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CONTENTS

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A Reexamination of Nicola Pisano's Pulpits for the Pisa Baptistery and Siena Cathedral

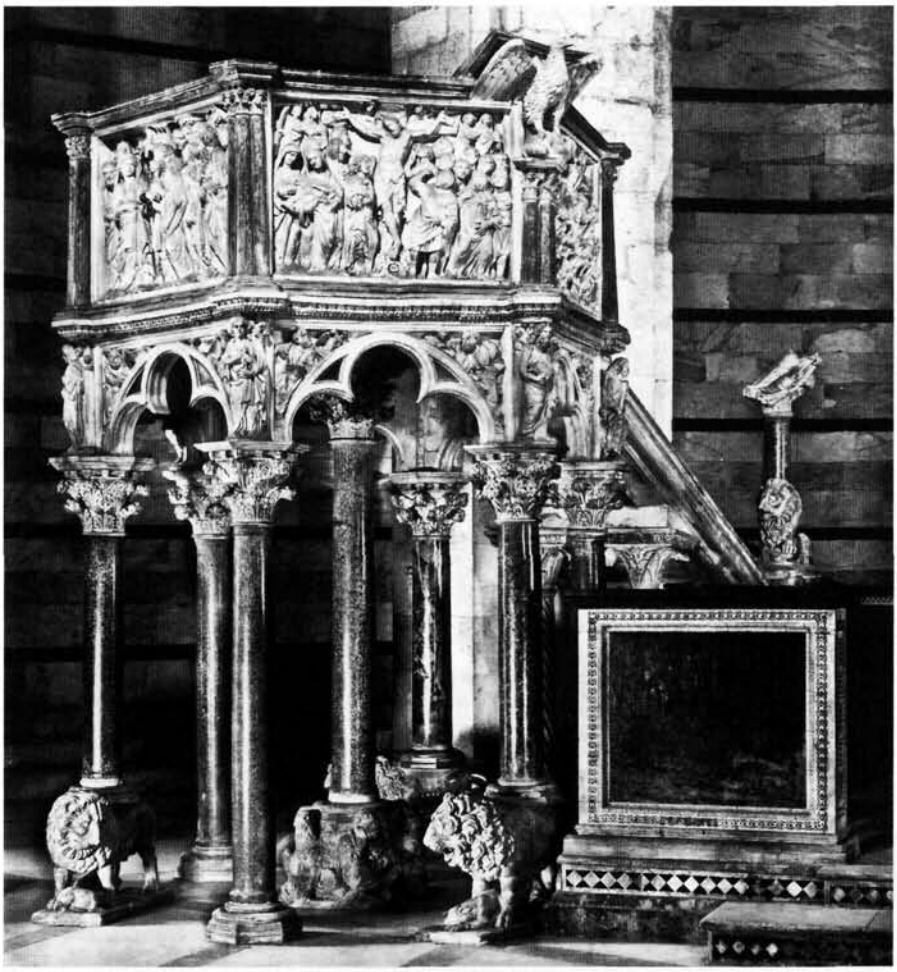
Lisa Marie Rafanelli

The aim of this article is to contribute to a better understanding of the narrative relief panels of Nicola Pisano's mid-13th century pulpits for the Pisa Baptistery (Fig. 1) and Siena Cathedral (Fig. 2). In order to take a fresh look at these well-known works, I have focused on the liturgical functions of and parishioners' relationships to the pulpits and the reliefs, as well as on social and historical context. Until quite recently, scholars approached the pulpits by subjecting their historiated reliefs or other sculptural details to one of two types of formal analysis — iconographic or stylistic — with scant mention of actual or intended function.[1] Within the rubric of stylistic analysis, the pulpits are said to evidence an evolution, loosely characterized as progressing from antiquicizing to gothicizing.[2] Consequentially, discussion has often been limited to identifying influences and sources external to each pulpit (from the probable to the hypothetical) in order to explain the differences in the way the structures, relief panels or other sculptural details look.

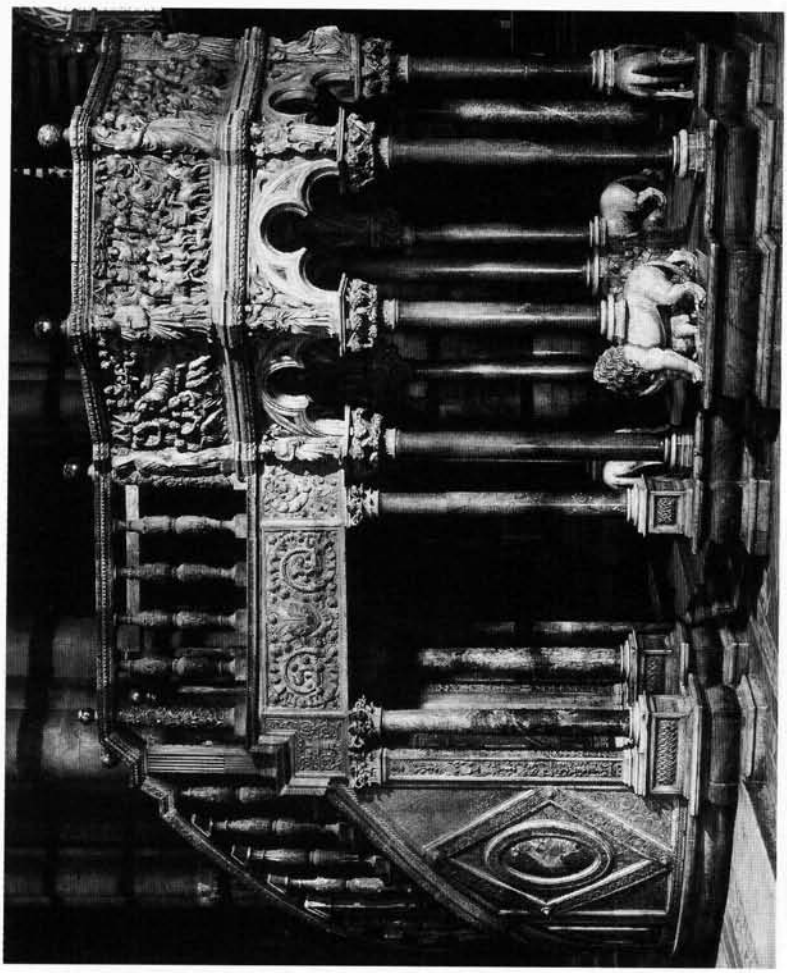
Seymour's description of Nicola Pisano's first pulpit, the Pisa Baptistery, carved between 1255 and 1260,[3] is typical of this outmoded approach. He describes the pulpit reliefs as "heroic,"[4] linking their style to well-known local Pisan antiquities.[5] Although this prescient "surface" classicism misses the mark of what is seen as a true Renaissance understanding of antiquity,[6] it was nevertheless a radical enough deviation from the norm to spark a counter-revolution, in which sculpture was "re-gothiciz[ed]."[7] Seymour claims that Nicola's nascent classicism was immediately "undermined" in his own later works,[8] such as the Siena Cathedral pulpit, carved between 1265 and 1268.[9] This work is said to be more *Gothic*, in this case meaning influenced by *French* artistic models.[10] The pejorative cast given to this stylistic (d)evolution is unmistakable: the Siena pulpit is described as lyric rather than epic, and not altogether surprisingly, more "feminine."[11]

This formal methodological approach presupposes the now suspect teleological model of artistic progress in Renaissance Italy handed down to us by Vasari: progress is achieved through the efforts of individual geniuses, and measured by artists' gradual understanding of antiquity. Is it any wonder that Nicola's apparent shift away from the antique in the Sienese pulpit is frequently excused by evidence of workshop intervention?[12] Even though studio assistants worked with Nicola on both pulpits, it is for the Siena pulpit that collaboration is stressed.

Polemics aside, style and stylistic differences are of course ultimately crucial to a full and accurate understanding of the way the pulpits look. But stylistic analysis divorced from any discussion of function places the proverbial cart before the horse. The admittedly perceptible differences not only between the two pulpits and those that came before them, but also between the two pulpits themselves, are perhaps better explained *first* in a way that is internal to the pulpits—namely as related to their function and location— rather than the heightened or lessened "influence," or reception of antique, French, or any other models. Such an approach broadens the parameters of the scholarly dialogue, and allows the affinities and differences between the Pisa and Siena pulpit reliefs to take on a new complexity. Further, what is otherwise



1. Nicola Pisano and Workshop, Pulpit, Pisa Baptisery, 1255-1260. (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource)



2. Nicola Pisano and Workshop, Pulpit, Siena Cathedral, 1265-1268. (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

3. Detail of *Nativity*, Pisa Baptisery Pulpit (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

4. Detail of *Nativity*, Siena Cathedral Pulpit. (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

5. Detail of *Last Judgment*, Pisa Baptisery Pulpit. (Photo: Alinari/Art Resource)

simply presumed becomes explicit—that the historiated reliefs are the most privileged embellishment on the pulpits. Finally, such an approach underscores the fact that stylistic trends need not be *the* determining factor in why objects look the way they do,[13] and thereby raises important questions about artistic meaning and stylistic choice in Dugento Italy.

Specifically, the historiated panels of Nicola's pulpits represent a shift from earlier representational traditions characterized by more symbolic or objective religious imagery to a more expressive, communicative, instrumental Christian art. While written and visual narratives were well-established components of both Christian teaching and church decoration, both underwent marked changes beginning in about the mid-Dugento. More than ever both the verbal and visual arts were geared toward instruction and stimulating "affective piety."[14] It is well known that these phenomena are due largely to the ascendancy of the Mendicant preaching orders in the 13th century.

The revivalistic tendencies of the Mendicants, propagated through a newly emotional, affective style of oral and written religious instruction, were aimed at making the stories and lessons of the Bible more vivid, and truer to real-life experience.[15] The new trends in verbal culture involved telling Biblical tales in a more "novel-like" fashion, and invited empathy or "sympathetic and affective participation" on the part of the audience.[16] Belief was enhanced and piety stimulated by a new focus on Christ's humanity, his Passion and his suffering— both within and outside the context of the Roman Catholic Mass.[17]

The visual arts of this period are also said to have become more affective in tenor, manifesting a new focus on instructive pictorial narration that communicated feelings and emotions, as well as the story-line of the Biblical text.[18] Nicola's Pisa pulpit reliefs evidence this paradigm shift towards these characteristics. This shift is linked to the function and location of the pulpits, factors intimately connected to the new cultural and religious trends. Specifically, because of the new focus on preaching in this period, the sermon began to gain gradual independence from the rites of the Mass. Perhaps as a result of this, there was a perceptible migration of the preacher's lectern or *ambo* from beside the altar into the nave of the church; the *ambo* became a pulpit.[19] More visible and more necessary than ever, whether in secular or Mendicant churches,[20] it appears that pulpits became increasingly prominent and specialized forms of church furnishing.[21]

Primary evidence of the shift occasioned by Nicola's Pisa pulpit is revealed in the comparison of it with Guglielmo's mid 12th century pulpit, located in the Cathedral of Pisa until the early 1300's.[22] At first blush, Nicola's pulpit seems traditional in its architectonic composition: from the speaker's platform elevated on columns to the casket covered with historiated relief panels of the Life of Christ. Nevertheless, the Pisa pulpit is different in at least two significant ways from its predecessor: the free-standing, polygonal shape,[23] and the ways in which the narrative reliefs are both represented and presented.

The hexagonal shape of the Pisa Baptistery pulpit would have been more conducive to gatherings of parishioners. While the pulpit was moved from the right of the baptismal font to its left following the Council of Trent,[24] it has always been free standing, and therefore visible from all sides. Although it is difficult to know which change came first, a similar concern — visibility — seems to have been the impetus behind the historiated reliefs as well.

Nicola has completely abandoned the *paliotto* composition type,[25] thus eliminating horizontal divisions between the narrative scenes, enlarging the size of the reliefs, and concomitantly reducing the number of episodes depicted. The reduction in the number of scenes means that each *historia* needed to embody enough information and variety to remain inspirational and interesting. Each moment chosen had to convey more potently the emotional impact and symbolic importance of Christ's whole life. Nicola met this challenge less by choosing a new type of subject matter,[26] than by making the narrative panels the unequivocal focus of the entire pulpit. The reliefs, for example, are more legible than those of Guglielmo's pulpit: they are larger, carved in deeper relief, and framed with more sumptuous detail. But increased size, visual clarity and lavishness are only part of the story; Nicola also provided new means of engaging the attention of the parishioners,[27] not only by using immediately recognizable antique references replete with civic significance,[28] but additionally by carving figures that interact with and react to each other by way of more exaggerated gesture, gaze, and facial expression.

Michael Baxandall has demonstrated that in the 15th century Renaissance artists utilized familiar gestures, facial expressions, and other crystallized rhetorical flourishes (familiar principally through preaching practices), to endow painted or sculpted figures with recognizable emotions.[29] It was part of the common understanding of the period that outward appearance or body language conveyed the existence of inner emotions or states of being.[30] A successful work of art would instruct and engage the viewer by providing recognizable reactions on the part of the narrative participants to

the events depicted. The viewer could draw inferences about the state of mind being represented and thus empathize with these emotions.

In the mid-Dugento Nicola achieved a similar emotional connection by means of such "rhetorical" tools of gesture and gaze. Perhaps Nicola was similarly inspired by the new instructive mode of preaching, as well as by local antiquities, models specifically chosen to help create this newly affective pictorial narration. If there were multiple inspirations, the result is unequivocal: the story of Christ's life on the Pisa pulpit is presented in a more articulate, readable, and therefore more convincing manner than on its 12th century counterpart. The next question is whether this quest is continued or "undermined" in the Siena Cathedral pulpit.

It is clear that the Pisan and Sienese pulpits are in dialogue with each other. Both are polygonal, freestanding speaker's platforms, which were placed in relatively unobstructed locations visible to most parishioners.[31] Both have elevated caskets adorned with carved, historiated relief panels depicting scenes from Christ's life. Both pulpits were used in the spoken or sung parts of the liturgy. Both stood as eloquent and monumental testimonies to the growing importance of preaching and the sermon in the 13th century. And finally, as the *symbol* of preaching, both pulpits may have been used not only for liturgical purposes, but for public-relations purposes in this competitive religious environment.

A different type of competition, this time civic, may have also played a role in the Sienese pulpit commission.[32] Both the Pisa and Siena pulpits ornamented spaces which were at least partially civic in nature.[33] If the pulpits partly served as icons of civic pride and identity, it should come as no surprise that well known local antiquities, symbolizing each respective cities' ancient heritage, or *Romanitas*, are openly referred to on both.[34] The case for competition is circumstantial but compelling nonetheless. Five years after Nicola completed the Pisa Baptistery pulpit, Sienese religious and civic authorities commissioned him to outdo himself. Apparently, their prior *majus pulpitum* would no longer do.[35] Perhaps it was a point of pride for the Sienese to have a larger, more sumptuous pulpit in their Cathedral than the Pisans had in their Baptistery.[36] Increased size and elevation had a practical side, of course, given the size of the cathedral and length of its nave. Siena's pulpit had to be bigger to be seen.

Although liturgical and civic function may explain the larger size and perhaps even the increased amount of sculpted embellishment on the Siena pulpit, it does not at first blush necessarily explain why the Sienese pulpit contains seven *narrative* panels, while the Pisa pulpit has only five. After all, an enlarged pulpit need not be covered with more narrative relief panels. Nor was it absolutely necessary to include within more of the individual panels two or more distinct narrative moments — in other words, to utilize the continuous narrative format (more so than in Pisa). Nor was it necessary to replace the Pisan device of triple column clusters framing the historiated relief panels with actual figures, a detail that gives the impression of a continuous stream of narrative rather than distinct episodes. Nor do these reasons account for the growing exploration of spatial and temporal depth on the Siena pulpit, as if the stories and moments represented not only break out of their lateral confines, but push inward into both space and time.[37]

The historiated relief panels were quite clearly the most important embellishment on the pulpits. Pictorial narration played a variety of semiotic roles that complemented the functions of the pulpit: privileging the preacher, his words, and his sponsoring

institution(s).[38] But even more importantly, the narrative reliefs contributed to the didactic efficacy of the preaching that took place from the pulpits by providing a visual complement to the sermon that served as an additional means of addressing the lay and clerical spectators. The stories represented were presumably well-known even to an "illiterate" churchgoer, or at the very least might have been explained by the preacher during the sermon. The greater number of narrative panels on the Siena pulpit was meant to exploit the potential of the "good thing" begun in Pisa. The proving ground for the new mode of pictorial narration, however, was not in the sheer quantity of narrative panels, but in the complex and communicative format, or style, of the reliefs.

Before turning to the differences between the narrative relief panels of the Pisa and Siena pulpits, it is instructive to take note of certain internal changes in the Pisan pulpit reliefs. In what may be one of the earliest narrative panels carved for the Pisa pulpit, the Nativity (Fig. 3), the stories of Christ's birth are articulated with a new sense of clarity, grandeur and persuasiveness, whereas in what may be one of the last panels carved,[39] the Last Judgment (Fig. 5), the spectator is presented with a far more complex and ornate scene. The later relief is covered with more and smaller figures, which exhibit greater variety in body position, gaze and gesture, and are more interactive with both each other and with the spectators. It is interesting that the dating of these panels, along with their relative artistic inspirations, has been actively debated: timing, after all, is crucial to the idea of stylistic revolution and counter-revolution.

The composition of tàe LKst Judgment is of course linked to the requirements of the subject matter; there was a need to represent crowds in a variety of emotional states, some ecstatic, some tortured. Additional sanction for the increased didacticism and emotionalism of this scene came from the new liturgical and devotional literature which made vivid Christ's passion and the inevitable consequences of his second coming.[40] The newly impassioned style of preaching, involving verbal images of Christ's corporeal being and suffering, and vivid descriptions of hell, was aimed at enhancing belief. Images followed suit. It is therefore particularly appropriate that for the Last Judgment, as well as for the Crucifixion, a more dramatic and affective visual narrative was sought.

Although these potentially late panels are often said to be predominantly inspired by French Gothic prototypes,[41] or to be the product of a younger workshop apprentice,[42] a slightly more complex set of choices or circumstances seems to be at work. These particular historiated reliefs which stress Christ's humanity and his role in judging ours, were specifically targeted through their selective use of visual complexity and dramatic rhetorical flourish to elicit an emotional response on the part of the beholder. This hypothesis is supported by Testi Cristiani's observation that Nicola employed a variety of relief modes on the Pisa pulpit—from large and clear to smaller and more complex — that were gradually revealed to the spectators as they drew near.[43] The larger reliefs, which faced the entry, might have drawn in an approaching parishioner, whereas messages about the possibility of redemption were revealed more slowly by the complex relief panels toward the rear of the freestanding pulpit.

It is this achievement of targeted pictorial narration, particularly the new brand of communicative, efficacious narrative found in the later Pisa Baptistery relief panels, that Nicola continued in Siena. Tellingly, the new style is used even when the subject matter arguably no longer demands it, as is revealed in a comparison between the Nativity panels of both pulpits (Figs. 3, 4). While many motifs and details from the Pisa

pulpit are repeated in Siena, important changes have taken place. Not only are there additional figures in the Sienese relief, which allow for visual complexity, but more so than in Pisa, the relief seems to have been carved with the position of the intended audience in mind: the kneeling, sitting or standing parishioner gathered around the pulpit. Here, and on all the reliefs on the Siena pulpit, the figures can be best viewed from below.[44] More than ever the faces of the Sienese narrative participants, and hence their emotional states of being, focus downward rather than outward — more directly engaging the viewer.

The figures also increasingly take on physical and psychological presences outside the carved compositions. For example, Christ of the Last Judgment sits between, but separated from the Elect and the Damned, with hand raised in benediction, blessing the participants of the narratives, who now occupy two entire panels, as well as the assembled laity and clergy.[45] The narrative participants in these two panels actively teach important lessons to the parishioners. The Damned do not engage the viewer, but warn us off, as we witness their self-absorption and private pain. The Elect on the other hand, reach out to share their lessons. One points to Christ as if to emphasize the need to listen to his words and to follow his good example; another points to the preacher, presumably for the same reason.

As with the Pisan pulpit reliefs, the Sienese *historie* were targeted to their audience —but since the arena has changed, so too have the reliefs. The Sienese pulpit was placed in the nave of a large Cathedral. Accordingly, there was no need to create larger scale reliefs for the purpose of drawing spectators in: the reliefs would not have been visible from afar anyway. Instead, the reliefs were more precisely aimed at the anticipated vantage point of the parishioner. Furthermore, by successfully exploiting the communicative possibilities of body positioning, gesture, gaze and facial expression, the reliefs were made more pointedly instructive, more specifically geared toward inspiring piety.

Perhaps French models helped Nicola achieve this heightened emotionalism, but clearly, style or stylistic influence cannot be the beginning and end of the discussion. It appears that the changes or evolution evidenced in the Sienese pulpit reliefs can be linked to the function of the pulpit, its location, and the spectators' relationships thereto. This conclusion may not seem startling, but it is at odds with more traditional analyses that explain the greater expressiveness of the Siena pulpit reliefs as a product of the influence or availability of French Gothic art, hypothetically linked to Nicola's contacts with France, French clerics, French ivories or illuminated manuscripts.[46] It is also subtly at odds with accounts that describe the Siena pulpit as a product of Nicola's personal quest for "realism."[47]

The increased visual complexity and interactive potential in the Siena pulpit relief panels brings to mind John Shearman's theory of the "slow-fuse." In an admittedly different context, Shearman posits that certain art works commissioned by knowledgeable patrons for spaces in which much time was to be spent (for example, private *studioli*) were "structurally complex in self-reference, and memory-challenging in external reference and imitation,"[48] thus providing the spectator continued intellectual challenge and enjoyment. Although in Shearman's model the patrons commissioned works of art for their own delectation, in the case of the pulpits complexity was chosen *for* the parishioners, and ultimately for didactic purposes. The visually complex reliefs covering the Pisan and the Sienese pulpits, replete with references to well-known local

works of art, were intended for parishioners at a time when they were increasingly bound to spend more of their time gathered around the pulpits.

The differences between the Pisa Baptistery and Siena Cathedral pulpits have too often been addressed as a purely stylistic matter instead of a functional one, creating a falsely dichotomous relationship between the two. Unfortunately, talk of stylistic precociousness and regression has obscured the true legacy of the pulpits: namely, that *both* evidence a new phase in the effort to endow sculpture with an educative and moral function. In related ways, both pulpits manifest the visual residue—style, perhaps—of the same desire to create an efficacious mode of narrative delivery, a goal which can be equated with rhetorical eloquence. *Elocutio* or eloquence, according to ancient rhetoricians, is the most difficult and most sophisticated part of oratory. By using complex verbal ornamentation including metaphor, humor, and emotional appeals, an orator can increase the audience's pleasure, hold its attention, and most effectively reach and educate the greatest number of people.[49] The moral and didactic aims of *elocutio* were celebrated and allegedly reborn in the verbal and visual culture of the Renaissance, newly christened as "ornament."[50] In at least one important and vastly under-appreciated way, the Pisa and Siena pulpits—as a pair—are harbingers of things to come.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Isabel Gonzalez

New York University, Institute of Fine Arts

This project was begun in Professor Leonard Barkan's seminar, "The Renaissance and Antiquity," at the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, in the Fall of 1995. Prof. Barkan provided many helpful suggestions during the early stages of my research. Professor Marvin Trachtenberg's NYU lectures first sparked my interest in the Pisano pulpits; his work in the field of Italian 'Gothic' studies has profoundly influenced my own thinking. I am indebted to my advisor Professor Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, and to my colleagues Yvonne Elet and Anne Leader, who read preliminary drafts of this article and provided valuable criticism. Yvonne Elet generously shared her own research and thoughts on the Pisani with me. The anonymous reader for the Rutgers Art Review also had many useful and helpful suggestions. A version of this article was presented at the Southwest Regional Renaissance Conference, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, May 10-11, 1996. I benefitted tremendously from the discussion following my presentation. As always and for every thing, thanks to H.G.

1. Notable recent exceptions include M. Seidel, "Die Kanzel als Bühne. Zur Funktion der Pisani-Kanzeln," in *Begegnungen. Festschrift für Peter Anselm Riedl zum 60. Geburstag* (Worms, 1993), 28-34; and K. Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy: Siena Cathedral in the Middle Ages* (Groningen, 1993). Documentary evidence from the Sienese State Archives is used by both authors to establish the liturgical uses of the Pisano pulpits. The Siena Cathedral pulpit, for example, was used for Gospel and Epistle readings, as well as for chant. The Pisa Baptistery pulpit was also used for preaching; the Baptistery played a crucial role in the religious and civic life of the city, perhaps even serving as the equivalent of a parish church. E. Angiola, "Nicola Pisano, Federigo Visconti and the Classical Style in Pisa," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977), 1-59, 6. Angiola links her iconographic analysis of the Pisa pulpit's historiated relief panels to the uses of the Baptistery. Referring to W. Braunfels' seminal article, "Zur Gestalt-Ikonographie der Kanzeln des Nicola und Giovanni Pisano," *Das Münster* II (1948/49), 324-36, Seidel highlights the pitfalls of iconographic analysis devoid of any reference to function. This article will deal primarily with issues raised by stylistic analysis.

2. "Nicola Pisano's pulpit in the Baptistery at Pisa [is] still free of French influence....Five years later, in the Siena pulpit, the situation is different. The stylistic evolution is overwhelming...." M. Weinberger, "Remarks on the Role of French Models with the Evolution of Gothic Tuscan Sculpture," in *Studies in*

Western Art. Acts of the XXth International Congress of the History of Art, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1963), 198-206, 198. See also J. Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1996), 12-28.

3. For the details and scant documentary evidence about the Pisa pulpit commission, see E. Carli, *Il Pulpito del Battistero di Pisa* (Milano, 1971); M. L. Testi Cristiani, *Nicola Pisano Architetto Scultore: Dalle origini al Pulpito del Battistero di Pisa* (Pisa, 1987), Appendix; A. Caleca, *La dotta mano: Il Battistero di Pisa* (Bergamo 1991), Document Appendix; Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 229-230.

4. C. Seymour, Jr., "Invention and Revival in Nicola Pisano's 'Heroic Style,'" *Studies in Western Art. Acts of the XXth International Congress of the History of Art*, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1963)4.4., 207-226.

5. Nicola's reception of local antiquities was already celebrated by Vasari, see G. Vasari, *Le Vite de'più Eccellenti Pittore, Scultore ed Architettori*, ed. P. Barocchi and R. Bettarini, vol. II (Firenze, 1966), 59. For the debate about Nicola's origins, and hence the possible explanations for his classicism, see G. N. Fasola, *Nicola Pisano* (Roma, 1941); W. R. Valentiner, "Studies on Nicola Pisano," *Art Quarterly* 15 (1952), 9-36; W. Kronig, "Toskana und Apulien. Beiträge zu Problemenkreis der Herkunft des Nicola Pisano," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 16 (1953), 101-44; Seymour, *Nicola Pisano's 'Heroic Style,'* 216; A. Middeldorf-Kosegarten, "Die Skulpturen der Pisani am Baptisterium von Pisa," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 10 (1968), 14-100, 59; C. Smith *The Baptistery of Pisa* (PhD. diss, New York University, 1975), 122; *Ibid.*, "The Date and Authorship of the Pisa Duomo Facade," *Gesta* 19 (1980), 95-108, 100; Testi Cristiani, *Nicola Pisano Architetto Scultore*, Part 1; Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 228.

6. Since it fails to reconcile ancient form with ancient content, as required by Panofsky, this form of classicism falls short of the Renaissance with a capital "R." E. Panofsky, "Renaissance and Renascences," in *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York, 1969), 62, 111.

7. *Ibid.*, 101.

8. Seymour, *Nicola Pisano's 'Heroic Style,'* 220. Giovanni Pisano, Nicola's own son who worked for a while as Nicola's apprentice, is typically assigned the role of repudiating his father's nascent classicism. Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences*, 101. For a more measured discussion of the relationship between Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, see A. Middeldorf-Kosegarten, "Nicola und Giovanni Pisano, 1268-1278," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 11 (1969), 36-81; and M. Seidel, "Studien zur Antikenrezeption Nicola Pisanos," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 19 (1975), 307-392. Seidel calls into doubt Giovanni's "counter-revolution," 379*ff*.

9. Documents pertaining to the Siena Cathedral pulpit can be found in E. Carli, *Il pulpito di Siena* (Bergamo, 1943), 41-49; Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, Appendices. For the pulpit's original configuration, see also M. Seidel, "Die Verkundigungsgruppe der sieneser Dom Kanzel," *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 21 (1970), 18-72.

10. For a reevaluation of the period of the Italian 'Gothic,' see M. Trachtenberg, "Gothic/Italian 'Gothic': Toward a Redefinition," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 50 (1991), 22-37.

11. Seymour, *Nicola Pisano's 'Heroic Style'*, 221, 222 n. 18.

12. "[Nicola's Pisan] 'heroic style' fades into a gentler and more refined quasi-anonymity that is increasingly difficult to distinguish from the style of the assistants." *Ibid.*, 221; Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 230-231.

13. John Shearman explores similar ideas for art of the 15th and 16th centuries in *Only Connect... Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*, Bollingen Series XXXV/37 (Princeton, 1992).

14. A. Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 1996), 160. Derbes' new study of pictorial narration in the Dugento suggests that the transformations in narrative art understood to be linked to the influences of the Franciscan/Mendicant orders, and heretofore ascribed to the age of Giotto (most notably by H. Belting, in "The New Role of Narrative in Public Painting of the Trecento: Historia and Allegory," *Studies in the History of Art*, 16 (1986), 151-168, might have had their nascence a full half century earlier, perhaps as early as 1235-40.

15. See, *e.g.*, I. Ragusa and R. B. Green, *Meditations on the Life of Christ. An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton, 1961) Pseudo-Bonaventure.

16. Belting, *The New Role of Narrative*, 152.

17. J. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: its Origins and Development*, rev. ed. (New York, 1959), 86. Related developments include mandatory elevation of the Host during the Mass, instituted in 1215, which was

thought to be symbolic of the raising of Christ on the Cross. *Ibid.*, 87. The Feast of Corpus Cristi, where the sacrament is carried through the streets, also gained prominence in 1246. *Ibid.*, 91.

18. Belting, *The New Role of Narrative*, 151; Derbes, *Picturing the Passion*, 1-18.

19. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 273; Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, 79.

20. The Mendicant orders and secular church vied with each other for audiences in this period. A. Murray, "Piety and impiety in thirteenth-century Italy," in *Popular Belief and Practice. Papers read at the Ninth Summer Meeting and the Tenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. G. J. Cuming and D. Baker (Cambridge, 1972), 84-93, 86. I am grateful to Yvonne Elet for calling this book to my attention.

21. In some churches there were two or more pulpits with specialized functions, such as separate pulpits for the Epistle and Gospel readings. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 273. Since the reading of the Gospel and the sermons or homilies based thereon were the most important part of the Mass, the Gospel pulpit was more lavishly decorated, and was often made of permanent materials such as marble. The Epistle pulpit was frequently portable and made of wood. It was the Gospel pulpit that slowly but perceptibly migrated into the nave; the Epistle pulpit remained nearer to the choir. Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, 79. The idiosyncrasies of local practice preclude generalizations about uniform preaching customs. Yet even where pulpits were not specialized, hierarchies were often observed; a church's marble pulpit, for example, might be reserved for more important holidays and occasions.

22. This pulpit was removed from the Cathedral in 1310 to make way for Giovanni Pisano's new pulpit. It was disassembled and sent to Cagliari where its relief panels were divided, and two smaller pulpits were constructed. See M. Weinberger, "Nicola Pisano and the Tradition of Tuscan Pulpits," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 55 (1960), 129-40, 130-131, and figs. 3-4.

23. Pope-Hennessy summarizes the state of the research on the origins of the polygonal pulpit shape. Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 229.

24. Testi Cristiani, *Nicola Pisano Architetto Scultore*, 193, 213. Guido da Como's baptismal font, commissioned after construction of the Baptistery, was completed in 1246. Smith, *The Baptistery of Pisa*, 234.

25. Weinberger, *Nicola Pisano and the Tradition of Tuscan Pulpits*, 137.

26. Scenes from Christ's life were familiar subjects for historiated pulpits. See Weinberger's reconstruction of Guglielmo's pulpit, *Nicola Pisano and the Tradition of Tuscan Pulpits*, 131. So too, pictorial representations of Christ's life had a long history of being juxtaposed with the sermon, as for example, on exultet rolls. See A. R. Calderoni Masetti's essay on the 11th century exultet roll of the Pisa Duomo in *Exultet. Rotoli Liturgici del Medioevo Meridionale* (Roma, 1994). The connections between Nicola Pisano's relief sculptures and illuminated manuscripts have not been adequately explored. The Last Judgement is one scene new to pulpit decoration. Weinberger, *Nicola Pisano and the Tradition of Tuscan Pulpits*, 136. The Crucifixion also appears to have a new configuration: using three nails, rather than the more traditional Italian four. Angiola, *Nicola Pisano, Federigo Visconti*, 12. These new details have been linked to Mendicant teaching and writing, specifically Pseudo-Bonaventure's *Meditations*. *Ibid.*, 13. For the theory that the Pisan historiated reliefs were related to or even inspired by the sermons of the presiding Pisan Archbishop, Federigo Visconti (1254-1277), see F. Pesenti, "Il XII Sermone del'Arcivescovo Federico Visconti e il Pulpito del Battistero de Pisa," *Commentari* 26 (1975), 259-66; Angiola, *Nicola Pisano, Federigo Visconti*; Testi Cristiani, *Nicola Pisano Architetto Scultore*, 187*ff*. For the argument that this theory is supported by "insufficiently specific" evidence, see Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 230.

27. In order to establish the beholders' physical and visual relationships with the pulpits and historiated relief panels, an ideal "spectator" is being assumed for purposes of this article. Lay parishioners usually stood during the Mass in this period, although some orders and churches allowed clerics and the infirm to sit and/or kneel. Jungmann, *Mass of the Roman Rite*, 291-2. The relationship of parishioner to pulpit was probably similar to that represented in Vincenzo Foppa's *S. Peter Martyr Preaching* in S. Eustorgio in Milan, illustrated in F. Wittgens, *Vincenzo Foppa* (Milano 194[?]), Tav. XXXIV.

28. It is well known that in order to create a new type of monument, Nicola reached beyond prototypes such as the pulpit of Guglielmo to the only other examples of "monumental" sculpted narrative to be found nearby: Pisan antiquities, particularly sarcophagi. Weinberger, *Nicola Pisano and the Tradition of Tuscan Pulpits*, 140. Most notably, Nicola openly quoted the prestigious Neo-Attic "Krater" Vase, and the Hippolytus and Phaedra Sarcophagus. For illustrations, see P. P. Bober and R. Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (Oxford ,1986), nos. 91 and 111. Seidel suggests that Nicola quoted these particular antiquities because they were specifically linked to Pisan *Romanitas* — and

therefore civic identity and pride. Seidel, *Studien zur Antikenrezeption*, 313-337. Implicit in this analysis is the belief that antiquities were displayed and/or imitated in the Middle Ages for political reasons. On this issue see generally N. Rubinstein, "The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), 198-227; C. Frugoni, "L'antichità: da 'Mirabilia' alla propaganda politica," in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, ed. S. Settis, vol. 1 (Torino, 1984); M. Jacoff, *The Horses of San Marco and the Quadriga of the Lord* (Princeton, 1993). On Pisa's historical awareness of its own ancient heritage, and on the classicism in Pisan medieval art and architecture, see G. Scalia, "'Romanitas' pisana tra XI e XII secolo: Le iscrizioni romane del duomo e la statua del console Rudolfo," *Studi Medievali* ser. 3 XIII (1972), 791-843; C. Sheppard, "Classicism in Romanesque Sculpture in Tuscany," *Gesta* 15 (1976), 185-192; S. Settis, "Continuità, distanza, conoscenza. Tre usi dell'antico," in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, ed. S. Settis, vol. 3 (Torino, 1984). It is interesting to consider whether the propagandistic explanation is a medieval and/or modern construct which elides discussion of any possible aesthetic component involved in the display and/or imitation of antiquity in the Middle Ages. It is possible that a specific understanding of the iconography and history of the antiquities studied by Nicola Pisano has been overestimated. A. Nesselrath, "I libri di disegni di antichità. Tentativo di una tipologia," in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, ed. S. Settis, vol. 3 (Torino, 1984), 97. Indeed, later Renaissance understandings of the meaning or identity of specific antiquities have been shown to be somewhat tentative. L. Barkan, "The Beholder's Tale: Ancient Sculpture, Renaissance Narrative," *Representations* 44 (1993),133-166.

29. Baxandall, M. *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1988), 61.

30. Leonardo da Vinci, for example, explained that a good painter has to paint both the man and the man's state of mind. The second is the harder of the two tasks — and must be done principally by copying gestures. M. Kemp, ed., *Leonardo on Painting* (Yale, 1989), 144.

31. Documents record that Nicola's Siena Cathedral pulpit was originally located "da lato del Vangelo sotto la cupola tra i due primi piloni." Carli, *Il pulpito di Siena*, 49. Although this suggests that the pulpit was originally located on the north side of the nave, recent scholarship has determined that it was actually a freestanding octagonal pulpit on the southern side of the crossing under the dome. Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, 78-81 and fig. 38.

32. The idea of civic competition was certainly nothing new. It is well known that Siena and Florence competed with each other in the construction of their town halls and cathedrals. See T. Benton "The Design of Siena and Florence Duomos," and C. Cunningham, "For the Honour and Beauty of the City: the Design of Town Halls," in *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400*, ed. D. Norman, vol. II (Yale, 1995).

33. Seidel, *Die Kanzel als Bühne*, 32. For example, Pisan confraternities frequently met at the Baptistery. Angiola, *Nicola Pisano, Federigo Visconti*, 5. In Siena, Nicola's pulpit was put to a variety of liturgical uses, but especially on the most important holidays and for public celebrations. Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, 80-81. Finally, it is well known that preachers of all denominations used pulpits to promote political causes, such as the crusades, or simply to gain a political following. A. Thompson, *Revival Preachers and Politics in 13th Century Italy: the Great Devotion of 1233* (Oxford, 1992), 12.

34. For ancient references on the Siena pulpit, see M. Greenhalgh, M. "'Ipsa ruina docet': l'uso dell'antico nel Medioevo," in *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, ed. S. Settis, vol. 1 (Torino, 1984), 142; White, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1250-1400* (Yale, 1993), 85; Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 231. For the Pisa pulpit, see supra note 28.

35. Nicola's pulpit was commissioned to replace a large marble pulpit, the *majus pulpitum*, which was most likely located on the north (Gospel) side of the nave below the steps of the elevated choir. Van der Ploeg, *Art, Architecture and Liturgy*, 79.

36. In 1310 Pisa raised the stakes by commissioning Giovanni Pisano to replace its Cathedral pulpit, carved by Guglielmo in the mid-12th century. It might also be fruitful to consider Pistoia's role in this "pulpit-race."

37. For example, at least one horseman in the Sienese *Adoration of the Magi* panel appears to be charging off into the space of the marble block. On the issue of the representation of the passage of time in sculptural relief, see E. H. Gombrich, "Movement and Moment in Art," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 27 (1969), 292-306.

38. The speaker and the spoken word had special prominence not only due to their physical elevation within the pulpits, but by their hierarchical equation with the scenes of Christ's life and passion. Seymour, *Nicola*

Pisano's 'Heroic Style,' 212-213. The speaker's casket was further privileged by its allusions to the sepulchre of Christ. Irving Lavin discovered that the 13th century liturgist Sicardus likened the Bishop's ascent of the pulpit stairs to Christ's passion. Taking on the metaphorical role of Christ, the priest emerges from the casket resurrected. I. Lavin, "The Sources of Donatello's Pulpits in S. Lorenzo: Revival and Freedom of Choice in the Early Renaissance," *Art Bulletin* 41 (1959), 19-38, 23. The representations of Christ's passion on the Pisa and Siena pulpits, in narrative content, remind parishioners of the path to eternal life secured by Christ's sacrifice, and in form, refer to death, since they resemble sarcophagi. The pulpits are borne on the backs of lions, animals that from antiquity have been associated with funereal functions, see M. Marini Calvani, "Leoni Funerari Romani in Italia," *Bolletino d'Arte* 65 (1980), 7-14. Thus, the hierarchies built into the structure and decoration of the pulpit were meant to be awe-inspiring, instructive, and to underscore the redemptive power of obedience to the word of God. The earthbound congregation would gather around the pulpits — in both cases hierarchically equated with sculpted representations of humanity — undoubtedly for hours on end, some standing, some kneeling, but all looking up at the narrative panels and (presumably) listening to the speaker.

39. The state of the research on the issue of the chronology of the relief panels is summarized in Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 230.

40. Angiola, *Nicola Pisano, Federigo Visconti*, 12-13.

41. "C'est [the Pisa pulpit] d'ailleurs une ouvre complexe, où l'on peut déjà saisir une évolution, depuis la *Nativité*, d'où le gothique est à peu près complètement absent, jusqu'an *Judgment dernier*, où le sentiment gothique a sa part." R. Jullian, "Les persistances romanes dans la sculpture gothique italienne," *Cahiers de Civilisation medievale*, iii (1960), 295-306, 299; G. H. and E. R. Crichton, *Nicola Pisano and the Revival of Sculpture in Italy* (Cambridge, 1938), 59. The fact that the *Last Judgment* is compositionally linked to battle sarcophagi is admitted somewhat more begrudgingly. White, *Art and Architecture in Italy*, 85.

42. Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 230

43. Testi Cristiani, *Nicola Pisano Architetto Scultore*, 213-214, ch. 5.

44. To my knowledge, this observation was first made by Professor Marvin Trachtenberg. It is my understanding that Prof. Trachtenberg will be exploring issues of visibility and optimal viewing distances in Trecento architecture, painting and sculpture — including the Pisani pulpits — in his forthcoming book. See also Testi Cristiani, *Nicola Pisano Architetto Scultore*, 213.

45. For an illustration, see Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, Plate 17. Carli has suggested that originally there were to be little columns in between the narrative panels on the Siena pulpit, but that the commission changed at a late date to include figures. He argues that the *Last Judgment* panels were probably the last to be carved as they more successfully utilize the new format. E. Carli, *Il duomo di Siena* (Genoa, 1979), 34.

46. Seymour, *Nicola Pisano's 'Heroic Style'*, 222. The Sienese Operaio, a brother from the French Cistercian abbey of San Galgano, has been thought to have encouraged utilization of French prototypes, perhaps from his personal collection of ivories, manuscripts or other devotional items. Pope-Hennessy, *Italian Gothic Sculpture*, 230. It is of course possible that Sienese civic and religious authorities may have preferred (or simply sanctioned) use of the *buona maniera moderna*. Since the Siena pulpit was in dialogue with that of Pisa, it might be worth considering whether French models offered the Sienese an alternative to the antiquity that was so assertively allied to Pisan civic identity.

47. White, *Art and Architecture in Italy*, 87.

48. J. Shearman, *Only Connect*, 259.

49. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. H. E. Butler, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1953), VIII, iii, 5.

50. See, *e.g.*, L. B. Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. J. Rykwert, *et al.* (Cambridge, 1994), bk. 8, ch. 1. For Renaissance usage and understanding of the term "ornament," and the relationship of that term to ancient rhetoric, see K. Weil-Garris Brandt, "The Relation of Sculpture and Architecture in the Renaissance," in *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo* (Venice, 1994).

Revisioning Queer Identity: AIDS Discourse and the Impenetrable Subject in Phone Sex Advertising

Randall R. Griffey

> It is necessary to re-think and "re-vision" the qualities of penetrability and impenetrability themselves...(290).
>
> Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body"
> *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*
> (Michigan, 1994)

Writing in June 1983, Frank Williams noticed interesting changes in Gay popular culture. In his article for *The Advocate*, Williams observed,

> Suddenly, all across gay America, the phrase 'Reach Out and Touch Someone' has taken on a whole new meaning....Phone conversations that start, "Hi sweetheart, what are you wearing?" and end, "I just came," are hardly new; lovers probably started purring erotically over the phone almost as soon as Ma Bell introduced the instrument. Only recently have ambitious entrepreneurs started charging for the privilege, turning an eccentric past-time into an enormously successful business proposition....[1]

Williams acknowledged that while sex over the phone was not an inherently revolutionary erotic activity in 1983, its growing popularity in the Gay public was evidenced by the increasing number of services advertising in the popular Queer press. Seemingly overnight, phone sex had become a widely profitable capitalistic venture. Furthermore, Williams credited the emerging corporate interest in male sex over the phone to an expanding Gay clientele pursuing—and willing to pay for—safe sex. To this end, he specifically isolated AIDS (which had only recently replaced the disease's original acronym, Gay-Related-Immune-Disorder) as a predominant force behind the growth of the phone sex industry:

> ...the mushrooming popularity of services all across the country indicates many are willing to suspend disbelief and allow themselves to be carried along the phone line fantasy....[One] current phenomenon...making phone-fantasy services successful [is the] fear of communicable diseases, particularly the little-understood and much-dreaded acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). As media coverage of AIDS has skyrocketed, so has the success rate of phone services.[2]

While a few scattered stories concerning a "gay cancer" and a limited number of GRID-related obituaries had surfaced in the previous several months, herpes was still the STD that was of most concern to the public according to the media up to 1983. It was in 1983—the year of Williams's article—that AIDS first made consistent headlines in the Gay press and was made the subject of entire issues of *The Advocate*. Williams appropriately articulated phone sex within the emerging economic and cultural discourse surround-

1. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1994-95.

ing the spread of AIDS: the potential profits to be made from a fearful Gay community increased as the number of AIDS cases mounted. Likewise, the numbers of phone sex lines grew as most bath houses in large metropolitan areas closed their doors.

Beyond providing Gay men with an attractive safe sex option in light of this new and terrifying disease, the growth of the phone sex industry throughout the 1980's had (and continues to have) a dramatic effect on Queer visual culture, specifically on the representation of the male body. Prior to the widespread panic concerning AIDS, *The Advocate*'s "Classifieds" section contained modest ads for bars, saunas, porn, personal ads, and various sexual products. Imagery played a relatively small role in marketing these services. Beginning in 1983, however, the male body was employed in increasing numbers to sell phone sex to a fearful Queer community.

This essay attempts to frame the Queer identity constructed by evolving representations of the male body in phone sex advertisements from the early 1980's to the present. More specifically, it seeks to articulate that identity in relation to AIDS discourse in the popular Queer press. Finally, it is an effort to pursue the project set forth by Susan Bordo—to "re-think" the qualities of penetrability and impenetrability themselves as they relate to the construction of Queer identity in one particular phone sex ad (Fig. 1).

The Gay phone sex advertisement in question was in use from late-1994 into early-1995. It displays the full-length profile of a muscular male nude lying on his back with

his knees and legs hoisted into the air. His face is turned away from the viewer. His hands are placed at his sides. He rests on a cool, ultramarine surface formed by the service's phone number, "550-1 on 1." Poised at a diagonal between the figure's raised legs, an anthropomorphized telephone receiver peers down over its anonymous partner as it wraps him in its cord. In the upper right hand corner, the provocative phrase "DO IT ONE ON ONE / DO IT WITH A GROUP" reports the erotic options available to the prospective consumer through this particular service.

Despite the man's apparent strength and muscularity, the phone, pulsating in a vibrant shade of red, seems to dominate aggressively its human companion. The man's subordinate status is, perhaps, most obviously conveyed through the use of the prominent phone cord. It binds and objectifies him. The three cord loops lead the viewer's eye up the length of his body. The first loop—the largest of the three—wraps powerfully around the figure's right thigh and stretches across his taut abdomen. The second loop emerges out from under the small of the man's back, forcing his buttocks seductively outward. Replicating the poses of countless "cheesecake" images of women, the arched position of the man's back and body underscores his "feminized" identity, a penetrable subject. The cord, then, follows the contour of the man's arm up to his chin, conveniently leaving his well-developed chest unobscured for the viewer's (and the receiver's) gaze. In an almost amusingly loving gesture, the last loop forms a pillow on which the man rests his head as he seems to writhe and squirm in sexual ecstasy.

On one level, the ad complies with standard formulae for most phone sex advertisements. The representation of the anonymous, objectified male body is commonplace in contemporary Queer visual culture. On the other hand, the representation of clearly-defined sex roles, "top" and "bottom"—exaggerated through the employment of bondage—is shockingly unique and innovative. The clear allusion to anal penetration and pleasure clearly distinguishes this ad from the majority of its contemporaries. Consequently, the image raises many important questions relating to the visual construction of Queer identity. For example, why do phone sex ads so rarely represent, or even allude to, sexual acts? More specifically, what has this smooth, muscular, idealized body meant within Gay popular culture? What kind of Queer identity does this body construct? And finally, what are the broad implications of its penetration in "Do It One on One?"

In her analysis of the body in current popular visual culture, "Reading the Male Body," Susan Bordo, has observed that,

> Gay and straight, male and female, blue-collar and white-collar, everyone in our culture today (who can afford to) is getting hard and ripped....Today the ideal is to have a body that is hard as a rock....[3]

Many unasked questions haunt Bordo's otherwise thought-provoking and insightful essay. For example, why is it so important for men and women in the 1990's to possess the "rock hard" body Bordo describes, a body that visualizes power and dominance? Moreover, why are these "non-ironic, fetishized macho aesthetics...becoming," as Bordo suggests, "more and more dominant within gay cultures"?[4]

The "fetishized aesthetics" to which Bordo refers has, in fact, been growing in dominance in Gay visual culture over the past ten to fifteen years. A survey of phone

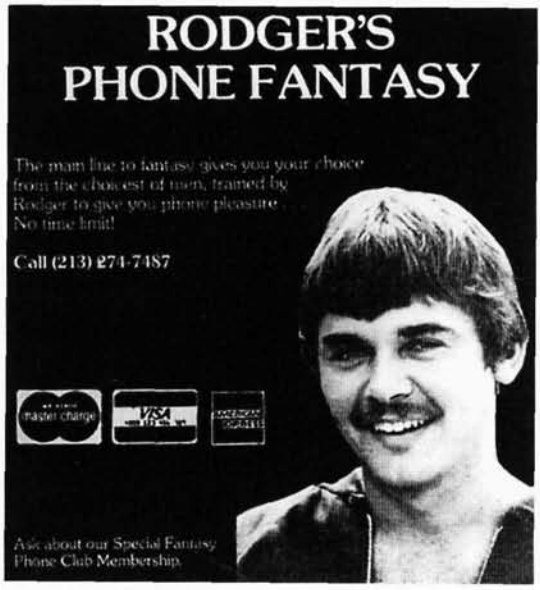
sex imagery from 1982 to 1994 attests to Bordo's general hypothesis. Images from 1982, such as those for "Rodger's Phone Fantasy" and "Dial Dick," (Figs. 2 and 3) display an early formula for phone sex ads far removed from contemporary standards. For one, both men are identified by name (though "Dick" is clearly a play on sexual slang). They appear warm, accessible, and inviting. They smile and engage the viewer's gaze directly. Each man's sexiness, consequently, is not achieved exclusively through objectification. "Rodger" coyly displays a scattering of chest hair due to his unzipped sweatshirt. Sitting comfortably on his bed, "Dick" reveals his athletic torso while turning and leaning warmly toward the viewer. Their expressions, gestures, and poses appear honest and spontaneous. In general, these early images seem little more than personal snapshots, attesting, in part, to the relative infancy of the industry in terms of economic capital and technology. In their seeming naiveté they achieve a degree of intimacy not typically associated with more recent phone sex ads.

Today, the male body is ubiquitous in Queer visual culture, particularly in phone sex advertisements. The growth of the phone sex industry over the past fifteen years has prompted a flood of Gay erotica to promote the services. However, the Queer body represented today is considerably different from the body of the early 1980's. A sampling of contemporary ads clearly indicates an increased emphasis on and objectification of the body (Figs. 4 and 5). In contrast to "Rodger" and "Dick," the men in current ads are—almost without exception—anonymous. Often, their heads and faces are cropped from the image. The body, consequently, is fetishized and objectified. Furthermore, the men invariably possess beautiful, hairless bodies (with the exception of those men who advertise "specialized" services catering to customers wanting a "Mature" man—a 'Daddy'—or a "Big" man—a 'Bear') and display their flawless physiques for the viewer by striking contrived, affected poses. If a man's face is shown, he is rarely smiling. Unlike the friendly expressions of "Rodger" and "Dick," most men in recent phone sex ads display smug facial expressions conveying considerable "attitude." In this respect, current phone sex imagery parallels Bordo's reading of representations of the male body issuing from the fitness industry. She writes,

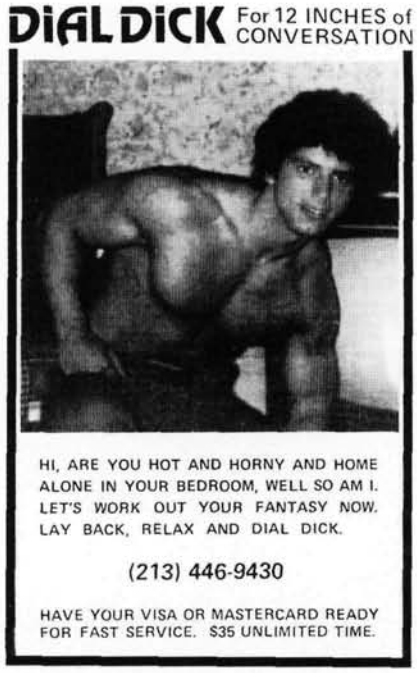
> The muscular male bodies idealize[d] today really are starting to look more and more like those depicted in Nazi posters and sculpture, not only in their aesthetics of physical perfection, but in their unsmiling posture of ascending power and superiority....[5]

The anonymous, fetishized male body in current phone sex advertising strangely retains a similar sense of macho superiority. Physically perfected, the men remain distant and inaccessible. Unlike "Rodger" and "Dick," they are sexual objects, not sexual partners.

In fact, Bordo's insightful reference to Nazi art illuminates the rich contradictions inscribed in contemporary Queer visual culture. The artists of Nazi Germany produced innumerable images that glorified the male body and the Phallus, an ironic artistic project coming from one of history's most outwardly homophobic societies. Invariably, however, Nazi art admitted same-sex emotional or physical contact only within narrow rhetorical schemes designed to construct and confirm an ideal masculine and heterosexual identity (Fig. 6). Depictions of contact between Nazi male bodies therefore served the paradoxical function of signifying the cultural denial of such intimate

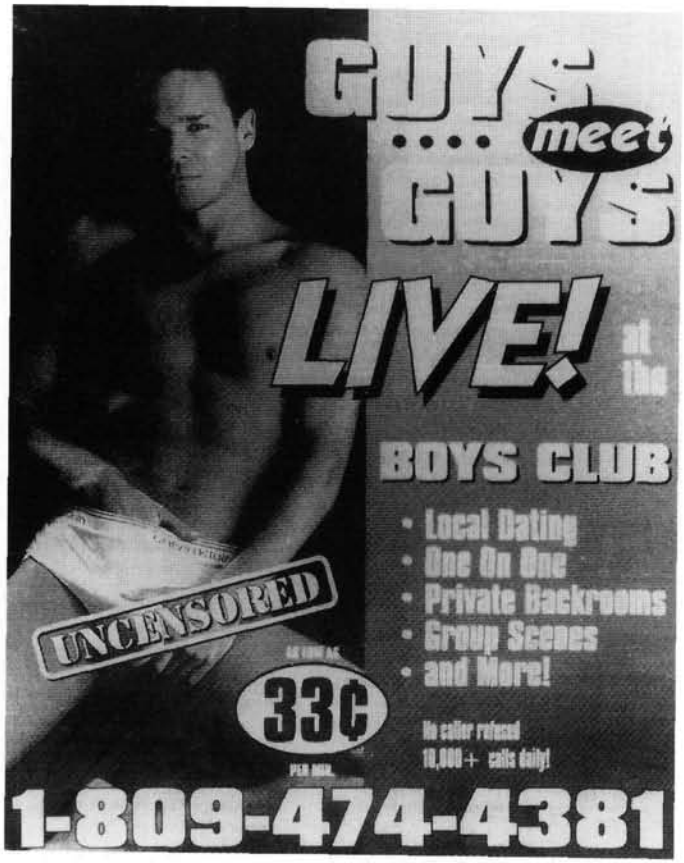


2. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1982. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

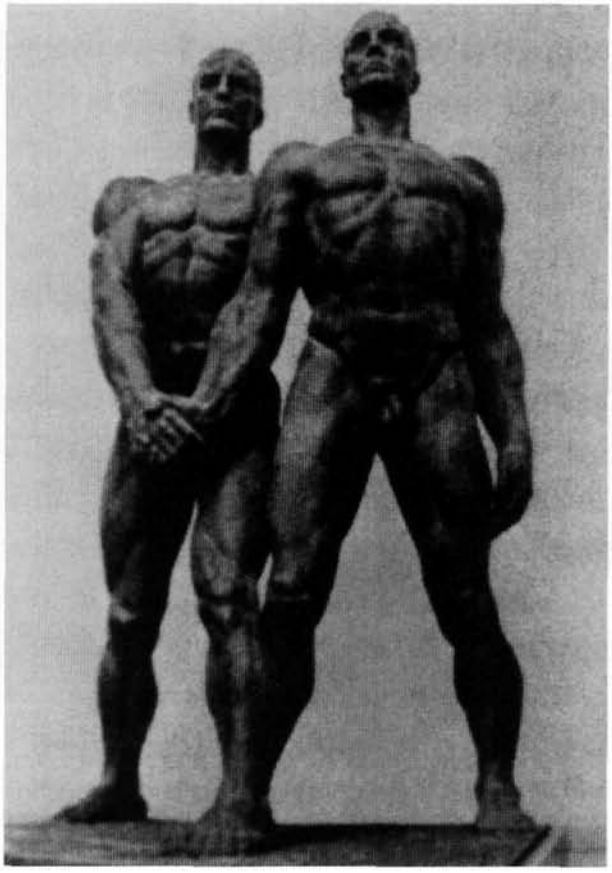


3. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1982. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

4. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1995.



5. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1995.



6. Josef Thorak, *Camaraderie*, late 1930s.

interaction between men. Interestingly, the Queer representation of the male body is similarly loaded with paradox. For, as Victor D'Lugin has pointed out in observing developments in Queer visual culture: "We may be seeing more of gay men's bodies today, but we're not seeing as much sex."[6]

D'Lugin's concise observation gets to the contradictory core of the construction of phone sex imagery. For it seems curious that an industry attempting to sell sex—albeit sex over the phone—should depict or allude to sexual acts so infrequently. Rather than visualizing sex and identifying individual bodies as either "top" or "bottom," contemporary ads generally encourage a more polyvalent reading of the male body. Typically, it is presented as an unfixed signifier. Because the viewer is left to imagine specific sexual acts, the body can be read as either "top" or "bottom" depending on his desires. Representing the male body as an unfixed signifier in Queer visual culture serves a particular function for advertisers: it insures a broad market. Regardless of one's particular tastes, proclivities, or desires, one can get what one wants from such images (assuming, of course, that the viewer's desire revolves around the white body, which remains dominant in Queer visual culture). Due, in part, to market appeal, most ads

7. Phoneline Advertisement, *Frontiers Newsmagazine*, January 5, 1994. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

appropriate the male body, yet consistently avoid identifying the commodified male body as either active or passive. The body is displayed, but sex is not (Fig. 7).

Breaking with this well-traveled pattern, the ad for "Do It One on One" unapologetically visualizes sex, specifically, anal intercourse. It boldly identifies the phone as active and the male figure as passive and exaggerates the polarities between the two by incorporating bondage into the visual narrative. The reference to bondage and S&M underscores a master/slave dialectic, a compulsory assumption of fixed, gendered sex roles by the two participants that permanently elides "the top" with power and control, "the bottom" with powerlessness. With his palm flattened at his side, the bound figure buttresses himself against the powerful implied thrusts of the dominant telephone.

By emphasizing the "top"/"bottom" duality so emphatically, the ad potentially reconfigures the viewer's identity, specifically as it relates to traditional notions of masculinity. While most ads fail to implicate the viewer in specific sexual scenarios, "Do It One on One / Do It In a Group" presents the viewer with a possibly threatening scenario from which it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape. What the viewer "gets"—whether or not he wants it—is anal intercourse. If the image does not make that point clear enough, the text underscores the fact. On the one hand, the text grants the potential customer subjectivity: the customer may determine the number of sexual partners he desires. He can reach one partner and have sex "one on one," or he may access two or more partners to participate in an orgy over the phone. Ultimately, however, the same text denies the viewer full subjectivity by demarcating the range of sexual activity that

can be explored by the caller and his partner(s). Repetition within the text places emphasis on the euphemistic "it." And the "it," indexically signified by the image, is anal sex. All other erotic possibilities available over the phone—including, for example, mutual masturbation and simulated massage or fellatio—are negated by the text and the image in lieu of anal intercourse. The centrality of the act is further underscored by the positioning of the male body in the frame of the image. His buttocks and the assumed point of entry, his anus, sit squarely in the privileged space of the center. The male viewer, the presumed customer outside the frame, is arguably constructed as the penetrated subject.

Consequently, the ad constitutes an affront on traditional notions regarding the construction of masculinity. As Bordo has noted,

> The conceptual/sexual system which sustains...the association of masculinity with the 'doer' not the 'done to,' the penetrator not the penetrated, the desiring sexual subject rather than the 'receiver' of the desires of another runs extraordinarily deep in our culture.[7]

The ad seemingly appropriates this system and subverts it by redistributing traditional "top/bottom" signs onto non-traditional subjects. The telephone receiver has seemingly infiltrated this two-tiered system traditionally reserved only for male and female subjects. It has assumed the "masculine" identity, thereby forcibly relegating the "masculine" body to the "feminized" role. Moreover, the fuller relevance of this renegotiation of gendered identities becomes clear when analyzing the iconography of the telephone receiver in other phone sex ads. Despite initial appearances, the phone receiver has not come from outside the patriarchal hierarchy to invade it. Rather, the receiver has emerged from within the system to subvert it even more radically.

The telephone receiver has served an increasingly important role in the construction of phone sex imagery over the past two decades. When phones were incorporated into ads in the early 1980's, they tended to be shown functioning in traditional, utilitarian capacities. For example, another ad (Fig. 8) shows a supposed leatherman carrying the phone receiver prominently in his right hand. Typically, the phone underscores the man's accessibility and availability through the use of the device. Similarly, a Christopher Atkins look-a-like poses with a receiver in an ad for "New York's Gay Phone Fantasies" (Fig. 9). In contrast to the leatherman who seems to wait anxiously for the presupposed incoming call, the Christopher Atkins clone, with receiver to ear, is shown in the process of an exchange over the phone. The image portends to recreate the experience of phone sex for the potential consumer wherein the conveniently half-naked youth will politely entertain the wishes of his customer. In these advertisements the role of the telephone receiver is clearly and exclusively utilitarian.

By 1983, however, designers had begun to move away from the functional aspects of the telephone, instead turning to the device for its formal attributes—size, shape, length, and width—in order to explore the phone receiver's potential phallic connotations. While the phone occasionally retained its traditional function in numerous advertisements, selected images portrayed a new, more overtly erotic use of the receiver and representation of the male body. A prominent ad for OCS (Fig. 10), displays these developments clearly. Here, a stocky, centrally positioned male figure

8. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1982. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

9. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1982. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

10. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1983. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

11. Phone Sex Advertisement, 1983. (Photo: Wilcox Collection, Kansas Collection, University of Kansas Libraries)

confronts the viewer with a stern expression and with his sizable physique. The cap, dog tags, and dungarees (and perhaps, body type) mark him as a military serviceman. Technically, he is a man in half a uniform, suggesting a new, pronounced eroticism. The phone is thematized in this more erotic scenario. In his visible left hand the man holds, not the telephone as previously seen, but his dogtags as if to underscore the authenticity of his military appointment while simultaneously drawing attention to his chiseled chest and prominent nipples. The phone has, in fact, literally become part of his anatomy. The shaft of the receiver conveniently serves as the shaft of his penis. The mouthpiece constitutes the man's voluminous "package." Obviously too large to be contained within his jeans, the phone/penis pokes out over his unzipped jeans. The ear piece forms the sizable head of his penis while conveying the overall impressive length of his suggested erection. Another ad conveys similar iconographic meaning. The ad for "The Linemen of San Francisco" (Fig. 11) displays a man on his back with his legs high in the air and framed by a circle. Amusingly, he is a "uniformed man" without a uniform, possessing only a hard-hat to signify his appropriate butch profession as a construction worker. While the thematization of the uniformed subject is not new in Queer advertising, this ad is highly idiosyncratic in terms of body pose. Few ads appropriate the bottom position to market their services. In this respect, the "Linemen" ad seems to anticipate the construction of "One on One." Despite his passive position, however, no reference is made to his partner (or partners)—either from within or outside the frame—who supposedly may assume the active/top role in sex. Rather, due to the framing device, the self-reflective gaze of the figure, and the obscured genital region, the erotic narrative is privatized and the possibilities for physical penetration denied: the circle functions conceptually as a peephole through which the viewer is tempted to look. Significantly, the phone is incorporated into this private narrative. Like the phone in the OCS ad, this phone—whose cord rises provocatively from between his legs—serves metaphorically as the man's own penis. He masturbates with the phone for our voyeuristic pleasure. In these two key images, the phone overtly signifies the phallus. More importantly, however, each man can manipulate and control his respective phallus because his masculinity and his impenetrability are visualized and defined by it.

Viewed in this progression of imagery, it becomes clear how "Do It One on One" marks a significant break with precedent. The male figure no longer possesses the phallic signifier. Rather, it is removed from the body and has assumed the guise of the phallic Other. Moreover, having assumed human proportions and presence, the receiver exerts its will onto the now castrated, bound, and penetrable male. Significantly, this penetrated male is the very "fetishized" masculine ideal that has—like Nazi representations of the male body—visually resisted, denied, and rejected subordination in thousands upon thousands of prior images. The questions, consequently, should be asked: What, possibly, does this smooth, muscular, idealized body mean within Gay popular culture? What are the broader implications of its penetration beyond the potential subversion of the viewer's masculinity?

In his 1983 article for *The Advocate*, "Strong Bodies, Gay Ways: Creating a New Self-Image," Stephen Greco examined the almost obsessive preoccupation with body building within contemporary Gay culture. Despite many preconceptions that body building is nothing but a self-indulgent demonstration of narcissism, Greco argues,

> ...I don't think it's as an erotic prop that bulk is sought by these bodybuilders...Body building means more to gay men than the way the bicep fills the sleeve of a polo shirt.[8]

Rather,

> Bulk and definition carry a symbolic charge in our culture. They can represent presence and identity, respectively; they can even promise to function as the kind of protective shell I felt (for a while) my strength gave me. With bulk and definition, gay amateur bodybuilders can compensate for the powerlessness and invisibility some say are ours as "marginal" members of society.[9]

Greco rightfully suggests that the body operates symbolically in Queer culture and in society-at-large. On one level, muscularity serves as a marker for "masculinity" in a homophobic society quick to construct the homosexual as womanly and effeminate. The perfected body, however, also signifies, as Greco reveals, invulnerability—specifically, immunity—within a community ravaged by disease and death resulting from AIDS. Greco notes,

> When I started body building, I knew that strength and definition wouldn't save me from Kaposi's sarcoma....Still, I imagined I was becoming encased in a kind of protective shell. That illusion of invulnerability was nice, but illusions...have their limits.[10]

Body-building provided a way for Greco to distance himself from the disease he feared. He attempted to construct a healthy body, an HIV-negative body, a body that could visually be read as "AIDS-free." In spite of his efforts, Greco's "illusion of invulnerability"—the facade of immunity he attempted to manufacture with his own body—was rendered transparent when he was confronted with a photograph of a torso displaying advanced symptoms of the disease. Greco recalls:

> Those luscious pectorals were covered with Kaposi's hideous purple lesions. There were also pectorals that, considering the size, shape and color of the nipples, I suspected with a flash sweat I had once kissed....He was strong too. Strong but still vulnerable.[11]

Greco's reaction is not uncommon. For, as Sander Gilman has insightfully suggested, "the image of the diseased makes those so categorized need to prove their basic healthiness."[12] Because AIDS is so intimately associated with homosexuality, gay men "are trying to prove they're healthy, and this includes people already infected. If the external signs are healthy, then we are."[13]

Queer visual culture has attempted to perpetuate an "illusion of invulnerability" on a broad scale. By disseminating idealized images of the male body, it distances the community from the realities of the disease. Consequently, "as AIDS became more entrenched over the last decade, the erotic ideal became more youthfully healthy. Or at least healthy-appearing."[14] D'Lugin, furthermore, has tied the representation of the body to lived experience in a very direct fashion. He believes that as Gay men "became

more fearful of sex, the images became more perfected and yet less sexual... [because] we're pumping...instead of sucking and fucking."[15] As a result, phone sex ads are filled with scores of men possessing beautiful bodies who generally do not or will not use them sexually. Like the men Bordo observed in body culture advertising, images for phone sex present

> Men with carved-marble bodies [who] gaze vacantly into space or stare grimly at the camera. ...But, they are merely contiguous statues; they do not look at each other, they rarely touch each other....[16]

Touching signifies vulnerability and, particularly in the age of AIDS, one's vulnerability may very well end in death.

Considering this complex intersection of Queer identity, the body, and AIDS, Bordo's previous reference to Nazi art is more appropriate than the author, herself, seems to have realized. Nazi art and Queer representation code the body similarly although the discourses permeating the codes are quite different. Nude men in Nazi art (sculpture, in particular) are, as Bordo points out, consistently unaware of their beautiful bodies. However, she fails to relate fully this accurate observation to the "fetishized aesthetics" thriving in Queer culture. Not surprisingly, the presumed and seemingly understood acceptance of male nudity as a public symbol in Nazi Germany carried with it particular assumptions with regard to viewer identity, specifically, sexual orientation. Nazi sculpture, in all its unashamed and unconscious nakedness, presumes—while attempting to construct—a heterosexual public identity by denying the male body its potential sensuousness. Though their physiques are clearly emphasized and idealized, the men do not engage the physical, sensuous realm. Because the Nazi male body operates exclusively in the service of the State, it can (and should) reveal its "naturalness." More to the point, because the Nazi penis serves only the honorable and desirable function of reproduction, it, too, can be (and should be) displayed for public consumption. The Nazi male body is not a site of pleasure and therefore, need not be obscured. Rather, it signifies the Phallus and all of its concomitant attributes—invulnerability, power, and dominance. Moreover, the Phallus in this instance provides freedom from physical and moral affliction, from the disease of homosexuality, in particular. The Nazi Phallic body attempts to veil the penis and all its lascivious and queer potentialities.

The Queer body utilized in contemporary advertising is similarly coded. Though it displays a nominal degree of useful polyvalency to appeal to a broad market, the Queer body—like the Nazi body—ultimately projects impenetrability and, by extension, immunity from disease. The Phallus (occasionally, as seen, taking the guise of a telephone) has been deployed to inoculate the body and insure its health. In contrast to the Nazi construction of masculinity, however, the disease guarded against in this case is not homosexuality, per se (though it could be argued that the narrow construction of homosexuality as clearly "un-feminine"—possessing a rock hard body, bulging biceps, and sculpted pecs—is, at its core, homophobic, if not misogynistic). The Queer body, rather, is free from the affliction of AIDS. Like Nazi art in general, it attempts to purge the public of its sexual disease and "impurity." In this respect, D'Lugin is somewhat off target with his assumptions regarding Queer body building. Pumping iron has not replaced sex. Rather, the pumped-up body publicly codes sex, allowing it to "pass" as

healthy and veil the devastating realities of AIDS that wreak havoc in and on the body. While Western ideals regarding the male body have changed very little from Polykleitos to Nazi sculpture to contemporary imagery (despite Bordo's assumption to the contrary), the discourse surrounding the body has changed. AIDS informs a new strain of Classicism in the representation of the male body, specifically, a "Queer Classicism" in which the male body—even the eroticized male body—is governed by the Phallus so that it is visually impenetrable and, consequently, invulnerable to disease.

Significantly, "Do It One on One / Do It In a Group" displays the violation of the classicized Queer body. Here, penetration disrupts more than traditional notions of masculinity. Entry into the classicized Queer body also subverts presumptions regarding invulnerability to AIDS. For, being a "bottom" in the age of AIDS is doubly stigmatized—stigmatized as the passive or "feminized" role and as the sick and infected subject position. According to Leo Bersani in his article, "Is the Rectum a Grave?", representations of AIDS generally isolate the passive sexual participant as the one deserving disease and death. He boldly claims,

> ...the similarities between representations of female prostitutes and male homosexuals...help us to specify the exact form of sexual behavior being targeted, in representations of AIDS, as the criminal, fatal, and irresistibly repeated act. This is of course anal sex, and we must of course take into account the widespread confusion in heterosexual and homosexual men between fantasies of anal and vaginal sex. The realities of syphilis in the nineteenth century and of AIDS today 'legitimate' a fantasy of female sexuality as intrinsically diseased; and promiscuity in this fantasy, far from merely increasing the risk of infection, is the sign of infection. Women and gay men spread their legs with an unquenchable appetite for destruction. This is an image with extraordinary power....[The] seductive and intolerable image of a grown man, legs high in the air, unable to refuse the suicidal ecstasy of being a woman.[17]

The implicit irony here is that the penis—not the anus or the vagina—is the anatomical feature primarily responsible for the transmission of death and disease in the late 20th century.[18] From this perspective, a significant inversion of signs from the turn of the 19th century to our own time can be observed. While the vagina signified emasculation and destruction for many "fin-de-siècle" Symbolist writers and painters (Edvard Munch, Franz von Stuck, and Gustave Moreau, among many others), sex and death collapse around the sign of the Phallus at the "fin-de-millennium." The Phallus, much like a loaded gun, is the sign to be feared in the age of AIDS.

Consequently, Bersani's observations raise meaningful questions relative to the present image. Is this squirming and writhing male body shown in a state of "suicidal ecstasy" as he, with legs in the air, entertains the fearsome Phallus? Is this the ultimate triumph of the Phallus—not only to subordinate, but also to kill the penetrable male body? Should the image, in the end, be read as only one of the thousands of representations of Phallic domination proliferated throughout Western culture?

A comparison with Michelangelo's *Leda and the Swan* (Fig. 12), one of the most famous images of the imposition of Phallic power onto the feminine body, begins to reveal how, despite initial appearances, the ad challenges the traditional power

12. Rosso after Michelangelo, *Leda and the Swan*, 1530. Royal Academy of Arts, London.

dynamics associated with "top" and "bottom." In the mythological scene, Zeus's power is cloaked in the form of the elegant and seemingly harmless swan. Leda is unknowingly seduced and deceived by its beauty. The Phallic power active in the ad, by contrast, is neither cloaked nor aesthetisized. The sharp, imposing, and threatening form of the telephone receiver clearly conveys the Phallus' intent to dominate. Consequently, the penetrated male, in contrast to Leda, is neither seduced nor deceived by the Phallus. Rather, the man is complicit with his own subordination. He actively—and knowingly—takes power. This active assumption of power serves to distinguish the image from other more traditional "patriarchal" representations of phallic power and inverts traditional power dynamics associated with the "top" and "bottom" positions.

Scott Tucker, in his critique of standard feminist reviews of pornography, "Gender, Fucking, and Utopia," articulates this inversion of power in more explicit and personal terms. Tucker proclaims:

> If some radical feminists choose to equate "phallic power" with patriarchy, I can only say that not all cocks are weapons in a sex war, and not all power is oppressive. When I take a cock in my ass, I am actively taking power and pleasure, not simply reproducing a passive "femininity"; and when I choose to give my partner the chief balance of power in sex, so that he strokes my cock with his asshole while I lie bound to a bed, then something is going on which is not reducible to the one word "patriarchy." Since certain radical feminists are fond of conflating all cocks into one patriarchal signifier named "the phallus," and likewise reducing all forms of fucking into "the fuck," this makes reality so much simpler.[19]

By privileging the "bottom" as a site possessing potential transformative power, Tucker attempts to simultaneously highlight and avoid some of the methodological pitfalls of feminism. Feminist critics can victimize themselves within the very system they intend to deconstruct, for, as Bordo herself has pointed out,

> When the role of [being] penetrable...is identified with subordinate status, the act of being penetrated constructed as an act of submission to a master....the pernicious gendered dualities are being re-inscribed, not challenged.[20]

Tucker, to his credit, refuses to re-inscribe these traditional power dynamics. Even in his reading of Gay male pornography he denies the impenetrable Phallus the power categorically ascribed to it and turns, instead, to the ubiquitous "bottom-boy" as the site of true identity formation:

> Anyone who has seen Brian Hawkes sit on a cock has seen the face of rapture, or of an excellent actor; whereas Jeff Stryker, for example, goes through...robotic motions....Stryker—He Who Never Gets Fucked (on screen, at least, as of May, 1990)—is indeed a business product.[21]

Tucker claims—or reclaims—the "bottom" as a site of pleasure and power. As he constructs the penetrated identity, not only is it not incongruous with masculinity, it is not incongruous with power. Consequently, he completes the project inaugurated by Bordo. He successfully "re-thinks" the "qualities of penetrability and impenetrability themselves," thereby liberating himself and those who follow him from the rigid constraints imposed on the body and identity by phallocentric structures within society.

While Tucker successfully rethinks penetrability as a site of power, pleasure, and agency, the ad for "Do It One on One" successfully "re-visions" those same qualities for the viewer. By imaging the penetration of the classicized Queer body, it constructs—and confronts—a Gay public permeated by traditional notions of masculinity, informed by AIDS discourse, and fearful of vulnerability and disease. More significantly, however, in contrast to previous ads, this image closes (at least partially) some of the multiple gaps that have existed in Gay popular visual culture between the Queer body, sex, and death. Consequently, the ad seems emblematic of very recent changes in the relationship between Gay culture and AIDS, and its discourse, including the widely recognized and debated return of public Gay bath houses, responses against safe sex campaigns and ideology, and the growth of HIV cultures within the Gay community.[22] Such contemporary developments seemingly form and inform new-found brazen attitudes concerning sexual freedom and a combative willingness to confront the specter of AIDS. Depending on one's particular perspective, these issues and beliefs currently being discussed in the Gay popular press may be interpreted as revolutionary, nihilistic, necessary, inevitable, and/or irresponsible. From the broadest possible view, however, recent shifts in the Gay community's responses to AIDS suggest an attempted reclamation of power and autonomy regardless of the potential cost. "Do It One on One / Do It in a Group" is inscribed with a similar pursuit of power and autonomy.

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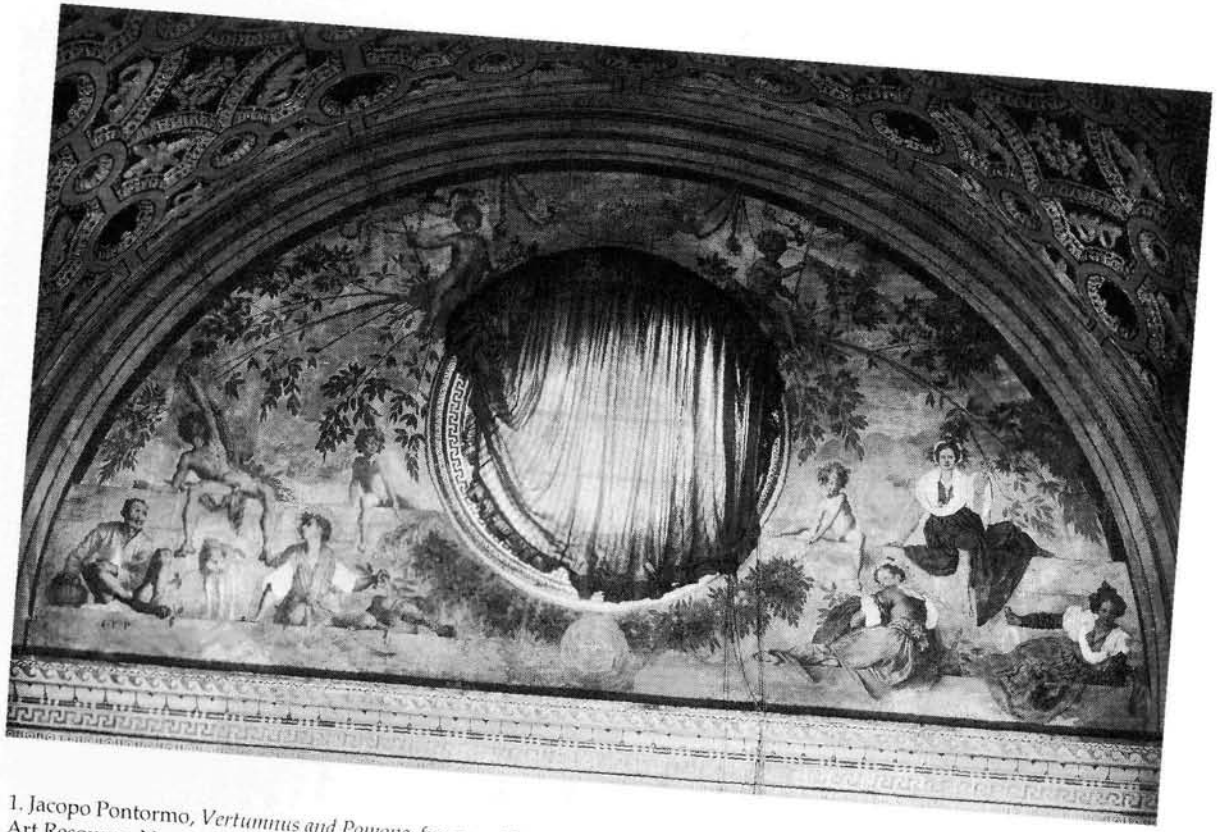
1. Frank Williams, "Dreamboys on the Line," *The Advocate*, 369 (June 9, 1983), 14.
2. *Ibid*, 14.
3. Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body, " *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures* (Michigan, 1994), 290.
4. *Ibid*, 295.
5. *Ibid*, 295.
6. D'Lugin quoted in William J. Mann, "Perfect Bound," *Frontiers Newsmagazine* (San Francisco) 13: 18 (1994), 23.
7. Bordo, 288.
8. Stephen Greco, "Strong Bodies, Gay Ways: Creating a New Self-Image," *The Advocate* (July 7, 1983), 25.
9. *Ibid*, 25.
10. *Ibid*, 26.
11. *Ibid*, 26.
12. Sander L. Gilman, "Depicting Disease: A Theory of Representing Illness," *Disease and Representation: Images of Illness from Madness to AIDS* (Ithaca and London, 1988), 6.
13. D'Lugin quoted in Mann, 26.
14. Mann, 26.
15. D'Lugin quoted in Mann, 23.
16. Bordo, 296.
17. Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave," *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism* (Cambridge, MA,1988), 212.
18. This particular gendered reading obviously does not take into account the continued spread of HIV and AIDS via intravenous drug use.
19. Scott Tucker, "Gender, Fucking ,and Utopia," *Social Text* 9:2 (1990), 16.
20. Bordo, 289.
21. Tucker, 25.
22. On these various interrelated subjects see, Andrew Jacobs, Jr., "Of Vice and Men," *New York* 28:13 (March 27, 1995), 24; Michelangelo Signorile, "HIV-positive and Careless," *The New York Times*, 144 (February 26, 1995), E15; Philip Yam, "Dangerous Sex: new signs of risk taking prompt rethinking," *Scientific American* 272:2 (February 1995), 10; Sara Miles, "And the Bathhouse Plays On," *Out* (July/August 1995), 87-89; Jorge Morales, "Curtains for New York Sex Clubs?" *The Advocate* 677 (March 21, 1995), 20.



1. Jacopo Pontormo, *Vertumnus and Pomona*, fresco, c.1520, in the Gran Salone of the Villa Medici at Poggio a Caiano (Photo: Art Resource, New York).

Seeing the Looking in Pontormo's *Vertumnus and Pomona*[1]

Pamela Phillips

Pontormo's fresco for the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano has been thought to depict, as two of the figures among its dramatis personae, Vertumnus and Pomona from Ovid's Metamorphoses. *This paper proposes identifying all the figures as manifestations of Vertumnus and Pomona at different moments in time. The key to this reading is attention to the significance of the gaze, as a leitmotif in Ovid's tale, and in Pontormo's painting, which in turn appropriates the gaze of the beholder into the pictorial fiction.*

As the preeminent family of Renaissance Florence, the Medici developed a repertory of imagery intended to advertise the family's strength and *virtù*, and promote the idea of a historical mandate for their dynastic succession as unofficial (and later official) rulers of the city. By the third decade of the sixteenth century, this imagery had evolved to stress particularly the resilience of the family, which had been exiled and returned to Florence twice, and which had suffered its share of untimely deaths that periodically deprived it of male heirs. A prominent theme of Medicean propaganda, as it was expressed in art, music, poetry and drama commissioned by the family, was that of Time's Return and the related promise of a return to the Golden Age under Medici rule. Several scholars have contributed to our understanding of how Pontormo's lunette fresco for the Gran Salone of the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano, traditionally entitled *Vertumnus and Pomona*, shares these themes (Fig. 1).[2] These studies have accepted this title for the picture and have located these two deities among the fresco's many figures, assigning various identities to their companions in the picture, none of whom appears in Ovid's tale of Vertumnus and Pomona in the *Metamorphoses*.[3] The presence of these extra characters in Pontormo's painting has been explained as instrumental in creating further layers of meaning that promote Medicean dynastic messages dealing with Time, Fortune, and the return of the Golden Age. This paper attempts to augment previous interpretations of the painting's imagery by identifying yet another level of meaning contained in the fresco, one that I see as complementary to, rather than mutually exclusive of, earlier readings. The proposal benefits from the recent restoration of the fresco,[4] and has the merit, I believe, of according more easily with the paintings's ostensible subject by identifying all of the fresco's *dramatis personae* as manifestations of Pomona and Vertumnus. My interpretation of the subject matter of the fresco also takes into account a key aspect of Pontormo's own artistic development c.1520, namely the intensified involvement of the viewer with the painting by making him a necessary participant in the fiction of the image through the vehicle of the gaze.

The villa at Poggio a Caiano, designed by Giuliano da Sangallo, was begun for Lorenzo *il Magnifico* in the mid-1480s and was still incomplete when the Medici were expelled from Florence in 1494.[5] Lorenzo had the villa designed to his own specifications which included a temple-front facade, barrel vaults in the portico and central hall (referred to as the Gran Salone), and many other *all'antica* elements which, as Philip Foster has shown, communicate its function as a site for a rebirth and celebration of the

ancient Liberal Arts and agriculture in Lorenzo's Florentine Golden Age.[6] *Il Magnifico* had also begun to decorate the completed portions of the villa with classically-inspired imagery before his death in 1492, including the beautiful glazed terracotta frieze adorning the villa's trabeated and pedimented entrance. Employing a classicizing vocabulary of forms and images of mythological deities, the frieze treats the theme of Time, measured in diurnal and monthly cycles. Time, as we shall have occasion to note later, was a recurrent and important theme for *il Magnifico*, and thus also became a key motif in subsequent Medicean imagery.[7]

Upon the return of the Medici to Florence in 1512, construction and decoration were resumed, and while still under construction the villa was used by Lorenzo the Younger (d.1519) for festivities and the reception of diplomatic and other official guests. The Gran Salone, although part of the original villa design, was completed only shortly before 1519, and its decoration was probably begun soon after.[8] The driving force behind its decoration was Pope Leo X, or Giovanni de' Medici, son of Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, who seems to have delegated the actual task of completing the commission to Ottaviano de' Medici and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (later Pope Clement VII).[9]

Andrea del Sarto, Franciabigio, Andrea di Cosimo Feltrini, and Pontormo were assigned portions of the hall to decorate. Sarto and Franciabigio were each given a long wall to fresco, and both artists completed one scene from Roman history.[10] Feltrini and Franciabigio completed the decoration and gilding of the barrel vault, which is stuccoed with various Medicean and specifically Leonine emblems.[11] We know from Vasari's *Vite* that Pontormo was originally assigned the entirety of both end walls.[12] Vasari also tells us that the Salone program was devised by Paolo Giovio, the author in 1551 of the *Dialogo dell'imprese militari e amorose.*[13] Giovio was part of the circle of Cardinal Giulio de'Medici, and there is evidence of him being in Florence in 1520.[14] No written documentation of his program survives, however, and thus while his authorship is not doubted, the exact theme of the program has been the subject of some dispute.

The problem is complicated by the fact that the artists who had begun to translate the program into pictorial terms were not able to complete their work. With the death of Leo X in December 1521, all work ceased and was not resumed until after the restoration of the Medici again in 1531, when a brief, unsuccessful attempt was made by Clement VII to engage Pontormo again for its completion.[15] The decoration of the room was not entirely completed until 1582, by Alessandro Allori, following a program devised by Vincenzo Borghini that was obviously revised to suit the needs of later generations of Medici. Allori's work included completion of the lateral walls with two more Roman *istorie*, the *sopraporte*, and the pendant lunette fresco, *Hercules and Fortuna in the Garden of the Hesperides.*[16] Clearly, consideration of part of the original program must take into account possible later changes and additions to the whole. Despite their modifications, however, Allori and Borghini certainly understood that the program was meant to link the Medici with ancient Roman rulers, thus also establishing analogies between Florence and Rome, which between 1519 and 1521 had both been dominated by the Medici as a result of Leo X's papacy. Leo X's desire to assert his continuation of his father's Golden Age, now extended to Rome as well as Florence, is a logical theme for the Salone program. Manipulation of ancient history and mythology to glorify the family is entirely consistent with Medicean, and specifically Leonine

propaganda, and is specifically compatible with Lorenzo *il Magnifico's* original intentions for the villa.

The subject of Pontormo's fresco is unusually difficult to ascertain, primarily because the figures depicted are not immediately recognizable. In the *Riposo* of 1584, Raffaello Borghini refers to them simply as *"alcune Ninfe, e Pastori."* [17] The fresco has effectively been entitled *Vertumnus and Pomona* since Vasari identified it in these terms in his *Vita* of Pontormo:

> ...and the Great Hall at Poggio a Caiano having then to be painted, there were given to him to paint the two ends where the round openings are that give light... from the vaulting down to the floor.... Thus, having to execute a Vertumnus with his husbandmen, he painted a peasant seated with a vine-pruner in his hand.... On the other side he painted Pomona and Diana, with other goddesses, enveloping them perhaps too abundantly in draperies. However the work as a whole is beautiful and much extolled.... [18]

Vasari's assignment of this subject to the work occurred 47 years after the fact: the fresco was complete by 1521, and his description appeared in the *Vite* edition of 1568. The accuracy of this title has been disputed.[19] There do seem to be, at first inspection, significant discrepancies between the image Pontormo presents and the story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (XIV, 623-771).[20] While, as Janet Cox-Rearick points out, Vasari knew both the artists and the Medici involved with the Salone commission,[21] and while he and Paolo Giovio were friends and colleagues, his description of Pontormo's painting is typically vague, and several inaccuracies in it suggest he may not have been entirely careful in his interpretation of the work. For instance, none of the male figures holds a vine-pruner, as he asserts; it is rather the female figure in the lower right corner who holds this implement. Moreover, no mention is made in Ovid's tale of husbandmen accompanying Vertumnus, nor of Diana's presence in Pomona's garden. As Cox-Rearick points out, Pontormo did not follow the traditional type of depiction of Vertumnus and Pomona, which shows them on a triumphal cart, such as we see in the woodcut illustration of the *Hypnerotomachia poliphili* of 1499. Nor did he chose to depict a particular, recognizable narrative moment from Ovid's story, such as is seen in works by the contemporary artists Rosso, Perino del Vaga, and Francesco Melzi.[22]

According to Ovid, Pomona was a wood-nymph who devoted herself entirely to the care of her orchard garden of fruitful trees, and thus takes her name from the Latin word *pomum.* Although she was admired by many male creatures, she spurned them all, allowing them no access to her garden. Vertumnus, who loved her most of all, employed various disguises in order to gain entry to her garden and gaze upon her. Ovid describes him masquerading as a reaper with a basket, a mower, an ox-goad, a leaf-gatherer, a vine-pruner, an apple-picker, a soldier, and a fisherman. Vertumnus's final and only transsexual disguise is that of an old woman, by which he gains Pomona's ear and attempts to press his case. After assuring her of Vertumnus' unsurpassed love, the "old woman" warns Pomona that she will be like the vine unmated to a tree and thus ultimately unfruitful if she persists in her ways. The "old woman" tells Pomona a moralizing tale of another young woman turned to stone due to her cruelty in spurning a lover. None of this has any effect upon Pomona, however, and Vertumnus, who is

ready to take her by force, reveals his true appearance and wins her over through his beauty.

Vertumnus was an Etruscan god whose name the Romans associated with the verb *uertere*, denoting turning and change.[23] He embodies the principle of seasonal change, and it is his series of transformations that qualify this story for inclusion in the *Metamorphoses*. The story of Vertumnus and Pomona is an allegory for the relation between the changing of the seasons and the earth's fertility. But how well does Pontormo's scene correspond with Ovid's narrative?

As we have noted, the lunette does not present one easily recognizable narrative moment drawn from the story.[24] Rather, Pontormo presents ten figures seated or reclining in an outdoor setting. Two adult figures are seated on a wall, four below. There are three adult male figures on the left, one nude and two dressed, and three female figures on the right. The older man in the lower left seems to look at the young man to his right, who in turn gazes at the nude figure reaching up to the foliage above him. All three of the female figures, posed differently, look out of the picture with intense and direct gazes, confronting the viewer. The ensemble also includes four putti: two straddle the wall holding a garland, and two, bearing placards, are seated on the trunks of foliage emanating from the frame of the oculus. Their primary function seems to be as "prop-bearers," rather than main characters in this scene. If read as *amorini*, they could suggest the triumph of love at the end of the tale, while the division of the genders among the six adult characters could allude to the opposition of male and female in Ovid's story.

Who are all these extra characters not mentioned in Ovid's tale? Which figures can be identified as Vertumnus and Pomona? Or was Vasari incorrect about the subject? The problem of determining the accuracy of Vasari's identification of Ovid's story is bound to the issue of its suitability to the Salone program and traditional Medici themes.

The most obvious reason that the story of Pomona and Vertumnus is suitable for the decoration of the villa is its celebration of the joys of bucolic living. Also relevant to Medici propaganda is the story's garden setting. The garden of love has a very long association with the concept of the Golden Age,[25] which had already been turned to political, propagandistic ends in Medicean imagery.[26] Another important argument in favor of identifying the fresco as the story of Vertumnus and Pomona concerns the origins of these deities. As we have noted, the Salone program incorporates the theme of analogies between sixteenth-century Florence and Rome and ancient Roman history. In the *Elegies* of Propertius, Vertumnus speaks with pride of his Tuscan heritage:

> Do you who marvel that my one body has so many shapes learn from the lips of the god the tokens of Vertumnus. A Tuscan am I and from Tuscans sprung, nor feel remorse to have forsaken Volsinii's hearths in the days of battle, at the time when Etruscans came with allied arms and crushed the Sabine forces of fierce Tatius. I saw the wavering ranks, arms thrown to the ground, and the enemy's back turned in ignominious rout. And you, Rome, appointed a reward for my Tuscan kin, whereby to this day the Tuscan Street is so named. But grant, O Father of the gods that for all time the toga'd populace of Rome may pass before my feet. I

> like this throng, and delight not in an ivory temple: it is enough that I can see the Roman Forum. (*Elegies*, IV. 2, 1-14) [27]

Vertumnus's Tuscan origins and position of veneration in Rome provide an excellent reason why the Medici, and particularly Leo X, might wish to identify with this deity. Manuscripts of Propertius seem to have been available in Florence and Rome. A fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century manuscript of his complete works exists in the Laurentian Library, as does the *Codex Urbinas*, from the fifteenth century, in the Vatican.[28] Pomona is an indigenous Roman goddess with a sacred grove, known as the Pomonal, outside Rome on the road to Ostia.[29] As an allegory of fertility through their eventual union, the story of Vertumnus and Pomona accords well with Medici propagandistic aims after 1513, when Leo X commissioned many works of literature and art celebrating the union of Florence and Rome under Medici rule. Furthermore, as K. Sara Myers has observed, the tale of Vertumnus and Pomona is placed in the *Metamorphoses* in the section devoted to Roman history, and distinguishes itself from the other amatory tales of the poem by resulting in the consumation of love without the use of force, but rather by persuasion.[30] Leo X, whose personal symbolism included the motto SUAVE, and the "gentle yoke" (the latter among the devices of the Gran Salone ceiling design) would have been far more inclined to favor an allegory of this sort to allude to his elevation to the papal throne and his joining of Florence and Rome, than the more common "love story" of ancient mythology, involving force and submission.[31]

The abundance and fecundity resulting from the happy union of Vertumnus and Pomona establishes a point of contact with the related theme of the Medicean Golden Age and the Augustan Golden Age so relevant to Ovid. The tradition of the Golden Age as a time of peace, harmony, and prosperity for humankind can be traced from ancient literature to the Renaissance. First described in Greek literature, the theme became immensely popular with ancient Roman poets. Probably the most influential contributions to the theme of the Golden Age were Virgil's Fourth *Eclogue* and the *Georgics*, Horace's Sixteenth *Epode* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The most significant Roman contributions were its characterization as an agricultural period, when humankind lived in prosperous harmony with a bountiful nature, which occurring in Virgil's *Georgics*, and the prediction of its return in the near future, presumably under a just ruler, as is prophesied in Virgil's Fourth *Eclogue*.

The self-fashioning of fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Italian rulers as restorers of the Golden Age was a familiar trope in the Renaissance, and the Medici were among its greatest practitioners. This claim was made many times by the poets and artists patronized by Lorenzo *il Magnifico*.[32] It was Lorenzo (1449-1492) who adopted two of the most potent devices of Medicean imagery for his personal symbols; the *broncone*, as a branch of dry-verdant laurel, and the motto LE TEMPS REVIENT (Time Returns), which plays on a line from Dante's *Purgatory* inspired by Virgil's Fourth *Ecolgue*: "The age turns new again; justice comes back and the primal years of men, and a new race descends from heaven."[33] LE TEMPS REVIENT and the laurel were combined many times thereafter and thus, in addition to its age-old associations with virtue, triumph and immortality, the Medici laurel—with healthy leaves springing from a dead branch— came to symbolize the claim of the Golden Age revived in Florence under the family.

The connection between Pontormo's lunette and the theme of the Golden Age is also made by the inscriptions on the placards held by putti, which read IVP. P and VTINAM. The right inscription is agreed to be an abbreviation for IVPPITER PATER (Father Jupiter) and the left is agreed to be the subjunctive expression, "would that!" [34] What is wished of Jupiter is contained in the inscription of the central tablet which bears part of a line from Virgil's *Georgics*: STVDIV[M] QVIBVS ARVA TVERI (I, 21); "...whose love guards our fields." The entire line reads: "Oh gods and goddesses all, whose love guards our fields— both ye who nurse the young fruits, springing up unsown, and ye who on the seedlings send down from heaven the plenteous rain!"[35] Indeed, the recent restoration of the fresco has uncovered the first portion of the Virgilian line ("DIIQUE E/ DEEQ[UE] DE QUE OMNES") scratched into the intonaco, and which was clearly used as a reference by the artist when painting the final, fictive inscription.[36] The entire passage is part of an invocation of the deities and, implicitly, an appeal to them (and Augustus) to restore the halcyon and prosperous days of the Golden Age when peace would grace the land, and agriculture could again flourish. This theme has particular resonance when we recall that the villa at Poggio a Caiano was a working farm and had been intended by Lorenzo *il Magnifico* as a site for the rebirth of this ancient art, as well as the ancient Liberal Arts. That this restoration is to occur under the Medici is implied by the branches of laurel arching over the scene. Ovid begins the story of Pomona by describing in some detail the care she lavishes on the plants and trees of her garden. She is thus an excellent choice to tend the precious Medici laurel, which represents the dynastic continuity of the family and consequently the coming of the new Golden Age under their leadership.

Time, however, like Fortune's Wheel, ushers in both triumph and destruction, as Lorenzo *il Magnifico* realized and often expressed in his imagery (such as that of the villa's entrance frieze) and in his own poetry. In addition to the motto LE TEMPS REVIENT, Lorenzo had used the motif of a disk inscribed with the word GLOVIS, which Paolo Giovio deciphered in his *Dialogo dell'imprese* as a reversal of the phrase SI VOLG[E]— "it turns," referring to Time and Fortune.[37] Time had dealt the Medici a major blow in 1516 with the death of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, and again in May 1519, with the death of Lorenzo the Younger, the last legitimate male heir. Julian Kliemann and Matthias Winner have pointed out that Ariosto's *Ne le stagion*, written shortly before Lorenzo the Younger's death in 1519, appeals to several gods, including Pomona and Vertumnus, to give new life to the Medici laurel.[38] The somber realization of the darker aspect of Time, by which dynastic dreams can be suddenly extinguished, is also strongly evident in Michelangelo's contemporary project for the tombs of the Capitani in the New Sacristy of San Lorenzo, another of Leo X's commissions.[39]

The GLOVIS disk appears in the fresco below the oculus, flanked by two figures who, in a typically Mannerist witticism, literally enact the verb *volgersi*.[40] The two dominant circular elements divide the pictorial field, while also promoting (along with its hemispherical shape) a circular reading of the composition, evoking the perpetual turning of Fortune and Time. Counterbalancing the sweep of the triumphant Medici laurel above is a garland swag held by putti beneath the window. The garland and putti are traditional motifs found on ancient and Renaissance sarcophagi (as are the Four Seasons, which, as we shall discover below, have been seen to be symbolized by the four figures of the lower register). Thus the lower half of the fresco, demarcated by the wall, seems to carry funereal connotations. As several scholars have demonstrated, Leo X

would have chosen to include an allusion to the Laurentian theme of Destructive Time because of its relevance to Medici history around 1520. The funereal elements of the fresco are, however, underplayed, and compositionally speaking, surmounted by the triumphant, fecund Medicean laurel in order to stress the primary function of the painting as an apotheosis: Time restored Medici hopes in June of 1519, when a new legitimate male heir was born. He was Cosimo, the future Grand Duke of Tuscany.[41]

Several scholars have identified the characters inhabiting the lunette as various deities who, through their mythological significance and juxtaposition to each other, cryptically signify a Florentine Golden Age.[42] These readings are extremely complex, and each figure is assigned several identities and symbolic functions. The male figure seated on the wall has been identified as Liber-Sol-Apollo. The sun god, typically nude, reaches toward his sacred plant; in his role as the god of healing he can be seen as aiding in the restoration of the laurel.[43] His female counterpart is identified as Luna-Diana-Ceres. (Thus Vasari's claim that Diana is represented may be correct). As several scholars have noted, Liber and Ceres are also the first two gods invoked by Virgil in the passage from the *Georgics* alluded to in the tablet above, and subsequent ancient commentaries on Virgil understood these two deities as symbols of the sun and moon. Their prominence in the Georgic invocation as well as their function as symbols of the sun and moon could explain their hierarchically superior position on the wall.[44] The old man with the basket in the lower left corner is identified as Vertumnus as well as Janus *coelum*, god of the heavens and the turning new year, and a personification of winter.[45] Pomona, then, is his counterpart on the far right. This latter identification seems immediately convincing in that she holds the pruning knife—an attribute of the goddess mentioned by Ovid. For Cox-Rearick she is also a personification of spring. The figure to Pomona's immediate right has been identified as Venus and a personification of summer.[46] The remaining male figure, who gazes up toward the figure of Apollo on the wall, is meant to be Saturn, who is also a personification of autumn. Thus the deities of the upper register represent Time measured in years (sun/Apollo/Liber) and months (moon/Luna/Diana/Ceres), while those of the lower register symbolize temporal change through the four seasons.[47]

With the Medici as patron and Paolo Giovio as author of the program, one should not be surprised to find arcane and complex readings elicited by this fresco. However, it is also possible that Pontormo injected his own concerns into the image which, as Vasari points out, he labored over and reworked exhaustively. I propose that an additional level of meaning can be found in the painting, which, while entirely consonant with the desires of the patron and program designer, also reflects Pontormo's own artistic concerns around 1520. In this particular phase of his development, as Cox-Rearick has noted, Pontormo was increasingly exploring the psychological expressiveness of his subjects through Michelangelesque treatment of the figure, as well as through his interest in their alert, often responsive gazes, which sometimes acknowledge the presence of the viewer and create a direct and immediate psychological rapport.[48] While, as we have seen, the patrons and designer of the Salone program had several good reasons for including Pomona and Vertumnus in the lunette image, Pontormo may have found in Ovid's story yet another facet, particularly germane to his artistic interests. One of the leitmotifs of Ovid's story is the act of looking: it is Vertumnus's continuous gazing at his beloved, and her eventual, unobscured sight of

him that catalyze reciprocal love. I suggest that this is an additional theme that Pontormo has chosen to emphasize in his painting.

According to this reading of the fresco, Pontormo has included the only two *dramatis personae* actually present in Ovid's story, showing Vertumnus and Pomona three times, at three different moments in the narrative. We have noted that there is no clear explanation for the presence of Vertumnus's "*agricultori*," as Vasari calls them. The three male figures shown, however, are all differentiated in age or costume (or lack thereof) and can be imagined as Vertumnus in his various states, a notion previously suggested by Kurt Forster in his monograph on Pontormo.[49] In the past, most scholars have preferred to identify Vertumnus only in the older, bearded figure at the far left. This identification is explained, apparently, by the fact that the god is frequently depicted as an older, bearded man, in contrast to his youthful consort, Pomona.[50] However, the key aspect of the god is his ability to metamorphose into any guise, and there is no reason to think of him exclusively as old. Indeed, the evidence for how he was represented in antiquity is scant and vague, and no canonic depiction is available.[51] In Book IV of his *Elegies*, Propertius employs the conceit of having Vertumnus, in the form of his own statue representation placed behind the temple of Castor on the Viscus Tuscus in Rome, define his protean nature, never pinning down a single likeness for himself. Furthermore, a close reading of Ovid's description of Vertumnus does not imply that he should be consigned to old age. At the point in his tale when the god, disguised as the old woman, attempts to persuade Pomona to accept Vertumnus as her suitor, he specifically describes himself as youthful: "Consider also that he is young, blest with a native charm, can readily assume whatever form he will..." (*Met.* XIV, 684-685). The male figures of the fresco's lower register represent two of his disguises, while the nude figure above may be a reference to his revealed state, which Ovid describes in the following terms: "When the god in the form of age had thus pleaded his cause in vain, he returned to his youthful form and stood revealed to the maiden as when the sun's most beaming face has conquered the opposing clouds and shines out with nothing to dim his radiance...and the nymph, smitten by the beauty of the god, felt an answering passion" (*Met.* XIV, 765-771). Vertumnus in his youthful, radiant, revealed state may appear as an image of the sun god Apollo because Ovid himself seems to draw the comparison, and because the guise of Apollo, functioning allegorically, is useful in the simultaneous scheme of Medici propaganda.[52]

If all three male figures are Vertumnus, then we should be able to read all three of the female figures as representations of Pomona at different moments. Indeed, all three can be read as the same goddess; they are certainly not differentiated in the way that the male figures are, since physical transformation is not part of Pomona's activity in the story. Ovid's Pomona has the role of gazing at Vertumnus in his many guises and responding to him, finally in requited love and attraction. Although each of Pontormo's female figures is distinct from the other two in her pose, all three are clearly engaged in the act of looking and responding emphatically to what they see. Indeed, the strong *contrapposto* of their bodies and the very different positions in which they are arranged suggest the active, transitory quality of their appearance. As theorists and artists such as Alberti and Leonardo expressed in words and in visual art, *contrapposto* is intrinsically linked with the suggestion of movement, and reveals the motions of the mind and the soul. In the case of Pontormo's lunette, the women aptly express their perception of and response to Vertumnus. Pomona's transformation in Ovid's story is from

disinterest to love, and perhaps her final, responsive state is suggested by her appearance on the upper register (as a pendant to the revealed, nude Vertumnus) seated and leaning forward, with legs parted and one limb revealed to the knee. The two seated figures on the wall are joined across the pictorial space by mutually grasping the laurel (and thus regenerating its life and fecundity). They are also accompanied by putti, who can perhaps be seen in this context as alluding to love and passion.

Many of Pontormo's studies of individual figures for the fresco reveal his strong interest in the active gaze, since they share an equal if not greater emphasis on the act of looking.[53] Indeed, in some of the drawings, the eyes have been enlarged to extraordinary proportions, and the gestures and movements of the figures, such as shading the eyes, pointing, and leaning accentuate their active gazing.[54] Significantly, in several of the studies (CR 134, 135, 136 137) the male figures are equally active in their intense gazing.[55] Perhaps this can be explained by recalling that Vertumnus's gazing upon his beloved is also described by Ovid: "In one guise or another, he would find his way to her, happy to watch her beauty" (*Met.* XIV, 654-655). In the fresco, the two male figures on the lower register still cast their gazes across space, but significantly not across the pictorial field to the realm of the female figures, nor out of the picture toward the viewer. It appears that the older, bearded man gazes toward the younger man to his left, who in turn directs his gaze (and ours) to the nude above. The visual scansion is thus locked on the left side, preventing it from crossing the composition on the lower register, and perhaps also suggesting to the viewer a sense of progression from one figure to the next. To the "schematic *contrapposto*" that David Summers observed in the fresco ("back/front, male/female, nude/clothed, youth and age") may be added the *contrapposto* of gazes averted from and directed toward the beholder.[56] As Robert Gaston has argued, the Renaissance viewer was certainly sensitive to the significance of attention and inattention in paintings. The dichotomy between the two halves of the lunette, in which the male figures make no visual contact with the viewer, while the female figures meet the viewer's gaze with powerfully assertive gazes, would surely have been recognized as signaling a significant disjunction.[57] None of the gazes of the painted male figures is nearly as emphatic, nor the postures nearly as histrionic, as those in several of the drawings, such as CR134-137 (a point Cox-Rearick makes in her study of the artist's drawings).[58] It seems that in the process of working out his final conception, Pontormo ultimately chose not to stress Vertumnus's act of looking, in order to reserve this form of agency for Pomona.[59] This begs the question, to what end? I propose that the viewer becomes the conduit for the interaction between the two protagonists. We see Vertumnus in his different guises, as Pomona would, and we are seen by Pomona as is Vertumnus. The viewer of the fresco completes the narrative action by partaking in the looking and seeing—by gazing at the painting and having his gaze returned—and thus joining the two halves of the image into a narrative whole. Thus the purpose of Pomona's "eye contact" with the viewer goes beyond the Albertian function of engaging him with the action by admonishing him to view it. Rather, the gazes of Pontormo's three Pomonas implicate the viewer as an intrinsic and necessary part of the narrative action: the visual process of the beholder is appropriated by the painting's characters.[60] The painting may also contain a punning play on the words for eye and oculus, since the fresco surrounds and is dominated by this form. Describing the assignment of the original commission to Pontormo, Vasari refers to the areas he

was to paint in the following terms: "gli furono date a dipignere le due teste dovo sono gli occhi che danno lume (cioè le finestre)..." [61]

Renaissance optical theory was still undecided between the intromission and extramission models of vision first proposed in antiquity; in other words, whether vision was the result of rays emitted by objects and reaching the eye, or by rays emanating from the eye and striking the object seen. The issue was treated by artists as well as theorists: Alberti mentioned the debate in *Della pittura* (but declared it irrelevant to his study of perspective and painting).[62] Filarete, in his *Trattato d'architettura* offers experiential proof for the intromission model.[63] Piero della Francesca, conversely, supported the extramission construct.[64] Leonardo's position is less clear and sometimes contradictory: at one point in the *Codex Atlanticus* he argues that rays do extend from the eye and exercise influence on things seen. In support of this idea he adduces the ability of some animals to affect their environment through their vision, and of particular interest is his comment on the power of a woman's gaze, in which he seems to be reflecting current notions: "maidens are said to have power in their eyes to attract to themselves the love of men." [65] It is tempting to imagine that Pontormo was aware of these theories regarding how the eye sees and can affect the thing seen, and that in his painting he was twisting the relationship artfully by giving this power to Pomona's painted gaze, which inspires love in Vertumnus through the viewer's eyes as he perceives her. The directness of Pomona's three gazes, and the vigor of her *contrapposti* lend her such animation and immediate presence that her recognition of the viewer transfixes and startles, and potentially initiates love through the power of the female gaze and through beauty—the beauty of the goddess and the magnificent execution of the artist.[66] Worth mentioning in this context is the developing relationship between the work of art and the viewer that manifests itself, by mid-century for example, in the notion that the work of art has the power to affect and even transform the viewer. This idea is evidenced in the interplay of literature and art prompted by sculpture such as Michelangelo's *Notte* in the New Sacristy and Cellini's *Perseus* in the *Loggia dei Lanzi*, both of which were claimed to transfix the viewer and even turn him to stone.[67] Such a powerful and useful artistic trope derives, of course, from antiquity, and was known in the quattrocento as well. In the beginning of Book II of *Della Pittura*, Alberti recalls (via Plutarch) the effect of a portrait of Alexander the Great on one of his captains, who trembled conclusively at the sight of it.[68] Considering the issue from another angle, there can be little doubt that Pontormo and his collaborator were aware of the venerable tradition of love residing in the eyes of the lady loved, frequently expressed in Italian poetry, including that of Lorenzo de'Medici.[69]

It is quite likely that Pontormo was aware of a related treatment of love and the gaze, as exemplified in Botticelli's *Primavera*, possibly another Laurentian commission. As Charles Dempsey has explained, Botticelli's Venus, in her eye contact with the beholder, her frontal pose and her gesture of salutation, represents "the initial greeting and acknowledgment of the lover by the beloved.... " [70] The *Primavera*, as Dempsey describes it, is a portrait of love, from its inception in the gaze of the lover and the gaze returned by the beloved, to more profound levels. For Dempsey, Botticelli's "portrait" begins with the gaze of the painting's viewer:

> All action in the *Primavera* commences with the gaze of the beholder, who is placed before Venus as a votary to her....It is the fact of his presence...that

> provokes her return gaze and welcoming gesture....The gaze of the beholder meets her shining eyes, and in that precise moment, eternalized in art, Love draws the bow and strikes the heart ....[71]

Like Botticelli's Venus, Pomona returns and responds to the gaze of the viewer, transforming him into the role of lover. That Vertumnus's act of gazing upon his beloved is transferred to the artist and the viewer of the painting is surely also significant in the context of the Ovidian narrative which so specifically relates gazing, desire, and possession. It seems possible to me that Pontormo considered Ovid's story very carefully as he created this image, and in the arduous and protracted process of devising and reworking his ideas for the fresco that Vasari describes, he arrived at this means of making Pomona the locus of desire for Vertumnus, himself, and the beholder.[72]

There are other instances of Italian Renaissance artists attempting to engage the viewer on several levels through the use of the fictive gaze which may be profitably considered with respect to the *Vertumnus and Pomona.* Particularly germane are examples in which the reciprocal gaze between the painted persona and the actual beholder is employed to locate the exchange in a particular temporal moment (or moments). In her study of two of Savoldo's paintings of Mary Magdalen, Mary Pardo traces the development of the half-length devotional image in the later fifteenth- and early sixteenth-centuries, recalling Leonardo's lost Gabriel (known through a copy by Bandinelli) who addresses the viewer through eye contact and gesture, as if the viewer were the Virgin Annunciate; in other words, the viewer is placed into one specific narrative moment.[73] In her interpretation of Savoldo's paintings (generally dated slightly later than Pontormo's fresco)[74] Pardo posits a "space between two fictions" created by the painter, referring to two distinct narrative moments from the Gospel of John (20: 14, 16), the two sequential moments when Mary, alone at the tomb, turns to look at Christ.[75] Pardo describes a process whereby the viewer, based on his familiarity with the Gospel and the visual evidence provided, first recognizes and temporally locates these two moments, and then interpolates the narrative. I suggest that Pontormo requires similar acts of identification, narrative expansion and interpolation from his viewer, providing as visual clues three male and three female figures representing three narrative moments. Several aspects of these paintings are significantly different: Pardo places Savoldo's paintings within the tradition of half-length devotional images derived from icons, a tradition to which Pontormo's fresco does not belong. She interprets the Magdalen's gaze (intended ultimately for the Risen Christ) as only momentarily intercepted by the viewer. Also according to her theory, Savoldo allows the beholder one glimpse of the protagonist and two temporal poles, while I am positing that Pontormo presents three views of the two protagonists to suggest less specifically-defined narrative moments, but distinct moments nonetheless that collectively imply the entire story. The paintings by Leonardo, Savoldo and Pontormo are significantly similar, however, in that all imply awareness and recognition of someone outside the pictorial fiction, and depend on that person— the viewer—as a necessary part of the pictorial dynamics for completion of the image. The works in question also deal innovatively with the long-standing challenge of how to evoke time cogently in a painting.

In the case of the *Vertumnus and Pomona* fresco, the erudite viewer familiar with Ovid's tale can reconstruct the story by "reading" the narrative into the image, in a sense creating a coherent narrative from the disjunctive visual clues the painter provides.[76] It is the viewer's task to comprehend that he is presented with three manifestations of the same two characters, and to apprehend the passage of time thus implied. According to this interpretation, Pontormo employs a method related to continuous narrative, a well-established means of depicting multiple moments in a story by showing the same characters more than once within the same unified fictive space, which the viewer understands as representing successive episodes. Clear examples of this method are seen in Ghiberti's *Story of Issac* on the Gates of Paradise, and Masaccio's *Tribute Money*, in which the same key figures are deployed in different portions of the fictive space. As Lew Andrews has recently shown, continuous narrative was still employed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries without being considered incompatible with innovations in pictorial construction and illusion.[77] Pontormo himself had employed this means of suggesting the passage of narrative time about two years before in his panels of the *Story of Joseph* for the Borgherini bedroom ensemble. In his study of continuous narrative, Andrews is primarily interested in demonstrating its compatibility with a deep, rational, three-dimensional space created through one-point perspective. In the Poggio a Caiano fresco, however, Pontormo eliminates the fiction of a deep space of this sort, and the narrative is presented within a highly compressed spatial ambient. This is one logical choice for a non-rectangular, highly placed wall decoration (especially one in which a centralized vanishing point would be swallowed by the void of the window). Pontormo had probably recently seen Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican *Stanze*, including the lunette of Jurisprudence in the Stanza della Segnatura, which offers a similar compositional solution in that it places the figures into the immediate foreground without supplying the illusion of deep space.[78] By compressing and thus de-emphasizing the space, Pontormo may also have removed the viewer's most traditional cue for recognizing the depiction of unfolding narrative time. The relationship between space and time nearly disintegrates, and this makes recognition of a narrative more difficult.[79] As previous interpretations of the *Vertumnus and Pomona* have shown, Paolo Giovio and Pontormo loaded this painting with arcane references that can only be unlocked by a viewer with a sound knowledge of ancient history and poetry, and Renaissance astrology. Divining Ovid's narrative of Vertumnus and Pomona in Pontormo's "non-narrative" presentation of the story is equally demanding, but ultimately possible for Renaissance literati. The prerequisite for comprehending the subject (before Vasari's biography of Pontormo, at any rate) is familiarity with Ovid's story and then the identification of the figures' gazes as significant and as a key aspect of his tale.

Another reason that the *Vertumnus and Pomona* is so difficult to recognize as a narrative image, and is at the same time so structured (or "emblematic," as Cox-Rearick aptly describes it [80]) relates to its position in the program and the structure of the room itself. McKillop and Cox-Rearick have noted that the lunette occupies a liminal space above the cornice, between the clearly narrative *istorie* referring to the earthly deeds of the Medici, and the vault, decorated entirely with non-figural devices, and symbolic of the heavenly realm. As these scholars have further noted, this location makes the lunette most appropriate for an image of Medicean apotheosis.[81] Accordingly, the lunette combines the types of imagery presented below and above it for the very reason

that it contains figural representations (and, I would argue, an obscured narrative) while simultaneously presenting an enigmatic, symbolic, seemingly non-narrative and highly-structured composition comprising an image and text that provokes multiple interpretations. These characteristics remind us somewhat of Renaissance *imprese*, for which Paolo Giovio is, of course, the best-known codifier. While Pontormo's fresco certainly cannot be reduced to a giant *impresa*, either in its function or appearance, it does share with this class of images the qualities of being arcane and combining image and text in a presentation demanding deduction.[82] The fresco lacks the Albertian prerequisites for an *istoria* which involve, among other things, overt action and interaction among the figures. As Winner points out, none of the figures touch or overlap one another.[83] All are positioned into a regular pattern—an equation balanced across the oculus—which contributes to the impression that they correspond with distinct temporal/narrative moments. This arrangement is in fact what allows the figures to bear multiple identities and support the presentation of several complex levels of meaning, so that they can simultaneously be ancient gods invoked by Virgil, planetary and seasonal deities combined into a significant message of Medicean apotheosis, and *dramatis personae* from the *Metamorphoses*. The highly structured scheme into which the figures are deployed is in turn artfully belied by the pastoral theme and Pontormo's casual, rustic presentation. That Pontormo could simultaneously incorporate yet another level of meaning into such an exquisitely beautiful framework is further testament to the extent of his creative genius.

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1. This paper was originally presented in Professor Rona Goffen's seminar, "Mythology and the Renaissance" at Rutgers University. I wish to thank her for introducing me to many key ideas leading to the theory here proposed. She and Dr. Sarah McHam both gave me much useful criticism on this paper and have provided me with superior instruction, guidance, and support during my ongoing training at Rutgers, and particularly with my forthcoming dissertation on the Chiostro dei Voti of SS. Annunziata in Florence. I would also like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Pilliod for her insightful comments and bibliographic suggestions for this paper, which led me to several developments of the original idea. My first attempt at published scholarship is dedicated with gratitude and love to Mary Phillips, Shirley Woodnorth, Marylou Gramm, and Noël Freudberg, who have given me many precious gifts.

2. The Medicean propagandistic message in the fresco has been comprehensively treated in studies by: Julian Kliemann, "Vertumnus und Pomona: Zum Programm von Pontormos Fresko in Poggio a Caiano, " *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorichen Institutes in Florenz* 16 (1972), 293-328; Matthias Winner, "Pontormos Fresko in Poggio a Caiano: Hinweise zu seiner Deutung," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 35 (1972), 153-97; Susan McKillop, *Franciabigio* (Berkeley, 1974); Claudia Rousseau, "Cosimo I de' Medici and Astrology: The Symbolism of Prophecy" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1983); Janet Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton, 1984); I have relied on these important studies of the imagery and themes of the work as a Medici commission.

3. The pairing of these ancient deities is unique in ancient literature to Ovid's poem, and the amatory tale he creates for them has symbolic significance within the *Metamorphoses* that carries over into Pontormo's fresco for the Medici villa decorative cycle. On the symbolic significance of the story of Pomona and Vertumnus in the *Metamorphoses*, see K. Sara Myers, "*Ultimus Ardor*: Pomona and Vertumnus in Ovid's *Met. 14. 623-771*," *Classical Journal* 89 (1994), 224-250.

4. On the recent restoration, see Laura Lucioli, "Note di restauro," in *Pontormo a Poggio a Caiano*, ed. Litta Maria Medri (Florence, 1995), 42-45.

5. Philip Ellis Foster, *La Villa di Lorenzo de'Medici a Poggio a Caiano* (Comune di Poggio a Caiano, 1992), 99. Another important source for the history of the villa is Silvestro Bardazzi and Eugenio Castellani, *La villa medicea di Poggio a Caiano*, 2 vols. (Prato, 1981).

6. Foster, *La Villa di Lorenzo*, chapters 2 and 6, esp. 141.

7. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 66-67. The decoration begun during Lorenzo's lifetime also includes Filippino Lippi's fresco, *The Sacrifice of Laocoön*, in the entrance loggia. For a full treatment of the villa's history, construction and function, see Foster and Bardazzi and Castellani.

8. Foster, *La Villa di Lorenzo*, 99.

9. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 89.

10. Sarto's fresco is usually called *Tribute to an Emperor*, possibly Caesar, and shows an ancient ruler being presented with the gifts of various exotic animals, an obvious reference to similar tributes paid to Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, in 1487, and Leo X, in 1514 (Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 107). Franciabigio's fresco, *The Triumph of Cicero*, has been interpreted variously as an allusion to Cosimo *Pater Patriae's* return from exile and as an allusion to Lorenzo *il Magnifico's* return from his diplomatic mission to Naples in which he made peace with Ferdinand of Naples, thwarting the plans of Sixtus IV to oust the Medici once again. See McKillop, 71-73, and Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 107. On the Salone program, and particularly the lower register, see in addition, John Shearman, *Andrea del Sarto*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1965), vol. I, 78-88; Matthias Winner, "Cosimo il Vecchio als Cicero: Humanistisches in Franciabigios Fresko zu Poggio a Caiano," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 33 (1970), 261-97; Julian Kliemann, "Politische und humanistische Ideen der Medici in der Villa Poggio a Caiano: Untersuchungen zu Fresken der Sala grande" (PhD. diss., Heidelberg, 1974); Litta Medri, *Il mito di Lorenzo il Magnifico nelle decorazioni della Villa di Poggio a Caiano* (Florence, 1992).

11. The stucco emblems of the vault include the *broncone*, or regenerating Medici laurel branch, the *palle*, the *diamante* and the yoke.

12. Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori scritte da Giorgio Vasari pittore con nuove annotazioni e commenti di Gaetano Milanesi* (Florence, 1906), VI, 264 and note 4. All subsequent references to Vasari's *Vite* are from the same edition and are referred to as Vasari/Milanesi unless otherwise indicated.

13. Vasari/Milanesi, V, 195. Giovio's book was first published in 1555, and drew on a long tradition of device-making, as is documented for example, in Baldasar Castiglione's *Courtier* (Castiglione was in fact in Rome in the first three years of Leo X's papacy, representing the duke of Urbino at the papal court, and concurrently composing and revising his manuscript). On Giovio, see T. C. Price Zimmerman, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Princeton, 1995), esp. pp. 247-249.

14. Shearman, *Andrea del Sarto*, I, 78 and note 1.

15. Vasari reports that Pontormo (then the only surviving member of the original decorative team) was called upon again by Ottaviano de'Medici, at the behest of Giulio de'Medici (become Pope Clement VII) to complete the Salone program. According to Vasari, scaffolding was erected and cartoons were made, but the work never progressed beyond this stage, though no explanation other than Pontormo's predisposition to go "off into fantasies and cogitations" is supplied as to why (Vasari/Milanesi, VI, 275-276). Several extant drawings have been identified with these cartoons, which Vasari describes as representing "a Hercules crushing Antaeus...a Venus and Adonis...[and] a scene of nude figures playing football." Another study thought to be for the *sopraporta* under his lunette, is usually called the *Anointing of the Athlete*, or *The Bath of Cicero*, and includes a painted lunette in which Leda reclines with the swan. See also Cox-Rearick's discussion of this issue, Janet Cox-Rearick, *The Drawings of Pontormo: A Catalogue Raisonné with Notes on the Paintings*, 2 vols., rev. ed. (New York, 1981), vol. I, 174-176, 285-287, cat. nos. 124, 130, 307-311.

16. The subjects of the two *istorie* painted by Allori are *Titus Flaminius at the Council of the Achaeans*, and *Scipio Meeting Hasdrubal at the Court of Syphax*. The *sopraporte* contain allegories of Virtue and its rewards. On Allori's and Borghini's role in the program's completion see Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 102-116 and 143-153; Jack Spalding, "Observations on Alessandro Allori's Historical Frescoes at Poggio a Caiano," *Storia dell'arte* 59 (1987), 11-14; Medri, *Il mito*, 85-91; Erkinger Schwarzenberg and Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi, "Norzia o la costante Fortuna: la lunetta di Alessandro Allori a Poggio a Caiano," *Kunst des Cinquecento in der Toskana*, ed. Monika Cämmerer, Italienische Forschungen Vol. XVII, (Munich, 1992), 197-206.

17. Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo*, 1584; cited in Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 122.

18. The English translation is from Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. de Vere, 2 vols. (New York and Toronto, 1996), 353. Vasari/Milanesi, VI, 264-265; the entire passage reads: "... avendosi a dipignere al Poggio a Caiano la sala grande, gli furono date a dipignere le due teste, dove sono gli occhi che danno lume (cioè le finestre) dalla volta infino al pavimento. Perchè Iacopo disiderando più del solito farsi onore, sì per rispetto del luogo e sì per la concorrenza degli altri pittori che vi lavoravano, si mise con tanta diligenza a studiare, che fu troppa; perciocchè guastando e rifacendo oggi quello che aveva fatto ieri, si travagliava di maniera il cervello, che era una compassione; ma tuttavia andava sempre facendo nuovi trovati, con onor suo e bellezza dell' opera. Onde avendo a fare un Vertunno con i suoi agricultori, fece un villano che siede con un pennato in mano, tanto bello e ben fatto, che è cosa rarissima; come anco sono certi putti che vi sono, oltre ogni credenza vivi e naturali. Dall'altra banda facendo Pomona e Diana con altre Dee, le avviluppò di panni forse troppo pienamente: nondimeno tutta l'opera è bella e molto lodata."

19. André Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris, 1961), 156.

20. The translation of the *Metamorphoses* used for this paper is the Loeb edition; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2 vols., trans. Frank Justus Miller (London, 1916). All subsequent references are from the same edition.

21. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 88.

22. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 122, and note 16. Melzi's painting of c.1510 and Rosso's drawing of c.1532 show Vertumnus, disguised as an old woman approaching Pomona. Perino del Vaga's drawing of c.1527 shows an old, bearded, nude Vertumnus seated in a garden setting with a young, nude Pomona, holding her pruning knife and an apple.

23. See McKillop, 75, note 47.

24. In addition to the works treating the painting and the Salone program cited above, Frederick Cooper has suggested another interpretation of the fresco. Stressing Pontormo's close connection with theatrical events, he sees the lunette as a visualization of a satiric play, written by Jacopo Nardi, *I due felici rivali*, referring to the competitive wooing of the same prospective bride by Giuliano and Lorenzo (the Younger) de'Medici. Frederick A. Cooper, "Jacopo Pontormo and Influences from the Renaissance Theater," *Art Bulletin* 55 (1973), 380-392.

25. For a discussion of this connection in literature see A. Bartlett Giamatti, *The Earthly Paradise and the Renaissance Epic* (Princeton, 1966).

26. Such an interpretation has been applied to Botticelli's *Primavera* by Horst Bredekamp, *Sandro Boticelli, La Primavera: Florenz als Garten der Venus* (Frankfurt, 1988). For a different treatment of Botticelli's painting, concerning the self-fashioning of Lorenzo *il Magnifico's* circle and its superimposition on the image of Medicean Florence, see Charles Dempsey, *The Portrayal of Love: Botticelli's Primavera and Humanist Culture* (Princeton, 1992).

27. Propertius, *Elegies*, bk. IV, II. trans. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1990). All subsequent references are from the same edition. See also Julian Kliemann's remarks on the description of Vertumnus in ancient writings (Kliemann, "Vertumnus," 299-301).

28. Propertius, *Elegies*, IV.2, 13-14.

29. Robert E. Bell, *Women of Classical Mythology: A Biographical Dictionary* (Santa Barbara, 1991), 379.

30. Myers, 229-230.

31. On Leo's *imprese*, see Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 36-39. I wonder if it is too far afield to see the possibility of a jab in the Pomona story. Considering the state of Italian affairs c.1520-21, and Leo's maneuvering to prevent the Papal States and Rome from being encircled by foreign powers, Ovid's story could conceivably allude to Rome's acceptance of her true destiny under Leo rather than the other brutish suitors of Pomona that Ovid mentions.

32. Ernst Gombrich notes that the theme also appears in Lorenzo's own poetry. Ernst Gombrich, "Renaissance and Golden Age," *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London, 1966), 32.

33. "Secol si rinova; torna giustizia e primo tempo umano e progenie scende da ciel nova." *Purgatorio*, XXII, 67-72. Quoted in Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 20-21, note 22.

34. The fictive inscription of the left placard has been read differently by scholars over the years, since the final letter in it was long obscured by the painting's dirty condition. The different readings of this word have slightly affected the various interpretations of the fresco's meaning. The recent restoration of the fresco has determined conclusively that the word depicted is VTINAM, just as Julian Kliemann had suggested in 1972 (Kliemann, "Vertumnus," 324-325). On this issue, see Litta Medri, "Vertumno e Pomona di Poggio a Caiano," in *Il Pontormo: le opere di Empoli, Carmignano, e Poggio a Caiano* (Venice, 1994), 60.

35. Virgil, *Georgics*, II, trans. H. R. Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library (London, 1916), 80-83; as cited in Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 303-305.

36. Medri, "Jacopo Pontormo: 'Vertumnus e Pomona' di Poggio a Caiano," *Pontormo a Poggio a Caiano*, 15.

37. Paolo Giovio further explained that GLOVIS is also, like the laurel, symbolic of Medici virtue, since it is an acronym for Glory, Fame, Honor, Victory, Justice, and Wisdom. Giovio, *Dialogo dell'imprese*, cited in Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 28-30.

38. This observation was first made by Matthias Winner and Julian Kliemann in 1972. Whereas Kliemann and Winner saw the fresco as referring specifically to the period before Lorenzo the Younger's death—and thus as an appeal for him to be spared as the only hope for an heir—Cox-Rearick and Rousseau place the message of the fresco after the birth of Cosimo I, and thus as a celebration of Medici continuity. See Winner, "Pontormos," 171-177; Klieman, "Vertumnus," 304-306; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 127-142.

39. Many intriguing connections occur between the imagery of these two contemporaneous commissions, both carrying messages of Medicean apotheosis and triumph over Time. Kathleen Weil-Garris Posner was the first to call attention to various compositional similarities between Pontormo's fresco and two drawings in the Louvre whose authenticity has been disputed, but which have been thought to represent one of Michelangelo's stages in the planning of the Capitani tombs around 1520-21 (Kathleen Weil-Garris Posner, "Comments on the Medici Chapel and Pontormo's Lunette at Poggio a Caiano," *The Burlington Magazine* 115 (1973), 641-649). The Louvre drawings suggest that Michelangelo experimented with an attic story for the wall tombs that included a central roundel flanked by putti, as well as garlands, plaques and seated and reclining figures, "in a lunette composition arranged in sparse, open, but symmetrical rhythms along an unbroken architectural horizon." (Weil-Garris Posner, 645).

40. I wish to thank my fellow graduate student at Rutgers, Costanza Barbieri, for this observation.

41. A portion of Ovid's description of Pomona may suggest these themes in a more literal way: "...She carried no javelin in her hand, but the curved pruning-hook with which now she repressed the too luxuriant growth and cut back the branches spreading out on every side, and now, making an incision in the bark, would engraft a twig and give juices to an adopted bough..." (*Met.*, XIV, 625-631). Admittedly, it is difficult to imagine the Medici perceiving their family tree as "too luxuriant," but taken in the context of the theme of loss leading to future strength, Pomona's activity, analogous to Fortune's, is quite applicable. A particularly pertinent example of this idea of loss and renewal in reference to the Medici laurel, discussed by Cox-Rearick, is Pontormo's posthumous portrait of Cosimo *Pater Patriae*, which was probably painted for Leo X shortly before the Poggio a Caiano lunette (circa 1519) (Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 41-59). Ovid's description of Pomona engrafting a twig and nurturing a bough could allude to Leo X's own adoption of Cosimo I as his godson, and his symbolic naming of the boy after the founder of the Medici dynasty (Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 49-50).

42. All of the scholars cited in note 2 have posited interpretations of Pontormo's painting that involve reading the six main figures as deities, as did Kurt Forster, *Pontormo: Monographie mit kritischen Katalog* (Munich, 1966), 39-47. The readings of the painting and identifications of the various figures in it differ, of course, with each scholar. The cursory summary I offer above cannot do justice to the many distinctions between them, but intends instead to supply a general idea of the history of its treatment in the literature. Kliemann and Winner offer extremely erudite readings and historical contextualizations of the work. McKillop offered several important insights, see particularly her discussion of the significance of the dog (McKillop, 76). Cox-Rearick has in turn done a masterful job of examining and interpreting the fresco (Cox-Rearick, esp. *Dynasty and Destiny*, 117-142, *passim*), and setting it within the larger context of Medicean propagandistic message. She and Claudia Rousseau have also proposed reading the fresco as representing key elements of the horoscopes of Leo X and Cosimo I that involve superimposing a zodiacal schema in the lunette composition.

43. Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 123-137. In reaching up as if to grasp the branch he also lifts his violet-colored drapery toward the plant. Violet was one of the heraldic colors of Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, who was frequently conflated with the god by his contemporaries. Falling between the figure's legs, the drapery visually connects his conspicuously exposed genitals with the laurel, alluding to procreation and the regeneration of the laurel, representing continuance of the male Medici line. For an interpretation of the Apollo figure as representing Leo X, see Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 140-142. She also points to the fruit of the swag below the oculus as being the *mala medica*, a Tuscan citrus fruit often incorporated into Medici commissions to allude to the *palle* and the family name (Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 48). Surrounding the figure of Apollo—above with the *lauro* suggestive of Lorenzo's name, and below with the Medici fruit claimed to have medicinal/restorative powers—would suggest quite clearly the restoration of the Medici line descended from *il Magnifico* (in part at least: Cosimo's mother, Maria Salviati, was a granddaughter of *il Magnifico*, while Cosimo's father, Giovanni delle Band Nere, was from the other branch of the family) .

44. Often cited as a commentary on Virgil is Servius's, *Servii gramatici in Vergilii carmina commentarii*. For discussions of this commentary and other fifteenth-century ones, see Winner, "Pontormos," 158-60; Kliemann, "Vertumnus," 313-15. As Litta Medri most recently reminds us, Apollo and Diana, figures of the sun and moon, and day and night, also have a prominent role in the villa's entrance frieze, executed for Lorenzo *il Magnifico* (Medri, "Vertumno," 60).

45. Kliemann, "Vertumnus," 300-303. The identification with Janus accords well with the key role this god plays on the villa's portico frieze designed for Lorenzo *il Magnifico* during his lifetime as part of the iconography of the new villa. See Cox-Rearick's chapter on the portico frieze, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 65-86.

46. In his review of *Dynasty and Destiny*, Charles Dempsey takes issue with Cox-Rearick's conflation of Venus and Summer, which he deems a "classical impossibility." Traditionally, Venus is associated with Spring. Charles Dempsey, review of *Dynasty and Destiny*, by Janet Cox-Rearick, *The Burlington Magazine* 127 (1985), 808-809.

47. Again, the theme of Time as represented by personifications accords well with the iconography of the portico frieze. See note 46.

48. Cox-Rearick, *The Drawings*, vol. I, 32-33. I shall refer to Pontormo's drawings using Cox-Rearick's catalog numbers, designated by the prefix CR.

49. Forster, 42.

50. See Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 122, and note 16, and my discussion above. We recall that this figure, for Kliemann, is simultaneously Vertumnus and Janus; the second identity would have a bearing on his aged appearance.

51. I wish to thank Professor Penny Small for sharing with me a draft version of her entry on Vertumnus in volume 8 of the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, forthcoming in 1997.

52. The recent discovery during the restoration and cleaning of the fresco of the appellation PAN underneath the older, bearded figure and the artist's signature could be further evidence of a connection, intended by Paolo Giovio and Pontormo, between certain ancient gods and members of the Medici family, in particular, Lorenzo *il Magnifico*. In addition to the well-known connections between Lorenzo and Apollo, we recall that a strong connection exists between Lorenzo and Pan (On these connections, see Chastel, 226-233; W. Welliver, "Signorelli's Court of Pan," *Art Quarterly* 24 (1961), 334-345; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 77, 83-86). Due to limitations of space, the implications of this newly discovered inscription and its subsequent erasure cannot be fully explored here, but should be considered in greater depth in the future. Professor Medri interprets the inscription as indicating a change in intention, possibly by Paolo Giovio, which if true, would be further evidence that the painting continued to evolve and change as Paolo Giovio and Pontormo collaborated on it. Perhaps even more significant, the subsequent erasure of the fictive inscription, like the decision to abridge the Virgilian inscription in the upper part of the composition, could be evidence of a growing desire on the part of the author to make the meaning of the work more difficult for the viewer to apprehend (On the recent discoveries, see Medri, "Jacopo Pontormo," 12-15).

53. Unfortunately, my interpretation of Pontormo's fresco does nothing toward solving the problem of the extant compositional studies for the lunette (if they are indeed for this lunette, and were not intended for the opposite wall). It has been noted that the two ideas recorded in CR131 and CR132 cannot easily be reconciled with the Ovidian story. Cox-Rearick does see an incipient working-out of the story in CR132.

However, the great differences between these two compositional studies and the fresco (lack of space between the figures, lack of attributes indicating the identities of Vertumnus or Pomona, lack of emphasis on gazing at each other, integration of the sexes, etc.) indicate that the final conception was a long time in development. Since no documents regarding Giovio's program exist, we must consider the possibility that the entire program, conception and execution, was at some point a work simultaneously in progress. The alternative is that the studies are for the opposite lunette. Testing this latter theory is difficult if not impossible, since CR 131 and 132 seem equally unclear as depictions of a particular story or theme, and we have no clear idea as to what Giovio planned as a pendant. Regarding the recently discovered evidence of changes made to the content of the fresco during its execution, such as the obscured fictive inscription PAN and the abridged Virgilian inscription, see Medri, "Jacopo Pontormo," 12-15.

54. In this argument I am referring to CR134-138, 140-141, 143, 145-149, and 151. See also Cox-Rearick's comments on this aspect of the artist's *oeuvre*, Cox-Rearick, *The Drawings*, vol. I, 32-33. These phenomena are not unique to Pontormo's studies for the Poggio lunette. Similar statements could be made about several of Pontormo's sketches and finished, painted figures. A predisposition to exploring issues concerning seeing and being seen only strengthens the likelihood that this theme is indeed emphasized in Pontormo's translation of Ovid's story.

55. In accordance with usual artistic practice in the Renaissance, Pontormo used male models in his studies for the female figures as well. The drawings I refer to are several that are traditionally seen as studies for the older male figure usually identified as Vertumnus since they explore the pose he retains in the fresco, although it is not entirely clear to me that these studies are exclusively for the cross-legged, older man of the fresco. CR 134 may indicate that the adjacent figures on the lower register both may have been planned as cross-legged figures at one point.

56. David Summers, "*Contrapposto*: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977), 357-358 and note 111. Summers builds on the analogy, previously drawn by Weil-Garris Posner, between the compositional/schematic structure of Pontormo's lunette and Michelangelo's contemporaneous plans for the New Sacristy project at San Lorenzo. See Weil-Garris Posner, 641-649; and Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 220-227.

57. Robert Gaston, "Attention and Inattention in Religious Painting of the Renaissance: Some Preliminary Observations," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth*, ed. Andrew Morrogh (Florence, 1985), 253-268.

58. Cox-Rearick, *The Drawings*, vol. I, 42-43. She also sees the address to the viewer of the far-right female figure as toned down in the final painting, which it certainly is, since the assertive forward-leaning posture of the upper torso has been retracted to a more sedate reclining posture. And yet the painted figure still maintains a strong, direct connection to the viewer through her posture and gaze.

59. It is surely also significant that in at least two of the studies for the female figures (using male models, but studying poses retained for the female figures) such as CR 146 and 149, Pontormo directs the gaze with equal intensity, but in quite different directions. In CR146, the figures gazes emphatically to his left. He is a study for the pose of the figure traditionally identified as Pomona (the figure on the far right of the lower register). Either Pontormo had not yet established the compositional location of this figure, or he was considering having one of the figures on the right side of the lunette focus its gaze outside of the fiction of the pictorial space at one of the lateral walls. Since none of the drawings can be precisely dated, this is speculation, but it might indicate that Pontormo arrived at the concept of directing the gaze of all of the female figures toward the viewer at a relatively late stage in his development of the fresco.

60. In his discussion of his preference for a painted figure who introduces the work to the beholder, Alberti does allow for interaction between the beholder and the characters enacting the *istoria*: "In an *istoria* I like to see someone who admonishes and points out to us what is happening there; or beckons with his hand to see....Thus whatever the painted persons do among themselves *or with the beholder*, [emphasis mine] all is pointed toward ornamenting or teaching the *istoria*." Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, bk. II, trans. John Spencer (New Haven, 1956), 78 (All subsequent references to *Della pittura* are from the same edition). Alberti does not, however, suggest that the visual process of the beholder may become the conduit for the painted characters' perception of each other. Furthermore, the clarity of message Alberti seeks for the *istoria*—the entire purpose of his advocating that a figure make eye contact with the beholder—is, I shall argue below, not the aim of Pontormo's fresco, which demands a certain level of erudition and careful analysis to discover even its subject matter. Although he does not posit quite the same dynamic I am proposing for the Poggio fresco, Robert Gaston has proposed that *Maniera* artists

including Pontormo sought a new level of involvement for the viewer through the meeting of his gaze by the painting's protagonists in the context of the *sacra conversazione* (Gaston, 265).

61. Vasari/Milanesi, VI, 264. The English translation of this passage (by Gaston du C. de Vere), is cited above, within my text; see note 18.

62. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, bk. I, 46, as cited by David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-kindi to Kepler* (Chicago and London, 1976), 149 and note 10. I do not wish to imply that Renaissance artists' knowledge of optical theory was entirely separate from that of scientists and theorists: artists' discussions from at least Ghiberti on incorporate knowledge of medieval Arabic and Western scholarly sources. On this issue, see Lindberg, chapter 8.

63. Donald Sanderson Strong, "Leonardo on the Eye," PhD diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1967, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts Series (New York and London, 1979), 390-391.

64. Strong, 359, note 22. In his annotation, Strong mentions Liliane Brion-Guerry's belief that in the second half of the fifteenth century, Northern Italy generally held to the theory of extramission, and the Florentines to intromission. Liliane Brion-Guerry, *Jean Pelerin Viator: sa place dans l'histoire de la perspective* (Paris, 1962).

65. Leonardo, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vini*, ed. and trans. Edward MacCurdy, 2 vols., reprint (London, 1958), 236; cited in Lindberg, 160 and note 61. Such an attitude toward the power of a woman's gaze may, admittedly, stem from less than scientific origins (such as the tradition of Italian vernacular poetry), but it is interesting and perhaps significant to find it within Leonardo's empirically-based argument on optics. Also on Leonardo's position on the intromission and extramission theories see Strong, 359, 379-380, 390-391.

66. In addition to the example of Botticelli's Venus in the *Primavera*, to be discussed shortly, the synergistic effect of the gaze paired with the activated form of a female figure, in rapport with a viewer positioned as the lover, has been discussed in the different context of uxorial imagery in terms of Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* and *Venus of Urbino*. On this see, most recently, Rona Goffen, "Sex, Space, and Social History in Titian's *Venus of Urbino*," *Titian's* Venus of Urbino, ed. Rona Goffen (Cambridge, 1997), 65, 79, and *passim*.

67. See John Shearman's very informative summary of this phenomenon in *Only Connect...: Art and the Spectator in the Italian Renaissance*, The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1988, Bollingen Series 35 (Princeton, 1992), 44-58.

68. Alberti, Spencer, 63.

69. For a description of this poetic theme as it relates to Botticelli's *Primavera*, see Dempsey, 152-154.

70. *Ibid*, 154.

71. *Ibid*, 157. At this point, however, the aims and methods of Botticelli's and Pontormo's paintings depart in significant ways, since the *Primavera* is concerned with depicting the stages and aspects of love, whereas the *Vertumnus and Pomona* makes use of the theme of love primarily to explore the power of vision and to suggest the fertility of a union between Florence and Rome. However, it is worth reiterating the obvious but important point that both works employ ancient motifs and themes within images that also transmit politically-charged messages.

72. Vasari/Milanesi, VI, 264-265. In a subsequent article I plan to discuss the relations of vision, desire, and the role of the artist and the viewer in greater depth in relation to the collaborative work with Bronzino, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, and other works by Pontormo.

73. Mary Pardo, "The Subject of Savoldo's *Magdalene*," *Art Bulletin* 71 (1989), 67-91. In her study, Pardo also adduces Leonardo's *Saint John the Baptist* and Antonello da Messina's *Virgin Annunciate*.

74. Pardo notes that the works are generally dated between 1520-1536 (*ibid*, 67-69, and note 3).

75. *Ibid*, 74-75.

76. The insertion of narrative information by the viewer that is not given in the artist's depiction is hardly new. However, Mannerist art often demands greater erudition of its viewer and frequently offers less obvious visual clues to effect its deciphering.

77. Lew Andrews, *Story and Space in Renaissance Art: The Rebirth of Continuous Narrative* (Cambridge, 1995).

78. Kurt Forster first made this observation (Forster, 45); Weil-Garris Posner elaborated on the analogy and discussed the possible influence of the *Parnassus* on Pontormo's composition (Weil-Garris Posner, 648).

79. See also Cox-Rearick's theory on the reduction of spatial depth in the painting to encourage a schematic reading of the setting as the glyph for Libra (Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 205).

80. *Ibid*, 119, 122.

81. McKillop, 74; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 117-120.

82. Specifically, I am following Cox-Rearick's critical point that, "This atypical presentation of the Vertumnus and Pomona story, together with the emblematic character of the composition, the symbolic laurel, and the inscription, suggest that the often-noted stylistic novelties of the fresco reflect not only an intensive phase of individualistic experimentation on the part of Pontormo, but complex and hitherto unexplained levels of symbolism in the work." My interpretation of the painting differs most clearly from hers in disputing her statement that, "...Pontormo's fresco tells no story at all" (Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 122).

83. Winner, "Pontormos," 153; Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny*, 202.

Notes on Uccello's *Battle of San Romano*: Identification of the Louvre Panel with the Battle of Anghiari

Julia Maria Lessanutti

Three panels attributed to Paolo Uccello, now distributed between the National Gallery London, the Uffizi and the Louvre (Figs. 1, 2 and 3) were first identified by Herbert Horne in 1901 as depicting the Rout of San Romano of 1432. Horne's conclusion was based on the earliest known record of the paintings from a well known inventory of 1492 from the Medici palace in Florence.[1] This reference has remained an important document in identifying the subject of the three paintings and their common source as commissions from the Medici family, in particular Cosimo. According to Horne, the London panel shows the mercenary captain Niccolò da Tolentino, commander of the Florentines, directing the battle against the Sienese (his standard of a Gordian knot appears on the flag over the figure carrying Tolentino's baton). The Uffizi panel (signed "PAULI UCIELI OPUS" on a scroll painted on a shield in the left–hand corner of the painting) captures the moment when the Sienese commander, Bernadino della Ciarda, was unhorsed by the Florentines. The Louvre panel shows Micheletto Attendola da Cotignola (identified by his standard which is quartered and bears two and three silver and sable barry undée, flying above the condottiere, and his personal impress of a unicorn seen just beneath this), acting upon Niccolò's orders, attacking the Sienese from the rear. The battle or rout of San Romano, which took place on 1 June 1432, gave the Florentines a long–awaited victory over the Sienese forces. Before the battle began, the command of the Florentines was removed from Micheletto Attendola and given to Niccolò da Tolentino, who became the hero of this war.[2]

The dating of the battle pieces has never been firmly established. While most scholars date the series to the 1450s after the completion of Cosimo de' Medici's new palace on via Largo, there are those who prefer an earlier dating in the period immediately following the San Romano victory.[3] The early dating places the panels closer to Uccello's 1436 fresco of John Hawkwood in the Cathedral of Florence, as well as the frescoes of the Chiostro Verde in Santa Maria Novella.[4] The problem of dating Uccello's battle pieces may never be resolved. However, investigating the probable motivations that inspired the subject of the commission will, I hope, throw new light and further discussion on these important Quattrocento paintings. I believe the political and historical events of the 1430s provided the most appropriate and acceptable time for the commissioning of Uccello's London and Florence panels of the *Battle of San Romano*. While I agree with the universal consensus that the subject of the London and Uffizi paintings is the battle of San Romano, I disagree that the Louvre panel represents this battle.

The London and Uffizi paintings are compatible in style and composition, but scholars have frequently commented on the discrepancies of the Louvre painting on both of these counts.[5] I suggest that the Paris panel was not part of the original commission. Rather, it depicts another battle, and was executed after the other two paintings to form a tripartite arrangement with the London and Uffizi panels as mentioned in the 1598 inventory from the new Medici palace.[6]

1. Paolo Ucello, *The Battle of San Romano: Niccolò da Tolentino*. National Gallery, London (Photo: National Gallery, London)

2. Paolo Ucello, *The Battle of San Romano: Bernadino della Ciarda Unhorsed*. Uffizi, Florence (Photo: Art Resource, New York)

3. Paolo Ucello, *The Battle of Anghiari: Micheletto Attendola da Cotignola*. Louvre. Paris (Photo: Photo Collection of the National Museums, Paris)

In the 1950s during restoration of the paintings, Umberto Baldini demonstrated that the original panels had been in a lunette shape. Further, he believed that the upper corners of all three had been inserted some time in the sixteenth century. Baldini was not aware that the technique employed for the additions was one used in the Trecento and not beyond the latter part of the fifteenth century.[7] He concluded that these panels were so shaped to fit into the architectural vaulting and between the supporting corbels in the room known as "la chamera di Lorenzo." That the rectangular panels had once formed a higher lunette shape at the top would explain the disturbing truncation of the lances in all three paintings and the standards in the London and Paris examples. Furthermore, Baldini posited that the London and Uffizi panels had originally fitted into the two bays of the short north entrance wall, the Uffizi panel being placed above the door, while the Louvre panel was set at right angles to these on the adjacent long east wall left of the entrance.[8] However, Baldini's arrangement does not explain the addition in the lower left corner of the Louvre panel, as observed by Paul Joannides. According to Joannides, the composition of the Louvre panel was carefully organized to "accommodate an intrusion into the lower left edge of the pictorial field, presumably of a door."[9] He cogently demonstrated that the Paris painting was meant to hang separately, and although the 1492 inventory located the pictures in the *camera di Lorenzo*, they were not originally commissioned for that room. The addition to which Joannides drew attention could be the crack described in a condition report on the Louvre panel.[10]

Recently, Volker Gebhardt argued that the three panels were hung together on the same wall in a "chamera terrena," a ground floor room in the north–west corner of the palace and adjacent to the garden. He asserted that Baldini's hypothesis had misled most scholars who supported the split arrangement. Gebhardt's arrangement of the three paintings, in which the three panels were hung on the east wall in a single line where the wall is long enough and the lighting is best, seems quite feasible.[11] He concluded that Cosimo commissioned Uccello to do the cycle for the old Palazzo Medici after Tolentino's death in 1435. The Louvre panel was the first to be executed, and according to Gebhardt, upon its completion Cosimo decided to cease work on the other two panels until his new palace was completed. He dated the London and Uffizi panels to the early 1450s, and the Louvre panel to the 1440s.[12]

Contrary to Gebhardt's hypothesis regarding the dating of the panels, I propose that the London and Uffizi panels date soon after Cosimo's return to Florence from exile in Venice in 1434, and that the Paris panel should be dated in the 1440s or even later. This would have been an excellent time for Cosimo to consolidate and reinforce his political ambitions, as well as promote his public image. Ostensibly, the *Battle of San Romano* was commissioned from Uccello as a visual document of Florentine republican triumph, and as a vehicle for propagating the fame of the captain general of that battle, Cosimo's friend, the condottiere, Niccolò da Tolentino. The events that followed the victory at San Romano reveal the great esteem held in Florence for Tolentino and that his memory was perpetuated publically for several years following the battle.

In 1432, the year of the battle of San Romano, Matteo Palmieri, in his memoirs, praised Tolentino not only for his bravery, but for his ingenious military tactics.[13] In the same year on 21 August, the feast day of the "unconquerable and glorious martyr" St. Rossore, through whose intercession the Florentines believed they had been victorious, the Signoria sponsored a ceremony in the church of the Ognissanti honoring Tolentino and his men for an unidentified victory over the Sienese.[14] In 1433 on the feast day of

St. John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence, Leonardo Bruni delivered an oration on behalf of the Signoria in which Niccolò da Tolentino was honored for his services to the city and credited with possessing the virtues of the ancients. Leonardo, in extolling the virtues of Niccolò, pointed out that the two most important things to the Florentines are the lily (the emblem of the government of Florence and its people) and the feast of John the Baptist. He continued that on this day Niccolò was honored by both:

> Due chose ha precipue il Populo Fiorentino,
> La insegna del Giglio, et la festa del Baptista,
> delle quali l'una vi dona a perpetua memoria
> delle excellentissime virtù vostre, dell'altra
> ha eletto il di solenne, e festivo a questo dono
> per più vostra celebrità, et honore.[15]

Cosimo's esteem for Niccolò da Tolentino may be gleaned from the account of the events that immediately preceded Cosimo's exile to Venice in September 1433. In describing these events in his *Ricordi*, Cosimo recalled how Tolentino, upon hearing of Cosimo's imprisonment in the Palazzo della Signoria, had arrived at Lastra with soldiers; his intention was to enter Florence to secure Cosimo's release. On the advice of the Medici family and supporters, Tolentino was persuaded to abandon his plan because it seemed too risky and might incite a deadly revolt. The decision was lamented by Cosimo who in his *Ricordi* stated his belief that the plan would have been successful.[16] Recalling this act of potential courage, Cosimo described Niccolò da Tolentino as his most faithful friend: "era molto mio amico."[17]

The events surrounding Tolentino's death are somewhat obscure. Some believe he died while a prisoner of the Milanese in 1434, and that his death may not have been accidental. The murder of Tolentino would have been one way for Cosimo's enemies, namely the Rinaldo degli Albizzi and the Duke of Milan, to eliminate a powerful and popular Medici supporter. However, there are other reports that he died in battle when thrown off his horse into a ravine.[18]

Gordon Griffiths has creditably suggested that Cosimo, upon his return to Florence from exile, might have been instrumental in having Tolentino's body brought back to the city for a splendid public funeral in order to demonstrate his esteem for Tolentino. Leonardo Bruni in his funereal oration hailed Tolentino as possessing the virtues of the ancient Romans.[19] Amidst a grand and solemn ceremony officiated by Pope Eugenius IV on 20 March 1435, the body of Tolentino was interred in the cathedral of Florence.[20]

With the outpouring of Florentine emotions surrounding Tolentino's burial in Florence and recalling, no doubt, Bruni's laudatory oration at the request of the Signoria, the shrewd Cosimo could have seized upon this moment to advance the image of his family by commissioning the battle pieces. As Griffiths so aptly perceived, this would have provided a most opportune occasion for the Medici regime to associate itself with a Florentine hero who was made to appear as a "Medicean martyr."[21] The Medici family residence as a focus of public ritual and Florentine business hospitality provided an appropriate location for exhibiting pictures of local warriors and battle victories. This was a practice observed in many council rooms of Tuscan communal palaces; here images of local heroes were proudly displayed in areas where the daily business of family and state were conducted.[22] By commissioning a painting of

Tolentino in command at San Romano for his family palace, Cosimo not only acknowledged the heroic qualities of his friend, but was also able to create a pictorial instrument of family propaganda to be seen by visitors to his home.[23] Medici patriotism and the family's image were perpetually connected with the painting and the victory at San Romano. The portrait of Tolentino in the London panel recalls an ancient Roman equestrian hero and thus emphasizes his heroic qualities. Cosimo likewise could share the accolade of hero because of his involvement with the mercenary captain and the events at San Romano.

The London panel shows the hero of San Romano, while the Uffizi panel depicts the demise of the enemy with the unhorsing of the Sienese commander, Bernadino della Ciarda. The London and Uffizi paintings are complete in terms of portraying the event and capturing Florentine and Medicean ideologies. They also complement one another in their figural components and the shared stage–like composition with its contrived placement of broken lances, pieces of armor and other relics of war used to define spatial perspective. There was no need to initiate a third painting for the depiction of the battle at San Romano, because the historical event, political implication and Medicean propaganda are sufficiently immortalized in the London and Uffizi paintings.

Comparison of the London and Uffizi panels with the Louvre panel reveals discernible differences in composition and style. The condition of the three panels differ. The varying degrees of the panels' conservation affects solely their color rather than their style and composition. The Louvre panel has been spared the over-cleaning of the London and Florence panels, and is the best preserved, as John Pope–Hennessy correctly observed.[24] Stylistic and compositional discrepancies, although overlooked by many critics, are still discernable and deserve closer scrutiny. The differences that separate the Louvre panel from the other two battle pieces support my supposition that the three paintings were not conceived originally as a tripartite composition, but rather, two separate commissions commemorating two different battles.

The directional movement in the London and Uffizi paintings is lateral; Tolentino moves across the panel in a left to right direction, whereas the Sienese commander moves from right to left; the two figures thereby converging towards one another. If the Louvre panel had been part of the original series, and as such, had been the center of the assumed tripartite composition, both protagonists could be read as moving towards this panel. This positioning, however, would disrupt the sequence of events. Micheletto of the Louvre picture has not yet encountered the enemy and the absence of any relics of the battle (broken lances, fallen shields and dead soldiers on the ground) attests to this. Instead Micheletto is depicted calling his troops to charge. According to accounts of the skirmish, Micheletto entered the battle arena after Tolentino and Bernadino were already engaged in fighting.[25]

This incongruity of events in relation to the Louvre panel provides an additional reason to suspect that it illustrates another event. Tolentino and Bernadino are both seated upon rearing white horses, who along with their riders are depicted in profile thus underscoring the lateral movement of the composition. The action takes place in the foreground of a limited stage-like space, with the tilted perspective of the hills rising as a backdrop to the dramatic performance below. The background in these two pictures is homogeneous, inviting an interpretation of a shared continuous landscape. Consequently, although two separate incidents are depicted, the viewer is urged to

read them as sequential moments. In both paintings, Uccello was very specific in marking out the foreground space systematically. He achieved this quality by distributing objects in a grid pattern so that the orthogonals converge at a center point just above the main horses and riders. There is an element of pictorial unity in these two panels generated by the type of events portrayed: the moment prior to the encounter with the enemy in the London painting and the result of this action illustrated in the Uffizi painting.

The differences between the Louvre panel and the other two, even though it deals with a similar subject, support my claim that the Paris painting was not part of the San Romano battle cycle. Micheletto Attendola, seated upon a black, rearing horse, advances towards the spectator as indicated by the thrust of the animal's head and the full-face portrait of Micheletto. The use of such a device de-emphasizes the lateral movement in contrast to the movement characterizing the London and Uffizi panels. No articulation of the foreground space is present. Instead, a series of human and animal legs marches across the picture surface in a frieze-like composition, but without the appropriate number of bodies to equal the limbs. The background is not consonant with the other two paintings since its tilted perspective does not create a bird's-eye view of the surrounding hills. Furthermore, the orange trees (a Medici attribute) visible in the London and Uffizi panels are not repeated or distinguishable in the Louvre example. These disparate elements destroy any implication of a continuous, "unified" composition in the cycle.

The potential movement from left to right of the London painting, indicated by Tolentino and his rearing horse, could be seen as forming one side of a parenthesis, with the right to left direction of Micheletto and his charging horse forming the other end of the parenthesis. This sequence could work if all three panels were hung on the same wall. However, the arrangement has to be seen as highly improbable, because it locates the Uffizi painting in the center, thus making Bernadino, the enemy, the focal point of the sequence.[26]

Stylistically, the Louvre panel shows a different stage of development in Uccello's career.[27] The volumetric forms of the "carousel" horses and the dramatic juxtaposition of light and dark modeling that create a "frozen" drama in the London and Uffizi panels are not employed in the Paris painting. It could be claimed that this disparity is due to the poor condition of the Louvre panel, where the contrast of light and dark shapes lacks the dramatic definition of the other two paintings. Notwithstanding the allowances caused by the deterioration of the panel, the actual drawing of the figures would not have been altered. For example, the Louvre panel depicts horses that do not share the massive anatomical structures and pantomimic species of the other two panels. Instead, the animals seem to carry less bulk and clearly do not demonstrate the same "frozen carousel" type of horse. Like the London and Uffizi examples, the Paris painting still pays homage to the Florentine convention of heroes on rearing horses. However, if Micheletto had not been on a black mount this practice would have been obscured by the medley of figures and animals compressed into the composition, a clear departure from the London and Uffizi panels.

There is one other significant consideration that widens the gap between the London and Uffizi panels and the Louvre panel: the armor worn by the condottieri. Lionello Boccia studied the armor Uccello meticulously illustrated in the three battle pieces. He asserted that Uccello paid scrupulous attention to every detail and repro-

duced the armor with great precision. Boccia concluded that the armor in the London and Uffizi paintings matches the kind used between 1430 and prior to 1440, and corresponded to that which appeared in the John Hawkwood fresco. In contrast, the armor in the Louvre painting is later, after 1440.[28] If Uccello had completed these paintings around the same time, then one would expect the armor in all three works to be compatible

So far the discussion has centered on the formal characteristics of the Louvre panel in distinguishing it from the London and Uffizi panels. The subject matter of the Louvre painting must be considered with respect to its difference from the other two works. Horne identified Micheletto Attendola by his standards flying in the painting as the condottiere leading his troops to attack the Sienese in the rear at San Romano.[29] Certainly, Micheletto had been the Florentine commander in 1432, but following the loss of certain fortresses he was replaced by Niccolò da Tolentino and given a subordinate position.[30] There was only one hero at San Romano, and he was immortalized by Uccello in the London panel.

Micheletto did not emerge as a hero from the battle at San Romano; he had already lost his command, was relegated to a secondary post, and was not mentioned at all in Bruni's oration of 1433. I suggest that Micheletto is represented in the Louvre painting as the commander of the Florentine forces at the battle of Anghiari, which took place on 29 June 1440. It was at this battle, rather than at San Romano, where he had achieved real fame as a condottiere; and this fame lived on in Florence well after his death in 1448.[31] Micheletto's name appeared in a memo written by Leonardo da Vinci as one of the captains to be represented in the painting of the *Battle of Anghiari* for the Sala dei Cinquecento.[32]

By then it would seem that the victory at Anghiari was more important than the rout of San Romano in terms of its outcome and what it achieved for Florence and consequently for Cosimo.[33] Bruni completed his *Commentarius* with a description of the battle of Anghiari by referring to it as an "enormous glory and exaltation to our city."[34] It secured for Florence lands in the upper Arno valley, strengthening its position and security against its northern enemies. For the first time Florence was fully in control of territory which once belonged to the greatest feudal rulers in Tuscany, the counts of Poppi. The triumph ended a five month period of immense tension for a government that had very little faith in the ability of its troops, so it is no surprise that news of the victory was greeted by the Florentines with great jubilation.[35] The Republic regained its confidence, and Cosimo and his regime were the benefactors of a renewed spirit. According to Ferdinand Schevill, the victory and acquisition of the Poppi lands and their dependent territories increased Cosimo's popularity and prestige.[36]

The greatest victory for Cosimo, though, would have been the demise of his old enemy Rinaldo degli Albizzi. As reported by Griffiths, Rinaldo had urged the duke of Milan to undertake this military campaign against Florence, assuring him of victory, and consequently the return of the exiled Albizzi clan to Florence. Rinaldo would never see Florence again and Cosimo could rejoice knowing that he would never again be vulnerable to the Albizzi. This must have been Cosimo's sweetest triumph since it was at the instigation of the Albizzi that Cosimo was exiled to Venice in September 1433.[37]

The battle at San Romano was the one event of the early period that would lend itself aptly to the political ambitions of the Medici. Similarly, the Louvre painting could have been commissioned officially from Uccello in the early 1440s, soon after the

4. Unknown artist, *Battle of Anghiari*. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin (Photo: National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin)

victory at Anghiari, as a celebration of another important republican victory, but also as a statement of Medicean propaganda. Ten years after the London and Uffizi works, Cosimo was able to reassert his conceit with a painting depicting the victory at Anghiari with Micheletto as the hero.

Machiavelli's commentaries on the battle of Anghiari complement the pictorial representation by Uccello. According to Machiavelli, Micheletto was the first to spot the enemy in a distant cloud of dust. He must have been in the hills surrounding the plain, because the passage continues that Micheletto rode down to the bridge, not far from Anghiari, between the citadel of Anghiari and Borgo San Sepolcro where the battle took place.[38] The site of the battle of Anghiari has been described as taking place in a field surrounded by hills. The encounter involved a round-arched, stone bridge still visible today. The popularity of cassone paintings in 1440 depicting the battle of Anghiari is generally considered to be a result of the influence of Uccello's battle paintings. The bridge near Anghiari appears in two of the most frequently cited cassoni paintings which depict the battle of Anghiari; one cassone is in the National Gallery of Ireland (Fig. 4) and the other is in the Sir Hugh Lane's Collection.[39] The bridge in the cassoni panels indicates the geographical location of the actual battle. Its absence within Uccello's painting leads me to conclude that a different location was intended by Uccello for the Louvre panel.[40]

I propose that Machiavelli's account, or one similar to it, inspired the Paris painting. It coincides with the moment chosen by Uccello when Micheletto, waiting in the hills with his troops, saw the distant enemy below in the field and issued the command to attack. Hochstetler Meyer explained that written sources for the battle were dispatches to the Signoria on that day and several days following the battle. Contemporary writers and ultimately Machiavelli based their accounts on these bulletins.[41]

As a later and separate commission, the Louvre panel would have been conceived to form part of the decoration in the same room where Uccello's first two panels were already displayed. The London and Uffizi paintings are complete in portraying and capturing the most important events of the battle, namely focusing attention on Tolentino, the hero of the victory and Cosimo's friend and supporter. A third painting on this subject would not enhance an understanding of the events. The Paris panel retains its integrity as a single painting. Joannides and Boskovits recognised it as a work

of the mature Uccello which demonstrated the more accomplished style of the artist's later years.[42]

The original location of the panels has never been securely determined. It could not have been the new palace on via Larga if, as I propose, the paintings predate the commencement of that palace. Their recording in the 1492 Palazzo Medici inventory does not necessarily confirm the new palace as their earlier provenance. Further, the referral of all three as the "rotta de san Romano" could easily have been a mistake by the compiler of the inventory. For those scholars who favor a 1450s dating for all three paintings—that is, after the completion of the new Medici palace—it would seem that too much emphasis has been placed on the 1492 inventory instead of analyzing the motivations that would have inspired such a commission. Also, the failure by scholars to scrutinise the apparent discrepancies of composition and style of the Paris panel has led to the uncritical acceptance of Horne's initial identification of all three paintings as representing the battle of San Romano. I believe there is sufficient and compelling evidence to identify the Louvre panel as a depiction of the battle of Anghiari.

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1. H. Horne, "The Battle-Piece by Paolo Uccello in the National Gallery," *The Monthly Review* (London, 1901), 114-38. In the 1492 inventory the panels are listed as being part of the contents from the "*grande terrena, detta la chamera di Lorenzo.*" In another inventory dated 1598 from the palace, the three panels are described as depicting antique jousts all in one piece, "*3 quadri grandi di giostre antichi tutti in un pezzo....*" There is no mention of Uccello as the artist nor any reference to the "rotta di san Romano" as stated in the 1492 inventory. For a transcript of the relevant inventories, see Horne, Appendix, 137-8.

2. For an account of the Luccan War and the demise of Cosimo de' Medici after it, see W. J. Wegener, "'That the practice of arms is most excellent declare the statues of valiant men': the Luccan War and Florentine political ideology in paintings by Uccello and Castagno," *The Society for Renaissance Studies* (Oxford, 1993), 142–53. See also, Horne, 126; and for identification by the standards and Uccello's signature 129–32; L. Boccia, *L'Arte dell'armatura di Paolo Uccello* (Milan, 1967), 89, n. 22. For an eyewitness account of the battle by Luca degli Albizzi, see M. Mallett, *Mercenaries and Their Masters* (New Jersey, 1974), 181-5. Another contemporary, Matteo Palmieri, described the background of the battle and praised Niccolò da Tolentino for his bravery and success, see *Matthei Palmerii Annale*, ed., new Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Sciptores*, XXXVI, 1(1906–1915), 135-6.

3. The construction of Cosimo de' Medici's new Florentine palace was underway by 1446, see G. Cherubini, and G. Fanelli, *Il Palazzo Medici Ricardi di Firenze* (Florence, 1990), 38; D. V. and F. W. Kent, "Two comments of March 1445 on the Medici palace," *Burlington Magazine* 121 (1979), 795-6; I. Hyman, *Fifteenth Century Florentine Studies* (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1968), 85-6, and 127-35. Also see Hyman's article, "Notes and Speculations on S. Lorenzo, Palazzo Medici, and an Urban Project by Brunelleschi," in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* vol. XXXIV (1975), 100-2; L. H. Heydenreich and W. Lotz, *Architecture in Italy 1400-1600* (Hammondsworth, 1974), 21-3.

4. The most recent monograph on Uccello offers the most comprehensive review of the panels' dating, see F. and S. Borsi, *Paolo Uccello* (New York, 1993), 307, who dated the London and Uffizi panels about 1435–6, and the Louvre panel to c. 1440. For the review see 310–2. See also the recent article by W. J. Wegener, "'That the practice of arms is most excellent declare the statues of valiant men': the Luccan War and Florentine political ideology in paintings by Uccello and Castagno," *The Society for Renaissance Studies* (Oxford, 1993), 38. Prior to this publication the standard monograph was J. Pope-Hennessy, *Paolo Uccello* (London, 1969), 153, who favored a later dating of the mid-fifties. Recent scholarship favoring an early dating of the 1430s and 1440s include R. Starn and Loren Partridge, "Representing War in the Renaissance: The Shield of Paolo Uccello," *Representations* 5 (1984), 58 and n. 5; M. Boskovits, *Early Italian Painting*

1290-1470, trans. F. P Chiarini (New York, 1990), 178; C. Volpe, "Paolo Uccello a Bologna," *Paragone* (July, 1980), 20; A. Parronchi, *Paolo Uccello* (Bologna, 1974), 37. See also L. Boccia, "Le armor di Paolo Uccello," *L'arte* 11/12 (1970), 55–91, who dated the London and Florence panels c. 1435, and the Paris panel to the 1440s based on the design of armor and costumes depicted in the paintings.

5. Paul Joannides correctly drew attention to the figural and compositional similarities and the homogeneous landscape of the background of the London and Uffizi panels. Conversely, the Paris painting has larger figures that are set against a "dense hedge with no landscape visible." See P. Joannides, "Paolo Uccello's 'Rout of San Romano': a new observation," *Burlington Magazine* 131 (1989), 214-5.

6. See Horne, (as in n. 1) 137–8.

7. V. Gebhardt, "Some problems in the reconstruction of Uccello's 'Rout of San Romano' cycle," *Burlington Magazine* 133 (March, 1991), 182.

8. U. Baldini, "Restauri di Dipinti Florentini," *Bollettino d'Arte* XXXIX (1954), 231, see fig. 21 for a reconstruction of Baldini's arrangement. On the arrangement of the cycle see also Joannides, 215; M. Davies, *National Gallery Catalogue. The Earlier Italian Schools* (London, 1961), 525-31.

9. Joannides, 215.

10. A condition report dated 23 June 1993 from Nathalie Volle, Conservator with the Chef du Service de Restauration des Musées de France advised that the Louvre panel was retouched in 1988. The restoration was carried out on some small marks on the head of the horse at the center and on the legs of the figure at the left.

11. Gebhardt, 180–4.

12. *Ibid.*, 184.

13. Palmieri, 135-4.

14. G. Richa, *Notizie Istoriche delle Chiese Fiorentine*, vol. VI (Florence, 1757, reprint Rome 1972), 257. Although the battle of San Romano is not specifically mentioned by name, we can safely assume that this was the event to which the reference is made.

15. Richa, 131. See also Leonardo Bruni, *Orazione*, ed. Oreste Gamurini (Florence, 1877), 11-6;

16. D. Kent, *The Rise of the Medici* (Oxford, 1978), 303; Gutkind, 77-8; Horne, 130; W. Roscoe, *Life of Lorenzo de Medici*, 2nd. ed., vol. 1, Appendix II (London, 1796), 5.

17. Kent, 301; Gutkind, 77-8; Horne, 130; Roscoe, vol. 1, Appendix II, 5.

18. There is some evidence suggesting that Tolentino and Rinaldo were bitter enemies and that Rinaldo had discussed plans with the Captain of the Commune for getting rid of Tolentino. See G. Griffiths, "The Political Significance of Uccello's *Battle of San Romano*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 41(1978), 315. C. Gutkind, *Cosimo De'Medici, Pater Patriae* (Oxford, 1938), 95, found very little evidence implying that Rinaldo Albizzi, who was instrumental in securing the exile of Cosimo, had anything to do with the death of Niccolò da Tolentino. He believed that it was not in his nature to do so, that he would not have wanted to make any new enemies by being associated with the murder of someone so popular in Florence. On the confusion regarding Niccolò's death, see Boccia, 89, n. 24.

19. Bruni, 11–6.

20. Borsi, 309; Griffiths, "Political," 315.

21. Griffiths, "Political," 315.

22. R. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca and London, 1980), 9, 425. On the imagery of council rooms in communal palaces, see E. Carter Southard, "The Frescoes in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico, 1289–1539. Studies in Imagery and Relations to other Communal Palaces in Tuscany" (New York and London, 1979), Garland Series, 82–5, 92–8.

23. Paintings of military heroes displayed in public settings were "foremost vehicles for a political message," observed W. J. Wegener. Those who entered the palace were confronted with these "commemorative images ... laden with topical meaning." See Wegener, 130.

24. Pope-Hennessy, 151.

25. According to Palmieri, Micheletto arrived and routed the enemy after the battle had been in progress for three hours. See Palmieri, 135–6. For a description of the battle by Luca degli Albizzi from his unpublished journal and a commentary by Giovanni Cavalcanti published in his *Florentine History*, see Starn, 50–2. In these accounts Niccolò had already engaged in battle when Micheletto made his surprise appearance.

26. Another sequence was proposed by M. L. Cristiani Testi, whose arrangement placed the two white horses of the condottieri in the lateral episodes, forming a parenthesis for the spiral composition of Micheletto and his black horse in the centre. This hypothesis is confirmed by the complex geometric configurations and linear perspective present in all three panels, which complement one another when seen as a tripartite composition. Cristiani Testi believes this follows the historical chronology of the battle. See M. L. Cristiani Testi, "Panoramica a Volo d'Uccello. La Battaglia di S. Romano," *Critica d'Arte* 46 (1981), 8. The weakness in Cristiani Testi's hypothesis, as observed by A. Padoa Rizzo, lies in the arrangement of the two allies, Niccolò da Tolentino and Micheletto Attendola, who encounter one another in battle. See the most recent catalogue of Uccello's works by A. Padoa Rizzo, *Paolo Uccello, Catalogo completo* (Florence, 1991), 66.

27. This stylistic transition has already been observed by Gebhardt, 184; Joannides (as in n. 5) 214, and Boskovits (as in n. 4) 178.

28. Several comparisons made by Boccia are worth attention. He used the knee armor design of the John Hawkwood monument and identified the same type in the London and Florence panels, but in the Paris panel the design was improved. In the execution of the horses' mounts and reins an interesting difference emerged here between the paintings. He observed that the horses' bits in the Paris panel were no longer the decorative, chunky and curved ones illustrated in the London and Florence panels. Instead, the horses in the Louvre painting were fitted with thin, straight and simple unadorned reins. Another comparison was made with the visors used in the paintings; for instance the "U" shaped visor in the Paris painting was a more functional and later device than those seen in the other two works. See Boccia, 55–91, esp. 64 for the design of the knee protectors, 68 for the different horses' bits, and 59 for the advanced visor type.

29. Horne, 131-2.

30. Pope-Hennessy, 151.

31. See the entry 'Attendolo, Micheletto', by R. Capasso, *Dizionario Biògrafico degli Italiani*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1962); M. Mallett, *Mercenaries and Their Master* (New Jersey, 1974), 97.

32. Horne, 132.

33. For a description and commentary on the Battle of Anghiari, see G. Griffiths et al., *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni* (Binghamton, 1987), 41-2. Also see Bruni, 49-50 for Bruni's description of the battle. Machiavelli wrote about the battle of Anghiari but did not mention San Romano, although he did mention the capture of Niccolò da Tolentino by the Milanese in a great battle at Imola and his death while in captivity a few days later. See N. Machiavelli, *The Florentine History*, trans. N. Hill Thomson, vol. 2 (London, 1906), 66 and 68.

34. Griffiths, *Humanism*, 49-50.

35. C. Bailey, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence* (Toronto, 1961), 168-72.

36. F. Schevill, *History of Florence*, 3rd. ed. (New York, 1976), 359.

37. Griffiths, "Political," 40.

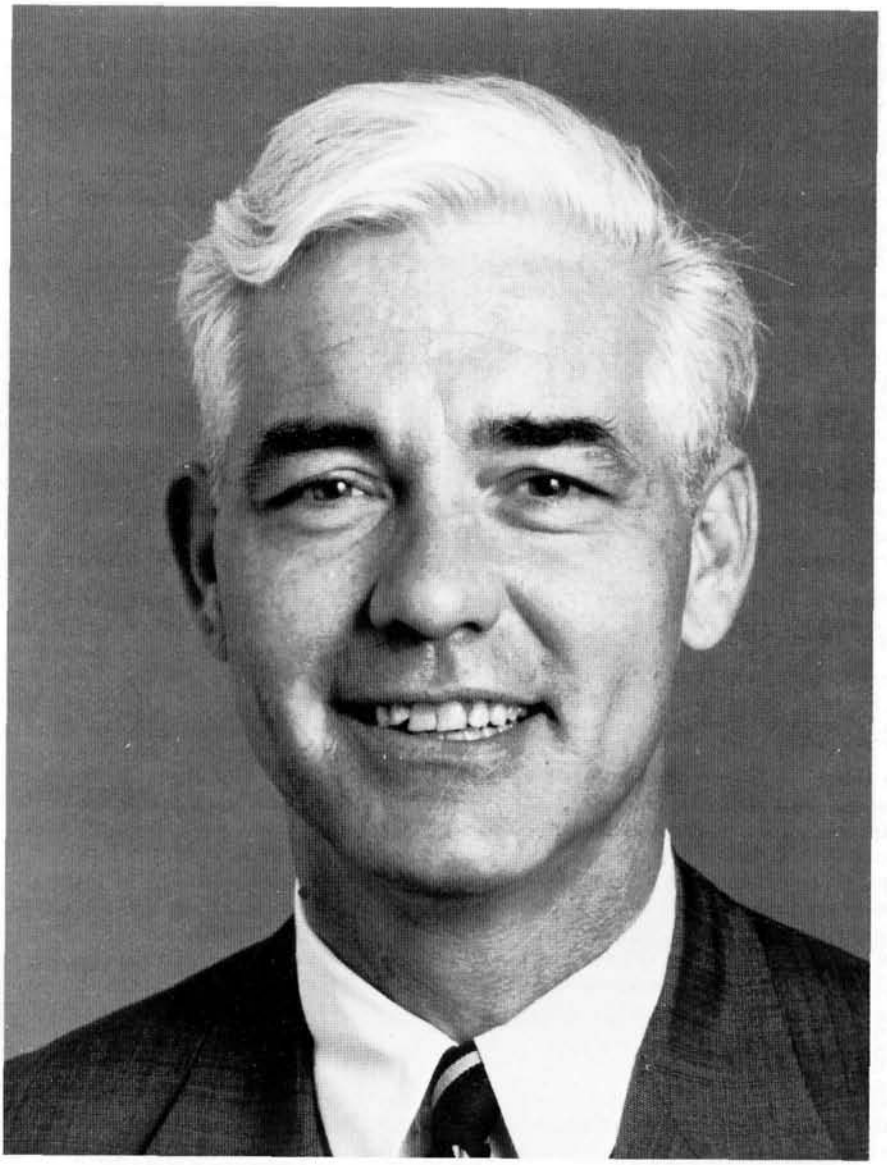
38. Machiavelli, 66, "Micheletto was the first to decry the enemy...he was foremost to encounter him in arms, riding with his men down to the bridge which at no great distance from Anghiari carries the road across the river."

39. For cassoni panels in English collections, see P. Schubring, "Cassoni Panels in English Private Collections—I," *Burlington Magazine* XXII (March 1912), 158-65, section II is continued on 196-331. For the Sir Hugh Lane cassone panel, see Schubring, pl. N.

40. For identification of the actual site of the battle, see B. Hochstetler Meyer, "Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari*:: Proposals for Some Sources and a Reflection," *Art Bulletin* LXVI (1984); for a description of the actual battle site see 371-2, and for cassoni panels depicting the battle see 368-9 and fig. 6

41. Hochstetler Meyer, 369.

42. Joannides, 2114; Boskovits, 178.



Dr. Peter C. Sutton

An Interview with Peter Sutton

Alexis Boylan and Kelly Winquist

Peter Sutton's career is marked by both diversity and excellence. After completing his dissertation on Pieter de Hooch at Yale University, Dr. Sutton began his museum career as an associate curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1985, he became the Curator of European Paintings at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts where he organized a number of exhibitions that were monumental in their scale and subsequent attendance, as well as in their academic import. These shows include Masters of Seventeenth Century Dutch Landscape Painting, The Age of Rubens, *and* European and American Impressionist Paintings: Crosscurrents. *In 1994, Dr. Sutton took a position as the Senior Director of Old Master Paintings at Christie's Auction House in New York City. He continued, however, to remain involved with museum work, acting as the curator of the exhibition,* Dutch Landscape Paintings *for the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid. Dr. Sutton is currently the director of the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut.*

This interview took place in the spring of 1995, in Dr. Sutton's office at Christie's.

Rutgers Art Review: Did you know when you began college that you wanted to study art history?

Peter Sutton: No. I had no idea. I was just groping around, in fact I initially thought to do something in the sciences or in math.

RAR: When and how did you become seriously interested in art history and Netherlandish art specifically?

PS: I started out as an undergraduate at Harvard not in Netherlandish art history but in East Asian history and spent nearly two years at it. I got rather interested in Buddhist art; Carrie Welsh was teaching some interesting courses. I then took Seymour Slive's general introduction to art. Seymour is an electrifying speaker and a wonderfully entertaining educator; a man who can rivet an entire lecture hall. I think we are most influenced, especially when young, by the people who impress us. I took a seminar with Seymour in my sophomore year and ended up nearly twenty-five years later writing an article for his *Festschrift*. In graduate school I went to Yale and worked with Egbert Begemann who is eminently patient in intimate teaching circumstances. Egbert is famous for guiding along legions of Ph.D. students; indeed we are often referred to as "Egbert's Army." I dedicated my first book to him and also wrote a piece for his *Festschrift*. I don't think that I ever really thought about being a Netherlandish art historian; it was more a case of trying to emulate individuals that I admired.

RAR: How did you first come to work in museums?

PS: Well, I was desperate for a job, casting about, and frankly would have taken virtually any position. However, I thought that I wanted to work in a museum more than teach. I had done some teaching as a graduate student but I realized that I preferred the direct contact with objects. I have always felt that you have to test ideas against the object; it is too easy to go to the library and play photographic solitaire. The objects themselves are so wonderfully resistant to fatuous generalizations. It was very hard to get a job at first. I spent six painful months unemployed, living at home with my parents. Finally Joe Rishel in Philadelphia took sympathy and hired me. I had a very good four or five years there and enjoyed working with Joe hugely. He is a very funny and generous man, a saint among curators. Joe has now brought along two generations of curators and not really been given proper credit for how he has left his mark on American museums by teaching museum professionals.

RAR: Many of your exhibitions have been survey in nature [for example *Masters of Seventeenth Century Dutch Landscape Painting, The Age of Rubens*, and *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting*]. Do you think museum exhibitions should function as educational tools, and if so how does this relate to what has been noted as a lack of didactic wall text in some of your shows?[1]

PS: A lack of didactic wall text? That is interesting. I have, in the past, tended to do survey shows. My inclination is to do things that are broadly cast reviews of periods, synoptic overviews as opposed to small thematic shows. It may have something to do with having worked in big museums. I think that large museums ought to do dossier shows (and we did them very regularly in Boston) but they also have the capacity and obligation to educate in the broadest sense, not only through narrowly focused monographic shows but also through expansive survey shows. I wouldn't flatter myself in paraphrasing Rubens and say that I am "by natural instinct" borne to taking on vast projects and huge orchestrated declarations, but I did find that was the way my mind worked. I also enjoyed the challenge of choosing the best and most representative examples given the very difficult business of obtaining pictures that are not only exhibitable but could also be lent. It is not a simple task. You can write a book about anything but to actually get the picture to the premises and have it be a representative, even superlative example is quite a challenge.

RAR: In an interview you stated that "the great challenge of Dutch art is to make it strange because it seems so much a part of our culture, so accessible."[2] Could you comment further?

PS: I think what I was saying is that the deceptive thing about Dutch naturalism is that it seems so accessible that you think then it is just about description and surface, or picturing, or about mapping as someone else said. It is obviously more complicated than that and naturalism, like mannerism, like any other style, is simply a style. But it is deceptively accessible.

RAR: Your stated purpose for *The Age of Rubens* exhibition was, "...to make Flemish Baroque painting more accessible and meaningful for the museum visitor." But you also noted that there is a "skepticism and unease felt by viewers in our highly

secularized egalitarian age...when confronted with spiritual proselytizing painting."[3] How did you attempt to overcome this?

PS: Well, we brought in pictures like the great *St. Catherine* from Toledo. Although ravishing as a painting, pictures like that are still rather hard for people to come to terms with because they are so devoutly hieratic. My eight year old son responds viscerally to pictures like Rubens' horrifying *Medusa* and everyone can love *The Garden of Love*, but the notion of an art which is charged with spiritual content and has a national religious and political function is something very foreign to the way we think about art in this highly secularized age. Boston's *Triumph of the Eucharist* is another hard picture for modern audiences. The whole idea of devoting an entire symbolic tapestry series to the proselytizing notion that the Eucharist will convert and sustain the masses is remote from most contemporary secular viewers' notions. It is much tougher to make such paintings understandable to museum visitors than trotting out eminently accessible Dutch landscapes or genre scenes. But to my great happiness people queued up and it was a success despite initial skepticism. I myself wasn't convinced that we were going to have such attendance, but miraculously we had more than 200,000 people in Boston and 235,000 in Toledo, which suggests everyone in the city came about five times. There were some who disagreed with the selection, suggesting, for example, that there weren't enough history paintings or that too much attention was devoted to the other genres. But I'm not sure that was true either. It all depends on how you cut the cake.

RAR: So you feel that it was a balanced representation of Flemish painting from that period?

PS: Well it could have probably done with a few more history paintings, and there were some sub-groups that were probably slightly over-represented. I think there were probably too many flower still lifes, which has something to do with modern tastes. There probably weren't enough large animal paintings but they are hard to transport. We were lucky to have the big Snyders already in Boston, which is more than fifteen feet long. Part of the problem, of course, is one of scale and many of the history paintings in question are vast commissions. However, I think we touched on the major figures and I don't think we slighted anybody who was tremendously important. One could have done a very interesting and thoughtful scholarly show, for example, on the followers of Rubens. You could have a show with artists like Willeboirts, Borrekens, and van den Hoecke, and others that only specialists know and you would put a scholarly brick on the pile. But you also would probably have driven people away in droves. And in the final analysis, how important are these artists relative to someone like Van Dyck, Jordaens, Brouwer, and Teniers? They are probably not as important. They are very worthy as academic subjects, but perhaps not as the subject for a major, costly international exhibition. So you make decisions based on quality, which people are not always taught to consider in an academic setting. Such decisions are unapologetically subjective. No question about it. Curators who ignore or avoid decisions based on quality do so at their own peril.

RAR: You have stated, " I deeply distrust exhibitions that are formed on the basis of making art historical points."[4] Could you comment further?

PS: I do believe that. I don't think that the way to conceive a show is merely to illustrate an art historical point. I think you owe your viewers a richer, more diverse experience. Shows that are the equivalent of pictorial footnotes have no place in a museum as important and big as Philadelphia or Boston. For example, I just went to a show in Delft, which is quite a good show, but it could possibly have done with several fewer Hendrik Van Vliets and omitted one or two of the weaker de Hoochs. It was a worthy show, and exhibited many minor artists that one was glad to see, but the selection wasn't consistently critical. There is a point when the minutiae of art historical points obscure the larger course of history.

RAR: You recently organized an exhibition at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Spain, a nation whose museums typically haven't aggressively collected seventeenth-century Dutch landscape paintings. What was that experience like?

PS: I had brought Catholic art to Boston with the Rubens show, which could be seen as a pioneering accomplishment in that Brahmin institution, so why not bring Protestant art to the Iberian peninsula? It was a good idea and had never been done before. Largely because the Baron had been such a generous lender over the years, we got wonderful loans, especially the Hobbemas and Ruisdaels which were to-die-for, just amazing. There were also some new things that we had not been able to secure for the 1987 *Dutch Landscape* show for the Rijksmuseum. So it was a good thing to do. It was fun and it was well attended and was the first show of a series they are doing. It really is a splendid museum. Madrid is fascinating these days, dramatically changed from the bad old Franco days when everything was so quiet and dusty and sad. Now it is bustling with activity from the renovated Prado to the Reina Sofia.

RAR: How did you get involved with that show?

PS: I was asked if I might do a show for them by their curator and advisors to Baron Thyssen. I suppose I am known as someone who can get shows finished on time. Authors can put things off to the next publishing season but a curator must perform on schedule. I do not wait for the muse. Reading over my own manuscripts, I find that the things I write on the days when I'm uninspired go along as well as passages I've written on days when I say to myself, "Wow, this is terrific!" It's all the same, alas! You just have to keep writing.

RAR: Do you plan to organize any other independent shows in the future?

PS: I may, there are certain projects that I can't talk about just yet, but I don't have much time anymore. Exhibitions are a little bit like auctions: we gather pictures from all over the place, but they are on view for a much shorter time, and of course we're delighted after the auction to see them go away, whereas there is always a melancholy moment when you dismantle a show at a museum. There also often are splendid pictures to catalogue for Christie's, but of course your name isn't on the spine anymore. I enjoy the art market and the challenge of putting names and numbers on things. It has been a great education for me. The best connoisseurs, without question, are auction house people and people in the trade, not those in museums or in academia. Dealers and

auctioneers often have uncanny visual memories. Their knowledge isn't written down anywhere; they learn it from looking and looking.

RAR: Was it difficult to move from a museum to an auction house?

PS: It was a speedy transition for me and challenging. Christie's was very patient and sent me to London for six months to learn the ropes. I had this period of freshman hazing when they showed me all the things I didn't know. They use a kind of Socratic method in which the entire department stands in front of pictures in the warehouse and discusses them. Needless to say, it doesn't have to be seventeenth-century Dutch, it can be anything, and usually it is something very remote from your training and interest. But you have to come to terms with it and put a name and number on it. There are a few people here at Christie's who are like the Delphic oracle; regardless of what the object is they do a bit of informed squinting and then murmur the name and an appraisal—fascinating.

RAR: Do you feel that you had any previous training that helped acclimate you to auction house work?

PS: Well sure, in museums there were always objects around, but the auction world requires thinking on your feet. Very often, the consignor will want to know right there and then the estimate on the picture and what you think it is. There were three baskets on my desk in the museum: "in," "out," and "too hard." Many times people would bring things into the museum and they would fall into the "too hard" category and you wouldn't answer right away. In the business world you don't always have the luxury to fully research things so you must sharpen your eye. Connoisseurship is undervalued, or at least it was. I think it may be making a come-back. Even as late as the 1980's the word connoisseur had elitist connotations. It was considered to be a pretentious fuss over minor distinctions of attribution and dating. But it has gained new currency as people discovered that they had constructed these elaborate theoretical models based on misattributed pictures. There is nothing more humiliating than discovering that one-third of the paintings in your book on Rembrandt are painted by somebody else. It's very dangerous to ignore connoisseurship.

Most of the specialists at Christie's are young, very energetic and hard working. When they hired me I was told I was going to be the "elder statesman," which I took to be some kind of gentle acknowledgment that I had written a lot of stuff. But it really is true I am older than everyone else! You may need to be young. We work at a very fast pace. It's quite exhilarating but a little breathless, too. There's not a lot of time for ruminative reflection.

RAR: Has your experience working at Christie's caused you to look at pictures any differently?

PS: No, but I certainly have a better commercial sense. You must learn what sells. Artists like the followers of Jan Brueghel the Younger are not artists to whom I would have previously paid a lot of attention, but they have their admirers and find ready buyers so one gives them their due. I used to be paid in the museum to ignore the bottom third of the market, now one must learn the names and numbers. However, we have

specialists, as I've said, who are remarkably adept at attributing these obscure, minor pictures. But one's response to great paintings is unchanged and undiminished. Moreover you have the unique privilege in this job of seeing great works of art, often unpublished, that are unknown to museum people and academics. Auctioneers and dealers react to pictures the same way everyone else does. We all go to the same shows and moon over the same pictures. But we also get to see the great stuff that's locked away.

RAR: Why did you decide to move to an auction house?

PS: Many reasons. I became interested in the market. I wanted to spend more time with objects and, in fact, now do. In museums curators necessarily spend an amount of time managing collections, filling out grant applications, making the turnstiles spin with shows. Time spent with the actual art seems to be harder and harder to schedule. I also had other concerns. I have two kids to educate and you frankly aren't paid especially well as a curator. It is a wonderful life, but it helps to have an independent income. I also realized that the people who are often the most interesting when talking about objects, who just see the most, are in the trade. I first experienced this when I served on vetting committees of art fairs with dealers, and it was fascinating what they saw. They often see more than museum people or even restorers since they put their own money on the line about a picture. You can't imagine how that galvanizes your attention.

RAR: How do you feel your work has changed the canonical view of Dutch and Flemish art?

PS: Have I really changed it in any significant way? Well, perhaps, I think that the *Dutch Genre* show introduced people to the history of genre. It hadn't really been written down before in any kind of serious way. Ours wasn't simply an iconographic approach, as the *Tot Lering en Vermaak* exhibition had been, in which Eddy de Jongh offered a fascinating selection of pictures encoding symbolic meanings and emblematic associations. Instead we sought an overview of the history of genre painting. Ironically, neither had Dutch landscape been handled in a truly encyclopedic way until we did it. People were interested to follow the chronological progression—something that even Stechow's invaluable book had obscured because of its organization by the dozen or so themes in landscape. The Rubens show was important in part because it came to America, where Flemish Baroque painting, unlike Italian or Dutch, had been neglected as a topic for shows. As I've said I do survey shows, and I think people appreciate a sense of the forest, not just the bark. That's how I may have changed the "canon" in a small way. But it is really quite a thought...my father used to ask us at the dinner table when we were little boys, "What have you done for the greater good of mankind today?" We didn't have an answer then either.

RAR: The Vermeer exhibition was incredibly popular and produced a great deal of publicity. But many have noted with cynicism that, in light of NEA cutbacks, the Vermeer show represented a conservative and non-threatening option to more aggressively pessimistic and troubling art. How do you feel about this? Do you feel that the resurgence in popularity of Vermeer as well as Jane Austen represent a conservative tone in the U.S.?

PS: No, I don't buy any of that. It's just one of those flip, bogus *Zeitgeist* theories. I have always liked Jane Austen, even in the turbulent sixties, and I often find it useful to read Jane Austen before I write something because you can hear the graceful rhythms of the prose. And Vermeer has long been sought after, not simply by collectors with conservative tastes; his "rediscoverer," Thoré-Burgher, was after all quite a revolutionary. And, frankly, NEA funding has *never* been ample enough to dictate exhibition policies in major museums. I think the popularity of the Vermeer show had to do in part with rarity. His art is exquisitely poised and balanced, astonishingly resolved, it has timeless, permanent appeal. That may be why his pictures are stolen all the time. People covet Vermeer's art because it seems to embody rarefied perfection in an imperfect world. But modern audiences have always queued up for these things. In 1984 when we did the Dutch genre show people mobbed the Vermeers so much that we had to put electric eyes in front of them. The show *In the Light of Vermeer* was a tremendous success at the Mauritshuis 35 years ago. The recent Vermeer show was probably the only chance that you will have to see two dozen of his pictures together; it was the opportunity, perhaps not of a lifetime, but certainly of a generation.

RAR: So do you see a resurgence of interest in Northern art in general, and if so what do you think is at the heart of that interest?

PS: Yes, and I think it is reflected in the art market. It probably has something to do with accessibility. They are representational images and people have always delighted in fidelity of observation, mimicry, and illusion. These are readily identifiable images that viewers can test against their own optical experience. The probity of observation appeals to people. Dutch painting is rising in value more swiftly than other areas of the Old Master painting market out of sheer demand. This may have something to do with the secularization of modern culture. It may have something to do with a respect for craft; Dutch artists worried about their techniques and materials so that their pictures have often come down to us in a good state relative to other schools of painting. I don't know, it is hard to say why, but Dutch and Flemish paintings sell very well. Modern collectors of Old Masters tend to specialize just as the Dutch artists tended to specialize. They regard it as a challenge to acquire a representative survey of well-preserved examples. The delicate pastoral idylls of the eighteenth century may be harder to understand in the rough-and-tumble modern world than the corporeal vitality and materialism of Dutch and Flemish art.

RAR: Do you feel that graduate programs adequately prepare students for the wide range of opportunities, especially given the job market?

PS: No, although that surely varies from one graduate program to another. There are precious few successful museum programs and virtually no exposure to the commercial art world. Students have very little idea of the options open to them. I know what academia is like, my brother is an academic and it is a gratifying life. It is enriching to have a community of scholars and students around you, but it also can be wonderful fun out in the rough-and-tumble world of business. Not everyone has the temperament or aptitude for it, but graduate students should at least be exposed to a dealer's career and work in an auction house. And frankly, a twenty minute visit to a dealer's gallery during your four years at graduate school isn't sufficient. I sometimes talk to graduate

students when they visit Christie's, but they don't come around very often, alas. The real world isn't semiotics and deconstructionism.

RAR: Has your work with objects made you skeptical about theoretical art history?

PS: Yes, probably I distrust the jargon of a lot of modern criticism and art theory. Unlike physics where there are theoretical and experimental physicists, I don't perceive a pressing need for or benefit from more theoretical art historians. And I fear that academic art historians who go to the faculty club and feel intimidated by the sheer intellectual brain-power of the mathematicians, physicists, and philosophers go back to their offices and try to conceptualize art history to a point beyond any useful edification. I like it but I can't understand a word of it. I read it and I think, "what a fast food meal—it's there and then it's gone. What was it? What did I eat?" Most of art history isn't very challenging or very hard. But it takes a great deal of careful looking and preparation. You get one-season-wonders among mathematicians, but you never get a thirteen year old *wunderkind* in art history. It also happens in music but not in art history mostly because it takes a lifetime of looking and is cumulative. You get better, which is a nice thing about getting older. The trouble is you start to forget stuff!

RAR: What do you see as the most promising area of employment and study for the next generation of art historians?

PS: I think there are still many neglected artists who deserve new monographic studies. I'm surely old fashioned because I believe that the best thing to do as a dissertation is a monograph with catalogue raisonné. If well done it requires you to use all the methodologies and techniques you've been taught in addressing one artist. And if you are a successful art historian who writes well you can create an image of an entire time through the individual and bring the art to life. But that's not the fashionable thing to do these days. As for employment, the situation isn't as bad here as it is in Europe; in Holland for example there seems to be ten people for every job. The opportunities are probably better here, but you wouldn't know it by going to the College Art Association meetings, where there are all those poor desperate souls with their resumes and portfolios. It is the saddest thing in the world. I would think that there are better opportunities, at least short-term, for well-trained art historians in the trade and the auction world. I don't think there are going to be a lot of new jobs in museums. Museums, it seems to me, have had their great run up in the '70s and early '80s and now have plateaued; they are not likely to be greatly increasing their staffing. Most museums have leveled off, there is re-entrenchment, and belt-tightening and a disagreeable thing called "down-sizing." But I would encourage people to keep all their options open, consider careers outside academia, even those on the "dark side," namely in commerce. But the most important thing to do first is to write your dissertation. Simply get it done! Then you can join the real world, however illusory it might be.

1. Nancy Stapen, "Country Fare," *Art News* 87 (Summer, 1988), 151.
2. Stapen, 153.

3. Peter Sutton, *The Age of Rubens* (Boston, 1993), p. 11.
4. Stapen, 151.

INDEX TO VOLUMES 11-16

Byzantine and Medieval

Renaissance

Baroque and Eighteenth Century

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century

African

Pre-Columbian and Latin American

Interviews

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