from other people he encountered."²³⁴ In the twelfth and early

²³³ Later authors writing about the Celsi family miracle also do not include Bandoni's original mention of the witness. These authors include: Giuseppe Gallesi (1642), Vincenzo Malanotte (1666), Vincenzo Peroni (1685), Antonino Borzacchi (1696), Nicolò Maria Torelli (1793), and M. Chéry (1869).

²³⁴ D.R. Woolfe, "The "Common Voice": History, Folklore and Oral Tradition in Early Modern England," *Past & Present*, no. 120 (Aug., 1988): 28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650921>

thirteenth centuries the Catholic Church in Rome developed a standardized process of canonization of which oral witness testimony was an integral component. Vauchez reports that Pope Calixtus II was not satisfied with written descriptions of the life and miracles of the potential St. Hugh and “demanded that authentic witnesses should appear and testify publicly before him.”²³⁵ Even as the dominance of an oral culture yielded to the dominance of the written word, the vestiges of oral authority lingered into the seventeenth century.

Chiostro della Cisterna

A comparison of the frescoed representation of the Celsi miracle in the Chiostro della Cisterna, which was executed before 1631 by an unknown artist, to Panicale’s watercolor rendering of the Celsi statue points to the likely say the votary had in the creation of his votive effigy. The fresco depicts a dramatic outdoor scene populated with numerous figures that encircle a slightly off-centered wooden stage erected to support the *mannaia*. Similar to Panicale’s watercolor Celsi is depicted in profile. His hands are tied behind his back, and the moment depicted in the Cisterna image shows the blade falling down onto Celsi’s neck. Among many differences between the watercolor and the fresco is Celsi’s clothing: while he is fully dressed in expensive garments in Panicale’s watercolor, he wears only a loincloth in the fresco. Martyrdom scenes of certain male Christian saints represent the martyr clothed only in a loincloth, as in the fresco of the *Martyrdom of Saint Peter* in the Brancacci Chapel, begun by Masaccio and

²³⁵ Ibid, 33.

completed by Filippino Lippi between c. 1424-27 to the mid-1480s. Caravaggio's depiction of the *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* in the Cerasi chapel, dating to 1601, also shows the saint wearing a loincloth, and Saint Sebastian is another Christian martyr depicted wearing a loincloth. Furthermore, a solitary man hanging from a cross centrally situated in the composition, to the left of the *mannaia* that constrains Celsi, clearly recalls Christ on the cross. It is unclear whether it is another execution happening simultaneously to that of Celsi, or if it is a device intended to label both men as Christian martyrs. Alternatively the crucifixion could serve as focus point for the condemned man: looking upon the symbol the individual about to be executed could pray and repent. Perhaps Celsi requested that the votive statue be dressed in fine clothing that was similar to his typical garments to facilitate recognition of his identity. If the statue were to have been clothed in a loincloth the votary would have resembled every other convict, and Celsi may have wanted his effigy to be recognized as either himself or as a man of means.

Giovanni di Paolo

Image

Giovanni di Paolo from Sorriano is identified as a carpenter in the image's accompanying text. An analysis of Giovanni's representation, particularly when contrasted to the subject of the previously-discussed watercolor, reveals a non-elite votary based on both his clothing and the lack of architectural elements accompanying his figure.

Giovanni's basic and modest clothing is the main visual clue of his socio-economic status. He wears a brown, long-sleeved, belted tunic that falls to his knees. The garment is open at the neck to reveal a collared white *camicia* underneath. On his head rests a black rimmed hat, white *calze* cover his muscular calves, and black shoes protect his feet. Giovanni's clothing is very similar to a number of representations of carpenters created much earlier than Panicale's seventeenth-century watercolor and the sixteenth-century votive statue. Agnolo Gaddi, along with his workshop, executed a fresco cycle of the *Legend of the True Cross* from 1380-1390 in the choir of Santa Croce in Florence. One scene, titled *The Wood Being Pulled from the Piscina and the Making of the Cross*, depicts laboring carpenters. The central figure whose face is obscured by a plank of wood wears clothing particularly similar to that of Giovanni: his long-sleeved, knee-length tunic is belted at the waist, and white *calze* and black shoes cover the lower half of his body. Another image portraying carpenters, a scene from *Stories from the Life of Santa Fina* executed by Lorenzo di Niccolò Gerini in 1402, shows three carpenters building the roof of a church. These laborers wear belted tunics, *calze* and dark shoes and are comparable to the carpenters in the Agnolo Gaddi fresco. Like Giovanni, the carpenters rendered by Gerini and Gaddi all dress in clean, neat clothing. The aprons worn by the majority of the Gerini and Gaddi figures constitute the main difference between the earlier representations of carpenters and Panicale's seventeenth-century depiction.

A late sixteenth or early seventeenth century drawing study by Alessandro Maganza depicts, among many figures, two carpenters at work and presents a

style of clothing that differs from the attire worn by Panicale's carpenter. Both of Maganza's men wear *camicie* with the sleeves rolled to the elbow and long, loose pieces of fabric cinched around their waists that fall to their calves. Their clothing accommodates the seemingly strenuous labor in which they are engaged. One carpenter bends at his waist over a table while he planes a piece of wood; the other carpenter rests his right knee on a low table as he vigorously saws. Garzoni's commentary on carpenters in the *Piazza universale* defines 13 varieties of men who labor with wood, ranging from jobs that require intense physicality, like the loggers (*sboscadori*), to those that are less demanding, like the crafters of marquetry (*intarsitori*).²³⁶ Richard A. Goldthwaite's extensive study on building construction in thirteenth and fourteenth century Florence additionally chronicles a range of carpenter types in Florence and notes that the Arte dei Legnaiuoli, the non-construction woodworkers guild, was the largest minor guild in fifteenth-century Florence.²³⁷ Neither Panicale's watercolor nor Bandoni's descriptive text lend any clues to the type of woodworking labor performed by Giovanni, but based solely on the comparison of the watercolor and the drawing one could hypothesize that Giovanni, who is presented to the viewer in neat and clean dress, may have engaged in a type of carpentry that was not as energetic as the men designed by Maganza. The Gaddi and Gerini carpenters, dressed similarly to Panicale's figure, would negate that claim as those figures also participate in energetic labor: Gaddi's men strain to pull heavy logs from the water and two

²³⁶ Garzoni, *Piazza universale*, 1198-1204.

²³⁷ Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, 238.

men on the right of the image actively saw the wood being used to construct a crucifix, while Gerini's carpenters bend to nail beams on the roof and another man planes a long board. Maganza's drawing was likely executed after Giovanni's statue, as the carpenter's miracle took place in 1564 and the *ceraiuoli* probably created Giovanni's effigy soon after. Perhaps Maganza's carpenters wear clothing more true to late sixteenth or early seventeenth century style while Panicale, reproducing the clothing on the statue, reflects an earlier style of clothing worn by carpenters.

Panicale's rendering of Giovanni's beardless face suggests he is a young man. Unlike other votaries depicted in the manuscript, Giovanni's representation does not show him at a moment of prayer. Instead, Giovanni's right hand reaches up towards his hat to grasp what appears to be the end of a blade that has penetrated his head while his left hand extends downward and away from his body. His gestures, combined with the tilt of his head to the right, enliven the figure in addition to calling attention to the grisly injuries he suffered.

In this dual-view representation of Giovanni's statue, the votary's rear-view contains significantly more graphic detail than the frontal-view, again supporting the theory that the votive statues must have been seen entirely or partially in the round. The abundant wounds on Giovanni's back almost obscure his body, although it is unclear which weapon caused the injuries. Bandoni's text indicates that "spears, pikes, and swords" were the weapons employed by Giovanni's assailants. A sword that strikes Giovanni's elbow is clearly identifiable by its long, thin blade, a scroll-shaped cross-guard and pommel taking

the form of a spade. Despite no mention of an additional sword in the narrative, a second weapon that pierces Giovanni in the head and neck appears to be a smaller version of the afore-mentioned sword. Its blade is shorter than that of the first sword, the cross-guard with flared ends meets the blade perpendicularly, and the weapon's grip is decorated with an oval pommel. The third weapon that repeatedly ravages Giovanni's back, in addition to piercing the votary in his left abdomen and right flank, is the spearhead of a pike or spear that has been removed from its thrusting pole. It is characterized by the triangular blade and tubular end that accommodates the pole. A fifteenth-century Austrian example of an ahlspiess, or awl pike, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is almost identical to the weapon depicted in the watercolor.

A discrepancy between the weapons illustrated in Panicale's watercolor and those listed in Bandoni's text is not highly significant, yet it underlines the mistakes that may arise when an object is reproduced multiple times and is transferred from one medium to another. The visualization of Giovanni's attack underwent at least three transformations: first, Giovanni verbally described the events surrounding his assault and the injuries he received to the *ceraiuoli*; the *ceraiuoli*, next, created a statue based on their interpretation of Giovanni's account, and Giovanni, as the consumer, likely gave his opinion to the artisans on the finished product. Once placed inside the church the statue may or may not have suffered damage that required restoration which would have altered its original appearance. Finally, Panicale executed his own watercolor interpretation of the statue in the manuscript. The inconsistency could be attributed to a mistake

made by Panicale in his interpretation of the weapons, but extensive evidence in the manuscript point to Panicale's faithful reproductions of the original statue, therefore this option is unlikely. It is equally unlikely that the *ceraiuoli* who made the statue mistakenly included an incorrect weapon as the patron of the statue gave his or her input to the wax-working artisans and surely had an opinion about the final product. Most likely the blame for the inaccuracy lies in Bandoni's interpretation of the story, which will be addressed in the following section.

Text

1564. On the 26th day of May Giovanni di Paolo from Sorriano, carpenter, going from Sorriano to Viterbo was assaulted by three of his enemies who wounded him 34 times with spears, pikes and swords, leaving him for dead, who, seeing himself without any help prayed to the Madonna della Quercia [asking that if] she saved him he wanted to become a religious man at her convent. He recovered and became a lay brother and lived for 16 years after [receiving] so many wounds and I met him and talked many times with him: that seeing his skin he seemed to be a strainer, what a miracle from this saintly Virgin on the 26th of May 1564. He had promised an effigy for becoming [a member of the religious order] and repented, and wanting to find a wife, he sent the Madonna this ex-voto for his health.²³⁸

Giovanni's narrative details his motivation for bringing an effigy to the Madonna della Quercia. Gratitude for his health after having survived a vicious attack was a main reason for the statue, along with obtaining the position of "frate converso," or lay brother, at the church. Occupied by manual work, lay brothers

²³⁸ "1564. Alli 26 di Maggio Giovanni di Paulo da Sorriano falegname venendo da Sorriano a Viterbo fu assaltato da tre suoi inimici quail lo ferirno con lance, spuntoni e spade da 34 ferite lasciandolo per morto quale vedendosi privo di ogni aiuto si raccomandò alla Madonna della Quercia che lo liberasse si voleva fare religioso nel suo convento. Sanò, et si fece frate converse et è vissuto doppo tante ferrite 16 anni et io lo cognosciuto et più volte parlato seco: cosa che a vedere le sue carni parevano uno crivello, miracolo di questa santa Vergine 1564 26 di Maggio. Quale haveva fatto voto di essere religioso et si era pentito, volendo pigliare moglie, la Madonna li mandò questa tribolazione per sua salute." Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 179.

were pious individuals assumed by religious orders to perform everyday maintenance tasks so that members of the institution could devote themselves to spiritual pursuits.²³⁹ It was a fitting position for a man whose profession was performing work with his hands. Moreover, the job as lay brother afforded Giovanni a spiritual connection to the Madonna della Quercia that did not impede his carnal desires to find a wife, which was the final motivation behind the carpenter's offering. Physically scarred from the attack, Giovanni's task of procuring a mate must have been a difficult one. Giovanni's offering highlights the material concerns of the votary – his desires to have physical health, a job, and a marital companion. Petrarch, in his *Testamentum* of 1370, comments that rich and poor men “are equally concerned with their possessions, unequal though they may be.”²⁴⁰ Giovanni's votive statue was a material symbol of his prayers and demonstrates that the desire to collect material goods did not rest solely with the elite; rather, it permeated the consciousness of all socio-economic levels.

Bandoni's narrative of Giovanni di Paolo's miracle is exceptional because it is one of the manuscript's few instances in which Bandoni seemingly spoke directly to the votary as a source for the narrative. Bandoni asserts that he “met and talked many times” with the disfigured Giovanni whose skin, due to his

²³⁹ The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church defines a lay brother as a “member of a religious order who is not bound to the recitation of the Divine Office and is occupied in manual work.” “lay brother, lay sister” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. © Oxford University Press 2005. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Arizona State University. 9 May 2012 <http://www.oxford-christianchurch.com/entry?entry=t257.e3988>

²⁴⁰ Findlen, “Possessing the Past,” 93.

extensive injuries, appeared to Bandoni as “a strainer.” The narrative relates that Giovanni’s miracle occurred in 1564 and that he lived another 16 years after the attack, placing his death around 1580. If Bandoni is correct in his assertion that he spoke directly to Giovanni, the sacristan was either a very young man when the conversations occurred, or he lived a lengthy life. Bandoni served as sacristan to the church of S. Maria della Quercia three times: from 1602-1605, 1607-1609, and 1619-1659. Indicating direct contact with the votary brings greater authenticity to Bandoni’s account of Giovanni’s miracle, but the dates of the miracle as reported by Bandoni appear to be incorrect. Similar to the aforementioned inconsistencies observed between the weapons pictured in the watercolor and those listed in the narrative, Bandoni may have made a mistake while recording the events of Giovanni’s miracle.

Without evidence that documents the amount Giovanni paid for the statue, one must rely on peripheral clues to gain an understanding of the kind of financial burden, if any, resulted from the commission of a votive statue. Knowing the salary of a sixteenth-century Italian carpenter helps to understand how he would have been able to afford the purchase of an offering. The profession of carpenter required both strength, clearly visible in Giovanni’s physical form, and intelligence, as carpenters were considered to be skilled laborers. Garzoni provides a partial list of the skills a carpenter was required to have, ranging from understanding the physical qualities of a piece of wood and the correct wood for manufacturing particular items, to knowing how to straighten bent wood using

fire.²⁴¹ Carpenters were also expected to own a range of tools: Garzoni lists 66 instruments needed by all carpenters.²⁴² Richard Goldthwaite, citing Leon Battista Alberti, reports that workers in Florence during the fifteenth century furnished their own tools;²⁴³ contemporary building contracts in Florence also stipulate that both skilled and unskilled labor were required to provide their own tools.²⁴⁴ Skilled labor in early modern Italy earned wages 50-100% higher than those of unskilled labor.²⁴⁵ Giovanni, as a skilled laborer, likely earned enough money to afford the tools required of his profession in addition to hiring the *ceraiuoli* to create his votive offering.

²⁴¹ “È di mestiero ancora aver cognizione de’ legnami che di coninuo s’adoprano, e saper se son secchi o verdi, e saperli metter in opera talmente che non s’abbiano più da torcere; e quando un legno fosse torgo, saperlo drizzar col fuoco, e saper distinguere tra legname e legname, e in quai cose s’adopera uno più che l’altro – come, verbi gratia, la noce s’opera per far lettiere, la pioppa per far tavole e asse, il frassino per fare de’ cerchi, il legno di pero per intagliarvi dentro varie e diverse cose di stampe, il busso per far tettini, le’ebano per far corone e ornamenti a’ specchi, il Castagno per far botti da vino, il cipresso per far cassette da tenervi cose delicate, il salice da far cerchi da barili, e così va discorrendo in tutti gli altri-.” Garzoni, *Piazza universale*, 1199.

²⁴² “Le cose pertinenti al lignaiuolo sono la cetta, il cettolino, il coltellazzo, la punta, la dolatora, l’assa da una mano e da due, lo spago, la tinta, la pialla (o da disgrossare o da polire o da saggiare), le piolette, i pioluzzi, le dirittore; e così le piale da cornice, cioè gli incastri, i bastoni, le forcine, i spondaruoli, le limbellete, l’intavolate, i filetti, le seghe; e le parti e maniere loro, cioè i bracciouli, i polzoni, il dentello, la corda, la sega sottile, il seghetto, la sega grossa, da scappezzare, da sfendere, da volgere, e da telaro; e poi trivelli sottili, grossi, da bolette, da venticinque, da sesena, da cannale, da vite, da taglio; e poi i martelli da orecchie, e le tenaglie, il mazzuolo, la mazzagrossa, i tagliuoli, i scalpelli (e piccioli e mezzani e grandi), le scobbie diverse, gli spennacchini, i gionocchietti, i graffiuoli, i ciselli, le sette e picciole e grandi, le sequarre, le sequarrette, il raffetto, i chiovi, e le brochette col capo piano da venticinque, da sesena, e grandi e picciole.” Ibid, 1200.

²⁴³ Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, 239.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 293.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 348.

Fabbrisio di Dionisio

Image

Among the most straightforward images of the manuscript, the watercolor of Fabbrisio di Dionisio from Gradoli exhibits a simply-dressed man whom the text defines as a fisherman. Two wounds mar his body: an ax cleaves the right side of his hatless skull, unleashing a torrent of blood that pours down his body, and a spearhead of either a pike or spear, almost identical to one of the weapons that injured the afore-mentioned carpenter Giovanni, pierces his lower right abdomen. Fabbrisio's hands are raised in prayer at his chest, and he bends his head to his left, looking up towards the wash of golden color that indicates the presence of the Madonna della Quercia. Greying hair and a grey beard indicate Fabbrisio to be of a mature age.

Fabbrisio wears a basic, flesh-colored tunic belted at the waist and falling to just above his knees, along with grey *calze* and dark-colored shoes. His clothing is very similar to that of Giovanni the carpenter, and it appears that all laborers in the manuscript dress in almost identical garments. Gregorio, known as the Lombardello and who was assaulted while leading to mules carrying fruit to be sold along the road, wears the standard tunic-*calze*-dark shoes uniform; Oratio Fabbiani, who was in the process of transporting a load of wine to Rome when he was attacked, dons a white belted tunic, white *calze* and black shoes; and the miner Bartolomeo di Selvestro wears a purple belted tunic, orange *calze* and brown shoes. Their clothing reflects sartorial similarities among laborers in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy. While sumptuary legislation related to

clothing typically is not directed toward laborers, the commonality of dress among males of the working classes may have been the result of sumptuary regulation. The uniformity of garment styles among laborers may also simply reflect a practical approach to wearing clothes that accommodated the physical aspects of their work.

Compared to the dress of fisherman depicted in sixteenth and seventeenth century imagery, Fabbrizio's garments do not appear atypical. Pope Leo X commissioned Raphael in 1515 to design a set of cartoons that depicted scenes from the lives of the apostles Peter and Paul. The cartoons would serve as models for tapestries that the pope would use to decorate the papal apartments. Executed from 1516-1517, Raphael's cartoon for the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes* depicts Peter and Paul alongside Christ in the left boat and another group of working fishermen in the boat on the right of the composition. While the unknown fishermen wear togas, Peter and Paul are dressed in tunics similar to what Dionisio wears in Panicale's watercolor. A print executed by Antonio Tempesta and published in 1599, part of a series titled *The Twelve Months*, shows an outdoor scene set along a river and is replete with water-related activities. A refined, high-class couple accompanied by their dog in the image's left foreground enters a boat which will soon depart for a day of leisure. Contrasted to their deliberate composure is the commotion made by young men swimming and playing in the water, along with the labor performed by a number of men on or near the water. The fisherman located in the center of the image provides the clearest example of clothing: he wears what appears to be a *camicia* rolled to his

elbows and a hat shades his face. It is unclear whether he wears pants, or if he has a type of loin cloth similar to what is worn by the playful swimmers below the fisherman. In comparison to the expensive clothing of the leisurely couple, it is clear that the clothing worn by the fisherman is that of a laborer. Another Tempesta print, executed in the sixteenth century, presents a composition similar to the print of the month of August, except in this scene there are more representations of labor. This image clarifies the type of pants worn: leg coverings are rolled up their thighs to prevent them from becoming soaked with water. Annibale Carracci's print of a fisherman, drawn in the 1580s but printed around 1640, confirms the garment worn over the legs of the fisherman. Even if it were common for fishermen to wear their leggings rolled up around their thighs while fishing, it is likely that Fabbrizio did not request that the *ceraiuoli* craft his votive statue in such a manner out of a sense of dignity he assumed for his self-presentation.

Text

Fabbrizio di Dionisio from Gradoli, fisherman, did not want to give his fish that he had in his boat to a certain man from the Grotte di S. Lorenzo, and he was struck with a hatchet on his head and his companion struck him with a weapon on a pole in his belly and his guts came out, he prayed to the Madonna della Quercia and he healed in a short time, he brought his large effigy with the stated account 1524 on the 27th of April, F. Tom[as]o Bandoni.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ “Fabbrizio di Dionisio da Gradoli pescatore non volendo dare il suo pescie che haveva nella barca ad uno certo dalle Grotte di S. Lornzo li fu dato del’ accetta sopra il capo et il compagno li diede con una arme in asta nel ventre che uscivano le budelle, si raccomandò alla Madonna della Quercia et sanato in breve portò il suo voto grande, con la detta relatione 1524 alli 27 d’ Aprile F. Tom[as]o Bandoni.” Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 216.

The *Libro dei miracoli* incorporates two traditions: an oral culture in which the spoken word, originating from a truthful source, was taken as evidence and a literary culture that necessitated the documentation of facts through the written word. Composed of one, long sentence interrupted by commas, Fabbrizio's narrative mimics an oral retelling of the event. Bandoni indicates that the specifics of his narrative originate from the "stated account" attached to the statue; based on the simplicity of the text Bandoni may not have altered the pre-existing narrative when crafting his version of Fabbrizio's story. The narrative's straightforward nature also points to the uncomplicated nature of the speaker: as a fisherman from the small fishing town of Gradoli situated along the banks of Lake Bolsena, his main concern is retaining his catch of fish in order to earn a living. Fabbrizio was likely a man of little means, but still gathered enough money to commission a votive statue from the Viterban *ceraiuoli*. Even a fisherman was able to obtain a statue.

Bartolomeo di Selvestro

Image

Like the clothing of Giovanni the carpenter and Fabbrizio the fisherman, Bartolomeo di Selvestro from Mantua also wears simple, unadorned clothing that reveals him to be a laborer. Bartolomeo's long hair alludes to his youth as young men depicted in Italian imagery of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries often wore their hair long. A number of examples are found in early modern paintings: Sandro Botticelli's *Portrait of a Youth with a Medal*, dating to c. 1475, Giovanni

Bellini's *Portrait of a Young Man*, dating to c. 1490-1500, Raphael's self-portrait of c. 1506, and Lorenzo Lotto's *Portrait of a Young Man*, dating to c. 1505,. Bartolomeo's blond hair color may suggest that he is a foreigner to Viterbo. The text indicates that Bartolomeo originates from northern Italy, a region where it was more likely to find individuals with lighter complexions and hair color. Other votaries depicted in the manuscript who come from northern Italian cities – Francesco Cechinelli from Milan, Felice di Jacopo Piccioni from Bologna, Ventura Buoncambi from Pisa, Iacopo from Todi, and Francesco Brunetti from Florence – are also pictured with light blond hair. At the same time the *Libro dei miracoli* shows individuals from areas near Viterbo with blond hair, such as La Savia, and it may be incorrect to assume that foreigners from locales to the north of Viterbo are represented with light-colored hair.

Apart from his garment, which suggests that Bartolomeo was a laborer, the only visual clues to his profession in the image are the rocks that surround his head. Presumably debris from the mining process, the text specifies that rocks were used as weapons to injure Bartolomeo. A close inspection of the stones reveals them to be attached to a device that encircles Bartolomeo's head, almost as a crown. The unusual headdress must be a direct copy of the mechanism utilized by the *ceraiuoli* to attach the rocks to the statue's head. Since the manuscript was intended to serve as a guide for future repairs to the statues, Panicale reproduced even the mechanical details of the sculptures to facilitate those repairs.

Panicale indicates the votary's strength by depicting the muscles of Bartolomeo's arms underneath tunic and the musculature of his legs. The artist further indicates volume through the use of shading on Bartolomeo's face, chin, and the shadow cast by his tunic on his upper thighs. Mining was a laborious, exhausting, physical, dirty job. There are very few Italian images that depict the mining process: although there were mines scattered across the peninsula, Italy has relatively less mineral deposits compared to other areas in Western Europe. Jacopo Zucchi's painting, *The Mine*, dating to 1570-1575 in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, presents a sanitized vision of the mining process. While the miners' tense muscles reveal physicality of the work, the dirt and grime associated with the trade is lacking. Northern European examples of the mining process render the activity in a more truthful manner. A drawing dating to around 1520 by Hans Holbein the Younger displays miners at work on a rocky mountain. Two sixteenth-century prints by Virgil Solis portray the range of activities associated with the mining process, along with the physical strength required of the job. A particularly revealing image of the life of a mine is found in a pen and ink drawing by the Housebook Master, dating to c. 1475-1485. The frenetic activity of a mine is clear as the miners enter and exit the hill's numerous mineshafts. Debris from the mining process and supplies necessary to work the mines pepper the image. The rowdiness of the miners is contrasted with the calm, wealthy men and women in the image's foreground. Both the Italian and Northern examples expose the mining process to be hard work. They additionally show the

similarity of attire worn by laborers spanning the continent that, in general, consisted of some form of belted tunic, *calze*, and footwear.

Text

Bartolomeo di Selvestro, miner from Mantua, finding himself at the alum mine to work exchanged words with two companions who, after many insulting words, injured him with three deadly wounds, one of which passed from this right shoulder blade through to his chest, the other companion hit him in three different parts of his head with a rock as one can see, [Bartolomeo was] ailing and left for dead; and while he was injured he said “Madonna della Quercia, I commend my soul to you and I forgive these companions of mine.” So later a woman dressed in white appeared to him, who raised up the said Bartolomeo and told him “do not doubt that the Madonna della Quercia will make you healthy.” Brought to the surgeon in Tolfa, he was quickly looked after, and the next day he found himself healthy and safe; he came to give thanks to the Madonna, leaving an effigy that one can also see in the account of this event [that happened] in 1510 on the 8th of March. Ita est F. Thom[asius] Ban[donius].²⁴⁷

The narrative indicates Bartolomeo’s origin from Mantua, a city located 257 miles to the north of Viterbo (based on measurements and roads of the twenty first century). Although the text does not specify where Bartolomeo’s miracle took place, it can be inferred that since he was working at an alum mine, and that he was taken to a medic in the Laziale city of Tolfa after his attack, that he was employed at the alum mines of Tolfa when he was assaulted. Alum was a coveted

²⁴⁷ Bartolomeo di Selvestro picconiere Mantovano ritrovandosi alla cava della lumiera a lavorare venne a parole con duoi suoi compagni, quali doppo molte parole ingiuriose lo ferirno con tre ferite mortali una delle quali passava da banda della spalla destra fino al petto, et altro suo compagno li diede di una pietra in tre parte della testa come si vede, acciacata tutta et lasciato per morto; et mentre che era ferito diceva Madonna della Quercia vi raccomando l’anima mia et perdono a questi miei compagni. Onde doppo li comparve una donna vestita di bianco quale levò sui il detto Bartolomeo et disse che non dubitasse che la Madonna della Quercia ti rende la sanità. Condotto alla Tolfa dal cerusico fu tenuto spedito, et il giorno di poi si trovò sano et salvo; et venne a rendere gratie alla Madonna facendo il voto che anco si vede con la relatione di questo fatto nel 1510 alli 8 di Marzo. Ita est F. Thom[asius] Ban[donius].” Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 167.

mineral, particularly for the early modern textile industry. The mineral, a fixative for dyes, removed the natural oils from wool to allow color to penetrate the fibers. During the middle ages it was imported to Western Europe primarily from sites in present-day Turkey. The Vatican was delighted in 1462 when large deposits of alum were discovered in the Papal States north of Rome in the city of Tolfa: the discovery meant that the Catholic world would no longer be indebted to the East for a critical product.²⁴⁸ As alum extraction steadily increased at the Tolfa mines the towns that surrounded the mines also grew in size. Around 1550 Tolfa had expanded beyond its medieval walls.²⁴⁹ A census document from Tolfa's archives dating to 1535 counted 234 homes owned by residents of the city, and 30 homes in which foreigners, or outsiders, to Tolfa resided.²⁵⁰ While the census data does not list the origins of the foreigners, it does demonstrate that there was movement around, or to, the Italian peninsula where work could be found. The presence of non-residents in the city of Tolfa contextualizes Bartolomeo's presence there.

Whereas historians have extensively chronicled the politics and power plays surrounding the alum mines of the Pontifical States, little to no mention is

²⁴⁸ For information regarding the geographic aspects of alum mines around the Mediterranean see Vasto Malacchini, *Geografia dell'allume nell'industria e nel commercio storico del Mediterraneo* (Rome: A.V.I.O, 1952), in particular chapter 4. Raymond De Roover studied the Medici control of the alum mines in *The rise and decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), in particular chapter 7. Peter Spufford gives brief mention of Tolfa in *Power and Profit: the merchant in medieval Europe* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 334.

²⁴⁹ Malachini, *Geografia dell'allume*, 52, note 1.

²⁵⁰ The homes are counted by "fuochi," or hearths. The data was analyzed by F.M. Mignati, *Santuari della regione di Tolfa, Memorie storiche* (Roma; O. Morra, 1936); see Malachini, *Geografia dell'allume*, 52.

given to the men performing the actual labor.²⁵¹ The *Libro dei miracoli* provides an understanding of the laborer, in particular his earthly concerns. Giovanni was physically attacked by his enemies and his social standing was called into question by the “insulting words” levied at him by his enemies. As discussed in the previous chapter, a man perceived as weak – the result of improper familial behavior or an attack on his identity – called into question his social standing and his public identity and necessitated quick resolution. Julian Pitt-Rivers writes: “[t]o leave an affront unavenged is to leave one’s honor in a state of desecration and this is therefore equivalent to cowardice.”²⁵² Violence in the early modern period was often related to the maintenance of one’s honor. Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen report that quick tempers and flares of anger were commonplace in early modern Italy: the percentage of violent acts occurring in late sixteenth-century Rome was greater than violence in New York City in the early twenty first century.²⁵³ Yet even before receiving the Madonna della Quercia’s assistance, Fabbrizio was quick to forgive his assailants. He demonstrated dedication to his faith in three ways: praying to the Madonna della Quercia, forgiveness, and leaving his offering for the Madonna.

²⁵¹ See note 31.

²⁵² Julian Pitt-Rivers, “Honor and Social Status,” in *Honor and Shame*, 26.

²⁵³ Cohen and Cohen, citing Peter Blasstenbrei’s study of crime in early modern Rome, *Kriminalität in Rom* (Tübingen: Karl Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), in *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2001), 48.

Bartolomeo's narrative also highlights the multi-tiered approach to healing in the early modern period, or, in Peter Burke's words, "medical pluralism."²⁵⁴ The miner relied on two types of medicine in order to heal from his injuries, one of them being the surgeon, *cerusico*, in Tolfa. Medical professionals came in many varieties in early modern Europe: physicians trained in medical schools had much textual knowledge but little hands-on experience, whereas the setting of bones and treatments of wounds and lacerations were the work of surgeons or bone setters.²⁵⁵ Yet even before receiving assistance from a medical practitioner, Bartolomeo made direct contact with a saint. Praying to different saints in order to resolve varying health problems was commonplace: St. Lucy helped with eye problems; St. Margaret brought relief to women in labor; St. Anne supported those suffering from infertility; and St. Paul was the contact for snake bites.²⁵⁶ Bartolomeo's decision to communicate first with the Madonna della Quercia highlights the importance of faith in healing in early modern Italy.

It is interesting to note that none of the laborers in the *Libro dei miracoli* are depicted alongside attributes of their trade: the carpenter does not appear with a saw or nails or a hammer; the miner has no pick; and the fisherman does not hold a fishing line or net. Other images of early modern laborers in Italy often

²⁵⁴ Peter Burke, *The historical anthropology of early modern Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 208.

²⁵⁵ Cohen and Cohen, *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy*, 251; Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Katharine Park, *Doctors and Medicine in Early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985).

²⁵⁶ Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, 209.

represent the laborers accompanied by their tools. The itinerant laborers in Rome depicted by Ambrogio Brambilla's print previously mentioned in Chapter 3, *Ritratto di quelli che vanno vendendo e lauorando per Roma*, are identified by the instruments and items they carry. A similar portrayal of workers is found in a series of drawings executed by Annibale Carracci in the 1580s or 1590s.²⁵⁷ Objects are ascribed to laborers and serve as markers of their identities. Similar to the compilations of laborers, the *Libro dei miracoli* also served as a catalogue in which representations of faith shown to the Madonna della Quercia was recorded. The votaries in Viterbo were identified by their wounds and the circumstances that led them to call upon the Madonna della Quercia for help. While all the votaries likely held a job or participated in some form of labor, the focus of the manuscript is not on work; rather, the emphasis is on their devotion.

²⁵⁷ The majority of Annibale's original line drawings have disappeared today. The drawings were copied and in 1646 they were published in a collection known as the *Arti di Bologna*. See Sheila McTighe, "Perfect Deformity, Ideal Beauty, and the *Imaginaire* of Work: the Reception of Annibale Carracci's *Arti di Bologna* in 1646," *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1993), 75-9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1360538> .

Chapter 6

PARALLELS TO POPULAR LITERATURE, RELIGION AND CULTURE

The intention of this this chapter is to highlight cultural trends that may have paralleled the retelling and recording of the miracles. Natalie Zemon Davis has demonstrated that the voices of common individuals, found in letters of pardon and remission composed in the mid-sixteenth century and submitted to the French king in an attempt to receive a lesser penalty for their crimes, reflect and reproduce, in Zemon Davis' words, "cultural constructions."²⁵⁸ Lauro Martines has also shown how fictional accounts can be examined for their factual, historical qualities.²⁵⁹ The two analyses that follow illustrate the tendency of narrative forms to participate in broader cultural movements.

Don Simone Foglietta

Image

The watercolor, which depicts Father Simone Foglietta, illustrates him standing with the majority of his weight on his right leg and his left leg extended slightly forward. Most of his face is visible to the viewer: he turns slightly to his right toward the wash of yellow pigment that indicates the divine presence of the Madonna della Quercia in the top left corner of the folio. The cleric is an older man, signified by his white beard. A black tricorne hat rests on his head. The collar and cuffs of Don Simone's *camicia* peek out from the edges of his long

²⁵⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: pardon tales and their tellers in sixteenth-century France*, 4.

²⁵⁹ See Lauro Martines, *An Italian Renaissance Sextet* (New York: Marsilio, 1994).

black robe that drapes around the priest in stiff folds. Black *calze* and black shoes cover the lower half of Don Simone's figure. His modest dress does not deviate from the typical clothing of priests in the early modern period (Benozzo Gozzoli, *Virgin and Child enthroned among angels and saints*, 1461; Master of the Saint Cecilia dossal, *Homage of a simple man of Assisi*, c. 1291-1305). Don Simone appears to be a strong man with broad shoulders, muscular arms that fill the sleeves of his robe, and robust legs; his physical form, nonetheless, occurs repeatedly in Panicale's other figures, both male and female.

Two surprising aspects mark this image. First, Don Simone's *camicia* and robe open to reveal his bare chest. Second, his naked torso is marred by a horrific injury: his abdomen gapes open and his innards fall forward into his outstretched hands. The priest's organs are clearly recognizable as they spill from his body: the viewer receives a vivid view of his liver, stomach, and crisscrossing intestines. Droplets of blood stain the opening of the wound on his abdomen, and larger quantities of bright red blood drip copiously from the organs. The downturned corners of Don Simone's open mouth are the only indication in the cleric's peaceful expression that acknowledges the horror that occurs below.

Don Simone's illustration is not entirely without precedent: portrayals of adult religious figures in varying states of undress appear regularly in religious art. Jesus is repeatedly depicted wearing only a loincloth in deposition and *pietà* scenes; the adult St. John the Baptist also reveals a bare torso in many images. Nakedness can be a sign of humility before God. The Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament (20:2) describes how God commanded Isaiah to "loose the sackcloth

from off [his] loins, and take off [his] shoes from [his] feet. And he did so, and went naked, and barefoot.²⁶⁰ While Don Simone's bare chest is visible in order to reveal his wound it could also serve, therefore, as a sign of his piety.

Moreover, his nakedness draws attention to his severe injury that points to his vulnerability and his own mortality.

Text

D. Simone Foglietta, from Canepina, was visiting the house of one of his friends, with all the fidelity and honor of a good religious man, when a daughter of that house made a mistake with one of her lovers and to save herself and her lover from death she blamed and forced the ugly situation on said Simone, and therefore thought that this way the thing should settle down. But the young woman's father, with his sons and relatives, who were too gullible, put themselves in place to kill the innocent D. Simone; and on [a] Saturday that was in 1496 in the month of June, the said priest was coming to the Madonna della Quercia to say Mass because he was very devoted, in the forest in the mountains on the border between Canepina and Viterbo he was overtaken by the father and sons of the young woman and hit with offensive words and they shot him and all his entrails and his guts fell out. So they believed him to be dead and he was thrown into a pit among the thorns and brambles, but when his enemies had taken leave a beautiful woman appeared and pulled him up and told him that the Madonna della Quercia had taken mercy upon him and she did not doubt him and with his feet [he] went to the [church of the] Quercia, and he brought himself holding his innards with his own hands and clothing and arriving at the Quercia, where it was very busy, he was completely healed in front of the Madonna, he celebrated Mass and lived for many years after and I heard about this from the oldest monks, the first sons of this convent that had met him and there is a new statue, because the old one had fallen seven months ago in 1624. It happened in 1504.²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Isaiah 20:2, newadvent.org: <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/isa020.htm>, accessed on March 27, 2012

²⁶¹ "D. Simone Foglietta canapinese praticando la casa d'uno suo amico con ogni fedeltà e honore come si deve da uno buono religioso, una figliola di quella casa fece uno errore con uno suo amante et per salvare dalla morte se et l'amante suo inculpò e impose il brutto fatto al detto Simone onde pensava ce così la cosa dovesse quietarsi. Ma il padre della giovane con li suoi figlioli et parenti troppo creduli si misseno alla posta per uccidere il detto D. Simone innocente; et uno sabbato che fu l'anno 1496 del mese di Giugno venendo il detto prete alla Madonna della Quercia per dire la messa della quale era devotissimo, nella selva della montagna nel confine tra Canepina et Viterbo fu preso dal padre et fratelli della detta giovane e spogliato con parole ingiuriose et fu da quelli sparato et tutte le budella e la cirata uscirono fuori et così morto come si credevano fu gettato in una fosa tra spini et roghi, ma partiti che furono li suoi adversarij

Based on the penultimate phrase in his commentary that the “old” statue of Don Simone had fallen seven months prior in 1624, Bandoni composed this commentary between 1624 and 1625. The author does not indicate that he personally met and interviewed Don Simone to create the commentary; rather, he drew his commentary from ecclesiastic sources, the “oldest monks, the first sons” of the church of S. Maria della Quercia. Around the same time Bandoni composed the commentaries for the *Libro dei Miracoli*, he also penned another manuscript, signed and dated 1625, for the book that would be published in 1628 titled *Scelta d’alcuni miracoli e gratie*. The two versions of the same miraculous event differ slightly from one another: the later account explicitly states that the daughter was pregnant, it analogizes Don Simone to the “innocent lamb” while his attackers are defined as “wolves,” and the later account specifies that the priest’s heart was one of the organs that fell from his body.²⁶²

comparve una bellissima donna et lo cavò fuori et li disse che la Madonna della Quercia li haveva fatta la gratia che non dubitasse et con li suoi piedi andasse alla Quercia, quale si portò co le proprie mani et panni et reggeva l’interiori et arrivato alla Quercia dove era molto popolo, avanti alla Madonna fu del tutto sanato, celebrò la messa et visse molti anni doppo et questo ho udito dalli più vecchi frati primi figlioli di questo convento che l’havevano cognosciuto et vi è la statua nuova che la vecchia è cascata sette mesi sono nel 1624. Il fatto fu nel 1504.” Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 136.

²⁶² “Si scorge chiaro in questo seguito di un divoto Prete da Canapina detto D. Simone Fioretti o Fuglietti, quale essendo stato devotissimo di Maria Vergine della Quercia fu da quella reso in vita poi che in Canapina havendo amicitia con una casa honorata una giovane di essa casata non mantenne il decoro di quella, et essendo cascata in peccato, e gravida rimasta non potendo occultare il fatto del suo amante incolpò a torto l’honorato Prete D. Simone, quale come innocente, conversava come prima alla libera, et un sabbato del mese di giugno 1496 disse di voler andare alla Quercia per celebrare la messa, il che udito dalli parenti della giovane gravida si posera al passo tra li confine di Canapina e Viterbo e come tanti lupi corsero contra l’agnello innocente di detto Prete, e spogliato li a primo il ventre e sparorno, che usciva fuori il cuore e le budelle e doppo lo gettono tra certi sterpi e spini senza mai dirli la causa di tanto sacrilegio e lo lasciorono come morto. Comparve la Madonna e lo levò su, e li disse che andasse alla Quercia, e andò et portò tutto il ventre aperto con l’interiori fuori et Avanti alla Madonna risanò e celebrò la messa e

The text further reinforces the pictorial message that Don Simone conducts himself in a respectable manner. He behaves with the “fidelity and honor of a good religious man”, and he is described as “very devoted” to the Madonna della Quercia and is “innocent” of the charges levied against him.²⁶³ The ultimate signifier of the great commitment Don Simone has to his faith is revealed when he completes his journey, on foot, to the church of S. Maria della Quercia while supporting his innards with his own hands.

Bandoni’s account of Don Simone’s miracle contains familiar literary and biblical tropes. The attack takes place in a forest, a locus of dangerous activity where, in fact, Don Simone was viciously assaulted. Dante Alighieri finds himself in a “dark forest” that is “savage, harsh and difficult.”²⁶⁴ Isaiah (56:9) warns of “...all ye beasts in the forest,”²⁶⁵ and the men who pursued and attacked Don Simone in the forest are comparable to wild animals. There is also a parallel between Jesus’ passion and the crown of thorns that was placed on his head before his crucifixion and the “thorns and brambles” that Don Simone’s body was thrown into after his attack.

This passage reveals a striking contrast between good and evil women. Don Simone’s troubles are provoked by a friend’s immoral and deceitful daughter who “made a mistake” with her lover and found herself pregnant. Bandoni’s

visse anco doppo alcuni anni e si vedde la sua innocenza e la podestà di Maria. La sua statua del voto in Chiesa.” Bandoni, manuscript of 1625, 11.

²⁶³ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 136.

²⁶⁴ Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam, 1980), 2.

²⁶⁵ Isaiah 56:9. King James Bible, Cambridge Edition.

observations in the *Libro dei Miracoli* only allude to her pregnancy; his text from the 1625 manuscript specifies that that “after falling into sin, she was left pregnant.”²⁶⁶ Female sexuality clearly defines family honor in this commentary: the daughter was unwilling to face her own death and that of her lover because of the harm she would do to her family’s name as an unmarried, pregnant woman. Instead she placed the blame for “her lover’s deed”²⁶⁷ on Don Simone.

The deceitful nature of the daughter contrasts with good nature of the “beautiful woman” who appeared to the injured Don Simone left to die in the forest. After helping the priest to his feet, the stranger murmurs reassuring words to the cleric and informs him that the Madonna della Quercia bestowed him with her grace and that he should not doubt her ability to help him. In this version of Don Simone’s miracle the beautiful stranger is clearly the miraculous embodiment of the Madonna della Quercia. The account of the miracle that Bandoni authors for his manuscript of 1625 eliminates the ambiguity of the beautiful woman’s identity and instead defines her as the Madonna.²⁶⁸ In literature the figure of the beautiful woman who guides injured men, either physically or spiritually, is commonplace. Among the most famous literary escorts is Beatrice, Dante’s muse whom he describes as the “the glorious woman of my mind.”²⁶⁹ She acted as Dante’s guide through his journey from hell to

²⁶⁶ See note 16.

²⁶⁷ Bandoni, manuscript of 1625, 11.

²⁶⁸ “Comparve la Madonna e lo levò su” (“The Madonna appeared and lifted him up”), Bandoni, manuscript 1625, 11.

²⁶⁹ Dante Alighieri, *La Vita Nuova*, 27.

paradise. Other accounts in the *Libro dei miracoli* also mention the apparition of a beautiful woman who helps the injured individual. Bartolomeo di Selvestro, Francesco di Domenico Berti, and Filippo di Giovan Filippo and his son Francesco all received the assistance of unknown, beautiful women. Similarly, Benedetto Pesciatelli was saved by a shepherd who was informed by a mysterious woman that Benedetto had been injured and was in need of help.

Evidence is critical to confirm the occurrence of a miracle. Bandoni's account of Don Simone's miracle establishes a factual basis for the cleric's quick recovery. First, Don Simone is a reliable source as he is a good, religious man. Moreover, multiple witnesses observed Don Simone's miracle. The priest arrived at S. Maria della Quercia when it was busy with people, "molto popolo."²⁷⁰ It was in front of the audience, and the sacred image of the Madonna della Quercia, that his grave abdominal wounds were healed.

The miracle of Don Simone does not include one important element found in the majority of the manuscript's commentaries: he does not personally invoke the help of the Madonna della Quercia, nor does anyone else implore her for help on his behalf. Don Simone's devotion to her was pre-existing because he was a member of a religious order and he was on his way to celebrate Mass at the church dedicated to her when he was injured.

²⁷⁰ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 136.

Chiostro della Cisterna and the Counter-Façade

At the church of S. Maria della Quercia Don Simone's miracle was repeated a total of four times in three different media: the original statue, the watercolor reproduction in the manuscript, and in two frescoes. The transfer of an image from one medium to another was a common occurrence in early modern art. Printmakers copied paintings for an art market of buyers that could not afford to commission major artists, or for collections maintained by wealthy individuals who wanted a version of a popular piece. Reproductive methods of paintings, sculptures, and prints were also used by artists for their own production purposes, or for members of their workshops as stylistic and technical sources. Print sources were particularly useful to artists that could not travel to view works of art in person.

The frescoes in the Chiostro della Cisterna and the on the counter-façade, the interior wall on the back of the structure's façade, depict similar scenes: both feature the original oak tree holding the miraculous image of the Madonna and Child in the center of the composition; both represent an altar erected in front of the oak surrounded by devoted onlookers; and each image includes the figure of Don Simone Foglietta kneeling to the right of the altar. According to Gianfranco Ciprini the frescoed lunette of Don Simone in the Chiostro della Cisterna was executed before 1685.²⁷¹ Despite the abundant records maintained at S. Maria della Quercia, neither the fresco's exact date nor artist are known. Construction of the actual cistern began in 1507, and decoration of the walls erected around the

²⁷¹ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 276.

cistern began almost 100 years later in 1602.²⁷² The fresco is extensively damaged. There are complete losses to the right side, left side and base of the fresco, and significant flaking on the remainder of the image. At the base of the lunette appears the coat of arms of the Basilica of S. Maria della Quercia. Don Simone is dressed similarly to his watercolor rendering: a black hat sits atop his head, and his black robes open to reveal a naked torso and his significant abdominal wound. The current poor state of the fresco obscures the detail of the organs that is visible in both the watercolor and the fresco on the counter façade. One difference between this fresco and the watercolor rendering of Don Simone is the cleric's age. Whereas he is depicted as an older man in the watercolor, indicated by his white beard, in this fresco his beard is full and dark in color, signaling a younger age. Four male members of the church and at least four bystanders witness Don Simone kneeling at the altar.

The version of Don Simone's miracle located on the counter-façade is in significantly better condition than the fresco depicting the same scene in the Chiostro della Cisterna. The fresco was executed on February 22, 1630 by the Viterban artist Angelo Pucciati.²⁷³ Not knowing the date of the Chiostro della Cisterna fresco prevents us from understanding whether one fresco served as a precedent. It is clear that the pictorial reoccurrence of Don Simone's story emphasizes the importance of his miracle to the history of the Madonna della

²⁷² "1602, 30 maggio...item, se si doveva dipingere il primo chiostro del convento, cioè quello della sagrestia, con i miracoli della Madonna, essendo che in chiesa vadino tuttavia cadendo i voti e si perda a poco a poco la memoria di quei miracoli." A.S.M.Q. vol. 120, c. 37.

²⁷³ A.S.M.Q., vol. 113, c. 69.

Quercia. Furthermore, the placement of his miracle in the prominent position of the counter-façade also points to the episode's significance. Above the main doors of the church, and directly across from where the priest celebrated mass, the counter-façade was a highly prominent location.

Like the Chiostro della Cisterna fresco, Don Simone's miracle is set outdoors at the oak tree that held the original miraculous image of the Madonna and child. The oak takes up a central position in the composition with its branches extending outward to provide shelter for Don Simone and other worshipers that kneel at the altar erected in front of the tree. Don Simone's rendering is similar to the Cisterna fresco: dark facial hair covers his jaw and chin, and black robes part to reveal a bare chest and extensive injuries. A framed painting of the Madonna and Christ child looks down from its perch in the oak at the devoted below. Votive effigies in the form of a small-scale human figure and a leg hang from the oak tree. An additional small effigy taking the shape of of an individual standing in prayer rests atop the altar. The repeated visual demonstrations of the Madonna della Quercia's votive offerings confirms the importance granted to them in the church of S. Maria della Quercia.

The counter-façade fresco is a busy scene populated with many of the Madonna della Quercia's devotees. One unique aspect of Pucciati's fresco is that it features one of the image's patrons positioned alongside Don Simone. To the right of the central portrayal of Don Simone praying to the Madonna della Quercia is the votive effigy of Domenico di Gaspare from Viterbo. Domenico kneels in reverence before the Madonna della Quercia. Bandoni recorded the

account of Domenico's miracle in his publication of 1634, *Paradiso Terrestre della Madonna santissima della Quercia di Viterbo, fiorito di gratie e frutti miracolosi novelli*. In 1612 enemies of Domenico di Gaspare assaulted him and brutally wounded his left arm, resulting in a complete amputation of his hand. After praying to the Madonna della Quercia his wound healed, his hand re-attached to his arm, and Domenico was able to go back to work in his store.²⁷⁴ An entry in the church's administrative books identifies the figure of Domenico in the fresco and states that the young man kneeling alongside Domenico is his son.²⁷⁵ The entry supplies additional important information about the votary. Domenico was a *pizicarlo*, or an owner of a store in Viterbo where cured meats, cheeses, and other food stuffs were sold. He provided 23 *scudi* towards the total cost of executing the image, and the church would have given the remainder of the payment to Pucciatti, as the job was valued at almost 50 *scudi*, but the annotation clarifies that Pucciatti was happy with a payment of only 23 *scudi*.²⁷⁶ The clerical entry does not specify why Pucciatti undervalued his labor to the church; one can assume, however, that Pucciatti's refusal to accept full payment was his way of exhibiting reverence and humility before the Madonna della Quercia.

²⁷⁴ Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 274.

²⁷⁵ "...[Domenico] è pinto con una mano tagliata e il figliolo li st vicino..." A.S.M.Q., vol. 113, c. 69.

²⁷⁶ A.S.M.Q., vol. 113, c. 69..

The Ravennate author, Tomaso Garzoni, described the profession of *pizicarolo* in his exhaustive compendium of labor, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*. Garzoni concedes that the *pizicarolo* (or *pizzigaruolo* in Garzoni's dialect) plays a useful role in the city because his store is a type of one-stop-shop where a variety of foods can be purchased, but the author's overall opinion of the profession of *pizicarolo* is not high. The *pizicarolo* enables gluttonous behavior due to the ease of purchasing a wide range of rich foods; his profession is "dirty and vile" because he is practically a cook,²⁷⁷ and additionally the *pizicarolo* is dishonest because he re-sells items purchased from other vendors at twice the original cost of the goods. Garzoni dedicated his book to Prince Alfonso II da Este, Duke of Ferrara and certainly the intended audience for his text must be taken into consideration; nevertheless, his chapter dedicated to the *pizicarolo* profession defines it as one that was well-paid. The large size of the fresco, and its prominent positioning in the church, further attest to the economic and social status of Domenico.

As one of the patrons of the fresco, Domenico likely consulted with Pucciatti on the fresco's execution. The *pizicarolo* assumes a prominent position in the image next to the celebrated Don Simone. The two votaries' heads are at the same level, and Domenico's kneeling pose repeats that of Don Simone, creating visual harmony. Domenico is dressed in fine, yet understated clothing. A collared *camicia* is visible underneath his dark grey doublet, and he wears an apron, the symbol of his trade, tied around his waist. He does not wear a hat,

²⁷⁷ "sporco e vile," Garzoni, *Piazza universale*, 1316.

perhaps out of reverence for the Madonna della Quercia. His curly hair is cropped short and his beard is neatly trimmed. Gesture enlivens Domenico's pose: his right hand rests reverentially over his heart and his amputated left hand lays on the ground while blood gushes from his arm. Domenico's son wears clothing that is finer in quality than that of his father. The son's *camicia* boasts an intricate lace collar and his grey doublet is identical to that of his father. Reddish-colored pants and a blue cape belted at the waist complete the son's attire. The sartorial display exhibited by Domenico's son reinforces the family's social status.

Intricate detail in the fresco does not stop at the clothing. Pucciatti paid great attention to the rendering of the oak tree and treated this miraculous site with care. It is a sturdy old tree with a wide, knotted trunk. One large limb has been cut to accommodate the image of the Madonna and child. The anatomical detail of Don Simone's innards resembles the detail found in Panicale's watercolor. Puccatti would certainly have seen Don Simone's statue in the church, and he may have also viewed Panicale's watercolor in the *Libro dei miracoli*.

Similar to Don Simone's placid expression in Panicale's watercolor, the recipients of wounds in the Pucciatti fresco do not exhibit painful responses to the proliferation of ghastly injuries. Don Simone and Domenico calmly gaze up to the image of the Madonna della Quercia. Domenico's son, unharmed yet positioned next to his injured father, looks upwards but to a location away from the Madonna. Emotional responses are conveyed instead through the scene's

bystanders. A solitary male figure in the fresco's foreground separates Don Simone from Domenico and his son. Emotion and movement enliven this figure who serves as a clear contrast to the sedate representations of his injured neighbors. Tense muscles are visible in the man's unclothed hand, arm, back and calves. It appears he struggles to maintain an upright position. His eyebrows raise over wide eyes and his mouth gapes open in shock, all made more obvious by his bald head that is unobstructed by a hat or hair. Puccati executed the man using typical characteristics of Italian Baroque art. His body twists upward in a spiraling motion, and his elbow is a device that draws the viewer into the scene by extending outward into the viewer's space. The dramatic wounds and varied emotional responses of the worshipers also serve to attract the viewer's attention. Like Panicale, Puccati also had difficulty executing convincing perspective foreshortening, visible in the altar and the solitary male figure's elbow.

Antonio di Piero Antonio Feretti

Image

Depictions of votaries in the *Libro dei miracoli* typically present the individual in a reverential manner: the votary appears in some state of fear, pain, or prayer and can be regarded as a model of piety. In some ways Antonio di Piero Antonio Feretti's portrayal is no different from other votary representations in the manuscript. Antonio faces forward with his hands raised in prayer at his chest while a look characterized by panic spreads across his face, indicated by the extremely downturned corners of his mouth. Based solely on the six large swords

that pierce his body, it can be expected that Antonio's facial expression is one of fear. The swords injure Antonio twice on top of his head, once in the right underarm, in his left wrist, his upper left thigh, and on his left calf. Blood pours from the wounds to cover his forehead, torso, and his left leg.

Antonio's depiction is also unique from other votaries in the manuscript: there appear to be traces of derision in his representation particularly visible in the clothing he wears which hints at buffoonery. Bandoni's accompanying text offers a possible reason for Antonio's less-than-respectable appearance. Antonio did not commission his own statue; rather, his father-in-law, who was not very fond of Antonio, funded the creation of Antonio's effigy and he may have directed the *ceraiuoli* to craft an unflattering appearance for the younger man. The voluminous red pants that cover the upper portion of his legs are a notable element of Antonio's visual presentation that contribute the irreverent nature of his rendering. Known as *pantaloni a zucca*, the distinctive legwear was short, round and billowy, taking their name from the pumpkin (*zucca*) whose silhouette it recalled. It was a style that came into fashion in the sixteenth century when clothing became more horizontal in nature, emphasizing the broadness of the male figure.²⁷⁸ The pair worn by Antonio is not only expansive, but also colored an eye-catching red hue. Examples of *pantaloni a zucca* are typically seen on men of greater means and worn with *calze* underneath the pants. A portrait by Alonso Sánchez Coello of Prince Don Carlos, the eldest son of King Philip II of Spain, dating to 1564, displays the young royal wearing *pantaloni a zucca* in a rich,

²⁷⁸ *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Clothing*, vol. VII, 40.

detailed fabric. Three portraits executed by Giovanni Battista Moroni also feature the sitters in *pantaloni a zucca*. The *Portrait of a Gentleman*, dating to c. 1550, presents a finely-attired man leisurely standing among pieces of his armor. Another portrait, *The Gentleman in Pink*, dating to 1560, depicts another man of means wearing richly embroidered garments. Whereas the afore-mentioned portraits, by both Coello and Moroni, clearly portray royalty or men of great wealth, the third portrait by Moroni, executed c. 1570, is more of an anomaly as it represents a tailor in fine garments. Tailors in fifteenth-century Italy comprised a group of skilled artisans whose prosperity was on the rise, but by no means was the typical tailor of the same wealth as the sitters in the previously-mentioned portraits. The Florentine tax assessment (*catasto*) of 1457 includes wealth information relating to 34 tailors who submitted tax documents to municipal authorities. Carole Collier Frick's analysis of the data shows only ten tailors with a net worth of over 250 florins.²⁷⁹ Moroni's portrait of the tailor assumes an objective differing from the displays of power, wealth, and authority seen in the other portraits: the tailor's portrait it is an exhibition of his profession, his talent, and an advertisement illustrating him to be fashionable and capable of reproducing his high style for his customers.

One can conclude that Antonio is not of noble or elite origins because of his pose. Previously discussed in Chapter 5, men of elite backgrounds are depicted in the manuscript both kneeling and in profile. Antonio's origins are likely much closer to those of other skilled and unskilled labor as he is pictured

²⁷⁹ Frick, *Dressing Renaissance Florence*, 63-65 and note 23, 259-260.

standing and facing the viewer. Contrary to the previously-discussed portraits, Antonio's watercolor presents the votary with bare legs and black boots which extend half way up his calf. He represents the manuscript's only depiction of a votary with bare legs, and it is surprising that none of the other votaries -- not even a fisherman, carpenter, or miner -- is shown without leg coverings. Clothing that appears to be more appropriate for a man of greater means, paired with Antonio's bare legs, all lend to a derisive reading of Antonio's image.

Antonio's hat is the other notable element of his appearance which contributes to the irreverent nature of his image. It's upturned, cut brim and low crown and recalls headwear depicted in imagery of *commedia dell'arte* players. The *commedia dell'arte* was a type of popular theater that originated in early sixteenth-century Italy and spread throughout Western Europe.²⁸⁰ It was an improvisational performance based on character types rather than a fixed script, and characters were recognized by their costumes and masks. An engraving dating to 1610 by Giacomo Franco exhibits a scene of comedians and charlatans, likely members of a *commedia* troupe, performing in a Venetian piazza. The central character, a man dressed in drag wearing garments fitting of a noblewoman or elite woman, establishes the irreverent, comedic tone of the image. Figures to the left of the central character dress in slashed *pantaloni a zucca*. The masked member of the company situated to the farthest right in the

²⁸⁰ For studies on the *commedia dell'arte* see Allardyce Nicoll, *The world of Harlequin, a critical study of the commedia dell'arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); Pierre-Louis Duchartre and Randolph T Weaver, *The Italian comedy : the improvisation, scenarios, lives, attributes, portraits, and masks of the illustrious characters of the commedia dell'arte* (New York : Dover Publications, 1966, 1928); Kenneth Richards and Laura Richards, *The commedia dell'arte: a documentary history* (Oxford, UK ; Cambridge, Mass., USA : Published by B. Blackwell for Shakespeare Head Press, 1990).

image wears a hat similar to Antonio's: it bears the same upturned brim with cuts, although the placement of the player's right hand almost obscures the decorative feature. Whereas the outlandish costumes in the Franco engraving are associated with comedic performance, Antonio's clothing and accessories, which resemble the actors' garments, appear to constitute a routine outfit for the votary. Again Antonio's clothing associates him with frivolity. Three additional examples point to the comedic nature of Antonio's hat. The frontispiece to a French fifteenth-century illuminated manuscript, titled *Terence des Ducs*, portray a number of masked performers, one of which wears a hat with an upturned, cut brim. Characters in an obscure watercolor manuscript housed at the New York Public Library, dating to the mid-sixteenth century to early seventeenth century, show two *gobbi*, or comical hunchbacks who performed in public spaces or served as court jesters, situated in the center of the composition, wearing what seem to be hats with cut brims. Finally, twenty-three etchings published by Francesco Bertelli in 1643, titled *Il Carnevale italiano mascherato*, depict the costumed characters of the *commedia dell'arte*. One image shows the character, Ferarese, wearing a hat with a cut brim, although the top of his hat is tall, extending much higher than what Antonio wears.

Text

Antonio di Piero Antonio Feretti from Galesi asked his father-in-law for his dowry a number of times, and at the end of a card game, his father-in-law disguised himself in a carnival mask and with either a pistorese or a storta he struck his son-in-law, wounding him two times over his head, both deadly, and upon the first strike Antonio called to the Madonna della Quercia for help, the

third wound in his chest, the fourth to his left hand almost cutting it off, the fifth over his thigh near his hip, and the sixth on the left leg. He fell to the ground as though he was dead and was brought into the house: his father-in-law came into the house just after and took off the mask: he was struck by a very high fever that brought him to confess what happened, he repented and asked for forgiveness from the Madonna della Quercia and promised and offering for both himself and his son-in-law if they were to recover, they went to the blessed church bringing the effigy that you see in the year 1530 in the month of February.²⁸¹

The consequences of earthly desires set the tone for Antonio's narrative. Both Antonio and his father-in-law suffer from a number of vices: card playing, greed, and anger. Violence, the product of anger, is perpetrated by Antonio's father-in-law against Antonio. Tired of hearing his son-in-law's repeated requests for dowry money owed to him, Antonio's father-in-law assaults him. Taking the form of money, goods, or land, the dowry was provided by the bride's family to the groom and his kin and was linked to a family's social and economic identity by contributing to the future well-being of the families involved in the exchange. The early modern period witnessed a sort of crisis related to dowries caused by the rising cost of this familial obligation. As early as the fourteenth century Dante lamented an idyllic past when "no daughter's birth brought fear to her father, for age and dowry then did not imbalance – to this side and that – the proper

²⁸¹ "Antonio di Piero Antonio Feretti da Galesi chiedendo la dote al socero più volte, et alla fine per via di carte, il socero travestito con la maschera in tempo di carnovale con uno pistorese o storta percosse il genero due ferrite sopra la testa ambedui mortali, et al primo colpo Antonio chiamò la Madonna della Quercia in aiuto, la 3^a ferita nel petto, la 4^a alla mano sinistra quasi che a fatto tagliata, la 5^a sopra la cosia vicino alla mollame, et la 6^a alla gamba sinistra. Cascato in terra come fusse morto fu portato in casa: il socero a pena arrivato nella propria casa et levatosi la maschera; li venne una febbre acutissima et lo ridusse a confessare il fatto, quale pentito, et chiesto perdono alla Madonna della Quercia et fatto il voto per se et per il genero ambedui sanati, et venuti a questa santa chiesa portorono il voto che si vede l'anno 1530 del mese di Febbraro." Carosi and Ciprini, *Gli ex voto di S. Maria della Quercia*, 193.

measure.”²⁸² Dowry inflation among patricians in fifteenth century Venice was particularly rampant with costs exceeding 1,000 ducats.²⁸³ Tuscan examples also reflect the high cost of a dowry. Maristella Botticini reports that between the years 1415 and 1436 the average dowry for a bride in Cortona totaled 125.5 florins, with the average salary of laborer working in nearby Florence amounting to 14 florins in the year 1427.²⁸⁴ While Bandoni’s narrative of Antonio’s miracle does not specify the amount of money owed to the groom, the reader can assume that the father-in-law was late in making the payment, thus provoking Antonio’s repeated questioning of the dowry’s whereabouts. An alternative explanation is that the father-in-law did not like Antonio even before the young man began making the requests for his dowry. Anthony Molho locates three trends of the marriage market in fifteenth-century Tuscany, one of which indicates that the personal qualities of a future son- or daughter-in-law were taken into consideration by parents.²⁸⁵ The father-in-law’s anger could have also been motivated by the fact that he was losing a productive member of his household with his daughter’s marriage, or perhaps the father-in-law was forced to provide a larger dowry than he had intended.

²⁸² Canto XV. Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam, 1984), 103-105.

²⁸³ Stanley Chojnacki, “Dowries and Kinsmen in Early Renaissance Venice,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5, no. 4, *The History of the Family*, II (Spring, 1975): 571-572.

²⁸⁴ Maristella Botticini, “A Loveless Economy? Intergenerational Altruism and the Marriage Market in a Tuscan Town, 1415-1436,” *The Journal of Economic History* 59, no. 1 (Mar., 1999): 105. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2566498>

²⁸⁵ Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 130-132.

Antonio's father-in-law does not plainly attack his son-in-law; rather, he takes revenge on Antonio by donning a mask and concealing his identity before assaulting the young man. Intentionally obscuring one's physical identity was prohibited in a number of early modern Italian cities. A law enacted in the central Italian town of Gubbio in 1507 forbade both men and women from wearing masks;²⁸⁶ similar legislation against wearing masks and veils is found in Brescia, Pisa, Ferrara, Venice, and Florence.²⁸⁷ Garzoni dedicates a chapter of *Piazza universale* to the subject of masks. He regards the objects, and the individuals who wear them, as corrupt and pointless.²⁸⁸ One sanctioned time of year for masquerade was the period surrounding carnival, a festive season preceding Lent when revelry and lawlessness was not necessarily sanctioned, but prohibited. In fact, Bandoni's narrative states that Antonio's miracle occurred in February of 1530, and it indicates that the father-in-law wears a carnival mask during the attack, "la maschera in tempo di carnevale."

Masquerading is a theme associated with tales of trickery, a concept known as the *beffa* in Italian culture. A hoax or practical joke, the *beffa* was a wide-reaching comedic device in early modern Italian theater, literature, and folk tales. The *Story of the Fat Woodcarver* (*Novella del Grasso Legnuioulo*) is a popular tale that circulated in fifteenth-century Florence and was recorded by Antonio Manetti in the 1480s. Manetti's story, whose premise relies on the

²⁸⁶ Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy*, 64.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 64-65.

²⁸⁸ "Del resto la professione dei mascherari e delle maschere è in tuto dissolute e vana," Garzoni, *Piazza universale*, 1034.

enactment of a *beffa*, shares similarities to Bandoni's account of Antonio's miracle, in particular the themes of mistaken identity and masquerade. Both narratives include offenses that have been perpetrated by one man against another. In the case of Antonio, he repeatedly asked his father-in-law for the dowry owed to him. Grasso, in the *Story of the Fat Woodcarver*, insults his group of companions by failing to attend a regularly-scheduled get together of dining and drink. The affront, in each case, leads to a form of punishment: the father-in-law, concealing his identity with a mask, severely attacks Antonio, and Grasso's companions fool him into believing that he is someone else.

Long before Manetti's account of Grasso the woodcarver, Giovanni Boccaccio made use of the *beffa* in the *Decameron*. Among his most recognizable *beffe* is the ninth tale of the eighth day of storytelling which describes Buffalmacco's deception of the physician Master Simone. In order to swindle the dim-witted doctor Buffalmacco concealed himself in a mask with "the face of the devil and...furnished with horns,"²⁸⁹ along with a black fur coat, and waited for Master Simone in Florence's piazza Santa Maria Novella. Upon the physician's arrival to the piazza the costumed Buffalmacco "began to dance and leap all over the piazza, hissing, screaming and shrieking like one possessed."²⁹⁰ Buffalmacco, still unrecognized by the physician, proceeded to throw Master Simone in a ditch filled with muck and filth. The next day Buffalmacco used his

²⁸⁹ Day eight, ninth story. Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G.H. McWilliam (London: Penguin Group, 1995), 629.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

first-hand knowledge of Master Simone's disastrous swim in the squalid ditch to blackmail the doctor.

It was the moment that the father-in-law removed his mask, revealing his true identity, when he was struck by a high fever. It seems that Antonio's plea to the Madonna della Quercia was successful: her intervention triggered the fever and subsequent admission of guilt by the father-in-law, prompting him to ask for the Madonna della Quercia's help. Antonio's complex story was likely important to foundation of the Madonna della Quercia's history as it reveals her munificence to those who may not be deserving of it; it also serves as an educational lesson on the power of faith and why one should dedicate him or herself to the Madonna della Quercia.

CHAPTER 7

THE VOTIVE STATUE AS PORTRAIT

Imagine a space that holds two sculptures. One figure is larger than life, a colossal form of a man astride an equally monumental horse. Both sculptures are situated atop a base decorated with bronze reliefs. Also crafted of bronze, the man sits tall on the saddle, casually grasping the reins; the horse is calm and controlled, responding not to the gentle grasp of its master but instead to the physical and psychological strength exhibited by the man. The cast bronze boasts a number of lifelike qualities: jointed seams and decorative elements of the sturdy armor that protects the rider's torso are clearly identifiable and highly naturalistic, as is the cape draping overtop the shoulder of the armor and down the rider's back. Knee-high boots adorned with spurs rest inside the stirrups, and a sheathed sword hangs at his hip. He wears no hat which reveals an expansive forehead. Even through his thick beard the strong set of his mouth and jaw are evident, and he gazes into the distance with an expression of contemplation. Rendered with accuracy, the horse's mane and tail are enlivened with movement, and the blanket placed between the horse's back and the saddle also appears to swing outward, casting a shadow on the animal's flank. The identity of the rider is known: it is Cosimo I de' Medici, who served as the Duke of Florence from 1537-1574, and from 1569 until his death in 1574 reigned also as the first Grand Duke of Tuscany. Spectators may have recognized Cosimo by his facial features or his regal placement on top of a horse; an inscription in the monument's base also

confirms the rider's identity for literate onlookers. Giambologna, a Flemish sculptor employed by the Medici court, executed the bronze from 1587-1594, after Cosimo's death.

The second sculpture in this fantasy gallery is life-sized and depicts a man standing on a plain wooden platform. His head tilts to the right and an expression of displeasure crosses his features, noted particularly by the downturned corners of his parted lips. The receding hairline and greying hair define him as a maturing man. Naturalism is achieved in the statue through actual hair and clothing, along with the colored flesh of the man's face, neck, and hands. This individual is not of the elite or nobility: his simple belted white tunic, white *calze*, and black shoes are characteristic of a laborer's modest, but practical, clothing. Six weapons violently pierce the man's body: one sword penetrates the man's right wrist, passing completely through his limb and causing a large amount of blood to pour from the wound. Other swords puncture the man's neck, chest, shoulder, abdomen, and bicep. The red blood exiting his multiple wounds vividly contrasts with his white clothing, drawing further attention to the severe injuries. Like Cosimo's sculpture, this man's identity is known: he is Oratio Fabbiani, originating from the small central Italian hill town of Marino. Also similar to the sculpture of the Florentine ruler, onlookers may have recognized Oratio by his clothing, his physical features, his wounds, or the paper attached to his statue which related Oratio's story. While transporting wine to Rome, Oratio encountered another porter with whom he exchanged offensive words; the confrontation resulted in physical violence and led to Oratio's injuries. The exact

identity of the artist who created Oratio's image is not as certain as that of Cosimo's; while the statue was executed in Viterbo's sole waxworks in 1502, it may have been produced by the owner of the shop, Giovanni del fu Petruccio Cifarella, or his son, Battista, or another member of the workshop. It is certain, however, that Oratio and the *ceraiuoli* had contact with one another while the sculpture was made: they would have met with one another, the *ceraiuoli* would have studied Oratio's appearance and learned about the miracle performed by the Madonna della Quercia on Oratio's behalf, and presumably Oratio would have given his final approval of the statue made for him.

These two sculptures exhibit comparable subject matter: they are individualized representations of two identifiable men, sculpted in the round by recognized artists, and enhanced with copious naturalistic detail. Whereas the bronze of Cosimo I falls under the category of portraiture, the definition of Oratio's sculpture is more problematic. Some would identify it a votive effigy, while others would denote it as a portrait. The hazy definitions of these art historical categories are not fixed; rather, the classifications are cultural products that, through repetition, have become associated with certain identities. Exploring the range of meanings for the two terms reveals them to be not very dissimilar from one another.

Portrait and Effigy Defined

Modern-day art historical thought defines early modern Italian portraiture as a category based on individualization, characterization, and idealization that,

according to John Pope-Hennessy, “reflects the reawakening interest in human motives and the human character, the resurgent recognition of those factors which make human beings individual.”²⁹¹ Traditional definitions of portraiture are inextricably linked to Jacob Burckhardt’s notion that the “individual” was born during the Italian Renaissance. He writes that “[w]hen this impulse to the highest individual development was combined with a powerful and varied nature, which had mastered all the elements of the culture of the age, then arose the ‘all-sided man’ – ‘l’uomo universale’ – who belonged to Italy alone.”²⁹² A number of art historians, such as Lorne Campbell and the afore-mentioned John Pope-Hennessy, echo Burckhardt’s ideas in their own work, likening the rise of the individual to increasing numbers of portraits produced in both Italy and Northern Europe during the Renaissance. According to these scholars, the portrait acted as a testament to the Renaissance individual’s drive to distinguish him or herself from others.

An effigy is defined as “a portrait, likeness, or image.”²⁹³ Serving as a substitute for an individual, it provides a constant physical replacement in the absence of the real body. It is important to note that portraits also functioned as proxies for absent bodies. In a letter written to Isabella d’Este a friend expresses how she dined with a portrait of the Marchesa placed on a chair opposite of her.

²⁹¹ John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979), 3.

²⁹² Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance Italy*, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore. (Salzburg: R. Kiesel, 1860), 73.

²⁹³ "effigy, n.". OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/59754?rskey=nn3rn0&result=1> (accessed September 30, 2012).

She commented "...seeing it there, I imagine that I am at table with your ladyship."²⁹⁴ The Bolognese cardinal and theorist Gabriele Paleotti conceded it was appropriate for people to keep portraits of loved ones who were separated from family and friends "in order to be able, by this means of keeping a picture, to alleviate the hurts brought about by [their] absence."²⁹⁵ In Viterbo the effigy-portrait was a permanent record of the exchange made between votary and intercessor; it served as the perpetual material sign of the votary's devotion and dedication to that particular Mary. Associations between effigies and portraiture expand beyond the recognized definition of an effigy. Franco Sachetti referred to an offering made by a Florentine burgher by the name of Pero Foraboschi in the *Trecentonovelle* as a portrait,²⁹⁶ and Vasari's oft-mentioned description of Lorenzo de' Medici's votive sculptures defines them as "so lifelike and so well wrought that they seem no mere images of wax, actual living men."²⁹⁷ Julius von Schlosser, writing in the early twentieth century at a formative stage of modern-day art historical analysis, also suggested that full-size votive effigies made of wax and other materials were a variety of portraiture.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 220.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 193.

²⁹⁶ Sachetti, *Trecentonovelle*, 625.

²⁹⁷ Vasari, Life of Verrocchio, *Lives of the Artists*, 329.

²⁹⁸ Schlosser, "Portraiture in Wax," 226-246.

Problematizing the Portrait Image

Traditional definitions of portraiture curiously claim to offer images of distinct individuals, when in reality many portraits share similar aesthetic codes that function to create a collective identity, typically of elite individuals. Henri Zerner proposes that French court portraiture shares a common aesthetic because the members of the court wanted to conform to the norms and customs of the court.²⁹⁹ Looking at a number of court portraits produced for the French court, the resemblance is clear: similarities in anatomy, facial features, hair and expression mark the figures (School of Fontainebleau, *Portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrées with her Sister* and *Gabrielle d'Estrées with one of her Sisters*, and François Clouet, *Lady in her Bath*). This phenomenon of portraiture as collective identity is based on the norms of French court culture and adopts a court aesthetic. Another example of collective aesthetic identity can be found in the so-called "portraits" of Venetian women discussed in articles by Elizabeth Cropper and Brian D. Steele.³⁰⁰ These authors question whether these images are "portraits," or if they instead constitute a portraiture that reflected contemporary literary conventions and general aesthetic ideals of that time. Again, examining multiple images reveals clear physical similarities among the sitters – corporeal bodies, along with comparable hairstyles and facial features. They also expose an

²⁹⁹ Henri Zerner. *Renaissance Art in France: the invention of Classicism* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 68-73.

³⁰⁰ See Elizabeth Cropper, "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style," *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 3 (Sep., 1976): 374-394. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3049531>; Brian D. Steele, "In the Flower of Their Youth: "Portraits" of Venetian Beauties ca. 1500," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 2 (Summer, 1997): 481-502. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2543455>.

aesthetic shared by different artists. Titian created a supposed portrait known as *Flora*, while Palma Vecchio painted almost identical renderings in the *Lady in Green* and his version of *Judith*.³⁰¹

Apart from an occasional desire to conform to a certain cultural aesthetic, the subjects of portraits wanted to look at good as possible. Joanna Woods-Marsden has shown that while sitters desired to be portrayed naturally, in reality they preferred that the artists produce idealized images. Isabella d'Este wrote to the artist Francesco Francia to express her satisfaction with his portrait of her, declaring it represented her as more beautiful than what nature had given her.³⁰² Here Isabella prizes both naturalism – what is recognizable in her likeness -- and idealization – the way in which the artist enhanced nature. In some situations, however, the idealization was taken beyond the sitter's preferences. Another letter written by the prolific Isabella discusses the portrait made of her by Titian that depicts the Marchesa of Mantua at twenty-years-old, when at the present time she was sixty. In the correspondence she questions “whether, at that age, I had the beauty contained in the painting.”³⁰³ Discovering the correct blend of reality and fabrication was the homework of the successful artist.

³⁰¹ The women pictured here certainly also subscribed to certain fashionable norms; for example, all the women share similarly-colored reddish-blond hair. A sixteenth-century Venetian treatise on herbs instructs women how to mix the proper ingredients to achieve such a hair color. Prints by Cesare Vecellio and Pietro Bertelli show Venetian women sitting outdoors on the rooftop of a palazzo wearing straw hats that have had the top cut open to allow their long hair to be pulled through. The hair is then combed across the wide brim to allow maximum exposure to the sunlight that, mixing with the concoction already placed on their hair, works to bleach the locks.

³⁰² See note 32, chapter 4.

³⁰³ “...che dubitiamo di non esser stata in quei otade ch'egli rappresenta di quella beltà che in sè contiene,” Letter from Isabella d'Este to Benedetto Agnello, Mantua, May 29, 1536, Archivio di Stato Mantovano, busta 2936, libro 311, c. 141, published in Alessandro Luzio, “Arte

Portrait busts, which found a successful market in fifteenth-century Florence, comprise another category of imagery that mixed the ideal and the invented. Representing primarily members of the Florentine elite, portrait busts produced in that city represented individuals who were both dead and alive, usually commissioned by a family member or group close to the individual represented in the statue, although there are a few known examples of the sitter him or herself conducting the commission.³⁰⁴ Similar to the painted portraiture described above, portrait busts combined elements of naturalistic rendering in addition to improving the flaws nature gave the sitter. Scholars agree that Donatello's bust of Niccolò da Uzzano, the Gonfaloniere of Justice for the Republic of Florence, was cast from his death mask.³⁰⁵ Panzanelli describes how Donatello's artistry transformed the official's features that had already begun to show signs of postmortem stiffening, "protruding cheek- and jawbones, sunken eyes, pronounced nose bridge, and slightly open mouth," into a rendering that instead gave an "impression of animation" resulting from the "lateral, upturned twist of Niccolò's head."³⁰⁶ Development of the portrait bust in Florence occurred alongside the heyday of votive sculpture in the same city; while a longer study would be required to fully substantiate this connection, they must have been

Retrospectiva: I Ritratti d'Isabella d'Este," *Emporium* 11 (1900), 432; see Woods-Marsden, "Ritratto al Naturale," 209 and note 7, 214.

³⁰⁴ Jane Schuyler, *Florentine Busts: Sculpted Portraiture in the Fifteenth Century* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), 1-20.

³⁰⁵ See Jane Schuyler, *Florentine Busts: sculpted portraiture in the fifteenth century* (New York: Garland, 1976), 77-113 and Panzanelli, "Compelling Presence," 21-23.

³⁰⁶ Panzanelli, "Compelling Presence," 21-23.

mutually influenced by a cultural climate that fostered the production of naturalistic sculpture representing secular individuals from Florentine society.

Alberti wrote that the “aim of sculpture is verisimilitude,”³⁰⁷ yet as demonstrated above it was a concept that was not wholly applied by artists who sculpted Florentine portrait busts. Votive statues crafted by *ceraiuoli*, contrarily, fully implemented Alberti’s declaration in their votive renderings of the faithful. Examples of their attempts to emulate the likeness of the votary present the strongest evidence that the effigies of S. Maria della Quercia were true portraits of those who offered them. For example, verisimilitude is dependent upon individualization. Critics allege that votive sculptures displayed ambiguous facial features. In 1462 an effigy of Francesco Sforza’s father hanging in Santissima Annunziata was removed and examined for its potential of resembling the Duke of Milan’s deceased father; it was determined that there was little similarity between the actual man and the votive simulacrum.³⁰⁸ Panicale’s watercolors in the *Libro dei miracoli* also confirm this claim: facial features of the votaries are essentially identical, but this sameness could be attributed to Panicale’s lack of skill. Moreover, the administrative notation recording the purchase made by a brother of S. Maria della Quercia of wax molds in Florence bolsters the allegation that votive offerings are simply generic renderings of the votary.

³⁰⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *De Pictura*, trans. Rocco Sinisgalli (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 58.

³⁰⁸ Evelyn Welch, “Sforza Portraiture and the SS. Annunziata in Florence,” in *Florence and Italy: Renaissance Studies in Honor of Nicolai Rubinstein*, eds. Caroline Elam and Peter Denley (London: Westfield College, University of London, 1988), 240; c.f. Holmes, “Ex-votos: Materiality, Memory and Cult,” 175 and Panzanelli, “Compelling Presence,” 17.

Finishing of the statue, however, was the stage in the creative process which brought forth the individualization. The *Libro dei miracoli* records varied hair styles and hair colors, men who are in some stage of hair loss, a diverse selection of both male and female head coverings, assorted weaponry – each of these unique features serves to particularize and identify the subject. Clothing in the manuscript is also hugely distinct: laborers wear similar, but differentiated, garments, and wealthy votaries dress in a range of garments adorned with distinct detail. Lorenzo de' Medici's effigy, which was placed in the church of the Chiarito in Florence, further reinforces the importance of clothing and identity: the sculpture was dressed in the same bloodstained clothing he wore during the attack. Personal garments marked Lorenzo's blood brought the statue even closer to the actual being. The variety of wounds is also of great importance in the particularization of the Viterban statues. As each votary story focused on the injuries he or she received, proper and accurate display of the wounds upon the votive statue was crucial in marking his or her physical character. Santi Paulino reacts with surprise when a halberd's strike causes his innards to fall out of his lower abdomen; Margarita di Fabbiano Rosa appears calm as two axes cleave either side of her head and her wrists remain bound by heavy ropes; Hieronimo Petroni suffers an almost complete amputation of his left hand, in addition to being stabbed an additional 15 times; and swords deeply penetrate each of Madalena di Francesco Lepri's breasts. In Viterbo the votaries are similar to Christian martyrs: both can be distinguished by their physical injuries.

Portraiture, Class, and Fitting In

Whereas a portrait is considered an official record of the sitter, typically picturing an affluent member of society, there is no visual counterpart for those of lesser means in early modern Italy. The votive sculptures in Viterbo, however, provide an equivalent for the less-affluent: the votaries commissioned the sculptures from local *ceraiuoli* with whom they consulted to personalize their images, and the final product was publically displayed in the church of S. Maria della Quercia.

The seventeenth-century Florentine biographer Ferdinando Leopoldo Del Migliore suggests that Florentine votive effigies, which undoubtedly inspired their Viterban equivalents, were a new type of offering invented for a class of disenfranchised individuals. In fifteenth-century Florence members of the major and minor guilds sent mementos that were representative of their groups, consisting of “arms, crests and standards”³⁰⁹ to be displayed in the city’s prominent churches, including the church of Orsanmichele.³¹⁰ Del Migliore relates that the laboring and craft classes, the *popolo minuto*, also wanted to participate in the same tradition but did not have the legal right to display arms. As a result they invented a new type of offering known as *boti* (the Florentine dialect’s version of *voti*, or ex-votos), which were “life-size portraits of men, face necks heads and hands of painted wax, with hats, clothing, styles, and every other

³⁰⁹ Panzanelli, “Compelling Presence,” 14.

³¹⁰ Panzanelli, “Compelling Presence,” notes 14 and 15, 32-33.

ornament that was fashionable in those days.”³¹¹ While the exact sources of Del Migliore’s knowledge remains vague, his explanation makes clear that the working classes desired to have the same access to the resources and benefits that accompany membership in a recognized group of individuals.³¹² Returning to the example of Cosimo I, his equestrian monument in bronze adopted a format that was reserved for Roman emperors in the ancient world and “reassociated with the most powerful rulers of Europe in the sixteenth century.”³¹³ His portrait, although executed posthumously, ensured his perpetual membership in an assembly of authoritative men. Oratio Fabbiani also achieved a number of outcomes with the commission of his sculpture. The object functioned as the material fulfillment of a promise he made to the Madonna della Quercia. It was a public display of his pious nature and additionally the statue served as a symbol of collective piety: displayed alongside the representations of his fellow faithful, his effigy confirms his membership to a group that was devoted to the miracle-working powers of the Madonna della Quercia.

³¹¹ “Onde rilassata la legge, il popolo inuentò di poi, una nuova offerta tutta diversa dalla prima, introdottiuisi i boti, figure d’Vimini ritratti al naturale, alti quanto il viuo colle teste, e mani di cera colorita, con capelliere, vestimenti, foggie, e ogni altro ornamento all’ysanza di que’tempi...” Del Migliore, *Firenze città nobilissima* (Forni: ?, 1684), 535.

³¹² I draw from Pierre Bourdeau’s concepts of social capital, which he defines as the “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.” Quoted from “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 248.

³¹³ Sarah Blake McHam, “Public Sculpture in Renaissance Florence,” in *Looking at Italian Renaissance Sculpture*, ed. Sarah Blake McHam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 177; see also H.W. Janson, “The Revival of Antiquity in Early Renaissance Sculpture” in the same volume, 40-59.

Elite individuals are pictured repeatedly in early modern Italian paintings, prints, and statues. The historical record has proven that they often had a say in their depictions; the elite also gave their opinions in depictions of individuals originating from inferior socio-economic classes. Servants, slaves, court jesters, and other social inferiors are occasionally represented alongside illustrious portrait sitters as a means to reinforce the social status and power of the image's central subject, seen in Titian's portrait of Laura dei Dianti which includes an African slave. Annibale Carracci's painting known as *The Bean Eater* is another type of painting owned by the elite that brought attention to class difference. Considered a genre painting, or an image showing a scene of everyday life, it depicts a laborer wearing a well-worn hat, *camicia* open at the neck and quilted vest sitting at a table for his midday meal. His posture – slumped shoulders, left arm resting on the table and right arm bringing the spoon to his opened mouth -- is the opposite of the erect posture of a nobleman or woman that indicates good breeding and proper manners. On the table in front of the working class man lies food consumed by the non-elite and thus is representative of his class: a full bowl of white beans that seem to be immersed in broth, a bunch of scallions, crusty bread, a flatbread with vegetables identified by Sheila McTighe as a “torta di bietola,”³¹⁴ and a carafe of wine, most likely *vinello*, a type of weak, watery wine drunk by the working classes and poor. A prominent marker of the subject's class is that he is pictured in the process of eating – his mouth is open in anticipation of

³¹⁴ Sheila McTighe “Foods and the Body in Italian Genre Paintings, about 1580: Campi, Passarotti, Carracci,” *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (Jun., 2004): 312. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3177419>.

the spoonful of beans that he brings to his mouth, and a drop of soup falls from his tilted spoon. His left hand that actively grasps a piece of bread and his inability to successfully bring a spoonful of food to his mouth without dropping anything from the utensil are two actions that a member of the elite would never be pictured performing in a portrait. Another significant sign of the laborer's station in life is found in his dirty fingernails which indicate that he works with his hands rather than his mind. This man's depiction is the antithesis of an elite individual's portrayal.

The painting's earliest provenance is in the collection of the noble Roman Pallavicini family where it was cited in an inventory of 1679. By 1787 the work was present in the Palazzo Colonna, and it still resides there today as part of the collection in the Colonna gallery.³¹⁵ In short, Annibale's painting resided in the households of elite individuals in Rome, and one can assume that the image was not commissioned to commemorate and honor the poor, but rather as a means to reaffirm the elite status of the painting's owner as contrasted to the low status of the laborer captured within the frame.

The historian Robert Jütte located visual aspects, or codes, found in images of the poor in early modern Europe and how those codes are associated with ideologies that color the artist's world-view. He accurately claims that images of the poor must be "interpreted in relation to the specific moral and political ideology of the *artists*, about whom we often have very few biographical

³¹⁵ Patrick J. Cooney and Gianfranco Malafarina, *L'opera completa di Annibale Carracci* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1976), 88.

details.”³¹⁶ Jütte goes on to assert that artists do not produce images that are mirror images of the poor; rather, artists reproduce the dominant ideology in order to “promote a certain image of the poor for the edification and education of the rich and poor alike.”³¹⁷ His conclusion may hold true in a general sense, but one well-known example of an artist that contradicts Jutte’s argument is Annibale Carracci. Although the previous discussion of Annibale’s *Bean Eater* identified various elements that criticized the laboring classes, evidence found in Annibale’s biographical information brings clarity to how the artist negotiated sixteenth-century ideology surrounding the poor.

Annibale and his brother, Agostino, who was also an artist, were born into a working-class family: their father was a tailor, and their uncle was a butcher. According to Annibale’s biographer Gian Pietro Bellori, when Agostino moved to Rome and began frequenting circles of the learned and elite Annibale sent him a drawing of a tailor wearing eyeglasses and holding the tools of his trade, a needle and thread. A note accompanying the sketch allegedly read: “don’t forget our father is a tailor.”³¹⁸ This anecdote reveals Annibale’s consciousness of and pride for his class, and his world view is further illuminated by comparing the *Bean Eater* and the *Arti di Bologna*, a collection of drawings depicting the poor and working poor in late sixteenth-century Bologna, to images of laborers produced by his contemporaries. Vincenzo Campi, a contemporary of Annibale from the

³¹⁶ Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of Annibale and Agostino Carracci*, trans. Catherine Enggass Forew (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968), 36.

Northern Italian city of Cremona whose work Annibale likely would have known, depicted the poor in a comical, degrading manner. This negative portrayal is particularly evident in his painting *The Ricotta Eaters*, dating to 1585 (fig. 7.10). The disheveled figures slouch and leer, and the greatest offender of the group, the man on the far left, opens his mouth to reveal the bit of cheese he has just placed there. Annibale's *Bean Eater*, in comparison, presents a dignified laborer who merely consumes his midday meal.

Perhaps a situation similar to that chronicled in Annibale's letter to his brother also faced the *ceraiuoli* in Viterbo. Socio-economically, the *ceraiuoli* would not have differed very much from the carpenter, the fisherman, the wine porter, the man who herded his pigs, or the miner, all of whom commissioned votive statues from the wax workers. A mutual class affiliation and the potential for shared experiences may have led the *ceraiuoli* to craft the less-affluent votaries in a respectful manner.

Evidence of the influence the laboring classes had on their own visual presentation in cultural productions can be found in the sculptural votive effigies of Viterbo which gave voice to the fears, desires, and preferences of less affluent socio-economic classes. They are portraits of the non-elite, commissioned by the non-elite, and study of them broadens a long-neglected field of art history.

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 - Sig. Giovanni Rinaldo Monaldeschi, *Libro dei miracoli*, watercolor, 1619-1620.
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