

Peripheral backwater or innovative upland?: patterns of Franciscan patronage in renaissance Perugia, c. 1390 - 1527

Beverley N. Lyle (2008)

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**Peripheral backwater or innovative upland? Patterns
of Franciscan Patronage in Renaissance Perugia,
c.1390 - 1527**

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**This work is submitted in partial fulfilment of the
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degree of Doctor of Philosophy.**

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Abstract

In 1400, Perugia had little home-grown artistic talent and relied upon foreign painters to provide its major altarpieces. A century later, this situation had been reversed with Perugino, Pintoricchio and Raphael all active in the city.

By investigating commissioning patterns in Franciscan establishments in Perugia from 1390 to c.1527, this thesis identifies the circumstances leading to this change. It argues that artistic innovation in such peripheral places is often undervalued or automatically attributed to external factors. Focusing upon five Minorite establishments, the importance of local religious, familial and notarial networks on patronal decisions is newly evaluated.

Geography-based models of the introduction and spread of ideas, particularly theories of centre-periphery and cultural exchange, are considered as a means of explaining Perugia's changing artistic status. The introduction analyses theories regarding the autonomy of peripheral patrons, the innovative potential of the periphery and the repetition of paradigms. It finds that existing models fail fully to acknowledge the periphery's contribution to artistic development which should be reappraised.

Chapters 1 and 2 chart Perugian patrons' shifting preference from foreign to local painters and attribute this to changes in training, political stability, increased civic identity, and an aspirational humanist court. Chapters 3 and 4 assess the dominance of the Peruginesque style. They propose that Raphael's early success lay in his perfection of this aesthetic, along with female Baglioni/Oddi and Franciscan patronal support. This occurred in a temporary competitive vacuum, characteristic of places beyond the centre.

In conclusion, some current theories undervalue the contribution of local patrons and fail to accommodate the innovative potential of peripheral places like Perugia. Ideas are generated in both places and influences flow between them through processes of exchange involving painters and patrons. Local patronal networks provide a matrix within which valid tastes are promoted independently of external pressures.

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Preface

At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the central Italian city of Perugia had little home-grown artistic talent and relied upon foreign painters to provide its major altarpieces. A century later, this situation had been reversed with Perugino, Pintoricchio and Raphael all active in the city. A large number of high altars were undergoing renovation with many of the biggest and most expensive altarpieces in Italy being commissioned there.¹ This thesis seeks to establish the factors leading to this change and asks what patterns of patronage accompanied it.

To address these issues, this thesis considers the nature of patronage and the development of painting in Perugia from 1390 to c.1527. The study focuses upon five Franciscan convents and monasteries together with the lay confraternities and families connected with these establishments. Additionally, other major artistic works in the city are considered where their impact was significant. Although the study concentrates on painting, especially altarpieces, some references to architecture and sculpture are made where appropriate.

Franciscan patronage in Perugia was consistently active throughout the period and reflected painting and commissioning patterns across the city as a whole. Their establishments encompassed a wide cross-section of Perugian citizens, clerical and lay, male and female and their adherents were often closely involved with the political infrastructure of the city. Commissions for the order reflected their theological and liturgical requirements and local Franciscan networks played an important role in the commissioning process, but there appear to be few instances when decisions were affected by external instructions from the central authority in Assisi. Furthermore, so far as can be established from the documents, private patrons commissioning paintings for Franciscan churches had a fair degree of autonomy, while commissions made at the instigation of the communities reflect local, provincial and specifically Franciscan concerns. Writing about mid-fourteenth-century Franciscan patronage in Northern and Central Italy, Dieter Blume proposed that the mother house at Assisi had sought to impose standardisation of decorative

¹ See O'Malley 2007, p. 691 for a comparison of the prices and size of Perugino's altarpieces.

programmes through directives.² However, Louise Bourdua's study of Franciscan patronage in the Veneto during the same period found that images there reflected local influences rather than formulae originating in Assisi.³ Artistic programmes were sometimes chosen by the friars but at other times were selected by the local patrons. A similar pattern occurred in fifteenth-century Perugia.

The increasing polarisation of the two main branches of the order - the Observants and the Conventuals - was also a major factor. The division centred upon interpretations of St. Francis' doctrine of absolute poverty and his prohibition upon the ownership of property. The Observants wished to remain as close to their founder's doctrine as possible, while the more pragmatic Conventuals operated under a series of papal dispensations which allowed them to possess property and receive a fixed income. Following the Observant reforms of the late 1300s and early 1400s, this movement gradually grew in strength and was championed by reformers such as St. Bernardino of Siena who often visited Perugia. Finally, tensions within the order became insurmountable and Pope Leo X formally split it into two distinct bodies in 1517. In Perugia, both branches were represented. The male Observants were based at San Francesco del Monteripido. The female Clares of Santa Maria di Monteluca were also Observants and the female tertiaries at Sant'Agnese and Sant'Antonio da Padova had close, if sometimes difficult, links with Monteripido. The Conventual base was San Francesco al Prato which also had a prominent civic role. Responses to the tensions within the order are discernable in the iconography of several of the altarpieces discussed in this thesis.

Despite the debate surrounding the order's vow of poverty, neither group of Franciscans opposed the decoration of their churches. St. Francis had stressed the importance of high quality chalices and illuminated manuscripts and the order swiftly realised the value of frescoes in proclaiming their message.⁴ Paintings became important teaching aids, reinforcing Franciscan tenets and many of the Perugian altarpieces had a didactic function. The order's requirement for clarity in their paintings may have been a factor in the selection of painters and will be considered.

² Blume 1983.

³ Bourdua 2004, p. 149.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Perugia had long been part of the Papal States, but after the twelfth century, in common with much of Umbria and the Marche, the city declared itself an autonomous republic, only occasionally recognising papal authority. As successive popes sought to re-establish control during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Perugia's relationship with Rome became increasingly important. Beyond this, Perugia's links with Florence and networks established through trade, printing and the university brought people and ideas from other places into the city. This introduction considers social, political and economic developments in the city and critical understandings of the Perugian experience.

Perugia's political history and relations with Rome and Florence

Throughout the trecento and early quattrocento, there had been an ongoing power struggle in Perugia between the nobles and the merchant classes or *poplani*, with the nobles gradually gaining in strength. This was resolved in 1416 when Braccio Fortebraccio da Montone seized power after the Battle of Sant'Egidio.¹ With the support of the papacy, he proceeded to reduce the power of the city's political institutions by ignoring elections and the decrees of the council, thereby ending the *Stato Popolare libero e guelfo* in favour of the nobles.

Braccio's rule established a brief interlude of peace in Perugia, as witnessed by the number of public works that were undertaken, including the completion of the Loggia in the Piazza di San Lorenzo and the building of huge arches for the Piazza di Sopramura.² Following Braccio's death in 1424, Pope Martin V sought to re-establish direct papal authority and enlisted Malatesta Baglioni to act as his agent.³ Malatesta correctly perceived that an alliance with the pope would empower him and the noble class, despite Perugia's relationship with the papacy being a constant source of conflict.

Under the *popolani*, the guilds had resisted papal rule and the city had been

¹ Heywood 1910, p 286.

² Lunghi 1996c, p. 105.

³ Black 1966, p. 32.

run by ten priors selected from the guilds who each served a two month term. But Braccio had weakened the priors, despite maintaining the structure of government. Faced with Malatesta's persuasiveness and the approach of 3000 horsemen in the pay of the church, the priors capitulated, consoled by promises that they would retain their ancient rights. Perugia was forced to acknowledge Rome as its overlord – *la libertà sotto il papa* - and although not present in the city in person, the pope appointed a cardinal legate to represent him and supervise the city's councils. Thereafter, as well as enforcing papal edicts, the legate oversaw the local magistrates' decisions and heard legal appeals, while the *camera apostolica*, through a resident treasurer, collected normal taxes and the *gabelle* or salt tax, fees for the use of Lake Trasimeno, and contract and customs dues.⁴ Perugia's relationship with Rome vacillated according to the ambitions of the various popes and the strictness or laxity of their officials.⁵

The settlement reached with Pope Martin V in 1424 guaranteed Perugia's territories, the continuation of the university and free access to him for ambassadors sent by the Priori, without interference from the legate.⁶ Individuals or teams of ambassadors were regularly sent to Rome in times of crisis to plead the cause of the city, explain their conduct, criticise papal officials and seek financial alleviation. Members of leading families were sent as ambassadors, extending the network of connections between Perugia and Rome. For example, in 1464, Baldassare della Staffa, Guido di Malatesta Baglioni and Leone di Guido degli Oddi were selected and in the 1490s, Baglione Montubiani was appointed on a permanent basis.⁷ He received a salary of 200 florins and also taught at Rome University.

The co-operation with the papacy particularly benefited certain nobles. Malatesta Baglioni was made lord of Spello and subsequently granted Bastia and Cannai, in return for his support. During his son, Braccio's supremacy (1437 - 1479), Pope Eugenius IV confirmed the grant for three generations and Pellini ascribed the subsequent power of the Baglioni family to these acquisitions.⁸ At the

⁴ Black 1970, p. 252.

⁵ Pecugi Fop 1997, p. 64.

⁶ Black 1966, pp. 32, 41.

⁷ *ibid*; Pellini 1664, II, p. 678.

⁸ Pellini 1664, II, p. 296.

height of their power, the family comprised over 20 households, mainly concentrated in the Colle Landone area. The Baglioni were brilliant, if ruthless, *condottieri*, employing thousands of soldiers and providing a lucrative source of revenue for Perugia and themselves. Near-contemporary chroniclers maintained that they were tyrannical dictators who ruled through fear, but Christopher Black has shown that other oligarchical families did curb their pre-eminence.⁹ They were, however influential upon foreign affairs. Though the Priors were officially responsible for this, they tended to rely upon the Baglioni to use their influence on foreign courts.¹⁰ For example, Guido and Rodolfo Baglioni actively cultivated the powerful Medici in Florence. In 1487, they formed an alliance and agreed to fight for Florence. In return, the Medici (unsuccessfully) petitioned the pope to declare the Oddi outlaws.¹¹

Francesco Mancini has credited Braccio Baglioni with cultivating a humanist court in the manner of other cultured *condottieri* such as Federico da Montefeltro.¹² During Braccio's *cryptosignoria*, as Mancini has described it, the court and the university provided forums for cultural, scientific and literary debate. Many civic buildings and churches were extended and Braccio constructed several fine villas with beautiful gardens where lavish entertainments were held.¹³ Dances, equestrian tournaments and games entertained the general populace and important visitors to the city also provided diversions.¹⁴ When Pope Pius II stopped over on his way to Mantua in 1459, a cortège of dignitaries dressed in furs and scarlet cloth accompanied him from the gate of San Pietro to the Palazzo dei Priori.¹⁵ In 1469, hospitality was extended to the emperor and the Venetian ambassador and, in 1471, Borso d'Este visited the city.¹⁶ Braccio also enjoyed good relations with both Rome and Florence at this time, acting as a successful *condottiere* for both parties.

Braccio's death in 1479 left a power vacuum during which members of the Baglioni family and others jostled for supremacy. In October 1488, the ongoing disputes culminated in a pitched battle between the Baglioni and the Oddi families in

⁹ Black 1970, pp. 245 – 281.

¹⁰ Black 1966, p. 5.

¹¹ Black 1970, pp. 268, 273.

¹² Mancini 1992, pp. 18 – 20.

¹³ Scalvanti 1898, p. 374.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 304 – 5.

¹⁵ Fabretti 1850, pp. 633 – 634.

¹⁶ Pellini 1664, II, p. 650.

the Piazza, following which the latter were driven into exile. Thereafter, Guido and Rodolfo Baglioni ruled through a special council packed with their supporters, known as the *dieci dell'arbitrio*. They intimidated the papal authorities and dominated the city, marking the start of *lo stato dei Baglioni*.¹⁷

Attempts by the Oddi in 1491 and 1495 to take the city were repulsed and, in addition to local skirmishes, wars were waged against Assisi, Foligno and Urbino for harbouring the exiles. Internecine rivalries reached their peak in June 1500.¹⁸ When Astorre Baglioni married Lavinia Colonna in an extravagant celebration lasting many days, some of the less wealthy and bastard members of the Baglioni family, took advantage of the party to attack Guido, Rodolfo and their families in what has become known as the *Nozze rosse* or 'red wedding'. Guido and others were killed, but the plotters ruled for only a few days before being ousted by Giampaolo, Rodolfo's son.

Perugia's difficulties with the Papal States soon resurfaced. For three years Giampaolo withstood their army, led by Pope Alexander VI's son, Cesare Borgia, but from January to September 1503, Cesare took control of the city, forcing Giampaolo to flee to Siena.¹⁹ Following Alexander's death, Giampaolo regained power in Perugia and also fought for Florence. But the papacy was not to be denied and, in 1506, Julius II set out against Perugia and Bologna. In a canny move, Julius persuaded Giampaolo to fight for him against Bologna. This strengthened the pope's position in Perugia as papal officials were able to control elections in Giampaolo's absence.²⁰ In return, Leo X made Giampaolo Count and Governor of Bettona in 1516. But the alliance was short-lived. In 1517, Giampaolo advised Perugia to make peace with ex-Duke Francesco Maria of Urbino, who was besieging the city. This ruined Leo's campaign and he exacted his revenge in 1520, when he lured Giampaolo to Rome, imprisoned and later killed him.

Thereafter, factional fighting within the Baglioni family played to the pope's

¹⁷ Pellini 1664, III, p. 7.

¹⁸ Matarazzo 1905, p. 148

¹⁹ Black 1970, pp. 246-247.

²⁰ Heywood 1910, pp. 310 – 311. Heywood believes this was short-lived and Giampaolo was able to re-establish his *signoria* on his return

advantage, added to which the city was severely weakened by plague, food shortages, price rises and heavy taxation.²¹ In 1529, Malatesta Baglioni fought for the Florentine republic against Clement VII and the Medici, but when Perugia was threatened by the papal army, he made peace.²² When the conflict moved to Florence, he advised that city to negotiate a settlement too. While this saved Florence from destruction, it enabled the Medici to return, so that Malatesta was subsequently labelled a traitor there and relations between the cities soured. On Malatesta's death in 1530, the papal forces attacked again and took most of the Baglioni possessions in Umbria. In 1534, Rodolfo Baglioni II raided Perugia in revenge for this loss of land, but received little support from the populace and was forced to retreat.

Meanwhile, the papacy continued to increase its tax demands, ostensibly to finance crusades against the Turks, but in the Perugians' view, to subsidise extravagances at the papal court.²³ Finally, in 1539, Pope Paul III demanded an 18% increase in the salt monopoly tax. In desperation, Perugia took up arms against this, but failed to secure the support of other papal states, Venice or the emperor. The papal forces swept through the *contado* and besieged the city. Perugia surrendered and Paul ordered the destruction of the Baglioni houses and the construction of a fortress on top of them – the *Rocca Paolina*. He abolished the city councils and imposed direct rule by papal governors, finally replacing Baglioni rule with that of the papacy.

Networks

Apart from political interactions with other cities, especially Rome, Perugia was connected to other places through networks involving trade, education and printing.

Trade and travel

Perched on two wooded hills, some 300 metres above the River Tiber and surrounded by deep depressions, Perugia was praised for its natural advantages and

²¹ Black 1966, p. 46.

²² Black 1970 pp. 247-248.

²³ *ibid.*

defences.²⁴ It was never as influential in terms of trade as Tuscany, but it was strategically well placed and was an important link between the port of Ancona on the Adriatic and the Mediterranean coast near Florence and Pisa. Goods also passed through Perugia, along the Tiber valley, from Romagna in the north to Lazio and Rome in the south. While not the shortest route, it provided the safest way to travel from Florence to Rome and was often a resting point for travellers. Such visits provided opportunities for cultural exchange as well as trade. Visitors witnessed Perugian achievements and brought news of developments in their own cities and elsewhere.

Perugian moneychangers fulfilled an important role changing coins into silver Perugian lira and providing letters of credit as a means of avoiding the laws against usury.²⁵ Banking became a major source of revenue. The provision of *condottiere* and mercenaries throughout Italy also brought valuable foreign currency to the city.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the city had successful wool and leather industries, however a decline in the wool market during the quattrocento and the decrease in artisan and mercantile investment during the *signoria* of Braccio and the Baglioni, led instead to a propensity on the part of the nobility to invest in land.²⁶ Land in the *contado* provided cereals, vegetables, olives, wine and dairy products as well as pasture for sheep, while Lake Trasimeno supported a lively fishing industry. Even so, cloth remained important to the economy and white Perugian cloth, with its distinctive striped blue or, more rarely, red borders, is frequently depicted in Perugian paintings.

Perugia's situation as a prosperous cross-roads encouraged foreigners to seek work in the city. They formed their own societies, many of which were based at the Olivetan church of Santa Maria dei Servi, due to that order's foreign connections.²⁷ The Germans and French had their own Cappella degli Ultramontane and the Lombards, who were predominantly builders, also had a chapel there.

²⁴ Crispolti 1648, p. 4.

²⁵ Banker 1997, p. 47.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁷ Pecugi Fop 1997, p. 18.

The University

Founded around 1276, Perugia University had long been famous in the fields of law and medicine, but in the early 1400s new chairs in rhetoric, poetry and oratory were established.²⁸ Initially, the university had been run by the *Savi dello Studio* - ten magistrates appointed by the *comune* - but in 1431 Pope Eugenius IV decreed that the papal governor or legate had to approve appointments.²⁹ By 1467, the governor was part of the selection process and fixed salaries. Gradually, the *comune* lost its authority to Rome, although it continued to provide most of the funding. The university had to compete for students and papal favour with the other universities of the Papal States, particularly Rome and Macerata. Even so, in 1483, Pope Sixtus IV, who had been a student in Perugia, ordered that new teaching rooms be converted from shops in Piazza del Sopramuro, near the city centre.³⁰

As a small university, biased towards Jurisprudence and suffering as a subject commune for much of the period, Perugia had some difficulty attracting leading humanists, especially as it lacked a Greek professorship.³¹ Nevertheless, the *comune* was keen to assert the city's humanist credentials, so to make the appointment more attractive they combined the posts of chancellor and professor of oratory. In 1440, they enticed the poet Tommaso Pontano da Camerino, who was expert in Latin and Greek, to the post and another humanist taught alongside him.

For the rest of the century, a steady stream of leading humanists spent time at the university. Among them, Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, the nephew of Tommaso, studied at Perugia then went to Naples, returning in 1465 on the promise of an appointment to the double post.³² But the pope, annoyed that the scholar had worked for his enemies in Naples, refused to ratify his appointment and, after three years teaching, Giovanni returned there. Francesco Maturanzio or Matarazzo, maintained the humanist studies.³³ He had taught in Ferrara and Vicenza and travelled extensively in Greece. He began as secretary to the papal governor in 1475 and was

²⁸ Grendler 2004, p. 227.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 66.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 67.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 227.

³² *ibid.*

³³ *ibid.*, p. 228.

certainly teaching from 1486-1492 and from 1498 until his death in 1518. He was a Ciceronian scholar and also wrote orations, commentaries, poetry and a chronicle of Perugia. These scholars' constant comings and goings ensured that new ideas regularly entered the city from centres such as Florence and Rome and leading universities like Ferrara, Padua and Vicenza. Additionally, the university attracted foreign students from Spain, France and especially Germany, to study law.³⁴ It is notable, however, that after 1500, eminent scholars stayed only briefly, quickly lured away by more lucrative or prestigious posts elsewhere, and most chairs were filled locally. A trend repeated in Perugia's increasingly inward-looking artistic preferences.

In addition to the university's scholars, many of the papal legates, such as Stefano Guerrieri, were eminent humanist scholars who contributed to the developing interest in ancient codices and the study of classical texts within the city.³⁵

Printing

Intellectual networks were also established through the introduction of the printing press to Perugia, enabling books to be produced locally and facilitating the dissemination of new ideas. In 1471, Braccio Baglioni, Matteo Baldeschi and Costantino di Messer Antonio invited two German printers to the city, forming the first Società Tipografica Perugina.³⁶ Initially, they were joined by other, predominantly German, printers and later, Cosimo di Bernardo from Verona was active in the city.³⁷ The first Perugian printers were the Cartolari family who took their surname from their profession.³⁸ Baldassare di Francesco Cartolari had moved from Papiano, near Deruta, to Perugia and obtained citizenship and the right to enter the printers' guild, in 1467. Working at first with cards and loose sheets, he soon progressed to books which he obtained from Venice. The business flourished and he was succeeded by his sons and grandsons. As the balance of political power moved steadily in favour of Rome, printers, like artists, began to adopt the Roman style.

³⁴ *ibid.* p. 69.

³⁵ Mancini 1992, p. 23.

³⁶ Pecugi Fop 1997, p. 37.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 39.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 38.

From 1518 onwards, Girolamo Cartolari gradually replaced the Gothic type preferred by his father, with Roman characters.

The Perugian artist, Giovan Battista Caporali, the son of Bartolomeo Caporali, was also involved in the printing industry in Perugia and had contact with Rome. In 1508, he almost certainly attended a meal there hosted by the architect Bramante at which several artists, including Perugino, Pintoricchio and Luca Signorelli were present. The meeting was apparently seminal as he described it in the commentary to his translation of the first five books of Vitruvius's *Trattato di Architettura* which was published in 1536.

Critical understandings of the Perugian experience

Art history has traditionally been categorised by time period or country. However, such divisions can be crude, if not arbitrary. Artistic innovations and endings rarely have clearly identifiable dates, while political frontiers often differ from the cultural ties and boundaries that bind or separate people. Artistic styles can be exchanged, adopted, imposed and adapted in areas far from their original source, both in terms of time and space. A geographical approach to the study of art history that takes account of topography, trade and communication links provides a more flexible approach to the problem of categorisation and gives an understanding of the way ideas spread and develop.

Classical categorisations

Classification by geographical principles is far from new. Since classical times, art has been categorised according to its place of production. Cicero contrasted the spare elegance of the Attics with Asiatic luxury and in the time of Socrates, cultural products were associated with their places of origin.³⁹ Vitruvius, following Plato and Aristotle, took account of the geographical effects of climate upon architecture and peoples.⁴⁰ Pliny distinguished painters according to 'genera' or kinds, based on their places of production.⁴¹

³⁹ Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum*, III.

⁴⁰ Vitruvius 1914, VI, Chapters 1 and 4.

⁴¹ Pliny the Elder 1938-63, Book 35.

Fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italian reception

In fifteenth and sixteenth-century Italy, these ideas were revisited. Alberti considered the effects of environmental factors upon his buildings and showed an awareness of place when comparing the arts of his day with those of classical times.⁴² Ghiberti divided his *Commentaries* into three books dealing with ancient art, modern art and theories of vision, anatomy and proportion. In the first book, he noted the particular skills of ancient cultures, such as Egyptian *disegno* and Greek painting and sculpture.⁴³ The second book selectively traces the progression of art in the *trecento* and acts as a preamble to his autobiography at the end of the section. He begins with Florentine painters to whom he affords special prominence, namely Giotto and his disciples, then considers Sieneese painters, and finally discusses sculptors, including the Pisani brothers and the German Master of Cologne. Ghiberti's grouping of painters by city indicates that certain places were already being associated with particular types of artistic production.

Giovanni Santi's rhymed chronicle which was dedicated to Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, celebrates 27 painters from all over Italy and beyond. It groups them roughly according to their places of origin and, within these groupings, by their particular skills.⁴⁴ After first praising Andrea Mantegna in Mantua, Santi admires Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden from Bruges who 'excelled at colouring'. Returning to Italy, he names thirteen artists from Florence, including Filippo Lippi, Francesco Pesellino, Domenico Veneziano, Masaccio, Andrea del Castagno, Paolo Uccello and Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo who are all described as 'great draughtsmen'. Notably, he does not refer specifically to Florence, but moves on at the end of the stanza 'from the lovely land of Etruria'. Within the boundaries of Tuscany and Umbria, Santi categorises artists according to their areas of expertise, although it is perhaps no coincidence that the expert *designatori* were all Florentine. Painters not from Florence are identified, including Signorelli from Cortona who is grouped with Ghirlandaio, Filippino Lippi and Botticelli. Leonardo da Vinci and Pietro Perugino of Pieve are linked as 'two young men alike in fame and years' and Perugino receives the additional accolade of 'divine painter'

⁴² Alberti, 1972, pp. 94-95.

⁴³ Ghiberti 1998, Book I, IV.1; VIII.1

⁴⁴ Michelini Tocci 1985, II, p. 674; Baxandall 1988, pp. 112-115 gives a translation and a table analysing the artists' places of origin, which he interprets as weighted towards Florence.

indicating Santi's high regard for him. Though Santi identifies Perugino's birthplace as Pieve, Perugia is alluded to in the use of the name 'Perugino' rather than Vannucci. Santi also reveals an appreciation of painters from further afield such as the Bellini brothers and Cosimo Tura, indicating that as a late fifteenth-century painter based in Urbino, he did not consider Florence to be the only place of artistic merit. While he lists 13 Florentine artists, 14 were from elsewhere and the account is striking for the lack of local Urbinate *campanilismo*.

The structure of Santi's poem goes some way towards categorising painters along geographical lines and begins to associate particular cities with particular skills, although this is never overtly declared. A concern with painters' geographical origins is also apparent in Luca Pacioli's *Summa Arithmetica* written in 1494. In the introduction to his treatise, the Franciscan mathematician enumerated the leading artists of the day for Federigo's successor, Guidobaldo, but went further than Santi by stating where each artist came from. They included the Bellini brothers from Venice, Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio and Filippino Lippi from Florence, Perugino from Perugia and Mantegna from Mantua.⁴⁵ The careful location of the artists' origins suggests this was considered relevant to discussions of their respective merits, though the idea that characteristics are associated with places is not articulated.

A country-wide approach was taken by the banker, Agostino Chigi, who wrote recommending Perugino to his father in 1500. He declared Perugino to be the best master in Italy and added that Pintoricchio was the only other painter worth considering for the decoration of the family chapel in Siena.⁴⁶ While this is hyperbole, these widely travelled and educated patrons evidently considered Perugian artists to be at the forefront of painting at this time. This view echoes that recorded in the preamble to minutes of a meeting of the Opera del Duomo in Orvieto, held in December 1489, in connection with the recruitment of Perugino to complete the Cappella Nuova frescoes:

⁴⁵ Pacioli 1494, p. 2.

⁴⁶ 'Sopra la Cappella vostra ho visito l'intentione vostra [...] che voi dite haver parlato a Mr. Pietro Perugino, vi dico, che volendo fare di sua mano, Lui è il meglio Mastro d'Italia. E questo che si chiama Patorichio è stato suo discepolo, il quale al presente non è qui. Altri maestri non ci sono che vaglino', quoted in Cugnoli 1879, p. 481.

‘and now there has come master Pietro Perugino a painter famous throughout Italy, evidence of whose workmanship may be seen in the apostolic Palace in Rome.’⁴⁷

In 1499, Luca Signorelli was similarly referred to by the Opera, as ‘a painter of great fame throughout Italy’.⁴⁸

Within Perugia itself, there is evidence of pride in the city’s identity and appreciation of its leading position in the panoply of artistic producers. The well-travelled humanist Francesco Matarazzo described Perugino as ‘pre-eminent among painters throughout the whole of God’s world’ and added that no one ‘could contend’ with Pintoricchio ‘for second place’.⁴⁹ These sentiments were reiterated in his epitaph to Perugino in the Collegio del Cambio:

PETRUS PERUSINUS EGREGIUS / PICTOR / PERDITA SI
FUERAT PINGENDI / HIC RETTULIT ARTEM / SI NUSQUAM
INVENTA EST / HACTENUS IPSE DEDIT. ANNO SALUT. M.D.⁵⁰

It was Vasari, in his *Lives*, who characterised artists according to their places of origin and attributed certain qualities to particular cities, such as Florentine *disegno* and Venetian *colorire*. His chronological biographies viewed the development of painting as a linear progression, culminating in what he saw as the ultimate artistic achievements of Florence and Rome and he was often dismissive of non-Florentine artists and their training. In Perugia, Vasari disregarded Perugino’s early training in a workshop in the city, apart from this master’s advice to study painting and go to Florence, as ‘the air in Florence naturally produces free spirits’ who are ‘not content with mediocre works’.⁵¹ He also recorded that the Florentine sculptor, Montorsoli found that Perugia was not for him and that he could not learn there, while Raphael had to forget his Perugian lessons.⁵² After visiting Florence, Raphael ‘changed and enhanced his style so much that it had nothing whatsoever to do with his early style’, that is the style of Perugia.⁵³ Moreover, after the young artisans of Florence had criticised Perugino because ‘he had re-used figures which he

⁴⁷ McLellan 1996, p. 308.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 313.

⁴⁹ Matarazzo 1905, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰ ‘If the art of painting had been lost, the distinguished painter Pietro Perugino would have restored it, if it had never been invented, he would have given it to us.’

⁵¹ Vasari 1550, III, p. 597.

⁵² Vasari 1568, V, p. 491.

⁵³ *ibid.*, IV, p. 162.

had placed in his works on other occasions', he left Florence and returned to Perugia, 'where he executed several works in fresco for the church of San Severo...and in many other places in the Perugian countryside'.⁵⁴ The point being that the less demanding patrons of Perugia and its *contado* continued to patronise him when he could no longer meet the standards required by the more discerning Florentines.⁵⁵

In fact, Perugino's leave-taking was not as sudden as Vasari suggests and, although it is broadly true that he was less successful thereafter, he kept his Florentine workshop until 1511.⁵⁶ In any case, he received few new contracts in Perugia itself after 1507, and was mainly engaged in completing contracts that had been agreed some time before. This suggests that the Perugian citizens' regard for Perugino's work was not so different from that of their Florentine counterparts.

Vasari's low regard for patrons outside the main centres is mirrored in Luigi Ciocca's letter to Isabella d'Este concerning Perugino in which he suggested that working for a Marquis' daughter in Mantua was a very different matter from working for patrons in Spoleto or the Marche.⁵⁷ Doubtless this included an element of flattery, but it is interesting that the distinction was drawn by place as much as class. Vasari's index to the *Lives* is organised on geographical principles under the heading '*Tavola de'Luoghi dove sono le Opere Descritte*'.⁵⁸ Beneath the city name, sites of artistic interest such as churches are listed along with the names of the artists who have works there. These include cities such as Bologna and Perugia. The index reveals the wide geographical distribution of works that Vasari considered worthy of inclusion and, taken simply on a numerical basis, give an indication of the artistic status and activity in each city.

Classifications in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the idea of the 'school'

Geographical categorisation developed in the seventeenth century when Agucchi wrote about the art produced in various separate localities such as Rome, Venice, Tuscany and Lombardy and gave each area or school, figurehead painters –

⁵⁴ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, p. 610.

⁵⁵ Castelnuovo and Ginzburg 1994, p. 51.

⁵⁶ Nelson 2004, pp. 65-73.

⁵⁷ '*non haveva a fare con spoletini o marchigiani ma con una Marchesana di Mantua*' transcribed in Canuti 1931, II, p. 233.

⁵⁸ Vasari 1550 and 1568, VI, p. 426-446.

Michelangelo and Raphael for Rome and Leonardo da Vinci and Andrea del Sarto for Tuscany.⁵⁹ In so doing, he claimed to be following the method used by the ancients. The idea of schools being identified with particular cities was elaborated upon by Lanzi in 1809.⁶⁰ He identified fourteen Italian schools of art and considered the main centres to be Florence, Rome, Venice and Bologna, with lesser ones such as Siena and Ferrara. When subdivided into particular time periods these schools were seen to represent different styles. Consequently, the 'school' became synonymous with the 'style'.

While Perugia was not considered by Agucchi or Lanzi, local writers produced comprehensive guides detailing the city's artefacts with a view to promoting the city's independent artistic heritage in the face of papal domination.⁶¹ As early as 1597, Crispolti produced a guide to the paintings, sculptures and architecture in Perugia's churches, recording many inscriptions and, in 1683, Morelli recorded the city's paintings and sculptures.⁶² In 1784, the Perugian artist and architect, Baldassare Orsini, produced a guide to the the city 'for strangers' and, in 1788, letters written by the political activist, poet and philosopher, Annibale Mariotti to Orsini, were published.⁶³ Reflecting Mariotti's support for *moti civili* (he supported the French invasion in 1797 and was imprisoned when the Papal States were reinstated), they described the development of Perugian painting from a somewhat partisan viewpoint. Countering Vasari's negativity, he stressed that it was in Perugia, not Florence that Perugino learned to paint.⁶⁴ He acclaimed 'il nostro' Pietro di Galeotto and asserted that Raphael took the taste for *grottesche* from Perugia to Florence and Rome.⁶⁵ These guides, with their unashamed bias in favour of Perugian art, helped codify and promote it locally, despite scant external attention. Usefully for modern researchers, they also provide a record of the works in place before the Napoleonic invaders and others plundered the city.

⁵⁹ Agucchi's treatise is published in Mahon 1947, p. 246.

⁶⁰ Lanzi 1968-74.

⁶¹ Crispolti 1597 (reprinted 2001), p. 14.

⁶² Morelli 1683.

⁶³ Orsini 1784.

⁶⁴ Mariotti 1788, p. 122.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 154, 163

Nineteenth and twentieth-century histories

In 1837, Vermiglioli published his life of Pinturicchio which included new documents relating to Pinturicchio and Perugino.⁶⁶ The dedication to Lavinia Vermiglioli Oddi, made much of Vermiglioli's pride in Perugia. It noted how Leonardo da Vinci was associated with Milan, Mantegna with Padua and Titian, Pordenone and others from that school with Venice and declared that while Perugino was renowned, other Perugian painters, such as Pintoricchio, were also worthy of attention.

Nineteenth-century art historians such as Crowe, Cavalcaselle and Berenson organised their studies in books or chapters focused on individual cities or limited geographical areas.⁶⁷ Crowe and Cavalcaselle's studies of Northern and Central Italian painting were structured chronologically in chapters devoted to individual painters or to the painters of a particular place. For example, Chapter II of the Northern study concerns 'Neapolitans, Sicilians and Antonella da Messina'.⁶⁸ Berenson, who tended to categorise painters through connoisseurship and observation, framed his analyses within geographical boundaries. He studied the painters of individual cities - Venice, Florence and Siena - as well as those from the larger areas of Central and Northern Italy.⁶⁹ But Berenson did not value Perugian art highly. In the 1911 edition of *The Central Italian Painters of the Renaissance*, he noted that Perugia was 'not very gifted with artistic genius' and that Pintoricchio's 'rich and savoury' work was 'more welcome to provincial palates than to the few gourmets'.⁷⁰ The first painter of note, Benedetto Bonfigli, 'did not augur well' while the 'inexorable dullness of provincial ideals' soon 'exerted its force' upon Fiorenzo di Lorenzo who 'could not long resist it'.

Later, Longhi also categorised his material from a geographical slant and drew attention to interactions between areas, for example, the relationship between Italian and German renaissance art and Italian influence on Flemish and Spanish

⁶⁶ Vermiglioli 1837.

⁶⁷ Kaufmann 2004, p. 46.

⁶⁸ Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871.

⁶⁹ Berenson 1952, originally published as separate essays from 1894 to 1907.

⁷⁰ Berenson 1911, pp. 88-91.

painting.⁷¹

With the twentieth century came a greater interest in documentary evidence and, in 1912, following a decade of archival research, Walter Bombe published the first comprehensive study of Perugian artists.⁷² Focusing on the city's production, he traced the development of the Painter's Guild and produced a history of Perugian painting from the thirteenth century to Perugino and Pintoricchio. A summary of the painters' lives with references to all their known documents followed. This was complemented in 1923 by Gnoli's *Pittori e miniature nell'Umbria* which lists every recorded Umbrian painter before 1600 in alphabetical order, giving details of their lives and documentary references.⁷³ He situated Perugian art within a regional school based on a geographical area, and as with Bombe, the remit is inwardly focused within those boundaries. This characterisation of Umbrian art as an independent, regional style continued with Todini's collation of Umbrian paintings in 1989.⁷⁴ In contrast, Canuti's definitive 1931 study of Perugino, which included transcriptions of the known documents relating to Perugino, is artist-centred and examines his time in Florence and Naples as well as Perugia.⁷⁵

The academicism of Gnoli's research reflected his positions as Director of the Perugian gallery and Soprintendente alle Belle Arti for Umbria. Frances Russell attributed the subsequent dearth of scholars researching into Perugian art as due largely to the comprehensiveness of Gnoli's study, but there are other, historical reasons for this.⁷⁶ In 1540, Pope Paul III crushed Perugia when he reasserted papal authority by erecting the massive Rocca Paolina fortress.⁷⁷ A large part of the medieval centre, together with the houses of the Baglioni family and many churches and monasteries, including the richly decorated Santa Maria dei Servi, were systematically destroyed. Later, many of Perugia's great paintings were dispersed. Some went to Rome, such as Raphael's *Entombment* which was taken by Cardinal Borghese around 1608, while others, such as Perugino's *Marriage of the Virgin*,

⁷¹ Longhi 1979, pp. 3-25; 23-25; 52-61.

⁷² Bombe 1912.

⁷³ Gnoli 1923.

⁷⁴ Todini 1989.

⁷⁵ Canuti 1931.

⁷⁶ Russell 1981.

⁷⁷ Pecugi Fop, 1997, p. 64.

were pillaged by Napoleon and remain in French galleries. Furthermore, the legacy of Vasari's negative assessment contributed to Perugia's omission from the canon of leading centres. While local writers strove to maintain Perugia's heritage in the face of domination by external powers, outside the city, these factors led to a relative lack of awareness of Perugian art beyond Perugino and Raphael.

Theories of diffusion and centre-periphery

Elsewhere, in the early 1900s, geographical concepts of diffusion began to be applied to art in an attempt to understand how styles spread, while the usefulness of fixed ideas about schools defined by a narrow location was questioned. In 1923, Brutails wrote that 'each social centre is a foyer of geographical irradiation' and that 'style spreads like concentric waves around a point of emission, although not so calmly.'⁷⁸ For him, styles spread by means of communication as dictated by the physical nature of the landscape. Rey applied the theory to the artistic form of cathedrals along the Le Puy pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela that passed through Cahors.⁷⁹ The Catalan nationalist and modernist architect, Cadafalch, noted how new forms radiated out from great churches along communication links and were unrelated to the political boundaries of states and provinces.⁸⁰

In 1938, Henri Focillon advised that the term 'schools' should be used with care as political frontiers do not demarcate art and influence may be exercised at a distance, for example through pilgrims. Moreover, he found that some cities have produced many different artistic currents that do not sit happily within the same classification.⁸¹ These views, which see the spread of ideas as occurring independently of political and state borders, seem to reflect the instability of their own historical period. At a time when borders were transient and national sovereignty often ignored, explanations that obviated any requirement for fixed boundaries or political alliances and relied instead upon the comparatively unchanging geographical features of landscape and communications links must have appeared attractive. This is perhaps especially true for a Frenchman who had seen his country and areas such as Alsace fought over in successive Franco-Prussian wars.

⁷⁸ Brutails 1923 quoted in Kaufmann 2004, p. 64.

⁷⁹ Rey 1925.

⁸⁰ Cadafalch 1935.

⁸¹ Focillon 1963, p. 71 [First edition 1938].

Moreover, French art from 1000 – 1850 was especially influenced by styles imported from elsewhere.

In his seminal work of 1962, *The Shape of Time*, George Kubler (Focillon's pupil) drew upon anthropological and linguistic methodology to challenge the usefulness of concepts of style and biography in art history, replacing them with the notion of a linked succession of individual entrances distributed through time. These innovations and their replications are recognisably early or late versions of the same action and replace the static concept of style with a continuously changing series.⁸² Fundamental to such ongoing change was the role of metropolises. Kubler maintained that urban life alone was insufficient to generate the required conditions for innovation and he distinguished between metropolises, with their rapid historical pace, and 'the tedium of the provincial city'. He defined a true metropolis as a centre of happening, 'where the central decisions of the whole group are made, and where the concentration of power draws together a class of patrons for the inventions and designs of the artist.'⁸³ In contrast, a provincial city can only relay or receive ideas from the centres. Consequently its art must necessarily be derivative. Kubler acknowledged that, taken alone, economic explanations for the presence of artistic centres are insufficient; there are many large cities but few centres of artistic innovation and artists often gravitate to lesser centres of wealth because innovation requires the stimulus of other artists in addition to patronage.⁸⁴ In his model, a wealthy metropolis is a prerequisite, not a guarantee, of artistic innovation and demographic size is irrelevant.

Around the same time, Kenneth Clark, in a variant of Brutraill's theory, identified degrees of provincialism determined by geographical distance from the centre. Styles originating in metropolitan centres spread out and become ever more provincial the further one moves towards the periphery.⁸⁵ However, this somewhat simplistic blueprint fails to accommodate differences in outlying areas except as a function of distance, regarding all locations on the same radial length as equally backward and out of touch. The model makes no allowance for variation in

⁸² Kubler 1962, p. 130.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 94.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 115.

⁸⁵ Clark 1962.

communications between the centre and different parts of the periphery, nor for variations in reception. Shils, writing in 1975, also supported the consensual acceptance by the periphery of the centre's standard and proposed that the centre's authority stems from the fact that the ruling authorities of society acknowledge it to be so.⁸⁶ Again, these theories, which imbue metropolitan centres with a unique capacity for innovation, reflect their time. In 1960s America and Europe, post-war urban expansion was generally greeted with optimism and enthusiasm. Future progress seemed to lie with the dynamism generated in great metropolises with little role for more provincial backwaters.

In 1979, Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg drew upon Clark and Shils in a detailed application of centre-periphery theory to Italian artistic centres.⁸⁷ Taking economic imperatives as the driving force they defined artistic centres where creativity occurred as:

... places which are characterised by the presence of an outstanding number of artists and of important groups of patrons who for various motives [...] are prepared to invest part of their wealth in works of art.⁸⁸

They refined Kubler's requirement for a metropolis, proposing that 'only a centre of extra-artistic power (political and/or economic and/or religious) could be an artistic centre'.⁸⁹

While for Castelnuovo and Ginzburg, the centre 'tends to emerge as a place of artistic innovation, the periphery tends to emerge (though not always) as a place of delayed development.'⁹⁰ This was attributed to the repeated use of designs and cartoons in dynastic workshops, failed artists from the centre settling in the periphery and the return of artists who had achieved success, but were now undermined by changing styles. The relationship between the centre and the periphery was inherently full of conflict with cultural domination imposed by the centre on the periphery.⁹¹ Their model denied patrons living in the so-called periphery their own

⁸⁶ Shils 1975, p. 4.

⁸⁷ Castelnuovo and Ginzburg 1994, pp. 29-112.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 30.

artistic agenda and credited them with no independent powers of discernment. It supported the innovative primacy of a few important artistic centres which have become paradigmatic at the expense of alternative canons.

The theory was challenged by Tom Henry in his study of Guillaume de Marcillat's work in Arezzo. He found that it failed to do justice to the fashion-conscious elders' role in the 'dissemination of artistic novelty' and argued that 'it is not necessary to do something first in order to be "innovative" as 'new ideas only become old ideas through use.'⁹² The Greek scholar, Nicos Hadjinicolaou also attacked the theory and called for recognition of the political dimension of artistic geography.⁹³ His finding that there can be resistance on the part of the 'periphery' to being so labelled is relevant to renaissance Perugia which appears not to have regarded itself as 'peripheral'.

The present author also found that the theory did not accommodate the independent political agenda of Cardinal Piccolomini and his patronal decisions for the Piccolomini library in Siena.⁹⁴ It was argued that the deployment of *grotesche* in the library decorations, far from exhibiting cultural subordination to Rome (where they had first become fashionable), actually demonstrated the Cardinal's critical independence. Furthermore, his specification of these *all'antica* motifs in the contract illustrated his aspirations for Siena's historical status to be placed on an equal footing with that of Rome. The deliberate adoption of the style of the centre by a patron in the periphery, whose political purposes were in competition with, or counter to, the interests of that centre, were not envisaged by Castelnovo and Ginsburg's model. This thesis will show that Perugian patrons engaged in autonomous, informed acts of patronage that were not fuelled by cultural dependency upon a centre.

Castelnovo and Ginsburg did not entirely dismiss the possibility of innovation taking place in the periphery and have been credited with facilitating the

⁹² Henry 1994, p. 79.

⁹³ Hadjinicolaou 1983, pp. 36-56, cited in Kaufmann 2004, pp. 98-99; note 144, p. 396.

⁹⁴ Lyle 2002, pp. 52-57.

recognition of some peripheral production.⁹⁵ They recognised a scenario whereby a double-periphery ‘could actually stimulate creation of fertile regions, places where different cultures met and which were a catalyst for original developments’ but the model accommodated peripheral innovation only as a ‘side-step’ or ‘alternative’ outside the traditional canon, which have little bearing upon developments elsewhere.⁹⁶ In this thesis it will be proposed that innovations not only took place in Perugia, but that they were part of ‘main-stream’ development, having a reciprocal effect upon the art of the ‘centre’.

Recent studies: centre-periphery and translation theory

In 2005, a collection of essays about the art of Emilia and the Marche in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries approached the question of artistic production in the periphery with the expressed intention of exploring the centre-periphery paradigm.⁹⁷ Three articles discussing Parma’s lively artistic scene situated themselves within the model but argued for an extension of the canon of centres to include Parma. In addition, Štefanac found much interdependence between cities on the Italian and Dalmatian Adriatic coasts. He challenged Vasari’s assumption of the privileging of Florence by patrons and painters in the Marche and argued that they looked predominantly to the high quality work of Dalmatia. Kroegel looked at Immaculate Conception imagery in the small towns of Emilia and the Marche – the ‘periphery of the periphery’.⁹⁸ She argued that being a peripheral place was advantageous to the development of a new iconography since remoteness allowed greater freedom of expression, in this case to the Immaculists. Ottolenghi found that Alessandro Sforza, lord of Pesaro, was a dynamic patron ‘on the cutting-edge’ of artistic taste. These notions of patronal freedom and autonomy go beyond Castelfnuovo and Ginzburg’s model and are supported by Perugian examples. For example, the early opportunities offered to Raphael in Perugia far exceeded those available to him in Florence. Patrons such as Elisabetta Guidalotti and Atalanta Baglioni were on the ‘cutting edge’ of artistic taste, not only in the context of Perugian patronage, but also when compared to patrons throughout Italy.

⁹⁵ Campbell and Milner, 2004, p. 5, though they refer to such areas of production as ‘minor centres’ which undermines the concept of peripheral innovation.

⁹⁶ Castelfnuovo and Ginzburg 1994, p. 75.

⁹⁷ Periti 2005, reviewed by Leone 2007, pp. 171-2.

⁹⁸ Periti 2005, p. 215.

The problem of artistic dissemination and innovation has recently been discussed in terms of a process of 'cultural translation'. In 2004, Campbell and Milner edited a collection of essays intent on reconsidering the 'process of cultural exchange between places and groups and the consequent changes of meaning inherent in such transactions'.⁹⁹ Rejecting the validity of 'discrete urban cultures' and 'organic regional identities', they examined how such places 'interpenetrate and inform' each other in a process they named 'cultural translation'. They attributed the late development of a distinct Italian national identity in part to the durability of regional identities comprised of the Kingdom of Naples in the South, the signorial courts in the North, the Papal States in the centre together with mercantile republics such as Florence, Venice and Genoa. They found that during the fifteenth century, cultural exchange between these areas was actively facilitated by artists and humanists, but that, simultaneously, intense economic and political interdependency resulted in a desire for 'the generation of difference'.¹⁰⁰

The translation model suggests that the need to develop and nurture separate identities particular to each area often withstood pressures to adopt styles and iconography from other centres. In so doing, 'the assumed passivity of the recipient' is questioned and affords it instead a 'selectivity in which the recipient exercises a certain discernment in the selective assimilation and modification of art practices and forms according to local considerations'.¹⁰¹ When effective modifications are imposed by the recipient, an exchange between the two participants takes place through which the recipient, or in the context of this study, the 'periphery', has an impact upon the provider. The direction of influence is therefore two directional and the relationship between the parties is more complex and reciprocal than has often been allowed. In Perugia, Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca seem to have been required to adapt their manner of painting to accommodate the wishes of their patrons, while Perugino took elements from the Florentine style of Verrocchio, made it his own in Perugia and subsequently returned with it in its new form to Florence. This thesis also argues that innovation in the periphery is not necessarily 'alternative'

⁹⁹ Campbell and Milner 2004, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, p. 135.

to or disconnected from the mainstream, but rather that developments there are often in direct, if selective, response to developments elsewhere and can, in turn, have a reciprocal effect on developments in the 'centre'.

Recent exhibitions: *campanilismo* and cultural exchange

Over the past fifteen years, there has been a series of exhibitions at the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria in Perugia, designed to raise the profile of renaissance painters within an Umbrian, and specifically Perugian, context. *Un pittore e la sua città: Benedetto Bonfigli e Perugia* (December 1996 – May 1997) looked at Bonfigli and his local contemporaries and emphasised the civic nature of much of their work.¹⁰² Smaller exhibitions in 1993 and 1998 considered major altarpieces in the city by prestigious foreigners – Piero della Francesca, Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli.¹⁰³ They highlighted the discernment of local patrons in selecting such renowned artists and noted the impact of these commissioners' requirements upon the 'foreign' artists through a process that can now be described as selective cultural exchange.

In 2004, *Perugino: il divin pittore*, aimed to re-evaluate Perugino's reputation.¹⁰⁴ The exhibition centred upon the Galleria Nazionale and sites in Perugia, but also included works, especially frescoes, in outlying Umbrian towns including Città della Pieve, Montefalco and Panicale. While Perugino's wider career was represented by paintings such as *Portrait of Francesco della Opere* (Uffizi Gallery, Florence) and *The Nativity* (Albani Torlonia Collection, Rome), Umbrian *campanilismo* was to the fore. While Perugino's time in Florence in Verrocchio's workshop was considered, his crucial experience in the Sistine Chapel in Rome appeared undervalued, being represented by nineteenth-century watercolours and engravings. The main contextualisation was provided by works by Perugian painters, such as Caporali thereby focusing inwardly upon Perugino's Umbrian and Perugian experience. A strength of the exhibition was that it temporarily reunited parts of altarpieces that had been dispersed and this was welcomed locally as 'safeguarding'

¹⁰² Garibaldi 1996.

¹⁰³ Garibaldi 1993; Garibaldi 1998.

¹⁰⁴ Garibaldi and Mancini 2004.

Perugia's cultural heritage and affording '*una ripresa di temi che sono oggi focali per l'immagine dell'Umbria nel mondo*'.¹⁰⁵

Monographs of artists have been popular in Italy in recent years and, in 2008, the Galleria Nazionale followed its Perugino exhibition with the first retrospective ever dedicated to Pintoricchio. With the stated intention of 'valorising' Umbrian art and culture and its 'extraordinary diffusion', *Pintoricchio* sought to bring that artist's work to a national and international public and critical audience.¹⁰⁶ Reflecting these regional concerns, it involved the nearby town of Spello, the site of Pintoricchio's celebrated decorations in the Cappella Bella. Much of Pintoricchio's renown stems from his frescoes, which could not otherwise be displayed, so this was an important adjunct to the main exhibition. Although he was born in Perugia, Pintoricchio painted relatively few paintings for the city, so the exhibition called upon works undertaken for other places, especially Rome and Siena. But it retained its Umbrian bias as these were integrated with works by local painters, stressing their Perugian context above all others. Much energy was also devoted to thorny questions of attribution, some of which remain unresolved.

In contrast to the locally orientated exhibitions in Perugia, in 2004, a major exhibition at the National Gallery in London traced Raphael's artistic career from his birthplace in Urbino, through the Central Italian cities of Città di Castello, Perugia, Siena and Florence, to the papal court in Rome.¹⁰⁷ *Raphael: From Urbino to Rome* highlighted the artist's formative experiences before he reached Florence, giving due weight to his early training in Urbino with his father, Giovanni Santi, which had often been undervalued and to his studies of Signorelli's paintings in Città di Castello.¹⁰⁸ It also underscored the importance of Raphael's early connections with Pintoricchio and Perugino and recognized the scale of the opportunities afforded to him in Perugia which included five altarpieces, a fresco and several smaller works.¹⁰⁹ In so doing, the exhibition raised awareness of the roles played by these cities, their

¹⁰⁵ Introduction to the exhibition by M.R. Lorenzetti, president of the region of Umbria in Garibaldi and Mancini 2004.

¹⁰⁶ Garibaldi and Mancini 2008, p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ Chapman 2004, p. 15.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 16-23.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 26-34.

patrons and artists, and set Raphael's subsequent works in Florence and Rome in context.

Taking a city-wide approach, *Renaissance Siena: Art for a City* (National Gallery, London, 2007-8) focused attention on Sieneese art from 1460-1530. Like Perugia's painters, Sieneese artists from this period fell outside Vasari's concept of progression and his neglect of them was perpetuated by subsequent generations of art historians who took their lead from him and treated these artists as backward-looking and peripheral.¹¹⁰ The exhibition maintained that Sieneese art differed from that of Florence, not because it was provincial or peripheral, but because Sieneese artists were working to a different agenda.¹¹¹ They and their patrons came from another tradition with its own unique visual taste. While Sieneese painters were capable of adopting elements of the Florentine manner - they incorporated naturalism in their depictions of the figure and landscape and referred to the antique - they were selective in their approach and continued to employ the 'Gothic' aesthetic to create 'imaginative, spiritual and visionary art'.¹¹² For example, Matteo di Giovanni's *Assumption of the Virgin* from 1474, knowingly combined old and new techniques.¹¹³ It employed a traditional hierarchy of scale, with a massive Virgin set against a gold ground, yet a severely foreshortened Christ flies out from heaven, and the expansive landscape at the bottom of the picture recedes into the distance. Such loyalty to Siena's artistic heritage reflected the city's political rivalries; it was both a defensive resolution 'to maintain an alternative to the artistic language of Florence' and a celebration of Siena's identity.¹¹⁴ The selection of new or traditional elements meant that stylistic choices were constantly and consciously being made by local patrons and artists according to the demands of individual commissions. These patrons were part of a small group 'who pursued their aims with such determination' that they influenced 'the outlook of an entire city'.¹¹⁵ This élite network led the way in establishing Sieneese artistic tastes.

¹¹⁰ Syson 2007, pp. 14-15, n. 9.

¹¹¹ Syson 2007, p. 14.

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 124-131.

¹¹⁴ Campbell and Milner 2004, pp. 1-13, cited in Syson 2007, p. 43; *loc.cit.* p. 44.

¹¹⁵ Angelini 2007, p. 31.

Replication: some particularities of the Perugian experience

A recurring criticism levelled at artistic production in the periphery is that it is excessively loyal to existing themes and that its patrons are content with coarse replicas.¹¹⁶ There are numerous examples of Franciscan churches in and around Perugia specifying that altarpieces should be ‘like’ existing prototypes and motifs, such as crib scenes, often reappear. To illustrate their charge of ‘uniformity and repetition’ against sixteenth-century Perugia, Castelfnuovo and Ginzburg referred to Ghirlandaio’s 1486 *Coronation of the Virgin* (Fig. 1.1) which was painted for the Franciscan church of San Girolamo (now Palazzo Comunale, Narni) and recreated for Franciscan establishments in Todi, Trevi and Norcia (as well as in Perugia and Città di Castello although these instances are not mentioned). The contracts for the altarpieces in Perugia and Todi specifically refer to the Narni prototype, however, the authors failed to analyse the terminology used and did not consider the patrons’ motives in making such specifications.

The Narni altarpiece depicts the Coronation of the Virgin while a crowd of 23, mainly Franciscan, saints worship the holy pair from below. All are set against a gold ground. The altarpiece seems to have become celebrated in Umbrian Franciscan circles for its size, opulence and abundance of figures, but it also provided a definitive representation of an event that was particularly venerated by the friars. Other establishments wishing to celebrate the Virgin’s coronation soon emulated it. The painting became an archetype which Franciscan patrons could refer to, to ensure both iconographical homogeneity and quality of materials and workmanship. In Perugia, the nuns of Monteluca required Raphael to paint an altarpiece:

*de quilla perfectione proportione qualita et conditione della tavola sive cona esistente in Narni nella chiesa de san Girolamo del luoco minore et omne de colore et figure numero et più et ornamenti commo in dicta tavola se contiene.*¹¹⁷

The nuns clearly wanted their altarpiece (Fig. 5.6, now Vatican Museums, Rome) to be physically and qualitatively similar to the Narni work, specifying that it should have the same perfect proportions and colours and be framed in the same way. But the expressed hope that it might contain even more figures quashes any notion that it should slavishly copy the original.

¹¹⁶ Kubler 1962, p. 76.

¹¹⁷ Transcribed in Shearman 2003, I, pp. 86-96; O’Malley 2005, pp. 236, 318 n.46.

Similarly, the 1507 document regarding Lo Spagna's *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece for the Observant Franciscans of Montesanto at Todi (Fig. 1.2, Pinacoteca Comunale, Todi), records that the painter promised '*facere picturam de auro cum coloribus et aliis rebus ad speciem et similitudinem tabulae factae in Ecclesia Sancti Jeronymi de Narne*' for which he would receive 200 gold ducats.¹¹⁸ This painting was eventually completed in 1511 and Lo Spagna stuck to his brief. The resulting altarpiece closely followed the prototype in its iconography, shape and the decoration of the frame with the figures disposed in two levels as at Narni. Despite remaining close to the original, this is no 'copy'. There are now 72 figures, the local saint, Jacopone of Todi, probably stands on the right of St. Francis and there is a landscape and sky background. The term '*ad speciem et similitudinem*' indicates a desire for an altarpiece that would resemble the beauty and type of the one at Narni, but which was relevant to the new patrons, not a precise copy.

In other cases, references to the prototype were probably specified orally. Lo Spagna's *Coronation* for San Martino at Trevi (Fig. 1.3, 1522, Pinacoteca Comunale, Trevi) follows the Narni altarpiece closely though the written agreement made on 22 July 1522, some 36 years after Ghirlandaio's work, made no reference to the subject of the painting, nor the Narni prototype.¹¹⁹ Some updating of saints has occurred reflecting changes in the emphasis of Franciscan devotion. St. Bernardino stands behind St. Francis, St. Bonaventure fills a prominent position and the local bishop saint, Martin is also in attendance. While the influence of Raphael's new Roman style can be seen in the muscular Magdalene and St. Catherine of Alexandria's *contrapposto* poses, the overwhelming effect is to recreate the ambience of the Narni work, while fitting it for its time and location. As Castelnuovo and Ginzburg noted, a further 'copy' of the Narni altarpiece was commissioned as late as 20 March 1541 from one of Lo Spagna's pupils, Jacopo Siciliano (or Siculo), for another Franciscan establishment – the convent of the Annunziata at Norcia. Despite being a freer adaptation, its iconography and atmosphere derive from the Narni original, again indicating that it was the effect that was required, not an exact copy.

¹¹⁸ Transcribed in Gnoli 1917, p. 138.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 138-139; Gualdi Sabatini 1984, pp. 69-72, 240-248, 403-405.

In referring to this group of similarly inspired altarpieces, Castelnuovo and Ginzburg implied that the repetition was due to a lack of innovation. This supposition fails to acknowledge the iconographical significance of the *Coronation* to Franciscans or to appreciate the likelihood that Umbrian Franciscans deliberately sought theological conformity that could be partially achieved through the presence of related altarpieces. It is significant that these altarpieces were all commissioned by Umbrian Franciscans and that all the convents fell within the *Provincia S. Francisci*. While the Narni *Coronation of the Virgin* cannot be said to have been ‘copied’, given the inclusion of local saints and changes to the horizon, there is no doubt that ‘the altarpieces share a strong family resemblance’.¹²⁰ That their iconography and composition remained relatively unchanged over a long period and was repeated by painters whose usual style differed from that employed in the altarpieces, suggests that calling to mind the look and ambience of the Narni painting was the essential aim of the commissions.

The Narni altarpiece illustrates the Umbrian Franciscans’ desire for a sense of local identity and uniformity in their worship throughout the province so that separate worshipping communities could join with a wider congregation during their devotions. The reproduction was important in ‘provoking a visual association’ with the other Franciscan sites.¹²¹ That changes were introduced to make the altarpieces relevant to their settings shows that the patrons wanted more than simple copies and the wording of the documents is framed in terms of similarity and type, rather than copying. The reproduction of the image for its spiritual and social significance to the order appears to have been the crucial factor, not a lack of innovation, nor the uninformed emulation of the original painter. Megan Holmes, writing about copying practices in fifteenth-century Florence, noted that such works were shaped according to the needs of their new patrons and could be ‘implicated in a process of identity formation, functioning as markers of a shared religious culture’ that varied subtly according to the patrons’ social and economic positions.¹²²

References to existing prototypes were not restricted to the Franciscans. A

¹²⁰ O’Malley 2005, p. 238.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 231.

¹²² Holmes 2004, p. 64.

previously unknown contract (Appendix 2.1) relating to an altarpiece by Sinibaldo Ibi depicting the *Madonna and Child with Saints* (Fig. 1.4) required the artist to replicate an existing model for the Servites.¹²³ In July 1513, Sinibaldo contracted with Antonio Pergiovanni Francesco of Porta Solis, who was also acting on behalf of his brother, Bernardino, to paint an altarpiece for the high altar of the Servite church of San Fiorenzo. The *catasti* documents identify them as members of the Catrani family.¹²⁴ The contract specified that it should depict the Virgin with her son on her knee, with Sts. John the Baptist, Joseph, Florentius (Fiorenzo) and the Servite saint, Philip Benizi. The *scabello* or predella was to depict the story of St. Joseph and incorporate the donors' coat of arms and insignia.¹²⁵ The painting was to have perfect colours, gold and ornaments and the picture and its construction were to be excellent and long lasting, with the altarpiece being '*ad modum et similitudinem*' to the altarpiece in the chapel of the Lombards in Santa Maria dei Servi. It was to be finished by May 1514 and in return Sinibaldo would be paid 100 florins. As with the *Coronation* contracts, the stipulation was for a painting 'in the manner of and similar to' the original, not a copy.

The Lombards' altarpiece (Fig. 1.5, Louvre Museum, Paris) had been painted by Giannicola di Paolo in 1512 and this recent completion date suggests an element of competition or desire to be fashionable on the part of the Catrani brothers. Depicting an enthroned Madonna and Child with two kneeling and two standing saints set in a lush landscape, it became an archetype for Perugian patrons, and was quoted as a model in Giannicola's 1522 contract with the Cantagallina for an altarpiece in Sant'Agostino (lost). The elegantly posed figures and balanced composition resemble Perugino and Raphael's Perugian style in the main panel, especially the meditative Madonna, floating angels and ecstatic saints. Pintoricchio's influence is apparent in the open landscape background and dolphin grotesques on the throne.

¹²³ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 755, fols. 711v-712r, unpublished. Vermiglioli read a note about the painting and its donors in a record book from the convent. Vermiglioli 1837, pp. 244-5.

¹²⁴ ASP, *Catasti*, II, 7, fols. 1r, 73r, unpublished.

¹²⁵ The contract confirms the identity of the patrons, who were members of the Ansidei family, as proposed in Cooper and Plazzotta 2004, p. 727. It also supports their proposal that it was Sinibaldo's predella and not Raphael's *Ansidei Altarpiece* in the same church that had a scene depicting the betrothal of the Virgin to St. Joseph, *loc. cit.*, p. 728.

Sinibaldo followed Giannicola's prototype closely although he does not appear to have fully understood its underlying principles. He retained the composition, but his stiff figures fail to relate to each other or to the vast architectonic throne that squeezes the standing saints into narrow strips on either side and obliterates the landscape setting. Sinibaldo was a pupil of Perugino and like other Perugian painters was also influenced by Raphael and Pintoricchio.¹²⁶ Here, Perugino's figures were his major source, as they were for Giannicola, but they lack Perugino's harmony and sense of balance. Despite these shortcomings, the painting clearly met the contractual requirement that it be in the manner of and similar to Giannicola's altarpiece. The patrons were concerned that the painting should be worth their hundred florins. If two independent assessors found its value to be less, Sinibaldo had to add further decoration to bring it up to the desired costliness. It was not required to be identical to the prototype, but to evoke its overall effect and splendour.

Kubler addressed the mechanics of replication and observed that it takes two opposing routes, namely 'motions towards and away from quality'.¹²⁷ 'Augmented quality' occurs when the maker of a replica improves upon the original model, while 'diminished quality' occurs when the maker reduces the standard of the replica either due to economic constraints or a lack of understanding of the original. Yet, despite allowing that improvement is possible during the replication process, Kubler did not credit provincial artists with the capacity to do this. Instead provincial copies were described as 'constantly coarsening replicas' and placed in the same category as 'copies by untalented pupils'. Biatosłocki, writing about renaissance art in Hungary, Bohemia and Poland, found that what he termed the 'vernacular' showed a lack of interest in space, composition, an enthusiasm for ornament, a lack of functional thinking, a disruption between form and content and a neglect of Classical norms and rules.¹²⁸ These inferences are not borne out by the Narni-inspired altarpieces even though they were destined for provincial Umbrian towns. While Sinibaldo's altarpiece exhibits some of these tendencies, it illustrates the importance of peripheral works in disseminating new motifs and compositional solutions, even if

¹²⁶ Turner 1996, 15, p. 60.

¹²⁷ Kubler 1962, p. 70.

¹²⁸ Biatosłocki 1989, pp. 49-58.

underlying concepts were not fully appreciated. Although Lo Spagna's muscular Magdalene and St. Catherine of Alexandria's *contrapposto* pose in the Trevi altarpiece leave their heavily draped and posed companions untouched, nevertheless, in these two figures the new Roman figurative style was present and being disseminated. The centre-periphery model failed to acknowledge that repetition can be due to constraints other than the lack of innovative ability and did not value the role of such repetition in disseminating new ideas. The increased flexibility of the translation model however, allows for selective appropriation of prototypes upon which new patrons can impose subtle variations appropriate to their own needs and tastes. The work is 'recast in a local idiom' in which the original 'units of meaning are preserved along with their paradigmatic structural order'.¹²⁹

Translation theory and cultural exchange

The translation theory, with its emphasis upon cultural exchange and the selective choices made by patrons and artists, goes some way to accommodating the contribution of peripheral places, such as Perugia, to artistic production. Its understanding of the role of patronal networks also sheds a more nuanced light upon the development of stylistic choices within the city. This study considers whether theories of centre-periphery and particularly ideas of cultural exchange provide useful tools in understanding the nature of patronage in Perugia, especially the innovative role of its commissioners and the importance of internal networks in the dissemination of its preferred style. Patronal networks operating within Franciscan establishments, including official interactions between abbots and abbesses, Guardians and Provincial Vicars are evaluated. The less structured, though more generally applicable, impact of family ties between clerical and secular patrons are considered and particular attention is given to female family networks. In addition, the potential agency of notaries in bringing together artists and patrons is discussed.

Issues of production in the periphery, including the impact of collaboration between painters are examined. The training of painters in workshops was instrumental in disseminating styles and techniques. Perugino benefited from his likely time in Verrocchio's studio and in turn, propagated his own style through his

¹²⁹ Campbell and Milner 2007, p. 5.

entrepreneurial workshop system which attracted students from far and wide.¹³⁰ Painters from different workshops came together to collaborate on specific projects. Sometimes, these joint contracts appear to have been legal expediciencies, with the (usually) better known lead party probably acting as a guarantor or overseer and carrying out little or no actual painting. But in other cases several hands can be detected. For these joint projects to attain a coherent finish, each contributor had to subsume his own style within the agreed aesthetic, with careful attention being paid to each other's work. This resulted in exchanges of technique and iconography and the spread of new fashions.

Changes in the reception of works by Perugian painters during the period were dramatic. During the early quattrocento, local production does not appear to have been highly regarded and commissions for major works, especially altarpieces were almost all awarded to 'foreign' painters. In the mid-1400s attitudes towards local painters changed radically until they were privileged to the virtual exclusion of outsiders. The reasons for this change in patronal attitudes are complex and are investigated in this thesis.

In considering these issues, this study seeks to avoid an aversion to the centre or any desire for polycentrism that overemphasises the importance of the area's production.¹³¹ Such distaste regards marginality as a 'socially constructed concept' relative to one's own point of reference and seeks to deny the existence of a 'single privileged reference point' in its 'search for a multiplicity of viewpoints'. The aim here is not to establish Perugia as another centre, nor to devalue traditional centres such as Florence or Rome, but to value its artistic production, whatever its status. As Nelly comments, peripheries still need to be properly judged and not just celebrated as 'astonishing pluralism'.¹³² The study does, however, challenge 'the mythical thinking' that 'what happens at the edge does not count, or worse, is not there'.¹³³

¹³⁰ Vasari 1568, III, p. 614.

¹³¹ Cullen and Pretes 2000, pp. 215-229.

¹³² Nelly 1992, pp. 57-59.

¹³³ Hartley 1987, p. 121 summarises the dialectic in these terms before turning to its critique.

Chapter 2: The Dominance of Foreign Artists (1390-c.1460)

Little remains of local artistic production in Perugia from the last decade of the fourteenth century and the early decades of the fifteenth century. This may reflect a poor survival rate of artefacts or simply that few pictures were painted. Nevertheless, the relatively high number of extant altarpieces by painters from other Italian cities, especially Siena and Florence, provides evidence of lively and discerning patronal activity within the city. This suggests either that foreigners received a disproportionate number of significant commissions during the period, or that these works survived while local works perished. Superior technical quality and craftsmanship on the part of the foreign paintings may have contributed to their longevity and their survival may be partly due to the fact that they continued to receive approval long after changing tastes rendered local works obsolete.¹

The documentary evidence from the period is fragmentary, with few contracts or wills referring directly to specific painters or altarpieces. Even so, the writers of early chronicles and guides to the city, such as Pellini, Lancellotti, Morelli, Crispolti and Orsini, mainly describe works by foreign painters. While these records reflect the writers' tastes, the weight of evidence leads to the conclusion that, during this period, Perugian patrons looked primarily to foreign painters when commissioning large-scale or important works, such as altarpieces or major fresco cycles. With particular reference to Franciscan establishments in Perugia, this chapter will examine the circumstances that encouraged commissioners, both individual and corporate, to choose foreign painters in preference to local artists. Were these painters in some way imposed upon the city from external centres or do the commissions demonstrate an informed and coherent pattern of local taste, with formal and iconographic requirements specific to the city?

Private chapels

Alongside genuine religious devotion and piety, family commemoration and promotion provided a crucial impetus for the furnishing and decoration of churches.

¹ Altarpieces were often moved to side chapels or sacristies to make room for new models. Taddeo di Bartolo's high altarpiece for San Francesco al Prato was seen in the refectory serving a different function for the friars. Orsini 1784, p. 317.

Dynastic links with particular monastic or mendicant orders, such as the Franciscans, often continued over several generations. Private family chapels began to be specifically mentioned in the documents from the end of the trecento, when donors started to give instructions that they should be buried in family chapels within conventual or monastic churches, as well as leaving money for the upkeep of the buildings and the maintenance of the friars and nuns within them.² One of the earliest references to a family chapel is found in the testament of Donna Bianca, daughter of Arlotto de Arlottolo de Michelotti and wife of Pandolfo Baglioni.³ In her will, dated 7 January 1395 with a codicil dated 22 November, she gave instructions that she should be buried in the Michelotti family chapel in San Francesco al Prato. She provided for a meal for the friars and the payment of such funeral expenses as her mother, Andrea, and her executors thought fit, but did not make any other bequests for the benefit of the brothers, providing instead for her estate, largely composed of her dowry, to pass primarily to her daughters, Francesca and Honesta, and her sons, Malatesta and Nello.

Donna Bianca made her will at the house of her father, Arlotto, and it is likely that at that time she had returned with her young children to live with her parents, as she had been recently widowed and her matrimonial home destroyed. Her husband, Pandolfo Baglioni, had been the leader of a particularly lawless group of nobles that was responsible for driving many of the merchants who ruled the city (known as *Raspanti* or *poplani*) into exile during the early 1390s. This caused such unrest that when Pope Boniface IX entered Perugia on 17 October 1392, the citizens, hoping for peace, welcomed him and gave him absolute authority over the city.⁴ The pope enforced an uneasy truce between the warring factions and the nobles consented to the return of the exiles. But, only a month later, the city was provoked into uproar when a papal official condemned one of the nobles. Led by Pandolfo, the insurgents forced Boniface to seek refuge in the monastery of San Pietro. Agreement was finally reached on 19 May 1393, yet, just five days later, insurrection broke out again and this time the nobles were beaten, with many being driven into exile.⁵ Pandolfo

² Thomas 1982, p. 420.

³ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 7, fols. 86v-87v, cited in Thomas 1982, p. 420.

⁴ Heywood 1910, p. 276.

⁵ Ansidei 1902, pp. 32-33.

and his brother, Pellini, were killed, the pope fled to Assisi and, on August 3, Biordo Michelotti took possession of Perugia with such ease that it has been suggested that the *condottiero* had masterminded the *Raspanti*'s assault on the nobles.⁶

Biordo was appointed Captain-General of the Perugian army and received a monthly allowance of 1000 florins from the public treasury. A palace was built and furnished for his use and a bronze statue erected to his honour in a prominent site on the southern side of the Cathedral, overlooking the *piazza*.⁷ Revenge was wreaked on the defeated nobles, particularly Pandolfo and his family. On 9 September 1394, it was decreed that their houses should be demolished and Pandolfo's memory obliterated.⁸ Perhaps Donna Bianca, who appears from her will to have been allowed to keep her dowry but little or nothing from her husband's estate, considered it more politic for her young sons, if she were to be buried with the seemingly ascendant house of Michelotti, rather than the despised Pandolfo Baglioni. Her straitened financial circumstances might also have prevented her from endowing San Francesco al Prato more generously, as her first priority would have been to ensure financial security for her children.⁹

By the time another female member of the Michelotti family, Donna Lippa, daughter of Nicola Dinolo dei Michelotti and wife of ser Ercolano Mathiolo Vitalis, came to make her will on 20 January 1399, the days of Michelotti supremacy were already over. Biordo Michelotti had been murdered on 10 March 1398, by Francesco Guidalotti, Abbot of San Pietro, acting with his brothers, Anibaldo and Giovanni. Pellini records that Biordo was buried secretly in San Francesco al Prato and later, when the city had calmed down, a ceremony was held in the lower room of the Palazzo del Popolo from where a casket, draped in black velvet, was transported to San Francesco.¹⁰ Donna Lippa also gave instructions that she should be buried in the family chapel in San Francesco al Prato, where the tomb of her mother was

⁶ Heywood 1910, p. 279.

⁷ Pellini 1664, II, p. 49.

⁸ Pellini 1664, II, p. 62; ASP, *Annali Decemviri*, fol. 157r cited in Heywood 1910, p. 280

⁹ Baglioni connections with San Francesco al Prato remained strong. Donna Bianca's great great grandson, Grifonetto, was buried in the church and Raphael probably painted the *Entombment* for his funeral chapel. Cooper 2001a, pp. 554-561.

¹⁰ Pellini 1664, II, p. 97.

situated.¹¹ Although her mother is not named in the will, she can be identified as Agnesola, daughter of Cionolo Bernardoli, widow of Nicola Dinolo dei Michelotti. She had named her son, Gerolamo, her universal heir, but provided that if he should die without heirs the inheritance should pass to her daughters, Lippa and Idonie for life and then be distributed between the hospitals of the Mercanzia and Misericordia, the church of San Silvestro and the friars of San Francesco al Prato for works (*lavori*) in the Michelotti chapel.¹²

Specific bequests for artistic works were rare at this time, with money usually being left for the general upkeep or decoration of church buildings, but Donna Lippa gave precise instructions. After providing for her funeral expenses she left her sister, [I]donie, a farm and the benefit of her goods during her lifetime. On Idonie's death, one hundred florins were to be paid to the convents and monasteries of Monteripido, Farneto, San Fiorenzo and San Francesco al Prato, with specific instructions that the 25 gold florins for San Francesco should be spent on 'paintings and figures of Christ's passion in the Michelotti chapel'.¹³ She made no detailed provisions for the execution of the figures, apart from requiring them to depict the Passion – an appropriate subject for a funerary chapel. Nor did she find it necessary to specify which artist was to undertake the work. This is not unexpected as it was customary for donors to entrust such decisions to their executors. However, it is possible that Donna Lippa had no need to specify further details, as the use of the gerundive '*faciendis*' - requiring to be made - may imply that some decisions about the work had already been taken. By having her will witnessed in the sacristy of the church of San Fiorenzo by friars from another of the establishments that she intended to benefit, she also went some way to ensuring that her instructions would be carried out.

Donors did not restrict their bequests to just one church, often making donations to numerous establishments of the same order, both within the city and

¹¹ '*...in capella de michelotitis ubi est sepultrum matris*', ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 7, fols. 100r-v, cited in Thomas 1982, p. 420.

¹² Monacchia 1984, pp. 113-114 gives a partial transcription of Agnesola's will, dated 10 April 1382.

¹³ *ibid.*, note 10 '*expendantur et convertantur in picturis et figuris passionis Christi faciendis in capella de Michelotitis et in aliis fulcimentis expedientibus pro capella predicta*' partially transcribed in Tabarelli 1977, p. 21.

beyond, and, less frequently, to several different orders. Donna Lippa left money to various establishments and her main beneficiary, Idonie, had become a nun at Monteluce by the date of the will. Similarly, the jurist, Alberto Guidalotti, third cousin of the murderous Francesco, made bequests in 1382 to the Franciscans of San Francesco al Prato, the Servites of Santa Maria dei Servi and Santa Lucia, as well as the cathedral of San Lorenzo, although his overriding interests lay with the Dominicans and the church of San Stefano.¹⁴

The high altarpiece in San Francesco al Prato

While bequests and commissions relating to family side chapels, such as that of the Michelotti family in San Francesco al Prato, sometimes provided for the production of an altarpiece, private donors were rarely directly responsible for the commissioning of high altarpieces in monastic and conventual churches.¹⁵ These major works, which were fundamental to the liturgical needs of the churches and had to meet specific requirements appropriate to their situation, appear to have been commissioned almost exclusively by the brothers or nuns themselves and were funded from specific bequests or from numerous, non-hypothecated gifts made for general purposes. It seems likely that the latter was the case with the large altarpiece painted for San Francesco al Prato by the Sienese painter, Taddeo di Bartolo, as no wills or contractual documents have been linked with the commission to date.¹⁶

Taddeo is documented as having visited Perugia at least twice - once around 1403 and again in 1413. Sometime between 1400 and 1404, the Sienese city authorities gave him permission to travel to Perugia 'for certain of his affairs'.¹⁷ This supports Vasari's assertion that he was summoned from Siena, where he may have been working on frescoes in the cathedral, to fresco scenes of the life of St. Catherine in the Dominican church of San Domenico in Perugia (both lost).¹⁸ Vasari's description of Taddeo being called to work in Perugia (*fu chiamato a lavorare a Perugia*) suggests that the painter was specifically selected by the Perugian

¹⁴ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 7, fols. 2r-3r, dated 14 October 1382, partially transcribed in Garibaldi 1998, p. 113.

¹⁵ Gardner von Teuffel 1999, pp. 190-208.

¹⁶ All paintings are in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia unless otherwise stated.

¹⁷ Milanese 1854 - 65, II, p. 109.

¹⁸ Vasari 1568, II, p. 311.

commissioners. That he was to paint the whole life of St. Catherine and had not long been in Siena before setting off for Perugia, indicates that the commission was important, both in terms of the size of the painting cycle and the status of the commissioners who were able to call him away at short notice.

By 1403, Taddeo was already an established painter. He had worked on several important commissions in Siena and, in 1401, had completed an altarpiece for the cathedral in Montepulciano. These works typify the graceful style that had characterised Siennese painting throughout much of the trecento and persisted into the early quattrocento. In summoning Taddeo to Perugia, the Dominican commissioners appear to have deliberately engaged an artist whom they knew would paint in the refined, Siennese manner.

Although Taddeo probably travelled to Perugia at the request of the Dominicans, once in the city he also worked for the Friars Minor and his bilateral polyptych for the high altar of San Francesco al Prato (Figs. 2.1-2, 1403) would have been a prestigious response to the *St Catherine cycle* in the rival mendicant church of San Domenico.¹⁹ The altarpiece replaced an earlier, double-sided altarpiece dating from around 1272-86 attributed to the Master of San Francesco.²⁰ This was a low, gabled dossal depicting on one side, scenes of Christ's Passion, various saints, and, probably, a Madonna and Child, with the twelve apostles on the reverse. Although now dismembered and incomplete, a reconstruction by Dillian Gordon puts its overall width at 363 cm. without lateral buttresses. This almost exactly matches the width of Taddeo's replacement altarpiece as envisaged by Gail Solberg, indicating that it was intended to sit on the original *mensa* as a replacement.²¹

In addition to the earlier, double-sided altarpiece in San Francesco al Prato there was another precedent for the form within the city in the Franciscan convent of San Francesco al Monte, known as Monteripido, outside Porta Sant'Angelo. Around

¹⁹ The inscription, *Thadeus Bartoli de Senis pi(n)xit hoc opus M.CCCC.III* appears on a scroll at the Virgin's feet. Santi 1969, pp. 102-104. See Comodi 1996 and Borgnini 2004 for the history and architecture of the church.

²⁰ Gordon 1992, pp. 70-77.

²¹ See Gordon 2002, p. 230 for a reconstruction of the earlier altarpiece. For a reconstruction of Taddeo di Bartolo's replacement see Solberg 1992, pp. 646-652.

1322, the Paciano Master had been commissioned to execute an altarpiece with standing saints and a Passion cycle, which was similar to the Master of San Francesco's retable.²² The form gained further ground in Umbrian Franciscan churches after the completion of Taddeo's altarpiece. In June 1444, Sassetta's double-sided altarpiece was assembled over the high altar of San Francesco in Borgo San Sepolcro and, as late as 1502, Perugino was commissioned to paint a replacement for the Monteripido altarpiece in the same bilateral format. In his study of Umbrian double-sided altarpieces, Donal Cooper attributes these altarpieces to the presence of retrochoirs, where the friars' choir was situated in a polygonal apse behind the altar, rather than before it in the nave.²³ This development probably stemmed from a desire to emulate the layout of the Upper Church at Assisi, but the now central position of the altar table resulted in the unconsecrated host being visible to the laity during the celebration of the mass. The double-sided altarpieces, with their two faces able to address two distinct audiences, therefore probably served initially to mask the ritual of the high altar from the lay congregation.²⁴ As the altarpieces increased in size, they also functioned to divide the friars from the laity and screen them from view. The introduction of double-sided altarpieces was therefore consequential upon the repositioning of the choir.

On occasions, the friars seem to have been content to put up with an unpainted side facing them for some time. In 1430, Antonio d'Anghiari was asked to paint the anterior face (*partem anteriorem*) of 'the panel in place on the high altar' of the church of San Francesco at Borgo San Sepolcro, which suggests that it was the physical separation provided by the panel, rather than its iconographic content, that was of paramount importance.²⁵ In his will of 1453, Tommaso di Paolo dei Ranieri left money for a new altarpiece for Monteripido to be placed, '*in coro et super altare maioris*'.²⁶ Despite stressing how beautiful the panel should be and that there should be figures, Tommaso left the decision as to which side of the altar should be painted

²² Gordon 1996, pp. 33-39.

²³ Cooper 2001*b*, pp. 1-54.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 52.

²⁵ See Banker 1991, pp. 49-50 for a transcription of the commission. Antonio d'Anghiari never fulfilled the contract which was eventually undertaken by Sassetta; Cooper 2001*b*, p. 41.

²⁶ Partially transcribed in Tabarelli 1977, p. 59. '*...reliquit quod in coro et super altare maioris fiat una tabula picta ex latere ubi dicitur missa aut ex utroque latere et alias prout videbitur guardiano dicti loci, pulcra et cum figures, ut melius et convenientius videbitur...*'

to the commissioning guardians.²⁷ The notarial document gave the friars a choice; it could either be painted on both sides or on the side where the mass was said. Perhaps Ranieri was aware that the legacy might be insufficient to pay for two sides to be painted and therefore left the final decision open. In any event, the decoration on the reverse does not seem to have been an essential feature. There is no record of Ranieri's instructions being implemented, although it is possible that the legacy was eventually used to fund the commission to Perugino some fifty years later. Although in these cases the monks appear unconcerned as to whether the side of the altarpiece facing them was painted or not, the reverse face of Taddeo's altarpiece is iconographically sophisticated and seems to have been part of a carefully devised programme tailored specifically for the Perugian friars.

In 1912, Walter Bombe proposed a reconstruction of Taddeo's now dismembered altarpiece on the basis of panels in the Galleria Nazionale, Perugia.²⁸ He suggested that there were originally five main panels on each side, with two additional panels depicting Sts. Peter and Paul acting as end sections to create a hollow, box-like structure. Such a construction would, however, be anomalous in relation to other Umbrian and, specifically, Perugian double-sided altarpieces of the time and Solberg has convincingly proposed that the altarpiece was originally a double-sided heptatych, painted on both sides of seven planks, with two separate, though related, iconographic programmes.²⁹ At some point the seven panels were sliced in two, but, by matching the knots in the wood and the height of the dowel channels that once linked the panels together, Solberg has paired them up: the Madonna with St. Francis; St. John the Baptist with St. Constantius; St. Paul with Mary Magdalen; St. Peter with St. Catherine and St. Anthony with St. John the Evangelist.

Solberg also suggests a pairing of St. Herculanus with a St. Elizabeth of Hungary panel now in Assisi (F. M. Perkins collection, Fig. 2.3). She found that not only do the scale, format and style of the figure match the Perugian saints, but the wood grain, knots, fractures and dowel channels on the reverse also match the

²⁷ Cooper 2001*b*, pp. 40-41.

²⁸ Bombe 1912, pp. 71-72.

²⁹ Solberg 1992, pp. 646-652.

Herculanus panel perfectly.³⁰ These observations should be persuasive, yet some doubts arise when the painted face of the panel is compared with the others in the series. The saints in the Perugian panels are set against a gold background, presumably symbolic of the court of heaven and, although the sides of the panels have been cut down, in those panels where one can see beyond the clothing of the saints, it is clear that the gold ground extends to within a few centimetres of the base of the panels. However, on the Elizabeth of Hungary panel the gold ground only extends down to the saint's elbow and below this there is a dark backdrop on both sides, placing her in a different space from the other figures. Furthermore, the Perugian figures stand on rough, uneven land which may refer to the hardships of their earthly lives as well as providing a coherent visual link across the panels. In contrast, Elizabeth stands on flat, undifferentiated ground. Another disparity appears in the inscription. While the Elizabeth panel has black, humanistic script on a light ground, the others have gold lettering, in a gothic script, on a black ground. These discrepancies may be due to later overpainting although the apparent difference in the height at which Elizabeth is set on the panel cannot be accounted for in this way. In any event, further technical investigation is required before the St. Elizabeth panel can be unconditionally accepted as part of the San Francesco altarpiece.

St. Louis of Toulouse's companion panel remains lost. The face containing the Madonna therefore reads from left to right: missing, Sts. John the Baptist, Mary Magdalen, the Virgin and Child, Sts. Catherine of Alexandria, John the Evangelist and, possibly, Elizabeth of Hungary. It is iconographically straightforward, with a typical Franciscan emphasis upon the role of the Virgin and the humanity of Christ that would have been easily understood by a lay audience. It therefore probably faced the nave where the laity worshipped. The Virgin, crowned Queen of heaven, sits regally with the *Stella Maris* on her shoulder. She looks directly at the viewer, fully cognisant of the future of the infant Child who sits, legs akimbo, on her knee. Her left hand rests protectively on the Child's shoulder, while her right hand is held to her breast in a gesture indicating acceptance of the will of God - a supreme exemplar of the Franciscan oath of obedience.

³⁰ *ibid*, pp. 646-647.

The Christ Child also gazes directly at the viewer with a maturity beyond his years, his foreknowledge confirmed by the goldfinch that he grasps firmly in his left hand, affirming his readiness to accept the trials before him. His right index finger draws attention to the bird's red plumage that legend says it received when it was splashed with blood while removing a thorn from Christ's forehead on the road to Calvary. Goldfinches were also kept as pets and given to children to play with and, indeed, to destroy. The bird is both a symbol of the Passion and a childhood plaything, illustrative of the infant's divine nature and his humanity, whereby he has toys like any other child. Moreover, the perceived threat of death to the innocent bird, had it been within the grasp of any other infant, portends the fate awaiting the Child himself.

The corporality of the Child is made plain despite his being fully clothed. His bare, splayed legs and the densely folded material of his skirts draw attention to the genital area as a signifier of his humanity and another reminder of the tenet that the Son of God is both fully human and fully divine. As such, his obedient suffering for the sins of man on the cross was not diminished by his divinity. A crucifix by the San Francesco Master hung suspended above the altarpiece and would have made obvious the connection between the Child, who willingly embraces his painful future, and the crucified man. This concept of the suffering Christ was particularly alive to the Franciscans who aspired, through a life of poverty and obedience, to emulate Christ. The Seventh fruit of St. Bonaventure's *Tree of Life* is 'his constancy under torture' while his *Life of St Francis* emphasises the parallels between the sufferings of Christ and those of Francis.³¹ The doctrine is effectively promulgated here to the lay congregation whom the panel addressed.

The five saints flanking the Virgin all had special significance for Franciscans. St. Elizabeth of Hungary (if her inclusion is accepted) was adopted as a Franciscan tertiary and may have been particularly close to a Perugian audience as she is reported by some sources to have been canonised by Gregory IX in the Franciscan convent in Perugia.³² Solberg has suggested that the other missing saint

³¹ Bonaventure 1978, pp. 147-153, 218-227, 303-314.

³² Perugino 1607, p. 56.

may have been Beato Egidio of Assisi. Egidio had been one of St. Francis' earliest companions, had lived for some time at Monteripido in Perugia, and his tomb, a paleochristian niche sarcophagus, was situated in San Francesco al Prato.³³ The exact location of the sarcophagus is unknown. Gordon suggests it was beneath the high altar *mensa*, while Solberg considers that it was probably housed in the crypt, directly under the high altar, much like the scheme in the lower church at Assisi where the altar stands above the crypt containing the tomb of St Francis.³⁴ However, there is no documentary evidence to support either contention and Cooper suggested the tomb was probably set in the transept and did not form part of the high altar complex.³⁵

Solberg also cites the example of San Francesco at Sansepolcro, where the altar is associated with a crypt containing the remains of the local *beato*, Raniero Rasini. The structure and iconography of Sassetta's altarpiece seem to owe much to Taddeo's Perugian altarpiece, suggesting that it was a model for the commissioners and programme devisers.³⁶ The Virgin and Child, surrounded by musical angels, as in the Perugian painting, are flanked by four standing saints rather than six. Sts. John the Baptist, Anthony of Padua and John the Evangelist are now joined by Beato Raniero, in the same relative position as the missing Perugian panel. The suggestion that the missing saint had local significance is particularly forceful when the specifically Perugian nature of the reverse face is considered.

The iconography of the reverse face is more theologically challenging than that of the Virgin and Child side and almost certainly addressed the friars in their retrochoir. The central panel contains a rare depiction of St Francis displaying the marks of the stigmata while trampling on three vices: Pride, Lust and Avarice.³⁷ These comprised the 'grand trilogy' of the Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas,

³³ The sarcophagus now forms the high altar in the adjacent Oratory of San Bernardino.

³⁴ Gordon 1982, p. 75; Solberg 1992, p. 649, but Solberg 2002, p. 221, suggests the sarcophagus was close to, or behind the high altar.

³⁵ Cooper, in conversation, 18.11.2003.

³⁶ See Gordon 2003, pp. 350-1 for a reconstruction of the altarpiece.

³⁷ An agreement relating to Sassetta's San Sepolcro altarpiece refers to an altarpiece at Città di Castello that may pre-date Taddeo's altarpiece and could have provided an iconographical source. '*San Francesco in un trono commo quello di Castello con quelle virtù da capo et i vicii da piedi.*' ASF, NA 19310 (già S. 879), 1439, fol. 14r-v, transcribed in Banker 1991, p. 54; Cooper 2001c, pp. 22-29.

but they have direct counterparts in the three Franciscan virtues of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty.³⁸ The inspiration for a standing St. Francis displaying the stigmata with outstretched arms and surrounded by a *mandorla* of seraphim can be traced to a thirteenth century seal from Assisi.³⁹ Its widespread adoption demonstrates the close ties that existed in that period between Franciscan convents and their mother church, and how a motif diffused through one medium, such as letters and documents, could be taken up by satellite communities and deployed in different forms, even altarpieces.

The unusual motif of St. Francis stamping on vices is more problematic, although it probably derives from Giovanni di Biondo's depiction of St Zenobius in Florence Cathedral. Taddeo retained Giovanni's representation of Pride with a sword, although he substituted a child's head for Giovanni's bearded head and helmet. Lust is similar to Giovanni's representation of Vainglory, and Avarice clearly owes much to him, as both are illustrated with the head of an old woman who appears to be a Benedictine nun with a bag of money.⁴⁰ This may allude to the riches of the unreformed Benedictines, in contrast with the poverty of the mendicant Franciscans. St Francis is supported by small, red angels as he strives to stamp out the vices. His flanking saints are two Franciscan luminaries, Sts. Anthony of Padua and Louis of Toulouse, together with two specifically Perugian saints – Constantius and Herculanius, patrons of the city.

The details on St. Herculanius' vestments are especially noteworthy. His terracotta-coloured cloak is decorated with black griffins - the symbol of the city of Perugia - encircled by gold leaves. Whilst the griffins are painted with brushstrokes on the outer face of the cloak, they are dotted on the inner lining to suggest shadow. Moreover, the griffins on the lining at the bottom of the cloak are comprised of black dots that have been punched, adding another subtle change of texture and quality to the cloth. The inclusion of local saints is not unexpected in an altarpiece for a major Perugian church, but the labour-intensive attention lavished upon St. Herculanius in particular does point to a specific requirement on the part of the commissioners, and

³⁸ Symeonides 1965, p. 101.

³⁹ van Os 1974, pp. 117-118.

⁴⁰ Symeonides 1965, p. 101.

the idiosyncratic inclusion of St. Francis trampling vices is so unusual that it must have been stipulated by the brothers.

Two pinnacle panels have been identified as components of the altarpiece.⁴¹ The *Redeemer displaying His wounds* would have been set above St. Francis who is similarly displaying the wounds of the stigmata, thereby emphasising the parallels between the saint and Christ and illustrating the apotheosis of the saint for the audience of friars. *The Redeemer Blessing* (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven) was set above the Madonna, from where it would have appeared to bless the lay congregation. Companion pinnacle panels have been lost, but probably contained three-quarter length busts of other saints similar to those in Domenico di Bartolo's 1438 *Santa Giuliana Altarpiece* for the Cistercian monastery in Perugia.

The predella panels have also been separated but it is generally accepted that six scenes from the life of St. Francis (Niedersächsische Landesgalerie, Hanover) and another depicting the apparition of St Francis to the friars (Private collection of J. H. van Heek, 's-Heerenberg) relate to the altarpiece. Their iconography is unremarkable, although the inclusion of a scene showing St. Francis obtaining water from a rock to prevent a peasant dying of thirst is uncommon. Bonaventure, when relating this miracle, drew a parallel between Francis and Moses, who drew water from a rock to quench the thirst of the children of Israel when they were in the desert.⁴²

The supply of water to Perugia was a perennial problem in which the Franciscans appear to have played a prominent role. In 1266, the *comune* decided to construct a series of fountains for which they 'sought to enlist the aid of the Friars Minor as they were known for their skill in that task' and begged the pope to support their attempt to bring Brother Deodato, *magister fontium*, to the city.⁴³ The problem was partially solved in 1278 with the completion of a subterranean aqueduct that brought clean water from Monte Pacciano into the centre of the city at the *Fonte Maggiore*. The aqueduct was badly damaged by an earthquake in 1349 and was

⁴¹ Solberg has matched the backs of the panels. Solberg 1992, p. 649.

⁴² Bonaventure 1978, p. 248; Exodus 17: 1-7.

⁴³ Galletti 1979, pp. 21-23, quoted in Burr 2001, p. 5.

subject to prolonged periods of failure. In 1382, the magistrates imposed an extra tax or *gabella* of two *soldi per libra* for the maintenance of what Pellini later described as '*quella bella, & meravigliosa struttura di quello acquedotto, & quel superbo modo del venire l'acqua nel vaso della fonte si mantenesse...*'⁴⁴ The city authorities entrusted the care of the source of the water to a hermit and Franciscan tertiary, Giovanni di Porta Sant'Angelo, sending him three baskets of grain in 1401 for his services. Urgent repairs were again necessary in 1402, when the Consul General contracted with a certain Jacopo Orefice for the replacement of various lead pipes.⁴⁵ The monasteries abutting onto the aqueduct where it entered the city at Porta Sant'Angelo, including the Franciscan establishments of Monteripido and later, Sant'Agnese and Sant'Antonio da Padova, were entrusted with its protection.⁴⁶ It is therefore reasonable to infer that the miracle of the rock would have had a particular resonance for the citizens of Perugia and the Friars Minor in particular. It seems likely that this panel, along with other scenes with popular appeal such as *St. Francis Preaching to the Birds* and *The Miraculous Mass at Greccio*, faced the laity, while the scenes relating to the foundation of the Order such as *St. Francis in a Chariot* and the *Apparition of St. Francis* addressed the friars.

Solberg has suggested that the shape, format and size of Taddeo's Perugian altarpiece were 'determined by the exigencies of the Umbrian Franciscan commissioners for whom it was made', but that its 'Franciscan content represents a supraregional parameter'.⁴⁷ While it seems clear that the need to replace a pre-existing double-sided altarpiece that met the particular liturgical and architectural requirements of the Franciscans of San Francesco al Prato largely determined the form and size of the altarpiece, the notion that its iconographical content, even when specifically Franciscan, is not regional, or even site-specific, is less persuasive. While the face containing the Virgin and Child is broadly generic in its Franciscanism, if Solberg's identification of St. Elizabeth as the occupant of one of the missing panels is accepted, this brings a Perugian element to the iconography, resulting from her possible canonisation in the city, which would be significantly

⁴⁴ Pellini 1664, I, p. 193.

⁴⁵ Montanari 1950, pp. 22-25.

⁴⁶ Lattaioli 1993, p. 57; Elsheikh 2000, II, p. 341.

⁴⁷ Solberg 2002, p. 220.

increased by the addition of another local luminary such as Beato Egidio.⁴⁸ Moreover, the reverse of the panel that would have addressed the more discerning and theologically aware friars contains a myriad of unusual features that point to a specifically Perugian requirement - most obviously, the inclusion of two Perugian patron saints, Herculanus and Constantius. The unusual inclusion of the miracle of the water also appears to be particularly apt for a Perugian audience. Beyond this, while the depiction of St. Francis displaying the stigmata with outstretched arms depends from a motif that originated in the mother house, the almost unique portrayal of St Francis trampling on three vices suggests a site-specific programme and the direct involvement of the Perugian patrons in the choice of iconography. Banker has shown that the Franciscans of Borgo San Sepolcro were active in determining the content of their double-sided altarpiece when negotiating with Sassetta.⁴⁹ It is likely that the friars of San Francesco al Prato behaved in a similar manner when instructing Taddeo.

Despite the apparent requirement that the Sienese painter should conform to the particular form and iconography required by the Perugian patrons, the style of painting within the panels is entirely Sienese. Indeed, these characteristics appear somewhat exaggerated, presumably to meet the patrons' taste and expectations. This is particularly true of the Virgin and Child side where the Madonna, Child and female saints have the long, aquiline noses, thin eyebrows and slanted eyes of earlier Sienese painters such as Simone Martini and Lorenzetti. The drapery of the lateral saints' clothing is also 'more voluminous, complicated and exuberant' than in Taddeo's previous work, with deeply folded swathes of material creating an elegant rhythm across the picture plane as it falls at regular intervals over the saints' right arms.⁵⁰ The Perugian patrons therefore appear to have desired Sienese aesthetics, provided they were subject to specific Franciscan, Umbrian and Perugian constraints pertaining to form, location and iconography.

The popularity of Taddeo's Sienese style within the city is further evidenced

⁴⁸ This is not to claim St. Elizabeth as an exclusively Perugian saint as she appears elsewhere, notably in Città di Castello and Cortona.

⁴⁹ Banker 1991, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Symeonides 1965, p. 100.

by his *Pentecost* painted in 1403 for Angelella Petri in memory of her son, Giovanni, in the chapel of St. Thomas of Villanova in Sant Agostino.⁵¹ More emotionally charged than the Virgin and Child face of the San Francesco altarpiece, the painting contains vivid narrative effects that recall the dramatic depiction of *St Francis trampling the Vices*. The heightened colours, dominated by vermilion, black and orange, give the scene a startling atmosphere, while the crowded composition, with the apostles ranked closely around the Virgin all reacting differently to the coming of the Spirit, creates a sense of immediacy. This is enhanced by Taddeo's creation of deep recession within the room by overlapping the figures, the use of orthogonals in the chequered floor and a fictive step and archway, which, when combined with a high imagined viewpoint, create the impression of looking through a window into an upper room.

Dominican commissions and a taste for the Sieneese style

While the Franciscans were engaged in replacing their high altar in San Francesco al Prato, their rival mendicant order, the Dominicans, were concentrating their resources upon the completion of their large church of San Stefano, also known as San Domenico Nuovo, where the nave was still bare. Whereas Sieneese painters predominated in the field of panel painting, a more diverse group of painters was engaged for frescoes. Around 1400, the Orvietan, Cola di Petrucciolo, frescoed the gallery with scenes from the life of the Virgin, Gentile da Fabriano painted a *Madonna and Child* and, between 1415 and 1417, the Florentine painter, Mariotto di Nardo and the Perugian master glazier, Fra Bartolomeo di Pietro, executed a stained glass window with saints and the life of St. James. The Sieneese painter, Benedetto di Bindo, decorated a chapel with scenes from the life of St. Catherine, as well as preparing cartoons for windows in the church.⁵²

Significant commissions also continued at San Domenico and, as these were mainly panel paintings, Sieneese painters were much in evidence. Bartolo di Fredi had probably painted a portable triptych depicting the mystic marriage of St Catherine

⁵¹ King 1998, pp. 103-104; Santi 1969, p. 105. Santi considers it a workshop piece, despite the inscription: *Thad[d]eus Bartholi de Senis pinxit hoc opus fecit fieri A[n]gellela Petri pro anima Iohannis filii sui an[n]i d[omi]ni MCCCCIII.*

⁵² Lunghi 1996a, pp. 31-47.

around 1388. In 1415, Bartolo's son, Andrea was commissioned to design a window for the convent and was probably responsible for most of the frescoes in the chapel of Sts. Catherine and Peter Martyr in the same church. His ties with San Domenico became so strong that when he died in 1417, he was buried in the cloisters there.⁵³

Perugia had close mercantile and political ties with Siena at this time, as evidenced by the fact that in 1390, some Sieneese merchants who habitually lived in Perugia were granted citizenship.⁵⁴ Not to be outdone in terms of courtesy, the Sieneese authorities granted citizenship to all Perugians in Siena, so that they paid the same taxes as native Sieneese citizens and, in 1403, the Perugians passed a reciprocal agreement.⁵⁵ It seems unlikely however that political and trade affiliations alone can account for the overwhelming Perugian tendency to appoint Sieneese painters. Nor was Perugia subordinate to Siena in a manner that could have led to the imposition of Sieneese style either directly or constructively. Rather, Perugian patrons appear to have desired and actively sought out Sieneese aesthetics, provided they were subject to Perugian constraints pertaining to form and iconography.

Gentile da Fabriano's *Madonna and Child* and a Perugian response

While Sieneese painters were dominant, a painting by Gentile da Fabriano, who came from the Marches, was also influential upon local painting and its subsequent development. Gentile's maternal grandfather and uncle had moved to Perugia, which may explain how he came to paint for the city.⁵⁶ His *Madonna and Child* altarpiece (Fig. 2.4) for San Domenico c.1404-6 may be his earliest panel and could have been painted when he was working in the Palazzo Trinci in nearby Foligno, although De Marchi has proposed that it was painted when Gentile was working in Venice.⁵⁷ While similar to Sieneese painting in its elegance and gothic rhythms, which may account for its popularity in Perugia, the picture introduced new iconographic motifs exhibiting Venetian influences. These include a hollow seat full of vegetation, strong *chiaroscuro* effects, *sfumato* rendering of the flesh tones and

⁵³ Christiansen 1991, pp. 353-355.

⁵⁴ Pellini 1664, II, p. 7.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 135.

⁵⁶ Marchi 1992a, p. 89, note 27.

⁵⁷ Apuleio 1988, p. 1; Benazzi and Mancini 2001, p. 225; Marchi 2006, p. 94. Vasari's 1550 edition states that Gentile did many works in Perugia. Vasari 1550, III, p. 366.

‘distinctive Venetian motives of [...] polylobate Gothic tracery’ together with an enhanced sense of weight and mass.⁵⁸

Gentile’s Perugian panel is referred to by Vasari as a *tavola* and it has often been treated as a stand-alone painting, though De Marchi considers it to have been the central panel of a polyptych.⁵⁹ An elegant, though substantial, Madonna sits on a golden throne from which verdant plants and shrubs sprout, conflating the concept of the Virgin enthroned, with the *hortus conclusus*, symbolising her virginity. A mature Christ Child sits upright on her knee holding a pomegranate that represents the resurrection; a symbol particularly associated with the Dominicans. At the Virgin’s feet, seven tiny angels hold a scroll inscribed with music and above her head, delicately incised on a gold ground, are six angels holding flowers, two of whom crown her.

The panel’s composition and decorative elements, especially the incised angels and herbaceous throne, were subsequently adopted by many local artists leading to the widespread diffusion of Gentile’s innovations across the city. Benedetto Bonfigli’s *Madonna and Child*, c.1445 (Fig. 2.5, El Paso Museum of Art, Texas) depicts the Madonna seated on a cushion, surrounded by herbaceous plants, set against a gold ground and depends from Gentile’s prototype. It was almost certainly commissioned for a Franciscan setting as the two wing panels include Sts. Francis and Anthony Abbot. One of the most faithful versions of Gentile’s panel is at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Figs. 2.6-7).⁶⁰ Dated 1428 and signed ‘PEREGRINVS’, it has been attributed to a Perugian, Pellegrino di Giovanni di Antonio and was originally in the Chapel of the Apostles in San Domenico.⁶¹ Pellegrino was inscribed in the *Matricola* of Perugian painters in the early quattrocento as Peregrinus Iohannis from Porta Eburnea and seems to have shared a workshop with the son of the Orvietan painter, Cola di Petruccioli.⁶² He is believed

⁵⁸ Marchi 2006, p. 94.

⁵⁹ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, p. 366. Christiansen 1982, p. 5; Marchi 2006, p. 94.

⁶⁰ The painting was examined by the writer at Blythe House, London (6559-1860). It was exhibited at the Gentile da Fabriano exhibition, Fabriano, 2006. Silvestrelli 2006, pp. 118-119.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² The attribution was first made by Parronchi 1975, pp. 3-13 and is supported by Russell 1978, p. 155 and Christiansen 1981, pp. 353-354. Bombe 1912, p. 303 identifies Peregrinus Iohannis as Pellegrino di Giovanni or Pelagrinus Iohannis (*sic.*)

to have worked on the Trinci palace frescoes alongside Gentile and Lello da Velletri, another follower of Gentile, who produced an altarpiece for the Perugian church of Sant'Agata, c.1437.⁶³ In December 1428, Pellegrino was appointed *camerlengo* of the painter's guild and, on his death in 1435, left his workshop to his pupil, Mariano d'Antonio.⁶⁴

Pellegrino's panel also depicts the Madonna seated on a flowery throne attended by angels, two of whom are tooled into the gold ground and crown the Virgin, while the other two are sketchily painted in blue. Again, the nude Christ Child sits on the Virgin's knee, but the relationship between the two figures is subtly different, as here, the Child leans towards the Virgin and turns his head to the left. This inclination enhances the intimacy between the pair and emphasises the role of the Madonna. In place of the pomegranate, the Child clutches a piece of the Virgin's mantle. Again prefiguring the Passion, this may refer to a popular medieval text which recounted that the Virgin wrapped the infant Child in her veil before laying him in the manger and covered Christ's nakedness on his descent from the cross with a veil from her head.⁶⁵ The Child's left hand reaches out to grasp his mother's cuff, placing his arm parallel with her elongated fingers. These actions draw the Madonna and Child closer together and may allude to the *compassio* or shared suffering of the Virgin with Christ. Marian spirituality viewed many incidents in the Virgin's life as comparable with those of Christ; the laying of the Child's arm alongside the Virgin's can be seen as symbolising the parallels between them.

The panel has recently been reunited with its original frame. This incorporates a *David Playing the Psaltery* on the cusp and is 'carved with fretted decoration in the Venetian style' supporting De Marchi's view that Gentile's prototype emanated from Venice, or was at least dependent upon the Venetian style.⁶⁶

While Pellegrino's composition undoubtedly derives from Gentile's panel,

⁶³ Benazzi and Mancini 2001, p. 615.

⁶⁴ Silvestrelli 2006, p. 118.

⁶⁵ Pseudo-Bonaventure 1961, pp. 33, 333. See also Steinberg 1996, pp. 26-45.

⁶⁶ Marchi 2006, p. 95.

Christiansen notes that it is tempered by Sienese influences.⁶⁷ The soft folds of the Virgin's dress and sleeve, the curved scroll, and the inclining figures who now form a graceful gothic curve in silhouette in contrast with Gentile's almost rectangular outline, all conform to the known taste of Perugian patrons, suggesting an adaptation of the Marchigian/Venetian model to meet local preferences for the Sienese aesthetic. The beginnings of an identifiable Perugian style can also be detected in the clear colours of the panel, especially the Virgin's mantle, which is a bright mid-blue and the generous use of tooled and punched gold, both in the background and on the sleeve and lower part of the Virgin's dress. The skin tones are pink and lightly modulated with other flesh tones, with a minimal use of the dark grey shading favoured by Gentile and Sienese painters, such as Taddeo di Bartolo, although the outlines of the figures are still delineated with a black, somewhat smudged line. The figures are schematised, particularly the faces of the Virgin and Child and the Child's hair, where the paint is so thick that the curls stand proud of the picture surface and catch the light. There is little sense of depth or weight so that even the Virgin's knee, whose presence is accentuated beneath her dress, contributes more to the overall decorative balance, than to establishing a sense of corporality.

The extensive use of foliage and flowers became a typically Perugian feature, probably deriving from Gentile's panel, although the abundant foliage and *mille fiori* foreground of Pellegrino's panel are more formulaic than Gentile's botanically convincing plants. The pale blue flowers, with their delicate dark ring near the centre, are identifiable as periwinkles. Associated in Italy with death and known as *fiore di morte*, they probably refer to Christ's future Passion.⁶⁸ While Gentile's twiggy shrubs sprout from the ground and throne, Pellegrino's plants cover the ground and throne in a decorative pattern of leaves and flowers that nevertheless evoke the dense mats of foliage characteristic of these plants.

Two coats of arms in the bottom corners of the panel almost certainly relate to the patron and have been identified.⁶⁹ On the left, the gold lion on a blue ground belonged to the family of Giovanni di Benedetto di Giovanni, a Perugian merchant

⁶⁷ Christiansen 1991, p. 354.

⁶⁸ Ward 1999, p. 286.

⁶⁹ Silvestrelli 1986, pp. 38-40; Silvestrelli 2006, p. 118.

resident in the parish of Santa Maria del Mercato in Porta San Pietro. The other relates to the family's warehouse situated nearby in the Piazza Grande. Giovanni di Benedetto was recorded in the *catasti* as having a patrimony varying between 900 and 1000 *libre*, so the family was affluent and could easily have afforded to commission a high quality altarpiece with expensive gold leaf and blue pigments. The most likely commissioner is Nicola di Giovanni who was elected *consul mercantie* in 1428 and three years later, nominated as prior, but died before taking up the post, whereupon his son, Pompeo, was elected prior.

The intimate relationship between the Virgin and her son in Pellegrino's panel is further developed in a *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels* that originated from the convent of the Minor Friars of Farneto (Fig. 2.8). Here, the Virgin supports the Child and the holy couple's faces touch as they stare poignantly into one another's eyes, both aware of the future awaiting the Child. Their pose and intense gaze is reminiscent of Donatello's *Pazzi Madonna* (c.1420-30, Staatliche Museen, Berlin), itself indebted to ancient sculpture such as Greek *stelai*, although the painting lacks the sculpture's sense of depth and weight.⁷⁰ The altarpiece is another rare example by a local artist and owes much to both Gentile and Pellegrino. The Madonna sits on a throne set against a flat, gold ground, once covered with a brocade pattern of flowers and leaves. At her feet, kneeling in a stylised leafy garden, two angels hold a scroll. Although the surface of the painting has suffered some wear, it is clearly by a less sophisticated hand. Dark shading is heavily deployed on the faces of the saints, while the elegant hands of Gentile's and Pellegrino's Virgins have become large and peasant-like, rendering suggestions that Pellegrino was the painter, unlikely.⁷¹ Nevertheless, the panel is both effective and affective in its portrayal of emotion between the Virgin and Child and the gentle concern in St. Francis' expression as he looks towards them. The bright red and yellow pigments of the Virgin and Child's clothes, the angels and St. Francis' book, set against the gold ground and dark mantle and robes are direct in their didacticism, while the lack of interest in weight and depth allows the painter to achieve an overall decorative effect. Lunghi has suggested that the painter might be Policeto di Cola, son of Cola di

⁷⁰ Olson 1992, p. 79.

⁷¹ Todini 1989, p. 261; Silvestrelli 2006, p. 116

Petrucciolo who was active in Perugia, especially San Domenico Nuovo, in the *trecento*. Policleto is documented from 1408 to 1446 and shared a workshop with Pellegrino, which could account for his strong influence upon this panel.⁷²

La libertà sotto il papa

The election of a merchant like Nicola di Giovanni to the office of prior shows that non-nobles were still able to hold important positions within the city. However, the ongoing, violent power struggle between the nobles and the *poplani* meant that the city and the *contado* were in a poor state during the early 1400s. Pellini records that due to the incessant attacks of the numerous exiled nobles or *fuorusciti*, the *contado* was overrun by wolves which even entered the city.⁷³ Nevertheless, rather than negotiate with the nobles, the *poplani* voluntarily submitted control to Gian-Galeazzo Visconti, the Duke of Milan, and subsequently acclaimed Ladislaus of Naples as their ruler, on the understanding that these lords would never allow the exiled nobles to return. This was reiterated when the names of the outlaws were inscribed in the *Annali Decemviri* in 1403, thereby defeating the Pope's open attempts to rehabilitate the Guidalotti.

The nobles, however, could not be resisted indefinitely and in 1416, financed by his exploits as a *condottiere*, Braccio Fortebraccio da Montone seized power at the battle of S. Egidio. The names of the rebel nobles were erased from the *Annali Decemviri* and Braccio proceeded to minimise the power of the city's political institutions by ignoring elections and the decrees of the council, which signalled the end of the *Stato Popolare libero e guelfo*. Despite his prolonged absences from the city, Braccio's rule established a brief interlude of relative peace, as witnessed by the substantial number of public works that were undertaken, including the completion of the *Loggia* in the Piazza di San Lorenzo, the building of huge arches for the Piazza di Sopramura and a new drainage system.⁷⁴ Even so, internal unrest continued, leading to the banishment of all the Michelotti in 1418 and a decree forbidding rebels' wives from enjoying their dowries during their husbands' lives.⁷⁵

⁷² Lunghi 1996a, p. 52.

⁷³ Pellini 1664, II, pp. 95-98.

⁷⁴ Ansidei 1902, p. 21.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 20.

Even the wearing of liveries was banned to reduce rivalries between the great families.⁷⁶

Braccio's death while laying siege to Aquila in 1424, provided Pope Martin V with an opportunity to re-establish direct papal authority over Perugia and he enlisted Malatesta, son of Pandolfo Baglioni, who had been wounded and taken prisoner during the siege, to act as his agent. Malatesta correctly perceived that an alliance with the pope would provide the best means of gaining power for himself and the nobles. Perugia's relationship with the papacy had been a constant source of conflict. In theory, the city was part of the Papal States, but after the twelfth century, in common with much of Umbria and the Marches, the city had declared itself an autonomous republic, only occasionally recognising the Pope's authority. Under the *poplani* the guilds had resisted papal rule, but the new oligarchy was much weaker and faced with Malatesta's persuasiveness and the approach of 3000 horsemen in the pay of the church, they submitted to a settlement, consoled by the promise that they would retain many of their ancient rights, including the magistracy of the Priors. However, Perugia was forced to acknowledge the pope as its overlord - *la libertà sotto il papa* - and although he was not present in the city, he appointed a cardinal legate to represent him and supervise the city's councils, creating a ruling dyarchy in place of the city's cherished autonomy.

This co-operation with the papacy benefited certain members of the oligarchy in particular. Malatesta was made lord of Spello and subsequently granted Bastia and Cannai in return for his support. During his son, Braccio's, rule (1437-1479), Pope Eugenius IV confirmed the grant for three generations and Pellini ascribed the subsequent power of the Baglioni family to these acquisitions.⁷⁷ The pope agreed to the continued exile of the *fuorusciti* so Ludovico Michelotti, members of the Colonna family and others, remained unable to take part in the legitimate affairs of the city and were reduced to launching forays upon the *contado*. Forced loans raised to defend the city from this threat caused further unrest. It was into this atmosphere of uncertainty that the Franciscan friar, Fra Bernardino of Siena, came in 1424 to

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 26; Heywood 1910, p. 290.

⁷⁷ Pellini 1664, II, p. 296.

preach his uncompromising message of repentance and self-denial. It is hardly surprising that he made many converts and his success may well have contributed to the expansion of Franciscan establishments, particularly female houses, which subsequently took place in Perugia.

Changing tastes: the Sant'Agnese tertiaries

New buildings and chapels required new altarpieces and Perugian patrons began to look to Florence, instead of Siena, for painters. The last major commission to a Siennese painter was probably to Domenico di Bartolo, for a polyptych for the Cistercian monastery of Santa Giuliana in 1438. The painting was commissioned by Abbess Antonia, daughter of the politically active Francesco Buccoli, but the choice of the Siennese Domenico may have been made by the monks of San Galgano near Siena, as the Perugian convent was a dependent of that monastery under the general curia.⁷⁸ By now, Domenico's work, while still demonstrating an attachment to the graceful style of Martini and Lorenzetti, had begun to incorporate the monumental volumes and circumscribed spaces of Florentines such as Lippi and Donatello, particularly in the weighty solidity of the Madonna with her stolid Massacciesque knees, monumental head and robust baby.⁷⁹ However, elsewhere in this altarpiece, especially the predella panels and the figure of St. John, Domenico eschewed the new developments and returned to Siennese rhythms and an uneasy placement of figures in the landscape. Perhaps this was in response to what he perceived to be prevailing tastes in Perugia or to the requirements of the local patron; the construction of the frame and panel points to it having been painted in the city. If so, it shows local commissioners affecting the manner in which an incoming painter painted, even when the initial choice may have been imposed upon them.

The Franciscan tertiaries of Sant'Agnese appear to have spearheaded the change in patronal direction when the Florentine master, Bicci di Lorenzo, painted an altarpiece for their convent c.1434, although it will be argued that the choice was not

⁷⁸ Garibaldi 1996, p. 54.

⁷⁹ For challenges to the view of Siena as a yardstick of tradition against Florentine innovation see Strehlke 1988, pp. 33-60, especially pp. 48-52 for Domenico di Bartolo; Syson 2007; for architecture, see Nevola 2007. But the lack of commissions from outside Siena is accepted, 'by the second half of the century even this trickle of non-Siennese commissions had all but dried up...' Christiansen 1988, p. 22.

as adventurous as may first appear (Fig. 2.9). The provenance of the painting is not certain as there are no known documents linking the work with Sant'Agnese and it does not appear in any of the early guides to the city.⁸⁰ However, the altarpiece entered the Pinacoteca in Perugia from the convent of Sant'Agnese and the iconography of the painting, which includes depictions of St. Agnes and other Franciscan and Perugian saints, supports the view that it was painted for the tertiaries.

The triptych is comprised of a central panel, with two doors that close to cover it completely on which are painted, by a less sophisticated hand, St. Ivo of Brittany, the patron saint of lawyers and judges (which may point to a jurist or lawyer as a major donor) and Blessed Pavino del Bastone. The altarpiece measures 206 x 205 centimetres when fully open but would be portable when closed and, though heavy, could have been moved to different sites within the convent, which could account for its omission from the early sources. Unusually, the predella panels also fold over the central panel, supporting the idea that it was intended to be portable.

The altarpiece is undated and the inscription, which once ran between the main picture fields and the predella panels, has worn away. Stylistically, Bicci's work is difficult to date as it did not change substantially over the course of his long career. He enrolled in the *Arte dei Medici e Speziali* in Florence sometime between 1385 and 1408 and worked in Lorenzo di Bicci's workshop, adopting his father's style to such effect that Vasari incorrectly attributed many of his works to the elder artist. He took charge of the shop around 1414.⁸¹ Although Bicci displayed a greater tendency towards 'gothic' lines and rhythms than his father, he does not appear to have espoused the figurative developments pioneered by his Florentine contemporaries. Instead, he continued to paint in a style that combined a feeling for Giottesque realism with an interest in rich pattern-making derived from the Sieneese school and the northern courts.⁸² Thus, the Sant'Agnese patrons, despite selecting an artist from Florence, then in the vanguard of developments in perspective, realistic

⁸⁰ The altarpiece was originally attributed to Taddeo Gaddi. Sirén 1904, pp. 338-342.

⁸¹ See Frosinini 1986, pp. 5-15, for the transition in management of the workshop.

⁸² Holmes 1969, p. 203.

settings and modelling, chose, in Bicci, a painter whose style closely conformed to their pre-existing taste for gold grounds, elegant drapery and sinuous forms. By employing a tried and tested workshop with a good reputation (they had worked for the Medici family) they could be assured of the final product. That the Perugians were not alone in these preferences is apparent from the fact that Lorenzo was head of a large and successful business that undertook numerous commissions both in Florence and other central Italian cities, and was able to hand it on to his own son, Neri di Bicci around 1442.⁸³

Despite the largely consistent nature of Bicci's work, there are some stylistic and iconographic features which suggest a date for this altarpiece of around 1433-4. The upper section of the central panel is shaped like a gothic arch, within a rectangular frame and depicts a half-length Virgin upon a cloud of cherubim and seraphim, attended by two angels. She supports an infant Christ clad in translucent swaddling clothes that emphasise his humanity. Half lying, half standing, the Child leans forward at an angle of forty-five degrees away from his mother and gives St. Catherine the ring that symbolises her mystic marriage to him. To the left, St. Agnes stands holding her attribute - a lamb - while a tiny St. Elizabeth of Hungary, clothed in the habit of a Franciscan tertiary, kneels in the space below the Virgin and Child, holding her cloak full of roses. She possesses the same diminutive stature generally afforded to portraits of female donors and occupies the subordinate space typically reserved for them. St. Elizabeth appears again in the predella where she is depicted visiting the sick - an activity that the tertiaries themselves would have engaged in on a daily basis. She can therefore be seen as personifying the tertiaries of the convent who may well have collaborated to purchase the altarpiece, as is known to have happened in 1522, when the tertiaries of San Bernardino in Verona clubbed together to pay for an altarpiece.⁸⁴

Van Os has shown that such group commissions tend to be more traditional in their choice of painter and iconography than those made by individuals.⁸⁵

⁸³ Turner 1996, p. 33.

⁸⁴ King 1998, p. 209; See Syson 2007, p. 132 for a miniature St. Francis representing the owner friars in a depiction of the Assumption.

⁸⁵ Van Os 1992, pp. 123-163.

Furthermore, commissions in the countryside may not always run in a logical 'linear' development, parallel with those in the city, as the different sets of commissioners may have different imperatives.⁸⁶ These may also have been factors affecting the choices made by the Sant'Agnese tertiaries.

The Madonna has the calm demeanour and slightly inclined head of the Madonna in the central panel of Bicci's *Sacra Conversazione* (c.1433, Pinacoteca Struard, Parma) which has been linked stylistically with Gentile da Fabriano's *Quaratesi Madonna* (1425, Royal Collection on loan to National Gallery, London).⁸⁷ The Child's tightly curled hair recedes sharply to either side leaving a pronounced widow's peak in the centre of his forehead. This recession is less pronounced in Bicci's earlier infants, such as that in the frescoed tabernacle on the *via dei Serragli*, Florence, dated 1427, but is present in the *Nativity* (San Giovannino dei Cavalieri, Florence) and the *Madonna and Child with Saints triptych* (San Ippolito e Donato, Bibbiena), both from 1435.

The figures of St. Herculanus and, to a lesser extent, St. Constantius, are remarkably similar to St. Nicholas of Bari in Bicci's Parma picture. All three have sallow skins, penetrating oval eyes and neatly curled grey beards, and their white shifts are elegantly twisted at the neck. Furthermore, St Herculanus' patterned vestment is crumpled and distorted in a manner unrelated to the drapery beneath it. This lack of understanding is also seen in the narrative panels of the Parma work.⁸⁸ The wing panels are divided by gothic arches and contain Franciscan and Perugian saints - Anthony of Padua, Louis of Toulouse and John the Baptist and the three patrons of the city, Lawrence, Herculanus and Constantius.

In the central panel, St. Agnes wears a long white dress decorated with the letters 'yHs' within a sunburst - the trigram of St. Bernardino of Siena. St Bernardino preached in Perugia on several occasions after his first visit in 1424 and became Vicar-General of the Observant branch of the Franciscans in 1437. He founded a

⁸⁶ See Paardekooper 2002, p. 30 for the uneven development of the *tavola centinata* in Siena and its *contado*.

⁸⁷ Thomas 1995, pp. 222-226.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 225. Thomas attributes the wrinkling of the vestment in the Struard panel, Parma to a misunderstanding of Gentile da Fabriano's depiction of drapery.

school of theology in Perugia and developed a strong following in the city. This was manifested after his death in 1444 by the building of an oratory to his memory at San Francesco al Prato in 1451, soon after his canonisation in May 1450. St. Bernardino was particularly devoted to the name of Jesus and at the end of his sermons would hold up a plaque on which he wrote the letters IHS or yHs - the first three letters of Christ's name in Greek - surrounded by rays.⁸⁹ While the letters represent the name of Jesus and appear frequently in Greek and Latin churches on tombs, paintings and in heraldry, the rays relate the symbol more specifically to St. Bernardino and it is therefore likely that the decorations on St. Agnes' dress do refer to him.

Paintings of St. Bernardino preaching, such as that by the Master of Fucecchio in the Kress Collection (Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama), often show the saint holding his trigram. In the Kress panel, the saint is depicted with a halo and the stereotypical thin, hollow face that instantly identifies him. It is not possible, however, to conclude from this that the painting was painted after his canonisation or even after his death, as some paintings depicting the sanctified Bernardino predate his canonisation and were part of a vociferous campaign to achieve sainthood for him. The depiction of the trigram on the clothing of another Franciscan saint, as in the Sant'Agnese altarpiece, is much less common. It suggests that it was painted at a time when Bernardino had established a reputation as a leading Franciscan and his trigram was a familiar symbol representing Franciscan ideology appertaining to the name of Jesus, but that it was not appropriate to include a portrait of Bernardino in the altarpiece. A date of c.1434 would be consistent with such circumstances.

Two scenes of particular relevance to the tertiaries of Sant'Agnese are depicted at the top of the doors. The left door shows the order's spiritual founder, St. Francis, receiving the stigmata, while on the right we see the hermits Sts. Jerome, Onuphrius and Paul, as exemplars of the life of poverty and mortification of the flesh aspired to by Franciscans. Paul is less frequently depicted in Perugian altarpieces than the other two eremitic saints and his inclusion may commemorate an important moment in the life of the convent.

⁸⁹ Farmer 1997, pp. 56-57.

Lancellotti records that on 23 October 1432, Eugenius IV confirmed a grant of privilege whereby the nearby monastery of San Paolo was united with the convent of Sant'Agnese.⁹⁰ It seems possible that the inclusion of St. Paul, the name saint of the sister establishment, in a position directly opposite St Francis, served both to commemorate the union and symbolically equate the two establishments, uniting them in worship of the Virgin and Child in the centre of the altarpiece. Visually, both scenes are afforded an equivalent tonal value. They are set in a dark, rocky landscape at dawn or dusk, with glimmers of light breaking over the horizon which brighten the heavy sky with passages of blue. The gold of the saints' haloes, the glow around the seraphim and yellow of the angel's robes contrast with the dark brown hues of the landscape and greys of the saints' habits which provide an effective foil for the red splashes of the seraph's and angel's wings, St. Jerome's cardinal's hat and, most strikingly, the girdle around St. Paul's waist that effectively draws attention to this saint. These saturated reds also create a visual link with the intense vermilion of the seraphim surrounding the Virgin and Child, bringing the peripheral scenes within the context of the main panel.

If the Sant'Agnese altarpiece was commissioned to commemorate the union of the two monasteries, or at least made at a time when the union was in the minds of the patrons, this would provide a *terminus ante quem* of late 1432 and realistically points to 1433 or 1434 as a likely date for the execution of the painting. This is consistent with its stylistic and iconographic characteristics and is indicative of the trend towards employing Florentine painters that gained sway in Perugia during the 1430s, albeit here one with many Siennese features.

With regard to issues of patronal taste and autonomy, during this transitional period patrons were making choices between providers from different centres offering different styles. The selection of a Florentine painter with Siennese qualities indicates that the tertiaries sought an altarpiece that represented their local concerns in their preferred 'gothic' style, rather than following trends from an external centre. While their choice may not have been stylistically innovative, the selection of a

⁹⁰ BAP, Lancellotti, *Scorta Sagra*, B, 4, 1, fol. 9r; Lancellotti 1856, p. 1.

painter from a different place does demonstrate patronal independence.

Two altarpieces for the Guidalotti family

The most important commissions to Florentine artists at this time were to Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli for two altarpieces for the Guidalotti family. As they had important consequences for the later development of the local school in Perugia, including several major Franciscan works, they warrant discussion here, despite being Dominican, not Franciscan, commissions. In particular, Piero della Francesca's altarpiece for the tertiaries of Sant'Antonio and the *Madonna and Child with six angels* from Santa Maria di Monteluca, currently attributed to Bartolomeo Caporali, owe much to Fra Angelico's prototype, while Fiorenzo di Lorenzo's *Triptych for the Confraternity of the Giustizia* is among those influenced by Benozzo's altarpiece.

Following the assassination of Biordo Michelotti by Francesco, Anibaldo and Giovanni Guidalotti in 1398, those who had been instrumental in the murder were executed, while the rest of the family had their houses demolished and goods confiscated. Many were sent into exile and the entire family was disgraced. Francesco was condemned '*in here e persona*' and painted effigies of him were erected at the city gates.⁹¹ The repercussions were still evident in 1436, when Malatesta Baglioni levelled the area on the *Colle Landone* where the Guidalotti homes had once stood, to build his own house and tower.⁹²

While the Baglioni were reinstated in the heart of the city and held positions of authority, the Guidalotti had yet to rebuild their reputation. The rehabilitation of the family fell largely to Benedetto and Elisabetta, children of Alberto di Nino di Lello Guidalotti and cousins of the murderers. Alberto had been an eminent jurist and his branch of the family escaped the worst of the retributions, probably because he had died several years before the murder, in 1390, and his children were still too young to have played any part in it. As a result, his widow, Giovanna, was able to retain her dowry and provide some financial security for Alberto's heirs. She was helped in this enterprise by her husband's friend and colleague, Onofrio Bartolino, a

⁹¹ Fabretti 1850, pp. 263 – 266; Pellini 1664, II, pp. 95-98.

⁹² Fabretti 1850, p. 410.

respected lawyer and professor of civil law. He acted as ambassador to Rome on behalf of the *comune* following the murder of Biordo, and in this capacity appears to have been able to protect the family in some measure.⁹³ His interest in their welfare increased further when, in 1396, his son, Bartolomeo, became engaged to Elizabeth and, by 1402, married her.

Benedetto carved out a brilliant career for himself in the church. Graduating first in law, he became renowned as a cultured prelate and trusted adviser to Martin V. For this and his family's unwavering support of the papacy, he was made papal Vice-chancellor (*Viccamerario*). In 1427, he became bishop of Valva and Sulmona and, five months later, was installed as bishop of Teramo. In January 1429, just before his death, he was appointed bishop of Recanati.⁹⁴ Benedetto and his sister must have appreciated the need to reintegrate the rest of the family within the public domain as both embarked upon a seemingly deliberate programme of educational and artistic undertakings that raised the family's profile. Benedetto promoted the foundation of a college to give young students at the university financial, educational and spiritual support. This was completed by Elisabetta after his death and became known as the *Sapienza Nuova*. Elisabetta clearly appreciated the role funerary monuments could play in promoting the status of families as, on Benedetto's death, she commissioned a marble monument and commemorative plaque for the Guidalotti family chapel of St. Nicholas in San Domenico. In 1570, the chronicler, Bottonio, recorded that its inscription recounting Benedetto's achievements concluded with the words, '*Domina Helisabet eius soror fecit*'.⁹⁵

It seems likely that that the canny Elisabetta was also instrumental in commissioning Fra Angelico to paint a major altarpiece for the same chapel (Fig. 2.10), although there are no notarial documents to substantiate this and the earliest reference to her as patron comes from the register of the church compiled by Domenico di Francesco Baglioni in 1548.⁹⁶ Biganti has suggested that the altarpiece

⁹³ Abbondanza 1963-4, VI, pp. 617-622.

⁹⁴ Biganti 1998, p. 105.

⁹⁵ Garibaldi 1998, pp. 38-39, n. 7.

⁹⁶ '*Questa capella fu dotata et ornata da madonna Hysabetta, sorella di detto vescovo in quella sepulto, figlia di messer Alberto Guidalotti*'. BAP, *Registro della chiesa e della sacristia di S.*

may have been commissioned after the death of Elisabetta's husband, Bartolomeo, in 1441, when she would have become financially independent, but the date of the painting is disputed.⁹⁷ Bottonio, writing in 1570, noted that it was painted in 1437 and this was accepted until Andrea De Marchi, following Ulrich Middeldorf, proposed the later date of 1447. He based his date on various technical and stylistic observations and the inclusion of a crypto-portrait of Pope Nicholas V (elected 1447) in the guise of the chapel's patron, St. Nicholas of Bari.⁹⁸ Laurence Kanter has subsequently returned to a date around 1437 on the basis that the image of St. Nicholas is typical of Fra Angelico's non-Apostolic saints from this period and the predella scenes are compositionally similar to the Louvre *Coronation* altarpiece (c.1432-4) and the *Linaiuoli* tabernacle (1433-5, Museo di San Marco, Florence).⁹⁹ Scarpellini dates it to 1442-43, on the basis of a document, dated 1442, confirming Elisabetta's involvement with a window in the chapel and his observation that Boccati's *Madonna del Pergolato* of 1446, derives from it.¹⁰⁰ Scarpellini convincingly states that the alleged portrait of Pope Nicholas bears little similarity to other portraits of him and the connection with Boccati's altarpiece is persuasive, but there is no evidence that the altarpiece was completed at the same time as the window and it could easily have been delayed given how busy Fra Angelico was during this period. Furthermore, Fra Angelico's developed depiction of space, perspective and light are analogous to his work in Orvieto cathedral, the late frescoes in San Marco in Florence and the St. Nicholas Chapel in Rome so that, on balance, a later date towards 1446, with Elisabetta as the probable patron, seems likely.¹⁰¹

Elisabetta must have intended the altarpiece to have a dramatic impact - it is very large (230 x 313 cm) and imposing, particularly for a family chapel. Accordingly, she needed a 'big name' painter with the proven ability to undertake a work which she must have hoped would help restore her family's credibility. Fra Angelico was not only in demand but, by 1446, also had impeccable credentials as a

Domenico iniziato nel 1548 da frate Domenico Baglioni, ms. 1232, fol. 2r, transcribed in Garibaldi 1998, p. 18.

⁹⁷ Biganti 1998, pp. 107-108.

⁹⁸ Marchi 1985, pp. 53-57.

⁹⁹ Kanter and Palladino 2005, pp. 158-160.

¹⁰⁰ Sartore and Scarpellini 1998, p. 89.

¹⁰¹ Garibaldi 1998, p. 24.

papal artist and a Dominican monk. Pope Eugenius IV had asked him to decorate a chapel in St. Peter's in Rome in 1445. Furthermore, he was adept at the new Florentine techniques and effects of perspective, depiction of light, naturalism and monumentality which would have created a noteworthy contrast with existing altarpieces in Perugia.

Elisabetta had links with Florence, Orvieto and Rome and may well have instructed Fra Angelico when visiting one of these cities. She had taken over her husband's business which involved trading in land, had purchased a farm near Florence in 1442 and had visited Orvieto when Fra Angelico was working there.¹⁰² Her father-in-law had been an ambassador to Rome and her brother had worked for Pope Martin V, where he had been involved in the artistic life of the city. As Vicecamerario, Benedetto commissioned Gentile da Fabriano to work in the Lateran church and he may have been responsible for bringing Gentile's associate, Lello da Velletri, to Perugia to paint the *St. Agatha Polyptych* for the Augustinians of Santa Maria Novella around 1427.¹⁰³ With this background, Elisabetta would have been a well-informed patron, capable of making considered patronal decisions in order to achieve her aim.

The San Domenico altarpiece is comprised of a central panel depicting the Virgin seated on a golden throne with the Christ Child standing on her lap, holding an open pomegranate, which may symbolise the hoped for resurrection of the family name as well as that of the Saviour.¹⁰⁴ Mother and Child are attended by four angels, two of whom carry baskets of red, pink and white roses, while the other two peer distractedly around the sides of the throne. Three brass vases, also filled with roses, perhaps signifying the Virgin Mary as the 'rose without thorns' in reference to her sinlessness, stand at the foot of the throne. Four supporting saints are depicted in separate panels. To the left, stand Sts. Dominic and Nicholas of Bari and to the right, St. John the Baptist, possibly also symbolic of the rebirth of the family, and St. Catherine of Alexandria, known for her wisdom. Pilasters at each end of the altarpiece each contain three pairs of saints. The Roman saints - Stephen, Paul,

¹⁰² ASP, *Notarile, Bastardelli*, 262, fols. 101v-102v, cited in Garibaldi 1998, p. 117.

¹⁰³ Marchi 1992a, pp. 125-128.

¹⁰⁴ Garibaldi 1998, pp. 22-24.

Lawrence and Peter – allude to the family’s papal sympathies. As previously noted, it has also been suggested that the St. Nicholas figure, to whom the chapel was dedicated, is a portrait of Pope Nicholas V.¹⁰⁵

Dominican saints are represented by Sts. Catherine of Siena and Thomas Aquinas, but specifically Perugian saints are not much in evidence. St. Lawrence does double duty for Perugia and Rome and it is suggested that the bishop saint paired with St. Jerome is Constantius.¹⁰⁶ However, he has few identifying attributes, the only one being a staff with a cloth tied around the top of it. This also appears in a representation of St. Herculanius now in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (Fig. 3.23) which seems to be by a Perugian hand.¹⁰⁷ The figure could therefore represent St. Herculanius, although his clothes are devoid of their customary Perugian griffins. The books held by eleven of the sixteen saints refer to the family’s interest in humanism and learning. Alberto, Benedetto and Elisabetta all left books to the library in San Domenico.

The predella scenes depicting the *Life of St. Nicholas* do not appear to have any specifically Perugian resonances. Scenes showing *St. Nicholas saving three unjustly convicted men from execution* were currently popular in Florence and would have been particularly relevant to a family seeking to free itself from the taint of its predecessors’ misdemeanours.

If a date between 1443 and 1446 is accepted, the altarpiece could be criticised for failing to adopt the latest Florentine fashions. The deployment of a flat, abstracted, gold ground in place of a landscape setting, as in the earlier *Virgin and Child Enthroned* (‘San Marco Altarpiece’, c.1440-42, Museum of San Marco, Florence) could be interpreted as reflecting ‘old fashioned’ Perugian taste.¹⁰⁸ But closer inspection reveals that, far from the space being flat and two-dimensional, the characters are set in a three-dimensional room with a convincing sense of depth. This

¹⁰⁵ Marchi 1992b, pp. 108-113.

¹⁰⁶ Garibaldi 1998, p. 20.

¹⁰⁷ Kaftal 1965, p. 550. The painting was formerly in the Elia Volpi Collection, Florence. Mancini attributes it to Caporali. Mancini 1992, p. 143.

¹⁰⁸ Pope-Hennessy 1974, pp. 17-18, dating the panel to 1437 saw in it the artist’s ‘attempts for the first time to escape from the tyranny of the gold ground’.

is achieved by the introduction of low tables to either side of the throne, the edges of which recede along steep orthogonals. It is further accentuated by the folded corners of the brocade cloths draped over the tables and the continuation of the floor beneath them. To make the point, Fra Angelico places St. Nicholas of Bari's mitre squarely on the table behind him. The Virgin's architectonic throne, with its classicising arch and antique frieze, curves sharply backwards into depth, while the acute foreshortening of St. Catherine's wheel has a similar effect.

The illusion that all the figures are in the same room in the beginnings of a *sacra conversazione* setting, despite being separated by columns and arches, is supported by the edges of the Virgin's throne which continue beyond the central compartment into the two flanking panels. The mottled marble floor also extends across the three main fields and its rolled edge, which forms a ledge in the foreground, serves to tip the ground forward, again enhancing the illusion of depth. The transition from the saints' space into the middle ground is much more convincing here than in Fra Angelico's *Cortona Altarpiece* (Museo Diocesano, Cortona, c.1430-36), which, although it has many similarities with the Perugian work, is less successful in establishing a coherent space and at developing a relationship between the figures, which remain remote from one another.¹⁰⁹

The choice of an ornate, pinnacled frame, rather than the rectangular *quadrata* that were appearing in Florence, could also be seen as backward-looking and pandering to local tastes.¹¹⁰ It makes perfect sense, however, when the setting is considered. The altarpiece stood in a prominent position within the church of San Domenico, first to the right of the main altar chapel.¹¹¹ The original church dated from 1235, but works to extend it began in 1304, continuing until 1459, when it was consecrated by Pope Pius II.¹¹² The architecture throughout was 'gothic' in style so

¹⁰⁹ Kanter considers this a workshop replica of the Perugian painting. Kanter and Palladino 2005, p. 160.

¹¹⁰ The frame is not original. See Bombe 1912, pp. 77-79.

¹¹¹ BAP, *Registro della chiesa e della sacristia di S. Domenico iniziato nel 1548 da frate Domenico Baglioni*, ms. 1232, fol. 2r, cited in Garibaldi 1998, p. 39, n. 9 places it first to the right of the choir, but this fails to consider that the choir was in the upper nave in the Quattrocento. See Del Giudice and Sartore 1998, p. 14 for a plan of the church locating chapels and altarpieces.

¹¹² See Rocchi Coopmans de Yoldi and Sergiacomi 2006 for the architecture and chapels in San Domenico; Garibaldi 1998, pp. 17 and 38.

the altarpiece frame and its construction was appropriate for its surroundings.

The panel is innovative within its Perugian context. To criticise it for not being in the vanguard of Florentine developments as regards the gold ground and ornate frame would be to misunderstand the treatment of space, the setting of the work and the underlying function of the altarpiece for its patron, Elisabetta and the Guidalotti family. She required a work that would be imposing, but not one that threatened the existing order, represented in San Domenico by Duccio's *Madonna and Child* and Gentile da Fabriano's *Madonna and Child*. In attempting to reinstate a once respected family who had been in disgrace for 40 years, she needed to remind Perugians of the Guidalotti's long good standing and support for the political and social structures of the city. The altarpiece needed to be seen as a continuation of the norms within Perugia, embracing its ideals and tastes, building on and developing them, rather than seeking to overthrow and destroy them. The shape of the frame and the gold ground kept the altarpiece within the realms of accepted taste. The up-to-date innovations within the work were sufficient to point up the family's intellectual and scholarly standing and identify them as a rejuvenated and potent force. For the moment, that was sufficient. The last thing Elisabetta wanted was to antagonise old enmities by appearing to challenge the existing order. Fra Angelico's work was sufficiently different to get noticed, but not to cause offence.

The altarpiece currently has no coats of arms or other direct references to the Guidalotti family, but it is likely that the original frame would have incorporated the family coat of arms as in Benozzo Gozzoli's panel of 1456. In any event, the setting of the altarpiece within the family chapel of St. Nicholas left no room for doubt as to the donor family. Not only did the inscription on Benedetto's tomb identify him and Elisabetta, but Fra Domenico Baglioni's description of the chapel refers to coats of arms in the '*cona*' and stained glass windows of the chapel.¹¹³ Moreover, the inventory for the church of San Domenico for the years 1430-63, lists several dossals and altar cloths provided for the chapel by the Guidalotti family, many of which were

¹¹³ BAP, *Registro della chiesa e della sacristia di S. Domenico iniziato nel 1548 da frate Domenico Baglioni*, ms. 1232, fol. 2r, quoted in Garibaldi 1998, p. 18.

decorated with the family coat of arms – a white lion on a blue shield.¹¹⁴

Elisabetta's aspirations for the family are also apparent from her endowments to the *Sapienza Nuova* college. When she left them half her dowry, amounting to 630 florins, it was on condition that they should erect the family's coat of arms and her brother's name, in stone, above the entrance to the college.¹¹⁵ The commissioning of Benozzo Gozzoli, like Fra Angelico, reflects the family's papal sympathies; Benozzo had worked with Fra Angelico in the private apartments of Nicholas V in the Vatican. His close association with Fra Angelico, both there and at Orvieto, suggest Elisabetta's involvement, still keen to reassert her family's integrity, although there are no documents to confirm this.

Benozzo's altarpiece (Fig. 2.11) was intended for the private chapel of the *Sapienza Nuova*, and would not have been on public display, unlike Fra Angelico's altarpiece in San Domenico. The panel was not recorded by Vasari and this omission probably reflects the fact that it was away from public gaze. The recently constructed setting (the college buildings were erected in the early 1430s) and educated audience did, however, allow for an up-to-date altarpiece shape - the new *quadrata* style which first appeared in Florence in the early 1440s. The main panel depicts a Madonna of Humility with the Christ Child sitting on her knee, blessing the viewer. On either side, Sts. Peter and John the Baptist, Jerome and Paul kneel before the holy couple. But, rather than gazing in admiration, they are actively engaged in a *sacra conversazione*, with St. Jerome, the patron of the college, expounding from an open book. The opulent gold ground is retained and behind the Madonna it is tooled to resemble the rich material of a traditional cloth of honour.

Various saints with an interest in learning and preaching, appropriate to the panel's audience, fill flanking pilasters and the predella. As well as Dominican saints, this altarpiece depicts Franciscan luminaries: Francis, Bernardino and Elizabeth of Hungary, the latter dressed in noble clothes rather than her usual tertiary habit, perhaps in reference to Elisabetta Guidalotti. The overall effect is of a rich,

¹¹⁴ ASP, CRS, *San Domenico, Miscellanea*, 59, fols. 108r-109v, unpublished.

¹¹⁵ This was Elizabeth's second will, dated 27 August, 1434. ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 24, fols. 225r-226v; published in Garibaldi 1998, p. 115.

highly refined, yet up-to-date work - an appropriate image for the family to project to the humanist audience within the college and one which would have been understood within that setting, if not in the city at large.

A manifesto against *clausura* in Sant'Antonio da Padova

At first sight, Piero della Francesca's altarpiece for the external church of the Franciscan tertiaries of Sant'Antonio da Padova (Fig. 2.12), appears to pre-date Benozzo's panel. The exact date is unknown, but is probably between 1455, when the sisters received permission to say masses on the church altar, and 21 June 1468, when the priors approved a contribution of 50 florins from the *comune*, for a panel that had already been made, '*depingi ac fabricari fecerunt quamdam tabulam*'. The painter is not named, but as no other altarpieces are known to have been painted for Sant'Antonio until Raphael's *Colonna Altarpiece* of c.1504-5, the decision probably refers to Piero's painting.¹¹⁶

The tertiaries of Sant'Antonio da Padova developed from a religious community present in Perugia during the fourteenth century. In 1419 they were given a house in Porta Sole and, by 1430, were living under the auspices of the monastery of Sant'Anna at Foligno led by Angelina da Montegiove, and had taken the name of Sant'Antonio da Padova.¹¹⁷ Links between the two establishments remained close and tertiaries regularly moved between the two monasteries. Margherita di Onofrio, who became the last Minister General of the congregation, spent time in both communities, thereby strengthening the spiritual and personal ties between them. The monastery was also associated with tertiary communities at San Giovanni in Todi, Sant'Onofrio in Florence, San Quirico in Assisi, Santa Margherita in Ascoli and Sant'Agnese in Viterbo.¹¹⁸ Only in 1461, with the suppression of the authority of the mother house at Foligno, did the links between the monasteries weaken, forcing the communities to look inward to their respective cities, rather than to Foligno, for support.

¹¹⁶ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 104, fol. 59v; published in Mancini 1993, p. 73. But see Chapter 4 for a possible commission to Perugino for an altarpiece around 1478-1480.

¹¹⁷ Garibaldi 1993, p. 45.

¹¹⁸ Garibaldi 1993, p. 50.

In 1442, the tertiaries of Sant'Antonio moved to larger premises with a cloister in the parish of San Cristoforo in Porta Sant'Angelo, close to the convent of the Minor Observants at Monteripido under whose care they were placed in 1455.¹¹⁹ Here they began a systematic building programme funded by regular testamentary dispositions, indicative of their increasing popularity and profile within the city.¹²⁰ The tertiaries were not, at this time, a closed order. Some lived in their own houses, though many lived together in groups, as here, and they had contact with other citizens through their acts of charity, including visiting and caring for the sick and ministering to the poor.¹²¹ This interaction with society led to clashes between the male monks of Monteripido, who wanted the order to become closed, and the women who fiercely, but ultimately unsuccessfully, opposed *clausura*. These gendered tensions seem to be reflected in the composition and iconography of Piero's altarpiece.

Many of the Sant'Antonio tertiaries came from the upper ranks of Perugian society, and, having taken their vows, were able to maintain close family ties. Familial involvement, both financial and administrative, often continued long after the women had entered the order. So, in 1460, Margherita's brother, Giacomo di Onofrio, left money in his will for vestments and the decoration of the church, maintaining the family's connection with the sisters.¹²² The women's well-placed connections may have influenced the priors in reaching their decision in 1468 to donate 50 florins towards an altarpiece and money to clothe the sick, '*pro campanis ad stillandum pullos pro infirmis*'.¹²³ Neri di Guido Montesperelli had been a magistrate at the end of 1467 and, in June 1468, Galeotto di Nello de'Baglioni was *Capo* of the *signori*, both of whom had family ties with the sisters.¹²⁴

It is uncertain who was responsible for selecting Piero della Francesca to paint an altarpiece for the tertiaries' chapel, but family connections again seem likely to have played a deciding role. During the late 1450s and 1460s, Margherita di

¹¹⁹ Moorman 1968, p. 566.

¹²⁰ Casagrande 1979, pp. 375-377; Garibaldi 1993, p. 51

¹²¹ Casagrande 1984, pp. 456-466.

¹²² ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 156, fol. 86v, as cited in Garibaldi 1993, p. 50.

¹²³ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 104, fol. 59v, transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 31, n. 99.

¹²⁴ Pellini 1664, II, pp. 693, 697.

Onofrio was still actively involved in running the monastery and was assisted by the young Ilaria Baglioni who was herself appointed minister in 1467 and 1469. Both came from influential families with strong Franciscan connections. Margherita's mother, Pellina di Filippo di Luca di Mascio was married three times; to the lawyer, Onofrio di Angelo, Ludovico di Filippo dei Baglioni and Nerio di Ceccarino.¹²⁵ Margherita was the widow of Averardo di Petruccio Montesperelli and had a daughter, Eufemia, who entered Sant'Antonio on being widowed by the death of the jurist, Mansueto Mansueti. Margherita maintained particularly close ties with her brother, Giacomo, a merchant who held the office of prior on several occasions from 1428 to 1458. He was Margherita's *procuratore* and also acted as *procuratore* for Sant'Antonio, as did her brother-in law, 'the very famous doctor of laws', Giovanni di Petruccio Montesperelli.¹²⁶ Giacomo's daughter, Paola, later entered the monastery and in her will of 1484 she appointed the sisters as her universal heirs.

The Montesperelli family had particular reverence for St. Anthony of Padua, and the family altar in San Francesco al Prato, where Margherita's husband was buried, was probably dedicated to him.¹²⁷ The family also had recent experience of commissioning an altarpiece. In 1455, Giovanni di Petruccio, who along with Sanurso Pauli dei Montesperelli had been among those appointed by the priors to oversee repairs to San Francesco in April 1433, commissioned a *Maestà* for the family chapel from the Perugian painter Mariano d'Antonio. In a document dated 7 January 1455, Mariano acknowledged receipt of 68 florins in final payment '*pro pictura eiusdam tabule et seu maestatis existentis ad presens in Ecclesia Sancti Francisci de Porta Subxanne super altare ipsius domini Johannis et suorum consortium*'.¹²⁸ 25 florins came from Giovanna, wife of the late Giovanni di Francesco di Paolo da Montesperello, 22 florins from the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia and the rest from Giovanni himself.

¹²⁵ Casagrande 1984, p. 454.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 486.

¹²⁷ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 327, fol. 122r; ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 15, fol. 6r, unpublished. The family is recorded as having tombs near the main altar. Modestini noted a statue of St. Anthony on the altar and Scarpellini deduced that it was dedicated to him. Scarpellini 1975.

¹²⁸ ASP, *Notarile, Bastardelli*, Notaio Giacomo di Paolo Nini, 1455, fol. 4r, transcribed in Garibaldi 1993, pp. 56-57; Bombe 1912, p. 90.

Scarpellini connected this commission with six panels attributed to Mariano, four of which depict the *Miracles of St Anthony of Padua*, and two, Sts. John the Baptist and Bernardino of Siena (Fig. 2.13).¹²⁹ The panels appear to be part of a large, medieval-style altarpiece, perhaps similar in design to the panel by the San Francesco Master in the same church. The presence of St. John the Baptist, who is not a specifically Franciscan saint, may point to his inclusion as a name saint of the patrons, commemorating the two Giovannis and Giovanna recorded in Mariano's quittance. Mariano also worked as a miniaturist and, in this capacity, decorated a large psalter, written by Frate Evangelista Todesco, for the sacristan of San Francesco.¹³⁰

Margherita's step-father was a member of the powerful Baglioni family and there appear to have been other connections between the two families as, on 4 May 1459, Braccio Baglioni, son of Malatesta and effectively '*signore*' of the city since 1437, held a garden party for love of the beautiful Margherita de Antonio da Montesperello.¹³¹ But Ilaria's connections were even closer, as she was Braccio's daughter. Braccio's aspiration to construct a humanist court along the lines of other great warrior princes, such as Federico da Montefeltro in Urbino and Sigismondo Malatesta in Rimini will be discussed in the next chapter, but his interest in artistic works is well chronicled. These probably included a commission to Domenico Veneziano around 1437-38 for a series of frescoes depicting famous men for the family *palazzo*.¹³² The young Piero is believed by some to have studied in Perugia at this time and may have worked with Domenico on these frescoes when he could have established a link with the Baglioni family directly, or through the recommendation of Domenico.¹³³ Furthermore, Federico da Montefeltro, Piero's patron in Urbino during the 1470s and possibly earlier, visited Perugia to pay homage to Pope Pius II in February 1459 and Braccio laid on entertainments for the visitors, so it is likely that the two *condottieri* would have met.¹³⁴ Braccio's rival,

¹²⁹ Scarpellini 1975.

¹³⁰ Bombe 1912, p. 90.

¹³¹ Heywood 1910, p. 303. Married to Francesco della Bottardo, she was Braccio's mistress.

¹³² Santi 1970, pp. 51-54 attributes a frescoed warrior discovered in the ruins of the Baglioni houses, to Domenico Veneziano. This is accepted in Scarpellini 1988, pp. 111-112.

¹³³ Scarpellini 1993, p. 111.

¹³⁴ Pellini 1664, II, p. 650.

Sigismondo Malatesta, had also commissioned Piero to paint his portrait twice - in the frescoed *Sigismondo Malatesta before St. Sigismondo*, in the Tempio Malatestiano dated 1451, and in a panel from 1451-1460 (Musée du Louvre, Paris). Furthermore, Braccio's younger brother, Guido, Ilaria's uncle, is documented as being in Rimini in 1456, working for Malatesta against Federico da Montefeltro and Giacomo Piccinini.¹³⁵ Braccio is also documented as knowing the humanist, Giovanni Bacci, a member of the family that commissioned Piero to fresco the *Story of the True Cross* cycle in the Franciscan church of San Francesco in Arezzo (1452-1466).¹³⁶ Finally, the Baglioni and della Francesca families owned contiguous pieces of land in the Tevere valley, near Bastia and are recorded as having dealings in April 1469.¹³⁷

Although none of these connections conclusively establish that Braccio was responsible for Piero's selection, they do identify a network of connections that help explain how Piero came to be selected to paint the tertiaries' altarpiece. While Margherita and Ilaria were capable women, managing the monastery at Sant'Antonio and, in Margherita's case, Minister General of the order, they would almost certainly have had to call upon their well-connected, male relatives to bring the altarpiece project to fruition. We know that Margherita's brother, Giacomo, was active on her behalf and the requirement that women act through *procuratori* in legal matters would have inevitably led to their involvement at critical stages in the commissioning and development of the altarpiece.

Compositionally, apart from the upper register, the altarpiece owes much to Fra Angelico's *Guidalotti Altarpiece*. The main panel depicts the Virgin seated on a semi-circular, vaulted throne with classical coffering. A Massacciesque Child sits on her knee, holding a goldfinch, symbolic of the Passion, in his left hand, and raises his right hand in blessing. To the left, forming a semi-circle, stand Sts. Anthony and John the Baptist, with Sts. Francis and Elizabeth of Hungary on the right, set against a gold ground that establishes a heavenly setting. In the upper predella, two *tondi*

¹³⁵ See Abbondanza 1963, p. 223.

¹³⁶ ASF, *MAP*, VII, 4, quoted in Ginzburg 1981, p. 21. This letter to Lorenzo de' Medici mentions Malatesta Baglioni as '*carissimo*', but this is probably an error and should refer to Braccio Baglioni.

¹³⁷ Balzani 1993, pp. 47, 51, 55.

depict Sts. Clare, founder of the Franciscan second order, and Agatha, who chose chastity over the advances of the Roman consul, Quintian. A third, now empty, tondo was set in what appears to have been a door, possibly for storing the host, although it has been suggested that it may have facilitated communication between the two sides of the altar.¹³⁸

The lower predella contains three earthly scenes: *The Miracle of St. Anthony*, which conflates two incidents when the saint revived dead children, the *Stigmatisation of St. Francis* and the *Miracle of St. Elizabeth*, when she rescued a child from a well. Buttresses to either side, but now lost, probably contained small depictions of other Franciscan saints.¹³⁹ The altarpiece is surmounted by a large stepped pediment (cut down) depicting the *Annunciation*. A kneeling angel and humble Virgin are set in a squared marble courtyard before an arcade of Corinthian columns that recedes steeply into the distance.

The composition of the central panel and predellas seems to have been tightly prescribed by the deviser of the programme, possibly Margherita, as they stand in a complex theological relationship with each other that depends upon the position of elements within the painting.¹⁴⁰ St Francis, placed directly below the Christ Child, becomes an *alter Christus*, receiving the stigmata just as Christ did on the cross. If the vertical connection is followed from the top down, the Annunciation is linked chronologically to the Madonna and Child and the crucifixion, while Francis' position below the Virgin equates his chastity with her virginity. Both Christ and Francis are flanked by Sts. Anthony and Elizabeth and those to either side of Francis actively intervene in the world, showing how members of Francis' orders could put Christ's teaching into practice. Moreover, the female St. Elizabeth's intervention is of the same degree as that of the male St. Anthony. Both save children from death. Elizabeth's calling, and by extension, the tertiaries' duty, is to be active within the community just like their male counterparts and not to be restricted to a life of prayer and contemplation within a closed order, as was being mooted by the nearby monks of Monteripido.

¹³⁸ Virilli and Fusetti 1993, p. 140.

¹³⁹ Gardner von Teuffel 1993, p. 90.

¹⁴⁰ Apa 1993, pp. 93-105.

Female saints are given considerable prominence with Elizabeth, Clare and Agatha, all depicted. The example of the noble Elizabeth, who had borne three children and had a happy marriage, was particularly meaningful for the wealthy, often widowed, Perugian tertiaries, as in taking her as an exemplar, they need feel no shame for their non-virginal state. Moreover, the emphasis on the care of children – traditionally a female concern - was appropriate to the lay congregation to whom the altarpiece was primarily addressed. It provided a way into the Franciscan life even for those women who might consider themselves barred due to their worldly commitments and responsibilities. At the same time, it put the case for the tertiaries' role in the community to continue.

For those accustomed to viewing Central Italian altarpieces from a Florentine viewpoint, the late date suggested for the altarpiece, when attached to an ornate frame, gold ground and compartmentalised structure, automatically renders the work archaic - a typical example of backward, provincial taste forcing an innovative artist to work in an out-dated manner.¹⁴¹ But Piero did not reject new developments in the depiction of space and depth; rather he adapted them to accommodate the requirements of his Perugian patrons, which tended to favour structural hierarchy and rich materials. Piero incorporated the likely patronal request for a gold ground similar to that in Fra Angelico's *Guidalotti* panel by using strategies other than architectural recession to create a sense of depth. Here, a brocade effect created from two layers of gold leaf, converts the typically flat, supra-dimensional ground of medieval paintings into a clearly defined back wall, covered with a decorative hanging. The depth of the room is established by extending the marble floor well behind the saints' feet and overlapping their bodies. The shadows, which fall from left to right consistently throughout the panel, and the foreshortened, disc-shaped haloes that reflect their bearers' heads, also contribute to the sense of depth.

The receding arcade of columns in the pediment, which has been regarded by many as irreconcilable with the rest of the work due to its modernity, can, therefore,

¹⁴¹ 'Still more embarrassing to the painter must have been the gilded grounds of the panels, damascened in one bold pattern for the centre and another for the sides'. Hendy 1968, p. 126.

be seen as merely another method of establishing depth - one unavailable to Piero in the central panel or the predellas which were probably tightly circumscribed by the programme.¹⁴² The well-known iconography of the *Annunciation*, high in the pediment, would not have required such careful prescription, so Piero probably had a free hand in its composition and could include a *bravura* display of perspectival recession. The audience would have had no difficulty in accepting the co-existence of earthly and heavenly realms depicted in these different ways, as they were simply visual parallels to fifteenth-century spirituality which saw mortal existence as a mere prelude to eternal bliss.¹⁴³

The work of local painters

So what factors can be ascertained from these mainly Franciscan examples to explain the almost exclusive selection of foreign painters to paint major altarpieces in Perugia during the first half of the fifteenth century? The choice cannot simply be attributed to a lack of local painters. The first Perugian *matricola* for the fifteenth century lists some 94 painters and Bombe identified several others for whom documentary evidence exists, but who were not enrolled in the Guild.¹⁴⁴ Their workshops were distributed throughout the city, with the greatest concentration in the district of Porta San Pietro, yet, apart from a few isolated examples, such as Pellegrino, Policeto di Cola and Mariano d'Antonio, there are few documents linking these artists with altarpieces and still fewer extant examples. The documents that do exist tend to be for small-scale commissions, such as that by Pietro di Angelo Ercolani, who in 1425, on entering the monastery of Monteripido, left his goods to the order, specifying that fifteen gold florins should be used for a painting of the assumption of the Virgin by *Tadeus Pictor*.¹⁴⁵ This probably refers to Taddeo Simone of Porta Sant'Angelo, the only painter named Tadeus inscribed in the Perugian *matricole dell'arte* for the first half of the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁶ The lack of further information in the legal document and the note that Taddeo had already been

¹⁴² Apa 1993, pp. 93-105. For a comparable situation involving Vecchietta at Spedaletto, see Paardekooper 1996, pp. 150-186.

¹⁴³ Wood 2002, p. 11; Bonnefoy 1989, pp. 8-26.

¹⁴⁴ Manzoni 1904, pp. 53-57.

¹⁴⁵ '*hoc honore dipingatur in dicto loco figura Anumptiate, prout est informatus Tadeus pictor.*' ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 94, fol. 18v, partially transcribed in Tabarelli 1977, p. 28.

¹⁴⁶ Manzoni 1904, p. 54.

informed (*prout est informatus*) throws some light on the way such relatively small-scale works may have been commissioned, with details probably being agreed verbally if the painter was local. It was unnecessary to include more than an outline reference in testamentary-style documents such as this, as both parties already knew what had been agreed.

Local artists appear mainly to have been employed to paint ephemeral articles such as banners, shields, furniture and altar-cloths. One such artisan was Baldassare Mattioli, who was inscribed in the *matricola* for Porta Sole and also had a workshop in Porta San Pietro. He headed a large family workshop that included his two sons, Angelo and Battista, his grandson, Ludovico and various apprentices, including Giannicola di Vanni da Castel della Fratta, (modern day Umbertide).¹⁴⁷ He is known to have worked for the *comune* in 1416-17 and was employed by Braccio Fortebraccio in 1419 and 1423, to paint round shields (*rotelle*) for Braccio's campaign at Todi, together with four chests (*cofani*), to be given to Count Oddone as a gift. In 1423, he painted frescoes with Antonio Alberti from Ferrara in Braccio's house in Montone - a project which provided work for several local artists, including Pietro della Catrina. The guild of painters was entrusted with organising the festivities surrounding the feast day of St. Herculanus, including running the *quintana* – a game where horsemen attempted to lance a ring that hung suspended from a scaffold. Baldassare was given the responsibility of painting this in 1424. Even so, despite his high profile and good connections, not one panel painting has been associated with Baldassare.

Similarly, Policeto di Cola, proposed as the painter of the *Farneto Altarpiece* and probably responsible for some of the frescoes at the Trinci palace in Foligno, is recorded as receiving 7 florins 70 soldi for painting trumpet pennants and a shield with a griffin, and 75 florins for standards, all for Braccio Fortebraccio, in 1423.¹⁴⁸ Policeto is documented as being active until 1446. In 1447, his wife, Nicola, daughter of Petri Andruccioli d. Piercivalli de Ballionibus, on making her will, simply left money for the celebration of the mass of St. Gregory and a requiem mass

¹⁴⁷ Bombe 1912, p. 91; Gnoli 1923, p. 44.

¹⁴⁸ Bombe 1912, pp. 299-300.

at the convent of Monteripido. In a subsequent will, dated 1448, she left money for an additional mass to be said at the church of San Domenico and the substantial sum of 100 florins to Monteripido for its decoration, repair, extension and conservation, which suggests that by this time she had come into money (although she is not described as a widow) and that Policeto had been financially successful in his career even though few panel paintings attributable to him, exist.¹⁴⁹

Summary

Despite there being no numerical shortage of local painters, their variable, and often indifferent, quality may have been a contributory factor in the patrons' choice of foreign artists. From the few local examples that exist, it is clear that while local artists were emulating the Sieneese style, their execution was, on the whole, less graceful, more stylised and generally lacking in *finesse*. The prevalence of Sieneese painters, particularly during the early years of this period, points to the patrons' desire for a particular aesthetic and quality of workmanship, and to informed decisions in the selection of painters who could deliver it, albeit often constrained within Perugian requirements relating to form and iconography. The gradual change to Florentine painters reveals an awareness and desire for new fashions, provided always that they came within the Perugians' own stylistic and formal requirements.

Given these overarching aspirations for style and quality, the selection of individual foreign painters can largely be ascribed to familial networks, as in the choice of Piero della Francesca, where it seems highly likely that Margherita and Ilaria were influenced by, or able to manipulate, family connections. Beyond a sense of religious duty, family ambitions and political allegiances seem to have been paramount in the Guidalotti selections of Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli, where both artists had papal approval and where the selection of 'big name' artists who could be guaranteed to deliver imposing works of the highest quality, was essential. Links and rivalries between religious establishments were also important, as with the Franciscans' commission to Taddeo di Bartolo after he had worked for the Dominicans, while the reputation of a longstanding family workshop may account for the commission to Bicci di Lorenzo. While Domenico Veneziano's famous letter

¹⁴⁹ Tabarelli 1977, pp. 42, 48-49.

from Perugia advertising his services to Piero de' Medici (1 April 1438) illustrates how some painters actively sought work, most commissioning documents suggest that it was the commissioner who selected the painter whom he desired.¹⁵⁰

Despite the prevailing tendency to commission foreign painters during the first part of the century and the underwhelming quality of the local school, the middle years of the century were to witness a sudden increase in the number of local artists being commissioned to undertake major works and the concomitant decline and then virtual extinction of commissions to foreign painters. The Sant'Antonio commission to Piero della Francesca in the late 1450s or early 1460s was the last commission to a foreign painter for a major altarpiece until Signorelli was commissioned to paint an altarpiece for the cathedral in 1483-4, and even then it will be argued that there were particular circumstances leading to this external commission. An examination of the changes within Perugian society and the religious and political landscape during these years may help explain this fundamental change in the patterns of patronal behaviour and its impact on the development of local painters.

¹⁵⁰ ASF, MAP, VII, fol. 290, transcribed in Wohl 1980, pp. 339-340. Despite working in Perugia, Domenico had heard that Piero's father, Cosimo, was about to commission a major altarpiece and wrote to ask that he be considered for the job. He also took the opportunity to 'spin' against the availability of his rivals, Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi.

Chapter 3: The Emergence of the Local School (c.1450-c.1480)

The second half of the fifteenth century witnessed a significant expansion in the number of artistic commissions within Perugia. This increase was accompanied by a marked change in patronal practice. Commissions to 'foreign' painters became a rarity and local painters emerged to meet the demand. To identify the factors underlying this transformation it will be helpful to consider various developments within the religious, social and political life of the city and their effect on patronal behaviour.

Religious, social and political developments

For the Franciscans, the preaching, death and subsequent canonisation of St. Bernardino of Siena were of paramount importance during this period. But Bernardino's influence extended beyond the confines of the order and its related confraternities, even having an impact upon the machinery of government within Perugia. His interrelationship with the Perugian state is discernable on the facade of the oratory that was erected in his memory. Fra Bernardino Albizzeschi died in the convent of San Francesco at Aquila on Ascension Eve, 20 May 1444, having preached his last sermon in Perugia on 4 May. Upon hearing the news, the magistrates provided for offices to be said at the cathedral. Bishop Giovanni Andrea Baglioni pronounced the mass and the Augustinian, Alessandro Oliva da Sassoferrato, was invited to give the funeral oration before the monks and '*tutti li gentilomini e cittadini da conto e moltissime donne*' – an indication of the high regard in which Bernardino was held by the upper echelons of Perugian society.¹

Bernardino had long enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the city authorities. From 1421 to 1438, he was Vicar of the Observant Franciscans in Tuscany and Umbria, but his initial invitation to preach in Perugia in 1424 probably came from the papal legate, Angelo Correr, who had both administrative and religious responsibilities and appears to have been sympathetic to Bernardino's teachings. Angelo had already attempted to prohibit outlaws from carrying arms and

¹ Fabretti 1850, pp. 548-9.

had tried to institute a *pax romana* in the city.² This establishment approval continued with the arrival of a new governor and papal legate, Archbishop Pietro Donato, and in response to the wave of public piety aroused by his preaching, Bernardino was asked to reform the city statutes.³ These were implemented in November 1425 with the support of the magistrates and the legate; both authorities appreciating the advantages of an orderly, self-denying populace.⁴

In the event, Bernardino's reforms were too strict to be workable and were abandoned within two years, but he continued to be revered within the city and to enjoy the support of the governing bodies.⁵ His efforts to quell violent rivalries between the noble factions, especially the bloodthirsty 'mock battles' fought on feast days, were particularly encouraged.⁶ In 1439, to facilitate St Bernardino's preaching, the magistrates erected a pink and white marble pulpit on the facade of the cathedral, illustrating the centrality of Franciscan teaching to civic life.⁷ Bernardino returned to preach in 1438 and 1441, during the early years of the episcopacy of Andrea Giovanni Baglioni. Andrea was a member of the ruling Baglioni family, whose close ties with Pope Eugenius IV resulted in the forcible implementation of papal reforms in Perugia.⁸ His acceptance of Bernardino's presence in his diocese indicates a congruity of interests between the friar, the Baglioni family, the church and the state.

The city authorities seem to have been keen to promote Bernardino after his death, perhaps hoping that the development of his cult would encourage behaviour conducive to stable government and the *status quo*. A mere two months after he had died, Perugia successfully joined with Siena and Aquila to lobby for his canonisation and on 24 May 1450, Pope Nicholas V declared Bernardino a saint. The announcement was probably timed to coincide with the meeting of the general council of the Franciscan order, then in Rome to appoint a new Vicar General. Consequently, the canonisation celebrations were attended by some 2000-3000

² Rusconi 1989, p. 114.

³ He also reformed the statutes of Siena.

⁴ Rusconi 1989, p. 116; Pacetti 1939, pp. 495, 507.

⁵ Origo 1963, pp. 152-3.

⁶ But Rusconi 1989, pp. 115-116, maintains Bernardino's success lay only in resolving personal disputes and that his failure to end factionalism is apparent from the ongoing measures that continued to be necessary. See also Webb 1996, pp. 100-101 for the regulation of feast days.

⁷ Fabretti 1888, p. 99.

⁸ Abbondanza 1963-4, V, pp. 192-193.

Franciscans, mainly Observants, along with 14 cardinals and 44 bishops, providing an opportunity for the Order to publicly affirm their increasing spiritual vitality.⁹ By 1451, the city of Perugia, working in tandem with the Franciscans, had appropriated the canonisation of the saint to promote its own increasing vitality and had commissioned an oratory at San Francesco al Prato and a chapel in the Cathedral to his memory.

The interests of the church, the state and the Baglioni family, were inextricably intertwined during this period. The Baglioni were the pre-eminent family in Perugia throughout the second half of the fifteenth century and from 1437 to 1479, Braccio Baglioni was at their head. As brilliant, if ruthless, *condottieri*, employing thousands of soldiers, they provided a lucrative source of revenue for Perugia and themselves and, at the height of their power, the family consisted of more than 20 households, concentrated in the Colle Landone area of the city. Technically, Braccio should not be described as *signore* as Perugia was officially governed through a power-sharing arrangement between the papal representatives - the legate, governor and treasurer of the *Camera apostolica* - and the *priori* or magistrates of the *comune*.¹⁰ His impact upon the political and cultural life of the city was, however, immense and his period of influence has been dubbed a *cryptosignoria*.¹¹ His personal acts of patronage and influence upon other commissioning bodies - state, clerical and lay - created an atmosphere of courtly taste that encouraged the eventual development of a local school of painters.

While Braccio's supremacy cannot be described as peaceful, it did provide a lengthy period of relative stability for his family and, by extension, the city, during which he was able to develop his princely ambitions. Francesco Mancini, with perhaps an element of local pride, has credited Braccio with cultivating a humanist court in the manner of other cultured *condottieri* such as Federico da Montefeltro, *'Uno stile cortese, dunque, perfettamente allineato con le aspirazioni nobiliari della committenza perugina che ama presentarsi come nuova cavalleria, trionfante nelle*

⁹ Mode 1973, p. 58.

¹⁰ Other oligarchical families, including the Oddi, Ranieri, Signorelli, Baldeschi, Montesperelli and Alfani, curbed the Baglioni's power so that they could not overwhelm the instruments of government. Black 1970, pp. 245-281.

¹¹ Mancini 1992, p. 11.

*armi, raffinata nella vita.*¹² Braccio's court, the university and other private circles provided forums for cultural, scientific and literary debate, while his introduction of the printing press to the university facilitated the diffusion of these ideas and allowed Perugia to produce books independently, so that it was no longer reliant on external sources.

The university, which originated around 1276 and was among the oldest in Europe, had long been famous in the fields of law and medicine, but in the second half of the quattrocento the chairs of rhetoric, poetry and oratory were filled with some of the foremost humanists of the day, attracted to the city from centres such as Florence and Rome. Other learned foreigners came to fill the post of papal legate, among them Francesco Matarazzo, Tommaso Pontano and Stefano Guerrieri. These men were eminent humanist scholars and their presence helped develop an interest in ancient codices and the study of classical texts within the city.¹³

The period saw much building work. The Palace of the Priors was doubled in size between 1429 and 1443 and during the second half of the century the Palazzo dell'Università Vecchia was built in the Piazza del Sopramuro. The campanile of San Pietro was renovated (1463-68) and that of San Domenico constructed (1464 onwards), while under the initiative of the Baglioni family, the church of Santa Maria dei Servi was modernised (1471). Braccio constructed many fine villas with beautiful gardens where lavish entertainments and dinners were held.¹⁴ Spectacles were not confined to the wealthy. Dances, equestrian tournaments and games, where the prizes included lengths of velvet cloth and gold rings, entertained the general populace, Braccio's coat of arms being prominently displayed throughout.¹⁵

The city was visited by many leading dignitaries, indicative of the circles within which Braccio aspired to move, and their arrivals provided opportunities for pageantry and display that did honour to both guests and host. When Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Pope Pius II, stopped in Perugia on his way to Mantua in 1459, he was

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁴ Such as the garden party for Margherita de Antonio da Montesperello, noted in chapter 2. Scalvanti 1898, p. 374.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 304-5.

escorted from the gate of San Pietro to the Palazzo dei Priori by the city dignitaries dressed in their finery.¹⁶ The many ambassadors who came to visit the pope while he was in the city were entertained with tournaments and jousts provided by Braccio. In 1469, the Venetian ambassador visited the city, as did Borso d'Este in 1471.¹⁷ To create a sufficiently imposing entrance for such illustrious visitors, the southern gate at San Pietro was redesigned by Agostino di Duccio (1473-1481), its austere, Albertian-inspired facade proclaiming the city's aspiration to be regarded as a humanist centre.¹⁸

The communal nature of these visits, in which Perugia's leading organisations, both clerical and lay, were required to participate, is apparent from paintings such as Benedetto Bonfigli's fresco, *The second translation of the relics of St. Herculanus* (Fig. 3.1), in the chapel of the Priors. While ostensibly commemorating the saint's interment several centuries earlier, it portrays Perugia's leading citizens of the day – magistrates, churchmen and even noblewomen – as they process in clearly defined groups across the central piazza against a backdrop of the city's most recognizable buildings.

The Priors' decision, in 1454, to decorate their chapel with scenes from the lives of Sts. Herculanus and Louis of Toulouse, celebrated the city's history and was intended to bring prestige to it. When, in 1469, Bonfigli began a lawsuit against the magistrates for non-payment of work already done and threatened to abandon the job, the magistrates stated that if the work were not finished, it would bring disgrace upon the entire city.¹⁹

Benedetto Bonfigli: a local painter for a local commission

In 1454, an extraordinary meeting had been held to discuss the '*reformatione et conservatione presentis ecclesiastici status*' of the chapel, at which Braccio Baglioni was present. It seems likely that the choice of a local painter, Benedetto Bonfigli, rather than a renowned foreign painter, for such a prestigious enterprise

¹⁶ Fabretti 1850, pp. 633-634.

¹⁷ Pellini 1664, II, p. 650.

¹⁸ For Agostino di Duccio in Perugia see Pope-Hennessy 1996, pp. 389-340; For Perugian humanist aspirations see Pecugi Fop 1997, pp. 77-78

¹⁹ '*et si res ipsa non deduceretur ad optatum finem cederet in ignominiam totius rei publice Perusine.*' ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 105, fols. 105v-106v, transcribed in Mancini 1992, pp. 164-165.

would have been the subject of some debate, and their concerns may be reflected in the precautions taken by the commissioners to ensure that their painting would be up to standard. The contract provided that the finished work should be judged by one of three renowned 'foreign' painters, all of whom were familiar with the city, namely Domenico Veneziano, Fra Angelico and Filippo Lippi. In the event, only Lippi was still alive in 1461 and he declared the frescoes to be '*bene factas*'.²⁰ This public approval from a Florentine artist not only afforded the local painter's work the legitimisation desired by the Priors, but also implicitly acknowledged the end of foreign domination.²¹ Bonfigli's commission marked the beginning of a new pattern of patronage within the city. Patrons no longer automatically went outside the city for important commissions, but increasingly found that local painters could meet their requirements and that it was acceptable, perhaps even desirable, to employ them.

Benedetto Bonfigli was born in Perugia, around 1418.²² Little is known of his early life, save that his grandfather was a wood carver and the family seem to have encountered financial difficulties around 1430, when they sold some of their land and goods. Mancini has hypothesised that Bonfigli may have been apprenticed in the Perugian workshop of Baldassare Mattioli; both were registered in the district of San Pietro where Baldassare had a well-established business. He had worked on several prestigious projects, including the decoration of Braccio Baglioni's house at Montone.²³ In later years, Bonfigli had contact with Baldassare's sons, Angelo and Battista, and they may have been apprentices together. In Baldassare's workshop, Bonfigli would have encountered a taste for narration and the ornate style of Umbria and the Marche - interests that are apparent in the frescoes of the Prior's Palace and Bonfigli's altarpieces.

Mancini suggests that, around 1430, Bonfigli transferred into the workshop of Mariano d'Antonio, where Policeto da Cola was also working by 1436. Both these

²⁰ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 97, fol. 83r-v, transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 157.

²¹ Mancini 1992, p. 27. Mancini proposes that the selection of the Florentine judges was orchestrated to provide legitimisation. They were bound to approve Bonfigli's work, as he was strongly influenced by them.

²² A legal statement recounting an attack on Bonfigli by a rapist, gives Bonfigli's age as 12 in 1429. Sartore 1996, p. 23. Mancini suggests a birth date of 1410. Mancini 1992, p. 33.

²³ Mancini 1992, pp. 33-38.

artists had ties with Pellegrino di Giovanni whose interpretation of Gentile da Fabriano's style has been discussed. If Bonfigli did enter this workshop, it would have increased his exposure to Gentile's style of painting and could account for the elegant Virgin and Child in the central panel of his *Madonna and Child* (El Paso Museum of Art, Texas) dating from the early 1450s. This ultimately derives from Gentile, though mediated by Pellegrino's more lyrical style. The elegant *Nativity* (Berenson Collection, Settignano) with its subdued ochre tones, rugged landscape and angels incised onto a gold ground is another early example of this refined style of painting that seems to have particularly appealed to Perugian commissioners.

However, the theory is not universally accepted and Elvio Lunghi dismisses the suggestion that Bonfigli trained in these local workshops on the grounds that Bonfigli's early paintings bear little resemblance to their known works. He proposes that Bonfigli worked with Domenico Veneziano when he was in Perugia and then went to Florence for some years to hone his trade.²⁴ This could explain the quality of Bonfigli's technique and compositional skills which surpass local examples, although Bonfigli would undoubtedly have been influenced by the painters in his home city.

Bonfigli seems to have come to the attention of someone influential in Roman artistic circles as, by early 1450, he was working in the Vatican palace, where Fra Angelico had been engaged since 1447, first by Pope Eugenius IV and then Pope Nicholas V. In March, April and May 1450, '*maestro Benedetto di Perugia dipintore per suo salaro*' received three payments calculated at the rate of 7 ducats per month.²⁵ This was the same rate paid to Benozzo Gozzoli for his work in St. Peter's in May 1447, which suggests that Bonfigli was working on more than just decorative features, though none of this work survives.²⁶ The exact nature of Bonfigli's position is unclear, although he was probably part of Angelico's team; Angelico himself had returned to Florence by late 1449.²⁷ Mancini surmises that Braccio Baglioni may

²⁴ Lunghi 1996a, p. 43; See also Pepe 1963-4, pp. 13-15 for the proposal that Bonfigli studied in Florence.

²⁵ ASR, *Camerale I, Tesoreria Segreta*, 1284, fol. 143r; Bombe 1912, p. 318; Rossi 1877a, p. 265; transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 151.

²⁶ For the payment to Benozzo Gozzoli see ASR, *Camerale I, Tesoreria Segreta*, 1283, Entrata e uscita 414, 1447-1448, fols. 38v-39r transcribed in Cole Ahl 1996, p. 275.

²⁷ Mancini 1992, p. 38.

have used his influence to secure Bonfigli's position.²⁸ Braccio had recently supplanted the Florentines as the Pope's *condottiero* and had his ear around 1450, but it is also possible that the two painters had some contact in 1447 when Fra Angelico probably painted the *Guidalotti Altarpiece* for San Domenico.²⁹

Bonfigli's achievement in Rome shows a Perugian painter having success outside his own city for the first time and it did not go unnoticed. Vasari acknowledged his work in the pope's palace and saw it as prefiguring Pintoricchio's success there.³⁰ The nature of Rome's artistic climate probably facilitated Bonfigli's acceptance there. Counter to the usual centre-periphery model, at this date it had no home-grown artists, with painters being gathered from other places instead. This fluctuating community may well have been more accessible to a young painter from Umbria than a city with a developed artistic 'school' of its own.

By August 1453, Bonfigli had returned to Perugia. He must have attained considerable recognition and experience from his Roman appointment as, along with Mariano d'Antonio and Melchiorre da Città di Castello, he was soon employed by the Priors to give an expert opinion on a processional panel by Battista di Baldassare Mattioli. The *Tabula Salvatoris* (Fig. 3.2, Museo Capitolare, Perugia) was painted on one side with *Christ the Redeemer* while the other contained a painted and gilded *bas-relief* depicting *The Coronation of the Virgin*. The panel replaced an earlier version and was carried in an annual procession on the feast of the Assumption from the cathedral to the Franciscan convent of Monteluca and returned eight days later.³¹ The panel's public role accounts for the contribution of 30 florins authorised by the priors on 21 June 1451.³² The painted side shows a robust Christ standing facing his congregation, his right hand raised in blessing and his left holding a staff. His stature is accentuated by the stylised folds of the cloak that falls between his arms in a regular, hieratic fashion, while his status is established by the heavy red brocade cloth and gold ground. Despite the stiffness of the figure, the face of Christ is well

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁹ But the carpentry suggests this was painted in Florence. Kanter and Palladino 2005, p. 159.

³⁰ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, p. 576, mentions Bonfigli's Roman work in the context of Pintoricchio's career.

³¹ Bernardini 1991, pp. 16-19.

³² ASP, *Consigli e riformanze* 97, fol. 72r, unpublished. An entry at 78r approves a payment of 25 florins.

modelled with an expressive, furrowed brow and finely painted beard and hair. Bonfigli and Mariano d'Antonio found it to be '*bene depicta*'.

Melchiorre, however, considered the sculpture to have certain defects, in that it did not comply with the form and design specified by the magistrates as Battista had used other designs and ornamentation for which the magistrates should be compensated.³³ On the carved side, a young Virgin lays her head on Christ's shoulder as his bride. They sit on a low, gilded throne decorated with scroll work. Two angels hold a red cloth of honour behind the holy pair, while two others stand behind them with their heads sharply inclined to either side in a manner characteristic of the angels of Bonfigli and a painter from nearby Camerino, Giovanni di Pier Matteo Boccati.³⁴ Their 'sweet' faces, framed by centrally parted, golden curls, resemble Boccati's choral singers in the *Madonna of the Pergola*, executed around 1447 and purchased by the Oratory of the *Disciplinati* based in San Domenico.³⁵

The banner would have been carried under a baldachin and Battista alludes to this by placing his figures under a small portico with a coffered ceiling, supported by two columns with ornately carved and gilded composite capitals. The plinth of the pediment has a gilded egg and dart pattern reminiscent of the frieze of ancient warriors in Boccati's *Madonna of the Orchestra*, painted around 1450 (Fig. 3.3). These *all'antica* features point to an engagement on the part of this Perugian artist with the antique and reflects the growing interest in humanism that was beginning to permeate the city. While Battista is not known to have visited Rome, he would have had direct contact with ancient Roman sculpture through the remains that were plentiful in Umbria, particularly at Assisi.

An altarpiece for the Confraternity of Sts. Jerome, Francis and Bernardino of Siena

The Baglioni and their political circle were not the only group to engage in acts of patronage that reveal a growing interest in humanist ideas and an increasing

³³ '*In aliquibus dictus Batista fecit ultra designationem aliqua ornamenta.*' ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 89, fol. 76v, transcribed in Mancini 1992, pp. 151-152.

³⁴ Boccati became a Perugian citizen in 1445.

³⁵ The altarpiece, which was the first example of the new Florentine *quadrata* in Perugia, was commissioned by Messer Agnolo, but rejected by him, perhaps because of its controversial shape. Nevertheless, the confraternity paid 250 florins for the work, indicating the willingness of some, if not all, Perugian patrons to accept new developments. Garibaldi 1996, p. 58.

desire for the artistic styles of Rome and Florence. The surge in popular religious fervour that stemmed from the preaching of St. Bernardino of Siena, his death and swift canonisation, manifested itself partially in an increase in the numbers entering monastic orders, but also in the formation of several lay confraternities dedicated to the saint, some of which became active patrons. Among the most influential was the Confraternity of Sts. Jerome, Francis and Bernardino of Siena which was formed in 1445 by Giacomo della Marca, who had attended the school of theology and canon law at the convent of Monteripido. The confraternity attracted prominent clerical and lay members; Angelo del Toscano, the General of the Conventual Franciscans, is listed in the roll of friar members immediately after Giacomo,³⁶ although he appears between the eighteenth and nineteenth numbered entries in the original list of members that includes laymen.³⁷ An entry immediately above Angelo's name states, '*Questi de sopra fuorono quelli che recevute la regola de la mano de frate Iacomo nominato de sopra*', apparently excluding Angelo from being a founder member as sometimes suggested.³⁸ However, Angelo was certainly an early member and he secured an oratory annexed to San Francesco al Prato for the confraternity's use in perpetuity.³⁹

The confraternity sought to establish a dialogue between the two factions within the Franciscan order - the Conventuals and the Observants - through the study of doctrine and theology and it venerated those saints who had stressed the study and knowledge of sacred texts. An entry at the beginning of the confraternity's record book emphasises Giacomo's role as both a preacher in Perugia and his giving of the rule to the Order, while the confraternity is recorded as being founded to God's glory and honour, as a good example to the people and to build up, or 'edify' them.⁴⁰ The greatest preachers and thinkers of the order, Roberto da Lecce, Bernardo da Firenze and Cherubino da Spoleto, were all members.⁴¹

The description of an altarpiece depicting the Madonna and Child with Sts.

³⁶ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato*, 18, fol. 32r. Members are listed in Nessi 1967, pp. 97-103.

³⁷ *ibid.*, fol. 8r.

³⁸ Mercurelli Salari 1996, pp. 143-144,

³⁹ See Nessi 1967, pp. 89-90 for the act of concession.

⁴⁰ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 18, fol. 3r. '*...intendano fondare e piantare ad gloria et honore de ipso dio et de tucta la sua sancta ad calistial corte et a bono exempio et ad edificazione delli populi...*', unpublished.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, fols. 32r-v, listed in Nessi 1967, pp. 97-103.

Thomas Aquinas, Jerome, Francis and Bernardino of Siena, in an inventory of the confraternity from 1512, probably refers to an altarpiece by Benedetto Bonfigli which entered the Pinacoteca, and later the Galleria Nazionale, from San Francesco al Prato (Fig. 3.4).⁴² Several details within the painting reflect the confraternity's predilections. Both branches of the Franciscans are alluded to. St. Francis, as founder of the order wears the dark brown habit of a Conventual, while St. Bernardino's Observant background is indicated by his light grey habit. Both are venerated as givers of the Rule and distinguished theologians, roles emphasised by the books they hold and St. Francis' cross. In contrast, St. Francis' stigmata are relatively understated. It is likely that St. Bernardino originally held his trigram, as his right arm is raised, but this area of the painting is badly damaged. St. Jerome, who was a popular Franciscan saint because of his ascetic life in the desert, appears here, not as a hermit, but resplendent in cardinal's robes and hat, holding a book - testifying to his humanist stature as the learned doctor of the church who had translated the Vulgate.⁴³

This interest in doctrine and a desire to counter allegations of ignorance often made against the Observant Franciscans in particular, may also explain the presence and honour afforded to the Dominican theologian, St. Thomas Aquinas. The Christ Child singles out St. Thomas for particular attention, leaning across St. Jerome to hand Thomas a sun surrounded by rays, symbolic of learning and wisdom. Moreover, the text of his open book is legible and refers to a well-known passage describing a vision Thomas experienced at the end of his life, when the crucified Christ appeared to him and praised his writing.⁴⁴

There are no published documents to indicate when the altarpiece was completed. Mercurelli Salari has surmised that the confraternity would have set about decorating its new location as soon as possible after moving in.⁴⁵ Angelo del Toscano had been in Rome in the Spring of 1450, when Bonfigli was working in the

⁴² ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato*, 18, fol. 3r (in secondary pencil numbering at the end of the manuscript) partially transcribed in Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 148, see also pp. 143-144. An inventory of c. 1530 also appears to describe the painting with a predella. *ibid.*, fol. 5r (secondary numbering), cited but not transcribed in Mercurelli Salari *loc. cit.*

⁴³ Mancini 1992, p. 127.

⁴⁴ B(E)N(E) SCRIP/SISTI D/E ME THO/MA QUIA/ ERGO A/ ME RE/CIPIES P(RO) LA/BORE TUO/ MERCED/EM B(EA)T/US TOM/AS D(OMINE)/ NOLO N(ISI)/ TE IP(SUM).

⁴⁵ Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 148.

Vatican. He may have seen his work there and recommended his selection. Furthermore, another member of the confraternity, inscribed as Giovagne Crinello de Tomassino, is likely to be the painter, Giovanni di Tomaso Crivelli. In 1445, he witnessed the act by which Bonfigli contracted to paint a *Maestà* outside the church of San Pietro and, in 1450, painted the ceiling of the chapel of the priors with Melchiorre de Matteo.⁴⁶ Bonfigli, with his local workshop connections and credentials as a papal painter would, therefore, have been known to various members of the confraternity if discussions for the commission took place soon after 1455 and the cachet attached to a papal painter could have been significant in view of the confraternity's aspirations.

The painting's architectonic setting, with its marble panelled wall surmounted by a vegetative *all'antica* frieze, postdates Bonfigli's Roman sojourn, while the illuminated face of the Child, the enthroned Madonna in her niche and the relationship of the saints in a *sacra conversazione* setting, owe much to Fra Angelico's *Guidalotti Altarpiece*, as do the four angels standing on the balcony. They do not necessarily indicate a date in the mid-1450s and Santi and Mancini both place the altarpiece among Bonfigli's later works, towards 1470.⁴⁷ The facial features of the saints, their neatly pleated skirts and the semi-circular disposition of the central group, resemble those in Bonfigli's *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 3.5). This has been convincingly identified as the altarpiece painted for Nicolo Guaspari in the chapel of St. Nicholas in San Domenico, which should now be dated between 1464 and 1467.⁴⁸

The confraternity's record book contains a section, written in an early hand, that records a number of substantial, but undated, bequests: 15 florins from Paulo di Bartolomeo, 20 florins from Matteo de Bartolomeo de Arezzo, 5 florins from Mariotto d'Angelo, and 8 florins from Mariano d'Angelo.⁴⁹ Of these, Paulo's will, dated 9 August 1458, reveals him to be the '*Spectabilis et prudens virum PAULUS quondam Bartholomeus Nicholuti merciarus*' and provides for his money to be used

⁴⁶ Bombe 1912, pp. 301-302.

⁴⁷ Santi, 1985, pp. 52-53; Mancini 1992, pp. 78, 127-129.

⁴⁸ ASP, San Domenico, 35, fol. 51r. The entry recording part payment to an unnamed painter for a panel for the chapel of Nicolo Guaspari is dated 25 April 1467, not 1466 as transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 161.

⁴⁹ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato*, 18, fol. 26v. Unpublished.

to maintain and support the confraternity's infirm.⁵⁰ Mariotto's five florins were to be paid in satisfaction of a promise he had freely made to the confraternity. His will, dated 3 July 1469, reveals the inter-denominational interests of some members of the confraternity. Described as a wool fuller, he asks to be buried in his chapel in San Domenico, but also leaves 50 florins to his daughter Virginia, a sister in the Franciscan monastery of Sant'Antonio da Padova.⁵¹

Matteo Bartolomeo's spiritual interests were also diverse. Apart from paying 4 florins for the maintenance of his local parish church of San Donato, his will, dated 23 July 1467 (Appendix 2.2), provided for him to be buried in the cathedral of St. Lawrence in Porta Sant'Angelo. He left 3 florins to the friars of Monteripido for the saying of masses and appointed the hospital of Santa Maria della Misericordia as his universal heirs (or, should they decline, the monastery of San Pietro). Furthermore, Matteo left 20 florins to the chapel of the Confraternity of St. Jerome in San Francesco al Prato, specifically for a panel that was being (or required to be) constructed and painted for the altar of the chapel.⁵²

The altarpiece is not described in the will, but the terms used suggest that it was already under construction, or at least being commissioned, by July 1467. It states that it is for the altar of the chapel, without specifying which altar, suggesting that at this time there was only one altar, or that this was for the main altar. One would, therefore, expect it to depict the confraternity's three eponymous Franciscan saints and to embrace those members with Dominican leanings by including a major Dominican figure such as St. Thomas Aquinas. There is a strong possibility that this bequest relates to Bonfigli's altarpiece, which can now be dated to around 1467 – a time when his altarpiece for Nicolò Guaspere was nearing completion or may have already been erected in San Domenico. There, it would have been seen by various members of the confraternity such as Mariottod'Angelo, who may have recommended Bonfigli for the confraternity's commission.

An altarpiece by Giovan Francesco da Rimini (Fig. 3.6, c.1464-1470), with a

⁵⁰ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 154, fols. 260r-262r. Unpublished.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 142, fols. 100r-102r. Unpublished.

⁵² *ibid.*, fol. 132v. Unpublished.

provenance from San Francesco al Prato, has a similar didactic message to Bonfigli's altarpiece and has been linked iconographically with the confraternity.⁵³ In the central panel, the Madonna sits on an architectonic throne within a scalloped dome, reminiscent of Piero della Francesca's *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece*. The Christ Child stands on his mother's knee blessing St. Jerome in the left panel. Again, Jerome wears his cardinal's regalia and is depicted poring over an open book. In the right hand panel, St. Francis, holding a crucifix and book, turns toward the holy couple. Any suggestion of poverty is abandoned as Francis wears neat, leather sandals. The atmosphere is sparingly refined; the plain gold ground, chequered floor and marbled wall emphasise an intellectual religious life, rather than active service within the community, as advocated by the *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece*.

The inscription at the base of the Madonna's throne states that Luca Alberto di Francesco had the work made for the soul of Micheline.⁵⁴ Luca Alberto 'domini Francisci' is also mentioned in the will of the painter Mariano di Antonio among his debtors as owing 2 florins for a painted panel that he had commissioned, indicating that Luca was an active patron.⁵⁵ Given the likely date of Giovan Francesco da Rimini's work, it is possible that this is the altarpiece for the confraternity referred to in the will of Matteo Bartolomeo, rather than Bonfigli's panel, although the absence of St. Bernardino militates against this. It is also unlikely that other donors would have been involved, given the inscription ascribing the commission solely to Luca. Moreover, the existence of Luca's family chapel in San Francesco al Prato is confirmed in his son, Tommaso's, will of 6 July 1470. Tommaso asks to be buried '*in capella suorum antecessorum, in pilo esistenti ante altare*', so it seems likely that the panel was for this family chapel and not the confraternity's chapel.⁵⁶ A certain Luca di Francesco is inscribed as the eighth member in the confraternity's roll and could be the same Luca, but a note in the margin states that he was required to resign from the confraternity in 1448, for behaviour contrary to the way of God and against the chapter.⁵⁷ This may account for the austere iconography of the panel, but renders

⁵³ Santi 1985, pp. 35-36; Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 143.

⁵⁴ HOC. OPU(S). FECIT. FIERI. LUCAS ALBERTUS. D(OMI)NI. FRANCHISCHI. P(RO). A(N)I(M)A. MICHELINE.

⁵⁵ Mariano's will is referenced only as ASP, *Notarile, Bastardelli* in Sartore 2003, p. 9.

⁵⁶ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli* 546, fols. 29v-30r, transcribed in Sartore 2003, p. 10.

⁵⁷ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 18, fol. 7v. '*fo rass a 1448 a de confraternitas altempo de messer Mariano de Domenico e de Francesco da Giovagne pore del dicto anno per rati fa*

the proposal that it was commissioned for the confraternity improbable.

Plague banners

Bonfigli's frescoes in the Prior's chapel depicted the urban landscape of Perugia in a vivid and lively manner, so that the city became a character in the narrative. This ability to capture the essence of the city would have made Bonfigli the obvious choice to paint a number of *gonfaloni* during the mid-1460s, where the depiction of Perugia as a city that needs and deserves divine protection, is crucial to their efficacy. Fabretti records that July 1464 saw such a bad outbreak of plague in Perugia that everyone tried to flee from the city to the surrounding countryside.⁵⁸ Fearing a repeat of the depopulation suffered during an outbreak in 1448, when parents even left their children to flee to safety, the magistrates appointed 100 men, led by Baldassare Baglioni and Galeazzo di Monte Felcino, to guard the gates and piazzas to prevent people leaving.⁵⁹ The fear of death from the plague could never have been far from people's thoughts and their collective terror could only have been heightened by the Church's teaching that the plague was a manifestation of divine wrath at the sins of man.

Various strategies were adopted to try to appease God's ire. During an outbreak of plague in July 1476, the Servite preacher, Fra Bonaventura, preached the need for confession and communion, to be followed by 15 days of processing and three days of fasting.⁶⁰ The confraternities of flagellants or *disciplinati* which had always been strong in Perugia also acted to save the city. They had originated in the 'peace movement' organized by the Perugian, Fra Rainiero Fasani, in 1260, when he called upon men to strip naked and whip themselves to end social conflict in the city.⁶¹ Enthusiasm for this abnegation spread quickly throughout Umbria and much of Italy, so that Pope Gregorius, fearful of some new heresy, prohibited their public processions. The flagellants formed a lay brotherhood and continued their exercises in private, imposing on themselves the dual duties of scourging and singing lauds, from which they acquired the name, *Laudesi*. The confraternity grew so quickly that

contra al capitolo della via stima de dio e fuoro gli e fatte le amonitone seria da dire el capitolo e nostro abba detto'. Unpublished.

⁵⁸ Fabretti 1850, p. 630.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 600; Pellini 1664, II, p. 678.

⁶⁰ Fabretti 1850, p. 647.

⁶¹ Heywood 1910, pp. 388-389.

during the mid-trecento the authorities began to fear such a powerful lay group and ordered that it be divided into three - the confraternities of Sant'Agostino, San Domenico and San Francesco, but they remained influential.

Hooded, so as to remain anonymous, and wearing white robes with a hole cut in the back, the *disciplinati* are prominent in many altarpieces and *gonfaloni*, such as Boccati's *Madonna del Pergolato* (1446) for the *disciplinati* of San Domenico. Despite the ban on processing, this appears to have continued, particularly during times of plague. Holy relics, which had initially provided rallying points for the crowds, were replaced by painted banners, or *gonfaloni*, as focuses for public prayer and supplication.⁶² Citizens of all ranks joined these brotherhoods which provided a cohesive social function during disruptive periods.

The San Francesco Gonfalone

Gonfaloni were designed to be seen by members of the confraternity and the general public. As such, their iconography needed to be clear and unambiguous, whilst reflecting the concerns of their audience. Bonfigli's *San Francesco Gonfalone* (Fig. 3.7, San Francesco al Prato, Perugia) probably commissioned at the height of 1464 plague outbreak, was the first of his plague banners and its hieratic treatment of the protagonists became the model for later examples.⁶³ The figures vary in size according to their importance. The Virgin dominates the scene, sheltering the small citizens, both lay and religious, under her cloak. The men kneel to her right, the women to her left, segregated as they would have been during the processions and services. The city's patron saints, together with Sts. Francis, Peter Martyr, Bernardino and Sebastian, the leading plague saint, plead their cause to the Virgin. Above them, set against a gold ground and flanked by Justice and Mercy, Christ prepares to rain down his three arrows of war, pestilence and famine. At the base of the standard, the city, identifiable by landmarks including the church of San Francesco al Prato, shelters beneath the Virgin's mantle. A family flees from one gate, while two armed men prevent people leaving through another – a reference to the measures taken to protect the city. In the centre, a woman runs past a pile of

⁶² Bury 1998, pp. 52-57. Bury identifies three types of *gonfaloni* – those carried in ordinary processions to identify individual confraternities; those carried during processions to honour particular saints; and large standards carried in penitential processions during times of plague, as here.

⁶³ The city wall is inscribed FU(NUS) [IN] PER(USI)O 1464. Biganti 1996, p. 165.

corpses, while the Archangel Raphael spears a skeletal, bat-winged Death. These graphic, local details suggest an empathy with the desperate people that a local artist could achieve more readily than a foreigner to the city.

The earliest reference to the *gonfalone* comes in a list of petitions, dated 3 October 1464, that the Perugian ambassadors Baldassare della Staffa, Guido di Malatesta Baglioni and Leone di Guido degli Oddi were instructed to present to the new pope, Paul II.⁶⁴ It asks for the grant of an indulgence to be attached to the image on the grounds that it had been painted during an outbreak of the plague and had been miraculously effective against it. The formal request appears to have come from the convent of San Francesco itself; the friars are recorded as intending to build a special chapel in the church to house the banner and Michael Bury suggests that it was only later that a cult was established to care for it. The portrayal on the banner of a group of *disciplinati* wearing white robes and hoods and processing on their knees towards the church may simply depict a commonplace scene during an outbreak of plague. It does not necessarily imply that a confraternity was involved in its commissioning. Mancini has suggested that the banner was commissioned by the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception which had been founded in 1432 and changed its name to the Confraternity of the *Gonfalone* once the banner became a focus of popular devotion.⁶⁵ While there is no documentary evidence to support this contention, it is clear that by February 1465 a confraternity called the *Societas Beate Marie Virginis* or *El Confalone* was responsible for the banner's care and veneration, and was building a chapel to house it.⁶⁶

The pictorial treatment of Sts. Francis and Bernardino in the banner reveals that the concerns of these commissioners were very different from those of the Confraternity of Sts. Jerome, Francis and Bernardino of Siena. Here, both saints kneel empty-handed, in humble supplication, interceding on behalf of the common people, while Bernardino personally introduces a friar to the Virgin. The saints' faces are haggard and care-worn and Francis' stigmata are accentuated by golden rays.

⁶⁴ Pellini 1664, II, p. 678; ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 100, fol. 95 transcribed in Bury 1998, p. 69.

⁶⁵ Mancini 1992, pp. 47-48.

⁶⁶ On 28 February 1465, a grant of wood was made to Ipolito di Francesco, the prior of the confraternity '*pro una capella fienda in dicta exclesia.*' ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 101, fol. 32r, transcribed in Bury 1998, p. 72.

There is no interest in their intellectual achievements as givers of the Rule or writers of treatises, only in their ability to empathise with, and intercede for, the people and city of Perugia.

The populist tone of the *gonfalone* could reflect the fact that it may have been paid for, in part, by the *comune*. Certainly, by 24 June 1466, public funding was merited as the priors agreed to a contribution of 25 florins, '*pro ornatu ipsius capelle et unius tabernaculi et pro ferramentis...*'⁶⁷

The *San Francesco Gonfalone* became the archetype for plague banners in Perugia, such as those by Bonfigli for the Silvestrines of Santa Maria Nuova (Santa Maria Nuova, Perugia) and the Servites of San Fiorenzo. The fashion also spread to the *contado*. In particular, Bonfigli's *gonfaloni* for Franciscan churches at Civitella Benazzone (Sant'Andrea, Civitella Benazzone) and Corciano (Santa Maria, Corciano) closely follow his original format, as does Bartolomeo Caporali's 1482 banner in the church of San Francesco at Montone.

Four angelic panels

Four panels by Bonfigli depicting pairs of angels bearing trays or baskets of roses have been connected with the *San Francesco Gonfalone* (Fig. 3.8). Two were recorded by Siepi in 1822, to the sides of the altar on the left wall of the sacristy of San Francesco al Prato, by which time the other two were in the Galleria dell'Accademia del Disegno.⁶⁸ The 1918 inventory of the Pinacoteca Vannucci states that two panels came from the chapel of the *gonfalone* and two from the adjacent chapel of the Confraternity of the Giustizia (formerly San Bernardino), but there is no doubt that they were originally all part of the same scheme.⁶⁹ The play of light on the figures suggests that the panels were displayed in two tiers, with kneeling angels above and standing ones below. Mancini has proposed that they were originally inserted in two doors on a case constructed to house the *gonfalone*, and that the 1466 payment by the priors, referred to above, relates to this phase of decoration in the

⁶⁷ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 102, fol. 70r, transcribed in Bury 1998, p. 72, n. 11.

⁶⁸ Siepi 1822, p. 797.

⁶⁹ Mancini 1992, p. 114.

chapel.⁷⁰ The iconography of angels carrying roses would be appropriate to the Virgin as the 'rose without thorns' and recalls the *Guidalotti Altarpiece*, where the Virgin and Child's attendant angels carry baskets of roses. The painting is of very high quality and the style comparable with Bonfigli's work from the early to mid-1460s.

There are, however, problems with Mancini's proposal. The angels in the upper tier focus on a point between and below them. The angels in the lower register all look in different directions and only the one on the extreme right, standing at right angles to the picture plane, appears to directly address the object of adoration. This is similar to the gazes of the angels in another four panels entitled *Eight angels with instruments of the Passion*, also from San Francesco al Prato, which have been attributed to Bonfigli (Fig. 3.9).⁷¹ A recent reconstruction proposes that these four panels, arranged in two tiers, surrounded a wooden *Crucifixion* carved by Agostino di Duccio.⁷² They would have hung on the side walls of a niche or tabernacle, perhaps slanted at an angle away from the statue. Another recent proposal suggests that the *St. Bernardino Miracles* also framed a niche or tabernacle housing a statue, perhaps of the Virgin and Child, and were arranged vertically, four on each side.⁷³

If the *Angels Offering Roses* panels were on doors flanking the *gonfalone*, to make visual sense with the angels addressing the object of devotion (and not merely each other), they would have had to be on the inside faces of the doors, visible only when the doors were open. The angels are clearly presenting their roses to someone but, assuming the doors were approximately the same size as the *gonfalone*, from their positions on the open doors, the lines of sight of the upper angels and the angel on the lower right, would have converged on the painted city of Perugia, presumably not the object of devotion. Given the lively representation of the cityscape, this in itself is not conclusive, although a presentation to the Madonna, rather than the city, would be more appropriate.⁷⁴ A key hole in one of the upper panels is problematic as

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

⁷¹ See below for an alternative attribution.

⁷² Mercurelli Salari 2003*b*, pp. 19-23.

⁷³ Teza 2004*a*, p. 249.

⁷⁴ The angels' gaze could only centre on the Virgin if the panels were set in doors much larger than the banner or arranged on the wall to either side of the *gonfalone* with the top tier placed much higher than the top of the banner.

it is on the wrong side to function as a lock if the pictures are to make visual sense. It could be a later addition following a change in use of the panels.

It seems more likely, given other configurations of multiple panels in the city, that these panels also flanked a statue as part of a tabernacle and were fixed panels, not doors. The sight lines of the angels would then be compatible with the adoration of a central figure. There was a tradition of depicting angels presenting roses to the Virgin in Perugia, as in the *Guidalotti Altarpiece*, so a statue of the Virgin or Virgin and Child would have been appropriate.⁷⁵ Unpublished entries in an account book for San Francesco al Prato (which is undated but appears to relate to 1456 or 1457) confirm that a statue of the Virgin was receiving attention at the time. The accounts itemise payments for the construction of a tabernacle in the chapel of St. Bernardino to hold a figure of Our Lady.⁷⁶

The tabernacle was made by Master Bartolomeo di Mattiolo from Torgiano, who was then working with the Florentine sculptor, Agostino di Duccio, on the facade of the oratory.⁷⁷ The tabernacle seems to have been a substantial construction; there are payments for the supply of gesso, wood and nails, and another craftsman was engaged to make the frame. An unpublished entry in another of the convent's account books, dated 1456, also refers to items for the 'altar of the tabernacle of the figure of the Virgin Mary that is in the chapel of St. Bernardino'.⁷⁸ The addition of a set of adoring angels around the tabernacle is not unlikely.

While there is no incontrovertible evidence to link the *Angels Offering Roses* panels to this statue of the Virgin, a 1566 inventory for San Francesco al Prato contains the unpublished entry, '*tre[?] quadri dipinti con la figura di nostra madonna quali stano sopra gli armanni della sagrestia*' under the heading,

⁷⁵ In Bonfigli's *Gonfalone of St. Bernardino of Siena* angels offer baskets of roses to Christ.

⁷⁶ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 1, fol. 4v. '*Io ricordo de denari che se spendevano per fare el tabernacholo per ponere la figura di nostra donna in Santo Bernardino el quale fa Maestro Bartolomeo da Torgiano*'. Unpublished.

⁷⁷ Magliani 1992, p. 295.

⁷⁸ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Entrata e uscita*, 1, 10v (new numbering). '*perlo tabernacholo de la figura della vergine maria che sta nella chapella de sanctus bernardinus*'. Cited in Magliani 1992, p. 296, who suggests this tabernacle refers to that of the Virgin Annunciate on the facade of the oratory, however this does not take account of the other account book entry stating that it is in the chapel. It would also seem to obviate the need for wood and nails.

'*Angeli*'.⁷⁹ As the paintings are listed under the section for angels, it seems likely that they depicted angels (although the entry immediately preceding it refers to a terracotta statue of St. John the Baptist with a broken leg which may suggest that the list was more generalised). Furthermore, '*la figura*' often refers to a statue, so that this entry may describe a statue of the Virgin, surrounded by painted panels containing angels – perhaps the *Angels Offering Roses* panels? Their position in the sacristy is near where Siepi saw two of the panels.

Four more panels

Recent research suggests that the group of four panels, *Eight Angels with Instruments of the Passion* (Fig. 3.9), formed part of a tabernacle housing a wooden crucifix believed to have been carved by Agostino di Duccio.⁸⁰ The will of Tommaso di Luca Alberto, previously cited, provided for the testator to be buried in his family tomb, in the chapel of his ancestors, clothed in a Franciscan habit.⁸¹ He left 50 florins for the construction of a building for the use of the novices of the order and a further two florins to provide a curtain for a newly constructed tabernacle that had been built to house a crucifix made in memory of the leading Franciscan, Angelo di Toscano. Angelo had died in Perugia on 20 August 1453 and his tombstone, also carved by Agostino di Duccio, was in San Francesco al Prato. The provision of a curtain suggests that the tabernacle was virtually complete by 1470, so the panels must have been painted between 1453 and 1470.

Tommaso, like his father, moved in artistic circles and had several links with Bonfigli. In 1455 he had paid Bonfigli ten florins on account of the *cappellano* of the Priors' chapel in respect of the frescoes there.⁸² Furthermore, one of the people charged in his will with obtaining the curtain was Felice di Matteo Francisci, who had been one of the ten *camerari* elected to negotiate the completion of Bonfigli's frescoes in the Priors' chapel on 10 December 1469. These connections have been used to support the contention that Bonfigli painted the four panels, although the distinction between providing curtains and commissioning panels has been

⁷⁹ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato*, 20, fol. 36r, unpublished.

⁸⁰ Mercurelli Salari, 2003b, pp. 19-23.

⁸¹ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 546, fols. 29v-30r, transcribed in Sartore 2003, p. 10.

⁸² ASP, *Cappella dei Priori*, 2, fol. 48r, transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 153.

overlooked.⁸³

A visual analysis runs into further problems. While the gold ground decorated with a pomegranate pattern resembles that in the *Angels Offering Roses* panels and the cloth of honour in Bonfigli's *Annunciation with St. Luke*, the angels here are heavier and less graceful than others associated with him – particularly the *Angels Offering Roses*. The fact that they are surrounded by instruments of the Passion and probably attend the crucified Christ explains their furrowed brows, but not why their heads are much larger in proportion to their bodies. Nor do they wear roses in their hair like all the other attendant angels known to be by Bonfigli, including those holding instruments of the Passion in the *Gonfalone of Santa Maria Nuova* (Santa Maria Nuova, Perugia).

Until recently, these contradictions led to the panels usually being attributed to Bernardino Caporali. The facial characteristics, particularly the furrowed brows, stylised curls and aquiline noses highlighted in white are similar to an altarpiece fragment depicting *St. Sebastian* (Federigo Zeri Collection) from an altarpiece originally in Santa Maria Maddalena, Castiglione del Lago. Prior to its dismemberment, the altarpiece was described by Mariotti as bearing the painter's name and the date, 1487.⁸⁴ Another fragment from the same altarpiece, *St. Anthony Abbot* (Museo Civico, Udine) has a backcloth similar to that depicted here. However, the Perugian panels are more cartoon-like than the Castiglione del Lago fragments and the angels' heads are disproportionately large. Furthermore, they are painted in tempera rather than the oils Caporali was using in other paintings at the time and they do not sit happily as part of his autograph work. It seems more likely that they were executed by a less skilled member of his workshop, or by another local artist who was emulating the styles and iconography of Caporali and Bonfigli. Laura Teza gives the angel panels to the circle of Bonfigli⁸⁵ but also discusses their similarity to works by the painter and miniaturist, Pierantonio di Niccolò da Pozzuolo.⁸⁶ He, however, seems an unlikely candidate, as his miniatures, of which his *Corale L* for San Pietro is best known, contain elegant figures with small heads that bear little resemblance to

⁸³ Mercurelli Salari 2003*b*, p. 21

⁸⁴ Mariotti 1788, pp. 83-84.

⁸⁵ Teza 2004*a*, p. 249.

⁸⁶ Teza 2004*b*, p. 70, note 47.

the coarse features of the *Angels with Instruments of the Passion*.

We have seen that Tommaso's family had wide-ranging artistic connections and his will makes another, previously unnoted, link that could be relevant here. The second witness to Tommaso's will was 'dompno Iohanne Baptista Baldassaris de Perusio', presumably the son of the painter Battista Baldassare, nephew of Angelo and cousin of Ludovico, who were members of a large painters' workshop in Perugia. That these painters were capable of producing good quality work that responded to changes in local tastes is clear from Battista's *Tabula Salvatoris* and it is possible that a painter from their workshop was responsible for the panels.

The St. Bernardino Gonfalone

Bonfigli's *St. Bernardino Gonfalone* (Fig. 3.10) differs from the *San Francesco Gonfalone* in that it was not a plague banner, but commemorated the annual procession for the feast of St. Bernardino. It appears to have been a *segno*, i.e. a type of insignia or ensign carried by a confraternity during public processions.⁸⁷ Its purpose was to identify the confraternity, while portraying elements of its history and declaring something of its ideology. On 23 June 1450, following the canonisation of St. Bernardino, the *comune* of Perugia agreed to spend 200 florins '*pro processione fienda*' and subsequently the procession was held annually on 20 May – the saint's feast-day.⁸⁸ In the mid-1460s, Bonfigli painted a banner for the Confraternity of St. Bernardino to be carried in the procession. It portrayed a complex scene from the pageant and didactically disseminated many of the confraternity's concerns.

The upper two-thirds of the banner is dominated by oversized figures of Christ the Redeemer and St. Bernardino apparently discussing the city and populace portrayed in the lower section. On hearing Bernardino's representations, Christ blesses the people. He holds aloft the flag of the Resurrection as a new rallying point in place of the factional pennants that Bernardino had railed against in his Perugian

⁸⁷ Bury 1998, p. 78.

⁸⁸ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 86, fols. 71r-72r, cited Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 146, n. 4. A banner, with the image of the saint painted on red silk, is described in documents relating to the procession. It appears to have depicted only St. Bernardino and as such, was a procession-specific image and object of veneration and should not be confused with Bonfigli's banner. Bury 1998, p. 77.

sermons.⁸⁹ The lower scene, with San Francesco al Prato in the background, depicts the moment in the procession when the citizens presented offerings of candles and Perugia's distinctive white and blue cloth. A boy beats a tambour and two trumpets sound. The civic nature of the event is reiterated by the trumpets' pennants which are decorated with Perugian griffins on a red ground.

All the city's important institutions were required to attend the procession and their positions in the cavalcade were strictly prescribed.⁹⁰ This is reflected in the assemblage of dignitaries portrayed on the *gonfalone*. In the centre, the Governor or bishop blesses the offerings and behind him five Franciscan friars stand in attendance. Next to the bishop appears the *podestà* with the priors, resplendent in their *lucco rosso*, and the *camerari* of the Guilds. Treasury officials complete the throng on the left. On the other side, a group of women congregates. They are mainly dressed as widows or in the sober greys advocated in St. Bernardino's teachings, the only exceptions being a noblewoman and her attendants. She wears a pink dress and gold brocade cloak, while her attendants sport roses in their hair, in marked contrast with the restraint of the other women. Obviously from the upper echelons of society, Mancini has suggested that she may be Anastasia Sforza, granddaughter of Francesco Sforza of Milan and second wife of Braccio di Malatesta di Baglioni.⁹¹ She married Braccio in May 1456, bringing an enormous dowry of 8000 florins.⁹² Anastasia appears to have had some Franciscan sympathies; she is believed to have commissioned a valuable dossal depicting the Coronation of the Virgin from Andrea della Robbia for the crypt of the Franciscan church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, in the Porziuncola, between Assisi and Bettona, in 1475.

Sneaking out from between the matrons, a young boy steals candles from the baskets at the instigation of a little black devil at his shoulder (his pointed ears confirm his devilish character). This may refer to an actual incident which Bonfigli witnessed or heard about, although the inscription on the boy's tunic, '*Fura che sarai*

⁸⁹ In 1447, the Franciscan preacher Fra Ruberto da Lecce had all the nobles' banners, except those of Braccio Fortebraccio, removed from churches in the city, including San Francesco al Prato. Pellini 1664, II, p. 568.

⁹⁰ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 86, fols. 71r-72r, cited in Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 146, n. 4; Els Sheikh 2000, I, pp. 161-2.

⁹¹ Mancini 1992, p. 112.

⁹² Pellini 1664, II, p. 633.

apeso – he who steals will be hanged - seems an overly severe punishment. More probably, it is a lesson to the entire community and refers to Bernardino's teachings against avarice and dishonesty. As Bombe commented, Bonfigli used the language of the penitential preachers of the age and employed '*dei mezzi grossolani e drastici*', to achieve his ends.⁹³ Next to the boy, a woman, dressed either as a widow or a nun, is the only member of the assembly to appeal directly to St. Bernardino. Presumably she seeks forgiveness for the child, although an intervention on behalf of the citizens is possible.

Bonfigli's *gonfaloni* are personal to Perugia, depicting from his first-hand knowledge, festivals and celebrations, times of crisis, the city's hierarchy, familiar landmarks, people and minor incidents. Only a local painter would be equipped to include such local colour and narrative incident and this ability, which Bonfigli had already displayed in the first phase of decorations in the Chapel of the Priors, made him the ideal choice for these public works. It is interesting to compare his banners with that of Nicolò di Liberatore from Foligno (l'Alunno), painted for the Confraternity of the Annunciation in 1466. The banner is similar in format, with the Annunciation in the centre, angels and God the Father above, and members of the confraternity, who were doctors of law, introduced by their saints in the lower section. But the atmosphere is detached, the architectural setting anonymous and there is no nothing to relate it to that particular confraternity or city apart from the lawyers' robes, which are themselves schematic.

The promotion of St. Bernardino of Siena

The image of St. Bernardino of Siena soon became popular on altarpieces and plague banners, however the impetus for a formal memorial to him seems to have stemmed initially from the Franciscan, Angelo del Toscano. He may have had a particular attachment to the saint, having been appointed General of the Minorites the day before Bernardino's canonisation, but, as well as wishing to render homage to the holy man, he would have appreciated the prestige a monument could afford his order and the city. The city authorities were quick to support the project. In March 1451, the magistrates of the *signori*, headed by Oddo di Giacomo d'Oddo, voted 300

⁹³ Bombe 1904, p. 22.

florins for the establishment of a chapel dedicated to St. Bernardino in the cathedral and agreed to the foundation of an oratory at San Francesco al Prato.⁹⁴ Angelo actively sought the involvement of the *comune* and, on 3 May, the priors responded to a personal request from him by providing 150 florins and electing five *camerlenghi* to administer the money and the works.⁹⁵ With this financial and administrative intervention, the construction of the oratory became a matter of honour for the *comune*, although its Franciscan thrust was not subsumed.⁹⁶ The construction of a magnificent oratory and the adoption of Bernardino as ‘*un santo cittadino*’ would benefit both the *comune* and the Franciscans.

The construction of an oratory was a costly undertaking and, even with substantial support from the *comune*, a public collection was still necessary. An unpublished account book for San Francesco al Prato records the donations made for the oratory between 11 April 1451 and August 28 1452.⁹⁷ 40 florins were raised by 4 June, with an additional 10 florins received by 28 August. Most of the 43 contributions were for sums of one florin or less and nine payments were made by women. The most substantial female donors were Donna Aldrovandesca di Filippo and a Franciscan tertiary, Donna Agnola, both of whom gave five florins. Donna Aldrovandesca (wife of Paulo Giovanni Tolomei and daughter of Filippo Francisci) appears to have been a longstanding benefactor of the Franciscans, as her will, made in 1458 and revised in 1460, made provision for masses to be said on her death at three Franciscan establishments: San Francesco al Prato, Monteripido and Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi, for which she left such money as her heirs should think fit.⁹⁸ Furthermore, her sister, Donata, became a Franciscan tertiary and left money for four masses; three at Monteripido and one in San Francesco al Prato.⁹⁹ These women’s generosity was matched only by Pietropaulo di Ser Bevignata who gave 5 florins and Carlo, a Franciscan friar who paid 10 florins, perhaps on behalf of his monastery, as the gift was made ‘*fuoro messi nella cappellam del convento.*’

The public collection for the facade raised money for the work, but beyond

⁹⁴ Pellini 1664, II, pp. 592-593.

⁹⁵ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 87, fols. 50r-v cited in Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 138, n. 8.

⁹⁶ Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 138.

⁹⁷ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 19, fols 1r-3r, unpublished.

⁹⁸ Tabarelli 1977, pp. 70, 72.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

that it allowed many small-scale donors to participate in an act of patronage that they could otherwise never have aspired to. It thereby secured the ongoing support of the public for the venture by giving a cross-section of the population a personal stake in its success. In 1452, the priors ensured that interest would not flag by instigating a procession from the cathedral to the newly constructed chapel, to be held annually on 20 May, the saint's feast day.¹⁰⁰ The following year, coinciding with the meeting of the Franciscan general council in Perugia, the oratory was inaugurated and Pope Nicholas V granted an indulgence to those who prayed in the chapel on the saint's feast day - a privilege which signalled papal approval and would ensure the success of the oratory as a place of pilgrimage. The request for this came from the *comune*, underscoring the connection between it and the order in this project.¹⁰¹

With Angelo del Toscano's death in August 1453, work on the oratory seems to have slowed and it was not until 17 July 1457 that Frate Urbano, the sacristan of San Francesco, noted the start of work on the facade by the sculptor, Agostino di Duccio (Fig. 3.11).¹⁰² It was eventually finished in 1461 (having been delayed while Agostino completed an altar in San Domenico) and the final payment was made in May 1462 after favourable reports by Benedetto Bonfigli and Angelo di Baldassare Mattioli. No commissioning documents are extant and the circumstances leading to the selection of the Florentine sculptor are unknown, although the prominence of symbols representing the city, interwoven with Franciscan iconography suggests that both groups were instrumental in the commission. By now, commissions to foreign painters were becoming less common as local painters began to meet the demands of Perugian patrons. However, there appear to have been no local sculptors of note and it would have been necessary to look outside the city for a sculptor capable of undertaking the facade of the oratory. It is noteworthy that two Perugian artists were charged with checking and approving the efforts of a Florentine – the reverse of the arrangements for the frescoes in the Priors' Chapel.

In the previous chapter, a move towards the selection of Florentine painters was detected, although they were often constrained to work within Perugian

¹⁰⁰ '*noviter costrutam*'. ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 88, fol. 53r-v, cited in Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 138, n. 10.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 87, fol. 63v, cited in Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 138, n. 11.

¹⁰² ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, misc.* 1, fol. 1, cited in Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 140, n. 14.

requirements regarding form and iconography. Again, it would be too simplistic to ascribe the selection of Agostino simply to a taste for the Florentine aesthetic or the desire to commission a Florentine artist *per se*. While Agostino's sculptures display the influence of the sweet Florentine style of Desiderio da Settignano, Michelozzo and the Della Robbia family (the Perugian work was long believed to have been executed by Agostino della Robbia),¹⁰³ his work has a sinuous line and his drapery billows in a graceful, decorative manner that often bears little relationship to underlying forms. In this, he more closely follows the 'gothic' tradition that we have seen was favoured by Perugian patrons. Furthermore, by this date, Agostino had been absent from Florence for several years, having been forced to flee the city in 1446 after being accused of stealing silver from the church of SS. Annunziata. After a short spell in Venice, from 1450 to around 1455, he was engaged by Sigismondo Malatesta to carve friezes for the walls of the *Tempio Malatestiano* in Rimini.¹⁰⁴ In a breathtaking display of personal aggrandisement, Sigismondo had a gothic, Franciscan church transformed into a secular 'temple' where he and his mistress, Isotta degli Atti, were eventually buried. Designed by Alberti, with the facade modelled on the Roman Arch of Augustus at Rimini, the mausoleum combined a mixture of Neo-Platonic, Christian and pagan elements that sought to glorify Sigismondo and his ancestors, and establish him as a humanist prince.

Perugian links with Rimini were strong during the 1450s as was noted when discussing Piero della Francesca's commission for the Sant'Antonio altarpiece. Of particular relevance here is the fact that Bishop Jacopo Vagnucci, who had been elected Bishop of Rimini in 1448, was transferred to Perugia in 1449, but only took up his seat in 1456, a few months before work commenced on the facade.¹⁰⁵ He would have been familiar with Agostino's work in Rimini in what was formerly a Franciscan context and may have appreciated how the politically astute skills deployed to glorify Sigismondo could be used to immortalise St. Bernardino, while accommodating the demands of the *comune*.

Agostino's facade consists of a two storey elevation dominated by a central

¹⁰³ The inscription OPVS AVGVSTINI FLORENTINI LAPIDICAE above the doors was misinterpreted.

¹⁰⁴ See Hope 1992 for a study of the *Tempio Malatestiano*.

¹⁰⁵ Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 140.

triumphal arch, surmounted by a triangular gabled pediment and is reminiscent of Alberti's design for the entrance to the Tempio Malatestiano. Constructed from pink marble, with cream marble friezes and roundels, the grounds of the reliefs were originally painted a celestial blue, although this is now badly worn. Comparison with Bonfigli's *St. Bernardino Gonfalone*, which features part of the facade, confirms that St. Bernardino's mandorla and the angels' haloes were originally gilded, while the grounds of the two upper roundels, containing griffins with their prey, were red - the colour of the city's pennants. These coloured grounds would have accentuated significant areas of the facade and highlighted two pre-eminent themes – the blue signifying heaven and St. Bernardino's ascension to it; the red representative of the city of Perugia.

Holding pride of place in the tympanum of the arch, St. Bernardino stands erect. In one hand he holds a tablet inscribed with his IHS trigram representing the blessed name of Jesus, while he blesses the city with the other. He is surrounded by a flaming mandorla and escorted heavenward by eight angels playing musical instruments. They fly in an almost prone position, flanked by winged cherubim and seraphim. A seated God the Father awaits him in the pediment. Mode's suggestion that these motifs derive from the celebrations held at Siena following the saint's canonisation is persuasive in that it may have brought the design to the fore of the commissioner's minds.¹⁰⁶ However, the Virgin frequently appears in a mandorla accompanied heavenward by prone angels in early Renaissance depictions of the Assumption of the Virgin.¹⁰⁷ In the Upper Church at nearby Assisi, the centre of Franciscan activity, Cimabue's *The Virgin's soul being received by Christ* depicts the holy pair seated within a mandorla, being carried heavenward by four prone angels.¹⁰⁸ Prone angels carry other burdens in the *Allegories of Obedience and Chastity* frescoed on the vault of the transept in the Lower Church, while in the Upper Church, *The death and funeral of St. Francis*, depicts St. Francis in a circular mandorla being carried to heaven by angels.¹⁰⁹ The deployment of the motif therefore draws parallels between St. Bernardino, the Virgin, for whom he had

¹⁰⁶ Mode 1973, p. 62.

¹⁰⁷ For the development of the mandorla from classical victory shields see Elderkin 1938, pp. 233-236.

¹⁰⁸ Stubblebine 1968, pp. 330-333 discusses depictions of the Virgin in a mandorla at Assisi and elsewhere.

¹⁰⁹ Both cycles have been attributed to Giotto; Lunghi 1996b, pp. 88, 107, but see White 1993, p. 215 who attributes the latter to an unknown master.

particular reverence, and St. Francis, founder of the Franciscan order.

The arch is flanked by two niches on each side. The upper pair contains an *Annunciation*, referring to St. Bernardino's veneration of Mary, but also, perhaps, a reminder of the miracle that occurred during the saint's visit to Perugia in 1425, when a statue of the Virgin and Child began to weep and Bernardino converted thousands of people.¹¹⁰ The lower niches contain images of two of the city's patron saints – St. Louis of Toulouse and St. Herculanus. While these statues and the griffins rampant in the roundels directly below them reiterate the *comune*'s role in erecting the oratory, the choice of these saints over Sts. Constantius and Lawrence, may be due to their particularly Franciscan qualities. Campigli, in seeking to show that the facade is primarily concerned with chastity, noted St. Louis' renowned chastity and surmised that the lilies depicted above St. Herculanus' niche relate to this. He also suggested that their positions below the Annunciation scenes confirm this theme and noted that in the *Franceschina*, written by Giacomo degli Oddi in 1474, the chapter entitled 'Chastity' discusses the lives of both Sts. Bernardino and Louis of Toulouse.¹¹¹

Their selection may, however, simply reflect the fact that Louis and Herculanus were the two leading patron saints in Perugia and were usually linked together. Furthermore, their lives embodied all three Franciscan virtues – Chastity, Poverty and Obedience, as did that of St. Bernardino and to favour one virtue over the others would be to ignore the panels on either side of the doors. The six outer panels house music-making angels, while four of the inner panels have been identified as depicting Poverty (Fig. 3.12), Chastity and Obedience, with the complementary Temperance, recognizable by her bridle.¹¹² These inner panels are singled out for attention by flanking pilasters of blue-green porphyry, capped by Corinthian capitals.

¹¹⁰ 'Frater Bernardinus de Senis...[venit] Perusium ad predicandum in platea et [illo] die apparuit miraculum in contrata Pastini porte S. Angeli, videlicet quod virgo Maria et eius filius plorabant, et totus populus ivit.' Fabretti 1850, p. 470; transcribed in Pacetti 1939, p. 507.

¹¹¹ Campigli 1999, p. 68.

¹¹² Jacobsen 1995, pp. 13-18. The iconography may derive from the *Franciscan Allegories* at Assisi. Poverty is worried by a dog and child, while Obedience wears a yoke like that borne by St. Francis in the Assisi fresco.

The presence of two archangels above each pair of virtues is unusual. Jacobsen ascribes Raphael's inclusion to him being the patron of pilgrims and Gabriel's to his traditional role as guardian of church entrances (although he is normally paired with Michael).¹¹³ Both would therefore be appropriate as guardians of the oratory's double portal, characteristic of places of pilgrimage. However, considering their proximity to the Franciscan virtues espoused by St. Bernardino, and the careful choice of the patron saints, it seems likely that these archangels were also selected because they share certain attributes with Bernardino.

Raphael appears with his head inclined to his right and his right hand outstretched, as if about to help someone to their feet. Raphael was venerated as a healer and many of St. Bernardino's *post mortem* miracles are thaumaturgic and involve him healing the sick, including the blind, lepers and victims of violence.¹¹⁴ Gabriel is well known as a messenger, having announced the births of Jesus and John the Baptist and he appears in this capacity elsewhere on the facade. His inclusion here may relate to St. Bernardino's eminence as a preacher, bringing the message of God to the people. Support for this analogy comes from the *Vita anonima* which records some of Bernardino's sermons. In a sermon preached in Perugia in either 1427 or 1441, the friar is quoted as saying after he had brought peace to the populace, '*Dominus Deus, videns dissensionem vestram quam ille valde odit, me ut angelum suum misit ad vos ut annunciem in terris pacem hominibus bonae voluntatis.*'¹¹⁵ The sentiments echo those of the angelic host to the shepherds outside Bethlehem, 'Peace on earth and goodwill to men'.¹¹⁶ If these words were preached in 1441 they would have been fresh in the collective memory and acceptable to both the Franciscans and the city authorities, thereby explaining the otherwise problematic inclusion of two archangels next to the virtues.

Beneath the niche with the Annunciate angel is a bas-relief scene which also portrays Bernardino as the bringer of the message; a flock of sheep kneels before a fluttering banner depicting the trigram. The scene has no parallel in the chronicles, which may mean it is symbolic rather than factual, or may stem from the fact that the

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 17.

¹¹⁴ See Pacetti 1939, p. 497 for these miracles.

¹¹⁵ Surio 1745, p. 44, reprinted in Pacetti 1939, p. 501.

¹¹⁶ Luke 2: 14.

trigram was denounced as heretical in some quarters for many years.¹¹⁷ Notably, this is the only scene in which Bernardino does not have a halo. In any event, it recalls his frequent exhortations to Perugians to abandon factionalism, forego liveries and banners and replace them with allegiance to the flag of the Redeemer.

The frieze below the Virgin depicts St. Bernardino preaching (Fig. 3.13) and is generally said to show a well-documented event at Aquila in 1438. He was expounding upon the Immaculate Conception, comparing the Virgin's virtue to a crown of twelve stars, when he was suddenly clothed in a bright light, prefiguring his eventual assumption, as portrayed in the central panel of the facade. However, this reading is not entirely convincing. The striations appear in the sky above Bernardino, not around him. Only one man turns away and even he does not appear dazzled, but looks up at a point some distance from Bernardino. The rest of the crowd continue to regard him with no apparent discomfort or surprise, to pray, or simply gaze to the side. While the characters in Agostino's narratives are never all entirely engaged in the action, in the other scenes on the facade there is always some reaction to the central event, while here there is no response to the appearance of a bright light. Furthermore, the events at Aquila are unrelated to Perugia, whereas the other scenes are either set in Perugia, or are generic, implying that they could have been. A re-examination of the scene is necessary. In the centre, standing in a raised, stone pulpit, St. Bernardino preaches and points heavenward with his right hand. Incised lines emanate from a central point in the sky above his head, but do not reach down as far as the saint. A group of four men, clothed in long, toga-like garments indicating their noble status, stand near the pulpit and one appears to engage directly with the saint. Further back, arranged in two rows on either side of the pulpit, women kneel in prayer and men debate. One woman has her right arm raised, but seems to be indicating the saint, rather than any phenomenon behind him.

It seems likely that this scene depicts St. Bernardino preaching in Perugia, railing against the sins of the people. This complies with the theme of civil obedience within Perugia, which is prominent in the facade, and is more relevant to its setting than the sermon at Aquila. The stone pulpit, albeit set near trees rather than in a

¹¹⁷ Mercurelli Salari 1996, p. 141.

piazza, recalls the marble pulpit provided for Bernardino in Perugia. The lines in the sky, which are not convincing as a representation of a bright light as described by the chroniclers, may instead represent God's light as referred to in the prologue to the *Statuti di S. Bernardino*, approved in 1425:

*Qui pietate motus novissime misit servum fratrem Bernardinum de Senis, Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, ut divinis monitionibus predicando populum, qui ambulabat in tenebris, reduceret in lucem veram.*¹¹⁸

At the very least, the preaching at Aquila may be conflated with Bernardino's Perugian sermons, making the scene more relevant to its Perugian setting and reinforcing the theme of civil obedience.

A long relief containing three scenes surmounts the door. The central section, directly below the ascending saint, depicts the 'bonfire of the vanities', when, in 1425, male Perugians responded to St. Bernardino's preaching by throwing their weapons and gaming equipment onto a bonfire and women relinquished their wigs and other fripperies to the flames.¹¹⁹ In the relief, a bonfire engulfs shields, spears, helmets and what appear to be gaming boards, but personal vanities are omitted. There are no false hairpieces or high-heeled shoes, only items that cause violence and civil unrest, consistent with the public nature of the facade.¹²⁰

The devil flies out from the middle of the pyre, referring perhaps to St. Bernardino's sermon in 1425 as recounted by Enea Silvio Piccolomini in his *De viris illustribus*. St. Bernardino promised to show the crowd the devil and then indicated that they themselves were the devil incarnate.¹²¹ Alternatively, it may refer to an incident when a priest put a banner decorated with the devil on a bonfire and the heat caused the banner to fly up out of the flames.¹²² The citizens are prominent in this scene. Women and children sit on the ground before the flames, while priors or magistrates survey the bonfire from their bench, illustrating the city authorities' approval of St. Bernardino's teaching which decried disorder and thereby underpinned the government of the city.

¹¹⁸ Published in Pacetti 1939, p. 509.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 504. Giacomo d'Oddi, writing in 1488 recorded the destruction.

¹²⁰ Rusconi 1986, p. 124.

¹²¹ Published in Pacetti 1939, p. 501.

¹²² *ibid.*, p. 505.

The lateral scenes relate to two *post mortem* miracles, neither of which is recorded in the literature. On the left, in a non-specific location, the saint rescues a child from a mill stream. To the right, a young man is imprisoned by a judge seated on a chair decorated with a carved griffin, placing it in a Perugian context. In an adjoining room, the man is incarcerated, with a devil tying a noose around his neck, encouraging suicide. However, St. Bernardino appears and saves him from committing a mortal sin.

The facade contains numerous classicising elements suggesting that the commissioners specifically required an up-to-date design, portraying humanist interests, like those appearing in Rome, Florence and more immediately, Rimini. As previously noted, the composition resembles the entrance to Alberti's *Tempio Malatestiano*, itself modelled on a Roman triumphal arch in Rimini. The gabled pediment and niches with their columns and triangular pediments have antique origins and the string courses and friezes have *all'antica* vegetative decorations. Open *loggie* provide architectural backdrops for the *Bonfire of the Vanities* and *Sentencing of the prisoner* scenes, while many of the figures wear pseudo-classical garments which billow in the wind like the clothing on antique sarcophagi. The proud declaration, AVGVSTA PERVSIA MCCCCLXI, in large, humanist lettering just below the heavenly scene in the pediment and above the ascending saint, proclaims the city as both a centre for humanist learning and one that has the blessing of the Almighty and his saints.

There has been considerable discussion as to who planned the complex iconographic programme for the facade, which reveals an intimate knowledge and understanding of St. Bernardino's life from both a Franciscan and a Perugian viewpoint, not all of which was recorded in the chronicles. This suggests that at least one of the programme advisers was a Franciscan who had witnessed the saint preaching in the city. Andrea del Toscano, while instrumental in getting the project off the ground, is unlikely to have planned the facade in detail before his death in 1453. The central motif, with St. Bernardino rising to heaven in a flaming mandorla, may point to the involvement of someone who had witnessed Siena's extravagant

canonisation celebrations, to which dignitaries from other regions were invited.¹²³ Among those representing Perugia had been their current papal governor, Neri da Montegarullo (also the Bishop of Siena) and Lorenzo Gentilotti, a '*gran signore*', who later served six months as Captain of Perugia. The crowd had gathered in the Palazzo Pubblico, where a wooden construction representing Paradise was covered with cloth hangings. In the centre, an effigy of the saint was surrounded by torches and, at the given moment, a mechanism lifted him heavenward, surrounded by a flaming aureole and accompanied by musical angels, until he came to rest at the foot of God, prior to taking his place in heaven. Mode has suggested that this dramatic representation of St. Bernardino's ascension would have made a great impact on those who witnessed it, including the Perugian visitors, and that they may have had it in mind when planning their own monument.¹²⁴

The *Franceschina* manuscript which discussed the lives of various saints, including Louis of Toulouse and Herculanus, was written in 1474 by an Observant Franciscan from Perugia, Giacomo or Giapeco Oddi. Giacomo was a member of the Oddi Novelli family that had split from the degli Oddi family in the trecento. They had a secure financial background and Giacomo was a merchant until, in 1448, he was converted by the Franciscan preacher, Fra Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce.¹²⁵ Giacomo quickly rose through the ranks of the Observants, becoming Guardian of the convent of the Porziuncola at Santa Maria degli Angeli, of Monteripido in 1460 and of Santa Maria delle Grazie in 1470. His *Franceschina* records the story of St. Bernardino's life and includes several episodes that are not related elsewhere.¹²⁶ While its date precludes it from being a written source for the facade, it is possible that Giacomo gave advice on the programme in person. This appears particularly likely when one considers that Giacomo was the son of Oddo di Giacomo Oddi, the head of the priors who had approved the building of the oratory and the chapel in San Lorenzo in 1451.¹²⁷

The iconography of the facade is a combination of general Franciscan

¹²³ Mode 1973, p. 64.

¹²⁴ *ibid.*

¹²⁵ Fantozzi 1922, pp. 147-148.

¹²⁶ Rusconi 1989, pp. 113-141.

¹²⁷ Teza 2004a, pp. 252-253. She follows Rusconi in accepting the connection between the iconography of the *St. Bernardino Miracles* and Giacomo's manuscript.

elements and specific references to St. Bernardino, interspersed with symbols representing the city. Moreover, even those elements portraying the life of the saint have particular relevance to Perugia, promoting an end to factionalism and the benefits of a united, peaceful populace – sentiments that both the city authorities and the Franciscans were keen to foster. Evidence of the Minorites' continued involvement in the regulation of city life is manifold. In 1462, they supported the first *Monte di pietà*, a type of bank which circumnavigated the church's anti-usury laws, while on 4 February 1481, a *delibera* of the Consul of the Priors 'ad tollendum et divertendum errores super catastris et libra'¹²⁸ provided that 20 members of religious orders, of whom ten should be Franciscan friars, should be elected to value land for the purposes of taxation.¹²⁹ While the Observant Franciscans used the cult of the saint to promote their branch of the order, the city authorities obtained an edifice that brought prestige to Perugia and promulgated teachings compatible with their interests.

Other projects in the cathedral

Significant projects were also planned for the cathedral, sponsored both by the state and by private citizens. An unpublished will from 1458 provides evidence that a new altarpiece for the high altar was contemplated, at least by the testator, Pergiovanni di Simone di Giovanni, *bambaciao*.¹³⁰ The will gives detailed instructions and work seems to have been well under way. The master carpenters, Paulino and Apollonio, had begun to construct the woodwork, although no painter had yet been recruited. These carpenters have been identified as Paolino da Ascoli (d. 1467) and Apollonio Petrocchi da Ripatransone who built the choir in the lower church of San Francesco at Assisi together, so were clearly craftsmen of some standing.¹³¹

Pergiovanni, despite being recorded as healthy in mind, body and intellect, was concerned that the altarpiece might remain unfinished at his death and stipulated that his heirs should ensure that the carpenters had sufficient funds to complete their

¹²⁸ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 117, fol. 9v cited in Grohmann 1981, I, pp. 139-140.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

¹³⁰ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 156, 64r-67v. This will is referred to in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, pp. 27-28, but no reference is cited and the text is not transcribed.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p. 32.

task and that '*bonos et expertos magistros et pictores*' should be employed to complete and paint the panel within five years of his death, for which he left the sum of 500 florins. This was a very substantial sum and more than sufficient for a high altarpiece, as a single-sided version typically cost around 100 florins. However, despite this generous provision, there is no trace of the completed work. Pergiovanni seems to have envisaged a double-sided altarpiece and was clear about what it should depict, specifying that the predella should have Christ's passion on one side and the Virgin Mary in glory, on the other. In addition, one side of the main panel was to contain the image of the Virgin, with her son in her arms, accompanied by Sts. Peter, Paul and Pope Clement. The other side should depict the figure of Christ in his passion with Simon the Apostle, the Perugian patron saints Lawrence and Herculanus and St. Catherine of Siena, along with any others whom his heirs should wish to include. He specified that the panel should be placed on the high altar of the cathedral, while he was to be buried in a tomb that was being constructed nearby (*fienda iuxta Dictam altare*). While it has not been possible to trace this work, which may never have been completed or may have been lost or dismembered, Pergiovanni's detailed instructions for its iconography and his anxiety for 'good and expert masters and painters' to complete it, confirm his desire for a high quality work.

Civic projects were also underway. In March 1451, as well as authorising the construction of the oratory in honour of St. Bernardino, the priors decided that a chapel should be built in the cathedral. Five *camerlenghi* were appointed, but little progress was made so that nine years later it was necessary to replace those who had died. In 1468, a new committee was elected, composed of Baldassare degli Ermanni, Biordo degli Oddi, Bernardino di Raniero, Ranaldo di Rustico and Luca di Nanni. They were authorised to spend the 300 florins that remained untouched from 1451, but even this did not get things moving and, on 15 September 1473, the priors gave an ultimatum requiring the work to be done within three or four months.¹³² By 9 July 1474, the *camerlenghi* were still in difficulty, claiming that the delay was because there were no '*magistri periti in arte*' in the city – presumably a reflection on the lack of sculptors, rather than painters.¹³³ Eventually, in 1475, work seems to have

¹³² ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 109, fol. 91v, transcribed in Fantozzi 1922, p. 460.

¹³³ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 110, fol. 109r-v, transcribed in Fantozzi 1922, pp. 460-461.

progressed and in March, a final payment of 30 florins was made to the sculptor, Agostino di Duccio.¹³⁴ However, the impetus for the memorial had passed and, in 1486, the altar was moved to make space for a new chapel to house the Holy Ring. By 1515, interest in the saint seems to have dwindled further as mass was celebrated at the altar just once a year, on the feast day of St. Bernardino.¹³⁵

A collaborative enterprise: *The Miracles of St. Bernardino of Siena*

Eight tablets depicting *The Miracles of St. Bernardino of Siena* and inscribed with the date, 1473, were believed to have formed part of a niche surrounding the *Gonfalone of St. Bernardino* in San Francesco al Prato (Fig. 3.14). However, Laura Teza has persuasively argued that they were actually part of the altar to St. Bernardino in the cathedral and surrounded a statue of the saint by Agostino di Duccio, the early date being a contrivance to suggest that the altarpiece had met the priors' deadline.¹³⁶

In common with the oratory, the major theme of the panels is public order and the consequences of civil strife; themes which again reflect the public funding of the altar. Three of the eight scenes depict St. Bernardino reviving victims of violence, while a fourth addresses the issue of false imprisonment. Concern for the production and survival of heirs is expressed in two miracles - a sterile woman is cured and a child is restored to health. The misfortunes of daily life are addressed in the curing of a blind man and healing of a man trampled by a bull, but it is the well-dressed members of the nobility and merchant classes in their 'classically' inspired houses, who benefit from St. Bernardino's ministrations. The panels reflect the concerns of their patrons - the priors and administering *camerlenghi* - for civil stability and secure family lines, all set in a mannered, bejewelled world such as Braccio Baglioni and his court aspired to. As with the oratory facade, sources for the iconography of the *Miracles* are difficult to trace, but Roberto Rusconi has identified close links with the *Franceschina* written by the Giacomo Oddi - a source which underpins the essentially Perugian concerns of this commission.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Rossi 1875, p. 211; Teza 2004a, p. 251.

¹³⁵ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 128, fol. 131r, transcribed in Teza 2004a, pp. 251, 273, n. 33.

¹³⁶ Teza 2004a, p. 252.

¹³⁷ Rusconi 1989, p. 129.

Following cleaning and restoration in 1991-1993, the original arrangement of the panels has been reconstructed on the basis of the painted gems on the frame and the oblique fall of light from the left in the left-hand panels and from the right in those on the right. This reconstruction places the more architecturally complex scenes at the base, nearer the viewer and the more open scenes at the top. There has also been considerable debate as to the authorship of the panels. The tonal harmony, consistently low horizons, coherent architecture and jewelled framing pattern point to one, overall designer, although at least four hands can be distinguished in the scenes. This could be explained by the ultimatum imposed by the priors which required the work to be carried out speedily.¹³⁸ The architecture also appears to have been delimited by one artist, who may have been responsible for the incised guide lines that appear in these areas. Conversely, the figures do not have any underscoring and it is here that the greatest divergences in size, poses and styles occur.

Teza has suggested that the painting scheme would have been overseen by Agostino di Duccio, as the master in charge of the construction of the altar and, on the basis of the Urbinate character of the architectural backdrops, she proposes that the architectural backdrops were designed by Francesco di Giorgio Martini.¹³⁹ However, there is no documentary evidence to substantiate this. Agostino would have been familiar with such architectural settings from his work in Rimini and could well have provided the general designs and architectural backdrops, while a Perugian workshop executed the paintings and was responsible for the landscapes and figures.

Recently, the ornate, classically-inspired architectural backdrops of the *Barberini Panels* (Metropolitan Museum, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) have been noted, with the suggestion that they may have been undertaken by the same hand as those in Perugia.¹⁴⁰ Early inventories of the Barberini household have established that the eponymous panels were part of an altarpiece in Santa Maria della Bella in Urbino and, almost certainly, painted by Fra Carnevale. The two sets of paintings have other similarities. Both are heavily incised, especially, the architectural areas; both depict small figures in relation to the background; both place

¹³⁸ Teza 2004a, p. 260.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 262-267.

¹⁴⁰ Christiansen 2005, pp. 27-35.

the important action deep in the mid-ground and both have drapery folds that fall straight to the ground. Moreover, both schemes have scenes of sickness or wounding.¹⁴¹ Fra Carnevale is believed to have worked in Perugia, possibly training with Domenico Veneziano and had close contact with Boccati who was active in the city.¹⁴² It is therefore possible, that Fra Carnevale had some hand in planning and executing the Perugian panels, but as yet there is no documentary evidence to support this contention.

The least well-executed panels are perhaps the easiest to attribute. Accordingly, *St. Bernardino resuscitating a young girl and saving a young man from attack* (Fig. 3.14g) and *St. Bernardino saving a young man hit on the head by a shovel* (Fig. 3.14h) were ascribed by Lunghi to the miniaturist, Pierantonio di Niccolò del Poccio, following comparison with his miniatures in antiphons I and L made for the monastery of San Pietro in 1472.¹⁴³ He appears in the *matricola* of painters in Perugia from 1471 and was *camerlengo* in 1475. Following the identification of Sante d'Apollonio's hand in the *Giustizia Triptych*, Teza has ascribed to him *St. Bernardino saves a young man knocked down by a bull* (Fig. 3.14e) and *St. Bernardino healing a sterile woman* (Fig. 3.14f).¹⁴⁴

The remaining panels are less straightforward. It had generally been accepted that *The arrest of a young man and his liberation by St. Bernardino* (Fig. 3.14c) and *St. Bernardino healing a paralytic man* (Fig. 3.14d) were by Pintoricchio,¹⁴⁵ but Teza has proposed Fiorenzo di Lorenzo.¹⁴⁶ To Pintoricchio, she ascribes *St. Bernardino of Siena resuscitating a young girl drowned in a well* (Fig. 3.14a), and *St. Bernardino healing a deaf blind mute* (Fig. 3.14b) usually given to Perugino, but in which Scarpellini also perceives the assistance of Pintoricchio.¹⁴⁷

However, close examination of these four panels reveals technical and iconographic similarities between *b*, *c*, and *d* that are absent, or less exaggerated, in

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 34, 325 re the Barberini panels.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁴³ Lunghi 1984, pp. 151-152.

¹⁴⁴ Teza 2004b, pp. 63-65.

¹⁴⁵ Venturi 1913, p. 483; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2003, pp. 39-47.

¹⁴⁶ Teza 2004b, pp. 66-67.

¹⁴⁷ Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2003, pp. 42-43.

a, leading to the conclusion that three panels were completed by one hand and the fourth, by another. The figures in *a* are smaller than in the other three, the foliage on the trees is more open and the sky is paler and lacks their layered clouds. The architecture in *b* and *c* is consistent, in that both have walls made of large pink stone blocks, articulated with white marble architraves, friezes and window surrounds, in contrast to the stylised white of the Arch of Titus in *a*. While the figures in all four panels are elegantly posed, often standing with one foot before the other and hands on hips, the stance of the figures in *b*, *c* and *d* is more exaggerated. In particular, the figures in the right foreground with their backs to the viewer have their feet set at an improbable angle of almost 180 degrees. In contrast, the feet of the figure on the left in *a* are a mere 90 degrees apart. Likewise, the hands and fingers of the figures in the group of three are awkwardly articulated, with the fifth fingers acutely crooked, as in many paintings from Verrocchio's workshop, while in *a*, they are only slightly bent. It may also be significant that in the borders of *b*, *c* and *d*, each red jewel is followed by three blue gems, while, in the other five panels, each red jewel, is followed by only two blue gems.

The three panels (*b*, *c* and *d*) contain many features typical of Verrocchio's Florentine workshop, albeit it in exaggerated form, and seem likely to have been painted by a former member. There is a keen interest in ornament and jewellery. The elaborate brooches worn by the figures to the right in *b* closely resemble those in the *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* (Fig. 3.15, National Gallery, London) attributed to Verrocchio's workshop and sometimes given to the young Perugino.¹⁴⁸ The brooch, with its distinctive blackberry-like cluster of dark stones and leaf-shaped mount, may have been a workshop accessory and appears again in the *Madonna and Child* (Staatliche Museen, Berlin) attributed to Perugino,¹⁴⁹ and in the *Madonna and Child* (Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris), given variously to Sante di Apollonio or Fiorenzo di Lorenzo.¹⁵⁰ The gold collar edged with pearls, worn by the figure next to the dog in *d*, resembles the collar in which the aforementioned brooch is set in the Berlin *Madonna and Child*. The only difference being that, in the former, the settings lie horizontally, while in the latter they sit vertically. The collar makes another

¹⁴⁸ Rubin and Wright 1999, pp. 172-173.

¹⁴⁹ Garibaldi and Mancini 2004, p. 170

¹⁵⁰ Attributed to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo by Scarpellini 2004, p. 51; to Sante di Apollonio by Teza 2004b, p. 66.

appearance with the brooch in the Jacquemart André *Madonna and Child*, now without pearls.

In the group of three panels, swathes of fabric fall in stiffly ruffled folds in the manner favoured by Verrocchio's workshop as in Lorenzo di Credi's preparatory study of *St. John the Baptist* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) and Verrocchio's bronze *Christ and St. Thomas* (Orsanmichele, Florence).¹⁵¹ Fantastic headgear is also prominent. The helmet of the soldier hurtling in from the left in *c* resembles a head sketched by Leonardo da Vinci, now in the British Museum (1895-9-15-474). Both probably depend from lost reliefs of the warrior emperors, Darius and Alexander, by Verrocchio that are known from descriptions by Vasari.¹⁵² The scrolled hat of the grey-haired man with his back to the viewer in *d* resembles those in Botticelli's *Adoration of the Kings* (National Gallery, London). Long hair is delicately painted, cascading in insubstantial, highlighted curls, resembling Verrocchio's metalpoint and grey ink drawing known as *Head* (Louvre, Paris), where the hair is mainly executed in white heightening and floats ethereally over the woman's shoulders.

These features are present to some extent in *a*, but are more restrained, tempered by an ambition for narrative clarity and physical propriety. While the painter of *a* achieved stillness at the heart of his composition, the painter of *c* and *d* seems determined to inject pace into the scene. Thus, the running soldier and swooping saint of *c* and the chasing dog and hand-slapping youths of *d* strive to evoke movement and drama. The soldier's haste is reminiscent of the young Tobias in *Tobias and the Angel*, which is sometimes attributed to Perugino (Fig. 3.16).¹⁵³

Compositionally, panel *a* appears distinct from *b*, *c* and *d*; the central figures are arranged in a coherent semi-circle, flanked by standing figures at each side. In *b*, the deployment of the characters in a circular group is complicated by the boy on the right and the incomplete standing figure on the extreme right, while in *c*, the confusion is exacerbated by genre details such as broken trees, children and dogs.

¹⁵¹ Perugino often imitated the classical types and voluminous drapery of Verrocchio's *Christ and St. Thomas*, especially in the Sistine Chapel's *Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter*. Coonin 2003, pp. 103-104.

¹⁵² Vasari 1568, III, p. 535.

¹⁵³ Henry 2004, pp. 77-79.

While all four panels seem to derive from a close, and probably first-hand, observation of the style and motifs favoured by Verrocchio's shop, panel *a* is more restrained in its composition and depiction of drapery, jewellery, poses and movement. Panels *c* and *d* are relatively overwrought, while panel *b* falls somewhere between the two groups. It is possible, therefore, that panel *a* was executed by Perugino, whose later works radiate an essential calm, with balanced, harmonious compositions that reveal little interest in drama or movement. The other panels, although often similar to passages believed to have been painted by Perugino when he was in Verrocchio's workshop, seem more likely to be by a colleague who saw those efforts at first hand and now redeployed them.

There are similarities with Pintoricchio's early style, which will be discussed more fully later, but the extreme stances of the figures and over-excited drapery point more compellingly to the Perugian, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, perhaps with collaboration from Perugino or Pintoricchio on panel *b*. He was present in Verrocchio's workshop and his later works, such as his niche for San Francesco al Prato (1487, Fig. 4.10) demonstrate that he was interested in recreating movement and dramatic action. The angels' feet are again placed at a physically challenging angle and the drapery is complex, voluminous and stiff. The child in *d* resembles the pot-bellied Christ Child in the niche and also the children huddled under the Virgin's cloak in Fiorenzo's *Madonna della Misericordia* from 1476 (Fig. 3.17).

Bartolomeo Caporali: a collaborative master

While the exact authorship of each individual panel remains a matter for debate, it is possible that the painters were either existing members of a Perugian workshop, or else came together in a collaborative enterprise, on a one off-basis, to undertake this urgently required work. In the 1470s, Bartolomeo Caporali's workshop was probably the most prestigious and well-connected *atelier* in Perugia and Teza proposes it as the workshop responsible for the panels.¹⁵⁴ It offered expertise in various fields. Bartolomeo and his brother, Giapeco, were both miniaturists, but payment records reveal that they undertook a wide range of work,

¹⁵⁴ Teza 2004a, pp. 259-262.

from tabernacles and baldachins to pennants for trumpets and heraldic emblems. Many of the workshop's commissions were prestigious, including the gilding of Giuliano da Sangallo's bench for the refectory of San Pietro and ceremonial items for the *comune*.¹⁵⁵ Caporali collaborated with the master glazier, Neri di Monte on major projects in Perugia and possibly Rome,¹⁵⁶ and seems to have had other Roman connections as, in 1467, he received 12 florins for applying gold leaf to the ceiling of St. Mark's.¹⁵⁷

Caporali's training and early works are uncertain, but it is believed that he spent some time in Florence, possibly in Verrocchio's workshop. His name first appears in 1442, when he was inscribed in the Perugian painters' guild for the district of Porta Santa Susanna. Subsequently, there are numerous records of him buying and selling houses and land. He was active in public life, being variously *camerlengo* of his guild, prior of the city and *capitano del popolo*, all of which would have raised the profile of his business amongst potential patrons. He is believed to have painted a *Maestà* and *Pietà* in the *Udienza dei Calzolari* in the Palace of the Priors in 1454.

Caporali also collaborated with Benedetto Bonfigli, whom we have seen was the leading public artist in Perugia in the 1450s and 1460s. In 1468, they were paid 100 florins for an altarpiece for the chapel of St. Vincent Ferrer in San Domenico Nuovo, further to a legacy left by the merchant, Francesco di maestro Pietro. Two panels depicting Sts. Catherine of Alexandria and Peter, and Sts. Paul and Peter Martyr have been proposed as part of this altarpiece, although it is difficult to detect the hand of either Bonfigli or Caporali.¹⁵⁸ The modelling on the face and dress of St. Catherine is achieved through coarse, parallel hatching that is alien to both painters whose brushwork was finer, with a more blended finish. Moreover, the long necks and caricatured expressions of the saints, Catherine's fur-trimmed cuffs, high-waisted dress and brocade cloak, resemble those in the *Angels with Instruments of the Passion*, whose attribution to Bonfigli or Caporali has been questioned above.

¹⁵⁵ Bombe 1912, pp. 144-152; Gnoli 1923, pp. 47-51.

¹⁵⁶ Benazzi 1996, pp. 185-187. Caporali probably provided cartoons for windows in Sant'Antonio in 1488. 15 ducats were paid to 'Bartolomeo of Perugia' for windows in St. Peter's, executed in collaboration with Francesco Baroni and Neri di Monte in 1467. Rossi 1877a, p. 217.

¹⁵⁷ Gnoli 1934, p. 97; cited by Teza 2004b, p. 56.

¹⁵⁸ See Garibaldi 1996, pp. 130-133.

Lunghi explains the dissimilarity to either painter's style by suggesting that they reached a stylistic accommodation and in a spirit of Vasarian emulation spurred each other on to greater heights.¹⁵⁹ However, it seems unlikely that two painters who did not normally work together could so thoroughly subsume their own styles. These panels may, therefore, be the work of a member of Bonfigli's workshop and unrelated to the document.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the documented link between the two painters is incontrovertible and sheds light on the nature of artistic collaboration within the city. Even though both artists were independent masters with large workshops, they were prepared to pool their resources to meet a specific commission. It is possible that such collaboration between two or more workshops took place during the painting of the *Miracles*.

A further example of collaboration between Caporali and another painter is found in an account book for the Confraternity of Sant'Andrea della Giustizia. This penitential confraternity looked after prisoners and escorted the condemned to execution. They were originally based in the small church of St. Mustiola, near Porta Santa Susanna and enjoyed close links with the Franciscans of San Francesco al Prato who provided the officiating priests at the masses celebrated in the church.¹⁶¹ The presence of Sts. Francis and Bernardino in their altarpiece attests to this closeness. In 1537, the confraternity merged with the confraternity of St. Bernardino and all its goods were moved to the convent of San Francesco, from where the altarpiece's provenance can be traced. Further evidence of the shared sympathies of the confraternity with the Franciscans is provided by the will and codicil of Pacce Giovanni Cecchi de la Nora from Castro Passignano. His will, dated 14 July 1481, provided for him to be buried in San Francesco, while his codicil of 24 November, left 20 florins for a *tavola* constructed and painted for the Confraternity of St. Andrew.¹⁶²

The confraternity account book records a series of payments to Caporali and

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 130-132.

¹⁶⁰ Bury 1990, p. 473, n. 22, suggests the document relates to a different altarpiece.

¹⁶¹ ASP, CRS, *Confraternita di S. Andrea e S. Bernardino della Giustizia*, uncatalogued, entitled *In questo libro chiamato memoriale X di charte 216, nel quale se scrive anno tutte li debitori e creditor della fraternita, 1464-1510* contains several payments for officiating in 1470, cited in Bury 1990, p. 470.

¹⁶² ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, 171v-172r and 172v. Unpublished.

Sante di Apollonio between October 1475 and April 1476.¹⁶³ It is possible that Pacce's legacy was for the same altarpiece. Bury's proposal that these payments relate to the *Giustizia Triptych* (Fig. 3.18), previously attributed to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, has been widely accepted, although his assessment that substantial areas of the painting were executed by Caporali is more problematic. In particular, the cold, metallic colours, angular drapery, static poses and over-emphasised anatomy, bear little relationship to Caporali's other work. A nodding acquaintance with Verrocchio's Madonnas can be detected in the Virgin's long neck, demure glance, and high-waisted dress under a cloak held by a brooch, but these details could have been assimilated from examples of Perugino's work already in Perugia. The lack of correspondence between the drapery and the bodies beneath it suggests that the painter did not fully understand the rationale behind the new style.

A possible explanation is that the painting was mainly, if not entirely, undertaken by Sante di Apollonio.¹⁶⁴ Caporali's name appears first in the payment schedule, but this may simply indicate that he was acting in a legal capacity as head of his workshop without undertaking much, if any, of the painting himself. This low level of involvement may replicate the arrangements for the *Miracles*. Caporali's hand cannot be detected in those panels, though he could have acted as a manager or coordinator. On arrival in Perugia, Agostino di Duccio or Fra Carnevale may have sought out an experienced workshop head to organise a group of local painters who could quickly produce a series of paintings. To ensure consistency within the panels and with the sculptural elements, he may have insisted that the painters had some knowledge (though not necessarily direct) of the Florentine style and this may have required the collaboration of painters from more than one workshop. As we have seen, the pooling of resources was not unusual in Perugia, and Caporali's willingness to engage in such arrangements is well-documented. The *Giustizia* collaboration also places one of the contenders for the *Miracles*, Sante di Apollonio, within Caporali's orbit.

The consistent taste of the Poor Clares at Monteluce

Since the discovery of the *Giustizia* document, Caporali's *oeuvre* has been

¹⁶³ Bury 1990, pp. 469-475.

¹⁶⁴ Teza 2004a, p. 261 reaches a similar conclusion.

reassessed and a large body of work excised, leaving a much depleted canon of which some remains open to question. The *Madonna and Six Angels* (Fig. 3.19) is a case in point. This painting is almost certainly that referred to in the *Memoriale di Monteluca* as having been donated by Fioravanti dai Matti of Perugia, in the time of the abbess, Sister Eufrosia Alfani, i.e. around 1465. The chronicler describes it as depicting the Virgin Mary with her little son around her neck and states that it was then on the altar of the Sacrament.¹⁶⁵ The painting is executed partly in oils and partly in tempera, making it the earliest known oil painting in Perugia and, as in Caporali's later *Adoration of the Shepherds* (Fig. 3.20), elements such as the angels' wings, the areas of gold fabric and the roses are outlined in a heavy black line, typical of designs for stained glass windows such as he is known to have made.

But the panel displays no Verrocchiesque attributes and is heavily indebted to Fra Angelico's *Guidalotti Altarpiece*. In particular, the faces have long straight, aquiline noses, solid, stylised curls and ecstatic expressions. As with Angelico, there is an abundance of gold, both in the embossed ground and the large haloes and crowns. The angels in the foreground hold vases of roses, similar in shape to those in the *Guidalotti* panel, though made of glass, rather than brass. The tiered angels surrounding the Virgin are much smaller in scale and hark back to trecento prototypes by Giotto or Duccio. It has been suggested the panel represents Caporali's early style.¹⁶⁶ If so, it must have been before he visited Florence and his style must have changed dramatically. Nor does it explain the early use of oils. More likely, this is the work of a local Perugian painter, possibly from Caporali's workshop.

The Adoration of the Shepherds (Fig. 3.20), also painted for the Clarissans at Monteluca c.1477-1479, not only reveals technical facility with oils, but also familiarity with Botticelli and the young Ghirlandaio, influences also present in the *Miracles* and evidence of the painter's familiarity with Florence. Previously attributed to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, its authorship by Caporali has now been confirmed by documents showing payments to him and a carpenter named Angelo Francesco, although the altarpiece is not mentioned in the *Memoriale*.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Nicolini 1983, p. 29.

¹⁶⁶ Garibaldi 1996, p. 188.

¹⁶⁷ Scarpellini 1994, pp. 235-238.

The panel depicts an animated Christ Child lying on the ground on a bed of straw, a reminder of the wheaten communion wafer representing Christ's body in the mass. Christ's head rests on the hem of St. Joseph's robe, while his feet lie on the Virgin's skirts, bridging the holy couple who kneel to adore him. Both Mary and Joseph sport belts of Perugian cloth, a local touch which brings the scene more closely within the experience of its Perugian audience. To the left, three shepherds and their hound worship the Child, while to the right, an ox and ass resembling those in Perugino's *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 3.21, 1475 -1476) regard the baby from their bier. Behind the holy family, a choir of angels sing and play musical instruments from the shelter of an open barn. On a step, in front of them, a split pomegranate, symbolic of the resurrection, spills from a knapsack made of Perugian cloth, while, in the distance, an angel announces his news to the shepherds.

Although Perugino was already disseminating the lessons of Verrocchio's studio in Perugia, the skilful technique of this panel supports the view that Caporali spent some time in Florence, possibly in Verrocchio's workshop. The composition, iconography and exquisite still-life flowers in the foreground owe much to Northern painting, as does the rocky landscape - interests that were current in Florence. The panel is enlivened by bright jewel colours, especially Joseph's yellow cloak, lined with vermilion, the Virgin's deep pink dress and the intense blue mantle of the foremost shepherd (colours that are repeated in the angels' clothes). A raking light bathes the scene, intensifying the colours of the fabrics, casting deep shadows, and illuminating the shepherds on their precipitous hillside as clearly as the foreground flowers.

Such brilliant colours and uncompromising light effects seem to have been influenced by Boccati's paintings from the mid-1450s, such as his *Madonna of the Pergola* for the altar of the confraternity of the Disciplinati in San Domenico and the *Madonna of the Orchestra* (Fig. 3.3) for the altar of the Company of the Holy Sacrament in the convent of St. Simon of Carmine. These altarpieces resonate with intricate details such as rich fabrics and *all'antica* friezes and are set under rose-covered pergolas in the open air. Not only do they recall the *hortus conclusus* symbolic of the Virgin, but, on a more secular note, evoke Braccio Baglioni's

famous garden parties. As in *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, the altarpieces are filled with ensembles of musical angels playing instruments and singing for the Madonna and Child – a response to sophisticated patronal tastes that appreciated music, as well as painting.

The sisters of Monteluce were indirect beneficiaries of the escalation in Franciscan sentiment that followed the canonisation of St. Bernardino and of increasing financial pressures on noble families to ensure their patrimony was not dispersed. The acquisition of these paintings coincided with a period of growth and patronal activity within the convent, which is documented in the *Memoriale di Monteluce* written by the abbess, Sister Battista Alfani and begun in 1488.¹⁶⁸ Her account was based on papers and books she found in the convent and the memories of older nuns. Battista records that, in 1218, a certain Gluctus Monaldus donated land on a hill called Monte Luce to a group of religious women to enable them to build a convent. Initially organised under the Benedictine rule, the convent became Clarissan in 1229. It survived the ravages of the Black Death and outbreaks of the plague in the mid-fourteenth century, but numbers were badly reduced and only 15 nuns were resident in 1448 when the convent adopted the Observant rule. But that same year, the establishment was boosted by the arrival of 23 sisters from Santa Lucia in Foligno. This, combined with a period of strong leadership under the abbesses Lucia da Foligno, Eufrosia Alfani and her blood sister, the chronicler Battista Alfani, resulted in the resurgence of the community. By 1465, there appears to have been a waiting list as, on the death of five sisters from fever, they were quickly replaced by five young women who had ‘long been praying to be able to enter the convent’.¹⁶⁹ By 1483, there were 68 sisters and the increase in numbers necessitated the building of a larger refectory, kitchen, laundry and bakery.¹⁷⁰

The women entering the convent tended to be either young girls or widows from the leading magnate families in whose hands individual wealth was concentrated.¹⁷¹ So, in July 1472, Bonifatia, the daughter of Mariotto degli Baglioni and sister of the reverend father Evangelista, Provincial Vicar of the Franciscans,

¹⁶⁸ Nicolini 1983.

¹⁶⁹ Nicolini 1983, p. 28.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁷¹ Grohmann 1981, I, p. 149.

entered the convent and, in 1477, she was joined by her niece, Adriana, daughter of Alberto degli Baglioni. In December 1482, Cleophe, the daughter of Sforza degli Oddi entered the establishment to take her place alongside women from families such as the Graziani, Alfani and Michelotti.

The expansion of female convents was not confined to Monteluce and resulted largely from the nobility's need to prevent the break-up of their land by putting their daughters into convents.¹⁷² In this way, six of Alfano Alfani's seven daughters (including Battista and Eufrasia) entered convents. Their accompanying 'dowries' contributed substantially to the assets of the houses they entered; Monteluce increased its holding from 1200 *libbre* in the early 1300s to 7441 *libbre* in 1489.¹⁷³ While these dowries tended to be used to maintain the initiates, renovations and new buildings were mainly paid for from receipts from benefices. In contrast, legacies from individuals tended to be used to commission sculptures, paintings, illuminated manuscripts and liturgical objects.¹⁷⁴ Most legacies were left by relatives of the sisters themselves and with their wealthy connections it is unsurprising that the convent was able to embark on a series of important commissions.

Many legacies were unspecific, leaving money 'for things for the church' and allowing some discretion as to how the money should be spent. In this way, a legacy from the mother of Sisters Eufrasia and Battista 'for things for the sacristy' enabled them to commission a marble tabernacle from the Florentine sculptor, Francesco di Simone Ferrucci (Fig. 3.22). In 1483, it was installed by him personally on the Altar of the Sacrament in the outer church, which was dedicated to the Virgin. When the cost of the tabernacle exceeded their funds, the sisters merely asked their brother to make good the shortfall, which he graciously did.¹⁷⁵ The family's connection with the tabernacle is commemorated by the inclusion of their coats of arms, a gold lion rampant with a red crown, below the finely carved candelabra.

The degree of autonomy enjoyed by the sisters in spending such legacies has

¹⁷² Banker 1997, p. 48. This was even more prevalent after 1500.

¹⁷³ Grohmann 1981, I, pp. 381 – 389.

¹⁷⁴ Wood 1996, p. 103.

¹⁷⁵ Nicolini 1983, p. 39.

been disputed. Traditionally it was assumed that their spiritual advisors would have taken such decisions. However, Jeryldene Wood has noted from the *Memoriale* that, while the sisters needed permission to proceed with their projects, this was often merely an approval of a decision that had already been taken by the nuns themselves.¹⁷⁶ Clarissan abbesses served three-year terms, but the nuns at Monteluca ensured continuity by electing an abbess and a vicaress and alternating the offices between the two incumbents. As a result, Lucia da Foligno and Eufrosia Alfani provided an unbroken period of leadership throughout the latter half of the quattrocento. On Eufrosia's death in 1489, her sister, Battista, took over her position.

We know that the sisters were conscious of the need for propriety, as Battista records that she employed the Franciscan, Fra Ludovico da Coldisipulo, to construct a chancel because she did not want strangers or lay workmen on the premises for the length of time that the work would take.¹⁷⁷ Even so, these women would have acquired a wealth of experience in the day-to-day running of the convent and its spiritual concerns. This seems to have included selecting and negotiating with artists and workmen, even if at one remove, through their male procurators. While the chronicler, Battista's, positions as blood sister to one abbess and then abbess herself, may have coloured her account of their achievements, she consistently credits the initiation of improvements in the convent's fabric to the abbesses, while courteously acknowledging that their advisors usually acceded to their requests.

Santa Maria di Monteluca has an aisleless nave and flat apse like many medieval churches in Umbria. During an extensive building programme in the mid-1400s, the interior was divided and a separate nuns' choir constructed behind the altar. Following this, the nuns were restricted to the inner church and only rarely granted dispensation to enter the outer area where the laity worshipped. Artistic commissions appear generally to have been made for this public arena, particularly the Altar of the Sacrament and the high altar – the audience being laymen rather than the nuns themselves. As such, their primary function would have been to give a clear expression of Clarissan spirituality, rather than engaging in complex theology.

¹⁷⁶ Wood 1996, p. 241, n. 39.

¹⁷⁷ Nicolini 1983, pp. 76-79; cited in Wood 1996, pp. 102-3.

The convent was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the high altar being known as the altar of the Virgin Mary.¹⁷⁸ Initially, this was dedicated to the Annunciation, but, from around 1478, it changed to the feast of the Assumption. Indulgences were granted for visits to the church on that day (15 August) and a public procession, followed by High Mass and Vespers, took place.¹⁷⁹ This devotion to the Virgin is reflected in the community's commissions which emphasise the various roles of the Virgin as Mother of Christ, Queen of Heaven and Bride of Christ.¹⁸⁰ In the *Madonna with Six Angels*, which hung above the Altar of the Sacrament in the external church, Mary appears as Christ's mother, but already wears her heavenly crown and bears the *Stella Maris* on her shoulder, while the gold brocade ground and attendant angels place her in a heavenly setting. The Ferrucci tabernacle on the same altar, in which the infant Jesus stands on a chalice before a mandorla reminiscent of the Host, refers indirectly to the Virgin's role as the mother who gave birth to this incarnate Christ, a message that would have been reiterated by the crucifix that was also present. The prominent torches held by two standing angels and the flaming candelabra on the pilasters refer to Christ as the Light of the World, but also make a visual pun upon the name of the convent, Hill of Light.

In contrast, the young Virgin in Caporali's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, which was probably situated in the nun's choir, is more humbly attired, bareheaded, with her long hair simply dressed with a strip of cloth; more fitting, perhaps, for an audience of women who had eschewed lives of privilege for a more ascetic calling. Yet this girl, who kneels on the bare earth, is singled out for attention by the Child who raises his arms to her and fixes her completely in his gaze, ignoring the distractions of the shepherds and the angelic choir. The figures in the roundels of the predella - the Archangel Michael, Sts. Louis of Toulouse, Bernardino, Francis, Clare, Anthony of Padua and Jerome - reiterate the feminine, Franciscan setting, ranking St. Clare alongside the order's male founders.

In selecting their painters and sculptors, the Alfani sisters and Abbess Lucia appear to have had a clear idea of the style that they were seeking, that is, the up-to-

¹⁷⁸ Nicolini 1983, p. 42.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 85, 97, 107.

¹⁸⁰ Wood 1996, pp. 107-8.

date Florentine style of workshops such as those of Verrocchio and Ghirlandaio, whether the artists originated from Florence or Perugia. While the somewhat archaic composition of the *Madonna with Six Angels* can be explained by the fact that it was donated ready-made by a lay benefactor, the choices made by the abbesses when they had free rein, point to an awareness of recent artistic developments and a willingness to engage with them. Thus, in 1491, a lay donor commissioned a somewhat conventional fresco, albeit in Peruginesque form, of the *Crucifixion with Sts. Clare and Francis* from Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. In contrast, in 1505, spending money left by Sister Illuminata for 'things of the church', Abbess Battista commissioned Raphael after taking advice from various citizens and spiritual advisors. He was initially instructed to paint an *Assumption* resembling that by Ghirlandaio for the Franciscan friars of San Girolamo at Narni, but when Raphael submitted a very different sketch for approval, it was accepted.

The sisters Eufrosia (formerly Emilia) and Battista (formerly Antonia) came from the wealthy Alfani family. Their parents, Alfano Alfani and Iacopa Beccuti, had 14 children, of whom seven entered holy orders.¹⁸¹ Besides Eufrosia and Battista, their three eldest girls, Costanza, Suriana and Agnese all became nuns at Santa Giuliana, their son, Emilio became a Franciscan Observant taking the name Giacomo, while another daughter, Camilla, married Carlo Coppoli, but in 1449, entered Monteluca, taking the name Felice, before taking up a position in Rome. The other sons were Francesco, Diamante, Giovanni Battista, who married Francesca Baglioni, Tindaro, who married Andrea Mariotto Baglioni and Lovisio. The remaining daughter, Pia, married Bontempo Giovanni Bontempi. Of these, Diamante Alfani was an official of the *Zecca*, or Mint, in 1474. As such he would have come into contact with the leading goldsmiths of the day as they were charged with managing the *Zecca*. It should not be forgotten that Caporali was an expert gilder.

The Monteluca abbesses therefore had familial connections with several other monastic establishments in Perugia and Rome and with influential families who were active patrons, such as the Baglioni. Caporali is believed to have painted a fresco of the *Assumption of the Virgin* for the *parlatorio* of Santa Giuliana, around 1467-1468,

¹⁸¹ See family tree in Nicolini 1983, unpaginated, between plates 16 and 17; Grohmann 1981, I, p. 416.

in which the influence of Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli and Boccati is apparent and, around 1473-1477, he painted a fresco of the *Pietà* above the altar in a room behind the choir.¹⁸² It is not unlikely that the recommendation of one group of sisters to another contributed to the choice of Caporali.

Caporali's other Franciscan commissions

Caporali and his workshop undertook several other commissions for the Franciscans in Perugia and the *contado*. In 1482, he made a large *gonfalone* for the church of San Francesco at Montone, while two predella panels, now in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, seem to have been part of a Perugian altarpiece (Figs. 3.23, 3.24). Painted in a mixture of oil and tempera on panel, a row of saints stand on a *millefiori* lawn against an architecturally complex pink wall, with a plinth and openings revealing more foliage.¹⁸³ Four saints face to the right and four to the left, suggesting that the sections were originally separated by a central element, such as a roundel containing a *pietà* or Man of Sorrows. St. Herculaneus, holding a flag with a Perugian griffin on a red ground and St. Lawrence with his grid-iron, confirm its Perugian provenance. Sts. Francis and Louis of Toulouse indicate a Franciscan connection, but the Dominican, Peter Martyr, is also depicted, along with James the Elder and Anthony Abbot, suggesting that this could have been a commission for a more diverse body, such as a guild or confraternity, possibly with links to the Franciscans. The inclusion of St. Luke, holding a portrait of the Virgin, may indicate a connection with the painters' guild, of which Caporali was *camerlengo* and represented as prior in July and August 1480.

Summary

By the early 1480s, a change in the pattern of patronal decisions had emerged in Perugia. During the period of relative stability under Braccio Baglioni, public buildings and decorative schemes burgeoned, leading to an increased sense of civic pride and identity. At the same time, many Franciscan establishments expanded in response to increasing numbers and revenue. The presence of leading humanists at the university and in papal posts encouraged an atmosphere where humanist

¹⁸² Santi 1985, pp. 54-56.

¹⁸³ This architectural backdrop resembles the Virgin's throne in the *Madonna and Child enthroned with two angels* (Staatliche Museum, Berlin) generally attributed to Caporali.

aspirations flourished and yet there appear to have been no major commissions to 'foreign' painters after Piero della Francesca's *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece* in the late 1450s/early 1460s. Instead, local painters such as Bonfigli and Caporali, working alongside a host of lesser known masters, such as Sante di Appolonio and Battista di Baldassare Mattioli, were selected to undertake works of public and sacred prestige upon which the reputation of the city rested. This is not to say that 'foreign' aesthetics were not desired. There was a strong preference for artists who could meet the requirement for humanist iconography and decoration in accordance with prevailing tastes in Rome and Florence, yet painters from Florence no longer obtained employment within the city. Preference was given to Perugian artists who had incorporated these new ideas into their work, but who continued to meet Perugian patrons' courtly desires for an elegant line, rich decoration, bright colours, liberal use of gold and local references. While this trend is most obvious in the field of painting, there is some evidence to suggest a similar attitude towards sculptors, although in practice this was impeded by a lack of local expertise. Even Agostino di Duccio, who had undertaken numerous commissions in Perugia, was only awarded the contract for the St. Bernardino chapel in the cathedral when it became clear that no local master could carry out the work.

This atmosphere of informal protectionism found official expression in a direction made by the *comune* in 1472. In agreeing to grant the Silvestrines of Santa Maria Nuova 30 florins for an altarpiece, the magistrates added the condition that the work should be '*dipingi per magistros expertos dicte civitatis Perusii unum vel plures et non per forenses*' with the further proviso that, in the event of a foreign painter being used, the donation would have to be repaid to the Treasury.¹⁸⁴ The Silvestrines prudently complied and instructed Fiorenzo di Lorenzo to undertake the work, which was completed between 1487 and 1493. Beyond simply favouring the local guild and keeping money and work within the local economy, this requirement indicates that there were plenty of painters within the city and that the authorities considered them capable of undertaking significant works worthy of communal support.

¹⁸⁴ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 108, fol. 78r transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 23. Mancini erroneously states that the subsidy was 300 florins.

A major change in the training and experience of painters such as Bonfigli and Caporali seems to have been instrumental in their success. Not only did they benefit from the earlier generation of masters such as Domenico Veneziano, Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli, who left important works in Perugia, but they themselves travelled, studied and worked in centres such as Rome and Florence. There, they assimilated new styles and techniques and acquired a status that legitimised their selection by Perugian patrons who, in turn, changed their perceptions of home-grown artists. The rapid spread of ideas between Perugian painters was facilitated by collaborative projects involving leading masters such as Caporali or Bonfigli.

Once local painters had secured the support of patrons such as Braccio Baglioni and the Franciscans, their success was assured and monastic and family networks helped propagate this pattern of patronage. The requirement that Bonfigli's frescoes in the chapel of the Priors be approved by a Florentine may demonstrate a desire for external approval, but also exhibits confidence that the local artist would not be found wanting. Perugian patrons thereby achieved the best of both worlds – the status of a 'foreign-approved' painter, but one who knew and met their particular requirements. This will be demonstrated even more clearly by the success enjoyed by Pietro Vannucci, '*il Perugino*', both in the city and throughout Italy.

Chapter 4: The Supremacy of Local Painters (c.1475-c.1500)

Perugian painters, who had come to monopolise commissions in their home city in the years 1450-75, achieved national and international recognition for the first time with the next generation of artists. Pintoricchio and Perugino became the most sought-after painters of the age; Pintoricchio enjoyed huge success in Rome and Perugino was in demand throughout Italy and beyond. Looking particularly at Franciscan commissions, this chapter examines the patronal networks in Perugia that continued to privilege Perugian painters and the ongoing relationships of these 'big-name' artists with their home city.

Religious, social and political developments

The last quarter of the fifteenth century was a period of both consolidation and change for Franciscan establishments in Perugia. Some existing convents such as Monteluca continued their building programme, while the friars of San Francesco al Prato were most concerned to shore up their existing premises which were under constant threat from subsidence. Theologically, the struggle for supremacy between the Observant and Conventual branches of the order continued, with the Observants gaining in strength under the leadership of Francesco Nanni, Minister General from 1475 until 1499. Although a moderate, he tended to favour the Observants in their quest for reforms.

There were also subtle changes in the objects associated with worship, which were reflected in the nature of artistic commissions. For example, the cult of St. Bernardino of Siena, which had dominated Franciscan spirituality in Perugia during the previous 25 years, experienced a gradual decline, while the canonization of the Franciscan forefather, St. Bonaventure in April 1482, began to be reflected in new commissions.

New confraternities and companies, such as the Company of St. Joseph, sprang up in response to changing spiritual, civic and social requirements and were often affiliated to the Franciscans. Some groups occupied chapels within existing churches, but others were situated in independent buildings. Either way, their

development created a demand for new altarpieces and processional banners, both as a focus for devotion and to promulgate their identities.

Itinerant preachers continued to have an impact upon the devotional and social life of the city. The Observant Franciscan, Bernardino da Feltre preached repeatedly in the piazza from mid-June until the end of July 1486, advocating peace and reconciliation and urging the acceptance of papal dominion following the election of Innocent VIII in 1484.¹

In the wider community, Perugian politics were still dominated by the power struggle between various noble families, especially the Baglioni, and the papacy. The death of Braccio Baglioni in 1479 left a power vacuum and, in 1488, ongoing disputes between various noble families culminated in a pitched battle between the Baglioni and the Oddi in the Piazza, following which the Oddi were driven into exile. Thereafter, Guido and Rodolfo Baglioni ruled through a special council packed with their supporters, known as the *dieci dell'arbitrio*, which attempted to intimidate the papal authorities and dominate the city, '*in man de quali era tutto il Governo della città*'.² Attempts by the Oddi in 1491 and 1495 to take Perugia were repulsed and, in addition to local skirmishes, wars were waged against Assisi, Foligno and Urbino for harbouring the exiles.

Leading families, such as the Baglioni and Alfani, maintained strong, though not exclusive, connections with the Franciscans. For example, a notarial annotation records that on Braccio Baglioni's death, his body was initially placed in his chapel in Santa Maria dei Servi, but was subsequently buried in San Francesco al Prato.³ Despite the political unrest, these families continued to be active patrons, with Braccio's successors maintaining the practice of employing local painters that had prevailed during the latter half of his rule.

Braccio Baglioni and the young Perugino

It is likely that an early connection with the Baglioni family led to the young

¹ Rusconi 1989, pp. 134 -139.

² Pellini 1664, III, p. 7.

³ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 211, unpaginated, transcribed in Cutini 2004, p. 530, n. 39.

Perugino painting *The Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 3.21) for the high altar in Santa Maria dei Servi. Situated in the Colle Landone area of the city, this church was patronised by the Baglioni family and Braccio erected a chapel there in the early 1470s. The building and decoration of the chapel were important to Braccio. He was personally involved in appointing Andrea di Angelo, a respected doctor of theology who had been prior of the convent since 1466, to oversee the construction of the chapel and he gave 120 gold ducats to the convent for the building work.⁴ Braccio's close interest in the project is confirmed by the provision of a substantial permanent endowment in his will.⁵

Braccio had clear views about the style of the chapel as the documents specify that it should resemble in '*modum*' the chapel of the Madonna delle Grazie in the Franciscan church of San Francesco al Prato. This chapel had been erected around 1465 by a confraternity known as the *Societas Gonfalonis* or *Societas Beate Marie Virginis* to house Bonfigli's miraculous *gonfalone*, popularly referred to as Santa Maria delle Grazie. The cult had prospered and the chapel, which was built onto the facade of the conventual church, was an impressive monument, as can be seen from a plan drawn by Ricci prior to its demolition in 1925.⁶ Hannelore Glasser identified three types of commission that were all required to be made '*in modo et forma*'. Firstly, where the prototype served as an inspiration, but the copy was very free; secondly where there was close adherence to the prototype, both in form and composition, and thirdly, where only the iconographical scheme was imitated.⁷ As Santa Maria dei Servi has been destroyed it is not possible to ascertain how closely the prototype was followed, though the Narni-type altarpieces considered previously indicate that in Perugia such clauses tended to require a resemblance rather than a strict copy. Even so, Braccio's requirement that the Servite chapel should be similar to that of Santa Maria delle Grazie illustrates how designs introduced by one order, in this case the Franciscans, could be quickly taken up and emulated by others in the city with the encouragement of an enthusiastic patron such as Braccio.

⁴ Canuti 1931, II, p. 408.

⁵ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 244, fol. 82v cited in Cutini 2004, p. 530, n. 31.

⁶ E. Ricci, 'Plan of the Oratory of the *Gonfalone*', MS; Perugia Convento San Filippo Neri; reprinted in Bury 1998, p. 73. Devotion to the *gonfalone* continued for many years. On 11 June 1490, the will of Magister Galeotto Ercolano provided for him to be buried in San Francesco al Prato and left four florins to the chapel of Santa Maria delle Grazie '*per ornamentis altaris de capelle*'. ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, fols. 356v-357v, unpublished.

⁷ Glasser 1965, p. 65.

The building activity at Santa Maria dei Servi coincided with a period of lesser military engagement on Braccio's part and a time when he enjoyed the support of both the pope and the Medici family in Florence. Braccio's fame as a *condottiero* and the high regard in which he was held by the Medici is illustrated by Vasari's portrait of him dressed as a warrior, standing next to Lorenzo il Magnifico, in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. At home, internal alliances based on family ties ensured his continued domination.⁸ Being selected to paint a major work for Braccio would have been a good break for the aspiring Perugino.

Although no documents relating to *The Adoration of the Magi* are known, it is plausible that Braccio was instrumental in selecting Perugino to paint the altarpiece, given his connection with the church. The three kings are clothed in Baglioni green and red, but Cutini's identification of the two younger magi as portraits of Braccio and his son, Griffone, is unconvincing.⁹ The faces of the kings are generic and not particularised which becomes plain when they are compared with some of the crowd. The features of the man to the left of the young king are much more natural, with his bone-structure, complexion and piercing eyes clearly being taken from life in what is almost certainly a self-portrait. The face to the young king's right is also individualised (although it lacks the life-like quality of the self-portrait) and has more persuasively been proposed as Malatesta di Pandolfo Baglioni, Braccio's father.

Cutini's suggestion that the young king can be identified as Griffone from a line of stitching on his left boot, supposedly depicting a wound sustained in his youth, is also dubious. While the stitching is prominent – red stitches over a dark brown slit, highlighted with white and flecks of black – and appears in the foreground, boots with similar stitching or lacing occur in other paintings from this period. For example, Tobias in Piero del Pollaiuolo's *Tobias and the Angel* (Fig. 3.16, c.1470s, National Gallery, London) sports a prominent seam on the inside of his boot and, in another version from Verrocchio's workshop that has been attributed

⁸ Cutini 2004, p. 528.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 529. See Teza 1997, pp. 89-102 for a discussion of Baglioni involvement in the commission.

in part to Perugino, Tobias wears boots that are loosely laced up the inside leg.¹⁰ Stitching or fine lacing, as on the king's boot, seems to have been fashionable and it would be dangerous to infer any personification of Griffone as the young magus from it.

The association of the Baglioni dynasty with the Magi theme repeats a topos that had been employed repeatedly in paintings for leading Florentine families including the Strozzi and Medici. As in Perugino's altarpiece, Benozzo Gozzoli's earlier frescoes for the Medici (1459, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence) shied away from representing members of the family as the Magi themselves, although such allusions could have been inferred.¹¹ In Florence, the political imperative to maintain the myth of subordination to the Republic required that the Medici be more diplomatically placed at the head of the kings' entourage. In Perugia, the Baglioni were subject to similar constraints, and fictions regarding their relationship to the *comune*, as well as a sense of religious decorum, prevailed. Burke has noted that the Medici are 'emblematically represented' in Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* (Uffizi Gallery, Florence), even if they are not 'portrayed' and this is also true of the Baglioni's presence in Perugino's altarpiece.¹²

Braccio's connections with Florence and the Medici family may have contributed to the selection of the Magi theme. Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* was painted for the Pucci family who were close allies of the Medici around 1470-75 – a time when Perugino may well have been in Verrocchio's workshop with Botticelli. Perugino's altarpiece has many of the trademarks of Verrocchio's workshop, for example the interest in landscape, the stance and clothing of the figures and their stylised hats. But Perugian tendencies are also present. The crowding of the kings' entourage on the left resembles Bonfigli's *Adoration of the Magi* (Fig. 3.5), while the chased gold in the decorations and gold on the clothes is typical of Perugian taste as exemplified by the richly decorated altarpieces of Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca in the city.

¹⁰ For the attribution to Perugino see Henry 2004, pp. 77-79.

¹¹ There is a large bibliography identifying portraits in the frescoes. See for example: Gombrich 1966, pp. 35-70; Achidini Luchinat 1992, p. 58; Hatfield 1992; Crum 1996.

¹² Burke 2004, pp. 112-13.

In commissioning Perugino to undertake his first major independent work in the city, the patron, Braccio Baglioni or someone close to him, was both discerning and innovative. In selecting a style and theme associated with the Medici, he asserted his aspirations for a humanist court comparable with theirs, but the choice of a Perugian painter underlines a cultural independence from them. The willingness to entrust the altarpiece to this young, local painter stemmed not from a blinkered preference for local artists *per se*, but from an appreciation that Perugino was a skilful painter; a far cry from the low calibre of many local painters that had previously forced educated patrons to look outside the city. Building on the strong local tradition that had already been established by Bonfigli and Caporali, Perugino was able to meet Perugian patrons' demands for high quality paintings from within the city. He was quick to advertise his skills. While the *Adoration* is unsigned, Perugino was already an adept self-publicist and his portrait, easily identifiable as a younger version of the self-portrait on the wall of the Collegio del Cambio (Perugia) stares out detachedly from the extreme left of the picture. Precociously confident in his abilities and seemingly ambitious for commercial success, he staked his claim to be the face that came to mind when prospective patrons were considering whom to appoint, armed with the seal of Baglioni approval.

The *contado* – a place of opportunity

Even so, apart from the *Adoration of the Magi*, Perugino's earliest Umbrian works appear to have been painted for towns in the Perugian *contado* - an example of how the periphery can be a place of opportunity for artists who have yet to become established in the more competitive atmosphere of the city. A fresco in the parish church of Santa Maria Assunta in Cerqueto once bore an inscription stating that the chapel was painted by 'Petrus Perusinus' in 1473 (Fig. 4.1).¹³ It was painted for the people of Cerqueto who wished to give thanks to Mary Magdalene for delivering them from an outbreak of the plague. The chapel was cared for by a male company, but the Baglioni family probably had some influence over the commission as they were large landowners in the area. Braccio also had ties with Perugino's home town of Città della Pieve, 40 kilometres southwest of Perugia, being *castellano* (Lord of the manor) since 1471.¹⁴

¹³ Crispolti 1597, p. 142.

¹⁴ Abbondanza 1963, V, p. 210.

Despite his origins, Perugino immediately associated himself with Perugia, signing himself 'Petrus Perusinus'. In his *Life* of the painter, Vasari relates that Perugino came from a poor background, although documentary evidence indicates that his family was moderately prosperous and politically active in Città della Pieve.¹⁵ Generally reluctant to acknowledge artistic merit that did not stem directly from Florence, Vasari probably wished to establish the impoverishment of Perugino's early artistic experience as much as his financial situation. His subsequent success could then be attributed to his exposure to Florence, rather than any early training he may have received in Perugia. Vasari does state that Perugino was apprenticed in an unnamed Perugian painter's workshop, but the lack of detail is dismissive of this early experience.

In reality, however, Perugino's apprenticeship in a Perugian workshop is likely to have had a significant bearing upon his subsequent success in the city, particularly given the Perugians' preference for local painters. Speculation as to which master Vasari was referring to has centred upon Benedetto Bonfigli, Bartolomeo Caporali and Fiorenzo di Lorenzo who ran the three largest workshops during the 1460s. A conclusive judgement based on Perugino's early style is difficult due to the lack of documented or securely attributable early works, but a close connection with any one of these masters could have helped him obtain his first independent contracts in the *contado* and, subsequently, in Perugia itself.¹⁶

All that remains of Perugino's work at Cerqueto is a detached fragment of fresco showing St. Sebastian tied to a column, flanked by the remains of another plague saint, St. Roch and a figure that probably represented St. Peter. The chapel was dedicated to Mary Magdalene and the wall above the altar originally depicted her surmounted by the Holy Trinity. The saints appear to be standing on a *trompe l'oeil* ledge jutting out from the wall and it is likely that a frieze of saints continued around the chapel. As such, the decoration would have been a substantial enterprise for a young painter and would have provided Perugino with an ideal opportunity to display his abilities, albeit to a restricted audience due to the church's rural location.

¹⁵ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, p. 596.

¹⁶ See Henry 2004, pp. 74-75.

The influence of Franciscan officials

While Baglioni influence may have assisted Perugino in obtaining the commission at Cerqueto, he undertook several other early works for Franciscan churches in the *contado* that cannot easily be linked to Baglioni support, but which may have resulted from recommendations passing between groups of Franciscan patrons. The role of the Provincial Vicars, Guardians and Confessors of the various monasteries in influencing the selection of painters seems to have been important. The Provincial Vicars were responsible for monasteries and churches in Perugia and her satellite towns. They travelled extensively throughout Umbria and would have seen and been involved with the commissioning of many new works and witnessed contracts and wills relating to altarpieces and church decorations. For example, Evangelista Baglioni was Provincial Vicar for several periods from 1477 until May 1493, when he was elected Vicar General of the Order thereby extending his influence throughout Italy and beyond.¹⁷ Furthermore, as a member of the Baglioni family he would doubtless have been aware of commissioning practices within the family and may well have recommended painters, such as Perugino, known to him from this sphere of influence.

The Guardians and Confessors were involved on a regular basis with specific Franciscan establishments and many Vicars also had experience in these roles. For example, Fortunato Coppoli was Provincial Vicar from 1477 until 1480, but had previously been Guardian of Monteripido in 1474. The familiarity of the Guardians with a range of locations would have given them knowledge of artists that might not have been available to the more cloistered and restricted inhabitants of the monasteries themselves. The *Memoriale* of the convent of Monteluca often refer to the abbesses receiving advice from their spiritual advisers before embarking on commissions. So, in 1499, Battista Alfani in her third term of office, consulted her confessor before buying a large crucifix, '*per consiglio et parere del dicto patre comprarò el crucifisso grande relevato pagandolo tucto de sua helimosina*'.¹⁸ While these advisers appear always to have responded favourably to the abbesses' proposals, the experience of the Guardians and Confessors must have extended the

¹⁷ Tabarelli 1977, pp. 190-193 lists the Umbrian Provincial Vicars.

¹⁸ Nicolini 1983, p. 68.

range of options open to the women when embarking on artistic commissions.

These officials were therefore in a position to recommend artists to prospective commissioners in Franciscan churches throughout Umbria and beyond. Henry has noted a potential example of such influence in the involvement of the Provincial Vicar, Luca da Siena, in the planning for the Albizzini chapel in the church of San Francesco in Città di Castello.¹⁹ Luca was responsible for the concession of the chapel to the patron, Filippo di Lodovico Albizzini and Raphael was subsequently commissioned to paint *The Marriage of the Virgin* (Fig. 4.2, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) for it around 1504. Raphael's altarpiece owes much to Perugino's painting of the same subject for the chapel of St. Joseph in Perugia Cathedral (Fig. 4.3, 1500-1504, Musée des Beaux Arts, Caen) which Luca would have known about from his responsibility for Franciscan chapels in the city. Both Perugia and Città di Castello were part of the *Provincia S. Francisci*. Perugia came within the local administration of Perugia (the *Custodia Perusina*) and Città di Castello within the *Custodia Castellana*.²⁰

The Franciscan patronal network may have played a part in the commissioning of a processional *gonfalone* depicting the *Pietà with Sts. Jerome and Mary Magdalene*. This was painted for the Minorite convent at Farneto situated on the road from Perugia to Gubbio within the Perugian *contado* and the area administered by the Provincial Vicar in the local district of Perugia (*Custodia Perusina*).²¹ The iconography of the dead Christ lying stiffly over his mother's ample lap derives from German *vesperbild* carvings. These were popular all over Umbria in the form of processional standards and may account for the banner's unusual horizontal format. Verrocchiesque motifs are also plentiful: particularly the Magdalene's crooked fingers and delicate tresses. Her brooch, which consists of a cherub's head, resembles that in Verrocchio's marble *Madonna and Child* (c.1475-80, Bargello, Florence).

The landscape, with its meandering river, rocky outcrops overhung with

¹⁹ Henry 2002, p. 277.

²⁰ Pellegrini 1984, p. 300.

²¹ *ibid.*

vegetation and feathery trees, set against a blue sky with wispy clouds, is reminiscent of the backgrounds in the *St. Bernardino Miracles* panels, while the deep folds of the saints' robes fall straight to the ground in much the same way as those of the kneeling figures in the *St Bernardino of Siena resuscitating a young girl drowned in a well*. The solid, angled haloes are similar to those in sculptures by Verrocchio, such as the bronze *Incredulity of St. Thomas* (1467-83, Orsanmichele, Florence) and paintings usually given to Verrocchio and his workshop, such as the Louvre *Madonna and Child*. However, the reflection of the Magdalene's head in her halo recalls Piero della Francesca's *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece*.

On these stylistic and iconographic grounds, the *gonfalone* has generally been accepted as an early work by Perugino, dating from 1473-78. The tenderness of the Madonna and the painting's fine technique tend to support this attribution, although the awkward composition and stiff figures, unmediated by Perugino's signature balance and ecstatic piety, are problematic. Another artist from Verrocchio's ambit cannot be entirely discounted.

Another example of the early patronage of Perugino by Franciscan establishments in the *contado* is provided by a detached fresco depicting Sts. Roch and Romano which was originally in the church of San Francesco at Deruta (Fig. 4.5, Pinacoteca Comunale, Deruta). Due to its strategic position on the road to Rome, Deruta had long been a garrison town for Perugian troops. The church of San Francesco already contained frescoes by Perugian artists and the nearby Oratory of the Confraternity of St. Anthony possessed a *Madonna della Misericordia* with a view of the *castello* by Bartolomeo Caporali.²² An inscription at the base of the fresco, DECRETO PUBLICO DE(R)UTA ANNO D(OMI)NI MCCCCLXXV(I), confirms that it was a public commission by the *castello*, although the detailed view of the town at the base of the painting, in which the bell tower of San Francesco rises amongst the towers of the *comune*, reiterates the interconnection of the civic and Franciscan authorities and their likely joint involvement in the commission. The fresco can therefore be seen as an early foray by Perugino into a public sphere controlled by Perugia, as well as a continuation of his Franciscan patronage.

²² Lunghi 2004, p. 106.

The fresco was probably painted following an outbreak of plague that was recorded in a statute made in December 1476 '*in tempore universalis et incredibilis mestitie hominum fletus et dolor luctualis morbi*'.²³ The statute required the observance of the festivals of Sts. Roch (2 August) and Romano (9 August) by abstention from work and the consuls and *camerlenghi* were required to use public money to provide wax candles for use by the Franciscan friars throughout the festivities. Like the Farneto banner, the painting contains many Verrocchiesque motifs, here combined with the balanced rhythms that became Perugino's hallmark. Once attributed to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, comparison with the contemporaneous *Adoration of the Magi* appears to confirm its authorship by Perugino. In particular, St. Roch's face resembles King Balthasar's in the *Adoration*. The fresco was well received. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo immediately incorporated the *God the Father* in a *mandorla* into a fresco in the Hospital of Sant'Egidio in Perugia.

Cerqueto, Farneto and Deruta were all towns in the Perugian *contado* and can be characterised as peripheral to that city. Through a combination of Baglioni and Franciscan patronal networks, these towns provided opportunities to the young Perugino not generally open to him in Perugia itself. They facilitated his development and furthered the dissemination of Verrocchiesque iconography as interpreted by him. These functions run counter to the centre-periphery model and exemplify how the model undervalues the role of the periphery and its patrons in stimulating innovation.

Potential locations for a Perugino fragment

While Franciscan establishments in the *contado* appear to have given Perugino most of his first commissions, there is some evidence to suggest that the Franciscan tertiaries of Sant'Antonio may have been among Perugino's first patrons in Perugia itself. Many of the women of Sant'Antonio came from a privileged socio-familial climate where humanist ideas were encouraged and this probably influenced their commissioning of Piero della Francesca. During the last quarter of the century, the social groups from which the sisters were drawn became ever narrower as

²³ *ibid.*, p. 108.

movement into the monastery from other areas almost ceased. Whereas, in 1453, eight of the twenty sisters were not Perugian, but came from Gubbio, Assisi, Todi, Città di Castello, Terni, Cortona and Foligno, by 1479, only five of the 32 sisters were 'foreigners'. By 1492/3, of 43 sisters only one was from outside Perugia, namely from Foligno.²⁴

The leading Perugian families, including the Montesperelli, Oddi, Graziani, Arcipreti and Boncambi, continued to be represented in the monastery and most significantly, Ilaria Baglioni, the eldest child of Braccio was still active. It is reasonable to infer that as an open order they maintained connections with their families and would have been aware of new patterns of patronage and ideas taking place in the wider community. However, the fact that the sisters came predominantly from Perugia must have meant that their tastes became increasingly homogeneous as they mainly encountered local developments. These would have included the Baglioni family's recent patronage of the young Perugino.

Nicolini notes that there was a '*traffico librario*' between Sant'Antonio and the Clares of Monteluca, who possessed a *scriptorium*, demonstrating their interest in learning and intellectual pursuits and their exchanges with other Franciscan establishments.²⁵ But the women's right to interact with society at large, which seems to have been reflected in the iconography of Piero's altarpiece, was seriously threatened in the 1480s. The Observant Franciscans at Monteripido, with whom the tertiaries were associated, sought to impose *clausura* upon them against their wishes. In order to safeguard their way of life they called upon the city for help and were forced to substitute the Observants with the Amadeiti, as their Confessors.²⁶ This branch of the Franciscans was formed by Amadeo Menez da Silva, later Beato Amadeo, in the mid-fifteenth century and was renowned for its spirituality. Governed by the Conventuals, they came into conflict with the Observant branch of the order until they were finally suppressed by Pope Leo X in 1517. The tertiaries at Sant'Agnese also resisted the pressure to become a closed order, but in 1491, they reluctantly agreed to live '*sub perpetua clausura*' in return

²⁴ Casagrande 1995, p. 259.

²⁵ Nicolini 1971, pp. 100-130.

²⁶ Tabarelli 1977, pp. 179, 184 and 186.

for being allowed to keep indulgences received from the Porziuncola.²⁷

A fragment of an altarpiece almost certainly by Perugino depicting Sts. Sebastian and Anthony of Padua (Fig. 4.6, c.1475-78, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes) could have been commissioned by the Sant'Antonio tertiaries. Though the original setting is unknown, the inclusion of St. Anthony of Padua suggests a Franciscan commission and the ornate gold brocade ground, patterned with pinecones, is reminiscent of the ground in Piero della Francesca's *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece* in the eponymous monastery. The plague saint, Sebastian, often appeared in Perugian altarpieces at this time, but his presence in a work for the sisters of Sant'Antonio would have been particularly appropriate. The monastery was renowned for caring for the sick and received recognition from the city authorities for making a distillation from herbs and chicken which they distributed during times of epidemic.²⁸

The fragment displays Perugino's characteristic balance and elegance together with Verrocchiesque motifs such as the crooked fingers. Its refinement is enhanced by the *hanchement* of St. Sebastian who stands hand on hip, with his weight on one foot, like Verrocchio's *David* in the Bargello in Florence.²⁹ These attributes point to a Perugian commissioner with a taste for late-Gothic ornamentation intermingled with the up-to-date style of Florence. The combination suggests that Perugino tailored his work to meet a specific requirement much as Piero della Francesca had previously done, and as Raphael would soon have to do.

There is no reference in the old guides to any altarpiece meeting the description of this painting in Sant'Antonio da Padova, but the will of Donna Armelina di Angelello Pietro magister Paulo, the widow of Ludovico Cristoforo, supplies evidence of commissioning activity within the community around the likely date of Perugino's altarpiece. The will was written on 13 July 1478 with a codicil dated three days later, in anticipation of Armelina entering the monastery under the name of Anna. The documents provided for her to be buried in the church and she

²⁷ Casagrande 1995, p. 266.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 260.

²⁹ Garibaldi and Mancini 2004, p. 202.

left the sisters a house in the nearby parish of San Fortunato in Porta Sant'Angelo. In addition to this, she left 40 florins to paint and decorate a panel for the altar in the interior chapel of the monastery.³⁰

Perugino's panel, with its gold brocade ground and refined style, would have fitted well with Piero della Francesca's altarpiece and the concerns of the order, but there is, at present, no conclusive proof linking the panel with the monastery. There were two other churches in the city bearing the name of St. Anthony which are also possible contenders for the site of the altarpiece, although again there are no conclusive guide book descriptions. One was the church of the Confraternity of St. Anthony and the other, the parish church of St. Anthony Abbot which was officiated over by the Olivetans. This latter church is referred to in a will made on 11 October 1478, by Nicho Florantonio Luca Bernardo of the parish of St. Anthony in Porta Sole.³¹ After providing for his body to be buried in the cemetery at St. Anthony and making provision for his wife, Margarita, Nicho left a house and vineyard for a small chapel to be built in the church, to be called the chapel of St. Anthony. This was to have '*Imaginem S. Maria con figlio, imaginem S. Antonius et S. Antonius de Padua et S. Sebastionem*' and was to cost 50 florins. Not only did the will specify two of the figures who would have appeared on the Virgin and Child's left in Perugino's altarpiece, but the church's dedication to St. Anthony Abbot suggests that this saint could have filled the prestigious position on their right. Nicho's request for '*imaginem*' could refer to frescoes or statues, but does not preclude an altarpiece.

Apart from this potential commission, Perugino painted no known altarpieces and just one banner for Franciscan patrons in Perugia until 1499. This was largely due to important commissions elsewhere. From 1477 until around 1482, he was in Rome decorating the Chapel of the Conception and then the Sistine chapel walls and the prestige accruing from this launched a busy career in Rome and Florence. From 1495, he was engaged with large and expensive projects in Perugia, such as the decorations in the Collegio del Cambio, the *Decemviri Altarpiece* for the priors and the *San Pietro Altarpiece* which at 500 florins was one of the most expensive

³⁰ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, fols. 104v-107r, partially transcribed in Balzani 1993, p. 51, n. 26 where it is proposed as a source of funding for Raphael's much later *Colonna Altarpiece* whereas Perugino's work would have been contemporaneous with the bequest.

³¹ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 253, fols. 54r-60r. Unpublished.

altarpieces in Italy.³² It is unlikely that the Franciscan establishments could have competed financially, but even so, the lack of Franciscan commissions over a twenty year period suggests that at this time Perugino's circle of commissioners did not include those closely connected with the Perugian Minorites.

An exceptional foreign commission

The monopoly established by local painters in Perugia was broken by just one major altarpiece commission to a 'foreign' painter. Luca Signorelli from Cortona in Tuscany, was commissioned to paint *The Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist, Onuphrius, Lawrence(?) and Herculanus(?)* (Fig. 4.7, Museo Capitolare, Perugia) for the chapel of St. Onuphrius in the cathedral, around 1483-84. While there are no known documents relating to the commission, a now lost inscription on the frame was recorded by Crispolti in 1648.³³ This establishes that the noble Jacopo Vagnucci of Cortona, once Bishop of Perugia, founded a chapel dedicated to St. Onuphrius in the cathedral and that his successor, his nephew Dionisio Vagnucci, installed the altarpiece in 1484. The altarpiece was first referred to by Vasari in 1568, but a diocesan inspection of the cathedral by Fulvio della Corgna on 20 October 1564 included a visit to the altar of St. Onuphrius and the record of the visit also mentions the role of the Bishop of Cortona in dedicating the chapel.³⁴

The selection of Signorelli, in the face of Perugia's overwhelming tendency to employ local painters, was most likely due to a pre-existing link between the painter and the Vagnucci family. They both originated from Cortona and are likely to have had family connections. Signorelli's last commission before his death in 1523 was also from the Vagnucci family, indicating an on-going association. The Cortona connection therefore seems likely to have been the main criterion for Signorelli's selection, although the *kudos* of employing a papal painter involved with the prestigious Sistine chapel programme would have done nothing to undermine the decision. The patrons followed the pattern of employing local artists in other areas of

³² O'Malley 2007, p. 677.

³³ Crispolti 1648, I, pp. 62-3; quoted in Henry and Kanter, 2002, p. 162. JACOBVS . VANNUTIVS . NOBILIS . CORTONENSIS . OLIM . EPISCOPVS . PERVSINVS . HOC . DEO . MAXIMO . ET . DIVO . HONOFRIO . SACELLVM . DEDICAVIT . CVI . IN . ARCHIEPISCOPVM . NICAENVM . ASSVMPTO . NEPOS . DIONISIVS . SVCESSIT . ET . QVANTA . VIDES . IMPENSA . ORNAVIT . AEQVA . PIETAS . M . CCCC . LXXXIV .

³⁴ ADP, *Visitale Diocesano* 1564-1568, fol. 5r, unpublished.

the chapel decoration. Four stained glass windows (c.1480s, Museo del Tesoro di San Francesco, Assisi) are believed to have been part of the St. Onuphrius chapel scheme and are attributed to Bartolomeo Caporali.³⁵ Caporali is recorded in several documents as collaborating with the master glazier, Neri di Monte, and it is likely that his workshop made the windows, with some direct intervention from Caporali.³⁶ The windows depict a Madonna and Child enthroned, with Sts. Onuphrius, Jerome and Lawrence. Giusto also recorded a window depicting St. Herculanus, but this is lost.³⁷ The graceful figures are placed under ornate gothic-style baldachins with intricately carved pillars and pinnacles and are typical of Caporali's late style as influenced by Verrocchio and Perugino. As such, they reflect the patron's up-to-date taste and requirements, here met by a local artist.

Jacopo Vagnucci was bishop of Perugia from 1449 to 1482, having been elected following the death of Andrea Giovanni Baglioni during a severe outbreak of plague, though he remained in Rimini and did not take up residence in Perugia until 1456.³⁸ His period of office was artistically active: Agostino di Duccio produced a stone altarpiece for the Chapel of St. Bernardino, which seems likely to have housed the eight tablets depicting the *Miracles of St. Bernardino*, and Pergiovanni di Simone's will from 1458, discussed in the previous chapter, provided for a new high altarpiece. While it has not been possible to trace this work, the bequest suggests that a lively patronal climate existed during Jacopo's time. A painted memorial to the bishop would have been appropriate.

Signorelli's panel depicts a monumental Virgin and Child on a raised wooden throne. Both mother and child attentively study an open book, presumably a bible or breviary describing Christ's future passion, a motif that had been employed previously by Pintoricchio, for example in his *Madonna and Child Writing with St. Jerome* (c.1481, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin). Four saints, arranged on two levels to fill all four corners of the panel, attend the holy pair. To the left, stand the wizened Onuphrius and ecstatic John the Baptist and to the right, two saints, best identified as

³⁵ Marchini was first to attribute the windows to Caporali. Marchini 1956, p. 43, n. 41; Marchini, 1973, pp. 161-165.

³⁶ Garibaldi 1996, pp. 196-197.

³⁷ Giusto 1911, pp. 242-248, 371.

³⁸ Pellini 1664, II, p. 579.

Herculanus and Lawrence in view of their roles as patrons of the city and Lawrence's position as titular saint of the cathedral. In the centre, a pot-bellied angel sits on the steps of the throne tuning his lute.

Vasari states that Signorelli was apprenticed to Piero della Francesca, and it is likely that at some point he also passed through Verrocchio's workshop.³⁹ The altarpiece reflects many of the fashions current in Florence, particularly those emanating from Verrocchio's *bottega*, which were already popular in Perugia. The carved architectonic throne, decorated with *all'antica* candelabra and acanthus leaves, and the carvings on the marble plinth and wooden step of the throne resemble Verrocchio's sculpture.⁴⁰ Two delicate glass vases filled with columbines representing the Holy Spirit may reflect the fashion for still-life details following the arrival of Hugo van der Goes' *Portinari Triptych* in Florence in 1483, although the ubiquity of floral motifs in Perugian paintings from the *Guidalotti Altarpiece* to Caporali's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, could have provided more immediate precedents.

Signorelli's response to these trends differs from that of most Florentine painters and bears some similarity with the approach of Perugian painters such as Caporali. Kanter notes that he was keen to avoid a clear delineation of pictorial space, with landscape playing no part in the conception which is, instead, concerned with the juxtaposition of individual units.⁴¹ Light, instead of unifying the objects and clarifying the volume of space as in Florentine paintings, serves to isolate the figures and heighten the abstraction of the painting. Set against a blue sky that resembles gold leaf in its limited colour modulation (it pales only slightly towards the horizon), the patterned deployment of the figures is accentuated, assuming priority over the realistic depiction of space. The low view-point reduces the visible horizon to a mere glimpse on the extreme left of the panel where a tantalising tree, building and lake hint at the vista hidden by the plinth. Yet the inclusion of this tiny landscape detail is significant. Much as Fra Angelico included a deliberately skewed bishop's hat to indicate his ability to depict depth and space, had he wished to do so, in the

³⁹ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, p. 633; Henry and Kanter 2002, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Henry and Kanter 2002, p. 104.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 17.

Guidalotti Altarpiece, Signorelli draws attention to his rejection of a landscape setting by including a provocative glimpse of what might have been. Perhaps it is no coincidence that he too sets a bishop's mitre at an angle into depth on the ledge behind St. Herculanus and that the bishop saint carefully studies his text in a manner reminiscent of St. Nicholas in Fra Angelico's altarpiece. The facial similarity with Fra Angelico's saint is also intriguing, being much more pronounced in the finished painting than in a metalpoint preparatory sketch for the figure now in the British Museum (London, 1902-8-22-5). It suggests a response by Signorelli to Fra Angelico's Perugian altarpiece.

Continuity of taste at Monteluce

In the previous chapter, we saw that the artistic programme undertaken by the Poor Clares at Monteluce followed a coherent pattern of patronal taste. The nuns' desire for up-to-date innovations executed to a high standard was, in the case of painting, able to be met by local painters such as Caporali. Under the ongoing guidance of the abbesses Eufrosia and Battista Alfani, this commissioning activity continued into the next century, with the sisters being among the few Perugian commissioners to obtain a completed work from the most sought-after painter in Rome during the 1480s – Bernardino di Betto, known as Pintoricchio.

Pintoricchio was born in Perugia and, as such, conformed to the sisters' practice of commissioning local painters, even though he was not based in the city. Born around 1456/60, his early training is uncertain, but the miniaturist Giapeco Caporali (brother of Bartolomeo Caporali) had a workshop near Pintoricchio's father's house in Porta Sant'Angelo and, as Pintoricchio's mature style favoured miniaturistic detail, it is possible that he was apprenticed to him. Between 1471 and 1473, Giapeco Caporali and Pierantonio di Nicolò illuminated a set of *corali* for the church of San Pietro. Among the numerous named assistants is one, Bernardino, whom Gnoli took to refer to Bernardino di Lorenzo, the brother of the painter Fiorenzo, but which could refer to Pintoricchio.⁴²

In both editions of the *Lives*, Vasari stated that Pintoricchio was Bonfigli's

⁴² Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 38.

friend and companion, although in the 1568 edition he added that Bonfigli was much older than Pintoricchio.⁴³ Pintoricchio's works do have elements in common with Bonfigli's paintings, namely a tendency to include crowds of people and objects, intricate detail, genre incidents and the liberal use of gold, but this need not point to an apprenticeship in Bonfigli's shop as Pintoricchio would have inevitably been exposed to his painting in Perugia and a training with the Caporali family seems more likely. Around 1473, Pintoricchio may have worked on the *St. Bernardino Miracles* with Caporali where he would have met the young Perugino. Later, he worked alongside Perugino in the Sistine Chapel in Rome in 1481, but his career in the intervening years is uncertain.

Whereas the prestige that accrued to the painters of the Sistine Chapel provided Perugino with a springboard to commissions in Florence and Perugia, Pintoricchio continued to work mainly in Rome. Despite maintaining contact with his home town - in 1481 he was inscribed in the Perugian *matricola* and, on 28 November, bought a house near the family property for 11 florins - with one exception, he undertook only small-scale commissions in Perugia itself, albeit for prestigious patrons such as the nuns at Monteluca.⁴⁴

In 1483, Sisters Eufrosia and Battista Alfani used money left to the convent by their mother and supplemented by their brother, to commission a tabernacle from the Florentine sculptor, Francesco di Simone Ferrucci. This complex was subsequently augmented with the help of further legacies from other members of the family; their brothers, Emilio and Giovan Alfani, left a total of 350 florins to the convent. Accordingly in 1499, when she was again abbess, Battista was able to purchase a wooden cross and arrange for a curtain painted with a *Pietà* to be brought from Florence and hung before the tabernacle.⁴⁵ Documents also show that Pintoricchio undertook a fresco decoration for the complex. Now lost, it apparently took the form of a fictive pavilion. On 7 April 1484, he was paid an advance of three florins and 25 soldi to buy a vineyard and the final receipt for seven florins '*per suo*

⁴³ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, p. 576.

⁴⁴ For the *matricola*: Manzoni 1904, p. 60. For the house: ASP, *Notarile, Bastardelli*, 691, fols. 762-764, paraphrased in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 285.

⁴⁵ ASP, CRS, *Monteluca*, 69, fol. 40r; Nicolini, 1983, p. 68. Teza attributes the curtain to Pintoricchio. Teza 2003, pp. 12-16, 27-32. This cross should not be confused with that by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo discussed below.

salario de la pentura de padiglione dettono de sacramento’ was dated 1485.⁴⁶ Pintoricchio’s longstanding connection with the Alfani family, particularly the important patron Alfano Alfani, for whom he probably designed an astrolabe in 1498 (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg), may well have begun with this commission.

In 1486, Pintoricchio was again working for the sisters, specifically at the wish of the abbess and, on 18 April, was paid ‘*per la pentura dove sta el chorpo de Christo cioè dentro de munisterio de volontà de la madre badessa*’ which is also lost.⁴⁷ Other records confirm that he was active in Perugia at this time and possibly collaborating with Bartolomeo Caporali. He received payment for a frescoed *Madonna and Child with Angels* above the entrance to a dormitory in the Palazzo dei Priori (now the Sala dei Catasti). The painting is in poor condition, but seems to have been undertaken with the aid of a collaborator from Caporali’s circle. Similarly, a set of five miniatures depicting *The Gates of Perugia* in the Matricola of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia dated 1486, seems to have been executed partially by Pintoricchio, along with a team of Perugian painters, perhaps overseen by Caporali.⁴⁸ Collaboration with Bartolomeo supports the idea of Pintoricchio’s early training with Giapeco Caporali, while links between Bartolomeo and the convent following the painting of the *Adoration of the Shepherds* may explain how Pintoricchio first came to paint for the nuns.

Maintaining their preference for home-grown painters, the nuns also employed Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. A document noted by Bombe records the payment of nine florins in November 1491, when Battista was abbess, to Fiorenzo for the manufacture of a crucifix for the women’s refectory.⁴⁹ Teza has suggested that this refers to a painted wooden statue of *The Crucifixion* that is still in Santa Maria di Monteluca (Fig. 4.8).⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, pp. 98 and 130, n. 11-14.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 98.

⁴⁸ Todini 1989, p. 291 attributed *The Gate of San Pietro* to Pintoricchio. The four extant miniatures are in Gemäldegalerie der Akademie, Vienna (*Porta Sant’Angelo*), Richard Kingzet Collection, London (*Porta San Pietro*) and Private Collection, Switzerland (*Porta Solis* and *Porta Eburnea*). Todini attributed the latter two to the Master of the Montemorcinio Corali, now known to be Tommaso di Mascio Scarofane. Silvestrelli 2008, p. 35.

⁴⁹ Bombe 1912, pp. 126, 332.

⁵⁰ Teza 2003, p. 28.

Following Bury's discovery of a contract naming Bartolomeo Caporali and Sante di Apollonio as the painters of the *Giustizia Altarpiece*, the role of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo has been substantially revised and many works previously attributed to him are now ascribed to Caporali.⁵¹ It seems likely that Fiorenzo, like Caporali and Perugino, spent some time in Verrocchio's studio in Florence and his few signed or documented paintings, such as the *Madonna della Misericordia*, painted in 1476 and the *Polyptych of the Silvestrines*, completed in 1493, appear to confirm his exposure to this influence. His elongated Madonnas, with their high-waisted dresses, inclined heads and ornate jewellery are especially Verrocchiesque. As his work is similar in style to that of Caporali and not unlike that of the young Perugino, it is not surprising that the Alfani sisters, who clearly appreciated the Florentine aesthetic, should employ another local artist who was able to furnish them with the style they desired.

The painted statue, despite having the usual attenuated limbs and painfully described abdomen and rib-cage of such crucifixes, presents an elegant and graceful figure. Christ's outstretched arms form a curved arc, while his poignantly crossed feet are supported by an angled plinth. His blue and white striped loin cloth falls in neat folds and his head, with its long, straight nose and sculpted eye-brows, tilts to one side. The style of the figure has much in common with Bartolomeo Caporali's refined altarpiece, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* and Francesco di Simone Ferrucci's *Tabernacle of the Sacrament*, and would have fitted seamlessly with the other works commissioned by the nuns of Monteluce.

Lupatelli interpreted the 1491 payments as referring to a detached fresco depicting the *Crucifixion with saints* that had been on the wall to the right of the choir (Fig. 4.9).⁵² However, this fresco is described in the *Memoriale* as part of the programme of work undertaken by Lucia of Foligno when she was abbess, which must have been before October 1491 when Battista was elected.⁵³ The fresco is in poor condition, but the distinguished head and subtly defined muscles of Christ's arms and abdomen are consistent with what is known of Fiorenzo's style.

⁵¹ Bury 1990, pp. 469-475.

⁵² Lupatelli 1918, pp. 17, 25; Teza 2003, p. 29.

⁵³ Nicolini 1983, p. 52.

Furthermore, the fresco owes much to Bartolomeo Caporali's *Crucifixion* in San Michele, Isola Maggiore del Trasimeno which was copied in 1492 for the abbey of Montelabate, probably by Fiorenzo's brother, Bernardino. It therefore seems likely to be another example of Fiorenzo's engagement by the nuns, again demonstrating a clear preference for the Verrocchiesque style, as interpreted by local painters.

The difficulty in identifying specific Perugian artists during this period is illustrated by a painting of *The Virgin and Child with Saints, Angels and a Donor* (National Gallery, London) dating from around 1475-80. The painting is of unknown provenance, but its central panel depicts Sts. Bernardino of Siena and Francis introducing a lay donor, kneeling before the Virgin and Child and is a reworking of a panel by Niccolò da Foligno that was originally in San Francesco al Prato (1457, Pinacoteca Deruta).⁵⁴ Sts. John the Baptist and Bartholomew appear to each side. Bartholomew, who holds as his attribute the flaying knife by which he was martyred, was the patron saint of tanners and skinners. The painting could have been commissioned by a member of this guild who was associated with a Franciscan foundation, perhaps San Francesco al Prato. Alternatively, Bartholomew could represent the name saint of the donor.

The altarpiece was previously attributed to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, but following Bury's reassignment of the *Giustizia Altarpiece*, it has been given to Caporali, on account of its similarity. The figure of St. Bartholomew resembles St. Peter in the *Giustizia Altarpiece* and the handles of Bartholomew's knife and the sword of St. Julian the Hospitaller(?) in the *Giustizia predella* are identical. However, as noted previously, the contract for the *Giustizia Altarpiece* was with both Bartolomeo Caporali and Sante di Apollonio di Celandro and it is proposed that Apollonio was responsible for most, if not all, of the *Giustizia Altarpiece*.⁵⁵ He also came from Perugia and is documented as being active in the city from 1475 until 1486. In the light of its similarities with the *Giustizia Altarpiece* and its lack of correspondence with *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, the London panel should also be reattributed to Apollonio.

⁵⁴ Bombe 1912, pp. 129-131.

⁵⁵ Teza also concludes that Apollonio was mainly responsible for the altarpiece. Teza 2004b, pp. 55-71.

San Francesco al Prato

Unlike Monteluca, not all Franciscan establishments were artistically active during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Sant'Agnese and Monteripido appear to have made no major commissions. While San Francesco al Prato continued to be the pre-eminent male Franciscan convent in Perugia and was a major beneficiary of private testamentary gifts and a recipient of state aid, there appears to have been a lull in commissioning activity there too. No known commissions were given to Pintoricchio and it was not until around 1499 that Perugino undertook any paintings for the church. At the same time, considerable energy and money was expended repairing and maintaining the fabric of the buildings, which were in a perilous state. Pellini recorded that in 1467, the *comune* donated 500 florins to San Francesco for repairs to its ruins and it was still soaking up money in 1492.⁵⁶

There is a wealth of archival evidence that private donations to the church continued, some of which provided for the erection of funeral chapels which would have required decoration. For example, in a series of unpublished wills and codicils dating from 1476 to 1483, 'Spectabilis vir' Giletto Bartolomeo Andrea Massi gave instructions that he should be buried in San Francesco al Prato and left 500 florins for the construction and decoration of a chapel, altar and tomb.⁵⁷ His wife's will dated 14 July 1481 made provision for her to be buried in San Francesco, dressed in a Franciscan habit.⁵⁸ However, years and even decades often elapsed between the founding of family chapels and their eventual furnishing with altarpieces, so that Giletto's plan might not have come to fruition for many years, if at all. As will be seen in the next chapter, Raphael's *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece for the degli Oddi chapel in San Francesco was commissioned around 1503, some 40 years after the original concession of the chapel to the family.⁵⁹

Few significant paintings from San Francesco al Prato from this period have survived which points to an underlying dearth of high quality commissions. One rare exception, an arched niche, is an undisputed work by Fiorenzo di Lorenzo (Fig.

⁵⁶ Pellini 1664, II, p. 688 and III, p. 34.

⁵⁷ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, fols. 67r-v, 172v-175r, 250v-253r, 327v, unpublished.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, fols. 170r-v, unpublished.

⁵⁹ Cooper 2001a, pp. 554-557.

4.10). It depicts Sts. Peter and Paul standing on either side of a polygonal recess, with the Virgin holding the baby Jesus surrounded by a garland of seraphim and accompanied by two angels in the lunette. The hems of the saints' robes bear the inscription FLORENTIUS LAURENTII P.(ERUSINUS) PINSIT MCCCCLXXXVII. The predella contains roundels depicting the Franciscan saints Bernardino, Anthony of Padua, Louis of Toulouse and the earliest existing representation in Perugia of St. Bonaventure (Fig. 4.11).⁶⁰

Bonaventure was elected Minister General of the order in 1257, but was only canonised in 1482, following petitions from Perugian Franciscans amongst others. In his lifetime (c.1218-74), though espousing poverty, he supported the need for study and hence the need for books and buildings. He championed the organisation of the order, rejecting the extreme position of the Spirituals or Observants, and was regarded as a supporter of the Conventual cause. It is significant that he was canonized by Sixtus IV who had Conventual sympathies. The Conventual brothers of San Francesco al Prato moved swiftly to celebrate their new saint at a time when the order was riven with divisions. On the day after the canonisation, the friars requested 30 florins from the priors for a *gonfalone* bearing the emblem of the saint and for a procession during which the friars would carry torches in his honour.⁶¹ At the Franciscan General Councils held in 1485 and 1488 in Casale and Cremona respectively, all convents were instructed to obtain new images of the saint.⁶² The first of these declarations could have provided the imperative for the inclusion of St. Bonaventure in the predella and, as three of his sermons were dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul, it is possible that the niche was constructed primarily to honour him. In this case, the commission is likely to have come from the friars themselves, rather than a private donor or confraternity.

The niche has stood empty for many years, but recently Teza has proposed that it was originally occupied by a painted wooden statue of St. Francis that has long been in the Oratory of San Bernardino, next to San Francesco al Prato. She suggests

⁶⁰ Teza 2003, p. 24

⁶¹ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 117, fol. 91v, transcribed in Teza 2003, p. 25.

⁶² Petrangeli Papini, 1972, p. 49.

that the statue was also painted by Fiorenzo.⁶³ An inscription running around the inside of the niche reads, ECCLES(I)AE .VENERA(N)TUR . FRANCI(SC)I . SERVI . MONUMENTUM . PRIORIS, suggesting that Peter and Paul venerate St. Francis as the great servant of the church, but also, perhaps, referring to St. Bonaventure as a leading servant of Francis. The reference to the priors suggests civic involvement in the procurement of the niche.

Teza has noted compositional and iconographic similarities between the niche and the tabernacle that was constructed for the nuns of Monteluce by the Florentine sculptor Francesco di Simone Ferrucci in 1483.⁶⁴ The billowing robes of Fiorenzo's attendant angels are very similar to the Verrocchiesque drapery of the angels that hold the chalice in the tabernacle, while the more statuesque poses of the saints, dressed in voluminous robes that cling to their bent legs revealing their underlying anatomy, resemble those of the standing angels who guard the host in the Monteluce carving. These similarities, which may derive from Fiorenzo's observation of the niche or from shared experience in Verrocchio's workshop, suggest that at least these commissioners in San Francesco shared the taste of the Alfani sisters for Verrocchiesque imagery, perhaps due to the influence of the male members of the family.

The Alfani are listed as having an altar and tombs in the church in the list of *sepoltuarii* compiled by Fra Nicolò Perugino in 1569, and wills made by various members of the family confirm their enduring connection.⁶⁵ The banker, Alfano Alfani, in his will dated 17 June 1482, left his body to be buried in San Francesco al Prato, together with 50 florins for a *palium* (altar cloth).⁶⁶ On 19 January 1482, Francesca di Fortera Baglioni provided for her body to be buried in the same church, dressed as a Franciscan tertiary, in the tomb of her husband, the merchant Giovan Battista Alfani.⁶⁷ She subsequently entered Monteluce as a tertiary, embodying the link between the family and the two establishments.

⁶³ Teza 2003, pp. 9-44.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

⁶⁵ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Serie Miscellanea*, 15, fols. 7v-8v, unpublished.

⁶⁶ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, fol. 257r, unpublished.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, fols. 207r-v, unpublished.

Overlaid upon what Teza has called Fiorenzo's 'Florentine matrix', the niche also has aspects in common with altarpieces by Antoniazio Romano who was active mainly in Rome and surrounding areas.⁶⁸ In particular, St. Paul in Antoniazio's *Madonna and Child with Sts. Francis and Paul* from Poggio Nativo (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome) stands in the same pose as Fiorenzo's saint and their volumetric clothing and attributes are alike. Although this painting dates from 1487, Fiorenzo could have based his figures upon an earlier prototype seen during a visit to Lazio.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the Perugian statue of St. Francis strongly resembles the figure of St. Francis in Antoniazio's *Subiaco Altarpiece* (1467, San Francesco, Subiaco) in his features, stance and attributes. There is no record of Fiorenzo travelling to Rome, however Bartolomeo Caporali was there in 1467 when he bought 1300 sheets of gold leaf for the ceiling in St. Mark's, and could well have been accompanied by the young Fiorenzo.⁷⁰ Exposure to Florentine and Roman models would have enabled Fiorenzo to offer Perugian patrons an up-to-date style that incorporated new ideas, but as a Perugian, he could meet their preference for home grown talent. It was Fiorenzo who was the beneficiary of the priors' insistence that a local painter be engaged by the Silvestrines of Santa Maria Nuova for their altarpiece which was completed between 1487 and 1493.⁷¹

Not until 1499 did Perugino certainly paint an altarpiece for the Franciscans in Perugia itself. *The Resurrection* (Fig. 4.12, Vatican Museums, Rome) was commissioned from Perugino on 2 March 1499 by the merchant and Perugian citizen, Bernardino di Giovanni di Matteo dicto da Orvieto for his family's funerary chapel in San Francesco al Prato.⁷² Bernardino matriculated in the Perugian Collegio della Mercanzia and seems to have traded mainly in Portuguese sugar. He invested substantially in land in the Perugian *contado*.⁷³ Evidently he was a successful businessman as, in 1528, he provided a dowry of 800 florins for his youngest daughter, Innocenza, on her marriage to Scipione Perinelli.⁷⁴ Bernardino and his wife, Oradina, were particularly devoted to the Franciscans. His will, made on 13

⁶⁸ Teza 2003, pp. 16-20.

⁶⁹ Cavallaro 1992, pp. 136-139.

⁷⁰ Gnoli 1934, p. 97.

⁷¹ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 108, fol. 78r, transcribed in Mancini 1992, p. 23.

⁷² Canuti 1931, II, p. 187 incorrectly transcribed the donor's name as Berardino Iohannis dicto da Corneto. For a reproduction and summary of the contract see Moscatello 2004c, pp. 614-615.

⁷³ Moscatello 2004a, p. 37.

⁷⁴ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 769, fols. 54r-55v, as cited in Moscatello 2004a, pp. 38, 39, n. 22.

April 1526, some three years before his death, provided that he should be buried in San Francesco in the tomb of his ancestors, dressed as a Franciscan.⁷⁵ Oradina specified that she should be buried with the tertiaries in the same church.⁷⁶ Bernardino's son, Giovanni, was a Franciscan friar and his daughter, Clara, entered the monastery of St. Clare in Orvieto.

Notably, Alfano Diamante Alfani, the nephew of Sisters Battista and Eufrosia Alfani of Monteluca, was present at the signing of the agreement. The contract was specific in its terms, requiring Perugino to depict a resurrection scene with a tomb, some men sleeping and the rest in accordance with a drawing already made. The panel had been prepared and was to be found in the house of a certain Filippo di Benedetto. Accordingly, the painting was to be finished by April and Perugino would be paid the relatively low sum of 55 florins. Perugino also contracted to paint a figure of St. Roch, to whom Bernardino was particularly devoted, on a side wall above the altar in the commissioner's chapel, for which the painter would claim no further payment. Michelle O'Malley attributes this low sum to competition with Pintoricchio, a desire to work for individual Perugian patrons rather than corporations, and a wish to install a painting in the prestigious church of San Francesco al Prato.⁷⁷ It may also reflect a desire to break into Franciscan patronal circles from which he appears previously to have been excluded.

Perugino seems to have begun work at once, despite extensive commitments in the Collegio del Cambio. He frequently re-used cartoons saving time and cost and providing clients with a known stock of images. Here the figure of Christ is almost identical to that of the ascended Christ in the altarpiece painted for nearby San Pietro (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyons, 1495-1500) and the later *Ascension of Christ* for Sansepolcro Cathedral (c.1505-1510).⁷⁸ The iconography is unusual as, instead of stepping out of the tomb, Christ is suspended in a mandorla above it in what may be an allusion to, or conflation with, the Ascension. Following the terms of the contract, three attendant soldiers sleep, oblivious of the dramatic event, though one particularly well-executed warrior, with clearly defined facial features and glinting

⁷⁵ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 731, fols. 102v-107r, cited in Moscatello 2004a, pp. 38, 39, n. 27.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 784, fols. 125r-126r as cited in Moscatello 2004a, pp. 38, 39, n. 26.

⁷⁷ O'Malley 2007, pp. 687-689.

⁷⁸ For the re-use of the cartoon see Hiller von Gaertringen 2004, pp. 335-350.

armour, moves away from the tomb with alacrity, his arm raised in amazement.

The high quality of this warrior has led to claims that it was painted by Raphael, but the early date renders this most improbable. The soldier should instead be seen as an example of Perugino's painting at its best, when he was at the peak of his powers and popularity. His encapsulations of piety, here seen in the languid, otherworldly figure of Christ, were in harmony with the atmosphere created by the fervent preaching of the Franciscan mendicant preachers, Roberto da Caracciolo and Bernardino da Feltre, which demanded a personal response from their congregations. Bernardino preached in the piazza in Perugia on 18 June 1486 decrying the sinfulness of games, masks and other vanities.⁷⁹ In a subsequent series of Lenten sermons given to the people of Pavia in 1493, he urged contrition from his audience for their sins, requiring them to express their sorrow through weeping and tears.⁸⁰ Such displays were revered as evidence of spirituality. The *Memoriale* of Monteluce recorded on the death of Sister Evangelista de Lucca in 1510 that throughout her long and holy life she had 'an abundance of tears' when meditating upon Christ's passion.⁸¹ These expressions of emotion were typical of those evoked by the Franciscan preachers and resonated with Perugino's emotive paintings. This work for San Francesco al Prato was the first of several paintings by him in the church that demanded personal responses from its viewers in the same way as the Franciscan preachers demanded participation from their congregations.

Confraternities: disseminators of taste

Although Franciscan convents and monasteries do not appear to have been particularly active during the last quarter of the century, many confraternities associated with the order made a substantial number of commissions to leading painters. Their members came from a relatively broad cross-section of society and their banners were seen by a wide public during processions so that confraternities would have been important agents in disseminating artistic taste.

The *Disciplinati* of St. Francis

⁷⁹ Giovanni 1491, p. 247 quoted in Rusconi 1986, p. 133.

⁸⁰ Feltre 1940, p. 357; Blanchfield 1999, p. 117.

⁸¹ Nicolini 1983, p. 99.

Outbreaks of plague and disease continued to ravage Perugia throughout the last quarter of the century, especially in the late 1470s, and the people turned to religion to help avoid it. The *disciplinati* movement, whose members engaged in self-flagellation and mortification of the flesh in atonement for sins to ward off the plague and other misfortunes, enjoyed huge popularity. The Confraternity of the *Disciplinati* of St. Francis, which was attached to San Francesco al Prato, was one such company. As part of their devotions they processed through the streets of Perugia and took part in the numerous public processions held in the city. It was usual for confraternities to carry banners or *gonfaloni* in these parades. Those carried at the head of the processions were intended to identify the company. They usually consisted of easily recognisable images, for example the name saints of the confraternity, and are known as *segni*. Other banners, generally with more complex iconography, had a devotional or inspirational role. Known as *imaghi*, they were carried further back in the body of the procession, often under a canopy or baldachin and seem to have been venerated in the same way as portable statues of saints.⁸² There is documentary evidence that the Confraternity of the *Disciplinati* commissioned at least two *gonfaloni* in the 1480s and '90s, perhaps with the intention of fulfilling both these requirements.

Formed in the late fourteenth century, the confraternity initially attracted many influential adherents, including Braccio Fortebraccio who is listed among deceased members during the 1400s.⁸³ The confraternity was still active towards the end of the fifteenth century, and attracting sympathisers from eminent families such as the Alfani and degli Oddi.⁸⁴ The Franciscan mathematician, Luca Pacioli, who taught the abacus in the *Studium* in Perugia from 1475-80, had dealings with the confraternity, as evidenced by two documents dating from 1479 and 1480.⁸⁵ Among other prominent members was the medical doctor, Galeotto di Ercolano. In 1480, he was elected *Directores Communis*, charged with judging the fairness of taxes imposed upon the citizens by the Vicar and Podestà.⁸⁶ He was also a regular adviser

⁸² Bury 1998, pp. 78-82.

⁸³ SBF, *San Francesco Nomina Confratrum Defunctoru*, B, IV, 472, fol. 11, unpublished.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, fols. 16v, 17r, unpublished.

⁸⁵ One document related to a tithe of grain and the other promised the return of a mattress, pillow and coverlet which Luca had borrowed from the confraternity to enable him to sleep in San Nicolò. Mancini 1979, p. 55.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 46.

to the confraternity and was elected prior of the company in 1477.⁸⁷ Galeotto was the father of the successful, but short-lived, painter, Pietro di Galeotto, who is documented as painting a banner for the confraternity. From May to September 1480, he received a series of payments, including the substantial sum of 22 florins, ‘*per pentura del ghonfalone nostro a cusì semo accordo adì 20 settembre [...] fiorini XXII*’.⁸⁸

On the basis of these payments, Mancini has identified a large painting on canvas depicting *The Flagellation*, now in the Oratory of San Francesco, as the *gonfalone* painted by Pietro di Galeotto (Fig. 4.13).⁸⁹ He calls in support an entry in a confraternity inventory that he dates from 1582 and reads as ‘*confalone da portare inanzi alla Croce e la figura de Santo Francesco*’ suggesting that the banner would have been carried before a cross and a statue of St. Francis. There are, however, some difficulties with this attribution as there are no descriptions of the subject of Pietro’s banner in the payment records. Furthermore, Bury has transcribed the inventory entry (which he dates as *c.*1562) as ‘*innanzi alla croce con la figura de santo Francesco*’.⁹⁰ This means that the *gonfalone* listed in the inventory depicted St. Francis and does not refer to *The Flagellation*. Indeed, it seems likely to refer to a banner purchased by the confraternity from Perugino in 1499 which depicts St. Francis and which is discussed further below.

Another inventory for the internal church of the Confraternity of San Francis, dated 1486, records that the church had several altars and that ‘*uno gonfalone con lo signore legato ala colonda*’ stood on one of them. This seems more likely to refer to Pietro’s *gonfalone* for which payments were made just six years earlier, but is still not incontrovertible evidence and the identity of *The Flagellation*’s painter remains disputed.⁹¹ Bellosi, pointing to the *gonfalone*’s sober colours, strong chiaroscuro and ‘Flemish quality’, draws parallels with works by Donato Bramante, who was active

⁸⁷ SBF, AFSF, *Libro dei verbali*, 456, 1477, fol. 243r; 1482, fol. 254v and 1488, fol. 255r, as cited in Mancini 1979, p. 46.

⁸⁸ SBF, AFSF, *Libro maestro* 424, fol. 89r, published with the other entries in Mancini 1979, p. 43-44.

⁸⁹ Mancini 1979, pp. 43-55.

⁹⁰ SBF, AFSF, *Inventari diversi*, 467, fol. 20v. See also fols. 28v and 39r; Bury 1998, p. 78, n. 35. The exact transcription is ‘*co’ la figura*’. The date is unclear, but is probably 1562 as subsequent entries relate to the 1570s and 1580s.

⁹¹ Garibaldi and Mancini 2008, p. 200.

in Urbino until around 1474, and proposes him as its painter.⁹² He suggests that the quality of the painting led the confraternity to protect it from damage by using it as an altarpiece and to commission another *gonfalone* for use in processions from Pietro. However, there are no documents linking Bramante with the banner and, as will be seen, Pietro cannot be discounted on the basis of style or lack of skill.

The canvas has long been associated with the company. A '*Gesu flagellato alla colonna*' on canvas was relined for the confraternity in 1742 by Giacinto Boccanero⁹³ and, in 1798, it was restored by Giovanni Cappelli.⁹⁴ Furthermore, the confraternity's practice of flagellation is reflected in the violent iconography of the image. Christ is depicted tied to a column, being whipped by two men. His raised veins, swollen eyes and slumped torso emphasise his physical torment, so that the painting could have served as an exemplar to the *disciplinati* in their devotions. The confraternity's symbol was a column flanked by two whips and appears on the covers of many of their record books and above the door of their oratory.⁹⁵

The inventories refer to a *gonfalone* but it is not certain that *The Flagellation* was intended to be carried as a standard in processions. At 196 x 134 cm, it is larger than most *segni* and its iconography seems too complex to have been the means of identifying the confraternity.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the decorative border is consistent with it being a banner and it could have been used as an *imago*, that is a focus for devotion in processions, as well as serving as a conventional altarpiece as indicated in the inventory. Altarpieces painted on canvas, though rare, were not unknown at this time.⁹⁷ The substantial payments made to Pietro for his *gonfalone* suggest that a high quality banner was envisaged. This is consistent with the finish of *The Flagellation* and a dual function. Payments for Perugino's banner amounted to a mere eight florins in contrast to some 40 florins paid to Pietro. That the painting is single-sided

⁹² Bellosi 2007, pp. 76-78.

⁹³ SBF, AFSF, *Libro dell'Entrate ed Uscita delle Confraternite dei Disciplinati*, B, II, 274, fol. 48, cited in Mancini 1979, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁴ SBF, AFSF, *Libro dell'Entrata ed Uscita della Confraternita di S. Francesco*, B, III, 329, fol. 12, cited in Mancini 1979, p. 45.

⁹⁵ See the cover of SBF, AFSF, *Libro del Ospedale de la Fraternalita*, B, I, 77 (1513), unpublished.

⁹⁶ Pintoricchio's *St. Augustine among Flagellants* measures 115 x 83 cm and Perugino's *St. Augustine and four members of a Confraternity* (Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh) only 94 x 64 cm.

⁹⁷ E.g. Mantegna's *St. Sebastian* (c.1480-1485, Louvre Museum, Paris) and Signorelli's *St. Mary Magdalene before Christ on the Cross* (c.1490-98, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) which was once believed to be a banner, but is now thought to be an altarpiece. Henry and Kanter 2002, p. 175.

supports its role as an altarpiece, but does not preclude its use as a banner.

It is not possible conclusively to attribute the painting to Pietro di Galeotto (nor to dismiss him) on the basis of style as no documented works by him survive. He was active in Perugia during the 1480s and achieved considerable standing, receiving a prestigious commission to paint an altarpiece for the Palazzo dei Priori in 1479. This was never completed due to his premature death from the plague in 1483 and Perugino eventually fulfilled the commission (*Decemviri Altarpiece*, Vatican Museums, Rome). Pietro was apprenticed to Piero della Francesca and *The Flagellation* bears some similarities with Piero's *Flagellation* (c.1450s, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino). In both, Christ is bound to a Corinthian column set on a geometrically patterned marble pavement, but in the Perugian painting the setting is an open loggia, perched high above a watery landscape reminiscent of the backdrop to Piero's *Double Portrait of Battista Sforza and Federico da Montefeltro* (c.1472, Uffizi Gallery, Florence). These similarities lend some support to the proposal that Pietro was responsible for the canvas.

Mancini has attributed the painting's heightened emotion and expressiveness to exposure to Northern artists whom he believes Pietro would have encountered on a documented visit to Vicenza.⁹⁸ But, as he acknowledges, there was no shortage of German craftsmen in Perugia at the time. The *Societas Germanorum et Gallorum* was founded in Perugia in the early 1400s and their statutes were confirmed by the *comune* in 1455.⁹⁹ Their members included artists, embroiderers, miniaturists and, especially, scribes from Germany and France. Although no major paintings can be attributed to them, their influence upon indigenous painters through the so-called minor arts must have been considerable. Furthermore, as noted in connection with Perugino's banner for the Franciscan convent at Farneto, there were many examples of German *vesperbild* carvings in Umbria and the physicality and expressiveness of these works could well have influenced the painter of *The Flagellation*, obviating the need for any trip to the North or Northern origins to account for its style.

The suggestion that *The Flagellation* was not used as a banner to identify the

⁹⁸ Mancini 1979, pp. 49-53.

⁹⁹ Scalvanti 1899, pp. 583-626.

confraternity in processions is supported by the fact that just 19 years later the *disciplinati* purchased a *drappellone* from Perugino. An entry in the papers of the confraternity in 1499 records a payment to ‘*Mastro Pietro pentore da chastello de la Pieve... per la sua pentura de uno drappellone con San Francesco con quattro frustati da pieie*’.¹⁰⁰ The record books show three payments in April and May 1499 for the relatively small sums of 4 florins and 60 soldi, 1 florin and 58 soldi and 3 florins and 2 soldi respectively. The final sum was collected by ‘Fantasia suo charzone’. He has been identified as Giovanni Francesco Ciambella, known as ‘il Fantasia’ who was enrolled in the *matricola* of painters in 1500 for the district of Porta Sole. Although described as a ‘charzone’ he appears to have been well regarded by Perugino as he was a witness to the contract for his San Pietro altarpiece and, in 1502, he received a small payment on Perugino’s behalf relating to the Collegio del Cambio. It is likely that he worked on secondary areas of these paintings and was one of the band of assistants who painted and gilded furniture, painted coats of arms on city gates and turned out flags and banners such as this one for the Confraternity of San Francis.¹⁰¹

The payments almost certainly relate to a banner made of red silk now in the Galleria Nazionale, Perugia (Fig. 4.14).¹⁰² Its portable size (106 x 50 cm), upright rectangular shape and clear iconography identify it as a *segno* or *vexillum* which would have been carried at the head of processions to identify the confraternity. St. Francis stands with one foot behind the other, his weight on one leg, with the other bent at the knee, though without the corresponding lowering of the hip typical of Perugino’s autograph figures. This suggests an inherent lack of understanding of the underlying anatomy, typical of a less able assistant. Four hooded *disciplinati* form a semi-circle behind Francis. They kneel on an intricately tiled floor which recedes into a depth that is contradicted by the over-large pattern of the gold brocade ground. Although modelled on a Perugino prototype, the banner is not of high quality and is almost certainly a workshop piece which is consistent with the price paid and the

¹⁰⁰ SBF, *San Francesco Nomina Confratrum Defunctorum*, B, I, 63 (1499), fol. 11r retranscribed in Lunghi 2004, p. 46.

¹⁰¹ On 26 September 1503, Perugino collected 65 florins for painting the arms of the new pope, Pius III on the gates of the city and, on 22 November 1503, 40 florins, for painting those of Julius II. Canuti 1931, II, pp. 198-199.

¹⁰² Lunghi 2004, p. 46.

transient nature of such artefacts.¹⁰³

The confraternity's unpublished record books reveal that other local artists also undertook work for them. In 1473, the miniaturist Giapeco Caporali was paid five florins to decorate a missal.¹⁰⁴ Fiorenzo di Lorenzo was increasingly employed, particularly around the turn of the century. In 1478, he received 50 soldi for painting 24 little flags (*banderotti*).¹⁰⁵ By 1500, he had been commissioned to paint a panel for the second altar in the confraternity's church.¹⁰⁶ In 1506, he was paid four gold ducats to paint a casket containing the bones of Braccio Fortebraccio in San Francesco al Prato and an unspecified payment was made to him in 1512.¹⁰⁷

The commissioning of four leading artists or their workshops indicates a developed awareness of new trends and a desire to associate the confraternity with them. Whether or not *The Flagellation* is the *gonfalone* for which Pietro di Galeotto was paid in the documents, there is no doubt that he did undertake a banner of some sort for them. While the commission may well have been consequent in part upon his father's position within the confraternity, Pietro was already highly regarded and any banner painted by him would have been a prestigious object. Likewise, a banner from Perugino's sought-after workshop would have declared the aspirations of the confraternity to a wide audience during public processions through the city. Commissions to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and Giapeco Caporali confirm that the confraternity sought work from high calibre local artists and cast further doubt upon the proposal that they commissioned the 'foreigner', Bramante.

The Confraternity of St. Bernardino

The *Disciplinati* of St. Francis was not the only confraternity associated with the Franciscans to seek a banner from the increasingly popular workshop of Perugino; the Confraternity of St. Bernardino obtained an even more prestigious, autograph work. This confraternity was based in Porta Eburnea (not to be confused with the Oratory next to San Francesco al Prato) and their banner, known as the

¹⁰³ Deterioration of the surface and extensive repainting make a definitive assessment difficult.

¹⁰⁴ SBF, *Libri Contabili*, 424, fol. 48r, unpublished.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 47, fol. 22r, unpublished.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 63, fol. 17v, unpublished.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 76, fol. 31, unpublished.

Gonfalone della Giustizia following their subsequent amalgamation with that confraternity, has been dated to around 1496 (Fig. 4.15).¹⁰⁸ In January 1496, the confraternity requested a contribution from the *comune* to enable an existing banner to be repaired and this was approved in February.¹⁰⁹ However, the confraternity appears to have changed its mind and later references mention a processional banner ‘*fiendo*’, ‘being made’, with a figure of St. Bernardino.¹¹⁰ A document from November 1496, in which Perugino seeks payment of an outstanding five florins from Sansonetto d’Antonio, Iohannes Tome and Barnabus Barnabei for painting a *gonfalone* for the confraternity of St. Bernardino, conclusively links the painter with the banner.¹¹¹ Sansonetto’s membership of the confraternity is confirmed by an earlier document in which he is referred to as ‘*nostro fratello*’.¹¹²

This non-payment supports the contention that the confraternity was not well-endowed and it appears to have had long-standing money problems. For many years its walls were bare of decoration¹¹³ and, in 1482, it was described as ‘*pauperrima*’.¹¹⁴ By 1537, it was so short of members that it was forced to unite with the confraternity of St. Andrew, also known as the *Giustizia*.¹¹⁵ This impoverishment begs the question of how the confraternity could have secured such a swiftly executed commission from Perugino who was, by now, approaching the height of his popularity and largely based in Florence. Besides being committed to produce an altarpiece for the Palazzo dei Priori (*The Decemviri Altarpiece*), he was also engaged in Perugia on a large altarpiece for the monastery of San Pietro and working in the Collegio del Cambio. Patrons such as Ludovico il Moro in Milan tried in vain to pin him down, writing to Guido and Rodolfo Baglioni to procure his services.¹¹⁶ Even the forceful Isabella d’Este in Mantua was kept waiting for a painting for her

¹⁰⁸ Previously dated to around 1501. Teza 1996, pp. 43-54.

¹⁰⁹ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 123, fols. 1v, 7v, cited in Teza *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 123, fols. 23v, 25, cited in Teza, *ibid.*

¹¹¹ ASP, *Archivio del nobile Collegio del Cambio*, 293, fol. 41v; cited in Bombe 1912, pp. 362-363, transcribed and linked with the *gonfalone* in Teza 1996, p. 53, n. 30.

¹¹² ASP, CRS, *Confraternita di S. Andrea e S. Bernardino*, 91, fol. 97v.

¹¹³ La ‘*capella è tuata bianca e non ci è niuna figura né imagine d’alcuno santo*’. ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 101, fol. 30r (1465); Teza 1996, p. 45.

¹¹⁴ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 117, fol. 71r; transcribed in Teza 1996, p. 53, note 26.

¹¹⁵ Teza 1996, p. 46.

¹¹⁶ On 8 June 1496, Ludovico wrote to the archbishop of Milan in Venice, asking if Perugino was there. He replied that he had left six months earlier and his whereabouts were unknown. Transcribed in Canuti 1931, II, pp. 291-292. Undeterred, Ludovico wrote to the Baglioni in Perugia on 28 March and 9 November 1497. Canuti 1931, II, p. 292.

studiolo.¹¹⁷ Unfortunately, the list of confraternity members is missing for these years, but it must have included some influential adherents to have been able to command an autograph work from Perugino at this time.¹¹⁸ Alternatively, it is possible that Perugino waived his usual fee, perhaps in gratitude to the confraternity for some service that they had provided or to perform a pious act himself.¹¹⁹

The banner depicts the Madonna with the infant Christ standing on her knee, clutching the neckline of her dress and looking in the opposite direction. It may reprise a motif from Giovanni Santi's *Sacra Conversazione* painted around 1490 for the Tiranni Chapel in San Domenico at Cagli.¹²⁰ However, the counter-argument, that Santi took the idea from Perugino, is also plausible.¹²¹ Perugino re-used the motif many times, both in Perugia and elsewhere, but given the long gestation period of the *Decemviri Altarpiece* - the contract was placed in November 1483, but only completed around 1495 - and Perugino's practice of making initial sketches soon after receiving commissions even if they were not worked up until several years later, it is likely that it was first conceived for the *Decemviri Altarpiece*.

In the banner, the Madonna is supported on a bank of cloud, rather than the *all'antica* throne of the altarpiece, and is surrounded by angels and seraphim. Sts. Francis and Bernardino of Siena kneel below them, accompanied by segregated groups of men, women, children and hooded *disciplinati*, robed in white. Two *disciplinati* kneel behind the praying women, recalling their official duties as escorts for prisoners.¹²² The depiction of the crowd was probably intended as an exemplar to encourage the involvement of the public in intercessional prayers and processions. In common with many earlier prototypes, the *gonfalone* is site specific in that the landscape beyond the kneeling populace is a conflated view of the city. Santi identified the viewpoint as Monte Morcino, which privileged the area of Porta Eburnea, where the confraternity was based.¹²³ The central piazza with the Palazzo dei Priori can be distinguished, along with the numerous towers and church of Santa

¹¹⁷ On 3 April 1497, Isabella wrote to Lorenzo da Pavia in Florence to ascertain whether Perugino was still alive, Scarpellini 1984, p. 64.

¹¹⁸ Teza 1996, p. 48.

¹¹⁹ O'Malley 2007, p. 676.

¹²⁰ Hiller von Gaertringen 2004, pp. 160-161.

¹²¹ Chapman 2004, pp. 16 and 61, n. 18.

¹²² Black 1989, p. 353.

¹²³ Santi 1976, p. 34; Teza 1996, p. 48.

Maria dei Servi in the Colle Landone district. The road leading from the city towards the people is probably the one that runs through the gate of Santa Giuliana, near the confraternity.

The Company of St. Joseph

Another confraternity closely associated with the Franciscans was the Company of St. Joseph, which was formed in response to a particular civic and religious requirement. In 1473, the city had obtained, in dubious circumstances a holy relic believed to be the Virgin's ring. A German priest had stolen the ring from Chiusi, near Siena, intending to take it to Germany.¹²⁴ However, he got lost in fog and ended up in Perugia, where he told a citizen, Luca, about the ring. Luca promptly informed the bishop and the priest was relieved of his burden, which became highly venerated in the city. The political fallout from Perugia's refusal to return the ring was far reaching. War with Siena ensued and the pope also intervened, cunningly suggesting as an alternative that the Ring should be sent to Rome, but to no avail and the ring remained in Perugia.¹²⁵

The city authorities welcomed the prestige that the relic brought to Perugia, not to mention the revenue received from visiting pilgrims and, initially, the ring was kept in the Palazzo dei Priori in a shrine with seven locks, within an iron box with a further four locks. The keys were held by various guilds, religious orders and public bodies, including the bishop, the Conventuals of San Francesco and the Collegio del Cambio.¹²⁶ This was a security measure, but also ensured that a diverse cross-section of the community took ownership of the ring. The ring inspired great public devotion which was reflected in Bartolomeo Caporali and Sante de Apollonio's *Giustizia Triptych*. Painted around 1475-1476, it depicts St. Mustiola holding the ring aloft on a cord. Eventually it was decided that a more accessible venue was required to enable worshippers to venerate it and, in May 1486, 200 florins were voted by the magistrates for a chapel dedicated to the Virgin and St. Joseph to be erected in the cathedral.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Matarazzo 1905, p. 8.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ BAP, ms. 3106, fol. 2v, cited in Cernicchi and Chiaretti 2005, p. 37.

¹²⁷ Canuti 1931, II, p. 199.

In 1487, the Company of St. Joseph was founded by the Franciscan preacher, Bernardino da Feltre, specifically to look after the holy relic. It also promoted family values and marriage. Its founder members included numerous high profile citizens including Fabritio di Tindaro Alfani, the nephew of Eufrasia and Battista at Monteluca, members of the degli Oddi and Signorelli families and the painter, Bartolomeo Caporali.¹²⁸ The company and cult of St. Joseph enjoyed such overwhelming public support that they were allocated the chapel in the cathedral dedicated to St. Bernardino that had been completed only ten years previously - a change in dedication that is also indicative of a falling away of public interest in St. Bernardino. The company immediately commissioned a stone altar to accommodate the ring, an iron gate was erected to close off the chapel and the ring was transferred to the cathedral on 31 July 1488.¹²⁹

On 16 September 1489, Pollio di Onofrio, the prior of the company, who was also a member of the goldsmiths' guild, contracted Pintoricchio to paint the life and marriage of St. Joseph in the newly refurbished chapel.¹³⁰ The painter was chosen by five elected representatives of the company who included Bartolomeo Caporali, the noble Mariotto Boncampi and the prior.¹³¹ Given their qualifications, this group was obviously fully aware of Pintoricchio's expertise and style of painting. The decision to employ him was therefore an informed choice displaying a preference for a local painter who came with the prestige of Rome.

It was intended that Pintoricchio should start work the following April, at which point he would be paid 20 florins and 25 soldi. Pintoricchio nominated Caporali to act as his procurator and decide on a price - further evidence of the facilitating role often performed by Caporali and his connection with Pintoricchio. Rita Silvestrelli, following Manzoni, has argued that the documents indicate that the painting was to be a fresco.¹³² However this is not specified and the requirement that

¹²⁸ BAP, ms. 3106, fols. 9v-15v, cited, but not transcribed in Cernicchi and Chiaretti 2005.

¹²⁹ ASP, ASCP, *Depositario Tesoriere*, 64, fols. 85v, 127v, 130r, cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 99.

¹³⁰ '...pingere in capella dicte societatis in ecclesia sancti Laurentii istoriam et sponsalia sancti Josep cum beata Vergine Maria, videlicet cum illis coloribus et picturis at alii ornamentis prout et sibi melius videbitur convenire'. ASP, *Notarile Bastardelli*, 505, fol. 132r, transcribed in Canuti 1931, II, p. 200; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, pp. 285-286;

¹³¹ BAP, ms. 3106, cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 99.

¹³² Manzoni 1898, p. 515.

the *'istoriam et sponsalia'* of St. Joseph be depicted does not preclude an altarpiece. Scenes from his life could have been incorporated into a predella. In any event, Pintoricchio never carried out the work and Perugino eventually provided an altarpiece (*The Marriage of the Virgin*, Fig. 4.3) a decade later, which suggests that the initial contract with Pintoricchio was also for an altarpiece.

The roll of the Company of St. Joseph shows an influx of new members in March and April 1498, including Agnolo and Nere de Giulio dei Signorelli, Girolamo de Francesco de Alfani, the painter, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and Hypolito de Ser Costantino da Terani, the Chancellor of the Baglioni.¹³³ This renewal of interest may have provided the impetus for the transfer of Pintoricchio's unfulfilled contract to Perugino.

Appropriately for an altar dedicated to the Holy Ring, Perugino's altarpiece situates the moment when St. Joseph places the ring upon the Virgin's finger in the central foreground, making the ring, which is hidden by Joseph's hand, the unseen focus of attention, just as the ring itself was hidden from view for most of the year, but remained the focus for devotion. Groups of rejected male suitors and female attendants flank the pair. Behind them a large piazza recedes into an airy Umbrian landscape connected to the main tableau by subsidiary scenes set on the orthogonals. The middle ground is dominated by a vast, classically inspired temple which calls to mind the humanist aspirations of Perugia, both of which provide admirable settings for the holy relic.

This series of commissions by confraternities associated with the Franciscans in the last quarter of the quattrocento reveals them to have been lively patrons. In common with practice across the city, they confined their patronage to local artists, but successfully engaged all the leading Perugian painters, including Pietro di Galeotto, Perugino and Pintoricchio, even if the latter did not deliver. In this respect they appear to have been temporarily more to the fore than most of the monasteries and convents. Their vigour and desire for top quality works indicates their centrality to Perugian society which is reflected in the demand for new banners and altarpieces.

¹³³ BAP, ms.3106, fols. 32r, 39v, 47v, 49r and 52r (old numbering), unpublished.

Pintoricchio in Perugia and the *contado*

The reason for Pintoricchio's failure to complete such a prestigious project as the St. Joseph Chapel in the cathedral is not known, but his connections with the company and the Alfani sisters at Monteluca may have led to the only major commission that he actually completed within the city. His *Fossi Altarpiece* was painted for the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli situated just outside the old medieval walls, near the San Pietro Gate, close to the Colle Landone area occupied by the Baglioni (Fig. 4.16). The site had originally been used by Clarissan nuns attached to the convent of Monteluca, but, in 1464, all the sisters perished during a virulent attack of the plague so the Franciscan Provincial Vicar, Alberto da Perugia, and the women's confessor, Matteo da Castello, ceded the property to the Augustinians.¹³⁴ This change in occupation was accompanied by rapid expansion and building work which was partially subsidised by the *comune*, under the *soprastanza* of Melchiorre di Goro and the spice merchant Francesco di Pietro de Randoli.¹³⁵ Francesco was a trusted adviser of Braccio Baglioni, having negotiated the marriage of Griffone and Atalanta Baglioni with Angela di Aquaviva. He was also *soprastanza* of the chapel of St. Joseph in the Cathedral and must have been aware of Pintoricchio's contract to decorate the chapel there. He was married to Margherita Montesperelli whose family had a chapel in San Francesco al Prato.¹³⁶

Other money for the monastery came from legacies, among which Melchiorre di Goro's own bequest was fundamental to the provision of a new altarpiece. In October 1479, his will provided 150 florins for the construction and painting of a panel to be placed on the high altar of the church and he gave instructions that it should contain the figure of St. Jerome, to whom he was particularly devoted.¹³⁷ Subsequently, Melchiorre changed the terms of his will and on his death, around 1492, he left only 50 florins for the altarpiece, the other 100 being diverted to the Observant Franciscans for works at their establishment dedicated to St. Jerome, near

¹³⁴ Nicolini 1983, pp. 24-28.

¹³⁵ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 119, fol. 2v, cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, pp. 193, 204, n. 6.

¹³⁶ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 277, fols. 35r-38r cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 204, n. 5. Francesco prospered in Braccio's service. His *catasti* entry for 17 November 1472 amounts to 485 libbre. By the next census in 1489/97 his assets totalled 1255 libbre. See Grohmann, 1981, p. 545.

¹³⁷ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, fols. 140r-142v, cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, 2004, p. 204, n. 11.

the gate of San Pietro.¹³⁸ Melchiorre's nephews and heirs, Sebastiano and Fioravante di Pietro Gori, met in the warehouse of their uncle's former colleague and now trustee, Francesco de Randoli. There they contracted with the carpenter, Mattia di Tommaso da Reggio, to produce a poplar panel according to the design 'già fatto' for 29 florins.¹³⁹ It seems likely, considering the complexity of the finished work, that Pintoricchio had produced this plan during one of his visits to Perugia in 1492, even though he did not formally contract to paint the altarpiece until 14 February 1495.¹⁴⁰

The contract with the painter was made in the Alfani office near the Palace of the Priors.¹⁴¹ Diamante Alfani, the brother of Eufrosia and Battista Alfani of Monteluca who had previously commissioned frescoes from Pintoricchio, and his son, Alfano, were both present. They are described as merchants of Perugia although they came from a family of bankers and Alfano was the papal treasurer in Perugia for almost 40 years from August 1492.¹⁴² While this position necessarily involved him in the financial arrangements for many artistic ventures involving the church, he also took a personal interest, commissioning an astrolabe from Pintoricchio and later probably commissioning *The Conestabile Madonna* (The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg) from Raphael. The funds for the altarpiece were to be deposited with the Alfani bank with Pintoricchio receiving 70 florins at the beginning of the work and a further 40 upon completion. He also received three florins to rent a workshop, which confirms his lack of a base in Perugia.¹⁴³ Funds were diverted from another project to meet Melchiorre's shortfall. In return, Pintoricchio was to paint an altarpiece depicting the Madonna in majesty, with the baby Jesus. St. Augustine should appear in his pontifical robes on her right, with St. Jerome, dressed as a cardinal, on her left. In the upper section there should be a *pietà* with an Annunciate angel on one side and the Virgin Annunciate on the other.

The altarpiece is uniformly high in quality and appears to be almost entirely autograph, apart from the predella which has recently been attributed to Eusebio di

¹³⁸ Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 193.

¹³⁹ Rossi 1872, p. 99.

¹⁴⁰ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 474, fols. 82v-83v, transcribed in Vermiglioli 1837, p. v (Appendix II).

¹⁴¹ 'in camera Alphani sita juxta plateam magnam ante palatium Magnificorum Dominorum Priorum'. *ibid.*

¹⁴² Morandi 1978, p. 112.

¹⁴³ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 474, fols. 1v-4r, 66r-v, cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli, 2004, p. 204, n. 14.

San Giorgio.¹⁴⁴ Pintoricchio brought his Roman experience to bear, including many of the *all'antica* details that his patrons there enjoyed, such as the classical buildings that nestle in the landscape behind the Virgin's throne, the mock relief of a battle scene and the faux-gilded Triumph on the Virgin's throne.¹⁴⁵ Even St. John's open sandals are Roman in style. Delicate, flat, polychrome *grotesche* on gold grounds, derived from the Domus Aurea, appear in the *Annunciation*, while the Virgin's throne and the pilasters flanking *Christ in the Tomb*, are decorated with gold motifs on a black ground. Monochrome *grotesche*, simulating carving, decorate the pilasters in the *Annunciation*. The areas within the volutes to either side of the *Pietà* and below the central panel also contain unusually sinuous and free-flowing polychrome *grotesche* set against a black ground.

Grotesche had first appeared in Rome in the early 1480s, and subsequently became very fashionable there, particularly amongst the circle of commissioners associated with the papacy. This is probably their debut appearance in Perugia and may well have been at the specific request of the commissioners. The contract for the altarpiece specified that, 'the painter also undertakes to paint in the empty part of the pictures – or, more precisely, on the ground behind the figures - landscapes and skies and all other grounds too where colour is put: except for the frame, to which gold is to be applied...' Baxandall read this as the client swapping gilding for landscapes and related it to the value of skill in the artist's brush, but the reference to 'all other grounds' could refer to the filling of spaces with the increasingly fashionable *grotesche*.¹⁴⁶ If so, it indicates that the commissioners were conversant with the new Roman style and keen to incorporate it into their altarpiece which would explain why Pintoricchio took trouble to include a variety of forms.

The shape of the altarpiece was also innovative in a painted context. Although initially reminiscent of gothic pinacled frames in its compartmentalised complexity, in fact, the structure with its arch, Corinthian columns and pediment resembles an Albertian church façade. As such, it finds parallels with Albertian-

¹⁴⁴ Garibaldi and Mancini 2008, p. 264.

¹⁴⁵ Typically Umbrian buildings are also included behind the Virgin's throne and in the two predella scenes.

¹⁴⁶ Transcribed in Baxandall 1972, p. 17; Vermiglioli 1837, p. vi (Appendix II). '*Anche promette nel vacuo delli quadri o vero campi de le figure pegnere paese at aiere et tutti li altri campi dove se mette colore excepto li cornicioni dove se ha a ponere loro li quadri non sintendono in epso coptimo*'.

inspired buildings in the city such as the facade of the San Bernardino Oratory and the nearby San Pietro gate and reiterates Perugia's humanist aspirations.

Despite the high quality of the *Fossi Altarpiece* and its innovative nature, Pintoricchio was not engaged by any Franciscan patrons in Perugia after this date and his work for the order there remained limited to his lost frescoes at Monteluca and the unexecuted decorations for the Company of St. Joseph in the cathedral. This accurately reflects the level of commissions that he received in the city as a whole. He undertook only two more significant commissions for Perugian patrons, neither of which were for Perugian locations – the *Cappella Bella* in Spello, for Troilo Baglioni and an altarpiece for the Observant Franciscans of Santa Maria della Pietà in Umbertide (*Coronation*) paid for by Alessandra di Costantino, the widow of Giovanni di Tommaso, in 1503.¹⁴⁷

The reasons for this are unclear. Mancini views the domination of Perugino and his workshop as aggressively preventing the establishment of other painters in the city, including Pintoricchio.¹⁴⁸ Scarpellini observed that 'no-one is a prophet in his own country' implying that Pintoricchio was not fully appreciated there.¹⁴⁹ But it is arguable that Pintoricchio's ability to depict miniaturist detail and genre incidents, his concerns with overall patterning rather than clarity of composition, and his interest in colourful drapery and ornamentation were truer to the heritage of Perugian painters and met the traditional predilections of Perugian patrons more closely than Perugino's compositions, which were imbued with the spatial concerns of Florence. Clearly Perugian patrons did not dislike Pintoricchio's aesthetic or fail to perceive his skill. The Perugian commissions that he did receive emanated from the same élite social groups as commissioned Caporali, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and Perugino, notably the Alfani family, including the Monteluca sisters, the Company of St. Joseph, the Augustinians at Santa Maria degli Angeli and the Baglioni.¹⁵⁰

The contemporary Perugian chronicler, Francesco Matarazzo, who was involved with the decorations of the Collegio del Cambio, described Perugino as

¹⁴⁷ Silvestrelli 2005, pp. 63-72; Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, docs. 143, 147, 151, 162 and 163, pp. 290-91.

¹⁴⁸ Mancini 1995, pp. 29-48.

¹⁴⁹ Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, pp. 207-231.

¹⁵⁰ See Henry 2008, pp. 121-129.

'pre-eminent among painters throughout the whole of God's world' but added that:

'there was also another master of that art by many called Pintoricchio, and by many Sordicchio, because he was deaf; small was he too, insignificant and ill-favoured. And even as the said Mastro Pietro was first in his art, so was this man second; and there was no one that could contend with him for second place. So that in this art of painting also there were born us men of the highest capacity and excellence, even as there were also in other sciences and arts.'¹⁵¹

Matarazzo's comments make it clear that Pintoricchio's skill was appreciated in Perugia. Moreover, his boast that 'there were born us men of the highest capacity and excellence' confirms a sense of civic identity and that patrons were fully conscious that Perugino and Pintoricchio were local men who should be celebrated and promoted. Indeed, Perugian connections helped him obtain important commissions elsewhere, including the Bufalini chapel (1482-85, Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Rome)¹⁵² and the *Madonna del Pace* (1488-1489, Pinacoteca Civica, San Severino Marche) which contained a portrait of Liberato Bartelli who had spent his early career as rector of the *Sapienza Nuova*.¹⁵³

Pintoricchio's lack of commissions in Perugia, at least until the late 1490s, was therefore probably due to his concentration of efforts elsewhere; unlike Perugino, he did not establish a workshop in the city. His decision to remain in Rome after the completion of the Sistine Chapel frescoes meant that he capitalised on the prestige that accrued to its painters there, rather than in Florence and Perugia. Nevertheless, he never cut his ties completely. In August 1491, though busy decorating Cardinal Domenico della Rovere's palazzo in Rome he (or his workshop) found time to paint the coats of arms of the pope, bishop and *comune* for Perugia's annual feast of St. Lawrence. His young nephew, Gerolamo di Simone, was made a canon in the Perugian cathedral, which lucrative office was probably a reward for his uncle's work for the pope in Rome.¹⁵⁴ Around 1500, Pintoricchio may even have decided to return to Perugia permanently as he improved the family home in San Fortunato and, besides the *Fossi Altarpiece*, was engaged on a major commission in

¹⁵¹ Matarazzo 1905, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵² Luchinat 1999, p. 12.

¹⁵³ Silvestrelli and Scarpellini 2004, pp. 107, 150.

¹⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 99. There are other instances of rewards to painters being made to their relatives, e.g. Luca Signorelli.

nearby Spello.¹⁵⁵ If so, the decision was short-lived as, in 1503-4, he left to work in Siena. His ambivalent relationship with Perugia is exemplified by his approach to being appointed prior in 1501, when he failed to capitalise on an opportunity to impress members of the commissioning constituency. He is recorded in the council minutes as being absent during the whole of March and arrived late on 8 April while the other priors were warming themselves before the fire. He proceeded to greet each of his colleagues with a cheerful face, apologising for his absence as he had been '*assente dalla città e dal contado*'.¹⁵⁶ The inference being that he was cavalier in fulfilling his civic responsibilities, which could not have endeared him to potential patrons.¹⁵⁷

Baglioni propaganda in Spello

Pintoricchio's only other major enterprise for a Perugian commissioner (other than the altarpiece in Umbertide) was executed in nearby Spello, but is worthy of consideration here as it reflects the political situation in Perugia at the turn of the century and its impact on patronal patterns.

The death of Braccio Baglioni in 1479 left a power vacuum in Perugia and the ensuing jostling for supremacy amongst different factions within the family is amply demonstrated by a series of commissions that were undertaken in Spello. The city, 35 km South East of Perugia, had been under Baglioni control for many years. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it had enjoyed independence as a 'mini' *comune* within the Papal States, but it also experienced intense rivalry with Foligno which resulted in years of civil war. Stability was further undermined by the Great Schism and, in 1353, the magistrates turned to Perugia for protection. In 1386, Pandolfo Baglioni was elected *conservator* of Spello and was subsequently appointed *Vicario Pontificio* by Pope Bonifacio IX. On Pandolfo's violent death, Spello passed into the hands of Biordo Michelotti and then Braccio Fortebraccio di Montone. It returned to Baglioni control in 1425, when Malatesta di Pandolfo and his brother, Nello, were made Lords of the city in return for having induced the

¹⁵⁵ Henry 2008, pp. 121-122.

¹⁵⁶ ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 124, fols. 67r and 73v, cited in Silvestrelli and Scarpellini 2004, p. 289.

¹⁵⁷ Henry cites his appointment as evidence that Pintoricchio was re-establishing himself in Perugia at this time. Henry 2008, pp. 121-129.

Perugians to submit to papal rule. During the rule of Malatesta's son, Braccio,¹⁵⁸ Pope Eugenius IV confirmed the grant for three generations and Pellini ascribed the subsequent power of the Baglioni family primarily to this acquisition.¹⁵⁹ For almost two centuries Spello became one of the feudal lands of the Baglioni.

We have seen previously how the interests of the Perugian state and the Franciscans were mutually supportive - the decoration of the facade of the San Bernardino Oratory with scenes promoting civil obedience being one example. Braccio Baglioni also stood to gain from the teachings of the order which supported the rule of law and by extension, the *status quo* and his support for the Franciscans is apparent from his actions in Spello. He invited itinerant Observant Franciscan preachers, including Fra Fortunato Coppoli and Fra Stefano da Perugia to the city and, in 1474, built the convent of St. Jerome on land provided by the *comune* so as to furnish the order with a permanent presence. The building is notable for its renaissance architecture and frescoes in the portico by painters from nearby Foligno.

Corrado Fratini has suggested that Braccio's decision to employ local painters in Spello, such as Niccolò di Liberatore, rather than prestigious foreign masters like Domenico Veneziano, who had decorated his house in Colle Landone, and Piero della Francesca who had painted the *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece* for the convent of Sant'Antonio, underlines the separation in Braccio's mind between the feudal periphery of the *contado* and his 'dominion' in the centre of Perugia.¹⁶⁰ However, the use of local painters is consistent with commissioning patterns in Perugia during the second half of Braccio's rule. Apart from Signorelli's altarpiece in the cathedral, the *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece* was the last major commission to a foreign painter for some time and was already bucking a trend towards employing local artists. Braccio only gained sole control of Spello on the death of Galeotto in 1460 and it was during this latter period that the most significant interventions took place at the convent of St. Jerome and elsewhere. For example, the eremitic monastery of St. Catherine in Spello was also Franciscan and it too received support from Braccio. This monastery was responsible for maintaining the water supply which was often

¹⁵⁸ Officially, Braccio ruled jointly with his cousin, Galeotto from 1437-1460, and alone from 1460-1479.

¹⁵⁹ Pellini 1664, II, p. 296. They also received Cannaiia and Bastia.

¹⁶⁰ Fratini 2000, p. 20.

threatened by skirmishes with Foligno. Doubtless Braccio regarded this function as essential to maintaining the integrity of his territory and saw the benefit of maintaining the foundation.¹⁶¹

As well as fostering a climate where the teachings of the Franciscans could flourish and work to his advantage, Braccio took practical steps to strengthen his family's position in Spello. His son, Griffone, was married to Atalanta Baglioni. She was the daughter of Galeotto Baglioni, Braccio's rival claimant to the Perugian *signoria*. The intention must have been that the heir of this union, the future Federico *alias* Grifonetto, would have an unassailable claim to the city.¹⁶² But circumstances intervened. Griffone was assassinated in 1477 and two years later Braccio died of natural causes, leaving Federico still a child under the guardianship of his mother. The leadership of Spello was assumed by Braccio's brothers, Guido and Rodolfo Baglioni. Strife with Foligno redoubled until, in 1489, peace was brought about by the intervention of the pope through the auspices of the cardinal of Siena.¹⁶³ A formal ceremony was held at which ancient texts in praise of peace were read aloud and the kiss of peace exchanged. Unsurprisingly, the reconciliation was short-lived.

As Federico grew up, he strove to reassume the position that had been lost to him on the deaths of his father and grandfather. To emphasise his credentials he changed his name to 'Grifonetto' and, around 1496-99, set about promoting himself through the decoration of a sepulchral chapel in the Franciscan church of Sant'Andrea in Spello.¹⁶⁴ This was probably intended as a funerary chapel for his father, Griffone. The Baglioni arms – a gold band on a blue ground – appear frequently along with those of the *comune* of Perugia. Following Braccio's practice, Grifonetto retained a local painter, known only as the Master of Spello or the Master of the Coronation of Montefalco. An inscription relating to what little remains of the frescoes states, QUESTA OPERA A FACTA FARE GRIFONE FIGLIOLO DE L[A] D[O]NA A[TALA]NNTA. The inclusion of Atalanta's name suggests that she may have been involved in the commission which would be consistent with her later commission of an altarpiece from Raphael.

¹⁶¹ Sensi 2000, p. 11.

¹⁶² Fratini 2000, p. 20.

¹⁶³ De'Conti 1883, pp. 317-318.

¹⁶⁴ Fratini 1996, p. 254.

Propaganda alone was insufficient to restore Grifonetto to what he considered to be his rightful position and, on 14 July 1500, he took part in a bloody plot with the intention of permanently removing Guido, Rodolfo and their heirs from the scene.¹⁶⁵ A large number of the Baglioni family had gathered in Perugia for the lavish wedding of Astorre Baglioni to Donna Lavinia which lasted for six days. Taking advantage of the celebrations, Grifonetto and other disenchanted young nobles launched a bloody attack upon the guests. The coup, which became known as the *Nozze Rosse* or 'red wedding', was initially successful for Grifonetto, resulting in the deaths of Guido, his sons Astorre and Gismondo and Simonetto, the son of Rodolfo. But the plotters ruled for only a few days before being ousted by Giampaolo, Rodolfo's second son. Grifonetto lost his life in reprisals following the murders and more jostling for power followed. By this time, Rodolfo was dying of syphilis and Guido's second son, Gentile, who was prior of San Lorenzo in Spello from 1498, 'abode always in Spello' so that the government of Perugia and the *signoria* of Spello passed to Morgante (Guido's third son) and Giampaolo.¹⁶⁶ On Morgante's death in 1502, Giampaolo ruled alone.

Although Giampaolo came to be associated with the frescoes painted by Pintoricchio in the 'Bella Cappella' in the collegiate church of Santa Maggiore in Spello, they were almost certainly commissioned by Troilo Baglioni, the eldest son of Rodolfo who had escaped death in the *Nozze Rosse* due to a fortuitous bout of fever. Troilo was prior of the collegiate church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Spello for a brief period from September 1499 until 27 August 1501, when he became bishop of Perugia, but he acted swiftly to leave his mark in the church. He appears to have refurbished part of the sacristy, as an intarsia inlay on a cupboard there bears his name, along with that of the craftsman, Pollione di Gaspare da Foligno. However, Pintoricchio's frescoes, dating from the autumn of 1500 to the following spring, are Troilo's greatest legacy.

Troilo's decision to undertake a major decorative scheme in Spello so soon after the notorious *Nozze Rosse* and the death of Grifonetto is significant. Grifonetto

¹⁶⁵ Matarazzo 1905, p. 148; Heywood 1910, p. 308.

¹⁶⁶ Gentile contributed substantially to the furnishing of San Lorenzo. Sensi 2000, p. 12.

had laid claim to the *signoria* of Spello and backed up his credentials through the decoration of a sepulchral chapel in the Franciscan church of Sant'Andrea. Troilo's decorative programme can be interpreted as a riposte to the dead Grifonetto, declaring where the balance of power now lay - not with Braccio's heirs, but with the sons of Guido and Rodolfo. The selection of Pintoricchio, a Perugian, but with the *kudos* of being the most sought-after painter in Rome, rather than a painter from Foligno, signalled the change of regime and may well have been intended to eclipse Grifonetto's memorial. There are numerous details in the fresco decorations that appear to allude to recent events, suggesting that they were prominent in the commissioner's thoughts and that there were political nuances hidden within the religious iconography. For example in the *Nativity* scene, a group of mounted soldiers lurks in the shadows of a rocky outcrop (Fig. 4.17). The rider on the white charger has been tentatively identified as the ruling Giampaolo Baglioni who was renowned as a handsome and formidable warrior and this is supported by the presence of a footman bearing a shield emblazoned with the Baglioni arms.¹⁶⁷

There are no known documents relating to the contract between Pintoricchio and Troilo, but evidence of his association with the victorious factions of the Baglioni family is provided by a document dated July 1501, in which Paolo Orsini and Adriano Baglioni (son of Guido) ceded Pintoricchio certain benefits from the Abbey of San Cristoforo in Chiusi.¹⁶⁸ We also know of Pintoricchio's connections with the Alfani family. They patronised him at Monteluca, were involved with the *Fossi Altarpiece* commission and probably recommended him to their friends. It has been suggested that Pintoricchio obtained the contract for the Borgia Apartments in the Vatican on the recommendation of the Alfani to their close friends, the Spannocchi from Siena and through them, to the pope.¹⁶⁹

The Alfani were closely related by marriage to the Baglioni: Francesca di Fortera Baglioni, the sister of the onetime Bishop of Perugia, Giovanni Andrea, was married to the merchant Giovan Battista Alfani. Following the death of her husband, she entered the convent at Monteluca in 1485, taking the name Sister Francesca

¹⁶⁷ Sensi and Sensi 1984, p. 45; '...*formoso e bello de giovenile età, e in arme un altro bellicoso Marte*'. Fabretti 1851, p. 242.

¹⁶⁸ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 431, fols. 45r-46r, cited in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 289.

¹⁶⁹ Mancini 2000, pp. 226-227.

Cherubina.¹⁷⁰ Pintoricchio worked in the convent in 1484, 1485 and 1486. Her will, dated 19 January 1484, written in anticipation of her entry into the convent, illustrates her generosity to the Franciscans in particular, but also demonstrates an interest in the decoration of altars and chapels.¹⁷¹ The will provided for her body to be buried, dressed as a Franciscan tertiary, in the tomb of her husband in San Francesco al Prato. She made several bequests to Franciscan establishments, including a book and 100 florins to the friars of '*Monte extra muros*' (Monteripido) before nominating the sisters of Monteluca as her universal heirs. She also left ten florins to the cathedral of San Lorenzo to decorate the altar of the chapel dedicated to St. Jerome, reflecting her husband's special devotion to that saint (he was a member of the Confraternity of St. Jerome).

Other inter-family marriages included that of Giovan Battista's brother, Tindaro, to Andrea Mariotto Baglioni, while his nephew, Alfano Alfani, the son of Diamante who had been present at the signing of the contract for the *Fossi Altarpiece*, married Marietta Baglioni. With these family connections it would not be surprising if the Alfani, who had long been patrons of Pintoricchio and had been recently involved with the contract for the *Fossi Altarpiece*, introduced him to Troilo.

The chapel's decorative programme illustrates the Incarnation and early life of Christ and begins in the vault, which is divided into four sections by fictive cross ribs decorated with *grottesche*. Within each section, a pagan sibyl famous for foretelling the Incarnation sits on a classically-inspired throne, flanked by texts from her prophecies.¹⁷² The figures closely follow Pintoricchio's depictions of the twelve sibyls in the Borgia Apartments and recreate a humanist ambience such as he often produced for his erudite Roman clients. The Eritrean sibyl, who appears to be the only one painted by Pintoricchio, is surrounded by books, illustrating a secondary theme of learning and intellectual pursuits. The wall scenes depict the first, third and fifth Joyful mysteries of the rosary: *The Annunciation*, *The Nativity* and *Christ among the Doctors* and include numerous *genre* and still-life passages.

¹⁷⁰ The act relating to her entry is published in Tabarelli 1977, p. 134.

¹⁷¹ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, 207r-v, partially transcribed in Tabarelli 1977, p. 132. Giovan Battista's will is referred to at p. 114.

¹⁷² These were taken from the writings of Barbieri. See Benazzi 2000, p. 27.

On the wall to the right of the Virgin, Pintoricchio responded to Perugino's self-portrait in the Collegio del Cambio. In contrast to Perugino's brightly lit, almost frontal pose and striking red beret, Pintoricchio emerges reluctantly from the shadows in a three-quarter pose, soberly clothed in black. Instead of Mattarazzo's gushing eulogy, a plaque below the portrait identifies him simply as BERNARDINVS PICTORICIVS PERVSINVS emphasising his Perugian credentials. The tools of his trade hang from a string of coral attached to the plaque: a stylus, brush and pen, while the shelf above holds a candle, ink and several books, one of which is open at a prayer in which the painter asks God to enlighten his intellect and sustain the hand preparing to illustrate the divine mysteries. The apparent modesty of this self-portrait invites favourable comparison with Perugino's picture in the Cambio with its overblown inscription and yet, this too, is illusory.¹⁷³ The inclusion of Pintoricchio's self-portrait was as much a promotional act as Perugino's version, save that Pintoricchio took the opportunity subtly to censure his rival.

In the exotic crowd to Christ's right in *Christ among the Doctors*, two figures stand out due to their sober clothes and particularised features. The hollow-cheeked, acerbic-looking man with piercing eyes is almost certainly the commissioner, Troilo, dressed in the black robes of a *protonotario apostolico*. The younger man in blue standing next to him clutching a money bag is likely to be the treasurer or *camerlengo* of the Collegiata, Pietro di Ercolano Ugolini, who in 1518, made the chapel his universal heir.¹⁷⁴

Pintoricchio's frescoes at Spello appear to be mainly autograph, although other hands can be detected in a few areas. In the vault, only the Eritrean sibyl is by Pintoricchio with the others, which are poorly articulated in comparison, being attributed to Giovan Battista Caporali, the son of Bartolomeo Caporali.¹⁷⁵ Fratini has proposed Eusebio di San Giorgio as the painter of the young boy wearing a beret in *Christ among the Doctors* and Andrea d'Assisi for the women on the extreme right

¹⁷³ See p. 19 for Perugino's inscription.

¹⁷⁴ Urbini 1896, p. 386. The will is published in Biviglia and Romani 1995, pp. 115-118.

¹⁷⁵ Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 214.

of the scene. It is also possible that Giovan Francesco Ciambella, known as Fantasia, and a painter from Spello, Tommaso di ser Francesco di Conio, called il Corbo, who later became Pintoricchio's trustee, were also present.¹⁷⁶ Tommaso was amongst those local painters who benefited from a desire amongst patrons in Spello for the new 'pintoricchiesque' style following the completion of the chapel.

Prior to the decoration of the 'Cappella Bella', Grifonetto's chapel would have enjoyed some prestige in Spello,¹⁷⁷ but, as seems likely to have been Troilo's intention, Pintoricchio's frescoes completely overshadowed the earlier work and during the early sixteenth century the first Baglioni chapel was not mentioned by any of the chroniclers. The chapel fell into oblivion while the 'Cappella Bella' became known as the Baglioni Chapel and was associated with the effective victor of the 'Nozze Rosse', Giampaolo.¹⁷⁸

Summary

This survey of Franciscan patronage during the last quarter of the fifteenth century shows that they, in common with patrons across Perugia, employed only local painters for major works. Even after the death of Braccio Baglioni, the pattern established under his *cryptosignoria* continued unchallenged. The only significant exception was the commission to Signorelli for the cathedral which can be explained by the patron's connections with the painter's home town. In selecting only local painters, patrons were not however required to compromise on quality. The older generation of skilled artists such as Caporali incorporated new ideas into a traditional Perugian matrix, while Perugino and Pintoricchio produced work of such a standard that it was in demand all over Italy.

Not all Franciscan establishments embraced the new generation of painters with equal alacrity. While the Alfani sisters of Monteluca were in the vanguard in commissioning Pintoricchio, he did not undertake any other work for the Perugian Minorites. Surprisingly, the sisters did not commission Perugino at this time, having recourse instead to Fiorenzo di Lorenzo. Apart from the possible commission of the

¹⁷⁶ Fratini 2000, p. 21.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 18-21.

altarpiece depicting *Sts. Anthony and Sebastian* for Sant'Antonio in the late 1470s, Perugino's Franciscan works were confined to the *contado* and one confraternity until 1499. Overall, the confraternities seem to have been the more active patrons during this period, particularly the San Francesco Disciplinati and the Company of St. Joseph.

The relative paucity of major works from the two leading painters of the day was most probably due to the overwhelming demand upon them elsewhere, especially in Florence and Rome and, in the case of Perugino, from other Perugian commissioners, such as the friars of San Pietro, the Collegio del Cambio and the Decemviri. For two decades, Perugia was an exporter of high quality painters; Perugian taste, albeit modified by those artists' experience in Florence and Rome, became the desired norm throughout Italy. Perugino's workshop activity increased and other painters adopted his manner – a tendency which we shall see had a huge impact upon the development of Perugian painting in the early sixteenth century. By late 1502, Pintoricchio had left Perugia for good to take up residence in Siena and, from October that year until 1507, Perugino was mostly absent, concentrating on his Florentine activities. The departure of these two pre-eminent painters left an artistic vacuum within the city which the young Raphael was ready and able to fill.

Chapter 5: The Perugino Effect (1500 –c.1527)

The first quarter of the cinquecento witnessed another change in emphasis in the commissioning patterns of Perugian patrons. While the preference for the Peruginesque style prevailed, Perugino himself was absent from the city for lengthy periods and, even upon his return, received few new contracts. A survey of Franciscan establishments reveals that a new generation of painters was now in demand. Some had been Perugino's pupils or assistants and continued to work in his style; others had no direct connection with him but had assimilated his manner of painting. Consequently, though Perugino himself was less sought after, the Peruginesque style became ubiquitous.

Religious and political developments

In Franciscan circles, the early 1500s saw the on-going tensions between the Observant and Conventual wings of the order come to a head, despite the reconciliatory endeavours of their Minister General, Egidio Delfini (1500-1506), formerly the Provincial Minister of Umbria.¹ The Observants did not seek separation but refused to accept an unreformed Minister General, while the Conventuals maintained their right to operate under the papal dispensations that had previously been granted to them. Egidio eventually had recourse to Pope Julius II who summoned a *capitulum generalissimum* in Rome in 1506, to resolve matters, but to no avail.² Under the Minister General, Bernardino Prati (1513-1517), the arguments became a public scandal forcing Pope Leo X to intervene. In 1517, all branches of the order – Conventuals, Observants, Amadeiti, Colettans, Poor Clares and Capuchins – were required to attend another General Chapter in Rome.³ Finally, in a bull entitled *Ite vos in vineam meam*, Leo officially divided the order, allowing the Conventuals to continue independently on the basis that they relinquished any right to elect the Minister General from their ranks. The numerous reformed branches were required to unite under the name *Ordo Fratrum Minorum* and a Minister General would be elected from amongst them, alternating every six years between representatives from the Cismontane and Ultramontane branches. Subsequently, Leo

¹ Moorman 1968, p. 569.

² *ibid.*, p. 573.

³ *ibid.*, pp. 582-583.

tried to constrain the Conventuals further and published a bull, *Omnipotens Deus*, ordering them to have their Minister General confirmed by the Minister General of the Order, but, due to their increasing independence, this was not enforced. In Perugia, San Francesco al Prato remained the centre of Conventual Franciscan activity, while Monteripido was the focus of Observant authority.

The city of Perugia also endured political turmoil during these years. Following the murderous *Nozze Rosse* in July 1500, Giampaolo Baglioni became head of the Baglioni clan though he was continually threatened by the rival claims of his cousin, Gentile. The Baglioni were unable to exert overall authority in the city, being held in check by other families and disunity within their own clan.⁴ Externally, the power struggle with the papacy continued to foment hostility. For three years, Giampaolo withstood the threat of Cesare Borgia who commanded the papal army of his father, Pope Alexander VI. But, from January to September 1503, Cesare seized Perugia and dominated it as Vicar, forcing Giampaolo to flee to Siena - until the death of Alexander and the illness and subsequent imprisonment of Cesare permitted his return.⁵ The papacy did not easily relinquish its interests and, in 1506, Pope Julius persuaded Giampaolo to submit to him. Alliances between family, church and state were variously made and broken as political expediency dictated. For example, when Pope Julius celebrated his success with a sung mass in San Francesco al Prato, he instigated a peace between the Baglioni and degli Oddi which barely outlasted his visit.⁶

The arrival of Raphael

In this uncertain religious and political situation dominated by factionalism, Perugia's artistic production was maintained, stimulated, at least in part, by the need of various groups and individuals to demonstrate their status and respond to the assertions of their rivals. The scene was further energized by the arrival of the young Raphael Santi from Urbino, who had been working for patrons in Città di Castello since 1500.⁷ Raphael's arrival in Perugia, sometime around 1502, coincided with a dearth of leading painters. Perugino left for Florence in October that year, from

⁴ Black 1970, pp. 245 - 281.

⁵ Heywood 1910, p. 277.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 219.

⁷ Henry 2002, pp. 268-278.

where he returned only intermittently until 1507. Likewise, although Pintoricchio was in Perugia in 1502 and February 1503, he was in poor health and was preparing to move his entire establishment to Siena to decorate the Piccolomini library.⁸ The absence of these artists left a vacuum which Raphael filled by adopting Perugino's style so convincingly that Vasari declared *The Coronation of the Virgin* (Vatican Museums, Rome) to be indistinguishable from the older master's work.⁹

Perugino's style was easily recognisable and desired by Perugian patrons. His balanced harmony was conducive to the private meditation encouraged by the preachers of the day, while his courtly refinement appealed to Perugian taste for the decorative. Superficially, his formula was easily reproduced by reworking existing cartoons and models so that both Perugino's workshop and other painters were able to adopt the style in response to demand.¹⁰ The Peruginesque style of painting became ubiquitous, though in the hands of lesser painters his models often resulted in flat, unmodulated paintings with stiff figures, sentimental expressions and poorly integrated compositions. Raphael's mastery of Perugino's style enabled him to break into a market otherwise dominated by local painters, enabling him to undertake major commissions early in his career, the most notable of which were altarpieces for Franciscan settings.

Raphael in San Francesco al Prato

San Francesco al Prato had suffered a lull in commissioning activity during the last quarter of the quattrocento, but the onset of the new century coincided with a spate of new works, including two major altarpiece commissions to Raphael. These formed part of a network of patronage involving the degli Oddi and Baglioni women. The first, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (Fig. 5.1), was said by Vasari to have been commissioned by Maddalena degli Oddi.¹¹ She was the daughter of Guido degli Oddi and his second wife, Giovanna. On 8 January 1461, Guido had been granted, in

⁸ Pintoricchio's will of 6 September 1502, states he was ill and feared for his life. ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 432, fols. 780v-782r, paraphrased in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 290. A document confirms his presence in 1503. ASP *Notarile Protocolli*, 433, fols. 81v-82r, paraphrased in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 291. The Piccolomini contract is transcribed in Vermiglioli 1837, p. vi (Appendix II).

⁹ Vasari 1568, IV, p. 158.

¹⁰ Ferino Pagden 1979, pp. 9-15.

¹¹ Vasari 1568, IV, p. 158.

perpetuity, a chapel dedicated to the Virgin.¹² In return, Guido donated grain which would be used to pay for the never-ending buttressing required to shore up San Francesco against subsidence. Other members of the degli Oddi family contributed to the maintenance and decoration of the chapel. In particular, Giovanna, in her will dated 5 February 1490, left 150 florins for it.¹³ Giovanna also asked Isaberta Baglioni, the daughter of Pandolfo Nelli Baglioni and widow of Giovanna's son, Ridolfo, to bequeath 150 florins from her inheritance to the chapel. Isaberta's own will of 1485 provided for her to be buried in San Francesco clothed in the habit of a tertiary and had already allocated up to 50 florins for an altar there.¹⁴ Giovanna's step-granddaughter, Gentilina, the daughter of Leone degli Oddi, subsequently donated 250 florins '*per la fabrica d'una cappella in detta chiesa*' in her will, dated 6 July 1504.¹⁵ Giovanna's step-son, Simone, married Leandra Baglioni, daughter of Braccio, and she is also connected with the chapel by an act made in 1516 when the chapel is described as being dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin.¹⁶

There is no guarantee that these bequests were intended for the same chapel: the *sepoltuarii* for San Francesco al Prato list two altars under degli Oddi patronage, one dedicated to the Assumption and the other to the Trinity, which belonged to the Sforza degli Oddi branch.¹⁷ Cooper took the view that both altars formed part of a 'single chapel complex' within the church. Borgnini Kermes has subsequently proposed that Gentilina's bequest refers to the construction of a second, smaller chapel dedicated to the Trinity, adjacent to the one dedicated to the Assumption.¹⁸ She refers to various architectural features to support this but there is currently no other documentary evidence to confirm the theory.

The role of the degli Oddi women in making testamentary dispositions for the chapel is significant. Despite being survived by her step-son, Simone, and several step-grandsons, Giovanna nominated her daughter, Maddalena, as her universal heir

¹²ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Seria Miscellanea*, 35, unpaginated. The original document is lost, and this is probably a seventeenth century copy, cited in Cooper 2001a, p. 554.

¹³ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 529, fols. 14r-15v, cited in Cooper 2004, pp. 742-744.

¹⁴ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 232, fol. 33r, cited in Cooper 2001a, pp. 554-61. Isaberta's bequest is incorrectly stated to be up to 500 florins.

¹⁵ Cooper 2001a, p. 555.

¹⁶ Mancini 1987a, p. 74.

¹⁷ Cooper 2001a, p. 555.

¹⁸ Borgnini, 2005, p. 51.

(although Guido's grandsons were to administer her bequests to San Francesco).¹⁹ Isaberta, the wife of Giovanna's late son, Ridolfo, was to benefit from his inheritance during her lifetime. Simone is mentioned only as a reversionary beneficiary of his half-brother's inheritance, along with his nephews. The will reveals Giovanna's intention to favour her own bloodline over that of Guido's first wife, but the women's prominence also reflects the reduced status of the degli Oddi men. In October 1488, ongoing disputes between various noble families had culminated in a pitched battle between the Baglioni and the degli Oddi in the Piazza. The degli Oddi were defeated and formally declared exiles in January 1489. In 1491 and 1493, they made abortive attempts to retake the city and, in 1503, briefly succeeded in returning during the rule of Cesare Borgia, only to be cast out again on the return of Giampaolo Baglioni in September of that year. Despite, or perhaps because of, the men's absence and their consequent financial independence, the women, who apparently remained in the city, continued to endow the chapel.²⁰

Around 1503-4, Raphael painted *The Coronation of the Virgin* for the chapel and it seems likely that one or more of the degli Oddi women were responsible for the commission. Although Vasari named Maddalena as the commissioner, there are no records for her after 1490. She may have entered a religious order and the tradition that, as a nun, she was the patron of Raphael's *Madonna of the Pinks* (National Gallery, London) supports this theory.²¹ The 1512 contract for Perugino's *Corciano Altarpiece* stated that Raphael's *Coronation* belonged to '*Alexandrae Simonis de Oddis*'²², otherwise known as Leandra, the wife of Simone.²³ Leandra's tomb and epitaph, which recorded her date of death as 1516, were seen on the floor of the degli Oddi chapel by Modestini,²⁴ and a previously unnoted entry in the convent accounts records the receipt of 5 lire on 15 July 1516 for the burial of Leandra degli Oddi, wife of Simone.²⁵ Leandra is also recorded in the 1566 inventory of the church as the donor of an ornate velvet altar cloth, confirming her active patronage in San Francesco and making her a likely candidate to be a commissioner

¹⁹ Ottaviani 2006, pp. 61-62.

²⁰ Shaw 2000, p. 118 notes that wives and daughters were often forbidden to join the men in exile.

²¹ Chapman 2004, pp. 190-192.

²² Canuti 1931, II, p. 258.

²³ Cooper 2001a, p. 554.

²⁴ Modestini 1787, p. 61.

²⁵ ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 3, fol. 16v, unpublished.

of the altarpiece.²⁶

Given the close ties that existed between the degli Oddi women, as demonstrated by Giovanna's will and which can be inferred from the adverse circumstances in which the women found themselves, a collaborative commission to Raphael involving Maddalena, her half sister-in-law Leandra and other members of the family is plausible.²⁷ Suggestions that the commission must have taken place in 1503, when the male representatives were temporarily restored to Perugia, are undermined by the women's ongoing record of dispositions.

Although the chapel was dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin, Raphael's altarpiece conflates elements of the Assumption and the Coronation. Both events were venerated on August 15 and the Coronation was a popular subject in Umbrian Franciscan establishments at this time, Ghirlandaio's version in Narni being the prime example. The upper section of Raphael's panel shows Christ crowning the young Virgin, flanked by musical angels and seraphim. The lower part depicts the Virgin's empty tomb, now miraculously filled with flowers, while the attendant disciples gaze up to heaven and St. Thomas holds the Virgin's girdle.

Three predella scenes depict episodes from the life of the Virgin - *The Annunciation*, *The Adoration of the Kings* and *The Presentation in the Temple* - iterating the theme of Marian devotion that runs through the chapel. Their elegant sophistication, particularly the nonchalant stance of the attendants in *The Adoration*, have much in common with Pintoricchio's courtly figures in the Piccolomini library in Siena for which Raphael had recently provided cartoons. However, as in those designs, Raphael's horses and dog turn more convincingly into depth than Pintoricchio was prepared to attempt in his frescoes.

Pintoricchio's two-tiered compositional arrangements in some of the Piccolomini scenes may have inspired the stacked composition of Raphael's

²⁶ *ibid.*, 20, fol. 27r 'Item un panno di leggio di velluto cremosi di broccato d'oro alto, et basso con frapponi (?) d'oro intorno in luogo di fregio con una gionta in mezzo di seta Bianca con un copasso grande et detaglioni d'intorno orati con un' giesu in mezzo fodrato di tela rossa il quale fu di Maddona Leandra de Glioddi.' Unpublished.

²⁷ Cooper 2004, p. 742.

Coronation and *Assumption* scenes, though Ghirlandaio's Narni version was probably the starting point. Raphael could well have known this painting as Narni is situated on a branch of the Roman *Via Flaminia* that ran from Perugia to Narni via Foligno, Spoleto and Terni and then on to Rome. The road was partially reconstructed during the renaissance and remained a major route. It is not known whether Raphael visited Rome from Perugia, although Shearman has proposed that an early visit did take place.²⁸ If so, he could well have followed this route and stopped in Narni to see Ghirlandaio's altarpiece.

Despite the compositional similarity to Ghirlandaio's work, the figural style in Raphael's main panel is highly Peruginesque and illustrates how closely he was emulating the older painter at this time, probably in response to his patrons' expectations. Although Raphael is unlikely to have been Perugino's pupil, as maintained by Vasari, he does appear to have had access to his paintings and preparatory drawings.²⁹ Perhaps Perugino employed him in some capacity, or his celebrated good nature gained him entry to the workshop.

Raphael's ability to reproduce Perugino's style may well have contributed to him obtaining the commission, although it is not known how he came by it. He could have been recommended by Perugino, who would have been known to the San Francesco friars from painting *The Resurrection* for a chapel there in 1499. Alternatively, Pintoricchio, who was in Perugia in 1502 and 1503, could have introduced him. Raphael made drawings for Pintoricchio's Piccolomini library frescoes around 1502-3 and Pintoricchio had worked for the degli Oddi family. Alternatively, the connection may stem from Urbino, where a branch of the degli Oddi family had conducted business with the Santi family.³⁰

However he came by the contract, Raphael approached the commission with great care, preparing numerous sketches, detailed cartoons for the heads and full cartoons for the predella. He clearly regarded the commission as an important opportunity to demonstrate his skill and the altarpiece did gain renown. The 1512

²⁸ Shearman 1977, p. 131.

²⁹ Vasari 1550 and 1568, IV, p. 157; Chapman 2004, p. 28.

³⁰ See Shearman 2003, I, pp. 57, 59, 60 for Raphael's connections with the Urbino notary, Matteo degli Oddi; Chapman 2004, p. 31.

contract for Perugino's *Assumption of the Virgin Altarpiece* in Santa Maria, Corciano, required that it be painted using gold and fine colours like, or better than, the degli Oddi altarpiece.³¹

Raphael's second altarpiece in San Francesco al Prato, *The Baglioni Entombment* (Fig. 5.2, Galleria Borghese, Rome), appears to have been closely connected with the degli Oddi commission, both in terms of its patronage and its position within the church. *The Entombment* is signed and dated 1507 and was almost certainly commissioned by Atalanta Baglioni, the widow of Griffone and mother of Grifonetto, for a family chapel dedicated to St. Matthew. Atalanta Baglioni was Leandra degli Oddi's sister-in-law and distant cousin (Pandolfo Baglioni was their great-grandfather), and a recommendation of Raphael by Leandra seems likely.³² Both paintings were probably situated in chapels that faced each other across the upper nave and transept of the church, with the *Coronation* probably on the west wall and the *Entombment* on the south wall of their respective chapels.³³ The time between their completions and their precise locations within the chapels point against them being conceived as a pair, but Raphael would have taken account of the first altarpiece when painting the second. Together, the two paintings would have forged a symbolic connection between the two family chapels which was more appropriate to the relationship between Atalanta and Leandra than the warring male members of the families.³⁴

Vasari states that Atalanta was the patron and this is corroborated by various documents. An autograph note from Raphael to Domenico Alfani, usually dated to around 1507-8, asks him to press Atalanta for payment, presumably for *The Entombment*.³⁵ A letter dated 2 April 1608 from the Papal Governor of Perugia informed Cardinal Scipione Borghese that the priors objected to the Franciscans disposing of the painting to him, on the grounds that it had been commissioned by a

³¹ Canuti 1931, II, p. 259.

³² Luchs 1983, pp. 29-31.

³³ Cooper 2007, pp. 33 placed both paintings on the south walls, however Borgnini has established the position of Alessandra's tomb in the chapel pavement and her proposal that the *Coronation* altarpiece was on the west wall is persuasive. Borgnini 2005, pp. 51-52.

³⁴ Cooper 2007, p. 38.

³⁵ Shearman 2003, I, pp. 111-112.

private patron, namely Atalanta Baglioni.³⁶ Furthermore, a now lost inscription recorded Atalanta's involvement.³⁷

A document from 1499, states that the chapel was originally ceded to Atalanta's mother, Angela of Aquaviva, who had left 200 florins for its decoration in her will.³⁸ On her death, the friars and their procurator confirmed the transfer of the chapel to Grifonetto and Atalanta for use as a funeral chapel for Angela and themselves. The funeral chapel commissioned by Grifonetto in Spello around 1496-1499, seemingly with the support of Atalanta who is named in an inscription, was probably intended as the funeral chapel for her husband, Griffone. Following Grifonetto's premature death in 1500, the Perugian chapel appears to have been put to further use. On 15 June 1508, Atalanta gave the friars a farm at Castello Montalera, near Panicale, for its continued support and, in return, the friars were to celebrate obsequies for Angela and Grifonetto and hold a double Mass of St. Gregory upon her own death. Atalanta died on 18 December 1509, and her will, dictated from her death bed the previous day, provided for her burial in the chapel, but made no further financial provision, indicating that everything was already in place. Instead, she left money for the restoration of her father-in-law, Braccio Baglioni's chapel in Santa Maria dei Servi where Perugino's *Adoration of the Magi* stood.³⁹

It is likely that Raphael's original instructions were to paint a Lamentation in the style of Perugino as his initial sketches derive from Perugino's *Lamentation*, dated 1495, which stood in the church of Santa Chiara in Florence (Fig. 5.3, Palazzo Pitti, Florence). However, the friars must have allowed Raphael and Atalanta considerable freedom over the iconography of the panel as the finished altarpiece departs substantially from the static *Lamentation* format.⁴⁰ Vasari records that Atalanta asked Raphael to paint her altarpiece before he went to Florence, but that he was unable to do so, promising instead to paint it on his return. Raphael's growing confidence and exposure to Albertian concepts of *historia* resulted in a dramatic

³⁶ Pergola 1959, p. 199, doc. 15; Cooper 2001a, pp. 554-561 reviews the documents relating to Atalanta.

³⁷ 'Atalanta Bagliona hoc divo Salvatori / donum donat et sacrum dedicat / Raphael Urbinas 1507'. Pietralunga 1982, p. xiv.

³⁸ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 614, fols. 5r-v, cited in Cooper 2001a, p. 558.

³⁹ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 652, fol. 149v, cited in Cooper 2001a, p. 560.

⁴⁰ The changes to the composition can be charted from the sixteen remaining preparatory sketches.

Entombment scene full of energy and movement – quite different from the meditative Peruginesque prototype that Atalanta probably anticipated, but which she nevertheless accepted.

Unusually for altarpieces of this time, the main panel depicts a narrative scene in which Christ's body is transported from Calvary to his cave tomb. Two straining bearers struggle to carry the dead weight, while the Madonna faints into the arms of her female attendants, mirroring Christ's passion in accordance with Marian tradition. The subject was also uncommon for an altarpiece. The motif of the slumped body carried by bearers originates from classical reliefs depicting the Meleager story, examples of which were present in Florence and Sabina on ancient sarcophagi. By 1507, apart from Michelangelo's unfinished version (c.1500-01, National Gallery, London), it had only appeared in predella panels, engravings such as Mantegna's *The Entombment of Christ* (c. 1465-70, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.), and as a subsidiary scene in Signorelli's frescoed *Lamentation* (1499-1503, Cappella Nuova, Orvieto Cathedral) which was known to Raphael.⁴¹ By selecting this intermediate episode in the Passion story, Raphael could invent a dramatic narrative scene, free from the iconographic constraints of a conventional *Lamentation* or *Pietà*.⁴²

Despite the change, the subject remained appropriate for a funeral chapel, particularly given the circumstances of young Grifonetto's death. The chronicler, Matarazzo, recorded that Atalanta disowned her son after he led a coup against a rival branch of the Baglioni family during which many of them were murdered. However, upon hearing that he had been mortally wounded in recriminations, she forgave his betrayal and was so grief-stricken at his death that she never remarried.⁴³ Inevitably, the temptation has been to identify the handsome young bearer in the centre of the panel, dressed in Baglioni red and green, as Grifonetto. Likewise, parallels between the swooning Madonna and accounts of Atalanta's grief are hard to resist even though the faces of the protagonists are 'types' rather than portraits. Furthermore, the frame of the painting has a cornice with griffins in the moulding,

⁴¹ Henry 1993, pp. 612-619.

⁴² Rosenberg 1986, p. 179.

⁴³ Matarazzo 1905, p. 138.

calling to mind not only Perugia, but also Grifonetto's name and heraldic arms.

The predella is particularly relevant to both its Franciscan setting and Atalanta's grieving motherhood. In place of the usual narrative scenes, three Theological Virtues are painted in *grisaille*. Charity appears in the centre emphasising motherhood, Faith holds a cup and wafer and Hope prays, reiterating the theme of Christ's martyrdom.

Raphael made the altarpiece site-specific by including a subtle reference to St. Matthew, the name saint of the chapel. While *The Entombment* does not depict the saint, the contorted pose and bearded face of the figure standing behind the Magdalene derives from Michelangelo's *St. Matthew* sculpture (c.1503-6, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Florence).⁴⁴ This had been intended for Florence cathedral, but was never completed and stood abandoned in the cortile of the Opera of the Duomo when Michelangelo left the city in late 1506. Raphael made a detailed pen and ink drawing of the statue on the verso of a preparatory sketch for *The Entombment* (c.1507, British Museum, London) and incorporated what he might have expected to become an archetypal image of the saint in the altarpiece. Moreover, if Cooper's proposed location of the altarpiece is correct, most visitors would have approached it from the left from where their view of the panel would be partially obscured. The first visible figure would have been the elderly bearer, making an immediate reference to the chapel's dedication.⁴⁵

It is generally held that Raphael's success in Perugia was due to his popularity with the mainstream Baglioni family and that he was, in effect, their official painter.⁴⁶ Cooper has questioned this, suggesting that Atalanta Baglioni and the degli Oddi women were disenfranchised members of society who lacked political influence and for whom blood ties were more compelling.⁴⁷ Both sets of commissioners belonged to families that were out of favour – the degli Oddi in exile and Grifonetto having been killed after leading a coup against leading members of the Baglioni family. While Matarazzo claimed that Atalanta supported Giampaolo

⁴⁴ Cooper 2001a, p. 561.

⁴⁵ Cooper forthcoming.

⁴⁶ Mancini 1987a, pp. 41-47, 54-55.

⁴⁷ Cooper forthcoming. I am grateful to Dr. Cooper for access to the proof of this article.

after the *Nozze Rosse*, there is artistic evidence suggestive of continuing rivalry.⁴⁸ The selection of Pintoricchio to decorate the *Cappella Bella* in Spello immediately after the coup can be read as a crushing riposte to Grifonetto and Atalanta's scheme in Sant'Andrea that had employed local artists from Spello. Likewise, the choice of the young Raphael for the San Francesco altarpiece can be interpreted as Atalanta distancing herself from the rival Baglioni regime that now dominated Spello.⁴⁹

In a development of this argument, it is proposed here that Baglioni support for Raphael was exercised primarily by the female members of the family whose allegiances extended beyond the Baglioni name to encompass the families into which they were born, those into which they married and, in several cases, the Franciscan order into which they entered. It is suggested that the early uptake of Raphael's work in Franciscan establishments was due largely to the inter-family and religious connections of these women rather than mainstream Baglioni support. The network of Franciscan women patrons supportive of Raphael extended across the city. Both the tertiaries of Sant'Antonio da Padova and the Poor Clares at Monteluca commissioned altarpieces from him and it appears likely that recommendations from both familial and religious networks informed their choice. Additionally, other advisory networks such as the Provincial Vicars, notaries and established painters seem to have promoted Raphael's cause.

Raphael and the tertiaries of Sant'Antonio da Padova

The majority of scholars date Raphael's *Colonna Altarpiece* (Fig. 5.4, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) for Sant'Antonio to 1504-5, although Oberhuber proposes 1501-2 on the basis of its heavy dependence upon Pintoricchio.⁵⁰ Mancini also prefers an early date, viewing the commission as a continuation of Ilaria Baglioni's patronage as Minister General.⁵¹ Ilaria's date of death is unknown, but she attended a chapter meeting on 3 March 1503,⁵² and a *memoriale* of the convent written in the late sixteenth century records that she was Minister General at the end of the fifteenth and during the first quarter of the

⁴⁸ Matarazzo 1905, p. 127.

⁴⁹ Cooper 2008, p. 37.

⁵⁰ Chapman 2004, p. 150; Oberhuber 1977, pp. 51-91.

⁵¹ Mancini 1987a, p. 24.

⁵² ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 433, fols. 218r and 219r, cited in Mancini 1987a, p. 65, note 71.

sixteenth centuries, so it is likely that she was still alive and involved in the commission even if the later date is accepted.⁵³ The chronicle notes that Ilaria visited all the provinces, tertiaries and the convent at Aquila, defying pressures towards *clausura* and giving herself the opportunity to see paintings in other churches, perhaps including Raphael's early altarpieces. Nor should Ilaria's family origins be forgotten when considering the likelihood of her involvement in the commission to Raphael. Born around 1438-40, she was the eldest child of Braccio Baglioni and Toderini Fieschi and sister to Alessandra (or Leandra) who married Simone degli Oddi, and Grifone, who married Atalanta Baglioni. The importance of the female Baglioni/degli Oddi network acting within Franciscan establishments assumes even greater significance for Raphael's early career if Ilaria commissioned the *Colonna Altarpiece*.

It is not known how the austere tertiaries financed the project. They had few resources of their own and were entered in the *catasto* documents of 1508 for the first time at a nominal 25 *libbre*.⁵⁴ It was noted previously in connection with possible patrons for Perugino's *Sts. Sebastian and Anthony of Padua* fragment, that Donna Armelina di Angelello Pietro Paulo's will, dated 13 July 1478, provided 40 florins for a panel for an altar in the interior church. After Piero della Francesca's altarpiece, no painting (with the possible exception of Perugino's dismembered altarpiece) has been associated with the monastery, so it is possible that Armelina's bequest provided part of the funding. She also left the sisters a house in the nearby parish of San Fortunato in Porta Sant'Angeli and another in Porta Eburnea and it has been suggested that the small buildings depicted in the background of Raphael's panel commemorate this gift.⁵⁵ The gap of almost thirty years between the bequest and the commission is problematic, but not fatal, as delays were not uncommon.⁵⁶

The Colonna Altarpiece, which depicts the Virgin and Child attended by Sts. Peter, Catherine of Alexandria, an unknown female saint and Paul, is something of

⁵³ BAP, *Memoriale del Monastero di Sant'Antonio da Padova*, 1585-1630, ms 1404, fol. 45v, cited in Mancini 1987a, p. 15.

⁵⁴ ASP, *Catasti*, II, reg. 35, fols. 131r-132v, cited in Grohmann 1981, p. 391, note 16.

⁵⁵ Wolk-Simon 2006, pp. 28-29 proposes that the detail of the buildings is significant. I am grateful to Tom Henry for his report on discussions at the New York Raphael conference (June 2006) suggesting that the buildings might recall Armelina's bequest.

⁵⁶ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 226, fols. 104v-107r.

an enigma in the way it combines elements of various styles in an unresolved manner. The female saints retain Perugino's oval heads and eyes and their faces have the sweet piety of his 'types', but are stiff and graceless. The male saints are more individualised, though still uneasily posed in their voluminous drapery. St. Paul resembles his namesake in Signorelli's *Onuphrius Altarpiece*. The composition also derives from Signorelli's altarpiece, with the saints arranged on two levels around the Virgin's elevated throne. But here they appear crowded and relate awkwardly to the architectonic throne and underdeveloped landscape background. Pintoricchio's influence is apparent in the Virgin's gold speckled mantle and the robed Child. Raphael seems torn between Perugino's whimsical style, Signorelli's monumentality and Pintoricchio's decorative patterning.

The altarpiece's theme centres upon the dual divinity and humanity of Christ, who appears as an infant, but is clothed in the robes of the Redeemer.⁵⁷ Vasari hinted at intervention from the nuns when he wrote that the sisters 'had him paint a panel of the Madonna holding a clothed Jesus Christ on her lap (as those simple and venerable sisters wished)...' implying that their prudence or modesty required the baby to be clothed.⁵⁸ But the image of the robed Child Redeemer was common in Rome, whereas in Umbria and Tuscany it was traditional to depict him nude or in transparent clothing to emphasise his humanity. Pintoricchio adopted the motif and executed several panels in which the Child is clothed. In the *Madonna del Pace* (c.1490) for Sanseverino in the Marche and *The Madonna and Child Reading* (c.1494-98, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh) the young Christ wears a Byzantine dalmatic and pallium, and in *The Madonna and Child* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) and *The Madonna and Child with St. John* (Fig. 5.5, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) he wears only the dalmatic, like Raphael's Child. The robes are typically full-length with embroidered panels on the chest and shoulders, and connote authority, priesthood and royalty. The Child's role as the compositional and symbolic focal point of the altarpiece is underscored by recent reflectographs which reveal the convergence of diagonal ruled lines at the top of his left hand. The detailed metalpoint underdrawing shows the Child clothed, confirming that this was not an

⁵⁷ Mancini 1987a, p. 17.

⁵⁸ Vasari 1568, IV, p. 162.

afterthought.⁵⁹

In most of Pintoricchio's versions, Christ is shown as a young child standing to bless or read or, as in the Fitzwilliam panel, sitting formally with his knees together like a miniature adult. In contrast, Raphael tackles the Christological issue head on. His robed Child is still a chubby baby, with the rounded back of an infant needing support from his mother to sit. While he knowingly blesses St. John with one hand, he grasps Mary's mantle like a security blanket with the other and his feet and knees sprawl apart childishly. Franciscan theology stressed Christ's humanity, so Raphael's juxtaposition of the human vulnerability of the baby with the priestly dalmatic and gesture of blessing would have highlighted the theological issue for them. The natural depiction of the tiny baby was particularly relevant to the female tertiaries, many of whom were mothers. If the Child's royal garments were requested by the patrons this does not imply simplicity or conservatism; Piero della Francesca's Christ Child was totally nude and was accepted by the sisters. Rather, it indicates an awareness of refined Roman fashions and an engagement with the theological debate regarding the dual nature of Christ.

The saints draw parallels between the life of Christ and his followers.⁶⁰ His principal apostles, Peter and Paul, hold books. Usually signifying the law and tradition, they may allude here to the Christological theme as Paul wrote about the dual nature of Christ in his Epistles. Catherine of Alexandria was renowned for her affinity with Christ's sacrifice. The identity of the fourth saint is disputed, but would seem to require similar qualities. The proposal that she is St. Cecilia, patron saint of music, is therefore unlikely. Mancini has proposed St. Margaret of Cortona who was frequently depicted with Catherine of Alexandria and shared her devotion to the Passion, aspiring to take part in the Saviour's suffering.⁶¹ Ilaria Baglioni was called Margherita before she entered the monastery and the inclusion of her name saint is plausible. Margaret of Cortona was also an important exemplar for the tertiaries and the figure was identified as Margaret in three sale documents from 1678.⁶² However, Raphael's saint has a halo, whereas Margaret was not canonised until 1728, although

⁵⁹ Wolk-Simon 2006, p. 24.

⁶⁰ Mancini 1987a, p. 17.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² Rossi 1874, pp. 304-310.

her feast was recognised by the diocese of Cortona in 1515.⁶³ Furthermore, she carries the palm of martyrdom, but Margaret was not martyred, so it appears that Mancini has confused Margaret of Cortona with Margaret of Antioch, who was revered in the Middle Ages and martyred for her Christianity. She had previously refused to marry and resisted many tortures.⁶⁴ Alternatively, Raphael's saint could be St. Barbara, as her attribute of a tower is represented in the background, but her identification as Dorothea, who was martyred for refusing to marry or worship idols, is, perhaps, most fitting for female Franciscan tertiaries.⁶⁵ Although she carries a book rather than her usual attribute of a basket of fruit and flowers, her hair is decorated with roses and the palm would be appropriate.

The unresolved nature of the central panel may result from patronal demands; Piero della Francesca's altarpiece for the tertiaries' external church also exhibits a tension between its constituent parts. The inclusion of the clothed Child seems likely to be due to the theological requirements of the women and further evidence of their intervention is visible in the predella scene depicting *The Agony in the Garden*. Originally, Christ knelt before a chalice set on the altar-shaped hillside, but this was painted out and replaced by an ungainly angel holding a chalice. The motif sits unhappily in the otherwise naturalistic scene and was probably added by another artist at the tertiaries' request.⁶⁶

In contrast to the main panel, the predella, which depicts episodes from the Passion, displays Raphael's developing narrative skill and is compositionally better integrated. Perugino's influence is still prominent - *The Pietà* derives from his altarpiece for San Giusto degli Ingesuati in Florence (1494-5, Uffizi Gallery, Florence) – but the predella may have been executed after Raphael left Perugia which could account for its increased sophistication.

Despite the altarpiece's shortcomings, its monumental arrangement was highly influential.⁶⁷ It was closely copied by Francesco Tifernate, a follower of

⁶³ Farmer 1997, p. 328.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 327-8.

⁶⁵ Wolk-Simon 2006, p. 29.

⁶⁶ Chapman 2004, p. 150.

⁶⁷ Ferino Pagden 1986, p. 99.

Raphael from Città di Castello, in his *Ognisanti Altarpiece* from around 1505 (Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello).⁶⁸ It was also modified by Eusebio di San Giorgio in his 1509 altarpiece for Sant'Agostino, although both versions are more Peruginesque than Raphael's original. As late as the 1520s, the Perugian, Bernardino di Mariotto, painted three altarpieces based on the same arrangement, each more monumental than the last, reflecting changing tastes away from Perugino's spare elegance towards the sculptural weightiness of Raphael and Michelangelo's Roman style.

Raphael's Monteluca Altarpiece

In common with other Franciscan establishments in Perugia, the monastery of the Poor Clares at Monteluca prospered throughout the first quarter of the sixteenth century, with more women applying to join them than they could accommodate.⁶⁹ Their church also appears to have been well attended by the laity, as, in 1503, the nuns had to erect a gate for the external church to control the crowds and various alterations were made in 1505 to deal with the number of outsiders coming in.⁷⁰ Perhaps in response to the needs of this burgeoning congregation, the women were keen to obtain a new high altarpiece for the external church. The *Memoriale* of the monastery record that in 1505, when Battista was again abbess and in the final year of her three year stint, they decided to commission 'una tavola o vero cona grande'.⁷¹ It was to depict the Assumption of the Virgin, as was appropriate for an establishment whose secondary dedication was '*Templum Deiparae Assumptae Sacrum*'.⁷²

During the second half of the previous century, the nuns had employed local painters of the highest calibre, such as Caporali and Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, and they took care to find out who was currently the best master by seeking advice from various citizens and their confessors and spiritual advisors (*venerabili patri*). These

⁶⁸ Wolk-Simon 2006, p. 30. Mancini 1987b, p. 175 dates it to soon after 1504 on the basis that the *Colonna Altarpiece* was painted c.1502-3.

⁶⁹ Tabarelli 1977, p. 98. In November 1509, so many women applied for six vacant positions that the Vicar narrowed the field to twelve, from whom the nuns selected six.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 76, 85.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, pp. 85-86. Gnoli 1917, pp. 148-149 followed by Mancinelli 1984, p. 286, assumed an earlier contract made in 1503, when Sister Chiara was abbess. However, the text is clear that the decision was made by Battista, who ran out of time in which to implement it.

⁷² Siepi 1822, pp. 309, 312.

would have included Bernardino da Foligno as Provincial Vicar, Francesco da Venetia as guardian and Antonio of Assisi as confessor. The chronicle states that the advisors had seen Raphael's work and recommended him. This probably included Raphael's *Betrothal of the Virgin* altarpiece (c.1504, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan). This was painted for Filippo Albizzini's chapel in the Franciscan church of San Francesco in Città di Castello which, like the Perugian convents, was administered by the *Provincia S. Francisci*. Closer to home, they must have known his *Coronation* in San Francesco al Prato and the recently completed *Colonna Altarpiece* in Sant'Antonio.

Given the connections between Monteluca and the Alfani family, it is reasonable to suppose that among the citizens giving advice were members of that family who also had connections with Raphael. Battista was an Alfani and the ties between her family and the monastery evidently remained strong as, on 31 October 1502, Andrea, the young daughter of Bartholo de Tindaro de Alfani had entered it. Raphael is known to have been friendly with the painter Domenico di Paride Alfani who had trained with Perugino and was Battista's great-nephew. Raphael employed him as an agent after he left Perugia and even sent him drawings. His note to Alfani asking him to collect a fee from Atalanta Baglioni was accompanied by a sketch of the *Holy Family*, and Alfani and Pompeo d'Anselmo's 1520 altarpiece for S. Simone del Carmine was based on a drawing sent to Alfani by Raphael.⁷³

The tiny *Conestabile Madonna* (c.1503-4, The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg) is also documented as being in the family's possession in 1600.⁷⁴ It may have been a gift to Domenico, but was more likely commissioned from Raphael by Domenico's uncle, the banker Alfano di Diamante Alfani, who was Abbess Battista's nephew. He certainly knew Raphael later as, in 1516, he witnessed a supplemental agreement between the painter and the Monteluca nuns. His longstanding interest in painting is evidenced by the fact that he had witnessed the contract with Pintoricchio for the *Fossi Altarpiece* and that with Perugino for *The Resurrection* in San Francesco al Prato. Since 1493, Alfano had been married to Marietta Baglioni, so the Baglioni women's patronal network may have been influential here too.

⁷³ Shearman 2003, p. 111.

⁷⁴ Rossi 1877b, pp. 323-326.

A note in the *memorial*, dated 29 December 1505, stated that the agreement with Raphael was signed by the banker, Cornelius de Randoli, and the nun's *factore* or procurator, Berardino of Cannai.⁷⁵ Cornelius and Venciolo da Messere Sacramorre were to act as *recolte* for the nuns. The project was financed from the bequest of Sister Illuminata de Perinello who had left money to be spent on 'things for the church'.⁷⁶ Previously called Epiphania, she was the widow of Nicolò de Lucha of Perugia and had entered Monteluce in August 1457 and died there in March 1494.

The contract, dated 12 December 1505, required Raphael to produce an altarpiece for the high altar of the external church of the same proportions, quality and condition as Ghirlandaio's altarpiece in the Franciscan church of St. Jerome at Narni. In particular, it was to have all the colours and as many, if not more, figures and be framed in the same way.⁷⁷ Berto di Giovanni was to paint the predella and design the frame. He had been one of Perugino's Perugian workshop assistants and his inclusion here alongside Raphael has led to suggestions that Raphael had his own workshop. However, joint contracts between independent masters were commonplace in Perugia at this time and it would be dangerous to infer more than a temporary collaboration.

The painting was to be completed in two years and in return the painters could expect to receive at least 177 ducats.⁷⁸ They would receive more if they were judged to have bettered the Narni altarpiece, indicating an aspiration to surpass the older work, whilst retaining its general nature. Simple reproduction was insufficient. Raphael's departure from Perugia was apparently imminent as the contract also provided for delivery of the completed altarpiece and payment of import duty. The arrangements for resolving disputes between the parties in any of eight cities, while not unique, also indicate that Raphael expected to be leaving Perugia soon.⁷⁹ Perhaps the nuns hoped that making Berto party to the contract would ensure that the work

⁷⁵ Nicolini 1983, pp. 85-86. Cornelius's daughter, Hieronima, entered the monastery in June the following year, p. 87.

⁷⁶ Nicolini 1983, p. 87.

⁷⁷ Shearman 2003, pp. 86-96; O'Malley 2005, p. 236.

⁷⁸ Shearman 2003, pp. 86-96.

⁷⁹ Disputes could be resolved in Perugia, Assisi, Gubbio, Rome, Siena, Florence, Urbino or Venice.

was finished on time.

The *Memoriale* record that the altarpiece should depict *The Assumption of the Virgin*, but this is contradicted by the contractual requirement that it should emulate and, if possible, surpass the altarpiece at Narni which portrayed *The Coronation of the Virgin*. The final version of the Monteluce altarpiece includes a Coronation with elements of an Assumption in the lower section. However, there is unlikely to have been any conflict in the nuns' minds. The Coronation is one of the Virgin's mysteries, not an 'event', and therefore includes the Assumption.⁸⁰ Depictions of these two Marian scenes were often conflated and both shared the same feast day of 15 August.

Despite agreeing to produce his altarpiece for the Clares within two years, Raphael failed to carry out the work and, in May 1516, Berto di Giovanni was sent to Rome at the nuns' expense to reopen negotiations.⁸¹ His efforts were successful as in June, Alfano di Diamante Alfani witnessed a further agreement, supplemental to the original contract. The nuns still required a painting resembling the one at Narni as they specified a Coronation and referred to the '*primo disegno*'.⁸² Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and in Bayonne reveal that around 1516, Raphael was still intending to follow the Narni precedent: the Bayonne sheet shows the same conical *baldachino*, supported by flying angels and retains the pallets for the immaculist text, set within an arched frame.

A later version of the Bayonne drawing that was probably made by Penni after a drawing by Raphael (Louvre Museum, Paris, 3888) provided the basis for Berto di Giovanni's *Coronation of the Virgin* for the Franciscan nuns of Sant'Agnese in Perugia. The sketch may have been a by-product of Raphael's preparations for the Monteluce altarpiece or he may have created it for his old colleague when he visited Rome.⁸³ But while the nuns of Sant'Agnese received their panel on 25 July 1517, Raphael failed to make any progress on the altarpiece for their sister house at Monteluce, despite agreeing that it would be delivered in time for the Feast of the

⁸⁰ Shearman 1961, p. 158.

⁸¹ Shearman 2003, II, pp. 253-256.

⁸² Shearman 1961, p. 159.

⁸³ *ibid.*

The Monteluce *Coronation of the Virgin* (Fig. 5.6) was eventually completed after Raphael's death by his assistants, Gianfrancesco Penni and Giulio Romano, while Berto di Giovanni painted the predella as stipulated in the contract. The upper section, which was probably undertaken by Giulio, depicts the Coronation of the Virgin, and a separate, lower section, probably by Gianfrancesco, shows the disciples gathered around her tomb, now filled with flowers. It is uncertain whether the panel was divided at some early date and later rejoined or whether it was always composed of two separate pieces to facilitate transportation.⁸⁴

In June 1525, the altarpiece was taken from Rome to Perugia and erected in the external chapel at Monteluce. Battista, the abbess at the time of the original commission had died two years previously in March 1523 and the current incumbent was Sister Veronica. Previously known as Suriana, she was the daughter of Nicholò de Paulo degli Graziani and the sister of Amico Graziani who had been involved in the commissioning of Perugino for the Collegio del Cambio and probably commissioned the *matricola* for the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia with its *Gates of Perugia* that are indebted to Pintoricchio.⁸⁵ Like Battista Alfani, she came from a family of active patrons and carried their interest into the convent. During her first term as abbess from 1506-1509, the nuns acquired several altar cloths and a painting depicting *Jesus Praying in the Garden*. In her last term, they obtained a pair of gilded and painted wooden candelabra for the sacristy, a diadem and crown for the Madonna (presumably a statue), along with various robes, including a mantle of Turkish damask, in addition to finally taking delivery of the altarpiece.⁸⁶

All four of these major altarpieces by Raphael were painted for Franciscan settings and commissioned by women. Once he had completed *The Oddi Coronation*, Raphael's reputation would have quickly spread amongst the Oddi and Baglioni women and through them, into the convents where their relatives were prominent.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 129-160; Shearman 1983, pp. 115-149. He proposed that the lower section was rejected by Agostino Chigi and redeployed to complete the Monteluce contract.

⁸⁵ Nicolini 1983, pp. 34, 86.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 95, 127.

Three of the altarpieces were almost certainly commissioned by female members of the extended Baglioni family, either in a private capacity or on behalf of a convent and the family network may also have influenced the Poor Clares of Monteluca through the advice of Alfano di Diamante Alfani, the husband of Marietta Baglioni. However, whatever the relative independence of these women in the absence of their menfolk or their positions as abbesses, they would still have been constrained by the mores of the day which required them to act through male procurators and advisors. The role of Franciscan provincial officials in recommending and approving prospective artists appears to have complemented familial patronal networks and together they played an important part in promoting Raphael.

Notaries as artistic facilitators

Another potential agency in the recommendation of artists were the notaries. They had privileged access to both patrons and painters, often visiting illustrious or cloistered clients in their houses or monasteries. They were privy to the process of engaging painters and drafted contracts confirming each party's expectations and requirements. They also acted for painters in their private affairs. A study of the *protocolli* notebooks of Ser Giacomo di Cristofano, the notary who prepared the contract for Raphael's Monteluca altarpiece, for the years 1501-1504 reveals that he acted for a network of clients and painters and had considerable involvement with Franciscan establishments in Perugia.

Ser Giacomo was frequently retained by Franciscan organisations, especially the Poor Clares at Monteluca and the tertiaries of Sant'Antonio. He also acted for the Observants at Monteripido and the sisters at Sant'Agnese, while San Francesco al Prato features in his documents. At Monteluca, a raft of documents confirms his frequent attendance. Among them, a document made on 27 January 1501, behind the altar at Monteluca, lists the members of the monastery under the leadership of Abbess Clara. It was witnessed by Diamante Alfani, a regular client of Ser Giacomo and the brother of Sister Battista, sometime abbess, along with Severo Alfani, their uncle.⁸⁷ Ser Giacomo also visited Monteluca to represent individual nuns. For example, on 18 April 1502, he prepared a will for Donna Francesca, the daughter of

⁸⁷ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 431, fols. 132v-133v, unpublished.

Roberto of Perugia, who was now a sister at Monteluca, in which she made the sisters her universal heirs and asked to be buried with them.⁸⁸

The large amount of building work underway at Monteluca around the turn of the century is reflected in a document dated 1 February 1502, when Lorenzo Domenico and Beltrame Marco *muratoris*, both Lombards, acted as arbitrators alongside the *fattore* and procurator of Monteluca in a building matter.⁸⁹ Ser Giacomo acted for several Lombard builders and seems to have developed a working relationship with them. He was also indirectly involved in the financing of building projects, as a will drawn up on 28 October 1501 for Cherubino, formerly ser Simone Cecchari, left 50 florins towards a chapel being built at Monteluca.⁹⁰

Ser Giacomo's visits to Sant'Antonio were equally frequent. Many of the documents record the women's entry into the order or make financial provision for them. On 23 January 1502, before the fire in a private room, Donna Landomia, the daughter of Benedetto Angelo Alberto di Guidalotti, the great-niece of Elizabeth Guidalotti, confirmed her desire to join the tertiaries and become known as Sister Francesca.⁹¹ On 12 March 1503, Cipriano olim Mariotto di Narduti provided 50 florins for Sant'Antonio in respect of his daughter Paula, who was now a sister there called Apollonia.⁹²

Ser Giacomo also had contact with the sisters of Sant'Agnes and, on 20 August 1503, he acted for Abbess Brigida in connection with a contract with the master carpenter, Monaco Marco.⁹³ More significant, was his work for Monteripido where he drew up the contract with Perugino for their double-sided altarpiece. This was signed at Monteripido on 10 September 1502 by the Guardian of the convent, Brother Bonaventure and Perugino in the presence of two Franciscan brothers, Cherubino of Foligno and Ambrogio Pietro di Nicolino.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 432, fols. 517v-518r, unpublished.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, fols. 174r-v, unpublished.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 431, fols. 366r-367r (second set of numbering), unpublished.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, fols. 124v-125r, unpublished.

⁹² *ibid.*, 433, fols. 252v-253r, unpublished.

⁹³ *ibid.*, fols. 713r-v, unpublished.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, 432, fols. 797r-v, unpublished.

As well as acting for these Franciscan establishments, Ser Giacomo had frequent dealings with some of their most important artistic commissioners. These included Atalanta Baglioni and her procurator, Augusto ser Giovanni Oddi. On 9 February 1501, he acted for Atalanta and her cousin, Andromeda, the daughter of Pandolfo Baglioni.⁹⁵ The agreement provided for Diamante Alfani to ratify and approve payments. On 18 April 1502, an act involving Atalanta and her grandson Galeotto's widow, Angellina, was drawn up.⁹⁶ Both documents were signed at Atalanta's house and indicate ongoing ties and obligations between the widowed women of the family. The earlier document also confirms a professional relationship between Atalanta and Diamante Alfani. Ser Giacomo's associations with the Alfani family were extensive. From 1501-1504 he acted frequently for Diamante in connection with Monteluca and, privately, for his son, Alfano. He also worked for Diamante's uncle, Severo, and nephews, Alonsino and Giovanni Francesco.

Ser Giacomo also worked for several members of the degli Oddi family including, on 15 July 1501, Donna Alexandra or Leandra, the widow of Simone degli Oddi.⁹⁷ The link between Ser Giacomo and Atalanta, Diamante and Alexandra, all of whom were probably party to altarpiece commissions to Raphael, is insufficient to establish the notary as having a key role in the recommendation of the artist, but his agency may have been part of the network of influences that led to the selection of the painter. The *Protocolli* reveal that, in addition to the *Monteripido Altarpiece* contract with Perugino and the Monteluca altarpiece contract with Raphael, Ser Giacomo dealt with a number of painters both as clients and witnesses. On 15 January 1502, the painter, Ludovico Angelo, along with one Lorenzo Jacopo Rubei and a master carpenter, Valentino Giovanni, witnessed a document providing for a dowry of 170 florins in respect of the marriage of Donna Violantia, the daughter of Bartolino Nicola de Bartolini, to Basilio Pietro Ceccharini.⁹⁸ Bartolino was the grandson of the famous Perugian jurist, Baldo di Ser Cola and a wealthy man in his own right, having been registered in the *catasto* on 2 March 1486 for 409 *libre*.⁹⁹ This was therefore a significant document for Ludovico to have witnessed and gives

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, 431, fols. 196r-197v, unpublished.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, 432, fols. 511r-512v, unpublished.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 431, fols. 28r-v, unpublished.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, fols. 83v-84r, unpublished.

⁹⁹ Grohmann 1981, pp. 448-449.

an indication of the status of his circle of connections.

In September 1503, a painter named Pompeo Martino witnessed the will of Filippo Antonio, a cobbler from Porta Solis.¹⁰⁰ Filippo gave instructions that his body was to be buried in Santa Maria Nuova and left 10 florins for an altarpiece depicting the Assumption to be painted for his chapel there. Possibly, the presence of the painter as a witness was connected to the commission.

Most significantly, Ser Giacomo had regular contact with Pintoricchio, who is named in the documents as Bernardino di Betto. From July 1501 until February 1503, he prepared documents to which Pintoricchio was party on at least seven occasions. A contract, dated 9 February 1503, provided for the piecework from a piece of land owned by Pintoricchio to be ceded to Giorgio Roscetti.¹⁰¹ Agreements made on 22 July 1501, 5 August, 19 October and 22 December 1502 concerned income from the benefice of the abbey of St. Christopher.¹⁰² On 12 August 1502, Pintoricchio made quittance to Francesco Oddi for 300 gold ducats, which was part of the money promised in his contract with Cardinal Piccolomini for the decoration of his library in Siena. The guarantor for the advance was Venciolo di Sacramorre who appeared again as an executor of Pintoricchio's first will and was also guarantor for Raphael's Monteluca contract. This raises the possibility that Raphael obtained the Monteluca contract partly through the auspices of Pintoricchio who was occupied in Siena.¹⁰³ Pintoricchio's will was drawn up in his house by Ser Giacomo on 6 September 1502 as he was gravely ill and in fear of death.¹⁰⁴ The other executor was to be Ilarione di Pietropaolo and each was to receive one third of Pintoricchio's benefice from the abbey of St. Christopher, along with 60 ducats that was owed to the painter by Jacopo Marrades for an unspecified debt.

Ser Giacomo acted for Francesco Oddi again in an act made on 7 September 1503 whereby he agreed to pay Angelo Antonio Ser Lorenzo, 42 florins. Francesco

¹⁰⁰ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 433, fols. 742r-v, unpublished.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, fols. 81v-82r, paraphrased in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 291.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, 431, fols. 45r-47v; 432, fols. 661r-662r, 899r-902v, 1186v-1188r, paraphrased in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 289.

¹⁰³ Henry 2008, p. 125.

¹⁰⁴ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 432, fols. 780v-782r, paraphrased in Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2004, p. 290.

appears to have been a well connected merchant, acting on behalf of Cardinal Piccolomini, but was probably not a member of the leading degli Oddi family, but part of the minor scion known as the Oddi Novelli.¹⁰⁵

Ser Giacomo's clientele during the years 1501-4 was extensive and influential. He met regularly with leading members of several Franciscan foundations, including abbots, abbesses and their procurators and had access to the internal areas of their monasteries and convents. In the course of his duties he visited the houses of many leading families, including the Baglioni, Alfani and degli Oddi, amongst whom were several prestigious artistic patrons and he dealt with the leading painters of the day - Pintoricchio, Perugino and, later, Raphael. He was well-placed to see new paintings in churches and homes, to hear of upcoming projects and to recommend, or at least discuss, painters in the course of his dealings.

The overlapping and complementary patronage networks of the Baglioni and degli Oddi women, the Franciscan officials and, perhaps, the connections of the notary combined to provide the young Raphael with a series of Perugian commissions that facilitated his rapid development and gave him experience of large-scale works that eluded him for most of his time in Florence. The 'periphery' was, here, a generator and facilitator, providing opportunities that the competitive environment of Florence did not permit.

The Peruginesque style in San Francesco al Prato

Raphael was not the only artist working in the Franciscan establishments at this time when the Peruginesque style was in great demand. In addition to Raphael's altarpieces in San Francesco al Prato that, at least initially, emulated the style of Perugino, Vasari recorded two paintings by Perugino himself - *The Resurrection*, which was discussed in the previous chapter and the *St. John the Baptist and Saints*, probably seen by Crispolti on an altar next to the door of the sacristy (Fig. 5.7).¹⁰⁶ This could be '*l'altare di San Giovanni delle scale*' that was recorded in the oldest list of tombs to the left of the door to the sacristy, at the head of the north transept. The altar of St. John belonged to the aristocratic Signorelli family and, in a later will

¹⁰⁵ Henry 2008, p. 124.

¹⁰⁶ Crispolti 1597, p. 96.

dated 27 May 1544, Adriana Signorelli expressed a desire to be buried there in the tomb of her ancestors, dressed in the habit of the sisters of St. Agnes.¹⁰⁷

The connection between Perugino and the Signorelli family appears to have been fairly strong and Adriana is known to have had dealings with him subsequently. In his will dated 1 May 1514, her husband, Francesco di Bartolomeo Graziani, asked to be buried in his family chapel in Santa Maria dei Servi and left 600 florins to the church on condition that the friars celebrated masses for his soul.¹⁰⁸ In accordance with his wishes, Adriana commissioned from Perugino an altarpiece depicting *The Transfiguration* and, on 17 December 1517, through the agency of her brother, Panfilo, she paid him 100 florins for the work. Furthermore, in July 1495, Francesco joined the Company of St. Joseph which commissioned Perugino to paint *The Marriage of the Virgin* for its chapel in the cathedral.¹⁰⁹ Given these connections, it is likely that Adriana, or another member of the Signorelli family, also commissioned the altarpiece depicting St. John for their family chapel in San Francesco al Prato. The reference to ‘stairs’ in the description of the altar suggests that it was raised up so that the viewpoint for any altarpiece would have been from below.¹¹⁰ In the altarpiece, St. John stands on a rock high above Sts. Francis, Jerome, Sebastian and Anthony of Padua, and the viewpoint is indeed very low.

The iconography of the altarpiece points to a refined patron moving in humanist circles. It was probably painted between 1500 and 1512, when the figure of St. John was copied by Mariano di ser Austerio on the frontal for the St. John the Baptist chapel in the Collegio del Cambio. Mancini has suggested that the altarpiece’s composition derives from a prototype there depicting Sts. John, Jerome and Sebastian. The additional figures in the San Francesco painting appear to have been forced into the composition as if to adapt the original cartoon for the Franciscan setting. The antique armour sported by St. Sebastian and the books carried by the other three saints repeat motifs found in the Cambio frescoes.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 1065, fols. 98r-100v, cited in Moscatello 2004b, p. 561.

¹⁰⁸ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 756, fol. 115r-v, cited in Moscatello 2004b, p. 560.

¹⁰⁹ BAP, ms. 3106, fol. 22r (new numbering), unpublished.

¹¹⁰ Lunghi 2004, p. 58.

¹¹¹ Garibaldi and Mancini 2004, pp. 131-133. The Collegio del Cambio altarpiece could have provided the prototype for Mariano.

The family had connections with the Cambio scheme. Francesco di Bartolomeo Graziani was a distant relative of Amico Graziani, the lay prior of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia who had probably commissioned the *Gates of Perugia* for the *matricola* of that society.¹¹² Amico was a man of letters and interested in the arts. He was instrumental in securing the return of the Perugian humanist Francesco Matarazzo to the city where he composed the decorative programme for the Cambio.¹¹³ As *Uditore* of the Cambio since 1496, Amico would have been involved in the selection of Perugino to paint the scheme, which connection may have contributed to Perugino gaining this commission for the family.

Another case where Perugino reworked an existing formula was *The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian Altarpiece* (Fig. 5.8) for the Martinelli family chapel in San Francesco al Prato which Crispolti saw on a wall to the right of the main entrance next to the family tombs.¹¹⁴ Although the original contract is not extant, legal proceedings in June 1520, in which Perugino pursued the heirs of the commissioners for payment, have recently been uncovered.¹¹⁵ They reveal that, in March 1505, Perugino contracted with the Martinelli brothers, Giuliano and Sinibaldo, to paint an altarpiece to fulfil the last wishes of their father, Martinello. Perugino was to receive 90 florins. Extensive damage to the painting had led to the painting being rated as a workshop piece, but the documents state it was painted by Perugino himself, albeit some 13 years later.¹¹⁶ This accounts for the late date of 1518 inscribed on St. Sebastian's pedestal. The family were still actively connected with San Francesco al Prato at that time as the convent's account book records a payment of 11 *libre* on 7 July 1522 for wax for torches to be carried by the friars at the burial of Donna Andriana deli Martinelli¹¹⁷ and, on 30 March 1523, 30.5 *libre* were paid for torches at the burial of Giuliano's son, Martinello.¹¹⁸

¹¹² Francesco was descended from Petrus dni Pauli di Graziani, while Amico came from another branch descended from Petrus dni Gratie di Gratiani. Grohmann 1981, pp. 500-505.

¹¹³ Matarazzo was also a member of the Company of St. Joseph from 1507. BAP, ms 3106, no. 828, unpublished.

¹¹⁴ Crispolti 1648, p. 96.

¹¹⁵ Sartore 2004, pp. 603-606.

¹¹⁶ 'quod dictus magister Petrus depinsit et ornavit dictam tabulam'. ASP, *Giudiziario, Miscellanea, "Pozzo"*, fol. 203, transcribed in Sartore *ibid*.

¹¹⁷ ASP, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 4, fol. 20r. Unpublished.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, fol. 28r. Unpublished.

It is likely that the elder Martinello died in the outbreak of plague that ravaged Perugia in 1504, hence the inclusion of the plague saint, Sebastian. The altarpiece is a simplified version of a large fresco painted for the Church of St. Sebastian in Panicale in 1505. In the fresco, an elegant St. Sebastian stands on a high plinth, tied to a Corinthian column. Four archers shoot arrows at the oblivious saint from a spacious piazza with a five-arched arcade decorated with ornate *all'antica* features. The San Francesco version repeats the elevated St. Sebastian tied to a column in a piazza, but to accommodate the narrower field, just two archers attack the saint and the arcade is only three arches wide. The *all'antica* references are also more restrained, with simple festoons on the arcade and humanist-style writing on the plinth.

Sartore has suggested that the Martinelli family may have been involved in commissioning the fresco at Panicale, or at least seen it and requested a version for their family chapel, but there is no evidence to support this.¹¹⁹ While the *catasti* show that the family held land near Lake Trasimeno at Passignano, Monte Ruffiano and Vernazzano, they had no property at nearby Panicale.¹²⁰ More probably, Perugino made a preparatory design soon after receiving the commission in 1505, when the Panicale version would have been fresh in his mind. This would account for the similarity in the two compositions despite the thirteen intervening years. The recycled design reflects the moderate price.¹²¹

An unpublished will dated 26 May 1502 (Appendix 2.3) for Spectabilis vir Antonio Mele Francesco of Porta Santa Susanna in the parish of Santa Maria delle Valle, provided for a significant tomb and altar complex in San Francesco al Prato.¹²² In poor health and expecting death, Antonio gave instructions that a sepulchre should be constructed facing the Chapel of the Gonfalone, where he should be buried, dressed in a Franciscan habit. A stone plaque was to be erected over the tomb, carved with his arms. An altar should be erected nearby, in a place that was more fitting and unobstructed, and an altarpiece depicting the Madonna with Sts. Anthony, Francis

¹¹⁹ Sartore 2004, p. 603.

¹²⁰ ASP, *Catasti*, II, 17, fols. 451r-458v, cited in Sartore 2004, p. 604.

¹²¹ Chapman 2004, pp. 28 and 62, note 103 shows that Perugino made designs soon after receiving commissions.

¹²² ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 529, fols. 56v-60v with a draft in *volgare* loose at the back, numbered 1r-2v. Unpublished.

and Bernardino was to be painted for it. To finance the painting, Antonio provided 50 florins in cash to be paid within four years of his death, but no provision was made for the tomb at this point.

Antonio also left 25 florins to the brothers of Santa Maria degli Angeli for the fabric and upkeep of their church and 5 florins to each of Monteripido, Sant'Antonio da Padova, Sant'Agnese and San Domenico and provided for grain to be given to San Francesco al Prato for ten years after his death in return for the saying of masses and offices. He made his wife, Costanza, his universal heir. She was to receive 300 florins in respect of her dowry and, after the payment of legacies, all his other goods and property. On Costanza's death, an additional 100 florins was to be provided for Antonio's chapel in San Francesco to be spent as already specified. At this time, 300 florins would be given to the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia in return for it allowing Costanza to remain undisturbed in Antonio's house during her lifetime, as it appears that the hospital had some claim over the property. However, if this should not occur, the hospital would forfeit the legacy and it would be paid instead to Monteripido and San Francesco. 100 florins would also be given to Monteripido, 100 divided between Sant Antonio and Sant'Agnese, 50 florins to Santa Maria degli Angeli and another 50 to the convent of San Francesco. 100 florins were provided for the marriage of his daughters. Given the extent of these bequests, it is clear that Antonio was a wealthy man and the money to be spent on his tomb was correspondingly substantial. The 1479-89 *catasto* confirms that he had assets at one point of 1,270 *libre*.¹²³ He had acquired a house in the prestigious *platea magna* near Santa Maria del Mercato from the heirs of Alberto Guidalotti, valued at 300 *libre* and owned farms, vineyards, olive groves and houses in Valiano di San Fiorenzo, Bisciana, Pila, San Martino in Colle, Migianella dei Marchese and San Valentino.

The proposed painter of Antonio's altarpiece is not named, but its description matches *The Virgin and Three Saints* (Fig. 5.9) given to Eusebio di San Giorgio. This has a provenance from San Francesco al Prato and has been dated to 1513.¹²⁴ Antonio's tomb was to be opposite or facing the Chapel of the Gonfalone, which was

¹²³ ASP, *Catasti*, II, Registro 17, fols. 511r-513v, unpublished.

¹²⁴ Santi 1985, pp. 148-9.

at the eastern end of the church.¹²⁵ The old guides describe a painting matching this description from ‘the school of Perugino’ outside the Baldeschi chapel adjoining the southern transept.¹²⁶ It is just possible, if the tomb were well outside the Baldeschi chapel (the altarpiece was only required to be nearby) towards the main altar, for the tomb to have faced towards the Chapel of the Gonfalone. In any case, Antonio’s tomb may not have been erected exactly where he wanted, or the altarpiece could have been moved subsequently. Eusebio’s altarpiece has been linked by Santi, following Urbini, to the will of Carlo Berardelli.¹²⁷ Urbini claimed that Rossi had found this document and that it provided 50 florins for the altarpiece, but no reference is given.

Antonio’s wife, Costanza was the daughter of Nicolò di Paulo deli Graziani and the sister of Amico Graziani, the lay prior of the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Misericordia. This may explain the large bequest to that establishment. Her sister Suriana, later Sister Veronica, was the abbess at Monteluce when Raphael’s altarpiece was finally delivered. These kinship ties reveal a family-wide connection with the Franciscans and with leading Perugian artists. Amico was involved in commissioning Perugino and possibly Pintoricchio. Their distant relative, Bartolomeo Graziani, was the husband of Adriana Signorelli, a strong contender to be Perugino’s commissioner for the *St. John the Baptist with other saints* that probably dates from the first decade of the sixteenth century and stood nearby in San Francesco.

The altarpiece demonstrates the dominant influence of Perugino’s style and, increasingly, Raphael’s Perugian works upon local painters. Eusebio had worked in Perugino’s workshop and also assisted Pintoricchio on several projects, including the Piccolomini library in Siena. He would, therefore, have been exposed to the young Raphael’s work and he seems to have been particularly drawn to his *Solly Madonna* (Fig. 5.10, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin). This dates from around 1503 and was probably painted in Perugia. In an associated drawing in the Louvre (Inv. Nos. 3855), the infant Christ sits on the Virgin’s knee, holding a goldfinch while turning his head to

¹²⁵ BAP, MS 3297, frontispiece, early 18c? published in Cooper 2001a, p. 555.

¹²⁶ Morelli 1683, p. 115; Orsini 1784, p. 308.

¹²⁷ Santi 1985, pp. 148-9; Urbini 1906, pp. 55-56. No link between the two families has been found.

study a book held by his mother.¹²⁸ Endearingly, the Virgin holds her son's foot with her free hand. Eusebio incorporated this motif into many paintings, including a *Sacra Conversazione* for the Franciscan church of San Francesco at Matelica and, a little incongruously, into Antonio's altarpiece. *The Virgin and Three Saints* depicts St. Anthony Abbot, centrally placed as Antonio's name saint, flanked by Sts. Francis of Assisi and Bernardino of Siena. All three are posed and clothed in a typically Peruginesque manner. Above them on a cloud the Madonna, shown from the waist up, holds her son and reads of his future Passion while cradling his foot. The dislocation of the reading Madonna from Raphael's earthly landscape setting into a heavenly one undermines the motif's prescient significance. Despite this somewhat indiscriminate devotion to Raphael's prototype, the altarpiece is a good example of how new iconography rapidly becomes integrated into the canon, whether in the periphery or elsewhere.

An alternative workshop

Eusebio was not alone in his adherence to the prototypes of Pintoricchio, Perugino and Raphael. Bartolomeo Caporali had died in 1496 and a group of Perugian artists who probably emanated from his *bottega*, including Eusebio, formed a society. They rented a workshop for at least one year in the church of Santa Maria del Mercato in the Piazza Sopramuro, in what Mancini has described as an attempt to get organised in the face of the crushing domination of Perugino.¹²⁹ Their choice of workshop was strategically sound. By this time, feudal families had returned to the city from the *contado* and established themselves within particular parishes, setting up areas of influence as they had previously done with their castles in the countryside.¹³⁰ The small piazzas peripheral to the Piazza Grande and Piazza Sopramuro, which had originally been centres for guilds and productive activities, now became the focus for individual families keen to refurbish their houses. Wealth became concentrated in the centre of the old city and by taking a workshop there the painters ensured that they were close to their major patrons.

In addition to Eusebio, the group included Berto di Giovanni, Sinibaldo Ibi,

¹²⁸ Joannides 1983, p. 138.

¹²⁹ ASP, *Notarile* 378, fol. 298r, cited in Mancini 1995, p. 37.

¹³⁰ Grohmann 1981, p. 152.

Lattanzio di Giovanni and Ludovico d'Angelo who were all parties to the lease. Apart from Ludovico, who came from a family workshop (he was the son of Angelo di Baldassare Mattioli, nephew of Battista di Baldassare Mattioli and grandson of Baldassare di Mattioli), the other tenants had all previously been associated with Perugino. The rent was five florins, as compared with the eight florins Perugino paid for his workshop in 1502, which gives some indication of the relative size of the two enterprises. Perugino's establishment paid almost twice as much rent as these five artists combined.

To compete with Perugino's workshop, the group needed to establish a niche market and appears to have gone about this by taking active roles in civic life. Ludovico d'Angelo was prior of the Guild of Artists in 1501 and 1503 and Eusebio di San Giorgio held the post in 1509. Berto di Giovanni acted as a *camerlengho* in 1504, as did Lattanzio di Giovanni in 1506, Eusebio di San Giorgio in 1509 and Ludovico d'Angelo in 1510. Doubtless drawing upon these connections, the group successfully obtained many small and medium-scale commissions, although major schemes eluded them. For example, in 1493, Ludovico had undertaken several small works for the Palace of the Priors and the following year he painted a *Madonna with Seraphim* on a gold ground for their chapel.¹³¹ They seem to have been able to maintain their independence; in 1500, Lattanzio di Giovanni rented a '*chamora*' from the confraternity of St. Augustine and kept it at least until 1509.¹³²

Despite being independent of Perugino, the group's paintings closely emulated the Peruginesque model, although Caporali's influence is also discernable, particularly in the work of Ludovico d'Angelo. Raphael's models became increasingly important for them and some of the group maintained contact with him after he left Perugia, especially Eusebio di San Giorgio and Berto di Giovanni, for whom he apparently provided drawings. This connection may have provided a marketing point for the local painters as Raphael's fame spread, as well as usefully maintaining his links with Perugia.

The Peruginesque style at Monteripido

¹³¹ Gnoli 1923, p. 186.

¹³² SBF, *Fondo di S. Agostino, Mastri*, 408, fol. 5v, cited in Mancini 1995, p. 30.

Like San Francesco al Prato, Monteripido experienced resurgence in commissioning activity with the beginning of the new half-millennium, boosted by the increasing strength of the Observant movement. Here too, a pattern of patronal preference for the Peruginesque style is evident with commissions to Perugino in the early 1500s and, subsequently, to his emulators.

Vasari mentions two chapels painted by Perugino depicting the *Story of the Magi* and *The Martyrdom of Franciscan Friars by the Sultan of Babylon*.¹³³ Morelli and Orsini recorded three chapels, adding a *Nativity* (Fig. 5.11) to the list of frescoes. But observation of the Monteripido site suggests that *The Nativity* and *Magi* frescoes were in the same chapel, in a small cloister in front of the entrance to the church, while *The Martyrdom of the Franciscans* was in another chapel dedicated to the Holy Sepulchre at the penultimate station of the Way of the Cross that ends at the church. All the frescoes apart from *The Nativity*, which was detached in 1865, are now lost.

The *Nativity* chapel was built in 1498 under the patronage of the Ercolani of Panicale whose coat of arms once appeared on pilasters there.¹³⁴ The family seem to have had longstanding connections with the convent, as in 1476 '*Jurisperitus vir d. Antonius Erculani*' left 50 florins from the residue of his estate to be given by his daughters, Pia, Marta and Cornelia to the church of San Francesco de Monte, '*pro uno palio*'.¹³⁵ Chapels dedicated to the Nativity became popular in Observant Franciscan churches to recreate St. Francis' Christmas celebrations at Greccio, and Perugino probably painted the *Nativity* fresco soon after the chapel was built. He reused a cartoon first employed in the Collegio del Cambio and subsequently in the Franciscan church of San Francesco at Montefalco (commissioned October 1503), moving in each case towards a simplification of the composition.¹³⁶ The central motif of the infant Christ leaning against a bolster on the ground under an open barn and adored by his earthly parents, shepherds and animals became an archetype for nativity scenes; the repetition of the iconography contributing to the cult-like promotion of the Nativity within the Franciscan order. As late as 1536, Domenico Alfani painted a *Nativity with St. Anne* for San Francesco al Prato based on

¹³³ Vasari 1568, III, p. 606; Morelli 1683, pp. 19-20; Orsini 1784, p. 161.

¹³⁴ Mariotti 1788, p. 210.

¹³⁵ Tabarelli 1977, p. 108. His sons were Peter Paul, Vincent, Erculanus and Ciprianus.

¹³⁶ Hiller von Gaertringen 2004, pp. 155-165.

Perugino's prototype, although the Child lying on the ground propped on one elbow owes much to Raphael's *Bridgewater Madonna* (1506-7, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh) and the barn is replaced by marble pillars.¹³⁷

On 10 September 1502, when he may still have been working on the frescoes, Perugino contracted to paint an altarpiece for the high altar of Monteripido where a wooden crucifix currently stood. The contract was made with the Venerable Brother Bonaventura, previously known as 'Ser Petri Paulam Herculani' of Perugia, the Guardian of the convent.¹³⁸ He seems likely to have been the son of the donor of the 50 florins noted previously, one of whose sons was named Pietro Paulo, strengthening the family's patronal links with the convent.

The contract specified that the altarpiece should be double-sided (Fig. 5.12). The side facing the friars' choir was to incorporate the existing carved crucifix and depict the Madonna, Mary Magdalene, Sts. John the Evangelist and Francis, with two small angels next to the wounds on Christ's hands. The *verso* was to show Christ and the Virgin enthroned with four apostles and other heads, depending upon how much space was available. This was intended to face the chapel reserved for women. The predella should depict the two celebrated Franciscan preachers, St. Bernardino of Siena and Bernardino da Feltre. The latter had died in 1494 and was immediately venerated in many Franciscan altarpieces, especially in northern Italy.¹³⁹ St. Bernardino's motif, the Name of Jesus, was to appear between them. In return, Perugino would be paid 120 florins, 50 by a benefactor named Jacopo olim Guido who was present at the signing of the contract.

The work was to be completed by Easter 1503, but the *Crucifixion* face is unlikely to have been started before 1504 and possibly not before 1506, given the amount of work Perugino was involved with in Florence and Siena. The figures are arranged in an inverted pyramidal composition around the cross, set against an expansive landscape. This closely resembles the composition of Raphael's *Mond Crucifixion* (National Gallery, London) which was painted in 1503 for the Gavari

¹³⁷ Santi 1985, p. 172.

¹³⁸ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 432, fol. 797, transcribed in Canuti 1931, II, p. 237.

¹³⁹ E.g. *The Virgin and Child with St. Jerome and the Blessed Bernardino da Feltre* by Filippo Mazzolo, c. 1494-1505, National Gallery, London.

chapel in San Domenico in Città di Castello, but it is uncertain who followed whom. The traditional assumption has been that Raphael must have seen Perugino's painting or at least his preparatory sketches and adopted his design. However, given Raphael's inventiveness and the possible late date of Perugino's panel, it may be that the influence flowed in the other direction, particularly as Perugino's figures appear less well integrated into the background than Raphael's.¹⁴⁰

There are considerable differences between the painting techniques on the two sides of the altarpiece, especially the rendering of the drapery. The folds of cloth are more voluminous, crisp and deeply folded in *The Coronation* and resemble stiff silks rather than the soft woollen fabrics of *The Crucifixion*. The illusion of silk is enhanced by *cangianti* effects created by juxtaposing lavender and pink or rose and blue to resemble shot silk. While this change partly reflects the depiction of a heavenly, rather than an earthly, setting, the technique is typical of the last phase of Perugino's work, suggesting that *The Coronation* was painted several years later, perhaps around 1517-18. A final payment of seven ducats made to Perugino on 27 September 1518 may relate to this painting.¹⁴¹ The altarpiece failed to win the friars' approval, apparently because it differed from the specifications in the contract, rather than any dissatisfaction with the quality of the painting.¹⁴² Presumably, this refers to the lack of additional heads and suggests that the commissioners valued the number of figures, as a quantifiable proof of costliness, over the aesthetics of Perugino's landscape setting.

In addition to these two major schemes by Perugino, two other paintings aspiring to the Peruginesque style hung in the sacristy at Monteripido. *The Madonna and Child with Sts. James the Apostle and Francis* by Lo Spagna or, more probably, his workshop and *The Madonna and Child with Sts. Roch and Francis*, attributed to Giannicola di Paolo. There are no known documents relating to Lo Spagna's painting and its date is unknown, although it is likely to be early sixteenth-century.¹⁴³ The *Madonna and Child* closely resemble a detached fresco, *Madonna del davanzale*

¹⁴⁰ Plazzotta also raises this possibility. Chapman 2004, p. 123

¹⁴¹ Canuti 1931, II, p. 270.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, 'quod dictus Mag. Petrus non pinxisset dictum quatum iuxta formam quae dictis scripta continetur, et obligatus sit'.

¹⁴³ Santi 1985, pp. 132-133.

(Vatican Museums, Rome), attributed to a follower of Pintoricchio, possibly Lo Spagna, from around 1500. Lo Spagna's Perugian panel, which is painted in tempera, depicts the Madonna with the infant Christ standing on a parapet, reading a book. An apple or pomegranate and a goldfinch, symbolic of the Passion, lie on the parapet and the Madonna sports the *stella maris* on her shoulder. These motifs were common in Pintoricchio's paintings, were adopted by Perugino and Raphael and became ubiquitous in paintings reproducing the Peruginesque style.

Lo Spagna, or Giovanni di Pietro, appears to have been born in Spain but arrived in Italy at an early age and trained with Perugino in Florence as one of the 'many artisans from France, Spain, Germany and other countries,' described by Vasari.¹⁴⁴ 'Ispania' is recorded as paying the rent for Perugino's Florentine workshop on his master's behalf in 1492, and may have relocated to Perugino's Perugian workshop.¹⁴⁵ Subsequently, he struck out on his own and is documented in Spello in 1502, where he already seems to have established a reputation, perhaps having assisted Pintoricchio in the Baglioni chapel. In 1504, he was in Perugia witnessing a contract between Fiorenzo di Lorenzo and the Benedictines of San Pietro.¹⁴⁶ He eventually settled in Spoleto, where he became a citizen on 7 December 1516 and later headed the guild of painters and goldsmiths. He was particularly active in the service of Franciscan commissioners in the *Provincia S. Francisci* and often reproduced successful images from one Franciscan setting for another, such as his versions of Ghirlandaio's *Coronation of the Virgin* for the Franciscans at Trevi and Todi.

Vasari believed Lo Spagna was forced to leave Perugia after 1504 because of the city's dislike of foreigners, but this is not supported by the evidence.¹⁴⁷ Whereas in the previous half century, the practice had been to commission local painters to the virtual exclusion of foreigners, during the early 1500s, some artists from outside the city, including Lo Spagna and, most notably, Raphael, did receive major commissions. Their success, in the face of an established preference for local painters, can be attributed to their adoption of the Peruginesque style. Both Raphael

¹⁴⁴ Vasari 1568, III, p. 614.

¹⁴⁵ Coonin 1999, pp. 100-105; Saporì 2004, pp. 14-15.

¹⁴⁶ Gualdi Sabatini 1984, p. 7.

¹⁴⁷ Vasari 1568, III, pp. 612-613.

from Urbino and Lo Spagna from Spain painted like native Perugians. Other factors must therefore have caused Lo Spagna's departure and Mancini suggests he left to avoid Perugino's monopoly.¹⁴⁸ However, it was Raphael who was receiving the most prestigious commissions in 1504, not Perugino. From 1503, until his departure for Florence around 1506, most of the major altarpiece contracts went to Raphael, not Perugino, who was largely absent. Lo Spagna's departure was more likely due to competition from Raphael.

Santi tentatively attributed *The Madonna and Child with Sts. Roch and Francis* from the Monteripido sacristy to Giannicola di Paolo because of the high quality of the painting.¹⁴⁹ It too is in the generic Peruginesque style, but here the influences of Pintoricchio and Caporali are more evident. The figures are set against a watery, hilly landscape reminiscent of Pintoricchio's backgrounds while their volumetric drapery owes much to Caporali. Canuti suggested that Giannicola, who was the son of a Perugian barber, trained in Caporali's workshop and had few direct dealings with Perugino, but was able to adopt elements of his style simply through observation, presumably in response to patronal demand.¹⁵⁰ The earliest documentary reference to him dates from August 1493 when he worked in the Palazzo Pubblico. The following year, he painted a *Last Supper* for the priors. The early dates of these works, completed before Perugino was spending much time in Perugia, support the view that Giannicola is unlikely to have trained in his workshop. Giannicola appears to have established his own independent workshop by 1500, when he leased premises in the Piazza del Sopramuro and, from 1509, he rented a workshop near the cathedral where he employed several *garzoni*.¹⁵¹ His putative connection with Caporali is supported by the fact that he often collaborated with artists known to have trained in Caporali's studio. He worked with Bartolomeo's son, Gianbattista, in the Chapel of St. Ivo in the cathedral in 1516, and with Eusebio di San Giorgio, with whom he decorated the Cappella Leonarda Olivieri di Baglioni in San Pietro in 1509. His adoption of the Peruginesque manner therefore appears to have been a response to the market, as exemplified by the Monteripido patrons, rather than due to his training or connection with Perugino's workshop.

¹⁴⁸ Mancini 1995, p. 37.

¹⁴⁹ Santi 1985, p. 140.

¹⁵⁰ Canuti 1931, I, pp. 287-289.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 288.

Perugino at Sant'Agnese

During the late quattrocento, the Franciscan tertiaries had come under pressure to become a closed order and significant reforms aimed at unifying the Franciscan order were imposed upon them. Following Julius II's bull, *Exponi nobis fecistis*, published on 15 October 1507, the laity had to be either lay, or regular and religious, meaning that the tertiaries living in houses were not regarded as ecclesiastics, while those living in hermitages or communities received the same rights and benefits as the Minorite friars. Following the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-17, all tertiaries were placed under '*l'obediienza, superiorita, correzione e costrizione dei Minori*'.¹⁵² In the same vein, the *Iter cetera* published by Leo X in 1521 required the tertiaries to make solemn vows. These provisions reduced the autonomy of both male and female Third Order communities and increased their dependence upon the friars.

While the women of Sant'Antonio da Padova resisted becoming cloistered, in 1491, the tertiaries of Sant'Agnese agreed to live *sub perpetua clausura*. Specific reforms were extended to them on 26 June 1509, when Julius II published a Bull giving the Minister General authority over them, along with Santa Maria di Valfabbrica near San Francesco al Prato, Sant'Ursula in Florence and various other establishments.¹⁵³ The Minister General became entitled to visit during his three year term of office and to maintain the women's religious discipline.

The Sant'Agnese tertiaries were well endowed by Franciscan standards, having been recorded in the *catasto* of 1489 as having property worth 3411 *libre*. But the last quarter of the quattrocento saw a lull in patronal activity and only one fresco depicting St. Jerome has been associated with them during that period.¹⁵⁴ This has been attributed to Perugino because of its Verrocchiesque drapery, rocky landscape and similarity to the St. Jerome of the Farneto banner. Although it seems to date from the late 1470s or early 1480s, the sketchy modulation of the face, stiff drapery and crudely executed tree, point to it being a workshop piece, perhaps using a Perugino

¹⁵² Moretti 1993, p. 293.

¹⁵³ Lancellotti 1856, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ Piagnani 2001-2002, pp. 149-152.

cartoon.

With the new century, the women embarked on a considerable building programme and made at least two major artistic commissions.¹⁵⁵ In addition to the *Coronation of the Virgin Altarpiece* by Berto di Giovanni referred to above, Perugino painted a substantial fresco on the end wall of a cloister completed in 1505 (Fig. 5.13).¹⁵⁶ The spaces between the cloister's columns were later filled in to create an internal chapel dedicated to the Consolation (now known as the chapel of the Immaculate Conception). As this was a private area, separate from the main church of the convent, and the nuns were in *clausura*, the old guides make no reference to the fresco, but the areas that remain are high quality and appear to be autograph.

The central arched section is set back slightly into the wall and its intrados is decorated with intricate *grotesche* on a yellow-gold ground. A violet cornice imitating stonework frames the scenes. The shallow recession and ornate elements give the impression of a costly tabernacle, but, in place of a statue, Perugino painted a statuesque Madonna delle Grazie standing in an open landscape. Fictive niches to either side contain St. Anthony Abbot and the Franciscan saint, Anthony of Padua. The Madonna raises both hands in a gesture of blessing or acceptance, while two angels hold a crown above her head. Two small female figures dressed as tertiaries, kneel on either side of the Virgin. The Sant'Agnese nuns still maintain that these were Perugino's cousins and that he painted the fresco by way of a dowry upon their entry into the convent. Closer inspection, however, belies this.

The haloed figure on the right has roses caught up in her gown and probably represents St. Elizabeth of Hungary. The left-hand figure holds a rosary but has no halo and Canuti identified her as Elizabeth of Hungary's distant relative, St. Elizabeth of Portugal.¹⁵⁷ She was not canonised until 1626, although Leo X authorised the celebration of her feast in 1516.¹⁵⁸ However, this figure has strongly differentiated facial features and could represent a donor or the abbess of the convent. Inscriptions running below the frescoes name three commissioners: Suora

¹⁵⁵ Grohmann 1981, p. 389, n. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Garibaldi and Mancini 2004, p. 235.

¹⁵⁷ Canuti 1931, I, pp. 227-228.

¹⁵⁸ Farmer 1997, p. 160.

Ufrasia, Suora Teodora and Suor Eustochia. The first has been identified as Eufrazia degli Arcipreti, whose family had intermarried with both the Baglioni and the Oddi. The second is probably Teodora di Pier Matteo, also from a noble family.

Given the encroachments upon the women's independence which were formalised by Julius's bull, the inclusion of two women dressed as tertiaries who, though diminutive, are placed in positions of honour to either side of the Madonna, is significant. The presence of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, famous for her interventions amongst the poor, stresses the active role that the tertiaries once played in society, while the expansive landscape highlights the tension between the constraints of *clausura* and the women's relinquished freedom to engage with the wider community.

The drapery and facial types point to the fresco having been completed around 1510, following Perugino's return to Perugia from Florence in 1507. As the Sant'Agnese cloisters were built by 1505, Perugino may have been commissioned then. In any case, it appears to be the only major Franciscan project awarded to Perugino by patrons from within the city after 1502, apart from the Martinello brothers' contract of 1505. Perugino's only other known contracts anywhere in Perugia after 1505 were for *The Madonna di Loreto* (c.1507-15, National Gallery, London) and *The Transfiguration* that fulfilled a will made in 1514 and was completed in 1517. Both were for Santa Maria dei Servi. Clearly Perugino himself was now in less demand, even though his style remained uniquely popular.

Perugino's last years

Vasari recounts that, by 1507, when he completed an altarpiece for SS. Annunziata, Perugino's style was already out of favour in Florence, and they particularly disliked the way he re-used cartoons.¹⁵⁹ In the face of continuous criticism and an inability or unwillingness to adopt the new style of Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael, he left Florence and returned to Perugia, where he executed several works – the implication being that in that peripheral backwater the less demanding patrons would continue to accept his old fashioned paintings. While

¹⁵⁹ Vasari 1550 and 1568, III, pp. 609-610.

doubt has been cast upon Vasari's allegation that the Servites found Perugino's painting so commonplace that they turned it round, it is true he received no more major commissions in Florence.¹⁶⁰ He maintained his Florentine workshop for a few more years, but abandoned it in 1511.

Perugino might have expected the competition to have been less intense in Perugia. Raphael, who had taken the opportunity afforded by Perugino's absence to establish himself as the painter of choice of the Franciscans and the Baglioni women, had already left for Florence. Pintoricchio had long forsaken his home town and Lo Spagna was already established in Spoleto. But Perugino seems to have been unable to secure fresh contracts in Perugia itself and new commissions were almost entirely confined to the *contado*, which may suggest that Perugian patrons were not so different from Florentine patrons in their discernment. Instead, Perugino was kept occupied completing long-overdue contracts, such as the complex, double-sided altarpiece for Sant'Agostino which he had agreed to paint in 1502, but which was no more than half finished when a subsequent agreement was reached in June 1512.¹⁶¹ The substantial amount of intervention by assistants, particularly on the face depicting the *Nativity*, suggests that Perugino was still running a sizeable workshop although, in 1513, he left his premises in the Piazza del Sopramuro and it is not known whether he rented elsewhere.

In addition to completing outstanding commitments, Perugino's output from this time consisted of small paintings for domestic settings or *gonfaloni* which were either sold or hired out for processions. The revival of the cult of St. Jerome by Dominican and Franciscan confraternities that had begun towards the end of the previous century gathered pace and resulted in Perugino painting a number of small panels depicting the penitent saint in the desert. These include a post-1512 version where his compositional simplicity and thin, translucent paint create an airy insubstantiality, typical of his later painting. The diversity of Perugino's employment is illustrated by a commission in 1512 to design a silver *navicella* for the Palace of the Priors. Depicting various figures, horses and chariots, the '*meraviglioso e nobil*'

¹⁶⁰ Nelson 2004, pp. 65-71.

¹⁶¹ Garibaldi and Mancini 2004, p. 292.

design was highly regarded and it was still in use in 1540.¹⁶²

The changing nature of Perugino's work towards the end of his career and his standing in comparison with other Perugian painters is illustrated by two contracts relating to frescoes in the church of San Martino in Campo, near Perugia. The church was used by the Confraternity of St. Martin and, on 5 October 1511, the painter, Giovanni di Giorgio, contracted with them to paint various figures.¹⁶³ Giovanni was German in origin, but had been in Perugia since his youth and was inscribed in the second and third Perugian *matricole*. Canuti lists him as a member of Perugino's school in Perugia and, in 1499, he was present when Perugino was commissioned to paint *The Resurrection* for San Francesco al Prato.¹⁶⁴ He was also present at a meeting (*adunanza*) of 15 painters that took place in the house of Lattanzio di Giovanni on 14 August 1506.¹⁶⁵ Unfortunately, the other 14 painters are not named but it was probably a meeting of the *Arte*, as Lattanzio was *camerlengho* that year and Gnoli states that after a conference, Giovanni was received into the guild.

The previously unknown contract (Appendix 2.4) required Giovanni to paint a Madonna with her young son around her neck which was to be the same size as one at San Cristofano. She should have blue robes painted with the most beautiful *azzurro de Magna* available in Perugia, a golden diadem and such ornaments as seemed best to the master. Various saints wearing golden crowns and painted in good colours were specified, namely, Martin, Antonio, Christopher, James, Sebastian and Sylvester. The figures were destined for the facade of the tribune or gallery of the high altar and Giovanni would receive 22 florins in total.¹⁶⁶

But Giovanni did not fulfil the contract and, on 3 December 1513, Antonio Mariotto contracted Perugino to undertake the work for the increased sum of 30 florins.¹⁶⁷ The contract states that the work should be done skilfully - *ad usum boni et idonei pictoris et magistri* - but it is uncertain whether he painted the frescoes

¹⁶² Pellini 1664, III, pp. 281-282.

¹⁶³ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 624, fols. 255r-v. This contract is acknowledged by Canuti 1931, I, p. 203, but not referenced or published. No reference is given in Gnoli 1923, p. 156 who states that the fresco was for the facade.

¹⁶⁴ Canuti 1931, I, p. 290.

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*; Gnoli 1923, p. 156.

¹⁶⁶ ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 624, fol. 255r, unpublished.

¹⁶⁷ Canuti 1931, II, p. 261.

himself or whether he employed assistants, bearing in mind he was no longer renting the workshop in the Piazza Sopramuro. Orsini and Bombe judged the frescoes to have been painted by Giannicola di Paolo, a student of Perugino.¹⁶⁸ Although the fresco was seen by Gnoli in 1913, by then it was in poor condition having been detached from the wall and, by 1923, it was lost, so a definitive attribution is impossible.¹⁶⁹

These two contracts relating to the same scheme give several clues about Perugino's status in 1513. He was still receiving some new contracts in the *contado* and not merely completing contracts agreed in his heyday, but even here he was no longer the commissioners' first choice. The preference was for the next generation - his former pupils and assistants. His quality as a master does not appear to have been in question and he still commanded the same or substantially higher fees than his former assistants, though not at the consistently high levels he had once received. This pattern was repeated on several occasions when Perugino took over work initially awarded to his former students. In March 1521, he undertook a fresco scheme in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Spello when Giannicola di Paolo failed to deliver and his contract was identical to that negotiated with Giannicola.¹⁷⁰ In the same year, he completed Raphael's half-finished fresco in San Severo.

An exception to this pattern, where Perugino appears to have been the first choice to paint an altarpiece in the city itself, may be explained by previous interaction between the painter and the commissioner. Adriana Signorelli's 1517 commission for *The Transfiguration* in Santa Maria dei Servi, at a fee of 100 florins, may have been due to her satisfaction with Perugino's earlier *St. John the Baptist with other Saints* in San Francesco al Prato, which the family is likely to have commissioned, again highlighting the importance of ongoing family connections in Perugian patronal decisions. Perugino also appears to have been the first choice of the heirs of Giovanni di Matteo di Schiavone for whom he painted *The Madonna of Loreto* in the same church. Otherwise, new projects went to other local painters who continued to work in Perugino's style and repeat his motifs, even after his death from

¹⁶⁸ Orsini 1784 p. 184; Bombe 1912, p. 207.

¹⁶⁹ Gnoli 1915, p. 114. A search of the Berenson archive at Villa I Tatti, Settignano, failed to uncover any photographic record and Mary Berenson's notes make no reference to the frescoes.

¹⁷⁰ Lunghi 2004, p. 128.

the plague in 1523.

Influences from beyond Perugia

Few foreign painters worked permanently in Perugia after the departure of Raphael and Lo Spagna. The *matricola* lists eight foreign painters from the early sixteenth century who were required to pay 50 *soldi* each semester for the privilege of painting in the city. Three *garzoni* paid 20 *soldi*. However, many, if not all of these entries relate to the mid-1500s as the list includes Arrigo Fiammingo who was active then.¹⁷¹ Even so, a few external influences did penetrate the city and as the balance of political power increasingly swung towards Rome, it became the focus for artistic innovation.

Drawings sent by Raphael to Perugian artists provided an important source of ideas. Domenico Alfani received at least one drawing from him. His altarpiece for San Simone del Carmine that was painted with Pompeo d'Anselmo in 1520, was based on a drawing (Palais des Beaux-Arts, Lille cat. no. 458) sent to Alfani by Raphael from Florence in 1508.¹⁷² Both depict the Holy Family with Sts. Anne, Joachim and John the Baptist, with the only variation being the number of angels. In his 1518 *Virgin and Child with Sts. Gregory and Nicholas* for San Gregorio della Sapienza, Alfani's actively affectionate Child and thoughtful Madonna are closely modelled on Raphael's *Mackintosh Madonna* (c.1509-11, National Gallery London). A drawing related to this has a provenance from Perugia (British Museum, London) so Alfani could have worked directly from this.¹⁷³ A nude relief on the Virgin's throne has also been linked with a drawing by Raphael in the Ashmolean.¹⁷⁴ Despite being more animated, naturalistic and compositionally adventurous than his early Perugian work, these Raphael drawings remain Peruginesque in terms of atmosphere, figure types and the landscape setting. Consequently, the paintings derived from them did not break with the prevailing style.

While most Perugian artists' forays outside Umbria seem to have been infrequent, a few did travel and incorporated what they encountered into their work.

¹⁷¹ Manzoni 1904, p. 9.

¹⁷² Joannides 1983, no. 174r.

¹⁷³ Santi 1985, p. 168.

¹⁷⁴ Ferino Pagden 1982, p. 163.

Gianbattista Caporali spent some time in Rome. In 1508, he almost certainly attended a meal hosted by the architect Bramante at which several artists, including Perugino, Pintoricchio and Luca Signorelli were present. The meeting was seminal to him and he described it in the commentary to his translation of the first five books of Vitruvius's *Trattato di Architettura* which was published in 1536.¹⁷⁵ The son of Bartolomeo Caporali, Gianbattista entered the family business as a miniaturist and was inscribed in the painters' guild for Porta Eburnea in 1497.¹⁷⁶ He worked with Pintoricchio in Spello, but was not content to remain an artisan and aspired to elevate himself through education. His conscious efforts to distinguish himself from less cultured practitioners are revealed in his dedication to the sponsor of his Vitruvius which states that he was moved to undertake the work '*per fare opera la quale più giovevole e grata fusse a questi homini senza littere*'.¹⁷⁷

Another traveller was Berto di Giovanni who visited Rome in May 1516 to pin down Raphael for the nuns of Monteluca. His Sant'Agnese *Coronation* was based on a Raphael drawing that he probably obtained there. The style of Giovanni Francesco Penni and Giulio Romano, who completed the Monteluca *Coronation of the Virgin*, also affected Berto's work. His four predella scenes for that altarpiece depict *The Life of the Virgin* and are set in dark, architecturally imposing interiors (Figs. 5.14, 5.15). Oversized columns are truncated to enhance their dramatic scale and the tops of arches and ceilings hidden to give the impression of height. Strong light streams onto the figures from a high source, creating dark *chiaroscuro* effects and deep shadows. These, the intense colours - acid green, orange and magenta robes - and the exaggerated attitudes of the figures owe much to the Roman style of Penni and Romano, which entered Perugia at first hand upon delivery of the altarpiece in 1525. Penni visited Perugia for its inauguration and collected his final payment on 2 September 1525.¹⁷⁸

In the 1520s, Domenico Alfani became influenced by the new Roman style as interpreted by Florentine artists, although there is no evidence that he ever travelled

¹⁷⁵ Caporali 1536, p. 102r.

¹⁷⁶ Manzoni 1904, p. 62.

¹⁷⁷ Caporali 1536, dedication, unpaginated.

¹⁷⁸ Shearman 2003, p. 800.

to Rome or Florence.¹⁷⁹ His 1522 *Pietà* for a tympanum above an altar in Santa Maria Nuova is the first example in which his interest in the figurative style of Fra Bartolomeo and Andrea del Sarto can be detected.¹⁸⁰ But it was not until 1527 that Alfani came into direct contact with the new Roman style when he gave shelter to Rosso Fiorentino who had fled to Perugia following the Sack of Rome. In return for his hospitality, Rosso gave Alfani a drawing of *The Three Magi* upon which Alfani based his altarpiece for Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Castel Rigone, near Lake Trasimeno (ex-Rinuccini private collection, Florence). Both the altarpiece and Rosso's drawing are lost, but a 1574 engraving by Cherubino Alberti (British Museum, London) is thought to record the drawing in reverse and an old photograph of the painting survives.¹⁸¹

David Franklin has surmised that Alfani wanted a drawing in the new Roman manner so that he could study the latest fashion, but that he had to adapt it before he could use it in Perugia, highlighting 'the inappropriateness of Rosso's up-to-date design for this regional commission'.¹⁸² While Alfani did modify Rosso's design, the photograph reveals how different the altarpiece was from Alfani's usual production and how much of Rosso's style he had, in fact, adopted. While Alfani's altarpiece has less drama and movement than Rosso's drawing, as recorded in the engraving, it is more animated than the Peruginesque style previously employed by Alfani and other Perugian artists and its acceptance marks a change in Perugian taste and a willingness to accept the innovation.

Summary

Patterns of patronage in Perugian Franciscan establishments changed subtly during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. While the Peruginesque style was the style of choice, a taste for the manner of Pintoricchio and Caporali also continued into the second decade. Perugino was absent from the city for most of the first decade and, on his return, was unable to secure many new contracts, the preference now being for the next generation, many of whom had once been his pupils. Raphael, in particular, had grasped the opportunities afforded by Perugino's absence. While

¹⁷⁹ Franklin 1994, p. 157.

¹⁸⁰ Santi 1985, p. 169; Shearman 1965, II, p. 346.

¹⁸¹ Reproduced in Franklin 1994, pp. 158-9.

¹⁸² *ibid.*, p. 160.

his Perugian paintings were largely Peruginesque in character, they explored a range of compositional and emotional solutions beyond the stock of Perugino's models and the large-scale works he undertook were formative to his career. After his departure, Raphael maintained contact with Perugian artists, sending them drawings from time to time. Increasingly, local painters incorporated his motifs and compositional arrangements into their works, thereby enlivening and updating paintings that, nevertheless, remained essentially Peruginesque. Eusebio di San Giorgio's altarpiece for Antonio di Mele in San Francesco is a case in point.

The taste of certain groups of patrons was particularly influential upon the development of painting in the city. The patronage that Raphael received from the Baglioni and Oddi women, and the Franciscan establishments in which they were active, proved especially valuable, particularly when combined with the complementary patronal interests of Umbrian Franciscan officials. Their recommendations also helped establish coherent and unified patronal choices within the Franciscan province through the promotion of certain formulae such as Nativity and Coronation scenes, to the advantage of painters such as Perugino and Lo Spagna who regularly re-worked existing models to meet this requirement.

However, the ubiquity of the Peruginesque style led to artistic stagnation in Perugia in the late 1520s and beyond. The overwhelming patronal demand for just one style and the virtual monopoly of local painters that had facilitated the development of Perugino, Pintoricchio and later Raphael, now stifled innovation. Perugian painting expired long before Pope Paul III finally crushed the life out of the city by erecting the Rocca Paolina fortress in 1540.

Conclusion

This dissertation has studied patterns of patronage in Perugia by focusing on works created for Franciscan establishments that were commissioned by both lay and Franciscan patrons. It has found that Perugia's standing as a place of artistic patronage and production altered significantly during the course of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The reasons for these changes were numerous, involving painters, patrons and socio-political factors and can usefully be situated within a theoretical framework of cultural exchange.

Changes in Perugian production and reception

From around 1390 to 1460, local production was mainly of indifferent quality, with Perugian workshops producing predominantly ephemeral objects and small-scale devotional paintings. High quality, large-scale altarpieces were, almost without exception, entrusted to foreign artists. Initially, these painters tended to be Sienese but increasingly they were replaced by Florentine painters. There were also major contributions from painters originating in the Marche and Gubbio. This situation was reversed during the latter half of the *quattrocento*. Perugia changed from being a city with no significant home-grown artistic production which relied upon importing painters from other places, to one where local production was so dominant that foreign painters were rarely required.

By 1500, Perugia's leading painters, Perugino and Pintoricchio, were the most sought-after in Italy and the city had changed from being a net importer of paintings to a net exporter. Some of the largest and most adventurous altarpieces of the day were painted for Perugian churches, culminating in Raphael's *Baglioni Entombment*. But this highpoint of artistic production was short-lived. By 1510, Perugian painters were no longer in demand in the rest of Italy and, although local patrons continued to commission them in preference to foreigners, painting within the city rapidly declined.

Factors affecting the development of Perugian painting

Socio-political factors

While Perugia's political relationship with the Papal States was turbulent, the resultant cultural interactions were important. The imposition of papal authority

through resident legates and treasurers meant that there was a steady stream of high-ranking, well-educated officials entering the city. In turn, Perugian ambassadors representing the *comune* made frequent visits to Rome. The university was able to draw students from throughout the Papal States, including the future Pope Sixtus IV. The ties with Rome also seem to have encouraged Perugian artists to obtain work there, with Bonfigli, Perugino and Pintoricchio all receiving papal patronage.

At home, efforts were made to attract leading scholars to the university and the introduction of the printing press stimulated scholarly debate and learning. The extended rule of Braccio Baglioni from 1437-79 gave Perugia a period of relative stability during which artistic endeavours flourished, encouraged by Braccio's aspirations to be considered a humanist prince.¹⁸³ A spate of building work, including palaces, monasteries and churches, required decoration and increased the demand for paintings.

Factors concerning artists: training and travel

From the mid-1400s onwards, Perugian artists began to travel and work in other cities. Whereas they had previously taken elements from the works of foreign painters located in Perugian churches and palaces, now they worked alongside them in Rome and Florence. Perugia, as part of the Papal States, was governed from Rome, so there were close legislative and administrative links between the cities that resulted in much interaction between them. In addition, the vast amount of patronage engaged in by successive popes, required and attracted many artists to Rome, as it lacked its own, local painters. Benedetto Bonfigli was the first Perugian artist of note to paint in Rome and he worked for Fra Angelico, alongside Benozzo Gozzoli, in the papal palace. Later, Perugino and Pintoricchio both worked in the Sistine Chapel and the experience and prestige that they gained there was a springboard to their subsequent careers.

Crucially, Bonfigli and Perugino returned to set up workshops in Perugia, bringing the stylistic and iconographic fashions of papal Rome, to Perugia. Bonfigli incorporated many of the spatial and iconographic lessons of the St. Nicholas Chapel into his Perugian paintings, such as his frescoes in the Palazzo dei Priori and his

¹⁸³ Mancini 1992, pp. 18-20.

altarpiece for the Confraternity of St. Jerome, whilst combining it with the decorative elements and local genre scenes valued by the city's patrons. Prior to his Roman enterprise, the young Perugino had spent time in Florence and returned to Perugia where he deployed motifs and skills acquired in Verrocchio's studio. Later, Pintoricchio would bring the fashion for grotesques from papal circles in Rome, to his home town.

These travelling painters were agents in bringing 'foreign' aesthetics into Perugia. In Castelnuovo and Ginzburg's centre-periphery model, this was seen as a one-way influence, with peripheral cities, such as Perugia, simply adopting the style that their painters had learnt in the centre. But this fails to acknowledge that once these ideas arrived in the periphery, painters incorporated and modified them to meet local patrons' taste and requirements. Just as Pellegrino subtly changed Gentile da Fabriano's prototype Madonna and Child to meet Perugian tastes and traditions, Bonfigli reworked Fra Angelico's figures and architectural settings, adding recognisable local buildings and figures to his frescoes and *gonfalone*. This 'generation of difference', whereby the imitation of fashions from other centres is 'counterbalanced by assertions or performance of difference' emanating from the local area, both reflected and contributed to an increasing awareness of the city's identity and an appreciation of its home-grown painters.¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Georgia Clarke has shown that different 'performances' of a 'common festive and ceremonial mode like chivalry could serve to generate such differences' in Bologna.¹⁸⁵

Workshops

The new generation of local painters benefited from an early training in Perugian workshops with masters who had travelled and trained in other centres and, like them, appear to have undertaken extended visits to other centres. Perugino seems to have undergone an early apprenticeship in Perugia, before travelling to Florence and Pintoricchio is likely to have experienced Caporali's workshop and Perugino's Perugian workshop provided training for many painters.

¹⁸⁴ Campbell and Milner 2004, p. 3

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 3, 162-186.

Collaboration

In Perugia, collaborative commissions were important in disseminating style and taste. Projects involving several artists such as the *St. Bernardino Miracles* facilitated the exchange of ideas between painters. Collaborative enterprises also required painters to subsume their individual styles to attain a unified finished product. Several hands can be detected in the *St. Bernardino Miracles*, yet the overall effect is coherent. Collaboration also seems to have supported lesser known artists. In the *Giustizia Triptych* most of the painting seems to have been undertaken by Sante di Apollonio, despite Bartolomeo Caporali being named first in the payment schedule. Such collaborations, where the lead artist in the documentation had a low level of involvement in the execution, suggest a working practice where one master acted as manager or guarantor, for another, less well-established painter through a formalised collaboration.

Some projects were funded collaboratively, affording a large number of people a personal interest in the completed work. Agostino di Duccio's facade for the Oratory of San Bernardino received support from the Franciscans, the *comune* and public donations and, along with his Gate of San Pietro, reveals a desire for his Albertian-inspired aesthetic. The somewhat reluctant employment of a foreign sculptor when no suitable Perugian could be found for the San Bernardino chapel in the cathedral, demonstrates a preference for local artists, but not to the detriment of style and quality.

Agostino di Duccio's interpretation of local iconography and symbolism on the facade, which laid claim to the cult of St. Bernardino for Perugia, subverts the centre-periphery model whereby foreign artists are agents for the imposition of the symbols of the centre upon an unwilling, or at least unresisting, periphery. The Perugians used a Florentine sculptor to promote Perugian interests. The periphery's ability to manipulate artists from the centre for its own cultural and political ends should not be underestimated. In Pistoia, Florentine sculptors were chosen to work on high profile monuments intent on celebrating that city's own independence.¹⁸⁶ The employment of the foreign artist guaranteed high quality work but also gave it a seal of approval. Siena's apparent success in enticing Donatello to leave Florence

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 221.

and live out his days there was a huge coup for that city.¹⁸⁷ The government required him to live in Siena and set up a workshop, then revelled in the glory of having secured both the services and the presence of the most famous artist of the day.

The presence of painters who were informed about up-to-date developments from their own travels and from collaborative exchanges, gave rise to a body of Perugian artists able to create significant artistic works in response to the demands of local patrons. Any lingering doubts as to the desirability of employing local painters would have been allayed by the priors' decision to commission Bonfigli to fresco their palace and Filippo Lippi's approval of his work. The employment of local artists was underpinned by positive discrimination from the city authorities. On at least one occasion, the *comune* stated that financial assistance would only be forthcoming if a local painter were commissioned. The model is of a city that interacts with other centres for artistic training and inspiration, but which is self-sufficient in terms of production, at least in the field of painting. Styles and motifs from elsewhere, especially Rome and Florence, were appropriated, modified and reworked for a Perugian context.

Factors affecting patrons and patronal networks

This thesis has found that local patrons were crucial to the development of painting in Perugia. Informal patronal networks, as well as the formalised collaborative enterprises identified above, helped to establish a demand for paintings and promoted painters able to meet it.¹⁸⁸

The networks pertaining to Franciscan commissions encompassed both professional and domestic spheres. Structural connections existed between the Provincial Vicars, the Guardians of the monasteries and convents, the abbots and abbesses and their procurators. As well as ensuring liturgical requirements were met, these networks promoted certain iconographical themes, such as Nativity crib scenes and depictions of the Coronation of the Virgin. Their responsibilities and associations extended beyond Perugia, across the Franciscan province, increasing

¹⁸⁷ Syson 2007, pp. 52-53. Donatello only remained in Siena until 1461, eventually dying in Florence in 1466.

¹⁸⁸ For a similar unity of purpose in patronal tastes in Siena see Angelini 2007, p. 31.

awareness of artistic developments in other places, such as Raphael's work for the order in Città di Castello. Within Perugia, clerics are known to have visited other churches for convocations and major services. Before *clausura*, female tertiaries could travel and even later, abbesses attended meetings in other convents, providing opportunities to see or hear about new paintings. It is clear from the number of documents referring to other paintings that commissioners from within the order, as well as private donors, were well aware of artistic developments elsewhere and desired to equal or outdo them. Within individual establishments, coherent visual patterns of choice can be detected, such as those made by the nuns of Monteluca who sought a Florentine aesthetic as implemented by local painters.

Braccio Baglioni's cultural aspirations helped establish an atmosphere where the arts were encouraged and his practice, in the latter part of his rule, of patronising local painters was adopted by his extended family. Family networks appear to have been important agencies in the development of taste and the encouragement of particular artists. In Franciscan circles, these connections continued after family members entered holy orders, creating a web of contacts that extended across the city encompassing clerics, tertiaries and lay people. Connections between family members, notably the Baglioni and Oddi women, seem to have influenced many patronal decisions, with lay and religious women regularly commissioning artists whom their relatives had previously employed and, presumably, recommended. Such women would have shared common visual experiences before entering into marriage or taking orders, so it is not surprising that they took up the same painters. But additionally, these female patrons, perhaps empowered by their early exposure to artistic commissioning and the example of their families, were prepared to go beyond the norm and take risks with new painters, formats and iconography. The early careers of Perugino and Raphael were advanced by Franciscan patrons and Raphael, in particular, benefited from female family networks that operated in parallel with those of the order.

In the lay sphere, confraternities provided close-knit forums where members, some of whom were themselves painters, were often involved in multiple collective commissions to leading artists. Their more prominent members were privy to major public commissions and would have brought their expertise into the confraternity.

For others, confraternities provided opportunities to participate in communal commissions, thereby extending the community's engagement in artistic ventures. Works for lay confraternities were often funded by contributions from many members, such as Matteo Bartolomeo's legacy of 20 florins towards Bonfigli's altarpiece for the Confraternity of Sts Jerome (Appendix 2.2).

Another, largely unacknowledged, network that was important in city life involved the notaries. They enjoyed privileged access to commissioners and painters and for some, such as Ser Giacomo di Cristofano, their work took them into monasteries, convents, private homes and civic buildings where paintings were displayed. While not necessarily engaging in acts of patronage themselves, they had an important function in formalising relationships between artists and patrons and were well placed to make influential recommendations.

These networks often overlapped and complemented one another, creating a complex web of interaction through which patronal choices could be informed and influenced.

The highpoint of Perugian painting

From around 1480 until the beginning of the sixteenth century, Perugian painting reached a highpoint. At home, satisfaction with local painters and their style was complete. The only outsiders to receive major commissions were Signorelli and later, Raphael. Signorelli's commission for the altarpiece in the cathedral can be explained by the painter and patron's common origins in Cortona, while Raphael adopted Perugino's style so thoroughly that his paintings were almost indistinguishable from the Perugian's.¹⁸⁹ Some of the largest, most expensive and innovative altarpieces in Italy were created for Perugian churches, such as Perugino's altarpiece for San Pietro and Raphael's *Baglioni Entombment* for San Francesco al Prato.

In a new development, the Perugian painters, Perugino and Pintoricchio, became the most desired painters throughout Italy and beyond. Although some of the

¹⁸⁹ Vasari 1550 and 1568, IV, p. 158.

concerns and styles of Rome and Florence did affect the way they painted, their painting remained their own. Perugino had trained in Florence under Verrocchio but his mature style was an amalgam of his Florentine and Perugian formative experiences. His success in Florence meant that elements of Perugian style were adopted by the centre. This is a reversal of the usually accepted direction of influence and demonstrates that 'translation' or the exchange of influence is a two-way process which does not only move from the centre into the periphery as proposed by theories of centre and periphery. The presumed 'impermeability' of the centre is a false assumption, as the centre soaks up the incoming iconography and style.¹⁹⁰

Perugian patrons afforded the young Raphael openings that would not have been available to him in a major centre. The close family and religious patronal networks helped him to become established quickly at a time when the other major painters were out of the city. Free of the competitive constraints found in major centres, peripheral places can therefore be places of opportunity for artists yet to make their name elsewhere. This is not to say that such work is unworthy of a major centre, but acknowledges that the fierce competition there makes it difficult for unproven artists to establish their credentials. Raphael's stay in Florence was characterised by small-scale portraits and devotional Madonna and Child panels and he received only one major altarpiece commission. In Perugia, the absence of the city's leading artists created a vacuum of talent which discerning local patrons were keen to fill with a talented incomer able to paint in the style they preferred.

The decline

Perugia's artistic pre-eminence was fleeting. Although it produced several major painters, it was unable to retain them all and the lack of real competition was problematic. Pintoricchio maintained connections with his home city, but worked predominantly in Rome and, later, Siena and never had a permanent Perugian workshop. Raphael moved to Florence and then Rome and seems unlikely to have returned even if this were not precluded by his premature death. Even Perugino was absent for lengthy periods and, with a Florentine wife and workshop, may have considered himself based in Florence.

¹⁹⁰ Campbell and Milner 2004, p. 138.

Perugino's Perugian workshop faced little competition and the overwhelming demand for his style meant that any rivals had little option but to adopt it. In the 1460s-1480s, collaborative commissions had been one of Perugia's great strengths allowing the development of a self-contained independence and 20 years of local success. But it is arguable that Perugino's over-development of that collaboration and his subsuming of it into one highly controlled workshop, stifled innovation.

Relatively swiftly, Perugia became more artistically isolated than it had been for generations. Local painters stopped travelling to other cities to study and work, training instead in Perugino's workshop. While this equipped them to meet the demand for his style, its inherent conservatism meant that innovation ceased. This need not have been fatal had local artists been invigorated by incoming foreign painters. In Florence, the core of painters was constantly shifting; painters moved on and were replaced by others of equally high calibre. But this was not the case in Perugia where the pool was relatively small and those foreign painters who were present also adopted Perugino's style, presumably in response to patronal demand. Competition was stifled and momentum lost.

By 1510, Perugia was playing no part in artistic endeavours outside its immediate neighbourhood. Its painters interacted mainly with each other and had few encounters with the painters or the ideas from other places. The city's production became self-referential, recycling its own, once fashionable ideas, with only an indirect awareness of developments in Florence and Rome. This lack of incoming ideas and curtailment of cultural exchange was not so much due to resistance to innovation as lack of exposure to it. When new ideas did arrive, as with Rosso Fiorentino's sketch for Domenico Alfani, there seems to have been some appetite for them, but the infrastructure that should have encouraged regular interaction barely existed.

The satisfaction of patrons and painters with the existing canon should not inevitably lead to a charge of inferior quality or complete lack of innovation, such as

Kubler associated with the periphery.¹⁹¹ Perugino's return resulted in several important altarpieces, in which he varied his style, adopting sketchier brushwork and thinner, sometimes translucent paint and acid colours, although his compositions and iconography remained largely unchanged. As Castelnuovo and Ginzburg envisaged, the periphery provided a forum in which older painters, perhaps unwilling to adopt the changing fashions of the 'centre' could continue to work and develop, even if their products differed from the fashionable mainstream. Nor does the repetition of a formula necessarily indicate that patrons and painters were bereft of ideas. The frequent requirement for *modo et forma* paintings in Franciscan commissions can be attributed to a requirement for paintings with similar iconography to meet liturgical needs and to promote a particular ideology. The series of altarpieces based on Ghirlandaio's Narni *Coronation of the Virgin* are dependent upon, but not static in their adherence to, the original.

These repetitions also show how patrons outside the mainstream continued to appropriate iconographic motifs from other places whilst modifying them to meet their own, requirements. This imposition of local preferences can be seen as a 'generation of difference', as described in models of cultural exchange and translation theories. It affords peripheral patrons a greater degree of autonomy and commissioning independence than earlier models of centre and periphery allowed and provides a more nuanced understanding of the role of patrons outside major centres.

Repetition of a prototype also allowed artists to refine a model, as in Perugino's series of open air *Nativities*, which helped facilitate the spread of the Franciscan cult of the crib scene. The fact that 'coarse' replication sometimes takes place does not mean that all repetition in the periphery is without invention. However, when contentment with the Peruginesque style became fixed to the exclusion of external enlivenment, innovation was eventually stifled.

In conclusion, theories of cultural exchange and translation are useful tools in understanding the spread of ideas, allowing a flexible approach to the periphery and

¹⁹¹ Kubler

its relationship with other centres. Ideas are generated in both places and influences flow between them in both directions through a process of cultural exchange involving selection and assimilation. Local networks provide a matrix within which patronal preferences can be exchanged and painters and styles promoted, independently of pressures from other centres. The creative opportunities afforded by the periphery and its patrons are valuable, and variations from original prototypes can be seen as deliberate generation of differences. This thesis does not seek to reclassify artistic places such as Perugia as 'centres', but argues that the creativity that they engendered should be more fully acknowledged.

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Abbreviations

ADP Archivio Diocesano Perugia
AFSF Archivio della Fraternita di San Francesco
ASCP Archivio Storico del Comune di Perugia
ASF Archivio di Stato di Firenze
ASP Archivio di Stato di Perugia
BAP Biblioteca Augusta Perugia
CRS Corporazione Religiose Soppresse
MAP Mediceo avanti il principato
SBF Sodalizio Braccio Fortebraccio, Perugia

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ADP, *Visitale Diocesano* 1564-1568.
ASF, MAP, VII, 4.
ASF, NA, 19296 (già S. 865) 1426.
ASP, *Annali Decemviri*.
ASP, *Archivio del Nobile Collegio del Cambio*, 293.
ASP, *Catasti*, II, reg. 7, 17, 35.
ASP, *Consigli e riformanze*, 86, 87, 88, 89, 97, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 108, 109, 110, 117, 119, 123, 226.
ASP, CRS, *Confraternita di S. Andrea e S. Bernardino*, 91; uncatalogued, entitled *In questo libro chiamato memoriale X di charte 216, nel quale se scrive anno tutte li debitori e creditor della fraternita, 1464-1510*.
ASP, CRS, *Monteluce*, 69.
ASP, CRS, *San Domenico, Miscellanea*, 59.
ASP, CRS, *San Francesco al Prato, Miscellanea*, 3, 4, 15, 18, 19, 20, 35.
ASP, *Giudiziario, Miscellanea, "Pozzo"*.
ASP, *Notarile, Bastardelli*, 262, 691.
ASP, *Notarile, Protocolli*, 7, 24, 94, 142, 154, 156, 211, 226, 232, 244, 253, 277, 327, 378, 431, 432, 433, 474, 529, 546, 614, 624, 652, 731, 756, 769, 784, 1065.
ASP, *San Domenico*, 35.

ASP, ASCP, *Depositario Tesoriere*, 64.
 ASR, *Camerale I, Tesoreria Segreta*, 1283, 1284.
 BAP, ms. 3106.
 BAP, *Memoriale del Monastero di Sant'Antonio da Padova*, 1585-1630, ms 1404.
 BAP, *Registro della chiesa e della sacristia di S. Domenico iniziato nel 1548 da frate Domenico Baglioni*, ms.1232.
 BAP, Lancellotti, P.O., *Scorta Sagra*, B, 4, 1, fol. 9r.
 SBF, AFSF, *Inventari diversi*, 467.
 SBF, AFSF, *Libro dell'Entrate ed Uscita delle confraternite dei Disciplinati*, B, II, III.
 SBF, AFSF, *Libro del Ospedale de la Fraternita*, B, I, 63, 77.
 SBF, AFSF, *Libro maestro* 424.
 SBF, AFSF, *Libro dei verbali*, 456, 1477, 1482, 1488.
 SBF, *Fondo di S. Agostino, Mastri*, 408.
 SBF, *Libri Contabili*, 47, 63, 76, 424.
 SBF, *San Francesco Nomina Confratrum Defunctorum*, B I, 467; B, IV, 472.

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Appendix 1(i): List of Illustrations

Paintings are in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia unless otherwise stated.

- 1.1. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Palazzo Comunale, Narni.
- 1.2. Lo Spagna, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Pinacoteca Comunale, Todi.
- 1.3. Lo Spagna, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Pinacoteca Comunale, Trevi.
- 1.4. Sinibaldo Ibi, *Madonna and Child with Saint*.
- 1.5. Giannicola di Paolo, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, Louvre Museum, Paris.
- 2.1. Taddeo di Bartolo, *San Francesco al Prato Polyptych (recto)*.
- 2.2. As 2.1 (*verso*).
- 2.3. Taddeo di Bartolo, *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, Perkins Collection, Assisi.
- 2.4. Gentile da Fabriano, *Madonna and Child*.
- 2.5. Benedetto Bonfigli, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, El Paso Museum of Art, Texas; Museo dell'Abbazia, Montserrat; location unknown.
- 2.6. Pellegrino, *Madonna and Child*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
- 2.7. Detail of 2.6.
- 2.8. Policleto di Cola(?), *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels*.
- 2.9. Bicci di Lorenzo, *St. Agnes Altarpiece*.
- 2.10. Fra Angelico, *Guidalotti Altarpiece*.
- 2.11. Benozzo Gozzoli, *Sapienza Nuova Altarpiece*.
- 2.12. Piero della Francesca, *Sant'Antonio Altarpiece*.
- 2.13. Mariano d'Antonio, *The Miracles of St. Anthony of Padua*.
- 3.1. Benedetto Bonfigli, *Second translation of the relics of St. Herculanus*.
- 3.2. Battista di Baldassare Mattioli, *Tabula Salvatoris*, Museo Capitolare, Perugia.
- 3.3. Giovanni Boccati, *Madonna of the Orchestra*.
- 3.4. Benedetto Bonfigli, *Madonna and Child with Sts. Thomas Aquinas, Jerome, Francis and Bernardino of Siena*.
- 3.5. Benedetto Bonfigli, *Adoration of the Magi*.
- 3.6. Giovan Francesco da Rimini, *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Francis*.
- 3.7. Benedetto Bonfigli, *San Francesco al Prato Gonfalone*, Oratorio of San Bernardino, Perugia.
- 3.8. Benedetto Bonfigli, *Eight Angels offering Roses*.
- 3.9. Follower of Bonfigli or Caporali(?), *Eight Angels with Instruments of the*

Passion.

3.10. Benedetto Bonfigli, *St. Bernardino Gonfalone*.

3.11. Agostino di Duccio, *Facade of Oratory of San Bernardino*, Perugia.

3.12. Detail of 3.11, *Poverty*.

3.13. Detail of 3.11, *St. Bernardino preaching*.

3.14. *Miracles of St. Bernardino of Siena*.

3.15. Workshop of Andrea Verrocchio, Pietro Perugino(?), *Virgin and Child with two Angels*, National Gallery, London.

3.16. Workshop of Andrea Verrocchio, Pietro Perugino(?) *Tobias and the Angel*, National Gallery, London.

3.17. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, *Madonna della Misericordia*.

3.18. Bartolomeo Caporali and Sante di Apollonio, *Giustizia Triptych*.

3.19. Workshop of Bartolomeo Caporali(?), *Madonna and Six Angels*.

3.20. Bartolomeo Caporali, *Adoration of the Shepherds*.

3.21. Pietro Perugino, *Adoration of the Magi*.

3.22. Francesco di Simone Ferrucci, *Tabernacle*, Church of Santa Maria di Monteluca.

3.23. Bartolomeo Caporali(?), *Sts. Francis of Assisi, Herculanius, Luke and the Apostle, Jacob the Elder*, The Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

3.24. As 3.23, *Sts. Nicholas, Lawrence, Peter Martyr and Anthony of Padua*.

4.1. Pietro Perugino, *St. Sebastian*, Santa Maria Assunta, Cerqueto.

4.2. Raphael, *Marriage of the Virgin*, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

4.3. Pietro Perugino, *Marriage of the Virgin*, Musée des Beaux Arts, Caen.

4.4. Pietro Perugino(?), *Pietà, with St. Jerome and Mary Magdalen*.

4.5. Pietro Perugino, *God the Father with Sts. Romano and Roch*, Pinacoteca Comunale, Deruta.

4.6. Pietro Perugino(?), *St. Sebastian and St. Anthony of Padua*, Musée des Beaux Arts, Nantes.

4.7. Luca Signorelli, *St. Onuphrius Altarpiece*, Museo Diocesano, Perugia.

4.8. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, *Crucifixion*, Santa Maria di Monteluca, Perugia.

4.9. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, *Crucifixion with Saints*, Santa Maria di Monteluca, Perugia.

4.10. Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, *Niche of San Francesco al Prato with statue of St. Francis*.

- 4.11. Detail of 4.10, *St. Bonaventure*.
- 4.12. Pietro Perugino, *Resurrection*, Vatican Museums, Rome.
- 4.13. Pietro di Galeotto(?), *Flagellation of Christ*, Oratorio of San Francesco, Perugia.
- 4.14. Workshop of Pietro Perugino(?), *St. Francis with four Disciplinati*.
- 4.15. Pietro Perugino, *Gonfalone della Giustizia*.
- 4.16. Pintoricchio, *Altarpiece of Santa Maria dei Fossi*.
- 4.17. Pintoricchio, Detail of *Nativity*, Baglioni Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Spello.
- 5.1. Raphael, *Oddi Coronation of the Virgin*, Vatican Museums, Vatican City.
- 5.2. Raphael, *Baglioni Entombment*, Galleria Borghese, Rome.
- 5.3. Pietro Perugino, *Lamentation*, Palazzo Pitti, Florence.
- 5.4. Raphael, *Colonna Altarpiece*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 5.5. Pintoricchio, *Madonna and Child with St. John*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.
- 5.6. Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Vatican Museums, Vatican City.
- 5.7. Pietro Perugino, *St. John the Baptist and Saints*.
- 5.8. Pietro Perugino, *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*.
- 5.9. Eusebio di San Giorgio, *Virgin and Three Saints*.
- 5.10. Raphael, *Madonna and Child (Solly Madonna)*, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.
- 5.11. Pietro Perugino, *Nativity*.
- 5.12. Pietro Perugino, recto: *Crucifixion with Saints*; verso: *Coronation of the Virgin*.
- 5.13. Pietro Perugino, *Madonna delle Grazie and Saints*, Monastery of Sant'Agnese, Perugia.
- 5.14. Berto di Giovanni, Predella of Fig. 5.6, *Birth of the Virgin*.
- 5.15. As 5.14, *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*.

Appendix 1(ii): Illustrations



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