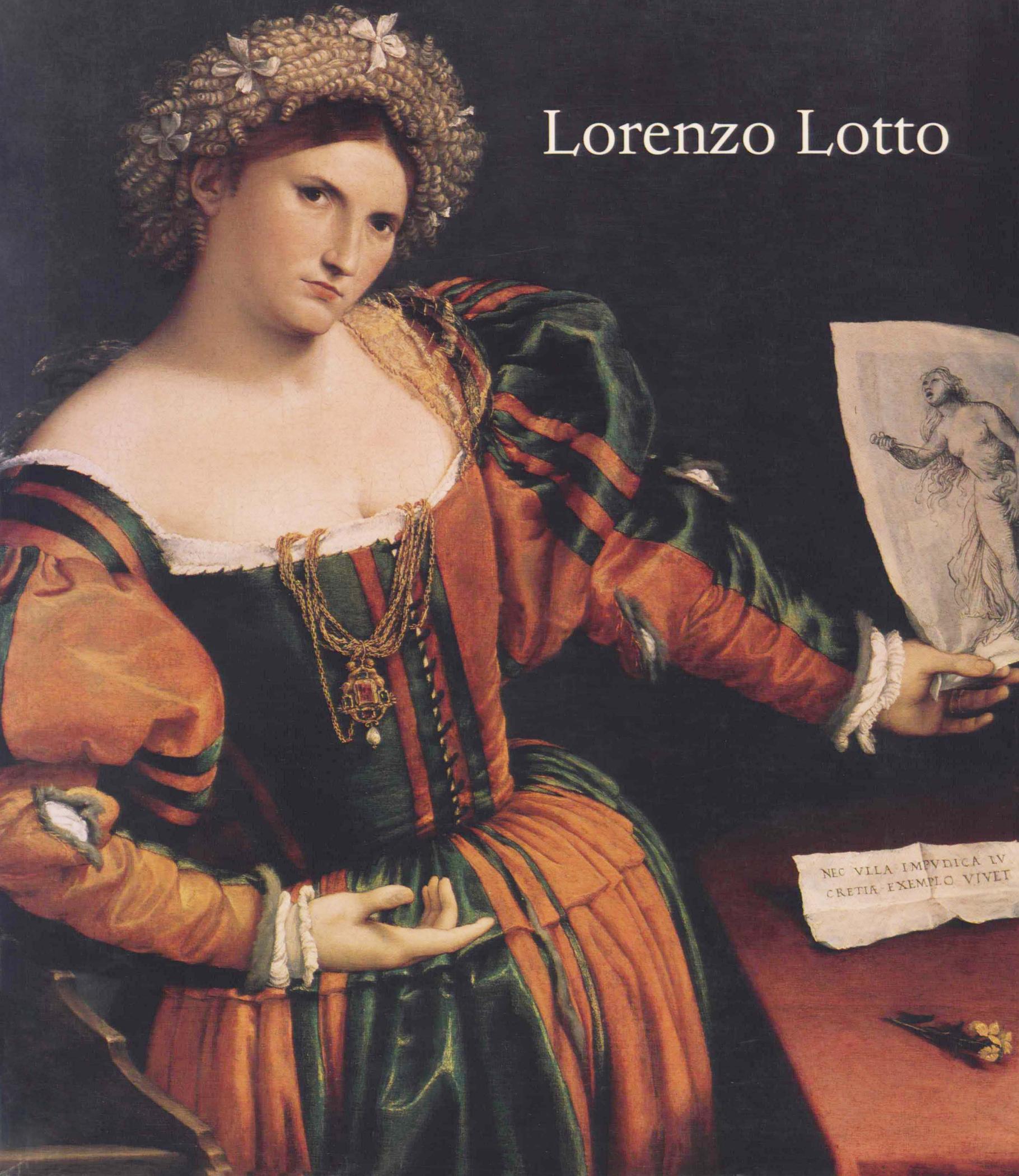


Lorenzo Lotto



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Lorenzo Lotto



Lorenzo Lotto

Rediscovered Master of the Renaissance

DAVID ALAN BROWN

PETER HUMFREY

MAURO LUCCO

with contributions by

AUGUSTO GENTILI

ROSAMOND MACK

LOUISA MATTHEW

ADRIANO PROSPERI

WENDY STEDMAN SHEARD

National Gallery of Art, Washington
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Lenders to the Exhibition

Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo
Allentown Art Museum
Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Rome
Church of Sant'Alessandro della Croce,
Bergamo
Church of Santa Maria dei Carmini, Venice
Church of Santo Spirito of the Parish of
Sant'Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo
Piero Corsini, Inc.
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
Galleria Borghese, Rome
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Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst

Foreword

Ever since Bernard Berenson's pioneering monograph on Lorenzo Lotto first appeared a century ago, the idiosyncratic quality of the artist's work has had a special appeal for twentieth-century sensibilities. A series of small exhibitions and conferences at various sites where Lotto was active—Bergamo, Treviso, and Asolo—reassessed the painter's achievement on the five-hundredth anniversary of his birth in 1980. Another regional show focusing on his work in the Marches took place at Ancona the following year. But the only comprehensive Lotto exhibition—held in Venice in 1953—took place more than forty years ago. And there has never been an exhibition in America devoted to the artist. The present exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo, one of the principal repositories of Lotto's works. The series of events celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of the Accademia Carrara culminates in this exhibition.

Consisting of some fifty works, our exhibition encompasses most of the genres in which Lotto excelled (devotional images, altarpieces, portraits, and allegories) and is arranged in approximately chronological order, from his promising beginnings through the mature work on which his reputation was based, to the end of his long and restless career in a religious community at Loreto on the Adriatic coast. Unlike previous exhibitions, this show includes only autograph works by the artist. Our aim is not to explore Lotto's sources or trace his influence, but to show this fascinating painter at his best and most creative.

David Alan Brown, the National Gallery's curator of Italian Renaissance painting, first proposed turning our attention to Lotto shortly after the 1990–1991 exhibition on the artist's great contemporary Titian. For an endeavor of such scope and importance, two renowned scholars were asked to join the project from the beginning. Professor Peter Humfrey of the University of St. Andrews and Professor Mauro Lucco of the Università di Bologna served with Brown as principal authors of the catalogue. Brown, Humfrey, and Lucco served, too, as members of the exhibition organizing committee, which also includes Francesco Rossi, director of the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo; Giovanna Nepi Scirè, Soprintendente ai beni artistici e storici di Venezia, Venice; and Carlo Bertelli, advisor to the city of Bergamo on matters concerning the anniversary of the Accademia Carrara.

In Bergamo, we would like to express our particular gratitude to Guido Vicentini, mayor; Gian Gabriele Vertova, vice mayor and

cultural assessor; Giovanni Carullo, publicist of the Comune; Ignazio Bonomi and Giovanni Pandini, president and vice president, respectively, of the Accademia Carrara; and Dr. Don Bruno Caccia of the Diocese of Bergamo. In Milan, we are grateful to Massimo Vitta Zelman.

Italian government officials, headed by Walter Veltroni, vice prime minister and minister of culture, and Mario Serio, director general, played an important role in obtaining loans. We are also indebted to Ferdinando Salleo, ambassador to Washington, Antonio Puri Purini, minister, and Giuseppe Perrone, cultural attaché. An exhibition on Lorenzo Lotto could not happen without the support of the appropriate superintendencies: Aldo Cicinelli of Brescia; Paolo Dal Poggetto of the Marches; Giovanna Nepi Scirè of Venice; Pietro Petrarolo of Milan; Nicola Spinosa of Naples; and Claudio Strinati of Rome.

Of course, our largest debt of gratitude goes to the following directors of the lending institutions, church officials, and private collectors, including Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Doria Pamphilj family, who have so generously agreed to share their works: Luisa Arrigoni, Peter Blume, Don Gianmatteo Caputo, Fernando Checa Cremades, Timothy Clifford, Piero Corsini, Alba Costamagna, Jean-Pierre Cuzin, Volkmar Enderlein, Msgr. Tarcisio Ferrari, Zofia Golubiew, Don Floriano Grimaldi, Anne d'Harnoncourt, Jan Kelch, Msgr. Nicola Larivera, Christopher Lloyd, Neil MacGregor, Lorenza Mochi Onori, Philippe de Montebello, Loretta Mozzoni, Edvige Palma Camozzi Vertova, Ruggero Pentrella, Edvige Percossi, Mikhail Piotrovsky, Malcolm Rogers, Pierre Rosenberg, Mario Sarcinelli, Karl Schütz, Emmanuel Starcky, Renata Stradiotti, and Roxana Theodorescu.

We are indebted to the city of Bergamo and COBE S.p.A., directed by Rosella Colleoni, for raising the funds to support this project. We also thank United Airlines, the official carrier for the exhibition, which generously provided its support. We are extremely grateful for U. S. government indemnity, under the auspices of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, without which the *Lorenzo Lotto* exhibition would not be possible.

EARL A. POWELL III

Director, National Gallery of Art

Acknowledgments

An international exhibition as complicated as this one results from the efforts of numerous individuals and many National Gallery of Art departments. The exhibition would never have taken place without the unflagging support of Earl A. Powell III, director, and Alan Shestack, deputy director. For their contributions to this catalogue, I would especially like to thank my co-authors: Peter Humfrey and Mauro Lucco; Augusto Gentili, who also helped with the initial selection of paintings; Rosamond Mack, who took responsibility for the carpet section; Louisa Matthew; Adriano Prospero; and Wendy Stedman Sheard, who, in addition to her essay, read and commented upon much of the manuscript. In the department of Italian Renaissance paintings, Gretchen Hirschauer, assistant curator, deserves special thanks for her perseverance on behalf of our project. William Breazeale, staff assistant, occupied himself with numerous details of the exhibition and its catalogue, with help from interns Allison Terry, Nancy Ficovic, Julie Turnock, and Jill Pederson.

D. Dodge Thompson, chief of exhibitions, and Naomi Remes, exhibition officer, with Jonathan F. Walz, staff assistant, administered the loans. Mervin Richard, deputy chief of conservation, advised on the condition of many of the paintings, and Steve Wilcox, frame conservator, provided frames when needed. In the editors office, Frances Smyth, editor-in-chief, Mary Yakush, senior editor, Susan Higman, editor, and Phyllis Hecht, designer, spent countless hours producing the catalogue. Sara Sanders-Buell, museum specialist, organized the photography, aided by colleagues at Skira Editore, Milan. Nancy Breuer, associate general counsel, advised on legal matters. Neal Turtell and the staff of the National Gallery's library, in particular reference librarians Ted Dalziel and Frances Lederer, and Thomas McGill Jr., interlibrary loan assistant, provided bibliographic expertise, while Gregory Most, chief slide librarian, and in particular Trish Ballard, assistant slide librarian, filled many requests. Ruth Philbrick, curator of photographic archives, and her staff, especially Karen Weinberger, cataloguer, and David Applegate, photographer, helped with photographic research.

The late Gaillard Ravenel was an early supporter of the exhibition. Mark Leithauser, chief of design and installation, Gordon Anson, head of lighting and production, Linda Heinrich, design coordinator, John Olson, production coordinator, and Barbara Keyes, head of silkscreen, are responsible for the installation. Susan Arensberg, head of exhibition programs, provided the wall texts and other educational materials. Sally Freitag, chief registrar, Michelle Fondas, registrar for exhibitions, and Lauren Mellon

Cluverius, associate registrar, planned the transportation of the paintings, while Ellen Evangeliste coordinated the art handlers.

We owe a further debt of gratitude to the following, in America and abroad, who assisted us in countless ways: Jaynie Anderson, Andrea Bayer, Sylvie Béguin, Susan Scott Cesaritti, Keith Christiansen, Frank Dabell, Dorota Dec, Pierluigi Leone De Castris, Jill Dunkerton, Robert Echols, John Eskenazi, Sylvia Ferino Pagden, Sarah Fisher, Roberto Fontanari, Maria Antonella Fusco, Stefano Giani, Jean Habert, Katherine Hutchins, Kristina Hermann Fiore, Sophie Juge, Beverly Lambert, Rita Lato, Ernesto Manna, Giuseppe Mascetti, Alexander Nagel, Mariolina Olivari, Nicholas Penny, Wolfgang Prohaska, Cristina Rodeschini Galati, Erich Schleier, George T. M. Shackelford, T. Barton Thurber, Paola Tognon, Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, Robert Torchia, Rossella Vodret, Janusz Walek, Laurie Weitzenkorn, Aidan Weston-Lewis, and Willi Zavaritt. Members of my 1996 Georgetown University fine arts department seminar on Lotto also contributed toward clarifying issues raised by the artist's work.

A number of Lotto's paintings were recently conserved and thus appear in their optimal state in the exhibition: *Allegory of Chastity* ("Maiden's Dream"), and *Allegory of Virtue and Vice* and *The Nativity*, National Gallery of Art, treated respectively by David Bull and Ulrich Birkmaier, who also investigated Lotto's techniques; *The Penitent Saint Jerome*, Allentown Art Museum, by Diane Modestini; *Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat*, Piero Corsini, Inc., by Lucia Biondi; *Lucina Brembati*, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, and *Virgin and Child with Saints*, Palma Camozzi Vertova Collection, Bergamo, by Minerva Tramonti Maggi; *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints*, Santo Spirito, Bergamo, and *The Trinity*, Sant'Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo, by Antonio Benigni; *Saint Jerome*, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome, by Fabio Porzio; *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian*, Palazzo Apostolico, Loreto, by Domenico Germani; *Andrea Odoni*, belonging to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, by Rupert Featherstone; *Madonna and Child with Saints*, National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, by John Dick; *Virgin and Child with Saints*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, by Elke Oberthaler; and *Madonna Adoring the Child with Saints*, Muzeum Narodowe, Krakow, by Anna Grochowska.

DAVID ALAN BROWN

Curator, Italian Renaissance painting
National Gallery of Art



Introduction



NO ONE WHO HAS seen or studied the work of Lorenzo Lotto could doubt that he is one of the most fascinating painters of the Renaissance. Deeply religious himself, he seems to have sympathized with the saints that he portrayed. Entering into their stories more as a dramatist than as a conventional painter, Lotto brings their travails to life. At the same time, his portraits clearly indicate the strong affinity he felt for his sitters, who appear vividly present centuries after he painted their images. The artist's ability to identify with his various subjects gives his work a highly individual character: in a church or gallery adorned with paintings, Lotto's efforts seem to beckon us. They stand out, not least because his unique vision is not the stable, harmonious one associated with the Renaissance.

In his own lifetime, however, Lotto (c. 1480–1556/1557) was overshadowed by Titian, and afterward he was all but forgotten. Only during the past century have the artist and his work come to light through a series of rediscoveries. The credit for having first recognized Lotto's greatness belongs to the American expatriate Bernard Berenson. On his way to becoming the foremost expert on early Italian paintings, Berenson used Lotto to demonstrate his new method of scientific connoisseurship. In a pioneering monograph published in 1895, Berenson not only established Lotto's oeuvre, but went on to define his "artistic personality" in a way that has shaped all subsequent interpretations of the painter. Summing up his subject in a final chapter, Berenson saw Lotto as a kindred spirit from another age (*Lotto*, 1895, 346). The probing, psychological character common to the artist's religious paintings and portraits seemed to Berenson peculiarly modern. Although "modern" for his generation meant akin to Degas and Manet, the notion of Lotto's having a contemporary appeal still seems valid today.

Despite its provocative thesis, Berenson's book was too centered on strictly art historical matters to make Lotto popular. The artist's rediscovery by the public had to await the major exhibition of his work held in Venice

in 1953. This exhibition, one of a series that also included Bellini and Giorgione, was accompanied by a spate of monographs by Italian scholars (as well as a revised edition of Berenson). These publications sought to explore the relation between Lotto's idiosyncratic personality and his work. A creator's life cannot always be linked directly with his output, but in Lotto's case the correlation is clear and compelling: no artist's production was ever more personal. It is striking, for example, how many of Lotto's pictures are signed (and dated), and this unusually large number of signed works accords with the extensive written record the artist left of himself in the form of an account book, a group of letters, and a will. The *Libro di spese diverse*, or account book, which runs from 1538 to Lotto's death in 1556, provides an amazingly detailed glimpse of his career. Among the miscellaneous expenses recorded for food, clothes, and working materials, there is even an entry (*Libro* 1969, 236) for undressing a female model "only to look" (*solo veder*). The letters Lotto exchanged between 1524 and 1532 with the confraternity of the Misericordia about the fate of his designs for the intarsias decorating the choir of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo are informative but disheartening, as is his will of 1546 (*Libro* 1969, 301–305; Humfrey 1997, 179–181), in which he describes himself as "old, alone, and anxious" (*nella età, e solo, senza fidel governo et molto inquieto dela mente*). The will and other poignant statements that Lotto recorded during the latter part of his career have been taken to support the widely held view of him as a melancholy loner. Even if we ascribe the difficulties the artist experienced in managing his affairs partly to the fact that he was single,

without the support of a wife and children, the conclusion that Lotto was hypersensitive appears incontrovertible: over and over he quarreled with friends and relatives, pupils and patrons. His art also seemed to mark him as an outsider. For some critics Lotto's fondness for emblems made him a kind of proto-surrealist, while for others he was a painter of humble, everyday reality. Either way his work appeared odd or outlandish when measured against the great exemplars of the classical style—Raphael and Titian.

The five-hundredth anniversary of Lotto's birth, in 1980, saw a veritable explosion of interest in his work. Scholars, taking a contextual approach, investigated in great detail the iconographic content and import of Lotto's secular and religious works, as well as the biographies of his portrait subjects. The artist's ties with persons accused of heresy and the fact that he painted portraits of Martin Luther and his wife might seem to mark him as a Protestant sympathizer, if it were not for his lifelong attachment to the Dominicans, which suggests to the contrary that he remained solidly Catholic. The evidence for Lotto's spiritual affiliations is contradictory, but there can be no doubt about the deeply felt religious beliefs reflected in his works. Indeed, the writer Pietro Aretino, while exalting Titian, praised Lotto specifically for his piety (*Libro* 1969, 305–306; Berenson 1956, 128).

Also in the 1980s, scholars focused on Lotto's altarpieces and other large-scale commissions. The net result of these specialized studies—conference papers, dissertations, and articles—was to alter the romantic image of the artist as an outsider by showing that much of his activity was not singular or strange. If Lotto was neurotic, he was a functioning neurotic. His painting technique was grounded in that of his predecessors. He had some familiarity with the intellectual culture of his time. He often took other artists' works as sources. And he fulfilled numerous commissions, working in nearly all the conventional genres for a variety of patrons. But while such a level-headed approach may account for the existence of Lotto's paintings and for one or another of their features, it does little to explain their originality or the nature of their appeal.

It is not only the bright color and smooth surfaces of Lotto's works that set him apart from other sixteenth-century Venetian painters. His attentiveness to detail is also fundamentally opposed to Titian's goal of pictorial unity, yet it is just this aspect of his work that speaks to twentieth-century viewers. Berenson's method was based on comparing morphological details in Lotto's paintings. And the iconographers have also scrutinized his works for telling elements, just as restorers have brought newly visible motifs to light. In fact,

we are constantly discovering the significance of previously unnoticed details in Lotto's paintings. Such details, large and small, are not included for their own sake or merely for representational purposes. Flower petals or a green curtain take on the status of metaphors, and other details, like the turned-over edge of a carpet in one picture or the cross held by the sitter in one of Lotto's finest portraits, are no less allusive. Integrated with myriad other details, they build up a pattern of meaning. This sort of detailed expression has tended to relegate Lotto to a position outside the mainstream of Venetian painting, as represented by Titian. It is surely true that if we take Titian's work as the standard, Lotto will come to seem somewhat marginalized. But viewed from another perspective, that of northern art, his work appears quite different. The point is not just that Lotto was profoundly impressed by Dürer; he represents, within the context of Italian Renaissance painting, a distinct stream of his own with strong affinities to artists working north of the Alps. The substantial nature of his achievement and the hold it continues to have over us suggest that Lotto may occupy a more central place in Renaissance art than he has hitherto been granted.

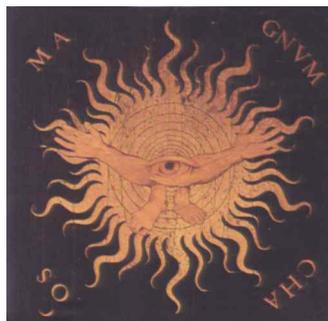




Lorenzo Lotto: Life and Work

FOR AN ITALIAN PAINTER of the sixteenth century, and in particular for a Venetian painter, the life, works, and personality of Lorenzo Lotto are exceptionally well documented. This fact is all the more remarkable considering that Lotto received such scant attention from Giorgio Vasari, the second edition of whose *Lives of the Artists* (1568) constitutes the principal biographical source for virtually every other artist of the Renaissance period. But in their efforts to reconstruct Lotto's career, modern historians have been greatly helped by his lifelong habit of regularly signing and dating his pictures, and especially by the rediscovery during the past century of a rather large number of original documents. Of these, three are of particular importance. The first comprises a series of thirty-nine letters written by Lotto from Venice to the governors of a confraternity in Bergamo, the *Consorzio della Misericordia*, regarding his designs for a cycle of intarsias (1524–1532). The second is Lotto's will, drawn up in 1546. The third, and one of the most important art historical documents of the sixteenth century, is the painter's account book, the *Libro di spese diverse*, which he meticulously kept for the last two decades (1538–1556) of his long life.¹ In combination these documents, besides providing valuable information about the external circumstances of Lotto's professional career and network of acquaintances, have the unusual merit of shedding light on his personal thoughts and feelings.

Viewed as a whole, the pattern of Lotto's career is strikingly different from that of any other great painter of Renaissance Venice. As a large and wealthy metropolis, Venice provided ample opportunities for artists and craftsmen of every degree of talent to make a living, and painters from all over the extensive Venetian mainland empire came, settled, and spent a lifetime of fruitful activity there. In this respect the career of Titian, originally from Cadore in the Dolomites but permanently resident in Venice from the time



of apprenticeship until his death, is only the most celebrated example of the well-established norm. Lotto, by contrast, was a native Venetian, but spent the first twenty-five years of his career in the geographically widely separated regions of Treviso, the

Marches, and Bergamo, before setting up shop in Venice for the first time in 1525, when he had already reached his mid-forties. Thereafter, although he spent more time in Venice than anywhere else, he continued to work extensively for customers in his former areas of operation; his residence in the city was frequently interrupted by return visits, sometimes over periods of years, to Treviso and the Marches. He left Venice for the last time in 1549, and he spent his final years (1552 to 1556/1557) in the Marchigian holy city of Loreto.

Critics have sought to account for this unusually peripatetic career in a number of different ways. In the earlier stages at least, Lotto's frequent changes of residence would certainly have been motivated by professional ambition; a freedom to travel in pursuit of attractive commissions would also have been facilitated by the fact that he never married, and did not have the family commitments of Titian or Bellini. But it is equally clear from his writings that Lotto's restlessness and temperament made it difficult for him to settle definitively in any one place; indeed, when in his later life he actively sought a final home where he could achieve serenity of mind, he was constantly frustrated.

Lotto was born in Venice in 1480, or perhaps a year or two later, for in his will of 1546 he describes himself as a "pictor venetiano . . . de circa anni 66."² He was thus slightly younger than Giorgione (1477/1478 to 1510) and slightly older than Titian (c. 1488/1490 to 1576). Lotto is presumed to have trained in his native city, perhaps in the workshop of Alvise Vivarini, but he is first recorded as a painter in the mainland city of Treviso from 1503 to 1506 and possibly as early as 1498. In this brief initial phase of his career, during

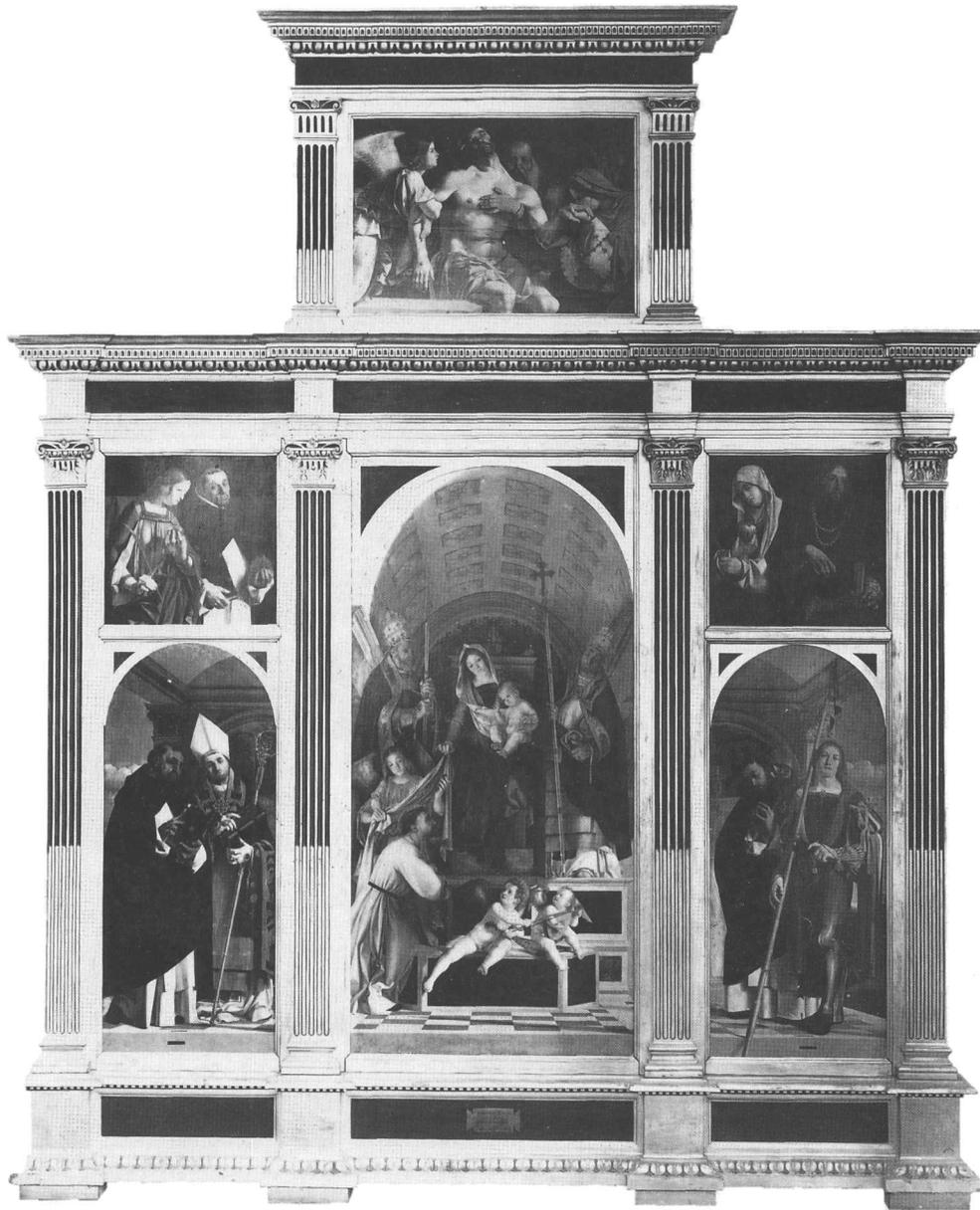


fig. 1. Lotto, polyptych of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints*, 1506–1508, oil on panel. Pinacoteca Comunale, Recanati

which the young painter enjoyed the active support of the local bishop, Bernardo de' Rossi, Lotto gained experience in virtually all the types of commission that he was to practice subsequently, from half-length images for private devotion to church altarpieces, and a *Saint Jerome in the Desert* (cat. 6) to portraits and secular allegories. Indicative of the high reputation that he had already achieved is a 1505 reference to him as “pictor celeberrimus”—a very famous painter.³

In 1506 Lotto made the first of his many radical career moves, transplanting himself to the distant city of Recanati in the Marches. The immediate cause for the move was the commission of a major altarpiece for San Domenico (fig. 1); but Lotto must have hoped that the proximity of Recanati to Loreto, a center of pilgrimage much favored by Pope

Julius II, would result in even greater opportunities. Indeed, soon after the completion of the Recanati polyptych in 1508, Lotto was called to Rome—at almost exactly the same time as his close contemporary Raphael—to work in the papal apartments in the Vatican palace. Throughout 1509 Lotto was employed on the decoration of one of the *stanze*, perhaps the ceiling of the future Stanza d'Eliodoro; but unlike that of Raphael, his work did not please the pope, and within three or four years it was destroyed to make way for a new project. With no new commissions forthcoming in Rome, Lotto seems to have left the city immediately, apparently making a brief visit to Florence before returning to Recanati, perhaps before the end of 1510. A second altarpiece for this town—the *Transfiguration of Christ* (fig. 2) for

Santa Maria di Castelnuovo—was followed in 1511–1512 by the *Entombment of Christ*, an equally important altarpiece for San Floriano in nearby Jesi.

In 1513 the painter left central Italy to take up residence in Bergamo, in Venetian Lombardy. Once again he moved to assume the commission for the high altarpiece of a major Dominican church (fig. 3), and once again he must have hoped that the successful completion of the work would lead to further local commissions. This time he was not disappointed, and judging from the splendor and exuberance of the pictures he painted for Bergamasque patrons, the decade he spent in the city was the happiest of his life. To a much greater extent than in the Marche, the support of leading local families, such as the Cassotti, the Tassi, the Bonghi, and the Brembati, enabled him to develop his powers as a portrait painter and his inventiveness as a painter of devotional images for the home. During this period he also undertook the most extensive fresco cycle of his career, that of

the Oratorio Suardi at Trescore, a few miles out of Bergamo.

Lotto began another major cyclical commission, an ambitious series of intarsias for the choir stalls of Santa Maria Maggiore, while he was still in the city in 1524, but then pursued it at long range after his departure for Venice in the following year. The progress of the execution is minutely documented in the series of letters Lotto wrote to his employers at regular intervals during the subsequent seven years, and as well as plotting the chronology of the intarsias, the letters shed light on the practicalities of the commission. Particularly interesting, for example, is the evidence that although the general program for the Old Testament cycle was devised by a theologian employed by the Consorzio della Misericordia, Lotto introduced changes on his own initiative, including the addition of a scene from the story of Lot (Gen. 19: 25–35) as a reference to his own name.⁴

Lotto's letters to the consorzio also lend valuable insight into his personal character. They show that over the years



fig. 2. Lotto, *Transfiguration of Christ*, 1511, oil on panel. Pinacoteca Comunale, Recanati

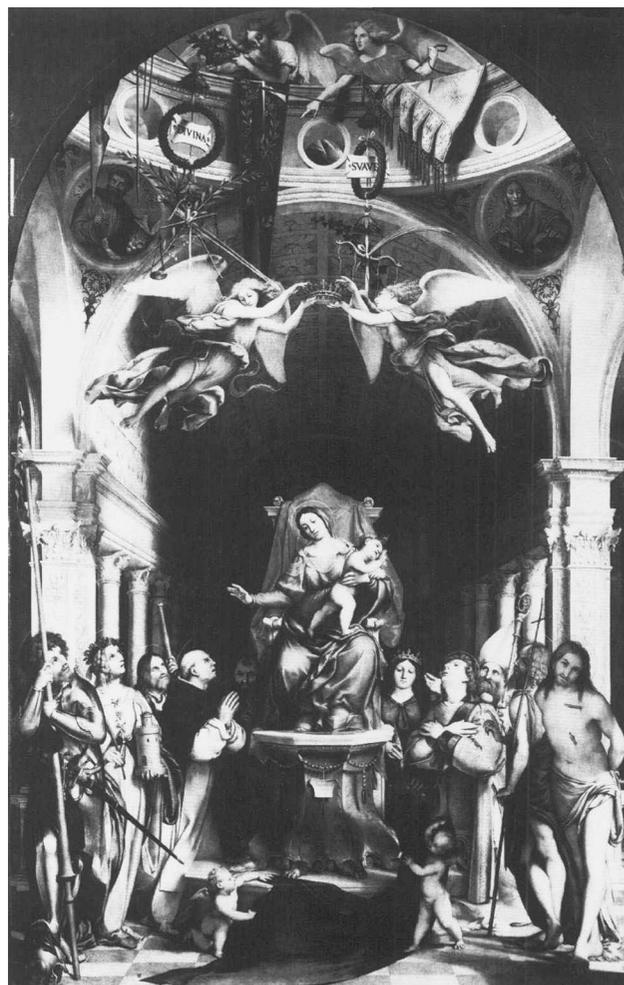


fig. 3. Lotto, *Martinengo altarpiece*, 1513–1516, oil on panel. San Bartolomeo, Bergamo



fig. 4. Lotto, *Saint Antoninus altarpiece*, 1542, oil on canvas. Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice

his relations with the governors became increasingly fraught, a result, in part, of the frustrations inherent in long-range communication, but in part, too, of his own prickly hypersensitivity. His tone is frequently defensive and fretful, and on several occasions he writes of his anxious and restless state of mind. Elsewhere, however, his letters reveal the same warmth of human sympathy that is evident in his portraiture, as when he speaks of his affection for the *intarsiatore* Giovanni Francesco Capoferri, or of his sorrow at the death of two dear friends. Similarly, there are echoes in the letters of the same deep religious commitment characteristic of his devotional pictures.⁵

It is not clear why Lotto decided to abandon Bergamo for Venice in 1525, but circumstantial evidence suggests that for a third time he was lured by the commission for a prestigious Dominican altarpiece: in this case for the newly canonized Saint Antoninus at Santi Giovanni e Paolo, although he did not in fact execute the work until 1542 (fig. 4).⁶ If he imagined that he would continue to receive important public commissions of this kind from Venetian patrons, he was

mistaken. Despite his experience as a large-scale decorator in the Vatican and in Bergamo, he was not invited to contribute to the narrative cycles in the Doge's Palace or the Scuole Grandi; his only other major Venetian altarpiece was the *Saint Nicholas in Glory with Saints John the Baptist and Lucy* of 1527–1529, commissioned by the Scuola dei Mercanti (guild of merchants) (cat. 29).⁷ On the other hand, as implied by Vasari, Lotto clearly enjoyed considerable success in the private sphere, painting portraits and smaller-scale devotional works for Venetian palaces. Customers for this kind of work included the wealthy businessman and discerning collector Andrea Odoni, of whom Lotto painted a spectacular and compositionally innovative portrait in 1527 (cat. 28), and the nobleman Marco Loredan, whose portrait Lotto included in an ambitious *Night Nativity*, now lost but reasonably identified by a seventeenth-century engraving (fig. 5). Evidence of Lotto's close integration into the social and professional world of Venetian painters is provided by a document of 29 September 1531: he served on a committee, alongside Titian, Bonifacio de' Pitati, and others, appointed by the Arte dei Dipentori (guild of painters) to administer a legacy left by their recently deceased colleague Vincenzo Catena.⁸

Lotto's movements between January 1533, when a Venetian notary witnessed his will, and January 1540, when an entry in the *Libro* records him back in Venice, are only sketchily recorded.⁹ During the 1530s he painted a number of altarpieces for churches in the Marches, and on several occasions his personal presence there is documented; thus, it is reasonable to deduce that in the spring of 1533 he moved his base of operations from Venice back to the area of Recanati and

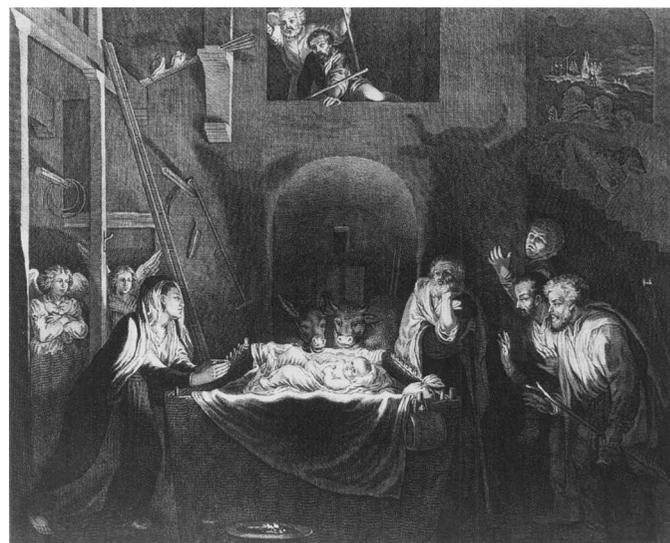


fig. 5. Jeremias Falck after Lorenzo Lotto, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.600.3027)

Jesi.¹⁰ Lotto had never lost contact with this valuable source of demand for his works: while still in Bergamo in 1523 he paid a brief visit to Jesi to sign the contract for the Saint Lucy altarpiece (cats. 34–36), which was not completed and delivered until 1532, and while in Venice in the later 1520s he painted and shipped off other altarpieces for Marchigian customers (fig. 6). If he was indeed resident in the Marche for most of the 1530s, it follows that he likely painted various other pictures datable to this period—including those of the quality and originality of the c. 1536–1537 *Holy Family with Angels* (cat. 43) and the c. 1534 *Adoration of the Shepherds* (cat. 39)—for Marchigian (or at least, for central Italian), rather than Venetian, customers.

From 1540 until his death in 1556 or 1557 the events of Lotto's professional and private life are recorded in minute detail in his *Libro di spese diverse*. This contains entries on all the pictures he painted during this period, together with the names of their commissioners or purchasers, and the prices he charged for them. In an appendix Lotto itemized his day-to-day expenses (colors, canvases, oil, varnish, nails, etc.), and the cost of his food and clothing. From these, and from the various references to the people with whom he came into everyday contact, it is possible to arrive at an unusually complete picture of the painter's social world. Chief among his friends were the brothers Bartolomeo and Antonio Carpan, goldsmiths and jewelers from Treviso, who had a workshop in Venice. It was Bartolomeo who looked after the aging painter during a serious illness in 1546 and who took charge of his effects after Lotto's departure from Venice in 1549; it was Antonio who initially put him in contact with Giovanni dal Saon, Lotto's landlord in Treviso from 1542 to 1545. Another close friend was Giovanni dal Coro, an architect from Ancona residing in Venice, who collaborated with Lotto on designing the frames of some altarpieces. Lotto was also on friendly, if not intimate, terms with the dominant figure in Venetian architecture and sculpture, Jacopo Sansovino, who lent the painter money on occasion, and whom he entrusted to sell a consignment of pictures in 1549. By contrast, the *Libro* contains no reference to Titian and mentions only a few relatively minor Venetian painters. Although without an immediate family of his own, Lotto lived for a time (1540–1542) in the house in Venice of his "nephew" (actually a younger cousin), the lawyer Mario d'Armano. The *Libro* contains records of a number of gifts Lotto bought for the children of the house and mentions a pair of portraits of Martin Luther and his wife that he painted for Mario in October 1540—an episode that has prompted considerable speculation about Lotto's stance in the religious



fig. 6. Lotto, *Virgin and Child with Saints Joseph and Jerome* (main panel); *Saints Francis and Clare* (lunette), 1526, oil on panel. Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi

crisis of the period and about whether he was sympathetic to Protestantism (see Adriano Prosperi's essay in this volume).¹¹

The chief commission that occupied Lotto immediately upon his return to Venice in 1540 was the Saint Antoninus altarpiece for Santi Giovanni e Paolo. But despite a 1541 reference in the *Libro* to a (now lost) portrait of Venetian patrician Marcantonio Giustinian, Lotto's art was now decidedly out of fashion in the philo-Mannerist climate generated there by the visits of Florentines Francesco Salviati in 1539 and Giorgio Vasari in 1541–1542. Lotto's move to Giovanni dal Saon's house in Treviso may have been prompted by his search as much for a more appreciative clientele as for the "more quiet life" away from "the many disturbances in the

house” of Mario d’Armano.¹² But in contrast to the 1503–1506 period in Treviso, this stay was not a happy one. Although Lotto went with the intention of settling there for the rest of his life, he had returned to Venice by 1545. In his lengthy will of 1546 the painter reflected bitterly on how in Treviso he had hoped to find relief from his loneliness and mental anxiety but had instead fallen prey to malicious gossip and had not even gained enough from his art to earn a living. He then revoked a previous legacy in favor of Giovanni dal Saon, and made instead his principal heir the Ospedaletto dei Derelitti, a charitable foundation adjoining the Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo. In the instructions for his funeral he asked to be buried in the church cemetery, dressed in the habit of a friar.¹³

In 1549 Lotto won the commission to paint a huge *Assumption of the Virgin* for San Francesco alle Scale in Ancona and left Venice to execute the picture on the spot (fig. 7). Although he went intending to return after its completion, the award of a number of other local commissions must have made him rethink his position. He was never to see his native city again. In 1550 he held an auction of forty-six of his unsold pictures in the town center of Ancona, partly in an attempt to raise much-needed funds but perhaps, too, to advertise his presence in the region.¹⁴ Although the auction was a failure—only seven pictures sold—Lotto continued to live in Ancona, where he enjoyed the favor of local patrons. In 1553, for example, he painted another very large altarpiece, now lost, for the chapel of the noble Amici family in the Cathedral of Jesi.¹⁵ During this period he also developed increasingly close contacts with the authorities at the basilica of the Santa Casa at Loreto, for which he had painted an altarpiece during his previous stay in the Marches in the mid-1530s (cat. 41); in 1554, after having lived there for two years, he entered the religious community as a lay brother. At this time he must have made a new will, canceling his previous instructions to be buried in Venice, and committing the remainder of his life to the service of the Santa Casa.

Although at Loreto Lotto may finally have found the peace of mind that had so long eluded him, his death in provincial obscurity aptly symbolizes the relatively low esteem in which his art was held in metropolitan Venice during the latter part of his career. The verdict of the artistic establishment is encapsulated in an open letter to Lotto from Pietro Aretino in April 1548, in which the powerful and articulate critic gives the painter only half-hearted praise, comparing him unfavorably with Titian and paying ironic tribute instead to his personal piety.¹⁶ Another propagandist

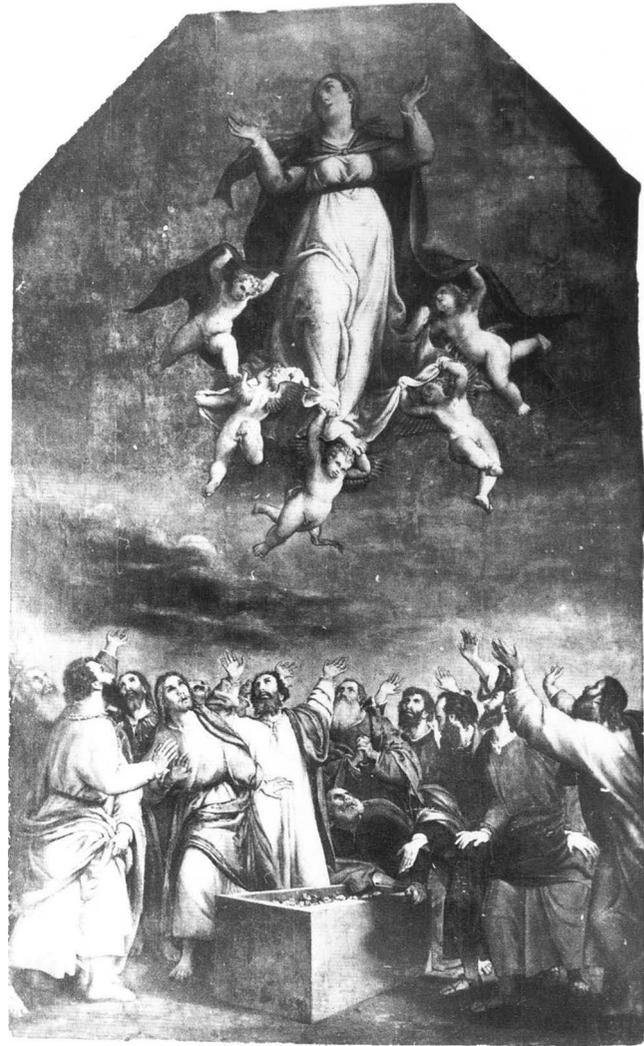


fig. 7. Lotto, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1549, oil on canvas. San Francesco alle Scale, Ancona

for Titian, Lodovico Dolce, was even more disparaging of Lotto in his 1557 reference to the supposedly “bad colors” of the Saint Nicholas altarpiece (cat. 29). This comment may have been made in riposte to Vasari who, in the first edition of the *Lives* (1550), had admired Lotto’s colors and the “licked” surfaces of his earlier works.¹⁷ But in the long term, Vasari’s more charitable and objective comments in the revised edition of the *Lives* (1568) inflicted even greater damage on Lotto’s reputation because of the dismissive brevity of his remarks and of the wide authority achieved by that book. The figure of Lotto—so individual in style, and not obviously belonging to the pictorial tradition of Venice, let alone to the idealistic one of Florence and Rome—could not find a comfortable niche in the grand historiographic scheme of the *Lives*, and Vasari made him share a short biography with Palma Vecchio and two provincial followers of Bellini, Niccolò Rondinelli and Francesco Zaganelli.¹⁸

The inadequacy of Vasari's biography set the critical tone for the next two centuries. The name of Lotto meant little to princely collectors of the baroque age, and a self-evident masterpiece such as the *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28), which entered the English Royal Collection in 1660, acquired an attribution to both Titian and Correggio. Following a remark made by Giampaolo Lomazzo (1584), and given credence by Venetian writers Carlo Ridolfi (1648), Marco Boschini (1663), and Anton Maria Zanetti (1771), a misleading tradition emerged that Lotto was a Bergamasque, to be categorized with Previtali and Cariani.¹⁹ Because of the peripatetic nature of Lotto's career, local writers had only a very fragmentary view of Lotto's work as a whole. The first signs of a more positive reassessment came only with Luigi Lanzi's pan-Italian *Storia pittorica dell'Italia* of 1795–1796.

Despite the contributions made by historians and critics such as Jacob Burckhardt, Joseph Archer Crowe, and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle during the course of the nineteenth century, it was not until the 1880s and 1890s that the foundations were laid for the modern appreciation of Lotto as one of the most engaging figures of Italian Renaissance painting. Essential to this development was the work of local archivists, who began to unearth a large quantity of original documents concerning Lotto, including the 1546 will and the *Libro di spese diverse*. These discoveries in turn provided a factual basis for the pioneering monograph first published by Bernard Berenson in 1895. Berenson subtitled his book *An Essay in Constructive Criticism*, and his principal aim was to put the newly developed art historical tools of rigorous connoisseurship and formal analysis into practice by reconstructing the artistic career of a painter whose work had received no more than passing mention in the existing literature. It is a tribute to Berenson's powers of visual judgment that even after a century of further research, his definition of Lotto's oeuvre and account of his chronology remain fundamentally valid. But that the monograph was conceived as more than a mere academic exercise emerges clearly from the final chapter, entitled "Resulting Impression." By introducing an unashamedly subjective element into his concluding observations ("I have a temperament which inclines me to forgive much in an artist like Lotto"), Berenson transcended an academic critical tradition that had neglected the painter because he was difficult to pigeonhole, or did not happen to share the strengths of Michelangelo, Raphael, or Titian; and while not attempting to disguise Lotto's weaknesses, the author provided an appreciation of his unique qualities that has similarly remained unsurpassed in its critical penetration.²⁰

The very comprehensiveness of Berenson's monograph must have discouraged further detailed research in the following decades: the first half of this century saw comparatively little advance in the state of knowledge of the artist. By contrast, the postwar years have been marked by two important events associated with Lotto, both of which have been accompanied by a shower of further publications. The first was the major exhibition, comprising 108 pictures, organized by Pietro Zampetti in the Doge's Palace in Venice in 1953. Among the monographs that followed quickly on the heels of the exhibition was an extensively revised edition of his 1895 book by the nonagenarian Berenson. The second important event was the fifth centenary of the painter's birth, celebrated in 1980–1981 with exhibitions in Treviso, Bergamo, and the Marches, and by an ambitious three-day conference in Asolo.²¹ Many of the conference papers were concerned with still unresolved problems of Lotto's chronology and relations with other artists. But at least three new areas for discussion and research came into prominence at the conference, namely, Lotto's religion, Lotto's use of allegory and symbol, and Lotto's patrons. These same three areas remain at the center of Lotto studies today.

1. All these documents, with the exception of four additional letters published by Chiodi 1977, are collected in the edition of the *Libro* published by Pietro Zampetti 1969. For a complete edition see Cortesi Bosco 1987, vol. 2. For selected extracts from these documents, including the will of 1546, in English translation, see Humfrey 1997, 177–183.

2. *Libro* 1969, 301. Arguments for an early 1480s birth date are in Rearick 1981 and Humfrey 1997, 7.

3. *Libro* 1969, 321.

4. Letter of 18 October 1526, *Libro* 1969, 268.

5. Letters of 10 February 1528 and 28 May 1529, *Libro* 1969, 286, 291; 2 September 1524 and 18 July 1526, *Libro* 1969, 261, 265; 18 July 1526, *Libro* 1969, 265.

6. Oldfield, "Venice," 1984; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 60–61, 425–426; Humfrey 1997, 87–89. See also the essay by Louisa Matthew in this volume.

7. Rearick (1985, 127–133), has made the interesting suggestion on the evidence of a compositional drawing (Schlossbibliothek, Aschaffenburg) that Lotto competed unsuccessfully in January 1533 for the commission to paint a canvas for the Scuola Grande di San Marco. But despite its acceptance by Cohen (1996, 352–353, 384), the attribution to Lotto of this drawing remains questionable.

8. Ludwig 1901, 69.

9. Ludwig 1905, 131, 135.

10. As pointed out by Zampetti in *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981, 324–325.

11. *Libro* 1969, 212; for the complicated question of Lotto's religious stance, see the essay by Adriano Prosperi in this volume.

12. *Libro* 1969, 215.

13. *Libro* 1969, 301–305.

14. Chiappini di Sorio 1984, 99.

15. Documents in *Libro* 1969, 307–310.

16. *Libro* 1969, 305.

17. Vasari 1550, 1976 ed., 553: "Fu tenuto molto valente nel colorito, leccato e pulito nella gioventù; e diletto di finire le cose sue."

18. Vasari 1568, 1976 ed., 552–554.

19. Lomazzo 1584, 1844 ed., 2: 444.

20. Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 308–309.

21. Zampetti 1953; Berenson 1956; *Lorenzo Lotto a Treviso* 1980; *Bergamo per Lorenzo Lotto* 1980; *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981; Zampetti and Sgarbi 1981.

Chronology

- c. 1480** Born in Venice.
- 1503** Recorded as a painter in legal documents in Treviso.
20 September: date inscribed on reverse of *Virgin and Child with Saint Peter Martyr* (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples).
27 November: witnessed a will in Venice.
- 1505** Recorded in further documents in Treviso.
1 July: inscribed date formerly on reverse of *Allegory of Vice and Virtue* (cat. 3).
- 1506** Inscribed date on *Assumption of the Virgin* (Duomo, Asolo) and apparently on *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (cat. 6).
4 May: settlement of dispute over fee of recently completed altarpiece for Santa Cristina al Tiverone, parish church.
17 June: in Recanati to sign contract for polyptych for San Domenico (Pinacoteca Comunale).
18 October: renewed lease on house in Treviso before departing for Recanati.
- 1508** Inscribed date on San Domenico polyptych and on *Virgin and Child with Saints Ignatius of Antioch and Onuphrius* (Galleria Borghese, Rome).
- 1509** 8 March and 18 September: payments from papal exchequer for work in Vatican Palace.
- 1511** 27 October: began the *Entombment of Christ* for San Floriano, Jesi (Pinacoteca Civica).
- 1512** Inscribed date on Jesi *Entombment of Christ* and on *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (cat. 9).
- 1513** 15 May: began Martinengo altarpiece (cats. 12–14).
- 1515** Inscribed date on *The Penitent Saint Jerome* (cat. 11).
- 1516** Inscribed date on Martinengo altarpiece.
- 1517** Inscribed date on *Susannah and the Elders* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence).
- 1521** Inscribed date on altarpieces for Santo Spirito (cat. 16) and San Bernardino, Bergamo, and on *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother, with Elisabetta Rota* (cat. 17).
- 1522** Inscribed date on *Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Catherine* (cat. 18).
- 1523** Inscribed date on *Nativity* (cat. 20), on *Marsilio Cassotti and His Bride Faustina* (cat. 21), and on *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22).
11 December: signed contract in Jesi for Saint Lucy altarpiece (cats. 34–36).
- 1524** Inscribed date on *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with Saints* (cat. 26) and on frescoes in Oratorio Suardi, Trescore.
12 March and 16 June: began to design cycle of intarsias for choir of Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo.
2 September: first of series of letters to Consorzio della Misericordia.
- 1525** Inscribed date on frescoes in San Michele del Pozzo Bianco, Bergamo, and in San Giorgio at Credaro.
20 December: arrived in Venice and took up lodgings at Santi Giovanni e Paolo.

- 1526** Inscribed date on *Virgin and Child with Saints Joseph and Jerome* for San Francesco al Monte, Jesi (Pinacoteca Civica) and *Christ Carrying the Cross* (cat. 27).
- 1527** Inscribed date on *Assumption of the Virgin* (parish church, Celana) and on *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28).
- 1529** Inscribed date formerly legible on *Saint Nicholas in Glory with Saints John the Baptist and Lucy* for Santa Maria dei Carmini, Venice (cat. 29).
- 1531** 29 September: served on committee appointed by the Arte dei Depentori (guild of painters) in Venice to administer a legacy left by Vincenzo Catena.
- 1532** 16 March: last of series of letters to Consorzio della Misericordia in Bergamo.
Inscribed date on Saint Lucy altarpiece (cats. 34–36).
- 1533** 28 January: made will in Venice (document lost).
Inscribed date on *Holy Family with Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (cat. 37).
Inscribed date on altarpiece for Sant'Agostino, Fermo (private collection, Rome).
August: began decoration of chapel of Palazzo dei Priori, Jesi.
- 1538** 1 August: began the *Virgin and Child with Saints* for Sant'Agostino, Ancona (Pinacoteca Civica, Ancona).
16 November: earliest entry in the *Libro di spese diverse*.
- 1539** Inscribed date on the Cingoli altarpiece (Museo Civico, Cingoli).
14 October: wrote to Cingoli from Macerata.
- 1540** 31 January: back in Venice; lived in house of Mario d'Armano from 3 July.
- 1542** Inscribed date on *Saint Antoninus Giving Alms* (Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice).
17/18 October: moved to Treviso; lived in house of Giovanni dal Saon.
- 1543/1544** Painted *Febo da Brescia* and *Laura da Pola* portraits (cats. 46–47).
- 1545** February to July: executed a *Pietà* for San Paolo, Treviso (cat. 49).
12 December: returned to Venice.
- 1546** 25 March: made will.
Inscribed date on altarpiece for San Giacomo dell'Orio.
November: stayed in home of Bartolomeo Carpan during period of illness.
- 1546/1547** Executes *Fra Gregorio Belo* (cat. 50).
- 1549** 1 July: arrived in Ancona to paint an *Assumption* for San Francesco alle Scale.
- 1550** August: auction of paintings and drawings at Loggia dei Mercanti, Ancona.
- 1552** 19 August: began altarpiece for Amici family in Duomo, Jesi.
30 August: took up residence in Loreto.
- 1554** 8 September: entered religious community at Santa Casa, Loreto.
- 1556** 1 September: final entry in *Libro*.
- 1557** 9 July: Lotto recorded as already deceased.

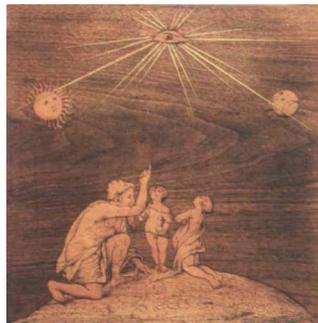


The Figurative Sources

AMONG ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ARTISTS, LOTTO makes the most intelligent and imaginative use of figurative sources, transforming them with such sophistication that it is impossible to categorize his manner as regional (Venetian, Lombard, central Italian), and at the same time creating a style so complex that it is often difficult to delineate its components.

Hypotheses have been proposed regarding Lotto's formative influences in the Marches, including that of Melozzo, Signorelli, and Crivelli,¹ but these have been refuted; a particular study of Giorgione also seems improbable. The role of Giovanni Bellini, however, appears clearly in Lotto's early work. The group of the Virgin and child in his *sacra conversazione* of 1503 (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples) patently derives from a Bellini prototype, and the compositional structures of two pictures (*Madonna and Child with Saints* [cat. 1]; the *Mystical Marriage of Saint Catherine* [Alte Pinakothek, Munich]) and the altarpiece for Santa Cristina al Tivertone, all of 1505, also reflect Bellini's ideas. In many ways, this fundamental allegiance to Bellini lasted at least until Lotto went to Rome in 1509. To be sure, it was impossible to avoid Bellini's influence around the turn of the century; but once Lotto settled in Treviso, perhaps as early as 1498, he seems to have found a more congenial figurative approach in the art of Alvise Vivarini,² whose altarpiece for San Francesco (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), which arrived in 1480, he certainly knew quite well.

In Treviso Lotto met a painter with whom he exchanged ideas in a clear process of give and take: Pier Maria Pennacchi.³ Pennacchi surely introduced him to a northern taste, which became one of his principal figurative sources throughout his life. The importance of northern painting for Lotto has been recognized by all who have studied him, not only for the depth of its influence but also for its duration. Although this aspect of Lotto's work reaches a peak between the end



of his stay in Bergamo and the beginning of his time in the Veneto and Marches, he seems to have paid close attention to developments in painting beyond the Alps until almost the end of his career. A profound influence from Dürer can be detected, for instance, in the cool, detached, antitonal colors of a masterpiece like the Asolo altarpiece (1506), which contains a direct quote from Dürer's drawing of the *Stone Quarry* (Ambrosiana, Milan). The way Lotto modulates the draperies in wide, paperlike folds also recalls the German artist, who at the time was completing his *Feast of the Rose Garlands* in Venice (now in Prague). Further, Lotto's representation of the tree branches in the Asolo altarpiece, as well as in the two allegorical portrait covers in Washington (cats. 3, 5) and the *Saint Jerome* in Paris (cat. 6), is clearly inspired by Dürer's woodcuts, as is the sunset in one of the Washington panels (cat. 5). Only northern influence can have justified at that date the idea of painting human figures on a small scale within a vast landscape rich in vegetation. The question also arises as to whether acquaintance with a Dürer drawing, the *Angel Playing a Lute* of 1497 (Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, W. 144),⁴ is the source for the remarkable detail, which appears in Lotto's work beginning with the San Bernardino altarpiece in Bergamo, of a single feather extending above the angel's wings; this motif, to my knowledge, is not found anywhere else in Italian or German painting.

What Lotto found in the northern tradition was certainly, as for any other Italian painter, an almost inexhaustible reservoir of motifs and formal suggestions; for him, however, these ideas were not items in an immense repertory to be used according to whim, to be copied in fragments and inserted into the most diverse contexts. What impressed Lotto was the capacity of northern painters to look at the visible world as an almost infinite sum of small, individual properties, with no filter between the eye and "reality" to rationalize or struc-

ture what is seen. In this way, reality did not appear as visually organizing according to similarities or contrasts, balance and symmetry, according to Alberti's widely accepted notion of *varietas*, but rather as the seemingly casual nature of geological upheavals or the botanical and zoological vitality of an untamed nature.

In the Ponteranica polyptych, the effect of transparency in the dark, like still-incandescent molten glass, immediately recalls the *Risen Christ* of Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece, painted around 1512–1516, although the path for such a reference is inexplicable. Pallucchini and Mascherpa⁵ have pointed out how the Bergamasque territory was traversed in the second decade of the sixteenth century by legions of *Landsknechts* from Switzerland, accompanied by the artists Urs Graf, Niklaus Manuel Deutsch, and Hans Leu. The most evocative name in this context, however, is Hans Holbein the Younger, mentioned first by Coletti and reiterated forcefully by Mascherpa;⁶ the lack of documentation for Holbein throughout 1518 could easily be accounted for by a trip to Lombardy, which might also explain the Italianizing aspect, somewhere between Lotto and Raphael, of his Oberried altar in Freiburg cathedral of about 1521 and the practically contemporaneous four panels with *Stories from the Passion of Christ* (Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel).

With Lotto we cannot speak of a general "northernness," as he knew very well how to distinguish between one northern artist and another. His *Christ Carrying the Cross* of 1526 (cat. 27), with the expressively deformed grimaces of the executioners, indicates a source in the hallucinatory "spät Gotik" taste derived from Bosch,⁷ perhaps an immediate response to having seen his triptychs that Cardinal Grimani left as a legacy to the Venetian Republic, and which from 1524 were on display in the Palazzo Ducale. A reminiscence of Patinier can be garnered in the landscape, unfortunately now quite ruined, of the *Virgin and Child with Two Donors* (fig. 1). In the Carmini altarpiece in Venice (cat. 29), too, the broad bay and moisture-laden air of an impending storm may recall the panoramic landscape of the "tela de la summersion de Faraon fu de man de Zuan Scorel de Olanda" (canvas of the drowning of Pharaoh from the hand of Jan van Scorel of Holland), which Marcantonio Michiel had seen in the collection of Francesco Zio⁸ (now lost, but perhaps similar to a panel on the same theme in a private Milanese collection).⁹

While still a youth in Treviso, Lotto came into contact with the artistic trend that replicated in the context of the Veneto the premises of virtuosity, daring perspective, and monumental synthesis of the image that Bramante had

spread throughout the Lombard territory, adopting also some terms from Bramante's architectural vocabulary.¹⁰ The illuminated section of the barrel vault of the central chapel in the Recanati polyptych, for example, picks up on an idea of Zenale, also used later by Fra Damiano Zambelli for one of the inlays of the choir of San Bartolomeo in Bergamo. All scholars have noticed Bramante's architectural terms in the Martinengo altarpiece in the same church; in *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* (cat. 17), and in the scenes from the Life of Saint Barbara in Trescore, the architecture is all Lombard, not Venetian. Finally, in the altarpiece painted for San Francesco al Monte in Jesi (Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi), the exaggerated slope of the architecture in the main panel and of the rustic rail fence in the lunette openly recall Bramantino's experiments in his fresco of *Argo* in Castello Sforzesco in Milan.

Oldfield¹¹ has convincingly argued that Lotto's acquaintance with Bramante was not indirect, through intermediary reports or works. He believes that it was this great architect—who in 1508 was working on the sanctuary of Loreto, very near Recanati where Lotto was finishing his polyptych for the Dominicans—who invited Lotto to work in the Vatican, where he received payments in 1509.

In those years Rome was an extraordinary building site and workshop, not only because some fundamental monuments were taking shape, from the urban project of Via Giulia to the construction of Saint Peter's and the Vatican, but also because of the fervor of discovery of ancient statuary, which was coming to light daily among the ruins. Thrown into this environment, Lotto does not seem to have reacted particularly to the news of the day: it is difficult to find in his paintings signs of enthusiasm for antiquity, even if the *Triumph of Chastity* (Rospigliosi Pallavicini Collection, Rome) follows precisely the lines of a Roman sarcophagus with *Nereids and Tritons* (Vatican museums), as Berenson had already noted.¹² The fragments of ancient statues surrounding *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28) are explained by the fact that the sitter had inherited an important collection of such objects. Only in *Susanna and the Elders* of 1517 (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) does Lotto appear to cite with any conviction the statue of the Kneeling Venus, now in the Prado but visible in the courtyard of Palazzo Massimi from the end of the fifteenth century. In that painting and in one of the Trescore frescoes of the Miracles of Saint Brigid there appears the unmistakable silhouette of the Torre delle Milizie in Rome. In a word, all Lotto's interest in classical antiquity is reduced to a few scattered quotations.

In the Vatican, however, he must have looked around him with a sharp and sensitive eye. In two depictions of Saint



fig. 1. Lotto, *Virgin and Child with Two Donors*, c. 1525–1530, oil on canvas. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Jerome (cats. 10, 11) there is at least a trace of awareness of what Michelangelo was doing on the Sistine ceiling; nothing more than an appropriation of formal motifs, to be sure, but enough for us to be able to say that if Lotto chose not to follow the path of formidable pride in the human figure, he had his own reasons for doing so.

The case is different with Raphael, an irreplaceable source for Lotto's art. Paradoxically, he seems to know not only the Raphael preceding their encounter, but in the following years also Raphael's works of the second decade, even though he finds a greater affinity of spirit with the older works, from the end of Raphael's Florentine period. The very fine *Saint Jerome* in Castel Sant'Angelo (cat. 8) shows the saint in a pose that is in some ways linked to Raphael's almost contemporaneous *Alba Madonna* (National Gallery of Art, Washington),¹³ but Raphael's influence on Lotto explodes in the two great altarpieces for Recanati and Jesi. In both, Lotto adopts Raphael's modern style in a way all his own: figures painted in a manner originally elaborated by Raphael but with Lotto's emotional content undergo a deformation that can make them seem proto-Mannerist.¹⁴ Nonetheless, already his brilliant enameled palette, harmonizing along tones of light blue, yellow, and pink, has become decidedly central Italian, very different from the richer and deeper Venetian range of his youth. Once he absorbed Raphael's formal vocabulary, it remained a con-

stant component of his style, to the point that in the *Santo Spirito* altarpiece in Bergamo (cat. 16), the young Saint John the Baptist at the foot of the throne derives from an idea of Raphael's in the Farnesina *Galatea* or the *Bridgewater Madonna*. Lotto's *Virgin and Child with Two Donors* (fig. 1), too, reveals its dependence on a drawing from Raphael's circle at Chatsworth, which toward the end of the 1520s must have been well known in Venice, as it served as the basis for two paintings by Vincenzo Catena, one formerly in the collection of the Earl of Mexborough in London, the other in Dresden.¹⁵ In the *Carmini* altarpiece in Venice (cat. 29), Saint John the Baptist is captured in a typically Raphaelesque pose that recalls the young Saint John painted for Cardinal Gouffier de Boissy, now in the Louvre.

Lotto's modern classical style was not acquired only from Raphael, however; in the Jesi *Entombment*, the slender saplings with feathery leaves in a gently rolling landscape and the poses of the cherubs holding Saint Bernardino's monogram of Christ imply an awareness of Fra Bartolomeo, who was a Dominican, an order with which Lotto was always closely tied. An even more patent stylistic reminiscence is seen in the *San Bernardino* altarpiece in Bergamo of 1521, where the angels holding the curtain, suspended in the difficult perspective of flight, refer back to Fra Bartolomeo's *Pitti Altarpiece* of 1512; the little angel on the left lifting Mary into heaven in the *Celana Assumption* of 1527 is a direct quotation

from this painting. In the *Visitation* in Jesi, the women on the right with their faces in profile and their veils half-covering their heads are a poignant reminiscence of Albertinelli's altarpiece on the same subject (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence). In Lotto's fresco of *Saint Vincent Ferrer in Glory*, in San Domenico in Recanati, the saint's pose is so clearly modeled on Fra Bartolomeo's panel on the same theme (Accademia, Florence)—the first preparatory studies for which were made in 1510–1511—as to seem a direct tracing or textual reference.¹⁶ Even the technique used for this fresco, in which the shadows are created by cross-hatching instead of by darkening the paint, is consistent with the methods of Raphael and Fra Bartolomeo but completely alien to artists of the Veneto.

Lotto's move to Lombardy in the early months of 1513 put him in contact with a totally different figurative reality. On the border between the Republic of Venice and the Duchy of Milan, Bergamo had a culture of images that included both Venetian and Milanese tendencies. Beyond the Adda, the weight of Leonardo's tradition was still felt strongly, continued by his most gifted and intelligent followers like Boltraffio or Cesare da Sesto, and even by Leonardo himself, although he would leave on 24 September of that same year for Rome. It has even been suggested that one of Lotto's most important sources in Lombardy were the frescoes by Gaudenzio Ferrari at Varallo Sesia,¹⁷ but lately this idea seems to have few adherents.

In 1584 Lomazzo had spoken of Lotto as a "master . . . at giving light,"¹⁸ placing him in a fairly close connection with Leonardo, an idea that in general terms still seems to maintain its validity in view of the veiled, misty atmosphere of landscapes like the one behind the splendid *Madonna* of 1518 (fig. 2), one of the absolute masterpieces of Lotto's art. There, for example, the idea of the two children, Jesus and John the Baptist, kissing, seems to derive from a Leonardesque drawing (perhaps by Francesco Napoletano) in Windsor Castle (no. 12.564).¹⁹ From his earliest years Lotto had shown an interest in Leonardesque images like the *Litta Madonna*, which may have been in Venice,²⁰ in his ex-Puslowski panel in Krakow (cat. 7). In his Bergamasque works one sees in fact a softer, more *sfumato* roundness in the faces, a gentler emotional expressiveness, quite different from his earlier clamorous harshness, which certainly owes a great deal to Leonardo's example and also to the works of the best of his followers. It may be a coincidence, but the analogies between the figure of Saint Sebastian in the Santo Spirito altarpiece and the last attendant on the right in the *Adoration of the Magi* by Cesare da Sesto, for San Niccolò dei Gentiluomini in Messina, painted in 1516–1517 (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di

Capodimonte, Naples), are so close as to warrant the suspicion that Lotto knew at least a sketch for the figure.²¹ The landscapes in the *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Nicholas of Tolentino* in Boston (cat. 24), the *Trinity* in Sant'Alessandro della Croce in Bergamo (cat. 23), even the Dresden *Madonna*, and in the end all of his works done in Bergamo, justify the belief that he was also quite familiar with the paintings of Andrea Solario, with whom he could have established acquaintance as early as the mid-1490s, when the young Solario was in Venice and Lotto was still an apprentice.²²

But just this particular gentleness of vision in the Bergamasque works can call to mind, in addition to Leonardo and his followers, the name of Correggio; indeed, scholars have invoked him as a fundamental source for Lotto's art throughout the nineteenth century and up to our day.²³ It must be said, however, that in the history of the idea of a profound interchange between these two artistic geniuses,



fig. 2. Lotto, *Madonna and Child*, 1518, oil on panel. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alter Meister, Dresden

mistaken attributions to one or the other play a major role, as does a certain lack of attention to chronological details. If, in fact, it is easy to see resemblances between the two, once the dates are checked carefully it becomes evident that Lotto's work always precedes similar creations by Correggio, a circumstance suggested almost *a priori* by the fact that Lotto was about ten years older. Already Morelli had indicated Lotto as a precursor of Correggio; Berenson, too, had insisted on a coincidental affinity of results due to a common point of departure in Leonardo.²⁴ There is certainly, to my mind, infinitely more "Lottism" in Correggio (like in the beautiful foggy landscape in *The Adoration of the Magi* in the Brera) than "Correggism" in Lotto, but in the end the only solution seems to be precisely this one: similar results arrived at by chance because of the geographical and cultural vicinity of the areas in which they worked.

After his return to Venice at Christmas of 1525, with this vast range of experience behind him, Lotto renewed his contacts with the reality of Venice; but by now his style was fully formed and underwent no substantial changes for the rest of his career. Despite the extraordinary success of Titian, for example, Lotto seems never to have looked to him as a model. There may have been a certain convergence with Savoldo on the same terrain of a "Lombard" luminous naturalism, but this tendency must also represent, for Lotto, a new flaring up of interests already well established in preceding years. In his Venetian period, Lotto devoted himself mainly to the production of magnificent portraits, with distinctive qualities completely different from what was circulating in the city on the lagoon (on this subject, see the essay by Wendy Stedman Sheard).

But in the end, perhaps it must be said that Lotto sought his figurative sources not only and not so much in the work of his colleagues, but above all in the infinite variety of the world. In his paintings it is not difficult to identify moments belonging to the common experience of his time, like the scattering of rose petals by the angels in the Cingoli altarpiece, a custom still practiced in many parts of Italy until two or three decades ago during processions and other important occasions for expressing popular piety. The layout of the Trescore frescoes, with the "pictures" that unfold in sequence, may be based on an acquaintance with northern works like Memling's *Seven Joys of the Virgin* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), but it seems mainly to echo the public festivities of miracle and mystery plays. The crowd begging for grace or alms at the bottom of the *Saint Antoninus* altarpiece in Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, of 1542, is performing a collective ritual with which the artist was perfectly familiar as gov-

ernor of the Ospedale dei Derelitti, attached to that church.²⁵ The "ex-votos" hanging from the ceiling of the chapel containing the tomb of Saint Agatha in the first compartment of the predella of the Saint Lucy altarpiece in Jesi (cat. 34), or the lighted candles attached to the iron railing in the church, are both a part of the collective mentality and ceremonies of his public.

1. Coletti 1939, 348–357; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 23; Zampetti 1953, xviii; Zampetti 1971, 116–124; Antonelli 1990, 35–40.
2. Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 34–50.
3. Their level of exchange is much more complex than the simplistic idea expressed by Sgarbi 1977, 39–50.
4. Koreny 1988, 74, 77.
5. Pallucchini 1975, 7; Mascherpa, "Nord," 1980, 17–23; Mascherpa 1981, 181–186.
6. Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 24; Mascherpa 1981, 181–182.
7. A connection between this painting and Bosch's *Christ Carrying the Cross* in the museum in Ghent seems inevitable, although it is impossible to reconstruct the path between them. See Béguin 1993, 545–546; C. Sterling (quoted by Béguin) has proposed a link with miniatures in Ghent or Bruges, like those in the famous *Grimani Breviary*, donated by Cardinal Grimani to his native city.
8. Frizzoni 1884, 178.
9. Meijer 1992, 1–7; Faries 1995, 253–255.
10. Lucco 1980, 33–66; Lucco 1981, 57–63.
11. Oldfield, *Omaggio*, 1984, 22–23.
12. Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 101.
13. Volpe 1981, 134.
14. Freedberg 1971, 1979 ed., 303.
15. Robertson 1954, 56–58, nos. 32–33. The relationship between Lotto's picture in Malibu and the two paintings by Catena, and the possibility that Lotto owned one of them, has already been noted by Peter Humfrey (1997, 131–132).
16. Oldfield, *Omaggio*, 1984, 26–27.
17. Pallucchini 1944, xxxi; Brizio 1953, 14–20; Brizio 1965, 35–42; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 31–59.
18. Lomazzo 1584, 1947 ed., 224.
19. On this drawing, see Moro 1991, 120–121.
20. On the painting and its questions, both as to attribution and whether it was in Venice, see Brown 1992, 362–363.
21. Rearick (1981, 27–28, 34–35) has posited that Lotto might have known Leonardo in Milan in 1516–1517; the date coincides with Cesare da Sesto's return to Milan after his stay in Messina. According to Pignatti (*Lotto*, 1953, 65), an encounter between Lotto and Leonardo took place in Milan between 1513 and 1515; on that occasion he would also have seen Bramante's Santa Maria delle Grazie, which he then reproduced in the Martinengo altarpiece.
22. On Solario, see Brown 1987.
23. See, for example, Locatelli 1867, 91; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 513–514; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 14, 195, 204; Frizzoni, *Emporium*, 1896, 242–257; Gould 1948, 286–289; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 26, 33; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 87–93; Ansaldi 1956, 5; Fiocco 1968, 315; Gould 1981, 169–171; Rearick 1981, 28, 35.
24. Morelli 1890, 1991 ed., 316; Berenson 1955, 194.
25. Manzelli 1981, 202–203.



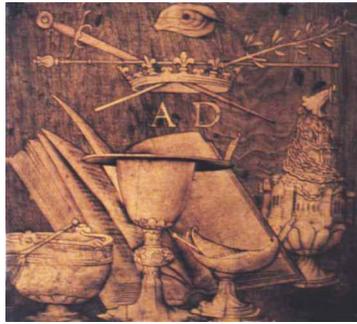
The Religious Crisis in Early Sixteenth-Century Italy

The Vine and the Vineyard

AT THE TIME THAT LORENZO LOTTO painted his monumental Christ-Vine in the Suardi family's oratory at Trescore (fig. 1), Pope Leo X had just issued the bull *Exsurge Domine* against Luther, who was represented as the wild boar ravaging the Lord's vineyard, namely, the Church. The traditional Christian image of the Church as the Lord's vineyard had its scriptural basis in the parable of Matthew 20: 1–16. In contemporary sermons and devotional writings, the parable served as a means to incite Christians to earn their final retribution by working as the gospel's laborers. Yet the biblical story could also emphasize the gratuitous nature of the Lord's prize granted to laborers as a reward, independent of the actual amount of work completed.

The vineyard, and the appeal to Christians that they should hasten to cultivate the vineyard, was widely invoked among members of the most combative circles of sixteenth-century ecclesiastical society. One could work in the "Lord's vineyard" as a shepherd of souls, as a missionary, and as an inquisitor. On the one hand, there was the need to uproot infected plants from the already tilled soil; on the other, it was necessary to cultivate new lands discovered overseas, planting, in other words, new vineyards. "Laborers," principally the Dominicans and Franciscans, were selected by the Lord for the cultivation of his vineyard. Dante Alighieri described Saint Dominic as the "farmer whom Christ chose to help him in his garden" (*Paradise* 12: 70–71). Moreover, from the name of the Dominicans was derived the description "*Domini canes*," the canines capable of driving out the heretics and rescuing the vineyard.

The whole Church was a giant vineyard, and the cities that served as diocesan seats were the smaller vineyards. Indeed, in Bergamo the image of the vineyard provided the title for a local chronicle, published in 1553 by Don Bartolomeo Pellegrini.¹ The publication was entirely devoted to an appeal



to struggle against the heretics, the German "barbarians" who were ravaging the Roman Church's "vineyard." Yet the arch-heretic Giorgio Siculo set upon the image of the Christ-Vine in a central passage of his *Epistola*, aimed at refuting the Calvinist doctrine

of predestination while supporting the semi-Pelagian notion of the perfection attainable by regenerated Christians through the benefit of Christ's death.² These interpretations were the extreme consequences of the contrast between the defenders of the Church as an institution and the followers of a religion grounded in the mysticism of Redemption. They may help us to understand better the truly diverse religious nuances already evident in the 1520s, between those who relied on the image of the vineyard and those—like Lotto—who grafted their idea of religious life onto the Christ-Vine.

In 1524 these consequences were still remote and unpredictable. Nevertheless, Lotto's fresco is significant precisely because of his choice to place in the foreground the Vine-Christ instead of the Vineyard-Church. The vineyard, however, is not missing from the fresco, nor is the reference to the heretical "foxes" that were ruining the crops. (The representation of a traditional series of apologetic references is so detailed and precise that some have even seen it as an insightful commentary on the bull of excommunication against Luther.) Yet it is plainly evident that it is not the Vineyard-Church in the foreground, but rather the single vine, Christ, vivifying the branches. Through his reference to the centrality of Christ, Lotto proves himself to be one of the most perceptive exponents of a vast and widespread trend in the Italian religious life of the first part of the sixteenth century: the restoration of Christ as the sole foundation and intermediary of the entire ecclesiastical structure and religious practice.

The mysticism of Redemption was by then widespread in very diverse circles, represented by such figures as



fig. 1. Lotto, *Christ the Vine*, 1523–1524, fresco. Oratorio Suardi, Trescore

Francesco Zorzi on one side and Fra Battista da Crema on the other.³ The question that dominated religious experience and thinking during Luther's lifetime was not the one suggested by the image of the vineyard, the problem of the true Church, but instead the salvation of each Christian, namely, that which was expressed through the image of the vine: "I am the true vine No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15: 1–5). A fundamental difference existed between the image of the Church-Vineyard and Christ-Vine: the Church was a vineyard in which many laborers worked, and whose reward might vary considerably. As Juan de Valdés noted, "the vineyard is the Church, which . . . includes [both] good and bad."⁴ Yet for Valdés, as for many others, the primary concern was to be a live branch of the Vine-Christ, achieving a living, personal relationship with him in order to guarantee one's survival.

The crisis of ecclesiastical institutions and traditional ritual practices during this period found expression in the search for a more active and direct contact with Christ's humanity. No one stated it better than Niccolò Machiavelli's young Florentine friend Pietro Paolo Boscoli, when he addressed those who prepared him to face his execution in accordance with the ideals of a Christian death: "I would like Christ's humanity to offer itself to me, and I would like to perceive him, as if Christ came out of a forest to meet me."⁵ The search for a vital and humanitarian religion, capable of offering assurances for one's own salvation, characterized this whole period. In addition, it bestowed melancholic overtones, the profound, sentimental kind, to both devotional

customs and forms of piety. For the most part it affected secular circles, yet the religious orders and ecclesiastical hierarchy were not outside its influence. Obviously, the most diligent guardians of orthodoxy, especially the Dominicans, did not fail to recognize the danger of heretical aberrations inherent in devotional practices indifferent to established institutions.

The transition from loyalty to heresy could occur in two ways. Either Christ's humanity was emphasized, even to the point of doubting or explicitly denying his divinity, or man's relationship to Christ was exalted, elevating man to God's position, eliminating human sins and thus making man saintly and faultless. During Lorenzo Lotto's lifetime, the consequences of both notions manifested themselves. In the Anabaptist Council of 1550, the impassioned debates concerning Christ's humanity that extended into the popular ranks reached doctrinal conclusions that were radically heretical in nature. To the contrary, the Lutheran doctrine of Justification by faith alone, which offered a reassuring message to uneasy souls, infiltrated Italy with features that were entirely unique. According to the *Trattato del beneficio di Cristo*,⁶ the most famous and widely read and circulated publication of the sixteenth century, the union of faith between the soul and Christ bestows upon every Christian a condition of perfection: ". . . That perfection through which we have been understood by Christ in order to be united with him"⁷

The justifying faith of Reformation theology was thus united with the "Spiritual" Franciscans' tradition, which had never died and was still capable of mobilizing small groups of "Perfecti" against secular and ecclesiastical corruption. One link, for example, connecting the legacy of the "Fratricelli"

and Reformation doctrine could be found in Bartolomeo Cordoni's *Dialogo della unione spirituale de Dio con l'anima*, a Franciscan mystical text "bordering between heresy and orthodoxy."⁸ The text, repeatedly published between 1538 and 1548, presented a hypothetical conversation between two interlocutors, Reason and Love, in which Love showed how it was capable of comprehending the mysteries of faith. Through love, that is, perfect charity, the soul could be united with God, a union in which sins were eliminated and the soul became perfect: "When the soul clothes itself in Christ in this manner, at that moment it becomes one with him, living on faith and living with Christ. Living on faith, which *'iustus ex fide vivit.'*"⁹

The *Dialogo* clearly represented the ambiguity of religious messages of this kind, at the junction between orthodoxy and heresy, placing next to one another the doctrine of Justification by faith alone and explicit acknowledgment of the powers of the pope, "Prince of the Apostles."¹⁰ Moreover, the ambiguity of such ideas was reflected in the diverse and often opposing consequences that such notions promoted. While Fra Bartolomeo Cordoni died in 1535 with a saintly reputation, the Capuchin Fra Girolamo da Molfetta, editor of the 1539 Milan edition, fled along with Bernardino Ochino to Switzerland in 1543. Yet, if he had not fled, we would have considered him a follower of the Catholic Reform movement; in fact, in the preface to his edition of the *Dialogo*, Fra Girolamo dedicated it to the Compagnia dei Servi dei Poveri, in which he mentioned the charitable works of their founder, Girolamo Miani, especially those he had performed in Bergamo. After his escape, things were seen in a different light. Critics remembered the violent charges against corruption in the Church contained in his sermons, while suspicions were cast upon those followers who were in attendance and who held secret meetings and joined groups called the "Illuminati."¹¹

We do not know whether Lorenzo Lotto had any part in these secret gatherings. Investigations by Venetian authorities and the Roman Inquisition did not implicate him. Even recent examinations by art historians in search of evidence of Catholic or Lutheran orthodoxy have not led to any clear conclusions. The questions put forward by contemporary scholars are similar to the ones asked by the Holy Office toward the middle of the sixteenth century, to the members of those groups who had survived long enough to come under suspicion and to be arrested. In vain, the accused attempted to defend themselves with the excuse that they were theologically ignorant or that they had long abandoned their heretical beliefs; as in the case of Cardinal

Giovanni Morone, who uselessly reminded those who were judging him that things had previously been considered differently in Italy, and that the mental clarity promulgated by the Tridentine decrees did not exist. One could not ask judges to be historians. We can ask contemporary historians not to be judges, however, and not to establish divisions between orthodoxy and heresy in early sixteenth-century Italy using the same standards as the Inquisition.

Recent studies have revealed more accurately Lotto's personal connections to both heretical circles and unquestionably orthodox devotional and charitable practices. (For example, he was a member and administrator of the confraternity of the Hospital for Poor Orphans at Santi Giovanni e Paolo;¹² yet only in the most polemical distortions did the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone become contrasted with the practice of good works.) Nevertheless, it was Lotto's work as a painter that clearly exposed his profound adherence to themes involving the imitation of Christ and Christians' free justification through the Passion of Christ. Painting was for him a means of exercising "the service of religion," in which, as Aretino wrote, Lotto surpassed even the great Titian.¹³ An inscription placed on the back of an image of the *Crucifixion*, in the Berenson collection at Villa I Tatti, Florence, states that the figure of Christ had been painted by Lotto "as a sign of piety . . . [during] the Holy Week at the moment of our Lord Jesus Christ's Passion."¹⁴

Preaching and Writing

In their religious education, men like Lorenzo Lotto, who lived between the end of the Quattrocento and the first half of the Cinquecento, experienced a move from oral to written tradition, a shift from the preacher's word to the reading of the Bible in vernacular Italian. The period that opened with the visionary sermons of Girolamo Savonarola was dominated in Italy until at least 1530 by preachers announcing from the pulpit the imminent end of the world. Don Bartolomeo Pellegrini's chronicle of the city of Bergamo described how he had heard one of these evangelists, Pietro Bernardini da Lucca, who had preached in Bergamo in 1520, prophesy biblical calamities, pestilence, hunger, and war, and the violent death of multitudes. Pellegrini reminded his readers that these predictions, in his opinion, ultimately proved to be correct.¹⁵ At that time, such prophetic proclamations were frequent and widely circulated. Pietro da Lucca was also a very popular writer on devotional themes regarding meditation on the Passion and the imitation of Christ.¹⁶

We do not know whether Lorenzo Lotto heard these sermons or read these written works. But he did not await the

1520s in order to undertake such themes. His San Vincenzo Ferrer in the Recanati polyptych is the foremost evidence of his thinking and abilities. Not only did he express his understanding of the nuances and forms of apocalyptic and prophetic sermonizing, but in particular he displayed an extraordinary perceptiveness in rendering through living and unforgettable forms the assimilation of such proclamations of the imminent coming of the Lord to judge sinners.

His religious education was, like that of most of his contemporaries, at first primarily grounded in oral tradition. Among his books, at least those owned in his later years documented in the *Libro di spese diverse*, he had a copy of the *Imitazione di Cristo*, a publication that was enormously popular.¹⁷ Indeed, Pietro da Lucca's text, *Dello imitar di Christo*, was evidence of the incredible success of a devotional theme, or rather a true literary genre, in which the Christocentric religion of the Christ-Vine expressed itself. Lotto's occasional spiritual interpretations, recorded in his account book, reflect a basic level of religious education supplemented by the "Lives of the Holy Fathers," Ludovico Bigo Pittorio's commentary on psalms, and a "Psalmist with Vernacular Narration."¹⁸ Above all, his thoughts reveal an awareness of the sermons and discussions that took place in monastic circles, especially the Dominicans in Venice at Santi Giovanni e Paolo. Essentially, for Lotto and the majority of his contemporaries, the oral tradition continued to dominate the written one.

As a result, Lotto was able to draw on a Lenten sermon of 1527 by a preacher from the Venetian monastery for the theme of the paintings he was proposing to his patrons in Bergamo: "And I believe that, for one of the paintings for the piers, the figure of *Iosué* halting the sun would be appropriate, which I was reminded of by our preacher during Lent."¹⁹ In such commissions, he took pride in the well-founded knowledge that he had gained from the Dominicans' teachings. One celebrated preacher, Lorenzo da Bergamo, was among his patrons, and Lotto accepted as payment for the work a portion of the alms given by those who attended his sermons.²⁰ It was hardly a bad deal, considering that Fra Lorenzo's sermons were always well attended. (The bishop of Verona, Gian Matteo Giberti, owed a part of the enormous success of his pastoral visit around the diocese in 1530 to the fact that he brought the great preacher, generally only heard in the city, into the country churches.²¹)

Lotto also revealed in his letters a new and uneasy awareness of his own ability to determine what was important to portray in order to recognize the Bible's "istoria," "without all the subtleties of the Scriptural text or its mean-

ings."²² Only a few years later he designed a figure of Moses that appeared as the frontispiece of Antonio Brucioli's vernacular edition of the Bible, which clearly demonstrated the essential union between his work as an artist and the most active expressions of the new religious sentiments.²³ The medium that Brucioli made available to readers of Italian had repeatedly been demanded. (In the same Dominican circles with whom Lotto mingled in Venice, Brucioli's undertaking was immediately imitated and emulated by Fra Zaccaria da Firenze and by Santi Marmochino.²⁴) Meanwhile, a warning was sounded by the Roman Church's representatives, in particular the papal nuncio, Bishop Girolamo Aleandro, and Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa. The reaction by those who wanted to defend the "vineyard" intensified, to the point that suspicion was cast upon many who were simply seeking answers to their own doubts through direct readings of the Bible. Investigated by the Inquisition, the Lutheran and Erasmian sources of Brucioli's edition of the Bible in vernacular Italian, and of his own ideas, were revealed, and his Bible—along with every other vernacular translation of the Holy Scriptures—was banned.

As far as we know, Lorenzo Lotto was never prosecuted by the Inquisition. Instead, recent historians have gathered circumstantial evidence and presented arguments in support of his attraction to the Protestant Reformation. But these suspicions have never produced any concrete proof of direct involvement with the then numerous and widespread heretical groups within the confines of the Venetian Republic. His library as recorded in the *Libro di spese diverse* included nothing subversive. (The "5 libretti de la *Instituta christiana*" that he presented to Ioan del Savon's children in 1544, which inconceivably have been considered to be Calvin's *Institutio christiana religionis*, were most likely elementary scholastic texts similar to those read in schools.²⁵) An entry of 1540 in Lotto's *Libro*, of "two paintings with portraits of Martin Luther and his wife," is noteworthy.²⁶ By this time, the open approval and attraction of Luther's works among leading Italian cultural figures, especially the Florentine historian Francesco Guicciardini, had been supplanted. Such criticisms and suspicions were shared by both the defenders of the Catholic Church and the followers of the most radical reform movements. During the same period, a widespread anticlerical feeling existed within the popular ranks. The need for a purified religious life, closer to an evangelic model, sustained the appeal of Luther, the one who first attacked the "three walls" protecting ecclesiastical privilege. Lotto's entry revealed then that even in the Venetian Republic, just as in Protestant Germany, there were those who privately vener-

ated Luther's image, and that he was willing to accept commissions for such works.

It is hardly surprising to find a demand for these works, considering the far-reaching acceptance of the Reformation in Italian urban areas. Of course, the movement was divided into various trends. In particular, groups of Reformation followers in the Veneto region—whom Martin Butzer addressed in his letters—were engaged in debates both internally and with more radical circles in Bologna and Modena, involving the same issues that separated the more moderate Lutheran positions from those of either the Swiss “Sacramentarians” or the Anti-Trinitarians. At the heart of the controversy was the question of Christ's real presence during the Eucharist, as well as his humanity. In light of the religious divisions of the period, Lotto appears far removed from the most radical positions, yet this does not necessarily mean that he was aligned with the intransigent Catholic faction.

During this time, precisely in 1541, Fra Bernardino Ochino explained to a Bolognese priest, Don Nicola Bargellesi, “that Martin Luther possessed the true spirit of God and the Blessed Jesus Christ, and that whoever shared Martin shared Christ.”²⁷ Opinions of this kind were discussed in circles associated with cardinals Reginald Pole and Gasparo Contarini, and eventually would be expressed in the *Trattato del beneficio di Cristo*. Meanwhile, in Lorenzo Lotto's circle, there was a tendency to favor moderate, evangelical reforms. Such notions were widely circulated among Venetian artisans, expressed in texts like *il sogno dil Caravia* (1541), and discussed by those associated with the jeweler Bartolomeo Carpan, whom Lotto knew well and who was later prosecuted for heresy.²⁸ Moreover, by 1540, hopes for a reform of the Church according to the Evangelists were raised by the announcement of the upcoming council, and by an imperial policy aimed at religious dialogue. Within a few years, though, the tide changed completely, following the collapse of negotiations at Ratisbon, the death of Cardinal Contarini, the creation of the Roman Congregation of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, and Bernardino Ochino's escape.

In 1546, soon after Luther's death and the establishment of the Catholic doctrine on Justification by the Council of Trent, Lotto left to his will the affirmation of his religious sentiments, which opened by invoking the name of “the Omnipotent, Eternal God of the Most Holy Trinity.” Such an invocation was far from the increasing expressions of piety toward the saints, and also alien to the beliefs of the Marian cults of the Counter Reformation and the Anti-Trinitarians in Venetian heretical circles. Indeed, Lotto con-

tinued to paint sacred images, which were explicitly banned and destroyed by such groups. Lotto's will clearly expressed the sense of “the uneasiness of the mind” that is so apparent throughout his work as a painter of religious subjects. He settled all practical considerations with the help of his religious confessor, before returning once again to the image of a welcoming and forgiving Christ. (It was this image of Christ, capable of pardoning every sin, that Lotto had represented in one of his paintings showing him with a raised hand protecting an adulteress.) He wrote: “[Christ], from whom, through his kindness and supreme mercy, I beg forgiveness, his grace, and to pardon my transgressions against his Divine Majesty and for all other kinds of sins against my neighbors.”²⁹

Even if his words did not betray a clear theological affirmation of the Lutheran doctrine on Justification by faith alone, they nevertheless expressed a religious attitude far from the notion of good works and indulgences, against which Luther had fought. The “small painting of Christ when he went to Emaus,” delivered in April 1546 to the druggist Alessandro Catanio, is the best evidence of the sense of uneasiness revealed by Lotto in his will. Perhaps he tried to translate accurately into images the reflections of Christ at Emmaus described in a well-known Venetian publication of the early sixteenth century: “. . . With the end approaching, full of uneasiness . . . He is with us, since nightfall is already upon us. Now, already at the end of my life . . . , [both] fear and terror devastate my senses Our salvation is only through You.”³⁰

Lotto found his Emmaus, his place of spiritual refuge, at the Basilica of the Santa Casa at Loreto. The site was preferred by many who identified with the religious sentiments of the *Trattato del beneficio di Cristo*. One of them, the Bolognese Nicola Bargellesi, was a canon of the Santa Casa and wrote and published the basilica's history precisely at the moment when Pope Paul IV (Gian Pietro Carafa) and his Grand Inquisitor, Cardinal Michele Ghislieri (later Pope Pius V), called him to testify about what he knew of the circulation of the *Trattato* by Benedetto da Mantova and Marcantonio Flaminio. This storm affected many people, and not all of them succeeded—like Bargellesi—in extricating themselves from suspicion. By this time, though, Lorenzo Lotto had concluded his tormented journey.

1. *Opus divinum de sacra, ac fertili Bergomensis vinea* . . . (Pellegrini 1553).

2. Siculo 1550, cc. 60v–61r.

3. Maria Cali mentioned the Christ-Vine theme in Francesco Zorzi's *De Harmonia mundi* (1981, 243–277, esp. 247). On the intellectual and artistic circles around San Francesco della Vigna and their connections to Lotto, Serlio, and Giulio Camillo,

see Foscari and Tafuri 1983, esp. 53–54.

4. Valdés 1985, 402.

5. “Io vorrei che l’umanità di Cristo mi s’offerissi, e vorrelo comprendere, come se uscissi d’un bosco e facessimo incontro” (della Robbia 1943, 100). As one may recall, Boscoli’s case especially impressed Jacob Burckhardt (1958, 2: 511).

6. Benedetto 1543, 1981 ed., 103–161.

7. “Quella perfezione, nella quale siamo stati compresi da Cristo per la incorporazione in lui” (Benedetto 1543, 1981 ed., 56). In the 1543 edition, notes in the margin refer to the passage in John 15.

8. Simoncelli 1977–1978, 565–601.

9. “Quando l’anima si veste così di Christo, all’hora diventa una cosa medesima con Christo, et vive di fede et vive di Christo. Vive di fede, quia ‘iustus ex fide vivit’”: Cordoni 1539, c. 79r.

10. Ivi, c. 77v.

11. See the letter by Gian Matteo Giberti to Fra Francesco di Calabria, 26 September 1542, in Simoncelli 1977–1978, 578; in Tacchi Venturi 1913, 320–329.

12. Zampetti, *Urbino*, 1983. For his connections to heretical circles, see Fontana 1981, 279–291.

13. Letter from Pietro Aretino to Lotto, April 1548: *Libro* 1969, 305–306.

14. “. . . per sua divotione . . . la septima santa, all’ora della Passione di nostro Signor Gesù Cristo.” See Canova 1975, 117 (cited by Muraro 1981, 299–312, esp. 303).

15. Pellegrini 1553, cc. 39v–40r.

16. See in particular his *Arte nova del ben pensare e contemplare la Passione del nostro Signore Giesu Christo benedetto* (Venice, 1525); in the Venetian edition, published by Niccolò d’Aristotile Rossi detto Zoppino in 1527, the *Trattato dello imitar di Christo* was added.

17. See *Libro* 1969, 212 and 237.

18. Perhaps Malerbi’s translation (Venice, Nicolini da Sabio, 1524), or maybe *Il Salmista secondo la Bibia* (Venice, Nicolaum de Aristotele, 1539).

19. “Et penso che per uno de li quadri per li pilastri, seria al proposito quel de Iosué che firmò il sole che in questa quadragesima lo senti ricordar dal nostro predicatore,” letter to Girolamo San Pellegrino, Venice, 9 May 1527: *Libro* 1969, 272–273; reproduced in Cortesi Bosco 1987, 13.

20. “Haver dele cerche de le prediche”: *Libro* 1969, 86; the note is from 1542.

21. Fasani 1989, 2: 447.

22. Letter dated 10 February 1528: *Libro* 1969, 285–286.

23. See Romano 1976, 82–91.

24. New information on the Savonarola-like Fra Zaccaria is published in Cortesi Bosco 1987, 161–163.

25. The idea that it was Calvin’s text was suggested by Cali 1983, 37–60, esp. 52.

26. *Libro* 1969, 212 (17 October 1540).

27. “[. . .] che Martino Luthero haveva il vero spirito de Dio et di Iesu Cristo benedetto, et chi partecipava de Martino partecipava de Cristo,” from Don Nicola Bargellesi’s testimony at the Carneschi trial, 8–9 June 1557: Firpo and Marcatto 1995, 6: 224–225.

28. Compare Martin 1993, 156–159.

29. “. . . al quale per bontà e somma clementia ademandò per misericordia la gratia sua e perdonarmi le ofese fate a sua divina maestà et mio prossimo con tute altre sorte di peccati”: *Libro* 1969, 301–303.

30. “. . . Appropinquandose la fine del mondo, sopraabunda la inquitade . . . Sta’ con noi, peroché già el se fa sera. Hor già se approxima el fine dela vita mia . . . , lo timore et lo terrore conquassa tutta la coscienza mia . . . In te solo è la nostra salute,” *Expositione dela Omelia de sancto Bernardo sopra lo evangelio de la seconda feria de Pascha*. . . (Venice, Antonio di Zanchi da Bergamo, c. 1501), d II r–v.



The Patrons' Role

WHEN LOTTO'S PATRONS COMMISSIONED a painting, they were most likely to ask for an altarpiece, a devotional picture, or a portrait. These three genres had become the mainstay of the workshops of Venetian "painters of figures" (that section of the painters' guild producing large-scale figurative works as opposed to such items as playing cards, shop signs, and furniture), since the arrival of Renaissance artistic styles and subject matter in Venice during the 1430s and 1440s.¹ Lotto produced large numbers of these conventional types of pictures with notable regularity from the first signed and dated work of his career, a devotional picture depicting the Virgin and child with a kneeling donor in 1503 (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples), to his last altarpiece, *Virgin and Child with Six Saints* (now lost) for Jesi Cathedral, in 1554.² These were the pictures that he had been trained to create as an apprentice in Venice during the last years of the fifteenth century. We do not know who Lotto's master was; however, the dominant model of success for any aspiring young painter around 1500 was the shop of the Bellini family, whose fame was based on attracting patrons for altarpieces and devotional pictures (especially of the Virgin and child), and promoting the taste for the more recently popular genre of life-size portraits.³

Lotto's reliance on the example of the older generation of Venetian painters for establishing his reputation and generating a reliable income may be characterized as conservative, or at least cautious, but it in no way suggests a lack of ambition or entrepreneurial spirit. In the early sixteenth century patrons typically expected painters to be well versed in a wide variety of techniques and genres, and Lotto was prepared to comply. His account book, which covers the years 1538–1556, provides a fascinating view into a painter's day-to-day activities, including his relationships with his patrons, and is supplemented by his extensive correspondence with



the Consorzio della Misericordia in Bergamo, patrons of the intarsia cycle for Santa Maria Maggiore for which Lotto provided the designs.⁴ The account book reveals that Lotto undertook a diverse array of tasks at the behest of patrons; he assumed the roles of skilled artisan, designer, and consulting expert. He restored old and damaged paintings (among them a manuscript illumination on vellum), painted and gilded small statues and frames, and designed and painted confraternity standards and banners on cloth.⁵ He accepted commissions to design altarpiece frames and to provide the drawings for the intarsia project at Santa Maria Maggiore, where he also was hired to provide expert advice on the plans for a new gilded copper altarpiece for the high altar. He occasionally recommended fellow artists for jobs, and he acted as an adjudicator to determine the value of completed altarpiece projects, as was often required by the contracts signed by painters and patrons.

The traditional view since the rediscovery of Lotto by Bernard Berenson and others at the end of the nineteenth century has been that Lotto worked primarily for members of the artisan class, to which most painters belonged (including Lotto), and for "provincials."⁶ Thanks to the renewed attention that Lotto has received during the last twenty years, new documentary evidence and a closer look at the account book have prompted a revision of these opinions. The projects that Lotto undertook for artisans, either as individuals or in groups, account for only about 20 out of 116 documented works of all types; furthermore, only 1 of the approximately 38 altarpieces is securely documented as having an artisan patron.⁷ Another misapprehension about the identity of Lotto's patrons concerns the number of confraternities, whose role as patrons, particularly of altarpiece commissions, has been underestimated. We now know that almost one-third of Lotto's entire altarpiece production was for these brotherhoods. This places him very much within the



fig. 1. Lotto, *Crucifixion*, c. 1534, oil on canvas. Santa Maria in Telusiano, Monte San Giusto

mainstream of altarpiece patronage in the sixteenth century, as the number of confraternities had increased dramatically during the previous century, and they had become a significant force in the market for altarpieces. Membership in a confraternity provided people from the lower ranks of society, who could never have afforded it otherwise, access to the patronage of a chapel and a burial site in a church; however, not every confraternity was made up of artisans or laborers. Lotto's records amply demonstrate that confraternity membership was also drawn from the middle and upper social ranks.⁸

The term "provincial" has often been applied pejoratively to imply that those of Lotto's patrons living in smaller cities and towns, by definition of their peripheral locations (that is, not Florence, Rome, or Venice), lacked the education, social connections, and especially the cultural sophistication to demand the finest or most fashionable art, even if they had money. It takes nothing away from the obvious importance of the great urban centers of artistic production to insist that such assumptions about geographical location are oversimplified. First of all, Lotto worked for the professionals and merchants as well as the aristocrats in every city in which he conducted his career, from an early patron in Treviso, patrician Bernardo de' Rossi, bishop and member of the local humanist circle whose portrait Lotto painted, to the illustrious Martinengo Colleoni family, whose grandiose altarpiece helped establish Lotto's reputation in Bergamo in 1516, to the very end of his career in 1554 when he was still working for the aristocrats and wealthy merchant families in the cities of the northern Marches who had supplied him with conspicuous altarpiece commissions since the 1520s.⁹

Although neither the wealth nor the social status of a patron necessarily guaranteed the quality of a finished painting, it is not coincidental that Lotto's most beautiful and arguably most artistically successful altarpiece (and one of the largest paintings in his entire oeuvre), was for one of his most sophisticated patrons. Niccolò Bonafede, bishop of Chiusi, had been educated in Rome and conducted his career in the service of five successive popes, including Julius II and Leo X. Among his many prominent positions were governor of Rome, papal legate to Venice, commissary general of the papal armies in several campaigns, and vice legate of the Marches. All the glory notwithstanding, his first loyalty was to the small isolated town of Monte San Giusto in the north-central Marches, where he was born and where he spent a great deal of time and money as a patron of art and architecture. It was here, in a location that could not have been more provincial, that Lotto created his magnificent *Crucifixion*, or as the work should really be called, *Lamentation of the Virgin*, c. 1534 (fig. 1), for the high altar of Bonafede's parish church, a picture so isolated that few have ever seen it, yet very obviously the product of an ambitious collaboration between a Venetian painter and a member of the Roman curia.¹⁰

Lotto regarded himself as a Venetian painter throughout his life, as did his patrons, and his early works, such as the Santa Cristina altarpiece for a parish church outside Treviso (fig. 2), were clearly indebted to Venetian painters of the older generation, especially Alvise Vivarini, Cima da

Conegliano, and above all Giovanni Bellini. Lotto traveled a great deal, as did most Venetian artists, but what made his out-of-town experiences less typical is that he remained outside of Venice (although within its economic and political spheres of influence), often for several years at a time. Although some scholars have claimed that Lotto worked outside Venice for extended periods because his paintings did not appeal to the taste of Venetian patrons, there are a number of reasons why this was not the case, especially during his first forty years as an independent master.¹¹

Lotto's motivation to move from one city to another was often tied to large altarpiece commissions, which he knew would bring him local and regional recognition because of the location, size, and expense of the project. Such a commission also provided him with a reliable source of income, usually ensured by a written contract, and was occasionally supplemented by a free or subsidized place to live and work.¹²

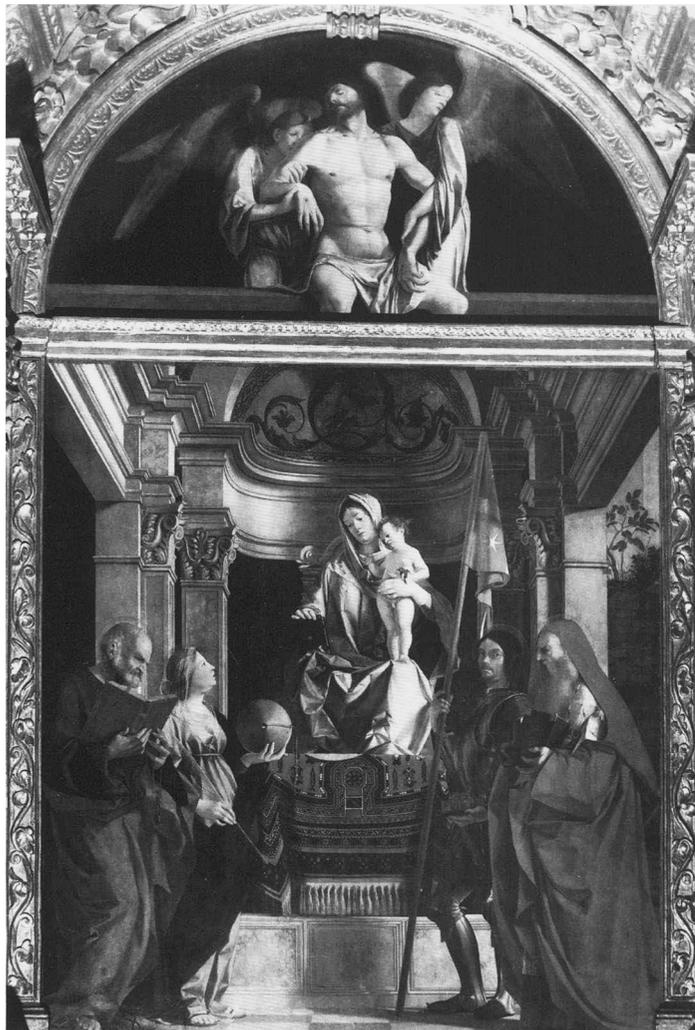


fig. 2. Lotto, *Santa Cristina altarpiece*, c. 1505, oil on panel. Santa Cristina al Tiverone (Treviso)

The polyptych for the high altar of San Domenico on the main square of Recanati, for instance, prompted a lifetime of commissions in towns of the northern Marche, which was supplemented in 1512 by his first altarpiece of many for Jesi. It also likely drew the attention of Bramante, then working as papal architect in nearby Loreto, and probably he was the agent who hired Lotto to work in Rome.¹³ The Martinengo altarpiece was the largest of Lotto's entire career, and it established his reputation in Bergamo, where he stayed busy for more than a decade, producing mostly altarpieces, devotional pictures, and portraits for many of the city's leading families and institutions. It is likely that he left for Venice in 1525 to pursue an altarpiece commission for the Dominican friars of Santi Giovanni e Paolo.¹⁴ The move did not mean abandoning his patrons in Bergamo or the Marche, as he kept in touch by letter and agent, shipped even large works such as altarpieces with their frames, and made occasional journeys in person. Furthermore, that Lotto remained in most locations for a number of years suggests that he was busy taking advantage of the enthusiasm his works generated among local patrons.

Lotto's first lengthy residence in Venice as an independent master, between 1525 and c. 1532, was a very busy period in his career. He rather quickly abandoned the San Antoninus commission in 1526 due to a disagreement with a Dominican friar, but he received another large altarpiece commission, for the Saint Nicholas altarpiece, from a confraternity of merchants with an altar in Santa Maria dei Carmini (cat. 29). It has been a commonplace in modern evaluations of Lotto that only two altarpieces commissioned by Venetian patrons during this period demonstrated his lack of success in attracting business in the city; however, a closer look at the activity of other painters suggests that Lotto's activity was not atypical.¹⁵ For example, during the entire decade of the 1520s Bonifazio de Pitati, Rocco Marconi, Gerolamo de Santa Croce, and Savoldo produced only one or two altarpieces each.¹⁶ Titian and Palma Vecchio produced three apiece, but had the benefit of continuous residence in Venice beginning several years before 1520, which had allowed them to develop their patron contacts. Lotto mentioned frequently in his letters from Venice that he was very busy, and the number and quality of paintings produced during these years confirm his claims.¹⁷ He sent at least four altarpieces to the Marche and one to Bergamo, and he produced a substantial number of portraits and devotional pictures. Some of the most impressive of these were for Venetian patrons, notably the *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28) for a gentleman and collector. Other paintings may also have been for Venetians, including *Portrait of a*

Young Man (cat. 32), *Bishop Negri* of c. 1525 (Monastero delle Paludi, Split), *Man with a Lion's Paw* of c. 1527 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), and devotional pictures now in Venice, Paris, Vienna, and Brescia.¹⁸ Very possibly Lotto maintained his export business because the Venetian market of the late 1520s was less active than at the beginning of the century; his letters indicate that he most certainly found it a very expensive and less-than-agreeable place to live.¹⁹

There is also no question that Lotto was producing very few pictures in the newer genres that had been pioneered in Venice by some of the painters of his generation—namely, Giorgione, Palma, and Titian—and by an enthusiastic group of patrons. While it is not entirely clear how numerous these patrons were, they were certainly citizens and patricians, and their more up-to-date and even unconventional taste in pictures was shared by elite patrons in the courts of north Italy, such as Mantua and Ferrara, in addition to Rome and Florence. These new pictures portrayed subjects based on antique themes—allegoric, poetic, and lascivious—with an unprecedented emphasis on the female nude and landscape, and many transgressed the boundaries between conventional genres, especially the so-called portraits of partially nude young women. One of Lotto's rare paintings from this period that depicted such a subject, *Triumph of Chastity* (fig. 3), suggests some of the reasons for his lack of participation in this "new painting." His doll-like nude Venus projects none of the sensuality that was making comparable paintings by Palma, Titian, and Giorgione so well known and sought after by certain patrons. The few female nudes that Lotto ever painted are all of a type and suggest he was reluctant to look closely at undressed female bodies, either live or as interpreted by the classical past, and uninterested in their

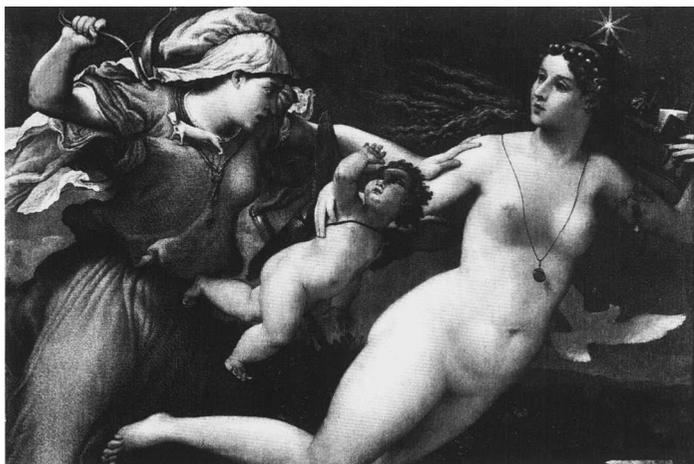


fig. 3. Lotto, *The Triumph of Chastity*, c. 1527, oil on canvas. Galleria Pallavicini Rospigliosi, Rome

erotic potential. His male nudes, furthermore, have little of the heroic appeal that was based on the study of antique sculpture being explored by Titian at the time. Lotto's delightful marriage picture, with its presentation of a minutely described catalogue of symbolic objects and actions, demonstrates that he took allegory seriously; however, his didactic approach lacked the poetic suggestiveness being developed by his peers.²⁰ Lotto's ability to sell works in the more traditional genres during his years in Venice is a reminder that tastes for pictures in an urban metropolis were not *a priori* at the cutting edge of new developments any more than tastes of patrons in a small town were unsophisticated.

The question remains as to how Lotto developed a coterie of patrons in the various cities and towns in which he worked. The installation of a lavish altarpiece in a highly visible location could play a major role in this. With or without such an announcement, a painter's reputation and availability was communicated by word of mouth in a society that still valued personal contact for the conduct of every sort of relationship and transaction. Any citizen with sufficient money to be a potential patron of art conducted his or her life within a complex system of overlapping and intertwining networks of personal associations. A prosperous citizen, such as Niccolò Bonghi of Bergamo, who is depicted in the picture he commissioned from Lotto in 1523 (cat. 22), was typically a member of a range of institutions that commissioned art, including confraternities (often more than one and in more than one church), vocational organizations, government offices, parish church, and family.²¹ In all these institutions, furthermore, there were like-minded individuals who might commission pictures for private use. Institutions themselves maintained networks, often on a regional and even international basis: the diocese with its many parish churches and the monastic or conventual order with its many chapters; confraternities with branches in home towns and in cities where the members worked; businesses that required attendance at regional fairs and maintained agents in multiple locations; and elected officials who traveled on pilgrimages and diplomatic missions on behalf of their communities. The northern half of the Marches was a particularly lively intersection for many of these networks. Recanati was the site of a very large commercial fair; the nearby city of Ancona was a busy port and an important link in the Venetian trade network in the Adriatic, and there were many merchants from the Venetian sphere of influence, including Bergamo, operating in the region on a permanent basis; the Holy House of the Virgin at Loreto was an important regional and international shrine administered by the papal bureaucracy in

Rome; and the entire region of the Marches was part of the papal states. Lotto had first established himself in the Marches with the polyptych for the high altar of San Domenico in Recanati in 1508, and he continued to expand his activity there even when residing in Bergamo and Venice. Once he returned to the Marches in the early 1530s, he remained for the rest of the decade, working in an even wider range of its communities.²²

The pictures that Lotto produced were mostly “made to order,” that is, at the request of patrons, which was standard business practice throughout Italy. Large-scale commissions for altarpieces and fresco cycles in public spaces were conventionally governed by a notary’s contract in which patron and painter agreed to a timetable and other details of the production process, standards of quality, terms of payment, and a price (although the last could be revised if a final arbitration by experts was stipulated). Such a contract protected both patron and painter, guaranteeing the former a finished product within a reasonable amount of time, and the latter payment for his work and recompense for expenditures.²³ Altarpieces and cycles, either fresco or on canvas, were the only projects typically covered by such contracts, and every busy painter of Lotto’s generation produced them in abundance. No such protection was afforded for portraits and smaller religious pictures (or for the new secular genres that also tended to be easel size or smaller). The lower price involved and often the informality of dealing with an individual’s personal tastes meant that such pictures were more subject to the whims of their consumers and the vagaries of the marketplace, and profit may well have depended more on the volume of pictures sold. The wide variation in prices for portraits, even for a painter as famous as Titian, and the large numbers of such works produced by any given painter (Lotto’s account book records forty portraits in the 1542–1552 decade), also indicate that the market for portraits, and by implication other pictures for private consumption as well, was active but volatile.

During the 1540s, especially the first half of the decade in Treviso, Lotto suffered financial and personal difficulties, including a bout of illness during October and November 1546 after he had moved back to Venice. These were precisely the same years in which he had the most problems attracting and satisfying customers for his smaller pictures, although the total number of works involved, approximately ten, was a very small percentage of his total output (for example, two devotional pictures were never delivered because the patron was dissatisfied with the result, and a portrait was completely repainted at the patron’s request).²⁴ We have virtually no evi-

dence for day-to-day business transactions of a painter’s shop in Venice except for Lotto’s account book, hence nothing with which to compare this aspect of his experience, but it is reasonable to assume that dissatisfied patrons of portraits were not unique to this painter, especially given the sensitive challenge of reproducing a person’s likeness, in a market unregulated by contracts or enforceable standards of value. Lotto’s response to difficulties with patrons was always the same: to assert what his painting really was worth in contrast to what he had received, and to insist on his professionalism in his business dealings. Lotto depended on his income as a painter to survive, as he occasionally reminded patrons in Bergamo—a situation not atypical for most painters, who still belonged to the upper reaches of the artisan stratum.²⁵

Lotto engaged in a number of business practices during his late career—the only period covered by the account book—that indicate a willingness to go beyond conventional commission-based arrangements and sell his pictures, except for the altarpieces, on the open market. He promoted his business in smaller pictures by giving discounts and occasionally donating a picture as an outright gift. Additionally, he sold pictures at fairs in Venice, and he sent pictures on consignment to shops in Venice, Messina, Rome, and Loreto. In 1550 he sponsored a lottery in Ancona to sell twelve pictures, many of which had remained unsold for some time, and thirty cartoons for the Bergamo intarsias that he had safeguarded for many years as part of his shop apparatus.²⁶ Because there is virtually no evidence of such selling techniques being used by other artists of his day in Italy (although the open market long had been important in northern Europe), and because we have very little comparable evidence from the first forty years of Lotto’s career, the lottery especially has been regarded as an ailing painter’s desperate, last-ditch attempt to survive. Instead, it may be more fruitful to regard Lotto’s activities as an indication of his keen entrepreneurship and of the existence of a more widespread open market for pictures than has hitherto been assumed. Lotto’s energies were ebbing (he would retire to the shrine of the Santa Casa at Loreto in 1552 and become an oblate in 1554), but his career was far from over, and he was still a busy painter. He received a large altarpiece commission in Ancona in 1549, which also guaranteed him inexpensive lodgings and studio space, and he continued to execute smaller pictures on a regular basis. His motivation for the lottery, in addition to generating income, may have been to unclutter his studio after a lifetime of hauling pictures and supplies from one place to another (hence his decision to sell the intarsia cartoons, which had been in his possession since the 1520s).

Lotto founded a long and busy career on providing patrons with time-honored genres of pictures for which there was a continuing demand during the first half of the sixteenth century. We now know that this demand existed among a wide array of patrons from various social ranks, and that for more than forty years Lotto successfully supplied them with altarpieces, devotional pictures, and portraits. His active role in marketing his works indicates the seriousness with which he viewed his profession as a painter rather than any sort of marginal status. Furthermore, it suggests that we need to look more carefully at the mechanics of selling pictures in sixteenth-century Italy. It was a time when the growing demand for paintings for personal use and display by a wider array of patrons may well have been answered by a more aggressive entrepreneurship on the part of painters, a response that did not depend entirely on the traditional commission process.

1. Altarpieces and smaller devotional pictures (meaning pictures with religious subject matter intended for personal use and generally private spaces) had become popular during the late Middle Ages. The “painters of figures” were referred to as “figurers” by the early sixteenth century, at which time there were eight subdivisions of the painters’ guild (“Arte”). For a summary history of the guild, see Rosand 1982, 9–12.

2. Lotto also designed the frame for this substantial altarpiece project, commissioned by a noble family from Jesi. The only detailed discussion of this commission is in Matthew, “Lotto,” 1988, 447–452.

3. The one genre for which a demand existed in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Venice that Lotto did not participate in was narrative cycles, in his day usually executed on canvas rather than in fresco, for churches, confraternity seats, and government buildings. The reasons remain a matter for speculation. He may have found the format uncongenial, although he did execute at least three fresco cycles for patrons in Bergamo during the 1520s. That he was out of town, in Treviso, the Marches, Rome, and Bergamo during the first three decades of the century, except for one period of approximately eight years between 1525 and 1532, surely limited his ability to develop the contacts with potential patrons in Venice that benefitted his peers who stayed in the city, and there was a noticeable hiatus in commissions for such projects by the 1520s.

4. For claims regarding Lotto’s lack of success in business see Berenson 1965, 21, 112–113; Pietro Zampetti, introduction to *Libro* 1969, xl–xli; and Muraro 1984, 144–164. The most recent and thorough publication of Lotto’s correspondence between 1524 and 1532 is Cortesi Bosco 1987.

5. There is no reason to doubt that Lotto had carried on these and other activities during the first forty years of his career. For the wide variety of activities undertaken by a painter’s shop, see Muraro 1992, which focuses on the Bassano family of painters. Their even wider array of activities was certainly related to their isolated location, far from the restrictions imposed by the Venetian painters’ guild and presumably from the kind of specialized competition found in the metropolis. Our knowledge of the activities of other Venetian painters is hampered by the lack of comparable evidence.

6. In addition to Zampetti’s introduction to *Libro* 1969, xxvi, and Zampetti, “Introduzione,” 1981, 22, see Rosand 1971, 407–409, and Muraro 1984, 145. Artisans are defined as those who worked at a trade or skill, usually with their hands. The upper echelon of this stratum included painters, apothecaries, goldsmiths, and printers.

7. The *Virgin and Child with Saints* of 1546 for an altar in San Giacomo dell’Orto was commissioned by a confraternity of artisans; Matthew, “Lotto,” 1988, 432–436. It is very likely that a few other altarpieces painted for parish churches or confraternities in small communities were artisan commissions, such as those at

Ponteranica (Bergamo), Breda, and Castelplanio.

8. Examples include the confraternities of merchants who commissioned the *Annunciation* (cat. 40) in Recanati and the Saint Nicholas altarpiece for Santa Maria dei Carmini in Venice (cat. 29), and the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the parish church of San Giacomo in Sedrina (north of Bergamo). The confraternity patrons of Lotto’s Saint Lucy altarpiece (1532) and the *Entombment* (1512), both for churches in Jesi (Marches), included prominent citizens among their members.

9. A very partial listing of patrician and wealthy citizen patrons includes Bishop Rossi and Ludovico Avolante from Treviso; Andrea Odoni and members of the Lippomano, Giustinian, Avogaro, Gussoni, and Mocenigo families in Venice; members of the Gratioli, Nobili, Pisoni, and Ferretti families in Ancona; the Martinengo Colleoni, Suardi, Brembati, Rota, Tasso, Cassotti, and Bonghi in Bergamo; the Amici in Jesi; and the Bonafede in Monte San Giusto.

10. See Matthew “Patria,” 1993, 184–206; 1994, 162–174. Bonafede died 6 January 1534 and was buried in a tomb in the capella maggiore, where Lotto’s altarpiece was located. This is the only altarpiece by Lotto to include a portrait of the patron. There are a few portraits of patrons in his devotional pictures, including Niccolò Bonghi in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22), and the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (cat. 39), in which the two shepherds are surely portraits and probably brothers.

11. Lotto settled in Treviso for two periods, c. 1503–1506 and c. 1542–1545 (and possibly a brief time in 1531–1532); in Bergamo, north of Milan but part of the Venetian territory during this period, between 1512–1513 and 1525; in the northern half of the Marches (an area that maintained close economic ties with Venice by means of shipping on the Adriatic) from 1506–1508, c. 1511–1512, c. 1532–1540, and finally between 1549 and his death in 1556 or 1557. The only documented exception to this pattern of residing within the Venetian sphere of influence was his sojourn in Rome, where he was working in the papal apartments of Julius II in 1509. Lotto decided to leave Treviso in December 1545 because he could not make enough money there to support himself (will of 1546 as reproduced in *Libro* 1969, 302). A careful reading of his account book confirms that the period 1542–1545 was likely the least successful of his career. Despite his illness for two months in 1546, the account book suggests that his business improved in Venice between 1546 and 1549.

12. Such accommodations were provided by three convents for which Lotto was executing altarpieces. The San Domenico commission in Recanati of 1505–1508, the commission for the Saint Antoninus altarpiece at Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, in 1526, and the *Assumption of the Virgin* for the high altar of the convent church of San Francesco alle Scale in Ancona in 1549–1550.

13. The first to point out the involvement of Bramante was Oldfield, *Omaggio*, 1984, 22–23.

14. As I have discussed elsewhere, the wording of the account book entries in 1540–1541 makes it clear that Lotto was restarting the altarpiece for the Dominicans. Aikema’s (1989, 127–140) attempt to relate the meaning of the image to a prior of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Sisto de Medici, mentioned by Lotto in an account book entry in March 1542, presupposes that Sisto was the patron of the altarpiece, but there is no evidence that this was the case. Sisto was not prior in either 1524–1525 when the altarpiece was originally started, nor in 1540 when the project was resumed. He was prior in 1541, and his term expired between March and May of 1542 (Archivo di Stato, Venice, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Reg. C-1524, fols. 89v and ff, and 96v for the election of the new prior 12 May 1542). Lotto’s reference to Sisto was a standard way of referring to a conventual chapter as the friars and the prior, and there is no reason to believe that the conventual chapter was not the patron of the altarpiece.

15. Modern writers have misunderstood Ludovico Dolce’s criticism of certain aspects of the style of Lotto’s altarpiece in Dolce’s *Dialogo di pittura* written in the 1550s and published in Venice in 1557; see Dolce 1557, 1958 ed., 154. Dolce was writing to bolster the reputation of Titian as the prince of painters, and he was celebrating Titian’s dramatic impasto style and sensual rendering of flesh that had become a hallmark of his style by midcentury. Dolce used hindsight to criticize Lotto’s rendering of flesh in a painting that was then thirty years old, and he ignored the most beautiful aspect of the painting, its very Venetian landscape (which Vasari singled out for praise). Whether or not Dolce’s criticisms were relevant, they should not be taken as a commentary on Lotto’s place in Venice three decades earlier.

16. Certainly there are altarpieces for which all records have been lost. The issue of the market for pictures from 1520 to c. 1550 in Venice has not been explored sufficiently. For a partial listing of altarpieces produced in Venice up to 1530 (which also includes works for out-of-town destinations), see Humfrey 1993, chap. 3.

17. For one such letter regarding his activity, dated 8 December 1528, see Cortesi Bosco 1987, 2: 20 no. 26.
18. Vasari wrote in his expanded biography of Lotto in the second (1568) edition of *Lives*, that there were many pictures (“quadri”) and portraits by Lotto in the houses of Venetian gentlemen. In the seventeenth century, Ridolfi (1648, 1914 ed., 1: 188) mentioned pictures by Lotto in the houses of two patrician families, the Grimani and the Gussoni, and described a night-time nativity among the “many works” by Lotto in Venice.
19. Cortesi Bosco 1987, 2: 14 no. 15.
20. Christiansen 1986, 166–173.
21. The case of Bonghi and his neighbors is exemplary. Bonghi rented a house to Lotto on the piazza of the church of San Michele al Pozzo Bianco. He lived in the same neighborhood as the della Torre family, who commissioned a portrait from Lotto, and the Suardi family, who were very prominent in civic and religious organizations in Bergamo and who were involved in at least three of Lotto’s commissions. In 1521–1523, Battista Suardi was an official of the Confraternity of the Santissimo Corpo di Cristo in the church of San Michele al Pozzo Bianco that commissioned a fresco cycle from Lotto in 1525, and both Suardi and Bonghi were members of another confraternity in the same church. Lotto also frescoed a private oratory for the Suardi family, and Battista furnished him with ideas for the intarsia project at Santa Maria della Misericordia, where Battista had served as the president of the consorzio that employed Lotto. The relationships extended even further. For some family networks and their relationships to institutions in Bergamo, see Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980; Cortesi Bosco 1981; Barbieri 1991, 63–99.
22. He expanded his patron networks from his bases in Recanati and Jesi to Loreto, Ancona, Cingoli, Osimo, Monte San Giusto, and Fermo.
23. A painter could and did have problems with a patron even when protected by a contract, but he was much more likely to receive his money in the end. Lotto wrote a threatening letter to the town council of Cingoli in 1539, demanding the rest of the payment owed for a finished altarpiece, *Virgin of the Rosary*, and threatened to appeal to the papal legate of the Marches. Although no contract for this altarpiece is extant, there likely was one (the letter refers to an agreement “il patto sano nostro”), and there is no mention of the business in Lotto’s account book, which in combination suggests that Lotto received his money. (Although the first entry in that book is dated 1538, there are no other entries dated before 1540.) See Aikema 1981, 450–451.
24. *Libro* 1969, 337–341, with page references to the text of the account book. Lotto also noted frequently that he received less for a picture than he thought it was worth, but given the lack of any standardized market value, it is difficult to evaluate his claim.
25. For patron difficulties see his letters to Consorzio della Misericordia, Bergamo, reproduced in Cortesi Bosco 1987, 2: 12 no. 11, 21 no. 27. His letters are filled with references to mutual obligation, respect, Christian behavior, trust, and honesty. When Lotto completed a portrait for a patron in Treviso in 1542, he wrote in his account book that he had not set a price but that he was sure he would be rewarded because of the honesty that became a gentleman such as his patron; *Libro* 1969, 120. For his sources of income, see two 1530 letters to the Consorzio della Misericordia, Bergamo, in Cortesi Bosco 1987, 2: 22 nos. 30, 31. For the status of painters in sixteenth-century Venice, see Hochmann 1992. Lotto associated with the upper echelons of the artisan world, such as jewelers, and with professionals, such as notaries and lawyers, and with merchants. A typical example is the guest list for the baptism of the son of Giovanni dal Saon, Lotto’s friend in Treviso, which included a lawyer, a doctor, a notary, and two jewelers, in addition to Lotto; *Lorenzo Lotto a Treviso* 1980, 19.
26. *Libro* 1969, 128, 130, 347.



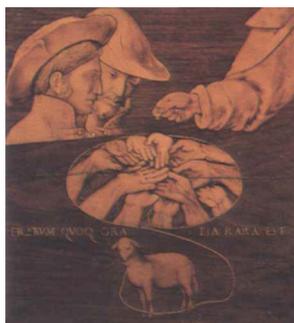
ECCE AGNUS DEI

L. Lotus . 1521 .

The Stories, The Metaphors

BERGAMO, 1520–1525. *Lucina Brembati*, no longer a young woman, faces a difficult pregnancy. Lotto depicts her with symbols—a moonlit night and a marten—that allude to the goddess whose name she bears: Lucina, who in classical mythology is invoked for protection in childbirth (cat. 15).¹ A young couple, *Marsilio Cassotti and His Bride Faustina*, calls us to witness their marriage, along with Cupid holding the yoke of love and the laurel of a lasting union (cat. 21).² Two other, more mature, spouses, in Lotto's *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25), have endured a difficult moment—the stormy landscape—which they have overcome by associating themselves with the virtues and qualities of the faithful dog, the far-sighted and industrious squirrel, and the elegant, honorific carpet³ (for other interpretations of these portraits, see the individual catalogue entries).

Later, leaving Bergamo for Venice and Treviso, Lotto paints a story in *Portrait of a Young Man* (cat. 31), which tells of a disappointment in love—indicated by the letter and ring among faded petals, and the cold green lizard—that has led the young man to turn from the courtly entertainments of music and hunting—the lute and horn—to seek concrete distraction in commerce—the binding of his book reveals it to be an accounts ledger, and the most imposing presence in the room is the safe with its keys.⁴ Lotto also depicts the story of *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28), the owner of a renowned collection of antiquities, who would have had his own reasons to be portrayed amid objects that did not belong to his collection but point instead to the idea of fertility, both male and female (Diana of Ephesus, Venus, Hercules); we know that Odoni never had the child he so desperately desired and invoked.⁵ There are also the stories of Mercurio Bua (cat. 42), told by Bua's gaze, more exhausted than melancholy, and his hand lying heavily on the skull among faded flowers (fig. 1),⁶ and that of a still-unidentified *Gentleman* (Galleria Doria Pamphilj,



Rome) sustained in his grief by a well-balanced self-control that is achieved through the love of wisdom.⁷ Both men are widowers, who wear along with their own wedding rings (on their little fingers, for obvious reasons of size) those of their dead wives (fig. 2).

Contrary to the traditional fifteenth- or sixteenth-century portrait, in which the occupation or role of the sitter is defined, in Lotto's extraordinary portraits the symbols, attributes, objects, and environments provide a corollary of information characterizing the subjects in a highly individual fashion, because they are drawn from a figurative synthesis of real moments in each sitter's life: marriage and births, illnesses and occasions of mourning, efficiency and honesty in administration, well-being and organization of the house, commitment in job and politics, constancy in prescribed devotions—in sum, the economic, moral, and religious values of the institution of the family. Lotto's subjects make up a rare gallery of affections and griefs, illusions and disillusion, infinite desires, isolated for a brief moment in the space and culture of the sixteenth-century city before the great European states managed to destroy its identity, and represented for a brief moment in the space and culture of the "city" portrait, before the official "state" portrait managed to impose the model of men without affections and distinguishing characteristics.

In order to discover their identities and their stories, both individual and collective, we must assemble a complete case study, drawn from the sum of numerous surveys of well-defined situations that we must recombine within a solid contextual framework, piecing together the meaningful elements that can be inferred from neglected images, unexplored city archives, and the artist's *Libro di spese* (account book).⁸ This will allow us to recover the portrait as a fully conscious memoir of a past that still belongs to us, rather than as a generic souvenir of a culture that is misunderstood and dis-



fig. 1. Detail of cat. 42



fig. 2. Detail of cat. 42

persed. These persons, with these faces and these difficult, minimal lives, asked the painter for images of devotion, reassurance, and compensation *sub specie aeternitatis*, sometimes even requesting that their portraits be included (for example, Elisabetta Rota with her book of meditations in *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* [cat. 17],⁹ or Niccolò Bonghi in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* [cat. 22],¹⁰ set in his own house, where he has offered Mary the best chair). More often, though, they stay out of the scene and entrust—when we are lucky—the name, the intention, and the various traces of the life lived to documents. Our pictorial genres, artificially separated, can be perused and reconnected through biography.¹¹

Madonna and Child with Saints Jerome, Peter, Clare (?), and Francis (cat. 1) is organized symmetrically by mirrored actions and gestures around the solid center created by the ample figure of the Virgin. Jerome presents a prophet's scroll. The Child grabs it nervously, reads it rapidly, and is frightened by what he sees there. Mary holds him firmly with one hand because he risks falling, too soon, from the safety of her lap. With her other hand Mary makes another gesture to protect the Child and ward off his martyrdom: she politely but firmly pushes away the hand of Francis, whose tunic has a tear to indicate his wound that "imitates" and represents the sacrifice of the cross. Together, Jerome and Francis "remind" the Virgin and child of the Passion, causing expressions of sadness and dismay to cross their faces. Clare folds her arms across her breast like a cross. Saint Peter, with his enormous book and massive keys, is a secondary presence

without an apparent role in the play of gestures set up by his fellow saints: he is the image of the prince of the Church called back to witness the Passion of Christ and the exemplary value of its imitation. On the hill, the green trees have been cut down prematurely, and the scene behind the curtain (echoing what is written in Luke 23: 28–31) is a metaphor for the martyrdom announced in the foreground by more than one voice.¹²

Lotto, signing his painting on the back of the scroll that bears the prophetic message, indicates his own personal submission to that destiny, his personal acceptance of that law—in short, his personal experience of contemplation and imitation. He would repeat this solution more than once by signing thrones and seats of numerous sad Madonnas, such as that in the extraordinary *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with Saints* (cat. 26), in which the Madonna sees the future as she leafs through Jerome's book, while the Child is distracted with Catherine in reciprocal pledges of love;¹³ the wheel on which Catherine was tortured in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) and the *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (cat. 19); the tomb in the *Entombment* (Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi); the cross in *Christ Carrying the Cross* (cat. 27); the letter in *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* (cat. 17); the coffins destined for the Child or the altar/table holding them in *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Nicholas of Tolentino* (cat. 24), *Holy Family with Saints* (National Gallery, London), *Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Catherine* (cat. 18), and *Revelation of the Child to Saint Catherine* (private collection, and a 1533 version [cat. 37]); Joseph's car-

penter's joint in the *Nativity* (cat. 20; fig. 3);¹⁴ Mary's footstool in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22); and the prayer bench in the *Annunciation* (cat. 40).

The signatures are declarations of full responsibility for Lotto's choice of metaphors. And the metaphors are varied. Some have a solid tradition behind them (but reworked with an emphasis taken to extremes, sudden swerves, and disorienting compositions); some are known only in a minor or marginal way. At times they display a surprising inventiveness, but the meaningful detail is always entrusted with a maniacal semiotic precision and crystalline conceptual organization that gives the whole a singular appearance of communicative simplicity. For his recurrent "guiding" theme, indicated by innumerable signals of precognition, preannouncement, and prefiguration of the Passion (already a securely rooted custom, to be sure, but one that used semiotically repetitive signs, as is apparent in the many examples of the Madonna and child by Bellini or Cima or Montagna),¹⁵ Lotto calls forth an astounding display of carefully chosen signals that he regularly presents in iconographical contexts or compositional layouts that are renewed or completely original.

The signed coffins, for example, are *small*. They are not *for the future* and Christ the adult but *for the present* and Christ the child. They are not for a historical representation but a conceptual prefiguration, not for the narration of an episode but meditation on a model. In the composition exemplified by the paintings of the Virgin and child in London, Boston, and Costa di Mezzate (cats. 24, 18), the Child is placed on a large funerary cushion, the cushion is on top of a small coffin, and the coffin is on the sacrificial table.¹⁶ In the first two, Jerome, who already has a cross, complete with the effigy of the crucified Christ, is on the left; Nicholas of Tolentino, on

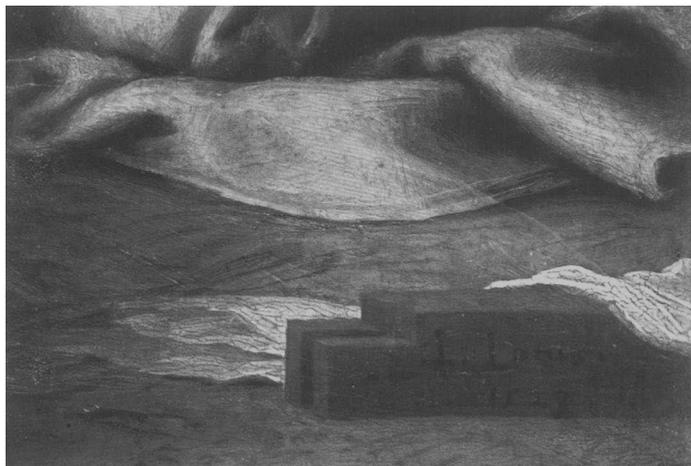


fig. 3. Detail of cat. 20

the other side, brings his arms to his chest in the sign of a cross and in so doing frightens the Child, who shrinks back into his mother's arms. In the third, John the Baptist is present, his cross and scroll announcing the sacrifice of the Lamb, and the Child recoils from Catherine because she has a squirrel, which from Pliny to Vincent de Beauvais has been credited with having the power to predict storms.¹⁷ In the 1529 and 1533 paintings with Saint Catherine (cat. 37), the sleeping Child, lying on a larger chest or coffin, is directly unveiled and revealed to her as an example for meditation and imitation.

Let us turn to the crosses. In the *Madonna Adoring the Child with Saints* (cat. 7), the desperate young John the Baptist points with his cross to the Christ child immersed in a deep and anything but serene sleep. In addition to Catherine and her wheel, there is also Francis with his stigmata, which presuppose identical wounds on the body of Christ. In the *Nativity* (cat. 20), the Child, who is lying in a basket, and not directly on straw but on a white sheet, stretches his arms up toward Mary who folds hers across her chest in the form of a cross. Joseph is affectionately sad; already above him is a large crucifix. In the *Holy Family* of c. 1536–1537 (cat. 43), the Christ child once again is squirming on a white winding sheet and stretches his arms toward the cross, held at the bottom by the left hand of the young Saint John, and at the top by Elizabeth's right hand; Zachary's right hand stretches out and almost touches it. In the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (cat. 39), the Child, in his usual position with his usual accessories, has already grasped—along with the head of the patient lamb—his destiny as a sacrifice; the cross is inscribed in the window and spotlighted by a supernatural star or a wholly natural moon.

The constant themes in the work of Lorenzo Lotto are the imitation of Christ and our redemption through his Passion and blood, scorn for the world, the ascetic experience, and the contemplative life. Sometimes these are accompanied by criticism of church hierarchy and praise for the individual search, for personal refinement: Jerome, whether penitent hermit or scholar, is the protagonist of paintings made for public and private devotions;¹⁸ Peter is often a secondary or distracted character (for example, in the *Santa Cristina* altarpiece of 1504–1506),¹⁹ except when he gives up his keys to hold the nails of the cross (*Entombment* of 1512).²⁰ Thus, we should not be surprised that this rigidly individualistic *spiritual* painter (as revealed in his letters to the Consorzio della Misericordia in Bergamo²¹ and his account book) progressively lost touch with the needs of a patronage that was increasingly controlled and disciplined, and paid for his inadequacy with a slow but inexorable failure in terms of moti-

ventions and realizations, of prestige and financial success. We should not be too surprised that this man, sensitive to an intimate and meditative form of religion, established relationships of friendship—of material and intellectual solidarity—with persons of unequivocal reform tendencies,²² at least as long as they conserved rights of citizenship and of tolerance in Italian territory. But he did this without giving himself over to a specific formation or allowing a label to be pasted onto him (and let us hope that the time is now past for posthumous labels, of forced adherence to or enrollment in a confession or party), without renouncing the credit he had earned with unexceptionable ecclesiastical patrons and devout citizens nor the remaining guarantees of an artistic skill beyond any form of criticism. Because this *spiritual* person was not a politician or a priest, not a theologian or a preacher, but was learned, well-informed, curious, and by profession a painter.

Over time, he had created for himself a highly refined culture of text and hypertext, an impressive instrument of figurative rhetoric, an emotionally moving language. He maintained, as long as was possible, an intermediate position, which, when faced with an increasingly rigid religious discipline and the radical choice between assent and dissent, took the form of a search for mediation, a call to reconciliation. He painted a triple portrait of his friend Bartolomeo Carpan (cat. 33), a jeweler from Treviso who was later denounced and put on trial,²³ but in the Saint Lucy altarpiece he places Carpan in the front row among the persecutors who try in vain to budge the unmovable Christian virgin (cats. 34, 35). In all probability he quite willingly furnished another friend, publisher Lucantonio Giunta, with some designs for the frontispiece of Antonio Brucioli's Bible (1532).²⁴ Brucioli, a scholar of immense learning and astonishing productivity who produced an Italian translation of the Holy Scriptures, was an advocate of a religion spread and meditated through individual experience of the text, which—according to an exceptional witness, Pietro Aretino—led him to be exposed to the gossip of ignorant, envious monks who “molested with the slanderous accusation of ‘Lutherans’ the most honest and the most Christian.”²⁵ When the painter noted in his *Libro* on 17 October 1540 the little portraits of Martin Luther and his wife for Mario d'Arman,²⁶ he had just finished celebrating the Dominican rosary in the Cingoli altarpiece and was preparing to celebrate Dominican charity in the altarpiece for Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.

If we wish to find a concluding manifesto for the position of Lorenzo Lotto, we must look for it in the badly

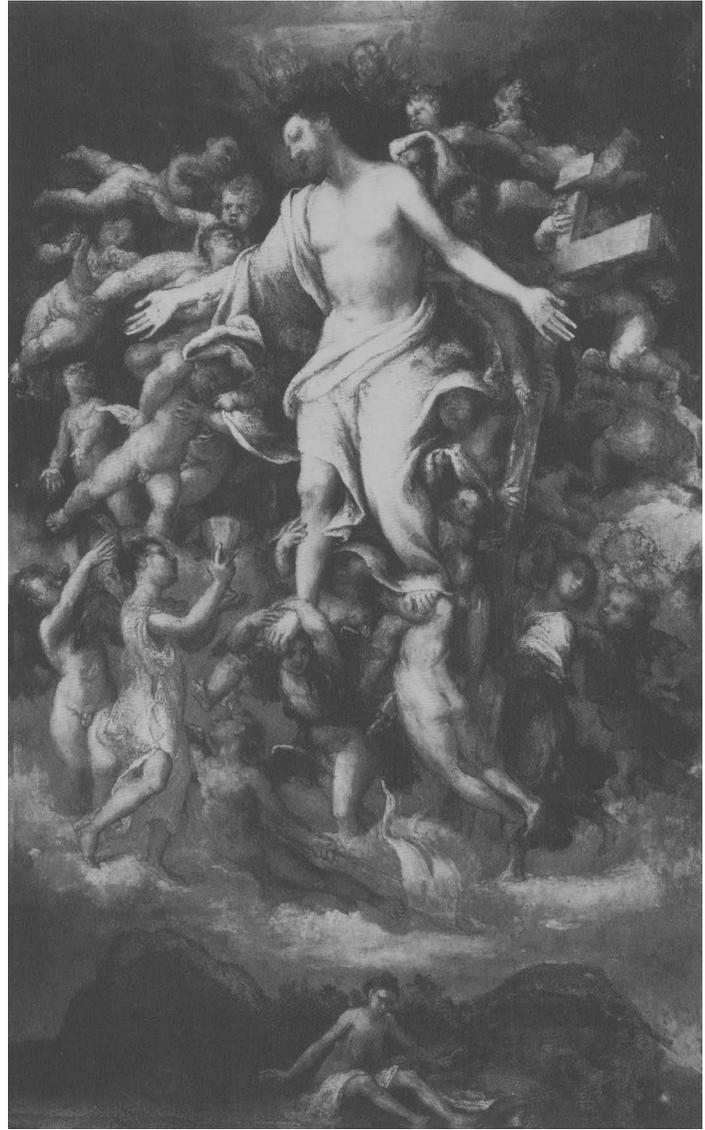


fig. 4. Lotto, *Glory of the Redeemer*, 1543, oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

preserved and not greatly admired *Glory of the Redeemer*, of 1543 (fig. 4).²⁷ Christ, who originally was bleeding, is amid a heavenly cloud of angels, between cross and chalice, hovering above a shriveled woman, the image of a desolate mankind who sees reflected in the mirror her own verified vanity and the hoped-for vision of redemption. After having rendered so many services to so many different biographies, the metaphor in the end becomes the instrument of the extreme autobiography, reuniting the theology of glory with the theology of the cross in the universe of figured and prefiguring desire—before war breaks out, before the bonfires are lit, before the scholar is reduced to poverty and silence, before the jeweler is called to answer his charges, before the painter of so many gardens of contemplation hides himself from the world until the moment of his last solitary walk.

1. Gentili 1989, 155–181.
2. Van Hall 1976, 292–297; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 342–344; Gentili 1989, 155–156; Gentili 1995, 101.
3. Di Tanna, “Bestiario,” 1990, 44–50; Cortesi Bosco 1993, 336–349.
4. Gentili 1981, 420–421.
5. Coli 1989, 183–204.
6. Ricciardi 1989, 85–106.
7. Grabski 1981, 387–390; Gentili 1981, 421–422; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 340–349; Ricciardi 1993, 315–324.
8. *Libro* 1969.
9. Colalucci 1991, 27–61; Massi 1991, 103–119.
10. Di Tanna, “Nozze,” 1990, 58–67.
11. Polignano 1989, 211–225.
12. Gentili 1985, 105–114.
13. Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 342–344.
14. Colalucci 1990, 71–88.
15. Goffen 1975, 499–505; Goffen 1989, 23–66; Gentili 1991, 33–36, 45–57.
16. Goffen 1978, 34–41.
17. Di Tanna, “Bestiario,” 1990, 47–50.
18. Gentili 1985, 97–104 (on Jerome in the San Zaccaria altarpiece by Bellini and the Santa Cristina altarpiece by Lotto), 105–109 (on Jerome in *Madonna and Child with Saints*, cat. 1), 129–132 (on the 1506 *Saint Jerome*, cat. 6), and 162–183 (on the c. 1509 and 1515 *Saint Jeromes*, cats. 8, 11, in the Venetian context of writings and images of Jerome between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries).
19. Gentili 1985, 104.
20. Gentili 1985, 194–195.
21. Chiodi 1968; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 2: 7–26.
22. Fontana 1981, 279–297; Fontana 1984, 359–362.
23. Fontana 1984, 359–360.
24. This certainly does not mean that he actually made the frontispiece, even more so as there is no trace or piece of information indicating that he was competent in the difficult and specialized technique of woodcutting. The attribution, never explained and supported by cogent art historical arguments, has been nevertheless spread and used as evidence to support a supposed adherence of the painter to an unidentified philo-Protestant group: Romano 1976, 82–91; Cali 1981, 257–258; Fontana 1981, 287–288; Cali 1983, 49–52; Tafuri 1985, 95; Prosperi 1988, 584. For a different approach to this problem and some documented clarification, see Gentili, *Artibus*, 1983, 77–93; Gentili 1985, 209–226; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 160–163, 175.
25. Aretino to Brucioli, 7 November 1537; Aretino 1960, 276.
26. *Libro* 1969, 212.
27. At one time the figure was bleeding but that has been bleached clean by an old restoration. Lotto (*Libro* 1969, 56) describes the painting as “un trionpho del Salvator Yesu in atto del sacramento sparger el sangue in aria con molti anzoleti” (a triumph of Jesus the Savior in the act of the sacrament scattering his blood through the air with many little angels).



The Portraits

LORENZO LOTTO'S EARLIEST KNOWN devotional picture, the *Virgin and Child with Saint Peter Martyr* of 1503 (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples), announces his deep affinity for portraiture even though the portrait of his patron, Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi of Treviso, that it once contained was later replaced by an infant Saint John the Baptist. The head of Saint Peter Martyr is so much like a portrait that we are tempted to believe an actual person, perhaps a Dominican priest of Lotto's acquaintance, served as its model. The concrete immediacy of this head renders all the more disturbing Lotto's unusually graphic image of martyrdom—a realistic meat cleaver embedded in the saint's skull jolts our sensibilities; moreover, this close-up of brutal martyrdom in a devotional painting for private use is unusual at this date and conveys Lotto's intensely personalized religious sentiments. From the beginning, then, Lotto's saints appear to be portraits of people he knew, whereas most painters either idealized or stereotyped their models, or even updated saint types inherited from older traditions recorded in workshop model books.¹

Lotto also combined portraiture with devotional painting by inserting portraits of donors as onlookers or participants in biblical scenes. In *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* of 1521 (cat. 17), the wife of one of Lotto's important Bergamasque patrons is portrayed with her small dog.² The *Adoration of the Shepherds* (cat. 39), probably from Lotto's second period in the Marches during the 1530s, is a devotional picture in which two brothers, recently identified as members of the noble Baglioni family from Perugia, are disguised as awestruck adoring shepherds—their true social status recognizable from the aristocratic clothing that can be glimpsed beneath their rustic tunics.

Lotto's originality as a portrait painter was demonstrated during his first Treviso period, 1503–1506, by two



independent portraits. *Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi* (cat. 2) has always impressed viewers as a tour de force of character portrayal and geometric solidity and monumentality surprisingly comparable to Raphael's contemporary portraits, having the added originality of an allegorical landscape depicted on its cover (cat. 3). This and a second portrait cover (cat. 5) display the remarkable convergence of landscape with portraiture at this precocious stage of the painter's career, when he experimented with elaborating his exterior definitions of sitters' identities by encapsulating aspects such as personal history, values, choices, ambitions, virtues, or hopes within narratives set in enchanted landscapes.

The unidentified subject of Lotto's earliest surviving portrait of a woman (cat. 4) fixes the viewer with an even, detached gaze that, although it conveys a sense of the woman's seriousness, stolidity, and dignity, is almost impenetrable. Yet the small indentations at the corners of her mouth might be hints of feeling—perhaps signs of exasperation or impatience—as if the experience of sitting for a portrait was alien to her cultural expectations.³ An uncanny aura of individuality is communicated by this unidealized, even unflattering, image of a woman.

Lotto's genius as a portrait painter is nowhere more apparent than in *Youth with a Lamp* (fig. 1). Although the date of this portrait is disputed, stylistic and morphological similarities to figures in Lotto's Recanati polyptych of 1508 have induced some critics to assign it that approximate date. Others have compared its harmonious geometrically based composition to Raphael's early portraits and even to those of the 1510s, with the implication that either Lotto became aware of Raphael's early work in 1508, or the Vienna portrait dates from a bit later.⁴ The youth's figure, clothed in velvety black, forms a pyramid with the circular outline of his hat as its apex. Strong, balanced compositions are typical of Lotto,



fig. 1. Lotto, *Youth with a Lamp*, c. 1506, oil on panel. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

even when subsequently the poses became more dynamic (see cats. 28, 38, 47).

The crisp contours and the carefully observed play of light and shadow focus attention on the face—its meticulously rendered flesh, the long nose with its delicate highlights, the slightly parted lips, and the eyes with their hypnotically penetrating stare. The impression of immediacy, of unmediated directness, is so strong that it is as if an actual person rather than a constructed simulacrum returns our gaze—as if a subliminal veil protecting the private inner being of the portrayed subject has been torn away.

The brocade curtain and its unusual white color are important in creating such a powerful illusion. As its folds and shadows guide our exploration of the picture, it pushes the young man's body forward into our space, while a thin green binding, nearly vertical, leads our eye toward the unobtrusive small lamp and its snuffer on a shelf in the picture's upper right corner. Considering that this portrait is relatively early, the degree of control it exerts over the viewer's perceptual experience of each and every pictorial element that operates within it is striking.

The *Youth with a Lamp* is the earliest known instance of Lotto's incorporation of a symbolic *impresa* within a portrait proper (compare cats. 2, 4).⁵ The burning flame is an *impresa* that stands for some crucial aspect of the sitter or of his life situation. Lotto represented the burning lamp, not as a natural attribute depicted in the same naturalistic style as the youth, but abstractly in a way that alludes to its existence in a mental rather than a physical realm. Scholars have compared Lotto's symbols to hieroglyphs, and, indeed, it was at just this time that Egyptian hieroglyphs were first being studied.⁶

The implication of a dark space continuing behind the curtain adds to the air of mystery. Is what lies hidden behind the curtain a metaphor for an unknown realm after death, implying that the portrait is a memorial? Since the flame can also stand for positive values such as life, wisdom, divine love, and searching for truth, the hypothesis of funerary significance cannot be sustained on the evidence of the picture itself. Adding to the puzzle is the youth's pained expression, which projects tension, anxiety, and perhaps suspicion—an expression alien to Venetian painted portraiture of the early sixteenth century that has occasioned the imputation to Lotto of a kind of protomodernity. According to one reconstruction, the portrait is a triumphant declaration of mortal danger having been overcome—the candle continues to burn despite the lurking snuffer. This explanation, advanced by Augusto Gentili, harmonizes seemingly incompatible elements—the young man's expression becomes comprehensible; yet neither the sitter's identity nor the date Gentili proposes is convincing.⁷

Lotto's response to Giorgione (c. 1478–1510), who had profoundly altered the premises of Venetian painting during his brief career, was complex and at first appeared minimal.⁸ During the decade that preceded Giorgione's death his revolutionary tonal painting and *sfumato* held no interest for Lotto, who never followed in the footsteps of Venetian contemporaries who sought to blur the outlines of figures and objects as if a humid atmosphere enveloped them. Of the works belonging to Lotto's 1503–1506 residence in Treviso, only his small, frontal close-up *Portrait of a Young Man* (fig. 2) betrays close attention to Giorgione's portraiture, for example, the latter's *Portrait of a Young Man* (fig. 3). In Lotto's portrait, unfathomable yet hypnotically alluring depths of the handsome sitter's thoughtful and sensitive psyche are evoked by a masterful rendering of his huge, wide-open dark eyes with their ineffable expressiveness that yet permits no exact characterization of emotional content. The two portraits are more alike than is apparent at first glance; X-radiographs

of Lotto's portrait have revealed an underlying head in three-quarter profile that is rather close to the head in Giorgione's portrait.⁹

As creators of new meaning for landscape, which at the time was not yet an independent pictorial genre in Italy, Lotto and Giorgione were proceeding in parallel directions. Executed in 1505 and conceivably as early as 1504, Lotto's allegorical landscape covers (cats. 3, 5) joined landscape painting to the definition of identity in portraiture in a fashion that recalls few precedents in painting other than Piero della Francesca's double-sided portraits *Federigo da Montefeltro* and *Battista Sforza* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence). Because both employ ambiguous and polysemous imagery, Lotto's portrait covers can be compared to Giorgione's approximately contemporaneous *Tempesta* (fig. 4), even though the latter is less indebted to the traditional *paysage moralisé* with its readily decipherable moral allegory. Giorgione's poetic compression and condensation reflect a more literary and syncretistic sensibility than can be found in Lotto's landscape vignettes.¹⁰

Later Lotto experimented with Giorgione's invention of "the turning portrait" and the related but more generalized

"interrupted action portrait."¹¹ Lotto seized upon Giorgione's device of using the viewer's act of observing the portrait as the motivation for a surprised or resentful pose or expression that turns the painting into an illusion of a dramatic interaction with something external to itself.¹² The sitter in *Man Holding a Glove* (fig. 5) reacts angrily. The wrenching swivel of his head, as he glares with bloodshot eyes over his shoulder at the intrusive viewer, communicates bilious rage. In positing such an interaction between the painted artifact and the living spectator, the portrait develops the potential for immediacy and drama that was inherent in Giorgione's invention.¹³ The *Portrait of a Nobleman* of c. 1525 (fig. 6) presents a man whose wealth and status are conspicuously announced by the richness and high fashion of his costume and his gold chain and sword. He raises a hand in salutation or farewell, outlined against a sky whose shade of blue Lotto appropriated as his own, achieving a gesture of such imperious potency that the implicit theatricality of the portrait's underlying conception is taken to a new extreme.¹⁴

It is instructive to compare Lotto's adaptation of new, more animated portrait types to Titian's. In *Portrait of a Man* of c. 1511–1512 (also known as *Man with a Blue Sleeve*)

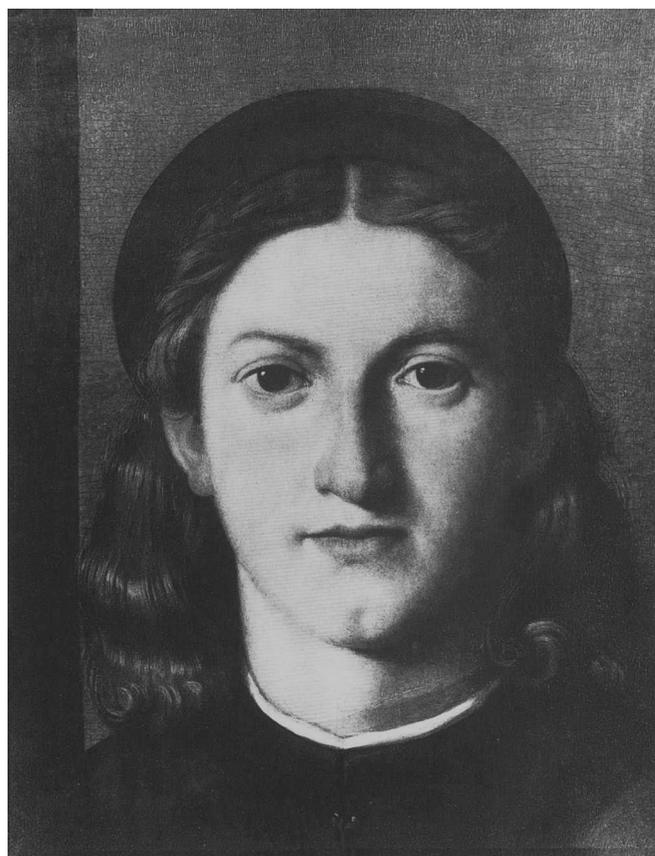


fig. 2. Lotto, *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1505–1506, oil on panel. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

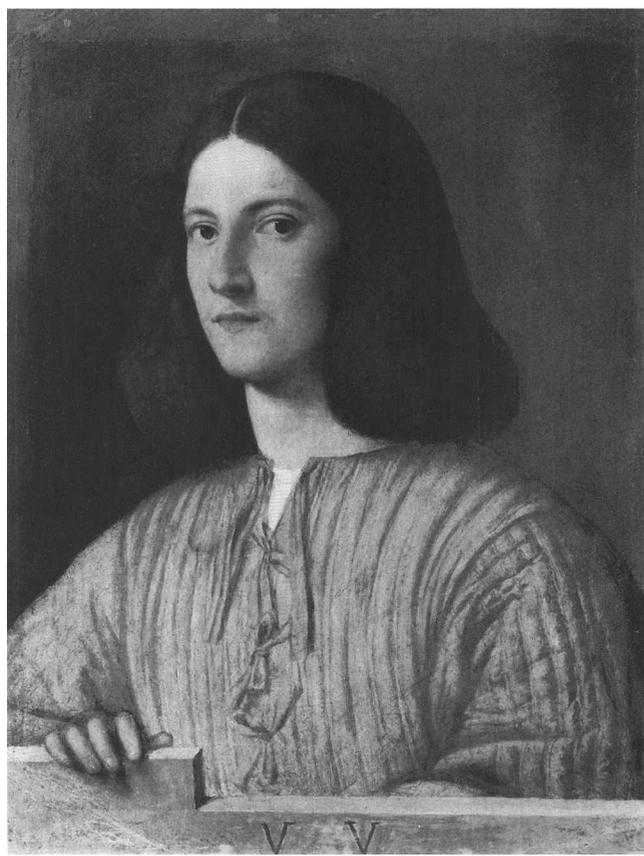


fig. 3. Giorgione, *Portrait of a Young Man (Giustiniani portrait)*, oil on canvas. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz

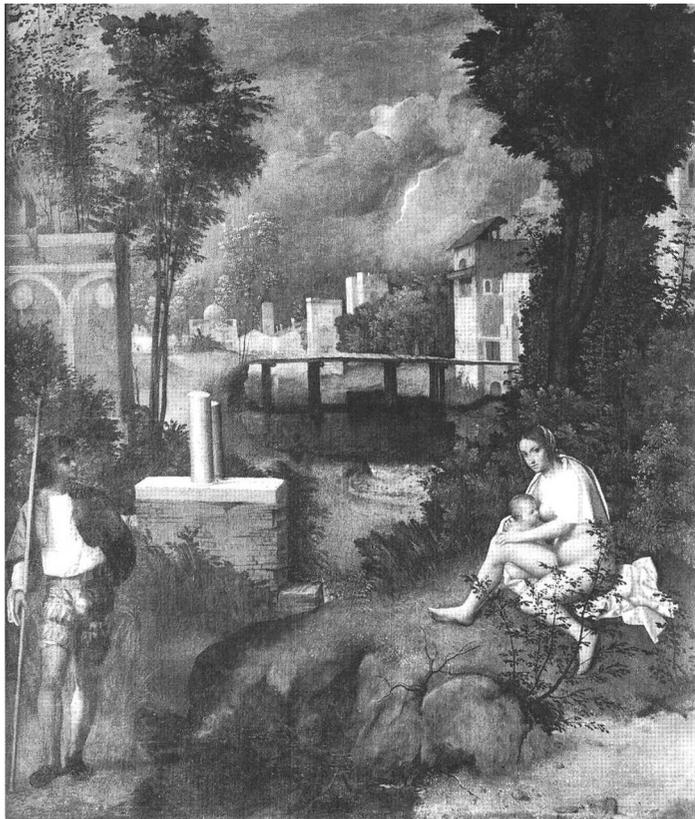


fig. 4. Giorgione, *Tempesta*, oil on canvas. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

(fig. 7), Titian slows down the viewer–portrait interaction by encouraging the eye to linger over the sleeve’s luxurious opulence of texture and color.¹⁵ The sleeve becomes a spectacular prologue to the fur-trimmed cloak, fine linen *camicia*, and, indeed, to the handsome head. The sitter, a man of mature years, turns toward us just a little, and his oblique glance conveys only mild curiosity. His obvious wealth and high social status are communicated in a manner very different from that of Lotto’s Bergamasque patron in *Portrait of a Nobleman*. Instead of a commanding gesture, Titian endows the Venetian patrician with an air of aloofness and aristocratic reserve, with which the painter sympathizes and which he will emulate with a success unmatched by any other Venetian painter.¹⁶ Titian shifts the emphasis away, not only from the possibilities of the Giorgionesque “action portrait,” but from the equally Giorgionesque (via Leonardo) portrayal of an inner state, a process of thought, feeling, or mood, of which, after Giorgione, Lotto became the Cinquecento master. In this early portrait, moreover, Titian’s inventive and technical brilliance vies for the viewer’s attention with the sitter’s personality, which remains to a great extent hidden.¹⁷

The portraits that won Lotto undisputed distinction in the history of European portraiture date for the most part

from his periods of residence in Bergamo (1513–1525) and Venice (1525–1533). His two conjugal portraits of Bergamasque patrons, the first of their kind in Italy, enriched this type by a remarkable array of symbols, some of which are obviously related to contemporary beliefs about marriage but others of which have proved much more resistant to interpretation. The smirk on the face of the cupid who joins Marsilio Cassotti to his bride Faustina with a symbolic yoke as Marsilio is about to place a ring on her finger—and in this detail traditional marriage portraiture is conflated with an action portrait—represents an overt intrusion of Lotto’s quirky humor into a context and genre that was normally unequivocally serious (cat. 21).¹⁸ On the precisely observed Turkish carpet in Lotto’s *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25), a sleeping squirrel occupies the center of a circle of gestures. That seemingly incongruous animal, as well as the motto “Homo nunquam” on the sheet of paper the man holds, represent the incorporation of a traditional *impresa*—body (or visual image) and soul (verbal motto)—within the picture itself, as if they were natural objects, yet it is clear (even assuming some squirrels could be tamed as pets) that they do belong to a different symbolic realm, which requires decoding.

For these conjugal portraits, Lotto adopted a new format, a rectangle that is a very slight bit wider than it is high and yet *appears* much wider than it really is, so that the

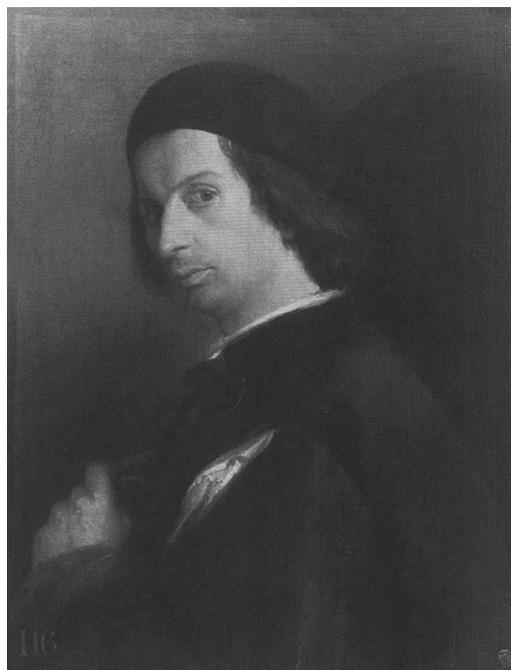


fig. 5. Lotto, *Portrait of a Man Holding a Glove*, oil on canvas. Hampton Court Palace. © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



fig. 6. Lotto, *Portrait of a Nobleman*, c. 1525, oil on canvas. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Hanna Fund, 1950.250

terms “horizontal” or “broad” format have been applied to it. Around this time he also began to create and to emphasize characteristic, defining gestures and more dynamic poses (see *Portrait of a Nobleman* [fig. 6], and cats. 28, 38, 47, 50), as well as a greater profusion of symbolic objects. Sometimes, as in the case of *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28), the objects appear to be fully naturalized furnishings of the sitter’s environment—yet scholars have concluded that the antique sculpture and fragments that surround Odoni like a collector’s prize possessions must be considered an “ideal assemblage” rather than objects he owned.

In Venice, Lotto produced a series of brilliant portraits in which the depth of psychological exploration was unprecedented and the originality of conception, style, and deployment of pictorial resources was unsurpassed (cats. 28, 32, 38; and *Bishop Tommaso Negri*, fig. 8).¹⁹ In his astonishing and wholly unique *Lady as Lucretia* (cat. 38), Lucretia Valier, the lavishly dressed wife of Benedetto Francesco Giuseppe Pesaro, asserts her chastity at the time of her January 1533 marriage by a provocative, confrontational stare and a vigorous, sweeping gesture, at the time more characteristic of a man than of a woman. An equally extraordinary portrait of a woman, probably dating to the late 1520s, appears unexpectedly as the head of Lotto’s *Venus in his Venus and Cupid* (Metropoli-



fig. 7. Titian, *Portrait of a Man*, c. 1511–1512, oil on canvas. National Gallery, London

tan Museum of Art, New York). Typically Lottesque is its cornucopia of emblematic symbols, some obviously relating to the painting’s epithalamic function, whereas others are less transparent; the reclining *Venus*, exhibiting simultaneous attraction and repulsion capacities, is the only sixteenth-century painting of this type with a head that gives every appearance of being a portrait. Here we confront a somewhat homely yet oddly charming woman who innocently—or is it coyly—indicates by her gesture the gift of her voluptuous nude body to the intended viewer, her husband.²⁰

Lotto’s *Portrait of a Young Man* (cat. 32), of c. 1526, to my mind the earliest in this series, is arguably the most profound and acute portrayal of the state of melancholy that had ever been created. Its fundamental chiaroscuro drama—a first for Lotto, recalling dark penumbras that had enveloped sitters in earlier portraits by Giorgione and Titian—contrasts the sitter’s pale face and hands, set off by the elaborately ruffled cuffs of his frosty white *camicia*, with the engulfing darkness through which we can barely glimpse the objects hanging on the wall behind him. The darkened palette, in tones of black, brown, and white—the cold blue of the fringed cloth on the table is scarcely an exception—diminishes the potential relief promised by the sliver of sunset landscape framed by the narrow window at the upper left.²¹



fig. 8. Lotto, *Bishop Tommaso Negri*, 1527, oil on panel. Franciscan Convent of Poljud (Split)

Both homage to and competition with his two great contemporaries (although Giorgione had died more than a decade earlier) are suggested by Lotto's foray into tonal painting and the visible impasto in the ruffled cuffs, highly unusual in Lotto's practice, which forcefully directs attention to the man's gestures. For it is these carefully selected and brilliantly represented gestures, their effect heightened by Lotto's placement of the sitter's head high in the picture and by his confecting for the otherwise elegant young man a twisted, awkward stance in relation to the table, a stance which is perceived only gradually after one becomes accustomed to the surrounding darkness, that push this portrayal toward the supreme mastery of psychological naturalism that we recognize it to be. In its protomodernity, Lotto's portrayal of melancholy reaches beyond Giorgione's more romantic images, which implied melancholy's potential as a conduit for divinely inspired creativity (Giorgione's *Self-Portrait as David* in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig) as well as its fusion with a sensuous and erotic mood (Giorgione's *Boy Holding an Arrow* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and *Page Resting His Hand on a Helmet*, three versions).²²

The state of melancholy—or clinical depression as it is now called—renders its victim incapable of action, so that whether the massive tome on the table in front of the young man is meant to represent a philosophical treatise or a business ledger (see cat. 32), the sitter cannot bring himself to engage with it. Although the portrait has been interpreted as a commemoration of the young man's choice of a studious lifestyle after a period of diverting pastimes (alluded

to by the hunting horn and lute hanging behind him), such an interpretation seems to miss the point that the incapacitating effects of melancholy, which prevent the sufferer from either making or carrying out crucial choices, are the overriding subject of the painting.²³ And it is the gestures—one hand loosely holds the unwieldy manuscript while the other listlessly and absentmindedly riffles through its pages—that in their indecisiveness sum up the painting's larger implications concerning the devastating effects of melancholy—even the scattered rose petals, a hoped-for palliative, cannot overcome its ravages.²⁴ The lizard frozen in motionless attention on the table at right, peering up at the hapless human whose heart is also frozen, incorporates an *impresa*-like symbol as if the cold-blooded creature could, at first glance, like the squirrel in Lotto's *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25), be mistaken for a household pet.²⁵

In *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28), another universally acknowledged masterpiece in a format that is commonly termed "horizontal" even though the dimensions hardly depart from a square, Lotto enlarged upon the older varieties of action portrait while rendering exceptionally penetrating "the look out of the picture" that directly engages and even challenges the viewer (compare cats. 4, 15, 21, 22, 25, 46, 47, 50). Odoni, by gesturing toward us with his right arm, his hand grasping a statuette of Diana of the Ephesians, while holding his left hand against his heart in the well-understood "sincerity gesture," demands that the viewer respond. His level searching gaze—lacking any hint of melancholy or anger (as a recent cleaning now permits us to realize)—seeks our answering gaze and our personal answer to the choice he poses.

The present exhibition offers the opportunity for major reinterpretation of this painting, which has been most often discussed from the perspective of problems posed by the antique sculpture and fragments surrounding Odoni, pieces that thanks to the efforts of Lars Olof Larsson and others (see cat. 28) are now securely identified. *Odoni* has more recently come to be regarded as a portrait of a collector who values nature more highly than art and invites the onlooker to share this view, following the logic of contrasting the symbolism of the Diana statuette with the ethos of collecting classical antiquities. Until very recently, however, the one detail that now promises to unlock the true meaning of Odoni's gesture and the inscrutability of his gaze has been obscured by mistaken restoration. Despite the presence of this feature in a seventeenth-century engraving, not until the 1996 cleaning treatment by Rupert Featherstone was this crucial iconographic element recovered: the gold crucifix that Odoni holds between his left thumb and forefinger directly over his heart.²⁶

Odoni is presenting the viewer with a choice between false pagan religions of classical antiquity and true Christianity.

Andrea Odoni may well testify to a connection between Lotto and the community of Evangelicals in Venice during the 1520s, and because of the obvious significance of the recovered crucifix, a further link may be detected to *Bishop Negri* (fig. 8), which was painted the same year as *Odoni*. The bishop was a leader of the reform movement in Venice, and Lotto's portrait strikingly renders Negri's moral and spiritual force as he contemplates his approaching death, which occurred later that year.²⁷ In the portrait's febrile lighting as well as its tragic psychology, Lotto uncannily anticipates Rembrandt. A prominent element is the large crucifix, its arms placed at an angle pointing at the sitter's chest, so that the corpus faces the bishop rather than the viewer.

That the crucifix was a particular object of devotion for Lotto was evident in his *Nativity* of 1523, painted in Bergamo (cat. 20). There a crucifix of unusually large dimensions hangs on the wall above the kneeling Joseph, attracting attention in a scene in which, at least in its Italian manifestations, crucifixes were not usually shown. That emphasis points to Lotto's deep Christocentricity and sympathy with the idea of a direct, unmediated relationship between human beings and God; yet Lotto always remained loyal to the Dominican order,

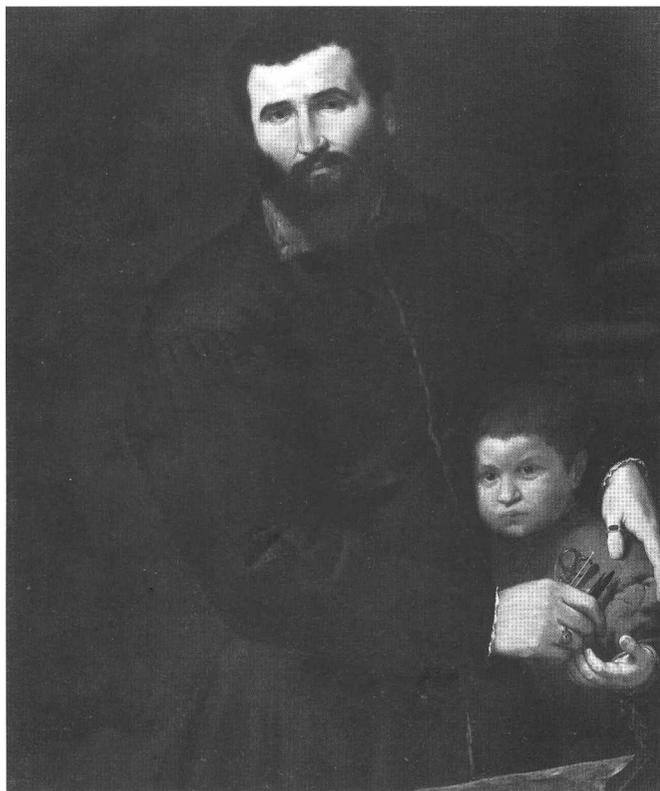


fig. 9. Lotto, *Portrait of a Surgeon and His Son*, 1544, oil on canvas. John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

intending to be buried in the cemetery at Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.²⁸ One can imagine the complexity and perhaps the contradictions of Lotto's religious experience given the places and times in which he lived.

Andrea Odoni's crucifix may have had another dimension—as a refined and precious work of the contemporary goldsmith's art. In that sense, there would be no conflict between art and religion. In the entry on Lotto's *Portrait of a Goldsmith in Three Positions* (cat. 33), which he dates c. 1530, Peter Humfrey notes Lotto's interest in goldworking and his particular friendship with goldsmith Bartolomeo Carpan, agreeing with Vertova that Carpan was the sitter. It is conceivable that Carpan was the creator of Odoni's gold crucifix, and in that way all three, collector, painter, and goldsmith, were linked in a circle of shared religious sympathies or beliefs.²⁹

Considering Lotto's character and personality, no one can doubt that the practice of devotional painting permitted him a degree of personal expression and achievement in a spiritual dimension that was exceptional even in the century and the locality that included Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Bassano, whether the work at hand was a major altarpiece that included several figures and allowed scope for innovations of style, color, and motif, or a smaller picture intended for a private chapel or individual contemplation. Nevertheless, from our vantage point at the end of the second millennium, inevitably colored as it is by the romantic, late romantic, modernist, and postmodernist movements of the past two centuries, it is Lotto's portraiture that retains—or, more accurately, has captured anew—the power to enthrall the viewer. This is true by virtue of its purely artistic elements that had impressed Titian himself (as was reflected in a rather ambiguous letter that Pietro Aretino wrote to Lotto conveying Titian's respect and admiration), and even more urgently, by the sense each of his greatest portraits communicates of having pierced to the core of a human personality with a psychological acumen that reached its most remarkable level of development in the years just before and after 1530, and recurred later in works such as his *Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat* of c. 1541 (cat. 44) and *Portrait of a Surgeon and His Son* of 1544 (fig. 9).³⁰ In these paintings people of the sixteenth century appear present to us in a manner that we sense is independent of the roles their social status assigned to them. The viewer of today is fascinated, yet disconcerted, by the power of these expressions, and by the idiosyncratic individuality of the artist who translated into visual terms qualities of psychic presence that rarely recurred in portraiture before the nineteenth century.

1. Humfrey (1997, 7–9, fig. 7) judges the figure of Saint Peter Martyr in the painting to be derivative of the type of friar-saint employed by Cima da Conegliano. There have been various attempts to identify models for Lotto's portrayals of saints in his altarpieces, for example, Manzato 1981, 123. For the argument that Lotto used portraits of people he knew and Lotto's portraiture in general, see the acute characterization in Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 13–17.

2. The patron, Domenico Tassi, had himself portrayed in a pendant canvas depicting a night nativity, known from a damaged canvas in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice; see Humfrey 1997, 56.

3. Her expression may be regarded as one aspect of Lotto's perceived protomodernity, if we remember that only in the 1860s did Degas introduce into his portraits the element of boredom or impatience that sitters often experience during portrait sessions (for example, *Belleli Family*, Musée d'Orsay, Paris). The twentieth-century painter who has made such expressions, sometimes verging on outright exasperation or rage, most central to his portraiture is Lucien Freud, grandson of the founder of modern psychology. For the possibility that the sitter was the widowed sister of Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi, who lived in his household until her death sometime before October of 1502, see Gentili 1985, 90.

4. Grabski 1980, 145–147; Grabski 1981, 384–385; Humfrey 1997, 20–21. David Alan Brown dates the portrait to 1508 (Brown to Wendy Stedman Sheard, January 1997). Boschetto (Banti and Boschetto 1953) dated it c. 1510; Grabski (1980, 145) dated it 1500–1510; Seidenberg (1964, 40–42) preferred an earlier date of c. 1504–1505, as did Gentili (1985, 76–82). Humfrey (1997, 20) terms it a work of Lotto's early career in Treviso.

5. A succinct definition of an *impresa* (and its antecedents) is offered by Kristen Lipincott (1990, 49–76). She discusses Lotto's use of the term *impresa* in letters about covers for the intarsias illustrating scenes from the Old Testament that he was designing as decorations for the choir screen and stalls in Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, from 1524 until c. 1531. See also Humfrey 1997, 82–85; Cortesi Bosco 1987.

6. For the plausible hypothesis that Lotto met Pierio Valeriano, the future author of *Hieroglyphica* and, like Lotto, a protégé of Bishop Rossi, before leaving Venice for Treviso around 1503, see Galis 1980, 363–375, esp. 367. Dempsey 1988, 342–365, deals generally with early Renaissance study of hieroglyphics. For the relevance of the sixteenth-century study of hieroglyphics to contemporary perceptions of other symbolic languages, see Grafton 1997, 63.

7. Gentili 1985, 76–82; compare with Humfrey 1997, 168 n. 34. Chancellor Broccardo Malchiostro, who came with Bishop Rossi from Parma and took holy orders sometime between 1500 and 1502, is Gentili's candidate as the sitter. Malchiostro was in his early thirties, too old to be the young man Lotto portrayed. Grabski's analysis, on the other hand, does not consider the anxious, disturbed quality of the young man's facial expression in concluding that the sitter was most likely a young humanist, “full of life and energy” (Grabski 1981, 384–385). Precisely this aspect of the youth's expression is unprecedented in nonallegorical portraiture, and it cries out for an explanation linked to the portrait's exact historical circumstances.

8. An exception is Lotto's prominent quotation of landscape motifs from Giorgione's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) in the second altarpiece of his early Treviso period, the *Assunta* in the Duomo of Asolo, of 1506, which deserves to be considered an expression of Lotto's admiration for Giorgione's innovativeness as a landscape painter. The same may be said about the landscape motifs, and their painterly style, in the upper right background of Lotto's *Madonna and Child with Saints Jerome, Peter, Clare (?), and Francis* of c. 1505 (cat. 1), where it is combined with an homage to Alvisse Vivarini in the form of the vivid green curtain behind the group of figures.

9. For Lotto's portrait, see *Gli Uffizi* 1979, 349; an X-radiograph was published in Baldini and Dal Poggetto 1972, 40, figs. 60, 61. A date of 1506 was assigned to it by Mariani Canova 1975, 89. Volpe (1981, 137) thought that, despite its frontality, the portrait reflected Lotto's experience of Raphael's portraits and consequently dated it c. 1511, as did Grigori 1994, 245, 252, no. 330. The portrait, bequeathed to the Uffizi by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici in 1675, was attributed to Leonardo, and was so listed in six inventories between 1704 and 1890. The correct attribution to Lotto was published in 1910 by G. Glück. For Giorgione's portrait see Anderson 1996, 296–297, and Sheard 1992, 171–176.

10. For the Piero della Francesca portraits see *Gli Uffizi* 1979, 410–411, P1177, P1178, dated c. 1465 or possibly c. 1472–1476; see illustrations in Gregori 1994, 122–125; she dates the portraits c. 1465. See also Dülberg 1990, 75–77, 126–127, 134, 139, 235–236, nos. 181 and 182. The most recent catalogue entry on the *Tempesta* is Anderson 1996, 301–302. The picture's syncretistic and literary qualities are dis-

cussed in Pochat 1970, 14–34, and Sheard 1985, 145–158. Pochat (1985, 3–15) redefined Neoplatonism in the Venetian context. That article addresses cats. 3, 5.

11. Anderson 1979, 153–158; Sheard 1992, esp. 141–149.

12. The acknowledged pioneer in this conceptual change was Leonardo with *Cecilia Gallerani*, a portrait of the mistress of Ludovico Sforza; see Brown 1990, 47–61 (an article that also allows the inference that Leonardo was the inventor of the “turning portrait”), and Kemp 1991, 271–272, no. 170. Even earlier, however, Tullio Lombardo, in a marble high relief of c. 1493, *A Couple* (Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Ca' d'Oro, Venice), had employed the device of portraying subjects responding to an unknown stimulus coming from outside the art work; see Sheard 1979, 201–211; Sheard 1995, 260–262, no. 29; and Luchs 1995, chap. 3, 51–66. Raphael employed the device in *Portrait of Cardinal Tommaso Inghirami*, c. 1510–1514 (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston), which Pope-Hennessy (1966, 117) called its earliest appearance. One can legitimately wonder whether Lotto transmitted this still relatively new portraiture concept to Raphael in Rome. On Raphael's brilliant use of the over-the-shoulder turning portrait type in *Bindo Altoviti* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), see Brown 1983, 178–187. Half a generation later, it seems clear that “the twisting glance over the shoulder” (Brown 1983) ought not to be thought of as “mannerist,” since it derives from early Cinquecento Venice.

13. On Lotto's *Man Holding a Glove*, see Shearman, *Italian*, 1983, 148, no. 144, who believes the old attribution of the picture to Giorgione may be connected to that painter's invention of the over-the-shoulder portrait type.

14. The costume and landscape suggest a Bergamasque nobleman. His “interrupted action” and relationship with a person outside of the painting proper locate this picture within the category of portraiture discussed above. *European Paintings* 1982, 366–368, no. 161, includes the speculation that the sitter represented a Venetian patrician. *Bearded Man*, a chalk drawing (Albertina, Vienna) that Berenson believed represented the same sitter at approximately the same date, may instead be connected to Lotto's portrait of Niccolò della Torre, which was added to *The Physician Giovanni Agostino della Torre and His Son Niccolò* (National Gallery, London), signed and dated 1515, at some point after Lotto had painted the portrait of Agostino. About the latter portrait, see Humfrey 1997, 66.

15. Wethey 1971, 2: 11, 103–104, no. 40; Campbell 1990, 69, 71, 86, 95.

16. On Titian's portraits, see Pope-Hennessy 1966, 135–148; Wethey 1971; Rosand 1978, 22–23, pls. 8, 9, 15, 27, 30, 34, 35; Paolucci 1990, 101–108, and individual catalogue entries on portraits in Venice and Washington in *Titian: Prince of Painters* 1990; catalogue entries on portraits by Titian and painters he influenced in *Le Siècle de Titien* 1993.

17. As with Michelangelo's sculptured portraits in the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo, Florence, the artist, not the sitter, occupies the center of attention. Several of Titian's portraits of c. 1512–1525 exhibit richness and elegance of dress, refinement of facial features and poses, and expressions ranging from thoughtful preoccupation to incipient melancholy. They constitute a response to the types established by Giorgione's *Portrait of a Youth* (Berlin), *Self-Portrait as David* (Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig), *Portrait of Gerolamo Marcello* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), *Terris Portrait* (Museum of Arts, San Diego), and *Portrait of a Young Man* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich, inv. no. 524), a copy of an original by Giorgione. Telling examples are Titian's *Young Man with Cap and Gloves* (Earl of Halifax; exhibited at National Gallery, London), c. 1512–1515, and *Man with a Glove* (Musée du Louvre; *Le Siècle de Titien* 1993, no. 54). See Wethey 1971, 2: 10–15. *Young Man in a Red Cap*, c. 1515 (Frick Collection, New York), is an early example of pronounced exaggeration in the body's volume, resulting in a diminished proportion of head in relation to body, that later became canonical in Titian's portraits. An astonishing example of this phenomenon in Lotto's oeuvre is his *Portrait of a Man* (Borghese Gallery, Rome), in which the miniature skull on the table calls attention to the sitter's grotesquely gigantic body; see also Humfrey 1997, 2, fig. 5. None of Titian's portraits features the kind of sudden violent movement seen in Lotto's *Man Holding a Glove*. Although the expansion in portraits' physical dimensions as well as in the sitters' apparent bulk displayed by Titian's *Jacopo Sannazaro* (Hampton Court Palace) and *Portrait of a Gentleman* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich; *Le Siècle de Titien* 1993, no. 53)—works that probably predate Lotto's arrival in Venice—is not firmly established in Titian's portraiture before the third Cinquecento decade, their qualities of dignity, gravity, and patrician reserve permeate virtually all Titian's portraits, demonstrating an underlying conception of portraiture that continued that of Giovanni Bellini and decisively repudiated that of Antonello.

18. For the genre of conjugal portraits, see cats. 21 and 25, and Hinz 1974, 139–218. The question of whether Tullio Lombardo's double-portrait high reliefs should be

regarded as conjugal portraits is taken up by Luchs 1995, 57–66, 69–70; Wilk 1978, chap. 4; Sheard 1995, 260–265, nos. 29–30. Northern precedents for Italian conjugal portraits are discussed in Hess 1996.

19. Bishop Negri of Traù (Trogir), Dalmatia, retired to Santa Maria delle Grazie alle Paludi in 1525, having been a leader of reformist circles in Venice. Presumably Lotto painted the portrait when the bishop was visiting in Venice; see Praga 1933.
20. Christiansen 1986, 166–173; Anderson 1996, 228. Humfrey (1997, 139) argues that *Venus and Cupid* is stylistically close to Lotto's Saint Antoninus altarpiece in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice (1541–1542), and therefore could be the *Venus* commissioned by Mario d'Armano, his closest relative, in September 1540. Anderson independently reached the same conclusion and suggests that it was occasioned by the marriage of one of Mario d'Armano's sons (thus a relation of Lotto's), and connects the picture to a 2 September 1542 entry in Lotto's *Libro di spese*, in which he records spending 12 soldi to hire a nude model. In that case, Lotto could have known the prospective bride and could have portrayed her face but not her nude body, for which the services of the model might have been necessary (unless Lotto based the reclining nude on a classical statue or another Venetian painted nude).
21. Possibly Lotto's paint surface has darkened over time, in which case background detail originally was more legible. Giorgione's pictorial precedents for the portrait's chiaroscuro structure are cited in n. 17 above. On melancholia in the Renaissance, see Jackson 1986, 78–103, and Sohm 1980, 13–32. The idea that Lotto himself suffered from a melancholic temperament and was singularly capable both of empathizing profoundly with sitters who were similarly afflicted, and of representing the effects of this condition with uncanny accuracy, goes back at least to Morelli 1897, 307. A probing article about one of Lotto's most affecting portraits—the melancholic *Thirty-Seven-Year Old Gentleman* (Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, Rome), illustrated in Humfrey 1997, fig. 154—is Cristaldi 1984, 201–238.
22. Sheard 1992, 149–160 (*Self-Portrait*); Anderson 1996, 300 (*Boy*), 310–311 (*Page*, version in Suida-Manning collection, New York, published here for the first time).
23. Galis (1977, 233–234, 423–429) believes the key to the portrait's interpretation is the argument in Petrarch "De Venatu et Aucupio," a dialogue in *De Remediis utriusque Fortunae*: frivolous pursuits of youth ought to be abandoned in favor of serious study of ancient philosophy and poetry. This view is contested by Gentili (1981, 420–424).
24. Rose petals were considered a remedy for love sickness, a form of melancholy that reached epidemic proportions in the Renaissance if literature is a mirror of reality. Gentili (1981) points out that this youth's melancholy has often been considered as caused by a rejection of his affections, and that the ring, letters, dead bird, and other elements in the picture support such an interpretation. He speculates that the youth's decision to devote himself to his family's commercial concerns, now that his hopes are dashed, motivated his father to commission the portrait; thus, the large tome is a family business ledger with which he is now occupying himself after his love has been rejected.
25. The connection between the frozen stance of the lizard and the congealed heart of the youth represents a brilliant visualization of the paralysis that accompanies depression, for lizards do "freeze." In 1536 Cardinal Gasparo Contarini wrote to Benedetto Accolti, ". . . I am well, living my customary life with friends, and. . . making an effort to attain some [degree of] knowledge of Christian teaching and life, [but] the more I read about the latter, the further from it I seem to be, living almost as if asleep and frozen still" (as quoted in Gleason 1993, 137).
26. Shearman (*Italian*, 1983, 144–148, no. 143) mentions but does not illustrate the engraving by Cornelis Visscher.
27. For the religious situation in Venice during the years when Lotto resided there, see the essay by Adriano Prosperi elsewhere in this volume. I have been unable to locate an adequate appreciation/description of this superb portrait since Praga 1933. Berenson (1956, 96) completely misinterpreted the bishop's expression in saying that Lotto had portrayed him as a "haughty and irate elderly man." Humfrey (1997, 165) mentions the portrait in the context of the high-ranking churchmen who had commissioned portraits from Lotto.
28. See, for example, the *Mystic Crucifixion*, which Lotto painted for his own use, and the inscription on its reverse; Humfrey 1997, fig. 145, 174 n. 39. For Lotto's religious sentiments, the overall religious situation in Venice during the 1540s, and Lotto's testament, see Humfrey 1997, 142, 174 n. 40, 179–181.
29. Humfrey (1997, 153) discusses Lotto's close association with Carpan and the latter's clandestine religious activities that culminated in the 1560 investigation of him by the Inquisition.
30. For a translation of Aretino's April 1548 letter to Lotto and comments on

it, see Humfrey 1997, 156–158. Catalogued as *Gian Giacomo Stuer and His Son Gian Antonio* in *John G. Johnson Collection* 1966, 44–45, citing entries in Lotto's *Libro*: "1544, marzo. A Gian Giacomo Stuer chirurgico, il ritratto suo insieme con quello del figliuolo Gian Antonio" and "In Treviso. A di . . . marzo del 44, die dar misser Joan Jac.o Stuer cerusico per un quadro de retrato suo in sema con el suo fioleto Zan Antonio, del qual non fu fatto pretio; fornito poi valse e honesto precio duc. 15. Tamen io me contentai de quello volse lui. Die haver el contrascrito missier Joan Jac.o Stuer cerusico: a di.7. marzo contadi dati per parte de li retrati diti de contro mocenigi n.o 10.L. 12.s." The latter entry is typical of those in the *Libro*. Lotto claims that the portrait is worth more than what he received for it, yet he refuses to set a definite price before the work is delivered, as though he were always hoping that the price offered by the commissioner will match what Lotto himself believes the picture to be worth; yet, since this never happens, it is as if he purposely sets himself up for rejection or disappointment. This is classic neurotic behavior, but it should be borne in mind that neurosis as it has been defined in our century is not considered incapacitating in terms of artistic production. The surgeon Stuer's anxiety concerning the future—whether he will be able to transmit his professional skills to his son and guarantee his means of making a living—is communicated by his facial expression and by the uncertainty and unhappiness on the face of his son. Stuer holds the surgical instruments close to his son's open hand and places his other hand protectively on the boy's shoulder. It is also possible that the aura of sadness may be explained by the recent death of the surgeon's wife. See Ricciardi 1989, 205–210.



The Frescoes

ALL THREE OF LOTTO'S surviving fresco cycles were painted within a brief period of two years at the end of his stay in Bergamo (1523–1525). The first and most extensive, that in the little oratory of the noble Suardi family on their estate at Trescore, some ten miles from the city, was probably begun in the late summer of 1523. Work stopped during the winter months, and in December Lotto was in Jesi, where he went to sign the contract for the Saint Lucy altarpiece (cat. 34–36), presumably having traveled via Venice. By March he was back in Bergamo, and he completed his work in the Oratorio Suardi by the end of the year. The second cycle was painted for the chapel belonging to a lay confraternity, the Consorzio della Vergine, in the parish church of San Michele al Pozzo Bianco, located in the upper city of Bergamo, near the Porta Sant'Agostino, in the late summer of 1525. Lotto's frescoes cover the upper part of the chapel only, above the springing of the vault; and although there is evidence that he also planned to decorate the walls, he left for Bergamo for good in December 1525 before beginning this part of the project. The final cycle of frescoes, painted for an external loggia of the country church of San Giorgio at Credaro, is the most modest of the three, and was executed very rapidly in the month or two before his departure. Until recently open to the air, this is also the worst preserved, and much of it is now illegible.

For most of the twentieth century it was also generally thought that Lotto, at the outset of his career, painted a pair of Pages on the wall beside the tomb of Agostino Onigo in the church of San Nicolò, Treviso.¹ Although a majority of critics now no longer accepts the attribution of these to Lotto, it remains likely that he was active as a fresco painter in his early years in Treviso—especially since without some kind of experience in this area he hardly would have been called to the Vatican in 1508 to work on the prestigious com-



mission for the refurbishment of the papal apartments; however, like his work in Rome, any such frescoes have vanished without a trace. A surviving fragment of a possibly more extensive fresco scheme, datable to the phase immediately after the visit to Rome, is the *Saint Vincent Ferrer* (fig. 1) in San Domenico, Recanati, the church for which he had painted his important polyptych of 1506–1508.² Much damaged at the top and bottom, and now serving as an altarpiece, this image of the fiery Spanish preacher was originally placed on the end wall of one of the Gothic aisles. The cloud-borne saint once floated high above a panoramic landscape, in a composition similar to the later Saint Nicholas altarpiece (cat. 29), and his upraised finger presumably pointed to the figure of God the Father, or Christ in Glory, in the apex of the pointed arch. The vigorous *contrapposto* of the saint and the unprecedentedly classical character of the flying angels have generally and plausibly been interpreted as a response to Raphael; but perhaps no less significant as an influence here, in terms of technique as well as of style, is Fra Bartolomeo, whose work Lotto would have been able to study on his putative visit to Florence of about 1510–1511.

Probably preceding the surviving Bergamasque cycles by a few years was a *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine*, painted in fresco on the face of the rood screen in Santi Stefano e Domenico in Bergamo, the church for which Lotto painted his great high altarpiece soon after his arrival in the city. Although the fresco was destroyed with the church by the mid-sixteenth century, its composition has been convincingly recognized in a preparatory drawing now in Leipzig.³ Among the leading Bergamasque families that maintained private chapels in this church were those of Battista Suardi—subsequently Lotto's patron at Trescore—and Girolamo Passi, who as an officer of the Consorzio della Vergine took charge of the commission at San Michele al Pozzo



fig. 1. Lotto, *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, c. 1511, fresco. San Domenico, Recanati

Bianco.⁴ Suardi had built the oratory in 1501–1502, and soon afterward had had the east wall, with its semicircular apse accommodating the altar, decorated by an anonymous and modestly gifted local painter. Lotto's task was to paint the other three walls, and the areas of ceiling between the exposed wooden beams that supported the roof (fig. 2).⁵ Except for the framing arch of the apse and a dado molding running round the room at head height, the simple interior had no architectural articulation. Lotto divided the west and south walls into two main horizontal zones by adding fictive moldings, illusionistically designed to match the real one. He filled the upper friezelike zone with a series of roundels containing alternating figures of prophets and sibyls, who look and lean out of their portholelike frames and gesticulate energetically to one another, as if across the real space of the chapel. In the main zone Lotto created vertical subdivisions by putting in fictive pilasters, and, on the south wall, by using the two tall narrow windows. The various narrative scenes on this long entrance wall, depicted on a large scale in the foreground and a small scale in the landscape beyond,

represent episodes from the life of Saint Brigid, an Irish nun venerated for her charitable activity on behalf of the poor and sick and, most appropriate in the context of the rural community of Trescore, as a protector of crops and farm animals against natural disasters. Thus, in the central section next to and above the doorway (fig. 3), the saint in her distinctive yellow habit is presented four times: in the left foreground she gives food (raw meat, which miraculously has failed to mark her habit) and drink (water miraculously transformed into beer) to two peasant women; to the right, she heals a blind man; in the left background she saves a flock of sheep from a wild boar; and in the right background she halts the advance of a devastating storm.

The iconographic program of the north wall opposite (fig. 4), uninterrupted by door or windows, is more complex and embraces two distinct themes. The center of the wall is dominated by the huge figure of Christ as the Vine, a literal representation of Christ's words in John 15: 5–6: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abideth not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." This passage, like the story of Saint Brigid, would have had a particular resonance in a rural community in which vines were cultivated; beyond this, the reference to withered branches would have carried strongly topical allusions in the early 1520s to heresy, and to the threat to Roman Catholicism posed by Martin Luther and the other Protestant reformers. Thus the figure of Christ, with the praying figures of Battista Suardi, his wife, and sister at his feet, is presented as the trunk of the vine, and the branches sprout out of his upturned fingers. The branches then curl into circles, forming natural counterparts to the roundels on the south and west walls, and likewise containing half-length figures, this time of saints. Sprouting leaves and bunches of grapes, the branches extend into the gable of the west wall and across the ceiling to form a fictive bower, filled with clambering putti. At either side of the composition are ladders placed against the branches of the vine, and two groups of early Christian heretics, duly labeled with their names, are attempting to climb to join the Elect. But two of the church fathers, Jerome and Ambrose, resist their advance and send them tumbling down beyond the confines of the fresco into an unseen pit of perdition.

The second theme of the north wall, portrayed on a much smaller scale in the background and middle-ground landscape and buildings, concerns the life of Saint Barbara, cotitular with Saint Brigid of the oratory. The story is taken



fig. 2. Lotto, *Scenes from the Life of Saint Brigid* (left). Oratorio Suardi, Trescore

from the *Golden Legend*, and like so many of the saints' lives retold in this popular compendium, it concerns the many trials and tribulations courageously suffered in Christ's name by one of his martyrs. It begins at the far left, where Barbara, recognizable by her blue dress and yellow cloak, is imprisoned in a tower by her pagan father. The story then unfolds from left to right, following a meandering course as Barbara is chased into the fields, arrested, forced to undergo a succession of cruel tortures, and finally beheaded. In one of the last episodes Barbara's father, the chief author of her persecution, is struck dead by a thunderbolt, a reminder that one of Barbara's most characteristic powers was to defend her devotees and their possessions from unexpected catastrophe.

It has been observed that a number of the poses devised by Lotto for the story of Saint Barbara are derived from prototypes by Raphael in the Vatican *stanze*; however, the comparison mainly serves to underscore the gulf between the imaginative worlds created by the two painters in their respective fresco cycles.⁶ Lotto's figures completely lack the heroic dimension of those by Raphael, and his narrative technique lacks the dramatic concentration of that of his erstwhile colleague. In spirit the Trescore frescoes remain much closer to Carpaccio's *Life of Saint Ursula* cycle (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), painted in Venice in the 1490s, during the period of Lotto's probable apprenticeship there, and likewise constituting a fairly literal rendering of an unsophisticated, fairy-



fig. 3. Lotto, *Saint Brigid Ministering to the Poor*, 1523–1524, fresco. Oratorio Suardi, Trescore



fig. 4. Lotto, *Christ the Vine* (left). Oratorio Suardi, Trescore

tale-like story, as recounted in the *Golden Legend*. Both men's work have a multiplicity of incident, a diffuseness of narrative focus, and an enjoyment of humorous and genrelike incidentals—evident in the depiction of the vendors' stalls on the far right at the story of Saint Barbara (fig. 5); and in both, contemporary dress is used to give the legend a verisimilitude and naturalistic vividness. Further contributing to the effect of vividness and spontaneity is the evident



fig. 5. Lotto, *Scenes from the Life of Saint Barbara*, 1523–1524, fresco. Oratorio Suardi, Trescore

rapidity with which the frescoes were executed. The heads and poses of large foreground figures, such as those of Christ, the saints, prophets, and sibyls, must have been carefully worked out in advance (as in his easel pictures), but much of the middle- and background was executed in large *giornate*—the busily active little figures and their surroundings apparently sketched in quickly and freely, with a minimum of reference to preparatory drawing.

A similar spirit of informal naturalism pervades the frescoes at San Michele al Pozzo Bianco, a church across the piazza where Lotto lived for some years before 1523.⁷ Early in 1524, immediately after the brief trip to Jesi, Lotto undertook the major commission by the Consorzio della Misericordia to design the cycle of intarsias for Santa Maria Maggiore, and it was one of the governors of the Misericordia, Girolamo Passi, acting in a different capacity, as officer of the Consorzio della Vergine, who commissioned Lotto to paint the much less ambitious cycle at San Michele. The consorzio's chapel is situated to the left of the chancel and is illuminated by a single oculus window high on the left wall, in the lunette supporting the vault. Lotto's scenes of the Life of the Virgin consist of the *Birth of the Virgin* in the lunette opposite the entrance, above the altar; the *Presentation* and the *Marriage of the Virgin*, combined in the right lunette; the *Angel of the Annunciation* and the *Virgin Annunciate* in the left lunette, on either side of the oculus window; and the *Visitation*, above the entrance to the chapel, in the main body

of the church. Represented in the cupola is *God the Father* in a glory of angels, a traditional complement to Annunciation groups, and indeed, his gesture of blessing is directed specifically toward the *Virgin Annunciate*; in this crowning position God implicitly also extends his blessing to the other key events of the early life of the Virgin.

This type of cross-spatial illusionism, already present in a more restrained way in the Trescore frescoes, is strikingly similar to that employed by Pordenone in the Malchiostro chapel in the Duomo of Treviso (1520), where a dramatic apparition of God the Father in the dome likewise complemented an *Annunciation* below, in the form of Titian's altarpiece.⁸ The similarity of concept raises the possibility that Lotto may have made a brief return visit to Treviso when passing through Venice on his way to or from Jesi in 1523–1524. Certainly with its close associations with his former patron Bernardo de' Rossi, the Malchiostro chapel would have been a monument of particular interest to the painter.

Lotto's other frescoes at San Michele lack the Pordenonesque, even Michelangelesque, dynamism of the *God the Father*, and retain the genre-like naturalism of the *Saint Barbara* frescoes at Trescore. This is especially true of the *Birth of the Virgin* (fig. 6), which, like the later Recanati *Annunciation* (cat. 40), is set in a sixteenth-century domestic interior, with a beamed ceiling, a bottle-glass window, a Savonarola chair, and maidservants in contemporary dress. Like Barbara, the figure of the Virgin is made immediately recognizable in the various scenes by her distinctive white dress, and her cream-colored shawl with gold stripes; thus, even the newborn infant Mary is dressed in white, while a servant wraps her in the shawl. Deliberately more idealized is the architectural setting of the *Presentation and Marriage*, in which Jerusalem is portrayed as a city of noble classicizing architecture, showing pedimented windows and frontispieces, obelisks, a monumental dome, and a column resembling that of Marcus Aurelius in Rome. In keeping with their high placing, the scenes are represented from a low viewpoint, obscuring the feet of the figures. In the case of the *Marriage of the Virgin*, which apparently takes place on the landing of a long and steep flight of steps, the metal banisters of the lower flight extend as if downward and outward into the real space of the chancel.

The principal scene of the badly faded frescoes at Credaro is a *Nativity*, one of Lotto's most frequently represented subjects.⁹ It is not clear whether the event is shown taking place by night, as in the *Night Nativity* of 1521 (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena) or in twilight, as in the c. 1534 *Adoration of the Shepherds* (cat. 39). The Netherlandish idea of showing the shepherds



fig. 6. Lotto, *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin*, 1525, fresco. San Michele al Pozzo Bianco, Bergamo

peering through openings in the back of the stable was to be repeated by Lotto in his *Night Nativity* (now lost), probably painted two or three years later in the painter's new home in Venice. Lotto's work at Credaro, in striking contrast to that at the Oratorio Suardi in Trescore and San Michele in Bergamo, must always have been perfunctory in character. Evidence to suppose that he simply was losing interest in this type of commission is provided by the fact that after his departure from Bergamo in December 1525 he seems never to have practiced as a fresco painter again.

1. For a recent survey of critical opinions, see Fossaluzza 1990.
2. For the *Saint Vincent Ferrer*, see Zampetti in *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981, 207–208; Gentili 1985, 197–200; Cortesi Bosco 1990, 51–54; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996, 72–76; Humfrey 1997, 38.
3. Cohen 1975, 131–135.
4. For the family chapels at Santi Stefano e Domenico, see Mascherpa 1978, 40.
5. For the Oratorio Suardi, see the fundamental monograph by Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980; also Humfrey 1997, 73–82; *L'Oratorio Suardi* 1997.
6. Katz 1978, 82–86.
7. For the San Michele frescoes, see Mascherpa 1971, 74–82, and Barbieri 1991, 63–99.
8. For the Malchiostro chapel, its decoration and patronage, see Cohen 1996, 573–578.
9. For the frescoes at San Giorgio, Credaro, see Mascherpa 1971, 82–84.

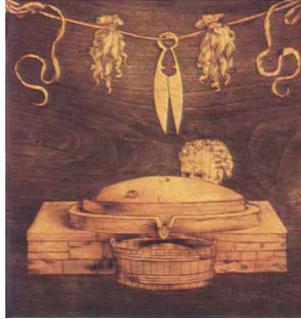


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Lotto: A Carpet Connoisseur

THE MERE SIX PAINTINGS in which Lorenzo Lotto represented oriental carpets distinguish him as an expert. So attentive to detail that his representations serve as documents for the history of carpet weaving, Lotto showed exceptional sensitivity to unique aspects of individual carpets, and brilliantly integrated them into his art. Although his income was modest, Lotto is the only Renaissance artist known to have owned an example of the elite imported carpets that he depicted: therefore, it is fitting that a popular sixteenth-century Turkish carpet design has been named after him. However, like most other oriental carpet patterns associated with fifteenth- and sixteenth-century European painters, the type known as “Lotto” could just as reasonably bear other names. Indeed the “true ‘Lottos’” are the re-entrant carpets in this exhibition.¹

The practice of naming carpet patterns after painters dates from the first systematic studies of early carpet weaving, at which time in the nineteenth century European paintings that had images of carpets were better known than surviving carpets themselves. In the 1870s Julius Lessing drew attention to the accuracy of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century depictions by matching groups of them with a few antique carpets. He especially praised the meticulousness of Holbein’s representations.² Beginning in 1902, the Turkish carpets with geometric designs most often depicted between about 1450 and 1550 were labeled “Holbeins.”³ This large group was soon divided between “small pattern” and “large pattern Holbeins,” and the terms have stuck even though Italian painters represented the carpets earlier and more often, and there is increasing evidence that the two patterns originated in different regions of Anatolia.⁴ Although Holbein did not represent it, a distinctive Turkish pattern popular in sixteenth-century Italian paintings and later northern European ones was long considered a subcategory of the “Holbeins,” with Lotto usually listed first among the artists who depicted it.⁵



During the past century more sixteenth-century carpets have come to light, and they prove that representations by Renaissance painters working in a descriptive style are remarkably accurate. Such carpets verify most of the details in Lotto’s representations. Yet it

is details in Lotto’s paintings that provide the only evidence of important developments in early carpet production. His paintings also convey an Italian fascination with these new, high-quality imports.

In the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22), Lotto painted either two similar Anatolian re-entrant carpets or the opposite ends of the same carpet hanging vertically over a window ledge. That on the right shows part of the characteristic re-entrant motif: a keyhole shape outlined by a broad black band. Clearly visible on the left is the top end of a prayer rug (where the black band forms a pointed niche from which lamps hang on chains), similar to a late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century carpet that is believed to be from the Ushak region of western Anatolia (fig. 1).⁶ Two details strongly suggest Lotto’s representation is of the top and bottom of a single rug. First, the two parts have identical ivory motifs on the outlining black band. A peculiar stylization of the Arabic word for God, this ornament appears on several other prayer rugs depicted in Italian Renaissance paintings, and on the oldest carpet that has an alternate, symmetrical re-entrant field design with keyholes at each end.⁷ Second, the rugs in Lotto’s painting have, within matching guard stripes, the same type of balanced open Kufesque border. Purely decorative and distantly related to an angular Arabic script called *Kufic*, Kufesque borders predominate on the various types of Turkish carpets depicted in Italian paintings from about 1450 to 1550. The prayer rug in figure 1, which is the only surviving contemporary re-entrant carpet with an open Kufesque border, has “flags” on the uprights of the open elements that all



fig. 1. Re-entrant Prayer Rug, late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, 170 x 124 (66 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 48 $\frac{1}{16}$), Ushak region, Turkey, wool pile on wool foundation. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst in exhibition



fig. 2. Re-entrant Prayer Rug, first half of the sixteenth century, 175.3 x 106.7 (69 x 42), Ushak region, Turkey, wool pile on wool foundation. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The James F. Ballard Collection, Gift of James F. Ballard, 1922 in exhibition

point in the same direction. The rugs in Lotto's painting have an alternate pattern—the flags point in opposite directions, which creates a more balanced effect. The side borders of his left portion show the Kufesque elements opening outward, the normal direction.⁸ The one border visible on the right carpet shows the Kufesque elements opening inward. For reasons that will be explained below, it is more likely that Lotto invented the slightly different border on the right as an artistic conceit, rather than accurately represented two almost identical carpets.⁹

Lotto's *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25) shows another elaborate Anatolian re-entrant carpet: either the bottom end of a prayer rug or one end of a rug with a symmetrical design. Early examples survive in both field designs with comparable ragged palmette borders, and a Ushak prayer rug from the first half of the sixteenth century illustrates a common border in which the quatrefoils, formed by vine stems connecting the palmettes, are surrounded by W-shape forms (fig. 2).¹⁰ The carpet Lotto depicted is a variant: the curved or angular forms are arranged in a whirling pattern. The fine curvilinear design in the border, which is comparable to that on another sixteenth-century symmetrical re-entrant carpet, indicates a dense knot count. The lustrous pile of Lotto's carpet, unusual in Turkish rugs, is another mark of its very high quality. The marked contrast between it and a coarsely woven prayer rug with similar field ornaments but a weakly drawn border (fig. 3) suggests that the latter is a late sixteenth- or seventeenth-century provincial version, and that the former must have come from a major workshop in the Ushak region.¹¹

It is not known whether re-entrant carpets rich in traditional prayer rug iconography (figs. 1–3) had religious meaning in Lotto's time. Their directional field design and standard portable size have become associated with the Muslim ritual of praying five times a day while facing Mecca, and from the fourteenth century on, the practice of using one's own rug or mat for prayers at the mosque or *zawiya* (monastery or shrine).¹² The characteristic niche is believed to symbolize both a doorway to paradise and the *mihrab* (the mosque niche orienting prayer toward Mecca), and the lamp commonly suspended in the niche refers to a verse in the Qur'an likening Allah to a light in a lamp in a niche. The keyhole at the bottom of the niche has been interpreted variously as the basin for ablutions required before prayer, a niche within a niche, or a mountain providing elevated ground for prayer. Triangular motifs with comblike extensions above the keyhole have been associated with the *minbar* (the pulpit in a mosque); the lamp, vase, or candlestick-



fig. 3. Re-entrant Prayer Rug, late sixteenth or seventeenth century, 153 x 120 (60 ¼ x 47 ¼), Ushak region, Turkey, wool pile on wool foundation. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The James F. Ballard Collection, Gift of James F. Ballard, 1922

like motifs that sometimes appear beside the keyhole may represent objects placed at a mosque entrance or *mihrab*.¹³ There is some basis for these interpretations in medieval Islamic art. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscript illuminations represent mosques as arcaded halls with lamps hanging on chains and a *minbar*, and thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Persian tile representations of *mihrabs* show a lamp hanging in a pointed niche that is sometimes flanked by lamps or vases.¹⁴ Nonetheless, there are also pre-Islamic precedents for most if not all of the stylized forms that have been presumed to symbolize the niche, *mihrab*, lamp, and *minbar* in the carpets, and this in turn raises questions about the validity of the term “prayer rug.” Over time, as Islamic cultures adopted these forms and adapted them to new compositions, the motifs probably did acquire new meanings. Furthermore, individual weavers, merchants, and owners undoubtedly understood designs differently, especially as new types of carpets were being developed.¹⁵

Re-entrant prayer rugs do not seem to predate the second half of the fifteenth century. They share their ornamental repertory with earlier *safs*—large rugs with rows of niches that were made for mosques and for use by the Muslim community during prayers—and symmetrical re-entrant carpets, which were also new and may have been wholly secular in use.¹⁶ Although in 1610 the highest Ottoman religious authority ruled against the use of such motifs as the *mihrab*, *Kaaba* (the Holy Shrine at Mecca), and any kind of writing in carpets because so many were being sold to nonbelievers, there is no evidence that re-entrant carpets, which appear in Italian paintings from at least 1493 to 1562, were made primarily for export to the West.¹⁷ In Venice re-entrant carpets came to be known as “mosque carpets”: the 1521 inventory of Francesco Badoer lists eight new “tapedi a moschetti,” and the 1584 inventory of Lorenzo Correr mentions ten “tapedi da cassa moschetti.”¹⁸

None of the surviving re-entrant rugs matches those depicted in Lotto’s altarpieces for Santa Cristina al Tiverone, 1505, his earliest painting of a carpet, and Santo Spirito, Bergamo, 1521 (cat. 16). The multiple borders with careful corner solutions—the patterns turn on the angle rather than continuing across one side as in most Turkish carpets—and the “cyprus tree” and floral motifs flanking the keyhole in the former identify them as belonging to the Para-Mamluk group. A late fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Para-Mamluk carpet with the same motifs in a different field design has an identical principal Kufesque border (fig. 4). The field and border patterns of Para-Mamluk carpets vary, but they share design and technical elements both with Mamluk carpets, which originated in Cairo, Egypt, during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, and with contemporary Turkish carpets. Most scholars argue that they were made in the Damascus area, close to Turkey in the north of the Mamluk empire, where there is some evidence of carpet production.¹⁹ These two paintings by Lotto, and one Mamluk prayer rug that was made in Cairo about 1500, show that re-entrant carpets were early on produced in widespread locations.²⁰

The type of carpet that has come to be called a “Lotto” appears in the foreground of his *Saint Antoninus Giving Alms* and *Portrait of a Family*.²¹ The elaborate field pattern, which does not have a fixed beginning or ending and exists in three variations, was probably designed for commercial production in or near the Ushak region. That in *Saint Antoninus* represents the classic, original Anatolian field in yellow, accented with dark blue, on a brick red background, and the typical early open Kufesque border. One sixteenth-century carpet with this border has a field that at one end matches the

beginning of the carpet in the painting, and possesses the most common arrangement of elements: quatrefoils run down the center, and octagons—which can also be seen as hexagons—frame them (fig. 5). In Lotto’s painting the octagons are in the center. This composition appears on several sixteenth-century carpets with open Kufesque borders, one of which is also three elements wide, and others of which are larger.²² The carpet in *Portrait of a Family* has a box Kufesque border identical to another sixteenth-century “Lotto” with an Anatolian-style field.²³ The field on the carpet in the painting, however, has a peculiar orange pattern on a dark red background. The serrated forms along the side of the field and the stiff drawing of the quatrefoil element seemingly relate to the kilim-style field that appeared in Italian paintings in the 1530s; the visible part of the field design more closely resembles a peculiar Anatolian-style car-



fig. 4. Para-Mamluk Compartment Rug, late fifteenth or sixteenth century, 208 x 144 (81 ⁷/₈ x 56 ³/₄), Damascus region, Syria (?), wool pile on wool foundation. Private collection



fig. 5. Anatolian-style "Lotto" Rug, sixteenth century, 207 x 124 (81½ x 48¹/₁₆), Ushak region, Turkey, wool pile on wool foundation. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Joseph Lees Williams Memorial Collection
in exhibition

pet in Istanbul, which has a blue and green pattern on a brown background.²⁴ The carpet in the *Portrait of a Family* is probably an early provincial variation of the sophisticated, designer-conceived pattern.

The second carpet in Lotto's *Saint Antoninus* with a compartmented field design is a Para-Mamluk similar to figure 4. In both the characteristic inward-pointing cyprus tree, floral, and geometric motifs are arranged radially around the rows of small star interlaces. The more open composition of the depicted carpet corresponds with other sixteenth-century compartment rugs.²⁵

Carpets that Lotto represented in *Portrait of a Family*, *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22), and the *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25) probably belonged to the patrons. Wealthy Italians had purchased pile carpets at least since 1300, and both individual and institutional owners proudly displayed them as signals of status, wealth, and taste. Since Francesco Badoer of Venice owned eight new "tapedi a moschetti" by 1521, it is likely that wealthy Bergamese, including Niccolò Bonghi, owned fine re-entrant carpets by then or a few years later. As a frequent guest in Bonghi's home, Lotto certainly knew his host's carpets well. Each probably cost Bonghi as much as the 60 ducats Lotto was paid; indeed, some sixty fashionable carpets that the Venetian Senate sent to Cardinal Wolsey in London in 1520 were worth more than 1,000 ducats; at the time of his death in 1492, Lorenzo de' Medici's two best carpets were valued at 70 and 60 florins.²⁶ Lotto's preliminary sketch for the *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25) shows that he planned to include a table carpet in the program and, like the portraits, he left its details for closer study. Possibly the carpets in Lotto's altarpieces belonged to the churches, as in Italy fine oriental carpets often were used to decorate the altars or the floors during visits of important persons; however, it is more likely that Lotto represented carpets belonging to friends or local merchants. Indeed, during Lotto's lifetime carpet loans and rentals were common in Venice.²⁷ But yet another possibility cannot be discarded: Lotto pawned a large Turkish carpet with thick pile, probably used on a table, in the ghetto of Venice on 1 January 1548, to make modest cash loans to two friends from Cingoli in the Marches, Joanne Francesco da Monopoli and Dario Franceschini.²⁸ Therefore, one of the carpets in Lotto's paintings may have been his own.

Except perhaps in the *Saint Antoninus*, Lotto represented carpets in traditional contexts. From the early fourteenth to about the mid-fifteenth century, Italian painters showed oriental carpets on the floor of an honored space where they

signified the exalted status of the Madonna, saints, and eminent living persons, or marked a solemn ceremony. From the second half of the fifteenth century, when there was a tremendous increase in luxury domestic furnishings and high-quality "Holbein" carpets began to arrive, painters rarely represented carpets as floor coverings except with the Madonna. Instead, they represented carpets as either works of art or status symbols. For their private enjoyment, rich Italians draped carpets on tables, chests, and benches in their bedchambers and studies. For public display during festivals or for ostentatious regular airing, they hung them from their palace windows and balconies.²⁹ What is unusual about the *Saint Antoninus* is that the carpets over the ledge and under the moneybags and miter play a pointed role in the theme: they emphasize the contrast between the wealth of the Church and the poverty of the masses. Similarly, Lotto's undated but certainly mature drawing of *An Ecclesiastic in His Bedchamber* (British Museum, London) includes a bedside carpet among the objects that convey the cleric's preoccupation with worldly pleasures.³⁰ Lotto's association of oriental carpets with excessive luxury was new in Italian art.

As a rule Italian painters used the bright colors and intricate patterns of oriental carpets to enrich their pictures and showcase their descriptive skills. Lotto possessed an unusual sensitivity to unique aspects of carpets and brilliantly incorporated them into his art. In his first representation, the *Santa Cristina al Tiverone* altarpiece, the carpet draws many of the painting's colors together in the center of the composition. The gestures of Saint Cristina draw attention to the corner of the carpet, the drape of which accents its cleverly turned borders and partially plaited fringe. In the *Santo Spirito* altarpiece (cat. 16), Lotto compared the texture and luster of wool pile and fringe with voided silk velvet. (By intriguing coincidence, the greatest fifteenth-century Italian painter of the visual and material qualities of luxury textiles, Carlo Crivelli, was also born in Venice and worked in the Marches. The velvet pattern in Lotto's painting was Crivelli's favorite.) The *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25) shows more of the carpet's corner than the preliminary drawing and highlights the white-outlined ragged palmette motif. The carpet's brilliant red anchors the center of a chromatically somber composition. In the *Mystic Marriage* (cat. 22) the niche of the prayer rug frames the Madonna's head. Directly beside Bonghi is a detail that is unique in Italian painting: the edge of the carpet is turned back and the fineness of the weave is indicated by the precisely rendered knots. Perhaps Lotto and Bonghi collaborated on this detail. To balance the composition, on the right end of the window

ledge Lotto shows what could be the bottom end of the same rug, although there is a discreet discrepancy in the border. Paintings that represent two or more carpets customarily show different ones to emphasize the owner's wealth.³¹ Both the detail on the left carpet and the ambiguity in the right one may be highly inventive devices to please Bonghi and flatter his expertise.

Re-entrant carpets appear frequently in traditional contexts for about three decades after they began to arrive in Italy, but representations decline noticeably thereafter. They appear with the Madonna only three times after 1519: in Lotto's paintings of 1521 and 1523 (cats. 16, 21, 22), and a *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints* of about 1530 by Giovanni Buonconsiglio (National Museum, Warsaw). Venetian painters continued to represent other types of carpets beneath the Madonna's throne into the 1540s, after which changes in painting style led to a general decline in Italian carpet representations. Re-entrant carpets appear as luxurious table coverings in a few paintings—three representations of feasts and three portraits—between 1530 and 1562.³² Although there was no corresponding decline in the popularity of these carpets among collectors between the 1520s and 1580s, the growing use of the term “mosque carpets” in estate inventories by 1521 suggests that Venetians had come to associate the re-entrant design with the Muslim religion to some extent. As a result, artists and patrons may have become more discriminating about the use of these particular carpets in paintings for ideological reasons.

1. Mills 1986, 116.

2. Lessing 1879, 5. Among the Italian paintings Lessing cited (p. 22) is the *Portrait of Cardinal Pompeo Colonna*, c. 1509, Galleria Colonna, Rome, traditionally but questionably attributed to Lotto, which shows a carpet with a border common on early “Lotto” carpets; see Mills, “Lotto,” 1981, 287.

3. Bode 1902, 101–103.

4. Mills 1986, 110–113; Mills 1978, 326–334; King and Sylvester 1983, 14, 26–27, 52–57. “Small pattern Holbeins” were named after a carpet in the portrait of George Gisze, 1532 (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), and “large pattern Holbeins” after the carpet in a portrait of Jean de Dinteville and George de Selve (*The Ambassadors*), 1533 (National Gallery, London).

5. For example, Bode 1902, 99–100; Campana 1945, 131–132. For use of the term “Lotto” in the United States, see Dimand and Mailey 1973, 185; Erdmann 1970, 57–58. For patterns named after Hans Memling and Carlo Crivelli, see King and Sylvester 1983, 56–58; Franses 1993, 271, 273–276. For the re-entrant pattern (also labeled “Bellini”), see Zick 1961, 6–14; Mills 1991, 86–103; Franses 1993, 277–283. The most complete list of Italian paintings representing re-entrant carpets is in Franses 1993, 375–376 n. 392.

6. For figure 1, see Spuhler 1987, 37; Zick 1961, 7–9; King and Sylvester 1983, 58; Mills 1991, 93–94; Franses 1993, 278. Mills suggests that the differences between the borders on this carpet and the one in Lotto's painting indicate they were made in different weaving centers.

7. See Mills 1991, 92, fig. 31 (Sion Symmetrical Re-entrant Rug, Musée Cantonal de Valère, Switzerland).

8. For paintings of re-entrant carpets with identical borders, see Mills 1991, figs. 11, 13.

9. Robert Pittenger (1988, 18–19), who first drew attention to the carpet barely visi-

ble on the right of *Mystic Marriage* (cat. 22), did not note the discrepancy in the borders. He suggested that Lotto may have planned to represent one carpet lying horizontally across the ledge but perhaps decided that vertical views of the two ends better suited his pictorial needs.

10. Mills 1991, 95–97; Franses 1993, 279–281. Franses credits Lotto with the earliest representation of the ragged palmette border; however, the border appears on a prayer rug in a fresco attributed to Garofalo in Palazzo Costabili, Ferrara, c. 1505–1508 (see Mills 1991, fig. 16a). For further discussion of the rug in figure 2 see *Prayer Rugs* 1974, 46; Mills 1988, 14–15; Ellis 1988, 77–78.

11. For the sixteenth-century carpet with a similar border design, formerly in the Baron Szalay Collection, Budapest, see Mills 1991, 102, fig. 33; Franses 1993, 280. Further discussion of the rug in figure 3 is in *Prayer Rugs* 1974, 48; Mills 1991, 97; Franses 1993, 279.

12. Ettinghausen 1974, 11–15.

13. Ettinghausen 1974, 18–23; Denny 1990, 95–97; Enderlein 1971, 9; *Prayer Rugs* 1974, 46; Zick 1961, 7; Ellis 1988, 78–79; Mills 1991, 90–91.

14. Denny 1990, 95, fig. 5; Grabar 1970, 212, fig. 3; Lane 1939, 4, pl. IA.

15. Franses 1993, 282–283; report of a paper presented by Michael Franses at the symposium accompanying an exhibition of carpets from the Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest in *Hali* 9 (May 1996), 71–73.

16. The relationship between *safs* and prayer rugs is discussed in Denny 1990, 100–103. For a probably fifteenth-century *saf* (Türk ve Islam Eserleri Museum, Istanbul, inv. no. 720), see Aslanapa 1988, 144, pl. 115; Denny 1990, fig. 22; Franses 1993, 282.

17. The first dated representation is in Cima da Conegliano's *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Six Saints*, 1493 (Cathedral of Conegliano), and the last is in an anonymous Venetian *Portrait of a Gentleman*, 1562 (Museo Civico, Padua); see both in Mills 1991, figs. 14, 17. For the Ottoman regulations, see Faroqhi 1984, 138, and Raby 1986, 35.

18. Molmenti 1928, 2: 477, 486; Raby 1986, 34. The Badoer inventory lists a total of seventeen carpets, and the Correr inventory lists thirty-one in Venice and mentions six more from Padua.

19. For figure 4, see Pinner and Franses 1981, 41; Ellis 1988, 6. For the Para-Mamluk group of carpets, see King and Sylvester 1983, 64; Ellis 1988, 5–7; Mills 1991, 89–90; Mills, “Eastern,” 1981, 53–55; Pinner and Franses 1981, 40–41. Ellis argues for a Turkish origin, the others for a Damascus origin. The 1485 register of the Treasury of the Ottoman Court in Istanbul lists four prayer rugs from Damascus (Raby 1986, 35–36). Mention of Damascene carpets in Italian inventories, often cited in support, is an unreliable indicator of origin for two reasons: in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century inventories, “Damascene” was broadly applied to ceramics and metalwork of an Islamic style, some of which was neither made in nor imported from Damascus (see Spallanzani 1978, 105–106; 1989, 83, 86); and the carpets “from Damascus” could also be Mamluk or Turkish carpets marketed there (see Erdmann 1966, 538–539).

20. For a Mamluk re-entrant prayer rug, c. 1500, Cairo, Egypt (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin; inv. 83,30), see *Prayer Rugs* 1974, 46, fig. 19, and Mills 1991, fig. 3.

21. Ellis 1975, 19–31; Mills, “Lotto,” 1981, 278–289; *Il tappeto orientale* 1982, 29–31; King and Sylvester 1983, 67–70; Pinner 1988, 27–28; Ellis 1988, 25–36. The earliest certain representation of the “Lotto” field is in Sebastiano del Piombo's *Cardinal Bandinello Sauli, His Secretary and Two Geographers*, 1516 (National Gallery of Art, Washington), Mills, “Lotto,” 1981, fig. 1.

22. For figure 5 see Ellis 1988, 22–24. A small “Lotto” rug with the same field composition as the depicted carpet is in the Saint Louis Museum of Art, inv. no. 104: 1929 (ex-coll. James F. Ballard), see King and Sylvester 1983, 68. For larger examples, see Pinner 1988, fig. 19 (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, inv. no. 121) and *Il tappeto orientale* 1982, 29–31, pl. 7 (formerly Eskenazi, Milan). On one end of the Saint Louis and Eskenazi carpets the Kufesque border opens outward rather than inward, giving the pattern a directional emphasis; see *Il tappeto orientale* 1982, 30–31.

23. Cincinnati Museum of Art (inv. no. 1957.327), illustrated in *Hali* 14 (August 1992), 134.

24. The terms first used by Ellis (1975, 19–22) for different “Lotto” field styles—Anatolian, kilim, and ornamented—have stuck. Most experts believe the second and third also originated in Anatolia rather than Transylvania or the Balkans as Ellis proposed; see Mills, “Lotto,” 1981, 280–281, 288. For kilim-style “Lottos” in Italian paintings, see Mills, “Lotto,” 1981, figs. 7, 9. For the Istanbul carpet, see Aslanapa 1988, 73, pl. 64 (text gives the carpet's location as the Vakıflar Museum, Istanbul, but caption gives it as the Türk ve Islam Museum, Istanbul). Ellis (1975, 25) proposed that the depicted carpet might be an Italian imitation. Similarities

between the Istanbul carpet and the painted one support Mills' argument ("Lotto," 1981, 288) for its Anatolian origin.

25. See the Para-Mamluk carpet in the Textile Museum, Washington (inv. no. AR34.32.1), discussed in Kühnel and Bellinger 1957, 77–78, pls. XLV, XLVI, and King and Sylvester 1983, 66, and another formerly in the Campana Collection, Milan, illustrated in Gantzhorn 1991, 212, no. 325.

26. Erdmann 1966, 529–532; Spallanzani and Bertelà 1992, 8.

27. For example, in 1541, the Foundation of the Scuola di San Rocco in Venice decided to buy two carpets for altars and visits of ambassadors and other important persons, and in later years restricted rentals of the scuola's large carpets; Curatola 1986, 125–127.

28. The entry on the loan to Joanne Francesco da Monopoli specifies "un tapedo turchescho da mastabe alto di pelo et forma largo." On 30 April 1548, Lotto recorded that he had received money from Joanne Francesco to redeem the carpet and other items pawned with it. Lotto initiated the loan to Franceschini in December 1547, and on 1 January 1548, Lotto added to Franceschini's account "un tapedo da impegnar in getto per man de Piero mio garzon." On 8 January 1548, Lotto received money from Franceschini specifically to retrieve the carpet. Lotto presumably pawned a single carpet for both loans. *Libro* 1969, 74, 75, 38, 37, xxix, 410.

29. For example, Carlo Crivelli represented carpets on window ledges in paintings set in the contemporary Marches: *Annunciation*, 1482 (Staedelsches Institut, Frankfurt), and *Annunciation*, 1486 (National Gallery, London), illustrated in Zampetti 1986, pls. 65, 74.

30. For the British Museum drawing, inv. no. 1951.2.8.34, see Pouncey 1965, 16.

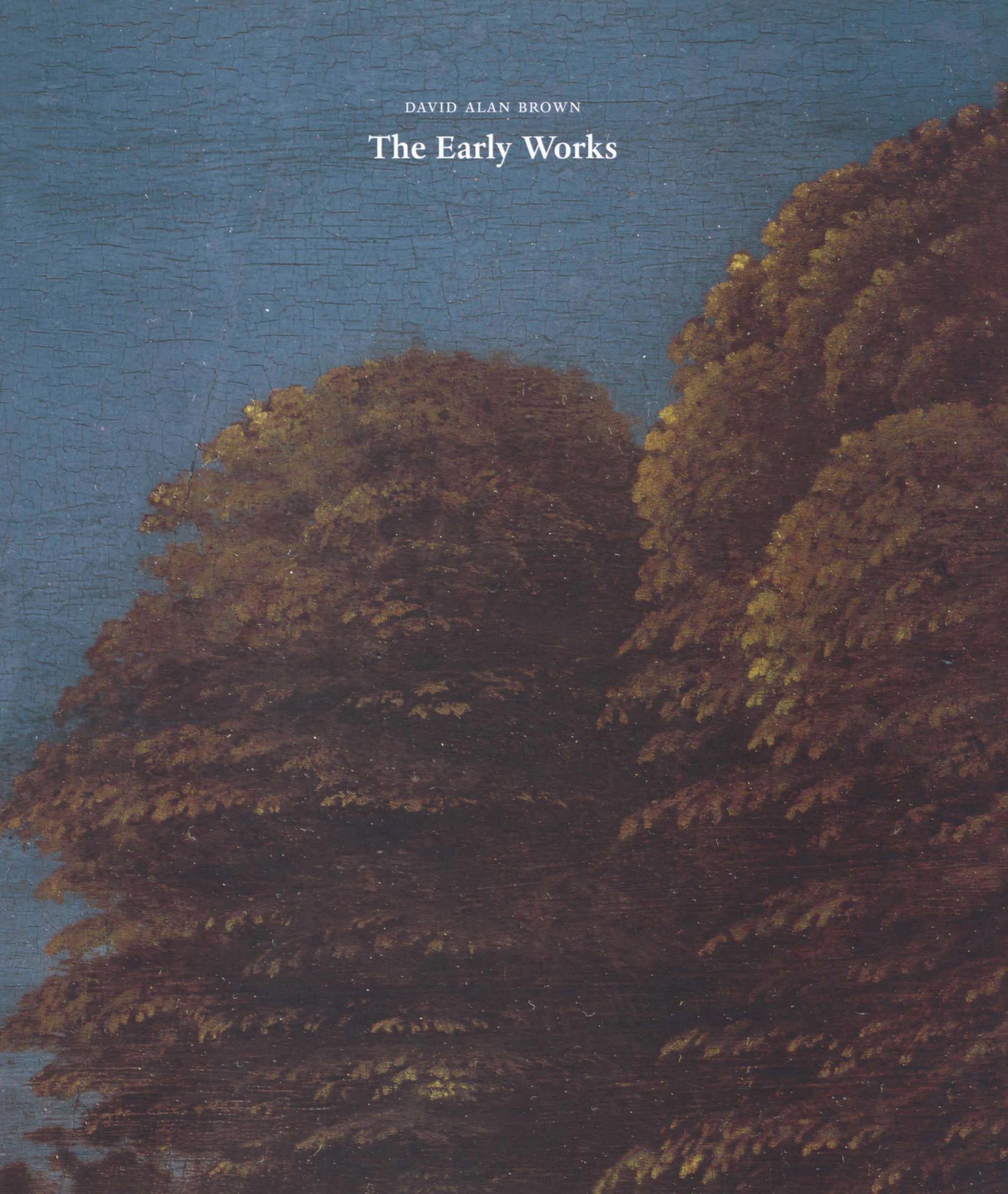
31. For example, four different re-entrant carpets are represented in the fresco attributed to Garofalo in the palace of Ludovico il Moro (Palazzo Costabili), Ferrara, c. 1505–1508, illustrated in Mills 1991, figs. 18 a–d. A fresco attributed to the School of Moretto in the Palazzo Martinengo-Salvadego, Brescia, before 1543, shows a rare pair of Mamluk carpets; Mills, "Lotto," 1981, fig. A2.

32. See the lists of re-entrant carpets in Italian paintings in Franses 1993. For an example of a late representation of a "small pattern Holbein" carpet with the Madonna, see Jacopo Bassano, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints Martin and Anthony Abbot*, c. 1540s (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), in Mills 1978, fig. 33.



DAVID ALAN BROWN

The Early Works



Madonna and Child with Saints Jerome, Peter, Clare (?), and Francis

c. 1505

oil on panel transferred to canvas, 82 x 105 (32 ⁵/₁₆ x 41 ⁵/₁₆)

signed, on scroll: L. LOTUS F.

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

ALTHOUGH LOTTO'S PICTURE in its present state lacks the elaborate detail of his other early works, the basic forms are all intact, and the beauty of his color was revealed by cleaning in 1991. Most important, the painting provides a key to understanding his artistic origins. Despite the efforts of generations of scholars (Dal Pozzolo 1993, 44–45 n. 1), Lotto's formation remains a matter of debate. Did he work in the Marches a decade or so before first being documented there in 1506 (Coletti 1939, 1953, 30–31; Zampetti 1980, 14–15)? Or if he received his training in Venice, was it from Giovanni Bellini (Pignatti 1983, 178–179; Vasari 1568, 1880 ed., 5: 249–250 and the other early sources), or from Alvise Vivarini (Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 307)? Or was Lotto influenced by the culture that he encountered in the Venetian mainland city of Treviso (Sgarbi 1977; Lucco 1981), where he may possibly have been active as early as 1498 (Liberali 1963, 4–6, 69; Gargan 1981, 1, 9, doc. no. 1)?

We can be quite sure that our artist was born in Venice circa 1480, but no records survive to shed light on his training. For that we must turn to the visual evidence offered by his early works. In the category of devotional images, the present picture belongs to a series of three so-called *sacre conversazioni*, which Lotto completed in Treviso between 1503 and 1506. Together these three works show the young artist emerging from the shadow of his former teacher. None of the pictures in question is dated, but the three may be arranged in a chronological sequence on the basis of style. The present painting bears a close stylistic resemblance to the altarpiece of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints* that Lotto completed between 1504 and 1506 for the church of Santa Cristina al Tiverone at Quinto near Treviso. These two paintings evidently precede the more advanced *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich), and they follow the *Madonna and Child with Saint Peter Martyr* (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples), which bears the date 1503 on the reverse. The Virgin and child in the Naples picture comprise an exact copy of a lost original by Bellini, known in many versions (Heinemann 1962, 1: 37–38, no. 135; 1991, 3: 17–18, nos. 135 ae–ah). Since Bellini was thus the main, if not the only, source for Lotto's earliest extant work, it follows that Bellini was probably his teacher. As a pupil, Lotto would have immersed himself in his master's production from the end of the fifteenth century.

The Edinburgh painting confirms what can be deduced from the Naples *Madonna and Child with Saint Peter Martyr*, namely that Giovanni Bellini was in all likelihood Lotto's master. The Bellini reflected here, however, is not the one under whom Lotto had trained but rather the author of the great San Zaccaria altarpiece of 1505. On a visit to Venice in 1505–1506, Albrecht Dürer described Bellini as “very old but still the best in painting,” and this high estimate is reflected in Lotto's Edinburgh picture of about the same date. Lotto, who had been working in Treviso, seems to have returned to his native Venice, where he was deeply impressed by the change in Bellini's style. He adopted the older master's current figural typology and compositional symmetry, as well as his crinkled draperies and his palette featuring bright blue and red set off against a green background. In one respect, however, Bellini provided an inadequate model: for the expressive role of hands in the painting—and for the motif of the curtain separating the figures from the landscape—Lotto seems to have consulted Alvise Vivarini's otherwise rather old-fashioned altarpiece of 1480, then in the church of San Francesco in Treviso (Dal Pozzolo 1993).

In the Edinburgh painting Lotto adopted a compositional type familiar in the work of Bellini and his shop, consisting of the slightly elevated Virgin and child flanked by two pairs of saints. But whereas Bellini's three-quarter-length figures are typically detached from each other and from the viewer, as if lost in meditation, Lotto chose to depict a real colloquy. The younger artist activates the static Bellinesque formula by having the Child scrutinize the scroll held up to him by the aged Jerome and by representing the Virgin in dialogue with Saint Francis, as she reacts to the stigmata that he displays. The other two saints are equally differentiated: Peter looks out at the viewer, while Clare (?), her head bent in profile, prays. Lotto's figures communicate, not least by their large, expressive hands. While the overall mood of the picture is serious, Lotto seemingly injected a note of humor: the figure of the Christ child, with his little skirt, bends stiffly to inspect the scroll bearing the artist's signature. The X-radiograph of the picture, which curator Aidan Weston-Lewis kindly discussed with me, shows that Lotto took special pains with the Child's pose: originally the proper right leg was bent.



All aspects of the painting are at the service of its devotional content. For Bellini's gentle illumination, Lotto has substituted a sharper, more selective light, which picks out the Virgin's raised hand, for example. The green curtain bisecting the picture horizontally also functions as an expressive device, focusing attention on the figures in the foreground. As Gentili has demonstrated (1985), Saints Jerome and Francis have a prophetic role, announcing or alluding to Christ's Passion. Thus, Jerome (if he is that saint and not an Old Testament prophet) wears a priestly stole and carries a scroll presumably indicating the infant's future self-sacrifice. Identifying attributes are missing in the case of their female companion, who, associated as she is with Francis, may be Saint Clare.

The foreground theme is underscored by the incident depicted in the landscape, which, as shown by the X-radiograph, originally extended below the curtain, suggesting that Lotto may have initially intended a pure landscape background. The Madonna's head tilts toward a scene of woodcutters felling trees in reference to Christ's suffering and death (Luke 23: 28–31). Here again, as with the principal figures, Lotto's source seems to be Bellini: two depictions of the Death of Saint Peter Martyr by the master and his shop include woodcutters in the background (Gentili 1985, 112–113). Even if Bellini's composition postdates Lotto's (Fletcher and Skipsey 1991), the parallel use of the same theme can hardly be coincidental. Employing allegory to cast light on the main subject of a work would become a fundamental characteristic of Lotto's art.

By about 1505 the young Lotto had developed an expressive artistic language within the mode established by his former teacher. Where Lotto's picture differs from Bellini's example, it does so mainly in ways that connect with his own later production. But if Lotto's interpretation of Bellini's manner is highly individual, the personal traits exhibited by the Edinburgh picture are not necessarily modern in the sense that the innovations of two other pupils of Bellini—Giorgione and Titian—entered the mainstream of Venetian art. Two or three copies, nevertheless, attest to the popularity of Lotto's composition (Berenson 1955, 1956; Sotheby's, New York, 3 October 1996, lot 80). And they include details such as Saint Francis' stigmata, no longer visible in the original. Further echoes can be detected in a *sacra conversazione* by the follower of Cima da Conegliano known as Luca Antonio Busati (Tempestini 1993, fig. 18; see also Tempestini 1981, 112–113, fig. 4; Sgarbi 1981, 229–230, fig. 1; Dal Pozzolo 1992).

PROVENANCE: Duc d'Orléans, Paris, by 1727; sold to the Duke of Bridgewater in 1798; Dukes of Sutherland, Bridgewater House; on loan to the National Gallery of Scotland from 1946 to 1984; acquired by the National Gallery in 1984

LITERATURE: Dubois de Saint Gelais 1727, 294–295; Ottley and Tomkins 1818, 2: 31–32; Passavant 1836, 1: 130; Waagen 1838, 2: 51–52; Jameson 1844, 109, no. 59; Bridgewater 1851, 15, no. 90; Waagen 1854, 2: 33; Morelli 1886, 37; Morelli 1893, 256; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 6–7; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 11; Berenson 1901, 4–5; Cust and Bourke 1903, no. 16; Bridgewater 1926, 18, no. 90; Venturi 1929, 9.4: 113 n. 1; Berenson 1932, 309; Berenson 1936, 265; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 65, no. 8; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 39; Berenson 1955, 24; Bianconi 1955, 37; Berenson 1956, 8–9; Berenson 1957, 1: 102; Bianconi 1963, 1: 35; Caroli 1975, 98–99; Mariani Canova 1975, 89, no. 13; Brigstocke 1978, 73–74; Caroli 1980, 80–81; Longhi 1980, 113–115; Béguin 1981, 100; Muraro 1981, 304; Sgarbi 1981, 225–226, 229–230; Spiazzi 1981, 104–106; Tempestini 1981, 112–113; Trevisani 1981, 287–288; Bensi 1983–1985, 91–92, 110n, fig. 58; Gentili 1985, 105–117; Dal Pozzolo 1992, 78 n. 50; Brigstocke 1993, 93–95; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 34–37, 40, 46n; Humfrey 1995, 141; Humfrey 1997, 21–25, 168n

Portrait of Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi

1505

oil on panel, 54.7 x 41.3 (21 5/16 x 16 1/4)

Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples

HOWEVER PROBLEMATICAL HIS LATER career became, Lotto's beginnings as an artist in Treviso were truly glorious. In 1505, at the age of only twenty-five, he was called "pictor celeberrimus" (*Libro* 1969, 321; Gargan 1980, 13, doc. 11). His outstanding talents won him the patronage of Bernardo de' Rossi, named bishop of Treviso in 1499. Working for this newly appointed prelate as a court artist, in effect, Lotto would naturally have painted his patron's likeness. Happily, both the portrait and Lotto's original painted cover (cat. 3) survive. The Naples painting was first recognized as Lotto's work by Adolfo Venturi, according to Biscaro (1901), who having identified the sitter as Rossi (1898) linked the picture with a mention of Lotto's portrait in a Farnese inventory of 1680 (Bertini 1987). With the passage of the Farnese collection from Rossi's native Parma to Naples, the identity of the sitter and Lotto's authorship of the portrait were forgotten.

The painting undoubtedly represents Bernardo Rossi. Dressed in a rose-colored *mozzetta*, or elbow-length cape (which preserves remnants of a darker red-lake glaze), and a black beret, Rossi wears a seal ring that bears (in reverse) the bishop's coat-of-arms, a lion rampant to the left, which also reappears on the por-

trait cover. And his features—fleshy face, pointed nose, and hair curling around the ears—agree with those in Rossi's image (fig. 1) on his medal (Hill 1930, 1: 157, no. 612). (Another portrait of Rossi bearing his *impresa*, the repainted terracotta bust attributed to Riccio in the Cappella dell'Annunziata in the Duomo in Treviso [Coletti 1921], is apparently less accurate.) Proof that Lotto's painting does indeed represent Rossi comes from the painted cover, inscribed on its reverse with the subject's name and exact age (thirty-six years, ten months, and five days) at the time the painting was completed, in July 1505. Rossi's portrait is almost certainly identical either to a "quadro dove è retratato suso la figura de Monsignore rev.mo di Rossi" mentioned in an inventory of his possessions, dated 4 July 1511, or to a "quadro cum uno retrato del Rev.mo vechio" cited in another such inventory of 25 April 1511 (Gargan 1980; Liberali 1981; Dal Pozzolo 1993; Humfrey 1997).

Lotto's portrait of Rossi, like his *Madonna and Child with Saints* (cat. 1) of the same date, occupies a middle or transitional place between more and less Bellinesque works in his oeuvre. It is preceded by a portrait in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Glück 1910), in which the bust-length format, unfocused gaze of the sitter, and signature on a stone parapet all derive from Bellini's example. The third in the series of early male portraits is the compelling *Youth* of c. 1508, also in Vienna, which marks Lotto's emancipation from the Bellini type. Lotto's portrayal of a high ecclesiastic official of 1505 clearly echoes Bellini's great *Portrait of Doge Loredan* of c. 1501 (National Gallery, London), both in the realistic treatment of the features and costume and in the sitter's air of authority. Going beyond Bellini, the candid, literally "warts-and-all" naturalism of Lotto's portrait must be based on life studies of the kind that have frequently been attributed to the younger artist (Pouncey 1965; Rearick 1981, 28–29).

More than just a realistic likeness, Lotto's portrait displays the same overriding concern with expression manifested in his *Madonna and Child with Saints* (cat. 1). The striking physical and psychological presence of the sitter accounts for the old attribution of this and other early works by Lotto to northern artists such as Hans Holbein (De Castris, *Capodimonte*, 1995) or Jacopo de' Barbari (Berenson 1901), and for the comparison often made to Dürer (Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953; 1981). The source for this aspect of Lotto's



fig. 1. Follower of Francesco Francia, *Bernardo de' Rossi* (obverse), c. 1519, bronze. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection 1957.14.780

portraiture, however, is Antonello da Messina and his tradition in Venice. Like Antonello and his followers, Lotto posed his sitter in three-quarter view to the left, with the eyes turned to gaze intently at the beholder. But whereas Antonello had concentrated on the head, setting it off against a dark background, Lotto here adopted his favorite motif of the bright green curtain, and he included the sitter's hand. The expanded format of the Naples painting, *vis-à-vis* Antonello, links it in turn to a group of late-fifteenth-century portraits by Alvise Vivarini, Andrea Solario, and other artists active in Venice. The larger scale of these works permitted their authors in each case to include the sitter's hand and to vary the background (Steer 1982, 141, no. 16; Brown 1987, 37, 41, 44–48, 67–68, no. 2, 70–71, no. 7). The model for the amplified portrait type was evidently Perugino's *Francesco delle Opere* of 1494 (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence); having been painted in Venice, this is a work with which Lotto may well have been familiar. With the sitter's forearms forming a pyramidal base for his bust and head, Lotto's portrait also bears a telling resemblance to the cartoon (Musée du Louvre, Paris) for a portrait of Isabella d'Este, which Leonardo is known to have had with him in Venice in 1500 (Brown 1992, 304, no. 47).

Not just the structure but even the smallest details in Lotto's painting serve to characterize the sitter. Thus, the folds of the green curtain frame Rossi's head, focusing attention on the penetrating glance of his cold blue eyes. And the buttons of his cape lead to the hand holding the scroll. The clenched fist in particular lends the sitter a resolute quality, which accords perfectly with what we know about the circumstances of his life (Liberali 1981). As an outsider from Parma, Rossi quickly came into conflict both with the local authorities and with Girolamo Contarini, the Venetian *podestà* (governor) of Treviso. The reforms he instituted undermined their control of ecclesiastical affairs, to the extent that disgruntled members of the Onigo family, in league with the governor, tried to assassinate the bishop in September 1503 (Biscaro 1930). Rossi survived this attempt on his life, but the hostility provoked by his combative personality and policies forced him to flee Treviso in 1510 (although he held office until his death in 1527).

An altarpiece representing the Incredulity of Saint Thomas, in the church of San Nicolò in Treviso, features an obvious copy (in reverse) of Lotto's portrait. The altarpiece, in which Rossi figures as one of a group of donors, formerly was attributed to Lotto himself (Biscaro 1898, 148–149), but recently has been assigned to Luca Antonio Busati, a follower of Cima da Conegliano (Tempestini 1993), whose oeuvre also reflects a knowledge of Lotto's early *Madonna and Child with Saints* (cat. 1).

PROVENANCE: Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi, Treviso, Venice and Parma, 1511–1527; acquired, possibly from his heirs, by the Farnese family of Parma before 1680; transferred with much of the rest of their collection to Naples, 1734; Palazzo e Museo di Capodimonte, Naples (De Castris, *Farnese and Capodimonte*, 1995)

LITERATURE: Campori 1870, 229; Berenson 1894, 80; Frizzoni 1895, 23; Biscaro 1898, 145–146; Berenson 1901, 90; Biscaro 1901, 161; Frizzoni 1906, 186–187; Glück 1910, 214, 217–219; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 394 n. 4, 428n; Venturi 1915, 7.4: 628–630, 758–762; Coletti 1921, 411–414; De Rinaldis 1928, 168–170, no. 57; Venturi 1929, 9.4: 113n; Berenson 1932, 310; Glück 1933, 2: 269, 272–274, 283–284; Borenius 1934, 231; Berenson 1936, 266; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 65, no. 10; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 36–37; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 28–31; Zampetti 1953, 16–17, no. 8; Pignatti 1954, 173; Berenson 1955, 16–17; Bianconi 1955, 37; Berenson 1956, 1–2; Berenson 1957, 1: 104; Molajoli 1957, 61; Bianconi 1963, 1: 35; Liberali 1963, 26–27, 33; Brizio, *Arte*, 1964, 8: col. 707; Brizio, *Art*, 1964, 9: col. 345; Seidenberg 1964, 38–40; Cogliati Arano 1965, 25; Pouncey 1965, 9–10; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 214–216; Steer 1970, 110–113, 127; Freedberg 1971, 206; Gilbert 1973, 194, 263; Caroli 1975, 81, 102–103; Mariani Canova 1975, 87, no. 8; Ruckelshausen 1975, 80; De Logu and Marinelli 1976, 2: 56; Galis 1977, 212–217, 251 n. 33, 402–406; Sgarbi 1977, 42, 45–47; Caroli 1980, 84–85; Gargan 1980, 17–18, no. 15; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 15, 26; Meller 1980, 328; Trevisani 1980, 81; Cali 1981, 254; Guarino 1981, 44; Liberali 1981, 74–75, 83, 90; Pignatti 1981, 94; Tempestini 1981, 112; Gentili 1983, 76–78; Pignatti 1983, 180; Sgarbi 1983, 231–237; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 35, no. 1; Gentili 1985, 76–79; Bertini 1987, 133, 246; Campbell 1990, 67, 254 n. 125; Dülberg 1990, 13–14, 33, 92, 143–144, 238–239, no. 187; Manzato 1992, 3: 255; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 37–39; Colalucci 1994, 7; Museo 1994, 77; Caroli 1995, 31–32; De Castris, *Farnese*, 1995, 166–167, no. 2; De Castris, *Capodimonte*, 1995, 2: 35–36; Hochmann 1995, 118; Humfrey 1995, 138–139; Humfrey 1997, 9–10, 167 n. 7



3

Allegory of Virtue and Vice

1505

oil on panel, 56.5 x 42.2 (22 ¼ x 16 ⅝)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

NO OTHER WORK BY LOTTO has attracted more scholarly attention in recent years, perhaps, than this fascinating little *Allegory*. The basic facts have long been known: Padre Affò described the painting, then in Parma, and reported, as early as 1791, the Latin inscription on its reverse, identifying both the artist and his patron: BERNARD. RUBEUS/BERCETI COM. PONT/TARVIS. NAT./ANN. XXXVI. MENS. X. D. V./LAURENT. LOTUS P. CAL./IVL. M. D. V. Federici (1803) cited the inscription again (with minor changes in wording) to demonstrate that Lotto came from Treviso. Morelli located the picture with a painter named Gritti in his native Bergamo (1880). The subsequent whereabouts of the painting were unknown to Glück (1910), who, nevertheless, connected the early mentions of it with Lotto's portrait of Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi (cat. 2) at Capodimonte in Naples. Glück proposed that the *Allegory* may originally have served as a protective cover for the Naples portrait. As additional evidence for the connection, he noted that both works could be traced to Parma, where Rossi died in 1527. Glück's brilliant intuition was confirmed when Borenus (1934) rediscovered the ex-Gritti picture in London. Borenus observed that the composition corresponds to the early descriptions of the picture, and, most important, that the dimensions of the portrait and the proposed cover agree.

Lotto's picture was undoubtedly painted for his first patron. The de' Rossi family coat-of-arms—a white lion rampant on an azure field—adorns the shield in the center of the composition, and the same *impresa* appears on the signet ring worn by the bishop in the Naples portrait. In addition, the inscription once on the back reads "Bernardo Rossi of Berceto, Papal Count [Bishop] of Treviso, age 36 years, 10 months, 5 days. Painted by Lorenzo Lotto. July 1, 1505." Affò (1791) stated that the inscription was painted on the reverse. Although he also knew the picture, Morelli (1880) gave the slightly different reading of Federici (1803). By the time the *Allegory* came to light in London in 1934, the inscription on the back had disappeared, probably when the panel was planed down for an armature that was applied to it. A paper label attached to the armature accurately repeated the inscription in the form in which it was seen by Affò. When this armature was removed and a new cradle attached in 1935, however, even the label had disappeared (as reported by Shapley 1979). This loss may have occurred when the picture was restored in 1934.

That the *Allegory* once formed the cover for Rossi's portrait in Naples is accepted by all scholars. As if complementing the portrait, the inscription once on the back of the cover gives the exact age of the sitter on 1 July 1505 (CAL. IVL. = *calendae Julii*, the first day of the month in the Roman calendar). Subtracting Rossi's age "36 years, 10 months, and 5 days" from 1 July 1505, we get the date of his birth, 26 August 1468, known from other sources. Lotto claimed to have painted such covers both early (see cat. 6) and late (*Libro* 1969, 42) in his career. In fact, the Rossi portrait had a cover: the inventory of the bishop's possessions made in Treviso in 1510 lists a "coverta del quadro del retratto" (Liberali 1963; Gargan 1980; Liberali 1981), while two further inventories made in the following year list the portrait itself (cat. 2). Both pictures were carefully remeasured for this exhibition: the dimensions of the portrait are 54.7 x 41.3 (21 ⅞ x 16 ¼), while the cover measures 56.5 x 42.2 (22 ¼ x 16 ⅝). The *Allegory* is thus a bit larger horizontally and vertically.

Though the use of painted covers for portraits may once have been fairly common, few survive today. Lotto's *Allegory* was evidently of the sliding, rather than the hinged, cover type. The slightly larger panel slipped in and out of a groove in the frame, as is suggested by its unpainted and relatively wide margins at top and bottom. The original arrangement was probably similar to that in Dürer's *Portrait of Hieronymus Holzschuher* of 1526 in Berlin (Dülberg 1990, 190, no. 45), in which both the likeness and its cover are preserved intact. Dürer's cover features a heraldic design. Lotto opted for a much more elaborate composition, involving figures in a landscape, which can be admired for its own sake apart from its intended function. The temptation to treat the panel as an independent work of art, or in other words to remove it, must have been great. Since Lotto's portrait cover is listed separately in the Rossi inventories of 1510–1511, it may, in fact, have been physically detached shortly after it was painted. If that is the case, then the Naples portrait and the cover in Washington are here reunited for the first time in nearly five hundred years (the *Allegory* was not in the Lotto exhibition of 1953).

Borenus (1934) not only rediscovered the *Allegory*, he was also the first to pose a question that runs like a *leitmotif* through the literature: what relation does the painting bear to Giorgione (*Zampetti* 1983), in particular to his famous *Tempesta*? Many writers, includ-





ing Pignatti (1953, 1954, 1981, 1983), concur that Lotto was influenced by Giorgione's masterwork. The exact contemporaneity of the two paintings (Giorgione's is usually dated about 1506) allows for the possibility, however, that the *Allegory* actually precedes the *Tempesta*. It is indicative of Lotto's ever-rising stature in our century that his possible priority over Giorgione in this respect should even be mooted (Morassi 1953; Steer 1970; Pochat 1973). The truth is that, whatever the relation between these two pictures, it was undoubtedly the slightly older Giorgione who, around the turn of the century, invented the new pastoral landscape genre that revolutionized Venetian Renaissance painting. This and other early works by Lotto (cats. 5, 6) offer an alert response to the new genre, but they differ in essential ways from the Giorgione type. Lotto's treatment of landscape forms, especially the foliage, betrays a knowledge of Dürer's prints (Humfrey 1997). And in the sense that it is explicitly moralizing, the Washington painting harks back to similar works by Giovanni Bellini (Cieri Via in *Giorgione*, 1981).

Beyond these pictorial sources, the *Allegory* draws on the iconographic tradition of Hercules at the Crossroads (Tervarent 1959) and related themes. The painting presents the intended viewer, Rossi, with a moral choice between virtue and vice. This choice is expressed in terms of a series of contrasts between the figures, their actions, and their attributes, which extends to their setting. Unlike the *Tempesta*, Lotto's landscape is a *paysage moralisé*, or moralized landscape, divided by the central tree stump into two zones, with lush green vegetation and a dark storm on the right and stark terrain below a clearing sky on the left. In this way the cover comments on the sitter's character while at the same time displaying Lotto's outstanding gifts as a landscape painter.

With the removal in 1995 of discolored varnish and repaint, many of the iconographic elements have become more legible. The broken tree stump from which springs a living branch, for example, is not Minerva's laurel, as one might deduce from the goddess' gorgon-headed shield suspended from the trunk by a fluttering pink ribbon. Lotto depicts the laurel correctly in the so-called *Maiden's Dream* (cat. 5). Nor is the tree an oak, as some writers have argued (Gentili 1980; Dülberg 1990, 144 n. 917), as it differs from the oak with its characteristic leaves and acorns in the artist's Asolo altarpiece of 1506. A third suggestion, that of an olive, proposed by Galis (1977, 193), Mariani Canova (1975), and Pochat (1985), is possible, as this tree was also sacred to Minerva, but the foliage of the living branch is too generic, perhaps, to make a definite identification. On the other hand, the meadow in which the drunken satyr sprawls can now be seen to include tiny red, white, and blue flowers, as well as the previously unnoticed motif of clusters of purple grapes with bright green leaves. The grapes link a cup of wine with an overturned jug (occasionally mistaken for a skull) spilling red wine onto the flowery ground. Before the grapes is a wooden ladle containing milk, which serves to identify the white liquid spilling from a second jug. While the overturned vessels stand for intemperance, the motif of "spilled milk" specifically



fig. 1. Venetian School, *Allegory*, c. 1530, oil on panel. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. G. H. Alexander Clowes

symbolizes the failure of good beginnings (Andreas Alciatus 1985, 1, no. 141; 2, no. 141).

The objects grouped around Rossi's shield have also emerged more clearly. They include a pair of books bound in red, as well as various geometrical and musical instruments. The wingless putto holds a pair of dividers with which he begins to inscribe a geometric figure in the stony ground. Lying before him are a square, a protractor, and another pair of dividers, together with what appears to be a plumb line and a round disk, perhaps marking the degrees of a circle. To these measuring tools are added a scroll with musical notes and three instruments—panpipes, a horn, and a flute or recorder—of the rustic type, which the satyr has abandoned in his pursuit of vice. Together these implements stand for cultural or intellectual activities that flourish under Rossi's aegis. The background meanwhile illustrates the consequences of the choices presented in the foreground. A ship—not a sea-monster, as critics once believed—is shown sinking in a storm; that the motif is a ship is indicated by a sail revealed during the recent treatment. On the left side a second putto, who has sprouted multiple pairs of wings, ascends the steep path leading to spiritual enlightenment. The technical examination made in connection with the recent cleaning reveals that the mountaintop disappearing into the clouds was painted over the distant mountain range, which originally continued to the left edge of the painting. The second putto and

the summit bathed in light were not part of the artist's original conception, therefore.

The more recent literature on the painting attempts to integrate the above-mentioned elements into a coherent whole. While these iconographic interpretations may scant the aesthetic qualities of the picture, they rightly seek to define its nature as an allegory. According to Galis (1977), Lotto's imagery derives from Plato and Petrarch, while Pochat (1985), following Liberali (1963), argues that the Petrarchan contrast of opposites illustrates the circumstances of Rossi's life. To the historical interpretation should be added those of Gentili (1980, 1985, 1988) and of Cortesi Bosco (1987, 1990), who find reflected in the painting Rossi's values, as known from his reading. For Gentili the painting extols Rossi's fortitude in facing his enemies, analogous to that of the biblical Job, while Cortesi Bosco claims that the mystical writings of the renowned French theologian Jean Gerson, which Rossi had in his library (Liberali 1981, 87), determined Lotto's conception. The cultural and intellectual milieu in which the picture was painted has also been examined by Gargan (1980, 1–31).

Working for Rossi in Treviso between 1503 and 1506, Lotto could easily have been exposed to the hermetic studies of Piero Valeriano and other members of the bishop's retinue. He even portrayed a leading humanist in Rossi's circle—Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli, the author of an alchemical poem entitled *Chrysopoieia* (see cat. 6). In addition, Lotto would undoubtedly have known Francesco Colonna's fantastic *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a copy of which belonged to Rossi's secretary (Gargan 1980, 31). But no amount of erudition will ever change the fact that Lotto's painting is basically an allegory of virtue and vice. A more interesting question, ultimately, than that of tracing its literary or philosophical sources has to do with who was responsible for the painting's thematic content. The symbolism Lotto employs here does not seem particularly esoteric. It may well reflect hermetic thought, but equally important, perhaps, is the artist's own lifelong predilection for emblems and allegories of all sorts. This propensity also affects Lotto's later portraits, in which the emblems are integrated with his depictions of the sitters. Lotto's symbolic language is best seen in his designs for the intarsias decorating the choir of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo. We know from the artist's correspondence with his patrons that the subjects for the allegorical covers of the biblical scenes (*Libro* 1969, 285–286) are personal inventions. We are led to wonder, therefore, whether it was not Lotto himself, rather than Rossi, who came up with the idea for the portrait cover meant to flatter and intrigue his patron.

A variant (fig. 1) of Lotto's *Allegory*, also in the National Gallery, Washington, originally seems to have formed the cover for a portrait (Dülberg 1990, 293–294, no. 332). Cataloguing this work, Shapley (1979, 246–247) suggested that the portrait in question was the *Lady* now in the Kress Collection in the Portland Art Museum (Shapley 1968, 175). A more likely candidate, because closer in dimensions, is another *Portrait of a Lady* (Caccialupi 1978, 30) in

Berlin. Clearly inspired by the Rossi portrait cover, the second *Washington Allegory* and the portraits in Portland and Berlin are now generally attributed to Pietro degli Ingannati, whose work has been confused with that of another Lotto imitator, Luca Antonio Busati (about him see cats. 1, 2). The second *Washington Allegory* takes over, and greatly simplifies, the essential elements of the Lotto prototype—the putto with dividers and other instruments and the satyr with the jug, flanking a central tree stump with a living branch and a coat-of-arms, all in a symbolic landscape. To these is added the motif of a sleeping nymph surprised by a satyr, modeled on a well-known woodcut illustrating the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in Venice in 1499. The inclusion of lechery, as well as drunkenness, on the side of vice relates Ingannati's *Allegory* to Lotto's second portrait cover (cat. 5) in Washington as well.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Bernardo de' Rossi, Treviso (1510) and Parma; Antonio Bertoli, Parma, by 1791; Giacomo Gritti, Bergamo, by 1880 to c. 1891, when sent, according to Berenson (1895), to London, where rediscovered (Borenus 1934) and sold Sotheby's, 9 May 1934 (lot no. 129); Contini Bonacossi collection, Florence; purchased by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1935, and donated to the National Gallery of Art, 1939

LITERATURE: Affò 1791, 3: 200–201; Federici 1803, 2: 5–6; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 497 n. 1; Morelli 1880, 33; Morelli 1883, 33; Morelli 1886, 37; Morelli 1891, 63, 73, no. 1; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 7; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 11; Berenson 1901, 5; Glück 1910, 217–219, 223–224; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 3: 394 n. 2; Glück 1933, 272–274, 282, 284; Borenus 1934, 228; *Catalogue* 1934, 26, no. 129; Kieslinger 1938–1939, 62–65; Suida 1940, 278; *National Gallery* 1941, 114–115; Morassi 1942, 147, 186; *Masterpieces* 1944, 70–71; Frankfurter 1944, 75; Pallucchini 1944, 1: xxvii; Wilde 1950, 350; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 66, no. 11; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 36–37; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 449; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 21–22; Morassi 1953, 292; Nicco Fasola 1954, 104; Pigler 1954, 166; Pignatti 1954, 171–172; Berenson 1955, 17–18; Bianconi 1955, 37; Berenson 1956, 2–4; Berenson 1957, 1: 107; Tervarent 1959, 2: cols. 389–390; Shapley 1960, 26–27; Bianconi 1963, 1: 35–36; Liberali 1963, 23–26; Walker 1963, 138–139; Praz 1964, 50–51; Seidenberg 1964, 39–40; *Pageant* 1966, 1: 170–171; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 214–216; Gibbons 1968, 111; Shapley 1968, 157–158; Steer 1970, 87, 104; Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 113, 278, 491, 645; Gilbert 1973, 194, 263; Pochat 1973, 385–387; Gentili 1974, 258 n. 27; Kiel 1974, 308–309; Kuretsky 1974, 576; Caroli 1975, 104–105; Mariani Canova 1975, 87–88, no. 9; Pallucchini 1975, 6; Galis 1977, 192–203, 245–248, 447–457, no. 84; Gandolfo 1978, 32–33; Anderson 1979, 643; Shapley 1979, 1: 277–280; Caroli 1980, 86–87; Gargan 1980, 17–18; Gentili 1980, 49–53, 202–203; Longhi 1980, 111 n. 11, 113n; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 15, 27; Albani Liberali 1981, 425, 429; Béguin 1981, 99, 101; Liberali 1981, 74–75, 78; Pignatti 1981, 95; Puppi 1981, 393–394; Volpe 1981, 128; Jacobsen 1982, 624–625; Murutes 1983, 2: 113, 134; Pignatti 1983, 180; Sgarbi 1983, 233–234; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 35, no. 2; Goldfarb 1984, 420 n. 9; Gentili 1985, 78–79, 84–87, 89–92; Pochat 1985, 5–7; Anderson 1987, 2: 563; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 177–178, 346–348; Gentili 1988, 80–84, 98; Rosand 1988, 76, 258, no. 15; Campbell 1990, 67, 254 n. 125; Cortesi Bosco 1990, 70–72; Dülberg 1990, 13–14, 33, 92, 143–144, 238–239, no. 187; Lippincott 1990, 74; Bucher 1992, 189; Cortesi Bosco 1992, 25, 43, 46; Dal Pozzolo 1992, 103–104, 114; Manzato 1992, 3: 255; Ballarin 1993, 309; Aikema 1994, 101; Colalucci 1994, 6–7; Dal Pozzolo 1995, 30–35; Humfrey 1995, 138–139; Humfrey 1997, 10–12, 167n, 168n

4 Portrait of a Lady

1505–1506
oil on panel, 36 x 28 (14 ³/₁₆ x 11)
Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon

THE CHARM THAT PORTRAITISTS such as Titian lent to their female sitters seems to have been reserved, in Lotto's case, for his beguiling representations of Saint Catherine. Lotto painted relatively few female portraits, in fact, of which this is the earliest to survive. The rather severe likeness of a lady who has yet to be definitively identified was first ascribed to Lotto by Morelli's disciple Gustavo Frizzoni (1906). His attribution was accepted by all later writers, except for Longhi, who, according to a note in the museum files, assigned the picture about 1922 to Jacopo de' Barbari, as did Magnin in the museum catalogue of 1933. Scholars nearly all agree, too, in dating the picture to Lotto's early period in Treviso on the basis of the strong stylistic resemblance it bears to the *Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi* (cat. 2), which can be precisely dated to 1505. Like that portrait, this one may once have had a cover, the so-called *Maiden's Dream* (cat. 5) in the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Although some writers have dated the *Portrait of a Lady* before the *Bernardo Rossi* (Liberali 1963; Galis 1977, 217; Liberali 1981; Gentili 1985) in line with their identification of the sitter, stylistic considerations favor a slightly later date of 1505–1506. This painting, like the artist's *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) marks a definite advance over the still very Bellinesque *Madonna and Child with Saints* of 1503 (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples). Its restricted palette, in which the black and white of the sitter's costume play an unusually prominent role, looks forward to the *Portrait of a Youth* of c. 1508 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). As with Rossi, Lotto portrayed his female sitter before a green curtain (but with no strip of blue sky above), the true beauty of which was revealed by cleaning (*Conservation* 1983). Also as in the Rossi portrait, the light, coming from the left side rather than from above, has an incandescent quality, with reflections enlivening the shadowed side of the sitter's face. Close parallels occur in the *Saint Catherine* and, in a more general way, in the figures in Lotto's Santa Cristina altarpiece of 1504–1506.

Again like the Naples portrait, the *Lady* was traditionally ascribed to Holbein. Lotto's highly realistic treatment of the features is reinforced by an unsparingly frank characterization. He refused to flatter his female sitter, who wears no jewelry and whose light brown hair is pulled back in a net cap, emphasizing

her rather ungainly features. The sheer scarf over the bosom likewise fails to disguise her corpulence. The identity of the sitter has been a subject of speculation. Liberali (1963, 1981) suggested Bishop Rossi's sister Giovanna, the widow of Giovanni Battista Malaspina, who lived with her brother first in Belluno and then (after 1499) in Treviso until her death in 1502. Although no authentic portrait of the lady exists for comparison, Liberali's hypothesis was tentatively accepted by Galis (1977, 217) and Dülberg (1990) and without reservation by Gentili (1985). The problem with this identification, however attractive, is that since Giovanna de' Rossi died in 1502, her portrait, stylistically datable to 1505–1506, would have to be posthumous, commissioned by Rossi as a memento of his dead sister. Although Giovanna bequeathed her property to her brother, no such picture (or its cover) is mentioned in the 1510 and 1511 inventories of his possessions, which do include other works identifiable today as Lotto's (cats. 2, 3, 6).

Whoever she was, Lotto's sitter has a stolid, matronly air that distinguishes her from Giorgione's *Laura* (c. 1506; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Giorgione's exactly contemporary picture initiated a new genre of Venetian portraits or near-portraits of courtesans in various guises and states of undress, called "Belle," or Beauties. This sort of image, in which Titian and Palma Vecchio excelled, aimed to titillate. Lotto's painting, by contrast, belongs to a smaller group of thoroughly respectable female portraits completed in Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Earlier likenesses of women by or associated with Bellini or Carpaccio (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) and Jacometto Veneziano (Johnson Collection, Philadelphia) appear to be rare variants of bust-length male portraits in three-quarter view. In the group including Lotto's picture the female subjects are shown nearly waist-length and turned almost full-face, with the glance directed at the viewer. Examples brought to my attention by Wendy Sheard include portraits of ladies formerly at Hampton Court (Shearman, *Italian*, 1983, 46–47, no. 39) and at the Worcester Art Museum (Davies 1974, 1: 386–388). The latter was wrongly ascribed to Lotto but is possibly by Previtali. One of the female portraits at the base of the altarpiece of the *Incredulity of Saint Thomas* in San Nicolò in Treviso (containing a copy of the *Bernardo Rossi*) also reflects the Lotto type. More interesting, Dürer, on his second trip to Venice in 1505–



1506, produced a version of the same type—the *Portrait of a Young Venetian Woman* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). Dürer's art in general (Pignatti 1954, 1981, 1983) and even the work in question (Sgarbi 1983) have been repeatedly connected with Lotto's portrait. Yet despite the similarity between their portrayals, it is by no means certain that Dürer here influenced Lotto. The extreme realism of the *Portrait of a Lady* also characterizes the *Bernardo Rossi* and the *Santa Cristina* altarpiece, which Lotto completed in 1505, before the paintings that Dürer executed in Venice could have had any impact on the local school.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Anthelme Trimolet (c. 1866); bequeathed by his widow Edma to the present owner, 1878

LITERATURE: Frizzoni 1906, 186–187; Glück 1910, 214–216; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 3: 426–428n; Venturi 1929, 9.4: 113 n. 1; Berenson 1932, 308; Glück 1933, 270; Magnin 1933, 41, no. 52; *Exposition* 1935, 121, no. 263; Berenson 1936, 265; Pallucchini 1944, 1: xxviii; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 24, 67, no. 15; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 37; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 31; Morassi 1953, 292, 296; Zampetti 1953, 21, no. 10; Pignatti 1954, 176; Berenson 1955, 31, 213; Bianconi 1955, 10, 38; Berenson 1956, 14–15, 463; *Giotto* 1956, 65–66, no. 92; Berenson 1957, 1: 102; Bianconi 1963, 1: 36; Liberali 1963, 6n; Brizio, *Arte*, 1964, 8: col. 707; Brizio, *Art*, 1964, 9: col. 346; Seidenberg 1964, 42–43; Rosenberg 1965, 141–142, no. 186; Caroli 1975, 284–285; Mariani Canova 1975, 89, no. 16; Galis 1977, 212, 214–217, 250n, 251n, 368–370, no. 71; Caroli 1980, 250–251; Guillaume 1980, 43–44, no. 68; Béguin 1981, 99; Liberali 1981, 75; Pignatti 1981, 94; *Conservation* 1983, 60–62, no. 29; Lucco 1983, 5: 469; Pignatti 1983, 180; Sgarbi 1983, 232–233; Gentili 1985, 89–93; Dülberg 1990, 144–145, 293, no. 329; Béguin 1993, 275; Humfrey 1997, 11, 12, 168n



Allegory of Chastity (“Maiden’s Dream”)

c. 1506

oil on panel, 42.9 x 33.7 (16⁷/₈ x 13¹/₄)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

UNLIKE LOTTO’S OTHER LITTLE *Allegory* (cat. 3) in the National Gallery of Art, this picture is not signed, dated, or documented. Even so, Morelli recognized it as Lotto’s work (Conway 1914). Scholars first dated the painting to the very beginning of the artist’s career, toward 1500. Then, when the other *Allegory* reappeared, a dating of 1505–1506 came to be preferred (Coletti 1939). In fact, the *Allegory* under discussion would seem to be exactly contemporary with Lotto’s *Marriage of Saint Catherine* in Munich and with his Asolo altarpiece of 1506. The charm of this frequently exhibited picture only increased with its cleaning in 1996. A young woman is seated on a grassy bank beside a pool of water. In the sky above her, a winged putto scatters small white flowers in her lap. In the lower right corner, a satyr reclines, pouring wine from a jar into his mouth, while opposite him a female satyr observes the scene. Behind a grove of trees the sun rises or sets over a distant mountain range. In contrast to the other *Allegory*, the landscape here is not divided symbolically. The idyllic setting for Lotto’s relatively small figures is related to the type of pastoral that Giorgione created in such works as the *Tempesta* (Pignatti 1983). The individual landscape forms, however, especially the foliage, derive from Dürer, whether from his prints or from the paintings he completed during his second Venetian sojourn of 1505–1506 (Dal Pozzolo 1992, 107–108; Humfrey 1997).

Like the other *Allegory*, which served as a cover for Lotto’s portrait of his first known patron, Bishop Bernardo de’ Rossi (cat. 2), this panel may once have performed an analogous function. Berenson’s suggestion to that effect (1955, 1956) was seconded by Mariani Canova (1975). Subsequently various candidates have been adduced. Mascherpa (1980) proposed the *Youth with a Lantern* in Vienna, but the dimensions disagree. Dal Pozzolo (1992, 119) recently argued in favor of a now lost portrait of the humanist Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli, which Lotto is known to have painted (see cat. 6). Augurelli’s portrait did have a cover, and both he and Lotto were in the bishop’s service in Treviso in 1503–1506, the period to which the *Allegory* can be dated on grounds of style. But the subject of the Washington picture (to be discussed) seems like an odd choice for the cover of a male portrait. Although rejected by Dal Pozzolo (1992, 108), the most likely candidate, among Lotto’s surviving portraits, is the *Portrait of a Lady* (cat. 4) in Dijon, as Galis

(1977) proposed. The identification of the sitter as Rossi’s sister Giovanna remains speculative, as she died in 1502. But the analogy between the two paintings in Washington and the portraits in Naples and Dijon is cogent, even if we accept neither Galis’ claim that they were pendants, nor her argument that the lady’s face is a smaller version of the portrait that the *Allegory* once covered. The female type is similar in each case, but it recurs in the already-mentioned *Saint Catherine* and in Lotto’s Santa Cristina altarpiece of 1505. Indeed, the profiles of the lady in this *Allegory* and of the titular saint in the altarpiece are virtually identical. Gentili (1985, 90) endorsed Galis’ theory, and so tentatively have Dülberg (1990) and Humfrey (1997). Admittedly, there is a greater difference between the dimensions of the second *Allegory* (42.9 x 33.7 centimeters) and the Dijon *Portrait* (36 x 28 centimeters) than is the case with the other portrait and its allegorical cover (cats. 2, 3). But the important point is that the (now cradled) Washington panel is slightly larger, horizontally and vertically, than the Dijon portrait, which it could, therefore, have covered. Cortesi Bosco (1992, 47) nevertheless prefers to regard the *Allegory* as an independent painting, identifying it with a “quadro dell’anima rationale,” which Lotto attempted to sell at the lottery of his works held in Ancona in 1550. In her view (1992), the female figure in the center of Lotto’s composition represents the soul reunited with its creator.

Technical evidence demonstrates that the scene presently visible in Lotto’s picture was painted over another partially completed composition upside down to the final one and slightly larger in scale. The X-radiograph (fig. 1) was interpreted by Shapley (1968, 1979) to show a seated figure with its head tilted back in profile. Reexamination of the X-ray reveals, however, that the head held in the hand is actually frontal and lowered. Moreover, a new infrared image made with a thermal-imaging camera (fig. 2) reveals that the figure Lotto first envisaged is nude, with the legs open and bent to the left, and, further, that it is seated against a large rock. Shapley and others following her have assumed that the underlying image represents a first attempt at the subject that Lotto eventually painted, after turning the panel around, but the gender of the sleeping figure is unclear. The motif of the head supported in the hand recalls Dürer’s drawing of a recumbent female nude (Humfrey 1997, pl. 18), dated 1501, in the Albertina, Vienna, which

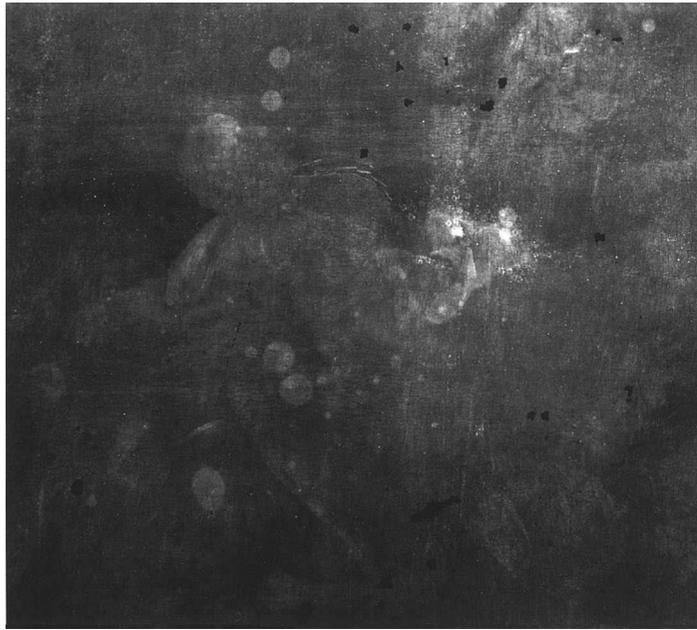


fig. 1. X-radiograph of cat. 5 showing top edge, rotated 180°



fig. 2. Infrared reflectogram of cat. 5, rotated 180°

Berenson (1955, 1956) related to Lotto's painting. Even closer is the sleeping nymph, her head propped up on her elbow, in a woodcut (Dal Pozzolo 1992, fig. 14) in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in Venice in 1499. It may be significant in this connection that yet another *Allegory* (see cat. 3), attributed to Pietro degli Ingannati, also in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, combines an echo of Lotto's portrait cover for Rossi with a sleeping nymph surprised by a lascivious satyr, derived from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* illustration, as if the Venetian imitator knew both of Lotto's little allegorical pictures. The Venetian *Allegory* may have served as a cover for the *Portrait of a Lady*, given to Ingannati, in Berlin (Caccialupi 1978, 30 and fig. 7). The resulting combination offers an interesting parallel to Lotto's *Allegory* under discussion and his *Portrait of a Lady* in Dijon.

Despite the link with the influential type of sleeping nymph, it is difficult to believe that Lotto's figure, seated with its legs spread, is really female. To the contrary, the artist exactly repeated the pose for the figure of Apollo asleep on Parnassus in a later picture now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest (Tátrai 1995, 146–147, no. 29). The same pose appears in another work, a cassone panel representing Hercules at the Crossroads (fig. 3) by an anonymous Sieneese master of about 1505, also in Budapest (Mravik 1978, no. 10). Here the male subject is depicted as a scantily clad youth asleep with his head supported by his right arm resting on a rock, just as in Lotto's underpainting. Although the attendants personifying Virtue and Vice in the cassone are absent in Lotto's original conception, his seated figure so closely resembles the sleeping Hercules that it may well have been the subject initially chosen for the Washington painting. Such a choice would agree with the Rossi *Allegory* (cat. 3), itself a variation on the Choice of Hercules. Like the Christian Jerome (see cat. 6), Hercules went out into nature to resolve (in a dream) his inner conflict. The ancient theme was known to Petrarch (Mommsen 1953, 178–192), and it became a favorite of Renaissance humanists and artists (Tietze-Conrat 1951, 305–309). The subject was especially popular in northern Italy at the time of Lotto's pictures (Mezzatesta 1975–1976, 17–19), and it inspired a number of variants, of which Raphael's so-called *Dream of a Knight* in the National Gallery, London, is the most famous.

Although the cassone panel representing Hercules would presumably have been used for a bride's trousseau, Lotto (or his patron) evidently felt the need to devise a different, more appropriately feminine, subject for his painting, which most likely served as a cover for the Dijon portrait. Accordingly, he turned the panel around and started over in a manner not unlike Giorgione's method of working out compositions on panel or canvas. Lotto's final solution was to contrast Virtue and Vice along the lines of the Rossi *Allegory*. Taken over from that work are the putto and the drunken satyr, who are associated here with sharply differentiated females: The satyress straddling the tree looks amorously at her wine-guzzling male counterpart; half-wild, she obviously symbolizes *voluptas* or carnal pleasure, while the other figure, into

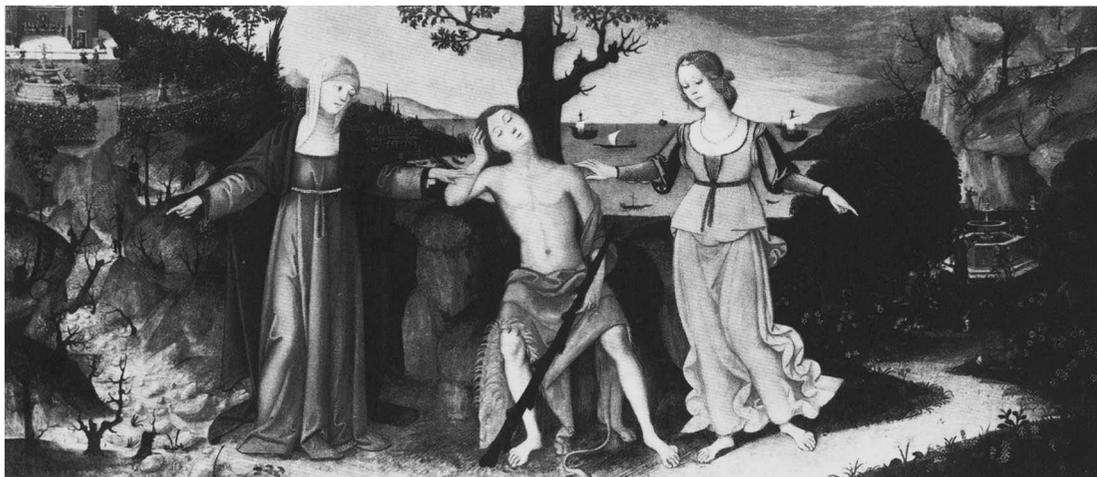


fig. 3. Giacomo Pacchiarotto, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, tempera on canvas glued to panel. Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest

whose lap the winged putto showers white blossoms, no less clearly exemplifies the virtue of Chastity. Modestly clad in an immaculate white dress and yellow drape (decorated with gold leaf), she leans stiffly against a tree stump sprouting a living branch (borrowed, like the putto and the satyr, from the other *Allegory*). The severed tree here has been identified as a laurel (Galis 1977, 209; Dal Pozzolo 1992, 109), emblematic in this context of Chastity (Gandolfo 1978), as it is in Lotto's conjugal portrait in Madrid (cat. 21). The lady, her head in profile, is shown awake, as in Dürer's drawing, ruling out the vague title of the "Maiden's Dream," proposed for the picture by its former owner (Conway 1914), consecrated by Berenson (1956), and still commonly used. The mythological interpretation of Lotto's subject as Danaë and the Shower of Gold (Berenson 1895) or as Plutus and the Nymph Rhodos (Shapley 1968 and 1979 on a suggestion of Robert Eisler) have also been rightly rejected, as the cascade is of blossoms, not gold. Gandolfo (1978) is closer to the truth; for him and for Arasse (1981), the allegory signifies the overcoming of bestial desires, a sublimation achieved, according to Gentili (1980, 1988), through the lady's "Quies" or repose. As a moralizing allegory of Chastity or Chaste Love, Lotto's picture elaborates on the admonitory theme of his other portrait cover by combining drunkenness with lust. The title under which the painting was first exhibited a century ago, "Sacred and Profane Love," is not so far off.

If the satyress is only an (amusingly characterized) type, it has long been recognized that Lotto modeled his personification of female Virtue specifically on Petrarch's Laura (*National Gallery* 1941; Mariani Canova 1975; Galis 1977; Pochat 1985). The sonnet in question (cxxvi), beginning "Chiare fresche e dolci acque," describes a shower of flowers falling on the poet's beloved, who is seated beside a stream. Petrarch's blooms drop from a tree, so Lotto's motif of the putto scattering flowers may be his own personal invention, particularly as it reappears in his *Madonna del Rosario* in Cingoli. Rossi's library contained a copy of Petrarch's "sonnetti et canzoni" (Liberali 1981, 88). Finding further allusions to Petrarch in the picture, Dal Pozzolo (1992) also compares Lotto's treatment

to Pietro Bembo's exactly contemporary dialogue on the nature of love, entitled *Gli Asolani*. Whether the humanist Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli devised the program for Lotto's painting, as Dal Pozzolo suggests (1992, 118–120), or not, Rossi's reading and the other textual sources cited represent an essential element in the cultural context in which this *Allegory*, like the other one, must be understood.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Conceivably the "quadro in tavola di Giorgione, con una dona seduta che guarda il cielo tiene un drapo nelle mani qual sono Danae in pioggia d'oro," cited in a Medici sale in Florence in 1681 (Anderson 1996); bought from a picture dealer in Milan in 1887 by Sir Martin Conway, Allington Castle, near Maidstone, England (Conway 1914); sold in 1934 by Contini Bonacossi, Florence, to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and donated to the National Gallery of Art in 1939

LITERATURE: Morelli 1891, 59 n. 1, 63, 69, 73 n. 1; Morelli 1893, 43 n. 1, 46, 51, 55 n. 1; Berenson 1894, 115; *Exhibition* 1894–1895, 16, no. 80; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 1–3, 49–50, 316–318; Berenson, *Venetian*, 1895, 19; Ffoulkes 1895, 82–84; Gronau 1895, 436; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 3–6; Berenson 1901, 1–2, 38, 256–257; Cook 1906, 144; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 394 n. 4; Graves 1913, 2: 717; Conway 1914, 38–44; *Catalogue* 1914, 22, no. 21; Fiocco 1914, 382; *Catalogue* 1928, no. X29; Conway 1928, 260; Longhi 1929, 277; Venturi 1929, 6–7, 113n; Constable 1930, 752–754; *Exhibition* 1930, 224, no. 403; Suida 1930, 43; Balniel and Clark 1931, 120, no. 345; Berenson 1932, 309; Borenius 1934, 231; Berenson 1936, 266; Mather 1936, 300–301; Frankfurter 1938, 166; Kieslinger 1938–1939, 62; Coletti 1939, 350–351; Austin 1940, no. 11; Suida 1940, 278; Morassi 1942, 185–186; Biagi 1942, 3–4; Frankfurter 1944, 89; Pallucchini 1944, xxvii–xxviii; Longhi 1946, 18, 62; Clark 1949, 43; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 8, 64, no. 5; Berenson 1953, 20–21; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 19, 37; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 449; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 21–22; Morassi 1953, 292; Pallucchini 1953, note to pl. 1; Nicco Fasola 1954, 104; Pigler 1954, 165; Pignatti 1954, 172; Berenson 1955, 18–19; Bianconi 1955, 37–38; Huyghe 1955, 310; Berenson 1956, 4; Berenson 1957, 1: 107; Tervarent 1959, 2: cols. 390–391; Seymour 1961, 100–101; Ballarin 1962, 484; Bianconi 1962, 1: 36; Shapley 1968, 158–159; Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 113, 475, 542, 645, 660; Pochat 1973, 384–385, 386–387; Gentili 1974, 258 n. 27; Caroli 1975, 106–107; Mariani Canova 1975, 6, 88, no. 10; Sgarbi 1977, 45, 49; Galis 1977, 35, 203–217, 435–446, no. 83; Gandolfo 1978, 34–36; Longhi 1978, 15, 56; Brown 1979, 16, no. 21; Shapley 1979, 1: 275–277; Brown 1980, 1: 98–99; Gentili 1980, 65–66; Lucco 1980, 50; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 15, 22–23; Spiazzi 1980, 104; Arasse 1981, 370–377; Béguin 1981, 101; Bigongiari 1981, 463; Gentili 1981, 416; Guarino 1981, 44; Pignatti 1981, 95; Lucco 1983, 5: 468; Murutes 1983, 1: 113, 134; Pignatti 1983, 180–181; Gentili 1985, 87–91; Pochat 1985, 3–15; Sutton 1985, 122, 129; Baranski 1988, 1: 209–210; Gentili 1988, 101–103; Rosand 1988, 69, 74–76, 258; Dülberg 1990, 144–145, 293, no. 329; Lippincott 1990, 74–75; Cortesi Bosco 1992, 25–49; Dal Pozzolo 1992, 103–127; Ballarin 1993, 309; Wood 1993, 50–51; Anderson 1996, 19, 378; Humfrey 1997, 12, 168 n. 21–22

Saint Jerome in the Wilderness

1506 (?)

oil on panel, 48 x 40 (18⁷/₈ x 15³/₄)

signed: LOTUS

Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris

GIOVANNI BELLINI'S INVOLVEMENT with the theme of Saint Jerome contributed to its enormous popularity among Venetian Renaissance artists and their patrons. As the fourth-century scholar who translated the Bible into Latin and as the hermit who reputedly founded Western monasticism, Jerome tended to be portrayed either seated and reading in his study or kneeling in penitence in the wilderness (Rice 1985; Russo 1987). The two themes—contemplative and penitential—were sometimes combined, as in Bellini's 1505 portrayal of Jerome reading in the wilderness (National Gallery of Art, Washington). A variant of the second type, this enchanting little painting is the earliest of at least five surviving depictions of Saint Jerome, which span Lotto's entire career. Taken in chronological order, these works show a striking development in his treatment of the theme. Although the Louvre painting is the most dependent on the artist's sources of inspiration, in this case Bellini and Dürer, it manages to be remarkably personal. Lotto's conception of Saint Jerome, with his wrinkled flesh, domed head, and long beard, derives from Bellini's example, but the pose, seated, with the legs drawn up, is quite distinctive, as are his actions. In one hand he holds a small cross and in the other a stone with which he beats his breast, while at the same time he meditates on Christ's Passion as related in the books lying around him. In this way Lotto combines the saint's spirituality with his self-mortification. And by eliminating all of the symbolic animals except the lion that commonly accompany Jerome in the desert (Friedmann 1980, 48–100), the artist also emphasizes the saint's solitude.

Apart from a second hermit emerging from the shadows of the cave on the left and the tiny horse and rider in the background, the harsh, even brutal, setting in which Lotto locates Jerome is remote from human concerns. Long ago Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895, 327) saw in the desolate solitude of the landscape a metaphor for Jerome's spiritual condition. The saint perches on a platform surrounded by massive tree-topped boulders jutting upward. Although Lotto is sometimes compared to Altdorfer and the Danube School, the actual source for his landscape, especially the vertical rock formations, is Dürer's engraving of Saint Jerome (Salvini 1978; Pignatti 1981; Lattanzi, "Louvre," 1983; Colalucci 1994; Humfrey 1997).

Lyrical light transforms Dürer's rocky gorge into one of the most poetic landscapes that Lotto ever created. The motif of the

sunset associates the painting with the artist's *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* in Munich and his so-called *Maiden's Dream* (cat. 5). As both of these works are datable to about 1506, the *Saint Jerome* appears, from a stylistic standpoint, to belong to the same time. Wilde (1950) read the date inscribed on the darkest part of the rocks in the lower right as 1506. Previously Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895) and others had deciphered the damaged and partly reinforced date as 1500, which would make the Louvre painting very early if not indeed Lotto's first work. The question of whether the *Saint Jerome* belongs to the beginning or the end of the artist's early period in Treviso is obviously crucial for understanding his development. Most modern writers have followed Wilde (Dal Pozzolo 1993; Humfrey 1997), but a minority, headed by Volpe (1981) and including Cortesi Bosco (1992) and Ballarin (1993), accept the earlier dating. Béguin, who has studied the matter carefully (1981), first agreed with Wilde and then left the question open (1993). The issue turns on whether the last numeral is an "o" or a "6." The present author's own examination of the panel, in the company of curator Jean Habert and curator Patrick Le Chanu, indicated that, contrary to what has been stated in the literature, the area above the final "o" has not been repainted. But while the digit is clearly an "o," it is smaller than the adjacent "O," leaving open the possibility that the original numeral was a "6" (or conceivably an "8"). One could suppose that after the upper part of the "6" was lost through cleaning or abrasion, it was not restored because the date was misread as 1500; however, the evident mastery in the picture strongly argues against such an early dating, three years before Lotto's *Madonna and Child with Saint Peter Martyr* of 1503 (Museo e Gallerie di Capodimonte, Naples).

Lotto's painting has been plausibly connected with "uno Sancto Hieronimo" and "uno quadro del Santo Gieronimo," mentioned respectively in two inventories of Bishop Bernardo de' Rossi's possessions drawn up in 1510 and 1511 (Liberali 1963; Gargan 1980, 17–18; Liberali 1981, 78). If it is the *Saint Jerome* that belonged to Lotto's first patron, as seems likely, Rossi would have commissioned this work in addition to his own portrait (cat. 2) and its cover (cat. 3). Gentili (1983, 1985) has stressed the appropriateness of the picture as a devotional image for Rossi. Indeed, the bishop's library contained copies of Jerome's life and letters (Liberali 1981,



87). But Lotto's painting may also reflect the artist's own spiritual aspirations, in addition to those imputed to his patron. It was Lotto, not Rossi, who forsook worldly power and pleasures. And it was Lotto who, like Jerome, was attracted to the monastic life at the same time that he elucidated the Scriptures in his art.

Whatever meaning the *Saint Jerome* may have had for Lotto or his patron, its subject and dimensions suggest that the picture was made for private devotion. Berenson proposed that it equally might have served "as cover to the portrait of a scholar who took Jerome as his patron saint" (1955, 1956). The task Jerome undertook, to translate and interpret the Scriptures, combined with his classical education, made him an ideal model for Renaissance humanists. Berenson's theory, subsequently taken up by Dülberg (1990) and Béguin (1993), is supported by the scale (smaller than in any devotional work of which he is the protagonist) and placement of Jerome, set back in the landscape in Lotto's painting. In this respect the picture resembles the two little allegories that Lotto painted as portrait covers (cats. 3, 5). As Dal Pozzolo (1992) noted, all three works have the same romantic air. The idea that the *Saint Jerome* might once have served as a portrait cover is further supported by the previously cited technical examination showing that the wood panel on which the picture is painted is actually a thin plank (5 millimeters) applied to a thicker one (26 millimeters), which is old but not original. The thinness of the original panel conforms to our general knowledge of portrait covers. In addition, the paint surface does not go to the edge of the panel, and there is abrasion along the barbe at the top and bottom edges, consistent with a panel that would slide in and out of an armature.

If the *Saint Jerome* was indeed a cover, as seems likely, it became separated from the underlying portrait, whatever that may have been. The dimensions of the picture do not agree with those of any of Lotto's extant early portraits, but we know that he painted a now lost likeness of Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli, a humanist in Bishop Rossi's circle. In an entry of 1545–1546 in his personal account book, the *Libro di spese*, Lotto refers to a copy he painted of "un retrato de misser Joan Aurelio Agurello con il roverso et coperto come stava el proprio originale" (*Libro* 1969, 26, 27, 102, 103, 192). The copy was made for Giovanni Lippomano, whose brother Pietro had been a pupil of Augurelli's; the original portrait and its cover presumably dated from Lotto's early period in Treviso between 1503 and 1506. But the present picture cannot be both the cover for Augurelli's portrait, still intact in 1545, and the *Saint Jerome* that belonged to Bishop Rossi in 1510. Another humanist closely associated with Rossi, Girolamo Bologni, is a possible candidate, as he had a special devotion to his name saint (Alexander Nagel in 1994 at College Art Association). Although no record survives of Lotto having painted a likeness of Girolamo Bologni, the humanist did address a poem to the bishop, urging artists to represent Jerome, as Lotto does here, as an ascetic (Gargan 1980, 27–28). He might almost be commenting on Lotto's painting. For this picture to have been both a portrait cover and Rossi's

Saint Jerome, we would have to suppose that Bologni ceded the painting to his patron soon after Lotto completed it.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Collection of Cardinal Fesch, Rome, by 1814 until 1841; Moret collection, Paris, until 1857; acquired at his sale for the Louvre

LITERATURE: *Catalogue* 1841, 61, no. 1367; Villot 1869, I: 145–146, no. 238bis; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 501–502; Morelli 1886, 37; Tausia 1888, I: 142, no. 227; Lafenestre 1892, 202, no. 1350; Morelli 1893, 45, 47; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 3–4: 49–50, 327; Berenson 1901, 2–3: 264; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 3: 398, 399; De Ricci 1913, 78, no. 1350; Venturi 1915, 7.4: 758–759; Hauteceur 1926, 77, no. 1350; Venturi 1929, 9.4: 7, 113n; Berenson 1932, 310; Berenson 1936, 266; Mather, Jr. 1936, 300; Pallucchini 1944, I: 27; Longhi 1946, 17–18, 62; Wilde 1950, 350–351; Banti and Boschetto, 66, no. 12; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 37; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 449; Zampetti 1953, 24–25, no. 13; Berenson 1955, 26; Bianconi 1955, 10, 38–39; Berenson 1956, 10; Berenson 1957, I: 104; Berenson and Kiel 1958, fig. 167; Ballarin 1962, 482, 485; Bianconi 1963, I: 37; Liberali 1963, 6n, 27–28 n. 80; Brizio, *Arte*, 1964, 8: col. 707–708; Brizio, *Art*, 1964, 9: col. 346; Caroli 1975, 81, 108–109; Mariani Canova 1975, 89, no. 15; Sgarbi 1977, 45, 49; Salvini 1978, 92–94, 98, 99 n. 9; Caroli 1980, 90–91; Gargan 1980, 3; Longhi 1980, 111–114; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 30–31; Béguin 1981, 99–101, 103–104; *Catalogue* 1981, 196; Liberali 1981, 75, 83; Pignatti 1981, 95; Sgarbi 1981, 227–230; Volpe 1981, 128; Gentili, "Roma," 1983, 40–41; Laclotte and Cuzin 1983, 153, 154; Lattanzi, "Louvre," 1983, 66–68; Sgarbi 1983, 240; Gentili 1984, 40–42; Gentili 1985, 129–132; Russo 1987, 223, 225, 227; Dülberg 1990, 164–165, 293, no. 330; Cortesi Bosco 1992, 41–43; Dal Pozzolo 1992, 103–105, 106, 108; Ballarin 1993, 309; Béguin 1993, 274–275, no. 8; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 37–38, 47–48 n. 21–22; Wood 1993, 99; Colalucci 1994, 7–8, 10; Humfrey 1997, 12, 16–17

Madonna and Child with Saints Francis, John the Baptist, Jerome, and Catherine

c. 1508

oil on panel, 40 x 29 (15³/₄ x 11⁷/₁₆)

signed, on stone base: L LO[T]US

Muzeum Narodowe, Krakow

THIS BRILLIANTLY COLORED LITTLE *Madonna and Child with Saints* bears on its reverse the mark (fig. 1) of one of the greatest collectors of the seventeenth century, Don Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, 7th Marqués del Carpio and Viceroy of Naples from 1682 until his death in 1687. Although the most famous picture Don Gaspar owned was Raphael's *Alba Madonna*, now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the early masters represented in his collection mainly reflected the Spanish love of Venetian painting. In addition to Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto, the last of whom predominated, Don Gaspar also acquired works by lesser known artists, such as Paris Bordone and Bassano. The number 1254, on the back of the Krakow painting, corresponds to that in the inventory taken of Don Gaspar's holdings shortly after his death in Naples in 1687 (Burke 1984). The subject and the dimensions correspond as well, although Lotto's name is not cited, perhaps because his signature was obscured (another Madonna, no. 1346, was listed as by "Lorenzo Lotti"; Burke 1984, 352). The Krakow picture is not included in the more comprehensive and detailed 1682 inventory of Don Gaspar's collection (which lists no fewer than six Lottos), indicating that he evidently acquired it after leaving Rome, where he had served as ambassador. Notes appended to the 1687 inventory (Alba Archives, Palacio de Liria, Madrid) indicate that the Krakow painting was one of the "quadri rimasti" shipped to Don Gaspar's heirs in Spain. Two centuries later, it resurfaced in Poland.

Among Berenson's many Lotto discoveries was the Krakow picture, which he knew from a photograph that he used in the

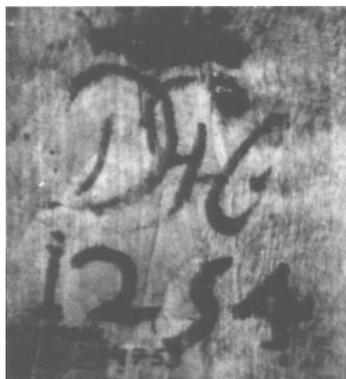


fig. 1. Inventory stamp on reverse of cat. 7

second revised edition (1901) of his monograph on Lotto. His direct examination of the picture seven years later could only have confirmed his view that it was virtually identical in style to the culminating masterpiece of Lotto's early period—the Recanati polyptych, commissioned in mid-1506 and dated 1508. Berenson accordingly dated the painting to 1508 or a little later. More recently, scholars have preferred a slightly earlier dating to the time when the Recanati altarpiece was under way (Mariani Canova 1975; Dal Pozzolo 1993). A date of c. 1507–1508 implies that Lotto made this painting in the Marches rather than in Rome, where Lotto became active late in 1508 or early in 1509.

The *Madonna and Child with Saints* translates the formal and expressive language of the Recanati polyptych into the category of small works made for private devotion. Lotto's previous *sacre conversazioni* completed for Bishop Rossi and his circle in Treviso were fairly large-scale and horizontal in format. Smaller than its predecessors, this picture was perhaps better suited to the new, more modest clientele that the artist found in the Marches. The narrow, upright format posed a problem, which Lotto solved by skillfully combining the figures in such a way that they seem compressed but not crowded. Although the outcome of this experiment was successful, Lotto soon returned, in the case of devotional works, to the customary oblong type of *sacra conversazione* (Galleria Borghese, Rome, dated 1508).

As Berenson and others have noted, Saint Francis on the left is similar to Saint Peter Martyr at Recanati; the bearded old man in the shadows, usually identified as Jerome (or occasionally as Joseph; Mariani Canova 1975), resembles Joseph of Arimathea, peering out from behind Christ's shoulder, in the *Pietà* that surmounts the altarpiece; and the infant Baptist brings to mind the music-making angels in the polyptych. The motif of the Virgin's praying hands occurs in both paintings, as does her profile, which matches that of the female saint on the left in the upper register. Closest of all is the Saint Catherine, whose rich costume, particularly her sleeve with its brooch and streaming ribbons, makes her a sister to the Saint Vitus, depicted a bit apart from his companions, in the altarpiece. Likewise, the sources that Lotto adopted for the altarpiece lie behind several of the figures in the Krakow picture as well—Dürer (Dal Pozzolo 1993) and possibly Leonardo

(Lucco 1981), whose *Madonna Litta* (Brown 1992, 362, no. 74), if it was in Venice at this early date, may have provided a model for the bare-headed Virgin looking down at her child.

Details such as the leafy wreath and the delicate fillet encircling Catherine's head are now more clearly visible as a result of the exemplary treatment of the painting carried out in 1996–1997. The removal of discolored varnish and repaint shows that the paint surface is very well preserved, apart from a few losses along the top and bottom of the panel, damage to the Virgin's blue robe, and abrasion in the shadowed areas of the fleshtones. The most striking result of the cleaning is the reemergence of the green curtain behind the figures—Lotto's signature motif, here treated, as in his other works, in such a way that the folds help to articulate the figure composition. The infrared reflectogram made in connection with the cleaning also reveals a *pentimento* in the golden yellow lining of the Virgin's robe, which originally fell over the top of the stone base.

The care with which Lotto worked out details can be seen nowhere better than in the figure of the Christ child. The theme of the infant sleeping as a prefiguration of the Dead Christ goes back to the Vivarini and Bellini (Goffen 1975, 503), but Lotto's reinvention of the theme is unprecedented. The infant lies suspended in the Virgin's white veil much as the body of the adult Christ is supported in Entombment scenes, including Lotto's own version of 1512 at Jesi. Lotto's interpretation of the Christ child as fast asleep in the shroudlike veil lends a wholly new poignancy to the subject.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Don Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, Naples, after 1682; his heirs, Spain, 1687; Count Sigismund Pusłowski, Krakow, 1901; by descent to K. F. Pusłowski; inherited by Marek Rostworowski; Muzeum Narodowe, Krakow

LITERATURE: Berenson 1901, 15; Frizzoni 1906, 187; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 3: 395n; Berenson 1915, 28; Venturi 1929, 9.4: 113 n. 1; Berenson 1932, 308; Berenson 1936, 265; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 24, 68, no. 22; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 39; Zocca 1953, 343; Berenson 1955, 25–26; Berenson 1956, 9–10, 463; Berenson 1957, 1: 102; *Malarstwo* 1961, 101, no. 98; Brizio, *Arte*, 1964, 8: col. 708; Brizio, *Art*, 1964, 9: col. 346; Rozycka-Bryzek, *Malarstwo*, 1968, 110, no. 104; Rozycka-Bryzek, *Venezianische*, 1968, 70, no. 58; Mariani Canova 1975, 90, no. 20; Caroli 1980, 252–253; Lucco 1981, 66 n. 73; Rudel 1981, 197, 202 n. 19; Zampetti, "Marche," 1981, 195; Burke 1984, 2: 350; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 40, 48–49 n. 39





Saint Jerome in the Wilderness

c. 1509

oil on panel, 80.5 x 61 (31 1/16 x 24)

signed on rock, lower right: L. LOTUS

Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome

IN ALL THE MYSTERY surrounding Lotto's Roman sojourn, this picture stands out as the only one that we can be sure he completed there. The catalogue of an exhibition highlighting the work at the Castel Sant'Angelo offers detailed information about its history and its condition after restoration in 1970 (Contardi 1983; Colalucci 1983). The painting used to be dated to the time of the artist's little *Saint Jerome* (cat. 6) in the Louvre (Longhi 1946; Banti and Boschetto 1953). But when the two works were displayed together at the Lotto exhibition in Venice in 1953, scholars (Pallucchini, as cited by Zampetti 1953; Zocca 1953; Brizio 1953; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953; Morassi 1953) quickly recognized that they could not be contemporary. The *Saint Jerome* in the Castel Sant'Angelo marks a radical change in Lotto's approach to the subject. Whereas the earlier version of the theme had combined the saint's penitential and contemplative functions, Jerome here appears twice, in the upper left as a penitent kneeling before a crucifix and beating his breast with a stone, and in the foreground as a scholar seated on a path marked off by a rudimentary fence. His relatively larger scale as protagonist emphasizes the figural content, as opposed to the landscape, of this devotional work.

Because of its strongly classicizing character, most modern writers have dated the painting to the period of the artist's activity in Rome (Mariani Canova 1975; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983; Humfrey 1997).

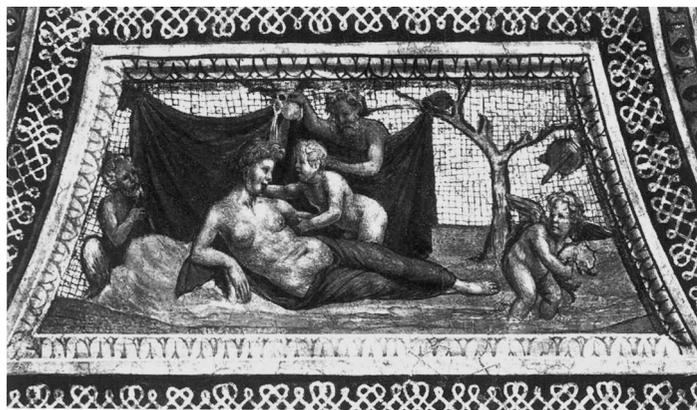
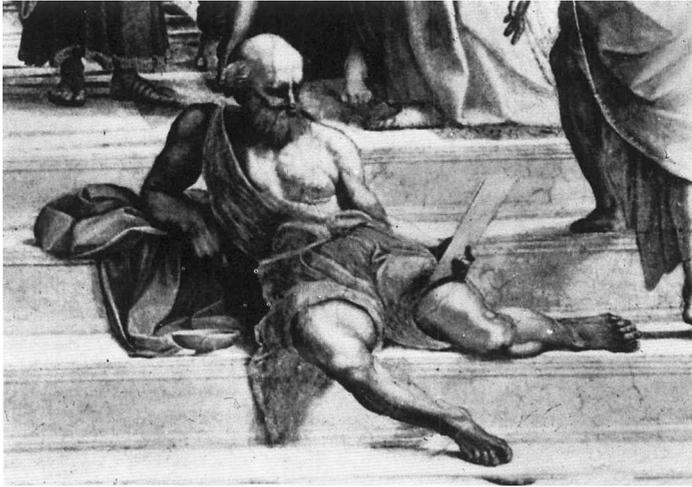


fig. 1. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, called Sodoma, vault paintings, fresco. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican

Lotto probably arrived in the Eternal City late in 1508, recommended to Julius II, perhaps, by Bramante; on a trip to Loreto during the second half of 1508, the papal architect may have admired the painter's newly completed altarpiece in the church of San Domenico in nearby Recanati (Oldfield, *Omaggio*, 1984). Lotto was paid 100 ducats on 9 March 1509 for unspecified work in the "upper rooms of the pope next to the upper library" (Zocca 1953, 341–342 n. 11). This payment, along with another one of 50 ducats on 18 September 1509 (Zocca 1953, 342 n. 14), indicates that he had been working in the Vatican for some time, as part of the team of artists including Perugino, Sodoma, Bramantino, Johann Ruysch, and, of course, Raphael, brought together to decorate the new suite of papal apartments subsequently known as the *stanze*.

Despite numerous attempts to identify Lotto's hand in the Vatican or other Roman decorations (Zocca 1953; Brizio 1956; Longhi 1980, especially 105–107 n. 2; Mancinelli 1984, 158–159, no. 68m), his contribution has never been established convincingly. The "room next to the library" (Stanza della Segnatura) would be either the Stanza d'Eliodoro or the Stanza dell'Incendio. Since Perugino's painting of the vault in the Incendio survives, we can conclude by the process of elimination that Lotto was probably employed in the Eliodoro. His work there (presumably in fresco even though he is not previously recorded as having employed that medium) would have been destroyed, once Raphael's superiority was recognized, to make way for the cycle still there today. The general question of who did what and when in this first project (Shearman 1965, 160; 1971; "Stanze," 1983) is too complicated to discuss here. But one aspect of the problem needs to be mentioned, as it has a definite bearing on Lotto's *Saint Jerome*. The vault of the Segnatura was evidently begun by Sodoma and partly repainted by Raphael when he took over the decoration in 1509. The part of Sodoma's work on the ceiling that survives includes four trapezoidal sections between Raphael's better-known *tondi* with female personifications (Tozzi 1927). Each of these sections (fig. 1) is composed of a figure seated or lying on the left in a landscape featuring a hillock and a tree. That Lotto adopted the same scheme for his *Saint Jerome* (Sodoma's satyr peering from behind the curtain becomes Lotto's lion) can hardly be a coincidence: he must have observed his colleague at work in the next room.



LEFT: fig. 2. Raphael, *School of Athens* (detail), fresco. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican



RIGHT: fig. 3. Raphael, *Disputation of the Holy Sacrament* (detail), fresco. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican

Like all of Lotto's paintings, the *Saint Jerome* thus provides a clue about his interests at the moment. But Sodoma was not his principal source; that honor goes to Raphael. The ultimate origin of Lotto's *Saint Jerome* has long been recognized (Zocca 1953) in an antique river god (Bober and Rubenstein 1986, 99–104). His recumbent figure has also been compared to the Umbrian master, specifically to the Virgin in the *Alba Madonna* (National Gallery of Art, Washington; Volpe 1981; Lucco 1994); yet, as Humfrey (1997) has objected, the relation is only generic. The actual source for Lotto's partly draped figure would seem to be Raphael's Diogenes (fig. 2), reclining on the steps in the *School of Athens*. The resemblance extends to the way the ancient philosopher holds a manuscript in his left hand, much as Jerome elegantly turns the pages of a book. Admittedly, the head in each case is rather different, but here, too, Lotto seems to have turned to Raphael for guidance: Lotto's source, appropriately, appears to be the profile of Saint Jerome (fig. 3), seated to the left of the altar in the *Disputa*. The cast of features and hair are the same, and both differ from the Bellinesque type of Jerome that Lotto had adapted four or five years earlier for the Edinburgh *Madonna and Child with Saints* (cat. 1). Working alongside him in the Vatican, Lotto could easily have followed the progress of Raphael's first efforts in the Stanza della Segnatura. His specific and somewhat self-conscious borrowings, considered as an homage to Raphael, help to date the *Saint Jerome* precisely. It must have been painted during the limited time span after the first frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura were undertaken and before Lotto's dismissal from the Vatican.

Because his Vatican decoration was "thrown to the floor" ("buttare a terra tutte le storie degli altri maestri e vecchi e moderni"; Vasari 1568, 1879 ed., 4: 332), Lotto's Castel Sant'Angelo *Saint Jerome* occupies a special place in his oeuvre. Lotto's synthesis of sources—pagan and religious—perfectly accords with Jerome's character as the prototypical Christian humanist—the translator of the Bible who was steeped in classical learning. His reinterpretation of the saint as a scholar calmly seated among his books extends to the landscape as well. The left half of the setting is still

conceived in the mode of the earlier *Saint Jerome* (cat. 6) with tree-topped boulders towering above the protagonist. This treatment, clearly inspired by Dürer's engravings, contrasts with the panoramic vista on the right. The broad valley and the feathery tree reveal Lotto's recently awakened interest in the spacious type of landscape favored by Raphael and his Umbrian contemporaries. The landscape throughout features symbolic motifs—woodcutter, shepherd and his flocks, and donkey beaten by its owner, as well as the penitent saint—that underscore the devotional character of the work (Lattanzi, "Eremo" and "Castel," 1983; Gentili 1985). Even the tree trunks have surreal female forms suggesting the temptations of the flesh against which Jerome struggled (Arasse 1981). The walled city glimpsed beside the river in the left background likewise alludes to the urban life which he fled in his search for spiritual renewal. The prominent cylindrical building has been recognized as the Castel Sant'Angelo (Lattanzi, "Castel," 1983), which serves to identify the city as Rome. This landscape motif, no less than the classically inspired figure, demonstrates Lotto's new-found "romanism," just as the lack of spiritual urgency in the painting may reflect the sophisticated climate that he confronted in the papal capital.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Mario Menotti, Rome; donated by him to Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo in 1916

LITERATURE: Papini 1920, 61–62; Venturi 1929, 9.4: 113 n. 1; Berenson 1932, 311; Berenson 1936, 267; Longhi 1946, 62; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 67, no. 17; Brizio 1953, 8–9; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 39; Morassi 1953, 296 n. 25; Zampetti 1953, 26–27, no. 14; Zocca 1953, 343; Berenson 1955, 26, 218; Bianconi 1955, 39; Berenson 1956, 10, 468; Berenson 1957, 1: 105; Bianconi 1963, 1: 37; Brizio, *Arte*, 1964, 8: col. 708; Brizio, *Art*, 1964, 9: col. 346; Caroli 1975, 110–111; Mariani Canova 1975, 92, no. 31; Caroli 1980, 106–107; Longhi 1980, 113; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 36–37; Arasse 1981, 376–377; Bertelli 1981, 187; Pilo 1981, 149–150; Trevisani 1981, 282; Volpe 1981, 133–134; Colalucci 1983, 33–39; Contardi 1983, 21–32; Lattanzi, "Eremo," 1983, 55–59; Lattanzi, "Castel," 1983, 54, 59–66; Sgarbi 1983, 240; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 8; Cali 1984, 238, 257 n. 10; Cannatà 1984, 38, no. 6; Gentili 1984, 42–43; Gentili 1985, 170–183; Trevisani 1985, 221–222; Russo 1987, 226, 230; Zampetti 1987, 1: 126; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 43; Aikema 1994, 101, 103, 112 n. 10; Colalucci 1994, 13, 15; Echols 1994, 62–65; Lucco, "Schede," 1994, 355 n. 19; Humfrey 1997, 32–33, 169n

Judith with the Head of Holofernes

1512

oil on panel, 20 x 15 (7⁷/₈ x 5⁷/₈)

signed and dated, upper right: L. Lotto 1512

Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Rome

THIS LITTLE PICTURE, intensely dramatic yet painted with the delicacy of a miniature, first came to light in connection with the celebrations for the five-hundredth anniversary of Lotto's birth in 1980. The artist's refined handling is especially evident thanks to the painting's condition, which is excellent apart from some losses along the lower edge. An unpainted margin indicates that, however closely cropped the figures are, the panel has not been cut down. By contrast to his greatly expanded narrative treatment of the theme in one of the intarsias in Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo (Cortesi Bosco 1987, 469–475, no. 57), Lotto here concentrates on the protagonists who have perpetrated the grisly deed. In conformity with the biblical account (in the apocryphal book of Judith), the artist shows the beautiful young widow, after she has decapitated the enemy general Holofernes with his own sword, placing the severed head in a sack held by her maidservant.

Dated 1512, the *Judith* may have been made for a sophisticated Roman patron, as Humfrey (1997) has suggested. Though Lotto was active in the papal city by 1509, we do not know exactly when he left to resume working in the Marches. On the other hand, a picture of this quality, if done in the Marchigian town of Recanati or Jesi, could have migrated to Rome during the course of the sixteenth century. It is recorded as belonging to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini in Rome in 1603 and in subsequent inventories of the Aldobrandini collection (D'Onofrio 1964; Della Pergola 1960; Della Pergola 1963; Ricciardi 1993). The painting was also clearly known to Carlo Saraceni, whose studio produced at least two variants of it now in Dresden and Verona (Ottani Cavina 1968, 135–136, no. 128, figs. 137, 138; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996).

Lotto's picture encapsulates in small format the style of the *Entombment* that he completed in 1512 for the Confraternity of Buon Gesù in Jesi. Now in the Pinacoteca Civica, the altarpiece is similarly composed of highly agitated figures emerging from shadowy surroundings. The artist's palette, consisting of bright blue, red, golden yellow, white, and green, is the same in both works. And the comparison extends to specific types: Judith, with her blond hair and jewel-bedecked costume, resembles the Magdalen in the *Entombment*, while Holofernes' lifeless head recalls, disconcertingly, that of the dead Christ, just as the sack in the small painting oddly echoes the shroud in the larger one.

Like Lotto's other early works, the *Judith* allows us to gauge his originality in terms of his choice and use of sources. The svelte figure of Judith marks a basic shift from Lotto's Venetian models in favor of a Raphaellesque typology. If we had only this picture, we could tell that Lotto had seen the female personifications in the *tondi* of the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura. The composition of the picture does not derive from Raphael, however. Humfrey (1997) has recently compared Lotto's *Judith* to several half-length versions of the theme by his Venetian contemporaries (Joannides 1992), but these all seem to postdate his departure from the Veneto in 1506. The real source for the figure grouping, as Gentili (1985) recognized, was Andrea Mantegna. He produced numerous versions of the subject in different media, which in turn inspired engravings (fig. 1) by other artists (*Andrea Mantegna* 1992, 403–405, 411–413, 435–444). As in the representations by or after Mantegna, Lotto contrasts the figure of Judith, holding a sword in her right hand and the head in her left, with that of her accomplice. In Mantegna's autograph paintings and drawings of the theme, the servant is black, as here; the engravings depict her as an old crone (a solution to which Saraceni returned for his copies). Although we cannot be sure which of the various Mantegna versions was the direct model for Lotto's composition, it is significant that for the exactly contemporary *Entombment* he also turned to that artist for guidance. Lotto seems clearly to have adopted Mantegna's engraving of the subject, rather than Raphael's oft-cited *Entombment* in the Borghese Gallery, as the source for his altarpiece (Galis 1977, 9–10; Gentili 1984, 48; Gentili 1985, 189–192). Probably through engravings, Mantegna would thus appear to have played an especially important role at this moment in Lotto's development, just after his exposure to Raphael in Rome.

Lotto changed the contrast between the female figures that he found in his Mantegna prototype and in doing so fundamentally altered its meaning. In Mantegna's treatment Judith is *décolleté*, and her maid, looking down at the gruesome trophy, is fully clothed. Lotto reverses the equation by showing the servant partially undressed. The Judith at whom she looks in amazement becomes, in Lotto's interpretation, an exemplar of heroic female virtue, like Catherine, Lucy, and the other female saints he portrayed. The Bible specifies that Judith dressed in all her finery to





fig. 1. Zuan Andrea after Mantegna, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, engraving, British Museum, London

captivate her enemy, and Lotto, likewise, stressed the seductiveness of her attire, ornamented with sparkling jewels. The way he fashioned the brooch on her bodice in the form of a cross is a reminder that, in a Christian context, Judith prefigured the Virgin victorious over the devil. The contrast between Judith's decorum and the disarray of her maid is heightened by the half-length format of the painting, with its dark background. Lotto's representation is not unique in this respect, for we find an analogous concentrated treatment, and the same slightly sinister mood, in Correggio's tiny depiction of the theme in Strasbourg (Gould 1976, 33, 273). The way Correggio turned the Mantegnesque compositional type into a dramatic close-up constitutes one more of those affinities between him and Lotto that are so difficult to explain.

D A B

PROVENANCE: Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Rome, by 1603; Olimpia Aldobrandini, Rome, in 1626; Aldobrandini collection, Rome, 1682; Gualdi collection, Rome, 1860; purchased from Guglielmo Gualdi by the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Rome, 1984

LITERATURE: Della Pergola 1960, 429, 439; Della Pergola 1963, 82; D'Onofrio 1964, 20; Gentili 1983, 49–50; Zampetti, *Girolamo*, 1983, 19; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 10; Zampetti 1983c, 314, no. 93; Cordaro 1984, n.p.; Zampetti 1984, 173–175; Gentili 1985, 200–201; Trevisani 1985, 221; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 43–44; Ricciardi 1993, 316; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996, 17–20, 56–57; Humfrey 1997, 38, 40–41



MAURO LUCCO

Bergamo





The Penitent Saint Jerome

c. 1513–1515

oil on panel, 55.8 x 40 (21 1⁵/₁₆ x 15 3¹/₄)

signed, on rock, lower right: LAUREN(T) LOTUS

Muzeul National de Arta al României, Bucharest

LOTTO'S FIGURE IS EASILY RECOGNIZABLE as Saint Jerome: a lion appears at upper left, and books allude to his role as translator of the Bible, which he carried out while a hermit in the Middle East. In addition, the saint beats his breast with a stone while holding a crucifix. In this painting, Jerome's aspect as penitent prevails markedly over that of intellectual, as is typical of other Lotto paintings of the subject (cats. 6, 8). Thus, greater emphasis is given to such details as the small but poisonous asp near his feet, the grasshopper in the foreground, and the bird skeleton at lower left. This iconography of Jerome as a penitent nude was especially popular in northern Italy, particularly in the Veneto, beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century (Lattanzi, "Tema," 1983; Russo 1987).

When the picture entered Baron Bruckenthal's collection, probably at the time of his appointment as governor of Transylvania, under Maria Theresa of Austria, at Hermannstadt (present-day Sibiu), between 1777 and 1787, it was labeled a work of the "Italian school." When the collection was transformed into a permanent museum in 1817, this attribution was retained (as it is listed, for example, in the 1844 catalogue). Frimmel (1894) identified the painting as a Lotto on the basis of the signature; Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895, who confessed that he had not seen it) and all subsequent scholars concur on the authorship. Some years earlier, Frimmel (1888) had prepared an edition of the notes of Michiel, so he knew that during a visit to Bergamo around 1525 the Venetian aristocrat had seen "in the house of Domenico of Cornello" "the little picture of S. Jerome . . . by this same Lotto," which he believed to be this painting. Frimmel's opinion did not find adherents; two years later it was excluded by Frizzoni, who indicated that the painting dated "from the artist's maturity" (perhaps implying that it postdated Michiel's notes). In fact, starting with Morelli (1890), the painting owned by Domenico Tassi (after Michiel, no longer cited by the sources in Bergamo) is usually properly identified as the one today in Allentown, of 1515 (see cat. 11). It cannot be excluded, but there is no real possibility of finding out, that the Bucharest painting could be the same one as the "Saint Jerome in the desert" mentioned by Tassi (1793) in the Bettame household in Bergamo.

Beginning with Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895)—who was relying on Frimmel's description, however—most scholars have dated the

painting to a few years after 1515. But based on Berenson's observation that the charged atmosphere of spirituality evident in this painting anticipates the two later versions of the subject (Prado, Madrid; Doria Pamphilj collection, Rome [cat. 48]), Mariani Canova (1975) proposed a substantially later date, around 1544 to 1546. She attempted to identify it as either one of the two variations made in 1544–1546 for Nicolò da Mula, or the one made in 1546 for Vincenzo Frizier. This proposal was accepted only by Caroli (1980), Giammarioli and Di Mambro (1983), and Aikema (1984); more recently scholars have favored a date during the second decade of the sixteenth century, usually in the second half of the decade. Changing his mind, Aikema (1993) locates it in the first decade, and Dal Pozzolo (1993) limits it to between 1512 and 1514.

To my mind, this last opinion is the correct one, and I shall try to pin the date down further. First, the left part of the landscape, with steep walls of rock and trees that have grown curious tentacle-like roots, is close to that of the *Saint Jerome* in Castel Sant'Angelo (cat. 8). The dark color of the rock and thicket stand out against the horizon, where the wide plain vanishes into a nebulous fog, as in the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the Brera. Morning dew saturates the grass of the meadows and shores, as it does in the foreground and background of the painting in Rome, and both compositions are constructed around an optical pyramid that descends from the top of the scene toward a distant horizon, wedging itself diagonally, from left to right, behind the rocky mass. Furthermore, both paintings depict the unmistakable Castel Sant'Angelo, symbolizing the civilization forsaken by the penitent, but also a fresh memory of Lotto's stay in Rome.

Lotto's method of suggesting, without meticulously describing, the tree branches is certainly freer and more relaxed, but not so very different from the landscapes in the *Madonna and Child with Saints* in Edinburgh, of around 1504–1505, the two allegorical portrait covers in Washington, of 1505–1506, and the *Saint Jerome* in the Louvre of 1506 (cats. 1, 3, 5, 6). It is also similar to that of Solario's *Penitent Saint Jerome* in the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle, datable to between 1510 and 1515 (Brown 1987, 230–231, 280–281), revealing Lotto's interest in Lombard landscape painting (Longhi 1929). The drape of the saint's tunic and cloak, which falls in wide, less tortured, folds, attempts to balance *spät Gotik*

forms and those of a classical tradition, between Raphael and Fra Bartolomeo. This treatment seems to reappear, though transformed, in 1516, in the predellas of the Martinengo altarpiece (cats. 12–14) in Bergamo; according to Humfrey (1997), there is also a correspondence in the rhythmic lengthening of the figure. Also, the angle of the saint's face is repeated in the Moses of the Recanati *Transfiguration* and the apostle in the center (perhaps Saint Peter) of the Brera *Assumption of the Virgin*. Together these references suggest a date sometime between the painting in Recanati—and, more generally, Lotto's stay in Rome—and the execution of the Martinengo altarpiece in Bergamo, that is, between 1512 and c. 1515.

Although close in date, the *Saint Jerome* in Castel Sant'Angelo (cat. 8) and the painting in Bucharest are notably different. The Castel Sant'Angelo painting has a significantly higher horizon, as though the viewer dominates the saint, who is placed toward the background. Jerome's pose is classical and appears to correspond exactly, though in reverse, to that of the nude on the right above the *Erythrean Sibyl* on Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling, painted by 1509. The result is a stable and balanced composition, perfectly consonant with the silence and meditation necessary for one studying the Scriptures.

By lowering the vanishing point, bringing the saint into the foreground, and stretching him across the front of the painting, Lotto gave the composition of the Bucharest picture a dynamism and emotional emphasis bordering on fanaticism. These prevail over the composure called for by the figurative norm, as is also the case in the agitated gesturing of the Martinengo altarpiece. For this reason, the saint's "act of penitence" appeared to Frizzoni (*Archivio*, 1896) as an "exaggerated motion," and Berenson was also struck by the fervor of intense religious feeling. In fact, this is the point: here Saint Jerome is no longer studying the sacred texts, but is immersed in penitence, beating his breast. The difference between the two paintings is more iconographical than stylistic; even more evident is the distance between two variations of the same type, separated by just three years, that is, the painting in the Louvre (cat. 6) and the one in Castel Sant'Angelo (cat. 8).

Additionally, the position of the saint's legs in the Bucharest painting, which provides the basis for the entire long modulated bridge of the composition, appears yet again to be lifted, with very few changes, from a nude on the left above the *Erythrean Sibyl* on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, the same portion of Michelangelo's complex that Lotto used for his painting in Castel Sant'Angelo, and which the artist surely saw during his stay in Rome in 1509. This is further evidence for a relatively close dating of the two works.

Recently a perfectly finished preparatory drawing for the head of Saint Jerome has come to light and been published by Humfrey (1997); noting the drawing's detailed portraitlike realism, Humfrey deduced that every painting by Lotto must have been carefully prepared by a series of sketches of the entire composition and then of the individual figures and details. In other words, the artist used a technique for the elaboration of his images stem-

ming from the fifteenth century that was still in use throughout central Italy, from Florence to Rome, but had been abandoned in Venice at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the example of Giorgione, who painted directly on his support with pigment, "without drawing" (Vasari). Lotto, however, remained faithful to the artistic practices he had learned during his apprenticeship, further refining them in the light of the knowledge he acquired on his trips through central Italy.

Lotto also drew heavily on his own creative imagination for details. Among the most unsettling of the entire painting is the grasshopper in the foreground, on the bottom edge of the picture, yet it does not seem to have stimulated the curiosity of scholars. Only Dal Pozzolo (1993) mentions a Saint Jerome "prostrate on the ground, between grasshoppers and snakes." In reality, the marked difference in scale between the insect and the penitent saint, the difference in the vantage points, and its position parallel with the plane on which it rests, different from every other directional line within the painting, all indicate that the grasshopper is resting on the picture frame (unfortunately, the current one is not original). Thus, the insect belongs at once to the saint's space and that of the viewer, as though it had flown from inside the scene to the physical edge of our reality to bridge the two worlds. The artifice in some ways reflects one often used in northern painting, a fly painted *on top of* another painted object, but here it is used with more sophistication and intelligence. It is an explicit invitation to become involved in the intensity of the mystical experience and divine love perceived by the saint, which should be no surprise coming from an artist with deep religious feelings; it is no coincidence that Lotto reused a similar idea in another painting imbued with strong emotional and prayerful overtones, *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* (cat. 17).

M L

PROVENANCE: Samuel von Bruckenthal, Hermannstadt, by 1800; Bruckenthal Museum, Hermannstadt, 1817–1948; Muzeul National de Arta al României, Bucharest

LITERATURE: *Die Gemälde-Galerie* 1844, no. 117; Frimmel 1894, 82; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 278; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 16–17; Berenson 1901, 224; Berenson 1907, 114; Csáki 1909, 208–209; Venturi 1929, 25; Berenson 1932, 308; Berenson 1936, 265; Spek 1937, 23; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 42; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 71; Berenson 1955, 59, 219; Bianconi 1955, 43; *Galeria Universala* 1955, 30; Berenson 1957, 106; Oprescu 1960, n.p.; Ballarin 1970–1971, 59; Mascherpa 1971, 27; Teodosiu 1974, 33; Mariani Canova 1975, 119; Caroli 1975, 286; Caroli 1980, 280; Teodosiu 1984, 54; Giammarioli and Di Mambro 1983, 115–116; Aikema 1984, 344; *Capolavori* 1991, 39; Aikema 1993, 304–305; Dal Pozzolo 1993, 44; Enescu 1993, 38, 180; *Da Antonello* 1996, 27; Humfrey 1997, 54–56

The Penitent Saint Jerome

1515

oil on canvas, 41 x 33 (16 1/4 x 13)

signed in gold, on trunk, lower right: LAURENTIUS/ LOTUS/ 1515

Allentown Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection

AROUND 1525, MICHEL (Morelli 1800) noted “in the house of Domenego of Cornello,” “the little picture of Saint Jerome. . . by this same Lotto.” Considering that the *Saint Jerome* of 1506 (cat. 6) had to have been painted in the Veneto prior to Lotto’s departure for the Marches, and that other versions of the subject date to after 1525, the alternatives are few: Michiel was either referring to this painting or the one in Bucharest (cat. 10) of a slightly earlier date. Michiel speaks of a *quadreto*, or “little picture,” and as the Allentown painting is the smaller of the two, the scales are tipped in its favor. In fact, identification of this painting as the one formerly in the house of Domenico Tassi “of Cornello” should be accepted as fact.

Sources in Bergamo after Michiel do not mention this painting. Tassi (1793) noted, without further details, “a Saint Jerome in the desert” in the Bettame household, which could be the Bucharest painting. Piccinelli (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959) specified that “in Brescia toward 1820 in the hands of Mr. Brignoli one could see a beautiful little painting with the name of Lorenzo Lotto in gold letters representing Saint Jerome”; the owner, in fact, was Paolo Brognoli, author of the *Guida di Brescia* of 1826, in whose collection the work is again cited.

In both this painting and the one in Bucharest, Saint Jerome is depicted more as a penitent than as an intellectual. Here, however, the saint has a composure that is lacking in the more vibrant passions of the earlier picture. Nonetheless, his twisting pose and the apparent disproportion between the various parts of his body have caused a certain amount of unease among scholars. Brizio (1953) attributed it to some bizarre proto-Mannerist ferment, Bianconi (1955) found it difficult to believe the picture was Lotto’s except for the signature, and Ansaldi (1956) judged the landscape to be as magnificent as the figure was badly composed.

Saint Jerome’s path of penitence and learning is presented more precisely. The canvas is divided into three scenes by the vertical *repoussoirs* of the cross, the slender backlit tree, and the thicker trunk on the left, as well as by the grassy shore in the shadows. Having come across the sea—Jerome was originally from Dalmatia—and donned the hermit’s tunic, he begins his symbolic ascent from the beach (lower right), through impenetrable woods and mountains (upper left), until finally, in the company

of his faithful lion, he stops in the Syrian desert to contemplate and read the Divine Word (center). The central moment of this experience is his penitential beating of the breast, inflamed by love and compassion, before the crucifix in a silent, isolated landscape. This act allows him to ascend not only the greatest heights of faith and thought, but also the ecclesiastical hierarchy; at the foot of the cross he has placed the emblems of his position as cardinal.

Cortesi Bosco (1987) interprets this painting as a sign of Lotto’s profound religious sensibility and his commitment to personal spiritual reform, which he pursued strenuously during his years in Bergamo. In actuality, those symbols so ambitiously displayed in the foreground, above the artist’s signature in gold, may indicate that the commission came from a cardinal or someone who aspired to be one. Indeed, the wholly private dimensions of the work would have allowed the patron to visualize for himself hopes that he could not have expressed in public for political reasons. If this premise is accepted, then the evidence points to someone in the household of Domenico Tassi.

The report given by Marin Sanudo in his *Diarii* (xxix, 162) of the murder of Bishop Alvisè Tassi, brother of Domenico, in 1520 is revealing: he was “bishop of Recanati *olim* of Parenzo, which bishopric of Parenzo he renounced in favor of Don Hironimo Campezo,” and he “was rich, he hoped to become cardinal through his money.” His aspiration to the office of cardinal, using any means, was evidently common knowledge in 1520, but the most important fact is that having started out as bishop of Parenzo on the other side of the Adriatic, in the same land as that of the Dalmatian Jerome, Alvisè Tassi gave up that bishopric to become bishop of Recanati and Macerata, on just this side of the sea—a transfer symbolized in the painting by the sailing ship drawing near port. He was nominated to his new position on 16 January 1516 (Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 136); bearing in mind that such ecclesiastical transfers never happen suddenly but require long periods of preparation and substantial expenditures of money, the coincidence between the certainty of his new bishopric, his aspirations to become cardinal, and the date 1515 inscribed on the Allentown painting seem more than indicative. With Alvisè Tassi’s murder in September 1520, his possessions passed to his brother Domenico, in whose house Michiel would have seen the painting around 1525.



The canvas is of exceptionally high quality and displays a supreme subtlety of execution, which would have been in keeping with Tassi's expectations and taste. The well-preserved sky, painted with precious ultramarine pigment or lapis lazuli, the signature in gold, the tiny particles of gold around the crucifix as though to show its special radiance against an already luminous sky, and the meticulous rendering of even the smallest details all indicate that this painting was intended for a particularly refined patron. Some of Lotto's inventions—the saint's long, unmanicured nails; the giant spikes fastening Christ to the cross; the ship with its lifeboat in tow; fishermen pulling their nets onto the beach—are among the artist's most captivating. The idea of the shore placed on a diagonal and immersed in shadow, creating a backdrop against which the figure emerges in the foreground, and at the same time separating this scene from a landscape that recedes luminous and diaphanous into the background, was also used by Lotto in the predella panels of the Martinengo altarpiece, in particular the scene of *Christ Laid in the Tomb* (cat. 13). Also, the face of the lion can be seen, practically unchanged, in Saint Mark's lion at the lower left of the Madonna's throne in that same painting. The head of Saint Jerome corresponds perfectly with Saint Augustine on the right of the large altarpiece in Bergamo, and even the fringed mantle closely recalls the drape of Saint Sebastian's blue-gray loincloth in the same painting. Signature, date, inventions, and stylistic traits demonstrate, therefore, that the Allentown painting was executed in Bergamo at the same time that Lotto was painting the altarpiece now in San Bartolomeo.

Contrary to Katz' opinion (1978) that Lotto stayed in Rome collaborating with Raphael at least until the completion in August 1514 of the Stanza d'Eliodoro in the Vatican (with the implication that all his paintings after that date and up to the San Bartolomeo altarpiece, which he dates 1514–1516, would be strongly Raphaellesque), this small painting, without denying the influence of Raphael, shows a more precise stylistic move in the direction of northern art. Signs of this are apparent not only in the cold, detached colors typical of that tradition and the emphasis on emotion, but also in the manner in which the tree branches are delineated; the perpendicular bends of the blades of grass clearly show the artist's acquaintance with the woodcuts, if not with the paintings, of Albrecht Altdorfer. Although there is no documentation of such an acquaintance, Lotto's curiosity about the world beyond the Alps is clearly expressed about two years later, on 17 July 1517, by a clause in the contract of an assistant he was about to hire, specifying that the boy must be prepared to follow him anywhere, even, if necessary, to France or Germany (Caversazzi 1940, 125).

PROVENANCE: Probably Domenico Tassi, Cornello, by 1525; Paolo Brognoli, Brescia, by 1820; Otto Mündler, Paris, by 1870; Mr. Waters, bought through Christie's, London, 1938; Mr. Smith, bought through Christie's, London, 1939; Contini Bonacossi, Florence; Samuel H. Kress, 1941; Honolulu Academy of Arts; Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, Pa., 1960

LITERATURE: Morelli 1800, 52; Morelli 1890, 315; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 136, 137; Berenson 1901, 110; Bernardini 1906, 98–100; Suida 1952, 40; Banti and Boschetti 1953, 70; Brizio 1953, 22; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 41; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 70; Zampetti 1953, 56–57; Berenson 1955, 51; Bianconi 1955, 43; Ansaldi 1956, 6, 8; Coletti 1956, 154; Berenson 1957, 104; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 123; Shapley 1968, 159–160; Mascherpa 1971, 27; Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 112, 409, 551; Mariani Canova 1975, 93; Katz 1978, 82; Caroli 1980, 250; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 45; Sgarbi 1981, 230; Gentili 1985, 176–178; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 143; Colalucci 1990, 83; Colalucci 1991, 27, 50, 59–60; Humfrey 1997, 170

12

Saint Dominic Reviving Napoleone Orsini, Nephew of the Cardinal of Fossanova

13

Christ Laid in the Tomb

14

The Stoning of Saint Stephen

1516

oil on panel, 12: 51.8 x 97.5 (20 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 38 $\frac{3}{8}$); 13: 50.9 x 96.8 (20 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 38 $\frac{1}{8}$); 14: 51.2 x 97.1 (20 $\frac{3}{16}$ x 38 $\frac{1}{4}$)
Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo

THE THREE PANELS MADE up the predella of the large altarpiece Lotto painted between 1513 and 1516 for Alessandro Martinengo Colleoni in the Dominican church of Santo Stefano in Bergamo (he had also painted a *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine* on the screen of the same church, seen by Michiel around 1525 and now lost). The history of the altar complex has been carefully traced by Tardito (1978) and Murutes (1983). When the church was destroyed on 10 November 1561 to make room for the new walled fortifications of the city, the complex was probably transferred along with the whole monastic community to the other Dominican convent called della Basella, in Borgo San Leonardo, a place particularly dear to Alessandro Martinengo Colleoni (Oldfield, *Omaggio*, 1984; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988). After 9 April 1565 it was placed in San Bernardino in the same *borgo*, or section of the town. (This church should not be confused with San Bernardino in Pignolo, which houses another Lotto masterpiece.) In 1571 the Dominican monks obtained from Pope Sixtus V the complex of San Bartolomeo, in the field of Sant' Alessandro in the lower city, formerly belonging to the suppressed order of the Umiliati, but because of the small size of the building the altarpiece could not be installed there, and so it remained in San Bernardino in Borgo San Leonardo. Because of this distance between the convent's quarters and its possessions, and perhaps also to raise money for the rebuilding of a larger church, the Dominicans tried to sell the altarpiece in 1591, but the Bergamo city administration intervened, stating that it was prepared to buy the piece to prevent the important and prestigious work from leaving the city, and the deal was concluded in December of that year. On 22 February 1603 the Dominican general was given a license to build the new church, which united the titles of all the earlier churches, being dedicated to "God, the Virgin, the

Patriarch Saint Dominic, with the title of Saints Stephen and Bartholomew." The first stone was laid on 11 June 1603, and the new building was officiated for the first time on 6 May 1623. But, after the vault of the apse collapsed, the choir was not completed until 1647, and it was only then that Lotto's altarpiece could be transferred to its new seat. Soon afterward, during the night of 17 February 1650, the three predellas were stolen from San Bartolomeo; after payment of a ransom and guarantee of impunity for the thieves under the "seal of the confessional," the panels were recovered on 21 February 1650.

In 1747, as preparation for the frescoing of the vault of the entire church, the altarpiece complex was once again dismantled, to be reassembled so as not to obstruct the view of Bortoloni's frescoes. The old frame was taken apart and the top panel with the *Angel with Globe and Scepter* taken off and given as payment for his work to the carpenter who carried out the operation. He sold it to a certain Borsotti, or Borsetti, who then passed it on to Don Giovanni Ghedini. In 1864 it was purchased by Antonio Piccinelli from Pietro and Giuseppe Ghedini (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959). It was finally bought by the museum in Budapest from Luigi Resimini in Venice on 19 July 1895.

The new frame designed by Giovan Francesco Riva Palazzi, in which the main painting of the altarpiece was placed in 1749, had no room for the predella panels, which were moved into the sacristy. In 1893, to raise money for the construction of the new facade of the church, they were sold for 12,000 lire to the Accademia Carrara, where they are today.

The original complex of the Martinengo altarpiece was certainly one of the most original and ambitious that could be seen in northern Italy at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The size

of the work (which with its frame measured about 8 meters high and 4 meters wide) is among the largest ever recorded. Such a grandiose work would have had equally important significance assigned to it: above all a celebration of the patron and his family that went well beyond his wealth and magnificence, accompanied and reinforced by the inlaid choir and silver and gold liturgical vessels. But the political message was also clear: Alessandro Martinengo Colleoni who, like his grandfather and adoptive father Bartolomeo Colleoni, had fought loyally for Venice, fulfilled a vow he had made for the return of the city of Bergamo, as an act of “divine justice,” under the “light yoke” (as the devices at the top state) of the lion of Saint Mark, after the dramatic events of the war of Cambrai. This return would ideally guarantee peace (symbolized by his patron saint Alexander, who was also patron saint of Bergamo, here significantly placing his foot on top of a war helmet) and “divine justice,” nourished by the wisdom of good government, indicated by the emblem of the olive branch, symbol of Minerva. To reinforce his statement, Alessandro Martinengo Colleoni makes a series of “Venetian” choices: the artist, for one, educated in the artistic tradition that was completely different from the dominant vein in Bergamo until Cambrai (1509); the compositional arrangement, with a unified scheme and not the antiquated division into panels as in traditional Lombard polyptychs; even contrast, for the sake of *varietas*, of a saint dressed in a full suit of armor (Alexander) with a nude (Sebastian), as already seen in the San Cassiano altarpiece by Antonello da Messina (1475–1476) or the lost altarpiece by Alvise Vivarini for the Battuti in Belluno (1486) (Cortesi Bosco 1983; Humfrey 1997; on the Venetian tendencies of the patron, see also Matthew, “Lotto,” 1988).

The particularly generous payment to Lotto of 500 golden *scudi* goes well beyond the usual expenditure “to save one’s soul,” and, along with the passage in Martinengo Colleoni’s order specifying that money was to be no object, it is revelatory of a strenuously pursued policy of public magnificence in this project. No information is available about the design and execution of the monumental frame; Mascherpa’s suggestion (1978), based on an hypothesis of Fornoni, that this was the work of Pietro Isabello, is very tempting but not supported by objective evidence. The complex could not have encompassed the two tondi of the *Pietà* and *The Martyrdom of Saint Alexander* in the museum in Raleigh (Kress collection, K1765A, B), nor the two panels with *Dominican Saints* in the Fondazione Longhi in Florence. While in the main painting, the *Angel* in Budapest, and the predella panels the light consistently comes from the right (from the actual windows of the church), in the two tondi in Raleigh its source is on the left, as Mascherpa underlined (1978) in excluding them from the complex after first (1971) thinking they were a part of it. The same observation has been made for the two *Dominican Saints* in Florence by Boschetto (1971), who earlier (1953) had thought that they, too, were part of the Martinengo altarpiece.

It is open to speculation who informed Lotto that Alessandro Martinengo Colleoni intended to commission a monumental altar-

piece; Chiodi (1962) and Mascherpa (1971) suggest that it could have been Zanin Cassotti, a Bergamasque merchant, and this hypothesis is taken up also by Cortesi Bosco (*Affreschi*, 1980). But Mariani Canova (1975) has posited that it was the Dominicans in Recanati, through the grapevine of the order’s various monasteries; Chiodi has since (1981) accepted this opinion.

The contract commissioning the work from Lotto, dated 15 May 1513, was published in excerpts by Tassi (1793), and later completely by Locatelli (1867), at which point it contained numerous lacunae where it had been eaten by mice. The commission was awarded by a public competition in which many artists, from Bergamo and throughout Italy, participated, but their names are not listed. Morelli (1891, 68) remembered having seen what he considered the sketch for the work, on wood and bearing the signature “Lau. Lo. In./ Io. Pau. Pin.,” which he interpreted as evidence that after signing the contract Lotto went to live for a time in the convent of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. When the sketch panel resurfaced on the market in December 1924, at the sale of the Paolini collection through the America Art Galleries in New York, Longhi considered it (in Banti and Boschetto 1953) to be a copy from Lotto by Giovanni Paolo Cavagna, according to a more logical reading of the inscription as: “Laurentius Lottus Invenit/ Ioannes Paulus [Cavagna] Pinxit.” Berenson (1955) also considered it a copy. Another one of similar dimensions appeared in 1973 at an auction in Milan (Finarte 154, 14–17 May 1973, lot 593).

While the main painting in San Bartolomeo still bears the signature and date of 1516, a label on the original frame, now lost, recorded by Michiel (c. 1525) and Tassi (1793), bore the year 1517; this has always been interpreted as the date of the actual assembly of the work. In any case, the three-year gap between the date of the commission and that of the conclusion of the painting, which not even the gigantic dimensions of the work can explain, has given rise to various hypotheses. One, already mentioned, is Morelli’s idea that Lotto returned to Venice for a period; another is that this depended on the dramatic conditions in Bergamo, under siege by imperial forces between 1513 and 1516 (Ballarin 1970–1971).

Even though universally admired and often considered of higher quality than the main painting itself, which is complicated and involved (Zampetti 1953; Ansaldi 1956), the predella panels have essentially not been studied separately from the entire complex. Piccinelli’s notes to Tassi’s text (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959), however, introduce some unsettling elements: he states that in the house of Maestro Rota in Milan there were copies of the three panels now in the Carrara, plus a fourth “uniform with the others.” Originally, then, the predella sections would have been four, but the ancient sources only mention three, and the width of the main field (342 centimeters) allows only three elements (whose widths added together equal 282 centimeters), divided by parts of the frame, and not four (whose total width would be 376 centimeters, even without any dividers that are presupposed by the unpainted areas of the edges).



cat. 14

Piccinelli also says that in the panel “where Saint Dominic is praying to restore to life the nephew of the cardinal there present, in the little figure behind him and closer to and smaller than those looking on, the artist has painted himself,” referring to a “Ms. Carrara.” From such a convoluted description it is hard to see precisely to whom Piccinelli is referring; however, the third spectator on the left, the one wearing the striped tunic, in his facial features, the cut of his hair and beard, his hat, and even his clothing, bears a certain resemblance to Niccolò Bonghi in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (cat. 22), which, significantly, was once thought to be a self-portrait of Lotto. But it was Piccinelli himself who, counter to current opinion, said that this was Bonghi and not Lotto; the only explanation of this discrepancy is to imagine that these two notes were written independently at some distance in time from each other.

There is no evidence of the order in which the three panels were arranged. Their current sequence, followed here, is the one quite convincingly established by Mascherpa (1978) on the basis of the slight turn in direction of the shadows cast across the ground (implying a greater or lesser distance from the light source represented by the windows along the right side of the church), and especially of a precise correspondence between the stories and the positions of the titular saints, Dominic and Stephen, above in the main painting. Thus, the miracle of *Saint Dominic* must be on the

left because Saint Dominic is on that side in the large panel, while Saint Stephen is on the right; in the center, in correspondence with the Virgin and child, is a story involving both, *Christ Laid in the Tomb*. This arrangement, however, has the evident disadvantage of placing the story of *Saint Dominic* on the left, while the perspective line of the buildings pointing in that direction would seem to fit better on the other side, to the right of the central scene.

Among the three panels, a visible difference in quality has always been noted, favoring *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* and *Christ Laid in the Tomb* over the *Saint Dominic*. Nonetheless, it is worth remembering that, while the first two stories are represented in one unified scene, the complex chronological and emotional articulation of Saint Dominic’s story requires it to be narrated in several theatrical “sets,” whose dislocation in space corresponds to the importance of the events, almost a rehearsal for what Lotto would have to do in Trescore as he dealt with the stories of Saint Barbara. With a stage so crowded with buildings to mark off the various moments of the story, the magical atmospheric fusion between figures and landscape seen in the other two panels inevitably fades and disappears.

Different in the problems they had to face, unequal in the quality achieved, the three panels also reveal different stylistic traits. In the figure of Napoleone Orsini, lying dead on the ground and flattened by violent foreshortening, Nicco Fasola (1954) indicated

reminiscences of the frescoes in the San Brizio chapel in Orvieto Cathedral by Signorelli, an artist whose life and works are entwined from time to time with Lotto's. In 1512, in fact, Lotto painted the *Entombment* in Jesi as a substitute for a work never painted by Signorelli. Cortesi Bosco (*Affreschi*, 1980), following a suggestion by Brizio (1953, 1965), sees instead in this foreshortening, as in all the panels, clear signs of a knowledge of Gaudenzio Ferrari, an influence that seems today to have lost its appeal. Coletti (*Lotto*, 1953) has found in the panel with *The Stoning of Saint Stephen* reminiscences of Andrea del Sarto, which seemed to him to confirm his theory of a stay in Florence after Lotto's time in Rome. Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895), Venturi (1929), and Ansaldo (1956) have detected traces of Giorgione's taste. In general, however, it is commonly held that the three panels show very clear evidence of a knowledge of Raphael, both his themes and his style, but reinterpreted in northern, almost Grünewaldian, terms in the extraordinary expressive tension of Lotto's color and forms. It can be added that, particularly in the *Stoning*, the pose of the three executioners on the right, along with an evident reference to the young Raphael during his Florentine period, recall classical statues seen by Lotto in Rome and here revisited in a very personal vein; the central figure seems almost a new version, in reverse, of the *Laocoön*. In the *Christ Laid in the Tomb*, the Mary Magdalene twisted into a forced pose is the transformation of a figure from the sarcophagus of Mars and Rhea Sylvia visible from the beginning of the fifteenth century in San Giovanni in Laterano (Bober and Rubinstein 1986, no. 25), while the torso, head, and abandoned arm of Christ recall the group of *Cupid and Psyche* known from the Quattrocento in various versions (Bober and Rubinstein 1986, no. 94). Even though it doesn't have a precise model, the arch on the right in the *Saint Dominic* is undeniably Roman. But it is the intense pitch of feeling, augmented by the veiled atmosphere and gathering mists of the extraordinarily "real" mountain landscapes (and in this aspect northern, as is evident in the graphic convention of the branches, Germanic and Dürerian in origin, on the right of *The Stoning of Saint Stephen*), that gives these paintings their unforgettable expressive character. In this sense there can be no doubt that in experiments like the highlights falling on the pious woman at right in *Christ Laid in the Tomb*, which apparently have their source in the light of Christ's halo, in the subtle interaction of the figures with the town, and especially in the sudden flashes of light, there are parallels with the contemporaneous painting of Grünewald and that just slightly later of Holbein.

Probably related to the figure of the warrior walking along the extreme left of *Christ Laid in the Tomb* more than to the two standing ones in the *Stoning*, as Ruggeri (1966) maintains, is a drawing in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, assigned to Lotto by Pouncey (1965), who thought it was a sketch for some of the figures in Trescore. The *Mourner* on the verso of that sheet could provide a good argument for linking it instead with *Christ Laid in the Tomb*. Moreover, Nicolò Giolfino remembered this drawing

when painting his panel with *The Coronation of Darius*, datable around 1518–1520, formerly in the Galleria Voena in Turin.

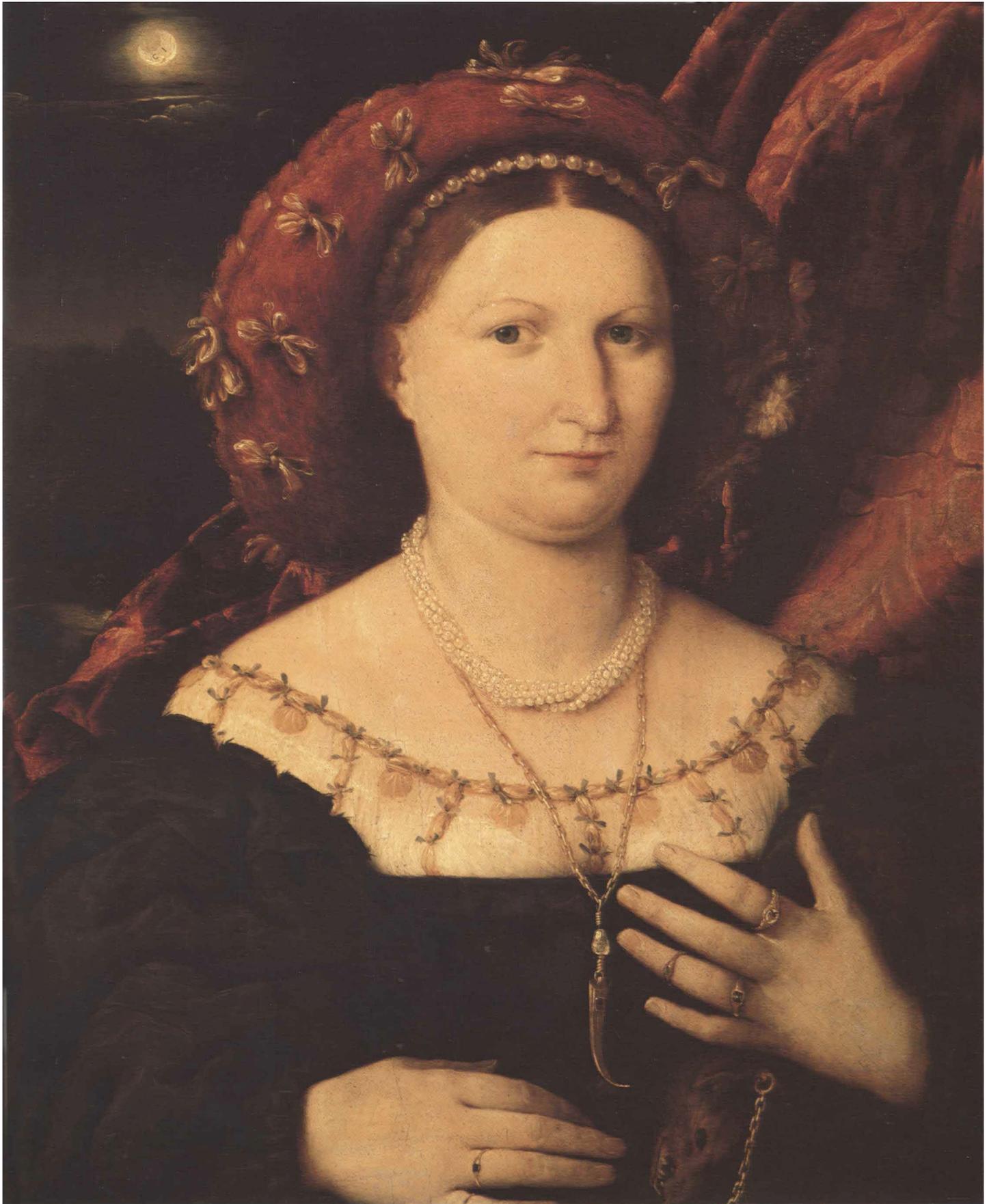
Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895) maintained, without ever going back on his opinion, that three other predella panels in the Accademia Carrara in Bergamo with *Events from the Life of Saint Stephen* were charming, free sketches for the predella of the San Bartolomeo altarpiece. His conviction was never shaken, despite their assignment to Marascalchi by Pallucchini (1934–1936), to Altobello Melone by Gregori (1955), and to Gianfrancesco Bembo by Bologna (1955), an attribution that is today universally accepted.

M L

PROVENANCE: Santo Stefano, Bergamo, 1516–November 1561; della Basella, Borgo San Leonardo, 1561–1565; San Bernardino, Borgo San Leonardo, 1565–1647; San Bartolomeo, Bergamo, 1647–1893; Accademia Carrara, Bergamo

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 143; Tassi 1793, 116–119; Federici 1803, 2: 6; Bottari 1822–1855, 5: 179; Locatelli 1867, 65–72; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 509; Frizzoni 1884, 131; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 158–159; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 196–199; Berenson 1901, 127–128; Berenson 1907, 113; Pinetti 1922, 16–19; Venturi 1929, 28–30, 114; Pinetti 1931, 39; Berenson 1932, 307; Berenson 1936, 264; Biagi 1942, 10; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 72; Brizio 1953, 20, 22; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 25, 40; Coletti, "Problemi," 1953, 4–6, 13; Perocco 1953, 260; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 452; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 63–69; Zampetti 1953, 60–61; Nicco Fasola 1954, 108; Berenson 1955, 64; Bianconi 1955, 45; Ansaldo 1956, 5, 6; Berenson 1957, 100; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 121–122; Ruggeri 1966, 64; *Libro* 1969, LV; Ballarin 1970–1971, 59; Freedberg 1971, 201; Mascherpa 1971, 15–16; Cohen 1975, 132; Mariani Canova 1975, 94; Zampetti 1975, 44; Cortesi Bosco 1977, 3–16; Béguin 1978, 113; Freedberg 1979, 303–304; Rossi 1979, 144; Caroli 1980, 114–119; Chiodi 1980, 15; Condemni 1980, 259; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 46, 52; Galis 1980, 374; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 68–69; Bertelli 1981, 187–193; Chiodi 1981, 173–174; Cortesi Bosco 1983, 213–249; Murutes 1983, 241–252; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 12; Oldfield, *Omaggio*, 1984, 26–30; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 323–325; Humfrey 1997, 43–47





15 Lucina Brembati

c. 1518

oil on panel, 52.6 x 44.8 (20 ¹/₁₆ x 17 ⁵/₈)
Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo

BY THE TIME THE PICTURE entered the Accademia Carrara, and even while still in the collection of the Grumelli family, the sitter's identity had been lost; this problem, however, was brilliantly solved by Caversazzi (1913), who noted on the forefinger of the left hand a ring with the Brembati family coat-of-arms. As the crescent moon is inscribed with the letters "CI," he deciphered the "CI inside LUNA [moon]" as "LU[CI]NA," thus recovering the name of a noblewoman recorded in numerous documents of the period, Lucina Brembati. This identification has never been doubted.

Gentili (1981, 1989; after Cortesi Bosco 1987) has recently expanded the iconographical reading of the work, but his conclusions are not entirely convincing. According to him, the painting plays on the similarity between the sitter's name and that of Juno Lucina, who in classical mythology protects pregnant women: the goddess was "Lucina" in that she helped bring babies into the light of day, and was identified with the moon (and consequently also with Diana) because, being a heavenly body associated with water, its presence in the sky facilitated labor and birth. In this way, the woman placing her right hand over her midriff was alluding to her pregnancy. Her worries about this upcoming event would be symbolized by the presence of the weasel or marten, a symbol of disaster, which is neutralized by the amulet, a horn, hanging from the chain around her neck. Since Lucina's first son was born in December 1508 and almost fifteen years had passed between that date and the hypothetical date for the portrait, which is usually placed, with some variation, between 1520 and 1523, these symbols would express the unease and worries of a woman no longer in the prime of youth as she faced an event that at the time was always risky, especially for someone close to thirty.

However, this is a circular argument dependent on self-confirming evidence. No documents speak of a pregnancy for Lucina Brembati in the years 1520–1523, nor of a third child born to the couple; thus, the only source for the idea is the presence of the moon and the fascination with the name of the goddess of childbirth. In this context, the right hand resting on her belly—a very common gesture in portraiture—alludes to her pregnancy. Reasoning in the opposite direction, accepting this last equation that hand on belly equals pregnancy, the context of the moon and the goddess Lucina seem to confirm the initial assumption. But

there is no information about Lucina Brembati's age or of her possible worries about a pregnancy, nor if she ever faced a late pregnancy that was not brought to term.

As to the marten (which Berenson in 1955 interpreted as a weasel, symbol of chastity), there is no doubt that the *Physiologus* and all the ancient texts speak of the animal in the negative terms reported by Gentili, but these refer to a living creature, not one already dead and transformed into a *schiratto*, or fur stole, one of the most desired items in women's fashion in the Venetian territories during the sixteenth century (Molmenti 1927–1929). Thus, there is no need for a charm to ward off an evil spell. In fact, neither Luini's *Noblewoman* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), always cited in relation to this painting, nor Parmigianino's *Anthea* (Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples), nor the *Gentlewoman* by Beccaruzzi (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo), to mention a few examples, appear to be at all concerned with the malevolent influence of the animal; instead, these women proudly show off their latest fashions.

Furthermore, the so-called good-luck horn (Mascherpa 1971) is actually a toothpick of precious metal, an item relatively well documented in the sixteenth century (see *Princely Magnificence* 1980, 72, no. 75a). That such objects were suspended from necklaces is confirmed by a passage from Monsignor della Casa's *Galatea*, written between 1551 and 1555, which mentions their misuse: "and he who wears a toothpick tied around the neck errs without fail . . ." (chap. 29). Lucina Brembati exhibits confidently the emblems of her social status, which, in addition to her expensive damask dress and shirtwaist, tied with a thousand tiny ribbons and embroidered with shells, include a large headdress strung with pearls. She also wears a pearl necklace, which certainly violated the sumptuary laws of the state.

But if all this is common to status portraits (generally, however, reserved for males), what is astonishing is Lotto's modern use of the "rebus" to identify the lady as a person, with her own name and surname, and not as a leading exponent of the Bergamo aristocracy. The letters CI inside the moon presuppose a viewer who is quick-witted and acute, ironic, and above all a lover of games and intelligence tests; as Humfrey (1997) has pointed out, it is as though the space given over to heraldic devices, usually

reserved for allegorical portrait covers, had been enlarged to invade the figurative field itself. The chilly distance of the moon seems to correspond to that which this lady appears to maintain between herself and society.

Like the earlier portrait that Lotto painted while in Bergamo, the *Della Torre* of 1515 (National Gallery, London), this panel resurrects the older half-figure format, giving greater emphasis to the face (Humfrey 1997). It is not a coincidence that Debrunner (1928) believed that the portrait, which he dated to 1521, was very close to the *Young Man with a Lamp* in Vienna. That format had a very strong tradition in Lombard portraiture, beginning with Leonardo and Boltraffio, up to more recent examples by Solario, such as the *Portrait of a Lady with a Lute* (Galleria Nazionale, Palazzo Barberini, Rome; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953; Cogliati Arano 1965). For Debrunner, however, this was not so much a pure iconographical borrowing as it was a substantial identification on Lotto's part with the "prosaic aspect of Lombard portraits," with their "almost northern crudeness of characterization." Appreciating this connection, Brizio (1953) suggested a comparison with Luini's *Noblewoman*. Zampetti (1953) spoke of a "dressed up, provincial Mona Lisa." There is no doubt that in the Veneto such a realistic and frank approach to the representation of a person's rather plain features would have perhaps caused some unease; here there is not only no idealizing impulse, but Lotto also eschews any mythological, poetic, or erotic disguise such as was common in Venetian female portraits. His eye always reproduces with the same attention to truth whatever falls under his scrutiny. In this sense, but earlier by several years, the panel finds its natural comparisons in the sublime portraits of Hans Holbein, who probably was in Lombardy in 1518.

Nonetheless, it is difficult to think that such a daring idea, unprecedented at that moment, as this nocturnal portrait, in which the pale moonlight laps the edges of the clouds and just barely mists the shores, could have existed without the example of Giorgione's *Orpheus in the Moonlight* (lost, but documented in a copy by David Teniers), which Lotto could have seen in Venice during his youth. Also, considering that nocturnes are more frequent in northern painting, and especially in the early work of Holbein, it would seem natural to propose a link with this artist (Mascherpa 1981). But between the analogous works of the two painters there is almost always a slight chronological discrepancy in Lotto's favor, so that his works tend to be the prototypes instead of the derivations.

Lotto's casting of a female portrait in the style reserved for male sitters can probably be partly attributed to his independent judgment and unconventional manner, and partly to the requests of his clientele, who in Bergamo were much more attentive to the values of domesticity than those in Venice (Humfrey 1997; see also cat. 25). Certainly, even without being one of the major masterpieces from his Bergamo period, this painting at the very least opens new dimensions of the imagination, which would lead a few years later to the most extraordinary portraits of married couples in Italian painting.

Not all critics agree on a date for the painting. Placed around 1523 by Berenson, it was moved up to c. 1517–1518 by Venturi; Morassi (1953) dated it around 1520, Cortesi Bosco (*Affreschi*, 1980; 1987) just before 1523, and Freedberg (1971) between 1521 and 1523. The wider, simpler folds of the dress and of the large red velvet curtain in the background recall those in the *Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist* of 1518 (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden), and the *Virgin and Child with Saints Roch and Sebastian* (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa), painted at the same time for the doctor and organist Battista Cucchi; the handling of folds is already supplanted in the two altarpieces painted for Bergamo in 1521, where the folds are tighter and the draperies more full as in northern painting. The Dresden panel, especially, is recalled in the subtly graphic treatment of the hands and the extraordinarily fine detail and realism in the hair and ribbons. The date of 1518 or immediately around it thus appears most likely for this portrait.

Bernardi (1910) published a *Portrait of a Lady* in oil on paper, formerly in the Secco Suardo collection and now lost, which he considered a preparatory *bozzetto* for this portrait, at the time not yet recognized as Lucina Brembati; Berenson (1955) believed that if it were by Lotto, it must have been executed around 1513. Lotto's authorship is accepted unreservedly only by Cortesi Bosco (*Affreschi*, 1980). Though the physical resemblances between the two sitters are considerable, the woman in the ex-Secco Suardo "bozzetto" seems older; thus, this painting should, if anything, date to about ten years later. It is currently impossible to verify this identification, as photographs available are inadequate, so it seems preferable to suspend judgment.

M L

PROVENANCE: Countess Grumelli Albani, Bergamo; Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, no. 900, January or February 1882

LITERATURE: Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 185–186; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 208; Berenson 1901, 148–149; Berenson 1907, 113; Caversazzi 1913, 23–25; Debrunner 1928, 122; Venturi 1929, 31–33, 114; Berenson 1932, 307; Berenson 1936, 264; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 74; Brizio 1953, 20; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 46; Morassi 1953, 296; Perocco 1953, 260; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 453; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 97; Zampetti 1953, 73–74; Berenson 1955, 82–83; Bianconi 1955, 47; Suida Manning 1955, 52; Ansaldi 1956, 4; Berenson 1957, 100; Cogliati Arano 1965, 46; Mascherpa 1971, 34, 48; Chiodi 1974, 83–86; Van den Berg-Noë 1974, 147, 161; Mariani Canova 1975, 98; Zampetti 1975, 44; Pignatti 1979, 66; Rossi 1979, 144; Caroli 1980, 124–125; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 49, 51; Gentili 1981, 418–419; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 18; Christiansen 1986, 168; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 472; Gentili 1989, 174–177; Ricciardi 1989, 85; Dal Pozzolo 1995, 37; Humfrey 1997, 66–70, 171.

Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints Catherine, Augustine, John the Baptist, Sebastian, and Anthony Abbot

1521

oil on canvas, 287 x 268 (113 x 105 ½)

signed: L. Lotus 1521

Santo Spirito, Bergamo

LOTTO'S PICTURE IS STILL in its original location, the fourth chapel on the right in Santo Spirito, Bergamo, where Michiel reported seeing it shortly after 1525 (Frizzoni 1884). The chapel belonged to the Augustinian Canons, and the altar above which the painting hangs was dedicated to Saint Augustine. This readily explains the prominent position of that saint, in his episcopal robes, to the right of the Virgin, who turns toward him. The Dove of the Holy Spirit, at top, alludes to the name of the church, which is located in the quarter of the city protected by Saint Anthony Abbot, justifying his presence on the right. Connected to the monastery was a hospital dedicated to Saint Sebastian, who in the painting is removing arrows from his body, while the infant Saint John the Baptist may allude to the patron's neighborhood.

Lotto's inclusion of Saint Catherine of Alexandria is more difficult to explain. Cortesi Bosco (1981) has proposed that Domenico Tassi of Cornello, who knew Lotto, acted as an intermediary in the commissioning of the altarpiece and insisted that Catherine be represented because she was the patron saint of his mother. This theory is unconvincing, as it is hard to imagine that someone underwriting the decoration of a chapel would allow such interference. It seems more logical that Catherine was the object of special devotion on the part of Balsarino Marchetti or one of his family members involved in the project.

No documents exist concerning the commission of the work, but the history of the reconstruction of the church offers some information. Inaugurated on 1 June 1311 (Meli 1970, 26), the church passed from the Celestine order to that of the Augustinian Canons following a decree by Pope Sixtus IV, dated 16 January 1475, in response to a complaint by the Bergamo city administration about the scandalous state in which the complex was being maintained (Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 340). Following a plan by the architect Pietro Isabetto, reconstruction of the interior began on 10 July 1512 with the elimination of the three naves, the traces of which are still clearly visible in the facade, and the construction of five lateral chapels on each side. The high windows in the center of the facade provided the only source of light. The chapels, with minor variation in interior decoration, were virtually identical, and perhaps from the beginning it was intended that their altar paintings be of the same size and shape. This is still true, even though the

chapels on the left were not completed until 1561 (Meli 1970, 26), and the only exceptions are a polyptych by Bergognone, dated 1508, commissioned by Domenico Tassi for the high altar but later moved to the third chapel on the left, and the polyptych by Previtali and Facheris in the Gozzi chapel, the fifth on the right, signed and dated 1525.

According to documents found by Cortesi Bosco (1981), on 20 August 1515 "d. Balsarinus fq. d. Marci de Anzelinis de Caprino," in his own name and that of his brothers, obtained the concession of the chapel still under construction between the Gozzi and Cassotti chapels in exchange for a gift of 2,000 imperial lire to be invested in a manner to ensure the saying of a daily Mass in perpetuity; the first half of the donation was paid on 9 February 1517. This Balsarino, son of Marco, can be identified, as Cortesi Bosco demonstrated, as "d. Balsarinus fq. d. Marci alias Marchetti de Anzelinis," a Bergamasque merchant living in the neighborhood dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, who in a postscript to the contract for the Saint Lucy altarpiece in Jesi, of 1523, is named Lotto's attorney; in 1527 he acted as the artist's intermediary for other paintings in the Marches (perhaps the two altarpieces for Jesi, of about 1526) and was, in any case, as correspondence demonstrates, a friend of the artist. The presence of the angelic choir at the top of the painting alludes to the surname of the patron ("Angelini"), as does the tall column on the left, otherwise difficult to explain in this context, which appears between two angels on the family's coat-of-arms. The payment in February 1517 of the first installment of the donation could indicate that by then the rebuilding of the chapel was nearing completion, and the time had come for Marchetti to commission a painting; moreover, Lotto had just recently finished in Bergamo the stunning altarpiece now in San Bartolomeo, signed and dated 1516.

For this painting, Lotto set the scene *en plein air*; the clear light indicates that it is early morning. The heavenly realm in the foreground is separated from the earthly sphere by a wall with a parapet, closed in the left corner by a base topped with a high column. Although this alludes, as Cortesi Bosco has noted, to the column in the Angelini Marchetti coat-of-arms, and may also signify an attribute of Mary and a metaphor of the faith understood by the Augustinians, it is also possible that the scene is a witty ref-

erence to the condition of the church, which was still under renovation when the altarpiece was installed. It may also refer to the conditions for the concession of the chapel, which involved responsibility for an external column.

Humfrey (1997) has convincingly underlined how this outdoor setting ultimately derives from Giorgione's Castelfranco altarpiece, but is mediated by a series of steps through Titian's altarpiece now in the Prado, one by Palma Vecchio in Zerman, and especially Cariani's Saint Gotthard altarpiece in the Brera, Milan. In this case, the period of Lotto's execution of the work should be narrowed to the three years between the end of 1518 (the date of completion for Cariani's Saint Gotthard altarpiece, apparently paid for on 18 January 1519) and the 1521 indicated on the painting. Matthew's suggestion ("Lotto," 1988) that the picture was installed above the altar shortly before 4 April 1521, when the Gozzi family, related to Balsarino Marchetti Angelini by the marriage of their sister Marta, decided to bestow on their chapel, held since 1515, 3,000 imperial lire, of which at least 300 was to be spent on an altarpiece, is intriguing, even if there is no proof. Humfrey has found that different patrons, especially within the same church, would often compete with each other to decorate their chapels with the most beautiful paintings.

The connection between Cariani's Saint Gotthard altarpiece and Lotto's painting, first advanced by Pallucchini and Rossi (1983) on the basis of documents concerning the commission and payment for Cariani's picture, completely reversed the critical tradition, according to which the Saint Gotthard altarpiece derived from Lotto's "open air" altarpieces, particularly those for Santo Spirito and San Bernardino (as affirmed by Baldass 1929; Gallina 1954; Mariacher 1975; Freedberg 1975); on the other hand, it is evident that this precedent was completely reworked and transformed by Lotto. In fact, while Cariani's painting has the more traditional vertical shape, and the saints are completely immersed in an idyllic pastoral landscape, in keeping with contemporary Venetian taste, Lotto's picture is in an unusual, practically square format, and the distinction between foreground and background is quite sharp. In effect, the crown above Mary's head, the saturated colors (note the unlikely green and pink hair of the musical angels), the heavenly beings' flowing draperies, inflated by gusts of wind that do not touch those below, all evidently, within the limits of experience and theology, work to turn into a metaphor what was never possible in physical reality, an encounter between saints from different eras, united across time and space. Lotto wants to make clear that despite physical appearances, this scene is taking place in Paradise, according to the verse from Saint Paul ("*nostra conversatio in coelis est*"), in a place completely remote from the distant earthly landscape, veiled by an early autumn mist; a landscape that easily finds its place in a Lombard tradition from Andrea Solario through Gian Girolamo Savoldo to Correggio.

The choice of such solutions is evidently not tied to Venetian tradition, although this has often been cited, for example by Freedberg (1975), who considered the Venetian variant of Lotto's

classicism to have developed from the models of Romanino and Palma Vecchio, and who saw in the crowd of angels an evident reference to Titian's *Assumption* of 1518 (Frari, Venice). Perhaps also Zampetti (1953, 74–76) indirectly indicates Venice when he speaks of the throng of angels as a "chromatic symphony," a suggestion later picked up by Mascherpa (1971; *Invito*, 1980), who uses the metaphor of music to refer to "a 'gloria' by Josquin Desprez or Jacob Obrecht heard in San Marco or in the naves of the great basilica of the Misericordia, while Saints Catherine, Augustine, Sebastian, and John the Baptist (with the sole exception of Anthony Abbot) create a ringing symphony of bright iridescent colors." For Mascherpa, following Pignatti (*Lotto*, 1953) and Bianconi (1955), that altarpiece and the one in Santo Spirito are closer to Correggio, and seem almost to be sources for his altarpieces known as *Day* and *Night* because of their particular lighting, with Santo Spirito being "Day" and San Bernardino being "Night." Banti (1953), moreover, in reference to the figure of Saint Augustine—whom she misidentifies as Ambrose—spoke of "a special lividness in the flesh tones [that] is perhaps an homage to the Milanese Bergognone"; however, there is no detectable difference in the flesh tones of this saint and the others. Although the physiognomy of the figures, especially the Virgin, hints at some contact with Correggio, a precise connection with the Emilian master seems in this instance to be improbable, as he appears to be pointed in a different direction in the two paintings cited and in the contemporaneous dome of San Giovanni Evangelista in Parma.

As both Cortesi Bosco and Humfrey affirm, it is instead Lotto's experience of Raphael that is his focus while he works on this painting. This renewed interest in Raphael would have been sparked by the news of his death on 6 April 1520, so that the Santo Spirito altarpiece would have constituted a direct "homage of Lorenzo Lotto to Raphael." The obvious implication, in part contradicted by documents discovered and published by Cortesi Bosco herself, is that the altarpiece must have been entirely conceived and executed after 6 April 1520 and before the end of 1521.

An inspiration from Raphael justifies the grandiose, monumental composition of the picture, especially when compared with the more intimate, subdued tone of its contemporary San Bernardino altarpiece; besides, Cortesi Bosco has correctly indicated that the pose of the young Saint John the Baptist, often read as Leonardesque (Zampetti 1953; Brizio 1953; Mascherpa 1971; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980; Caroli 1980), clearly derives from that of the Child in Raphael's *Bridgewater Madonna* (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh), or the cherub at the center of *Galatea* (Villa Farnesina, Rome). Less evident is the reference to *Saint Cecilia*, which arrived around 1514 at San Giovanni in Monte in Bologna (officiated by the Regular Canons, who belonged to the same congregation as the convent of Santo Spirito in Bergamo), which Lotto, according to Cortesi Bosco, would have seen in that town. There is no real documentation of Lotto's passage through that city, however, and it is even less likely that he could have seen it during



his trip from the Marches to Bergamo, as the *Saint Cecilia* was not yet in Bologna. Furthermore, rather than the throng of musical angels at the top of *Saint Cecilia*, Lotto's group seems to recall, in its more open semicircle, the scene of Paradise in Raphael's *Disputation of the Sacrament* in the Stanza della Segnatura (Zampetti 1975; Humfrey 1997). Moreover, there does not seem to be any link between the pose and expression of Raphael's Mary Magdalene and Lotto's Saint Catherine, except that they both look out at the viewer. Saint Catherine imposes her presence in a more intelligible manner and establishes a link between the physical space of the viewer and the illusionistic space of the painting. The pensive, meditative expression of Saint Anthony Abbot seems to follow a different compositional concept than that of Saint Paul in Raphael's painting; the only similarity is the interruption of the horizon line by the heads of the figures.

Saint Sebastian, at right, indubitably has classical antecedents deriving, more or less consciously, from a detail of the *Exodus of the Dacian People* on Trajan's Column, but perhaps the most immediate source is the figure of Abraham from Titian's engraving of the *Sacrifice of the Patriarch Abraham*. Much later in the century, the anonymous author of a sheet of the *Assumption of the Virgin* (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, no. 428; cf. *Bergamo*, 1980, 108–109) would pick up Lotto's characterization.

Lotto used sources with ease and intelligence. Rarely does he cite literally, but more often reinvents the motif for his own purposes. The infant Saint John differs from Raphael's model in the impish way in which he grabs and almost suffocates the lamb, which struggles to escape, resulting in a seeming wrestling match between cherubs. In the same vein are the improbable green stockings Lotto gives Saint Anthony Abbot, and the manner in which Catherine gathers her gown about her with a nonchalance of the utmost elegance but, overcome by a moment of flirtatious curiosity, looks out toward the faithful. Angels indecorously fight over the sheet music. These are all examples of the pronounced emotional charge with which Lotto often imbues his scenes, here with a light and happy air.

Lotto also used his own paintings as sources. The face of Saint Augustine seems to be the same as that for Saint Paul in the Ponteranica polyptych, in the central panel of the *Saint Lucy* in Jesi, and at the right, toward the center, in the *Crucifixion* in Monte San Giusto. Evidently, Lotto sketched portraits of real people, which he would use in various contexts. Perhaps a minor question, impossible for us to solve, lies in the fact that the soldier turning his head over his shoulder to look out of the picture in the Monte San Giusto painting has been convincingly identified by Massi (1990) as a self-portrait of Lotto; in this case it is hard to understand why the artist wished to include himself in the painting, almost as though he wanted to reinforce an authorship that was already affirmed in the signature.

Stylistically, the Santo Spirito altarpiece seems to have been conceived and begun soon after the *Virgin and Child with the Young*

Saint John the Baptist of 1518 (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden). In addition to a similar landscape, the Virgin's neckline, hairstyle, and features, as well as the figure of Saint John, are close in both paintings. The execution of the work, with an interval for the San Bernardino altarpiece, must have lasted about two years (this would refute the observation by Locatelli [1867] of the "very quick hand" of the artist, capable of creating two masterpieces of this kind in only one year).

The altarpiece, which seemed "marvelous" to Pasta (1775) and "superb" to Tassi (1793), appears to cede pride of place in modern times to that of San Bernardino, unanimously considered to be more appealing. This does not seem to depend on conditions of conservation, although Piccinelli's handwritten annotations to Tassi's book (1793), published by Bassi Rathgeb (1959, 122), state that the work was restored "by one Zanetto Miliori, a Venetian, around 1760 using paint mixed with wax." This gloss (which refers also to an untraceable manuscript by Marenzi) was added to the line in which Tassi (1793, 121) noted that Lotto's work was "in excellent condition." Giovanni Migliori, indicated as Venetian, could be a son or relative of the painter Francesco Migliori who, perhaps after 1736, had worked in nearby Brescia.

M L

PROVENANCE: Santo Spirito, Bergamo, 1521

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., I: 144; Pasta 1775, 117; Tassi 1793, 120–121; Federici 1803, 2: 6; Lanzi 1809, 53; Locatelli 1867, 91; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 510, 512; Frizzoni 1884, 135; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 180–182; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 206–207; Berenson 1901, 144–146; Berenson 1907, 113; Venturi 1929, 36–40; Pinetti 1931, 110; Berenson 1932, 307; Berenson 1936, 264; Biagi 1942, 10–11; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 19, 22, 75; Brizio 1953, 20; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 16, 25, 42; Perocco 1953, 260, 261; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 453; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 87–88; Zampetti 1953, 74–77; Nicco Fasola 1954, 110; Berenson 1955, 75–76; Bianconi 1955, 14, 15, 47; Ansaldo 1956, 5; Berenson 1957, 101; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 122; Pallucchini 1965, 55; *Libro* 1969, xviii, lv; Freedberg 1971, 201, 204; Mascherpa 1971, 36–38; Van den Berg-Noë 1974, 147; Mariani Canova 1975, 96–97; Zampetti 1975, 47–48; Cortesi Bosco 1977, 12; Freedberg 1979, 304, 308; Pallucchini 1979–1980, 659; Caroli 1980, 134–135; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 48; Cortesi Bosco, *Ritratto*, 1981, 313–315, 321; Markova 1981, 148, 149; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 46, no. 17; Oldfield, "Venice," 1984, 144; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 20, 144; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 338–344; Aikema 1989, 132; Barbieri 1989, 25; Di Tanna, "Nozze," 1990, 63; Colalucci 1991, 35; Cortesi Bosco 1991, 16, 235; Humfrey 1997, 48

Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother, with Elisabetta Rota

1521

oil on canvas, 126 x 99 (49 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 39)

signed, on label, lower center: m° Laurenttjo Lotto pictor 1521

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie

RIDOLFI (1648) IS THE FIRST TO CITE this painting in Tassi's house in Bergamo, together with its pendant, the *Nativity of Christ*, "in which the baby gives light to the whole picture" (Michiel, in Frizzoni 1884). Toward the end of the eighteenth century, Tassi (1793), who was the first to point out that the second picture contained a portrait of Domenico Tassi and the first that of his wife Elisabetta Rota, reported that both paintings had passed from the Tassi family to the canon Count Giambattista Zanchi. Subsequently, the paths of the two pictures diverge; according to Piccinelli (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959), *Christ Bidding Farewell* was purchased by Massinelli of Bonate, who then resold it in Milan; from the Tosi collection in Brescia (Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896) it passed into the Solly collection, and then into the Gemäldegalerie (Schleier 1996). Massi (1991) believes that the painting sold by Massinelli was a copy of the original, probably the one that in 1875 was in the Baslini collection in Milan, cited in the 1913 catalogue of the Berlin gallery and today considered lost.

It is more difficult to trace the movements of the other painting; in 1908 the Italian government bought through Pietro Pisani in Milan (and then gave to the Galleria dell'Accademia in Venice) a *Nativity* in which the light source is the child Jesus and there is the figure of a donor. This would seem to correspond to Tassi's description and that of Michiel (Morelli 1800); its dimensions are also quite similar to those of *Christ Bidding Farewell*. Sinigaglia (1908) mentioned that the painting came from Bergamo. The current condition of the painting does not permit a well-founded judgment: it could equally well be the miserable remains of the original cited by Michiel, Ridolfi, and Tassi, which has been heavily retouched (Hadeln 1914; Thieme-Becker 1929; Venturi 1929; Berenson 1932, 1936, 1955, 1957; Colalucci 1991), or a copy of the lost original (Longhi 1929; Ciaranfi 1935–1936; Coletti 1953; Banti and Boschetto 1953; Bianconi 1955; Moschini Marconi 1962; Massi 1991). The prevalence of this latter idea from about 1930 until recent times has obscured any connection between the Berlin and Venice paintings; only since Massi's work (1991) has the fact that they are pendants emerged in recent criticism. According to Massi, the compositions of the paintings, both constructed on diagonals that converge from the outer corner toward the center, the positions of the donors reversed, confirm that the two scenes were

planned as parts of a whole. Colalucci (1991) and Humfrey (1997) concur.

The complex iconography of the Berlin painting has attracted the attention of scholars, as the subject is rare in art (Gould 1948). *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* is the theme of a Dürer engraving published in 1511 (Bartsch 92), and appears in paintings by Correggio (National Gallery, London), Giovan Francesco Caroto (San Bernardino, Verona), and the workshop of Paolo Veronese (Pitti Palace, Florence). In addition, Cortesi Bosco (1980) mentions paintings of the subject by Defendente Ferrari (Longhi Foundation, Florence), Giovanni Cariani (Ambrosiana, Milan), and Fermo Stella (Santa Maria delle Grazie, Varallo Sesia); Colalucci (1991) gives examples by Bernardino Luini (private collection, Milan) and Bernardino Gatti (San Francesco, Pavia); and Massi (1991) cites a painting in the Academy in Vienna.

Although subjects of this type are relatively infrequent in northern Italian painting, they do appear in mystery and miracle plays of the time (Gould 1948). Thus, Berenson (1955) identified the apostle in the background, next to Saint Paul, as Saint Jude, who almost always appears in these plays as Christ's companion when he enters public life; Massi (1991) also accepted this opinion. Muraro (1981), on the other hand, considers the figure to be Saint Thomas, because of his outstretched arms, palms up, almost as if to "touch with his own hands." According to Gould (1981), the figure on the left, near Saint Peter, is Saint Joseph. Colalucci (1991) believes him to be Saint James the Greater; Lotto had painted that saint just a few years earlier with the same face and attire (Pinacoteca Comunale, Recanati), and as James was a witness to the Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, he would have lent credence to a scene that is not in the sacred texts. However, since this figure seems to be arriving at the last minute to an event that was already under way, and the textual source for the painting, the *Meditations* of Pseudo Bonaventure, speaks generically of apostles, his role may be metonymical, indicating the whole (the group of apostles) by a part, as though the others were just behind the door, about to enter the scene.

Other scholars—Perocco (1953), Nicco Fasola (1954), Bianconi (1955), Cortesi Bosco (1976; *Affreschi*, 1980), and Massi (1991)—have focused on the theatricality of the composition, which is arranged



like a scene from a mystery play in a setting resembling a basilica or church. Massi decoded the painting as an image produced in the mind of Elisabetta Rota through “mental prayer” (based on a popular Franciscan devotional book, Nicolò da Osimo’s *Zardino de oration fructuoso*), as she concentrated on the *Devote meditationi sopra la passione del nostro signore cavate et fondate originalmente sopra Sancto Bonaventura cardinale dell’ordine minore*, a book published around 1493 that relates Christ’s farewell to his mother. In other words, Elisabetta Rota, inspired by her book, visualizes Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother, projecting it in terms of her own daily experience. Thus, the scene takes place not in an unfamiliar house in Bethany but in a fine palace or sacred building in Lombardy, with a garden probably quite similar to the one in which Rota passed her days. She would thus find herself involved as a spectator (Massi 1991) in a scene from her own imagination.

For Cortesi Bosco, this manner of presentation reveals the intimate way in which Lotto approached questions of faith—more through emotion and affection than through reason—but this should not in any way cast doubts on his orthodoxy in religious matters. Such doubts are openly manifested by Cali (1981) who, although she accepts the connections established by Cortesi Bosco, concludes that the painting is early evidence of Lotto’s pro-Lutheran sympathies. Massi (1991) points out that Lotto’s invention of a pair of paintings (an idea he would later return to for the portraits of Febo da Brescia and Laura da Pola in the Brera [cats. 46, 47] and another pair of lost portraits mentioned in his *Libro di Spese*) permits the artist to show the Incarnation of the Word, on the one hand, and the initial moment of Christ’s Passion, on the evening of Wednesday of Holy Week, on the other. She connects this iconography with the stormy vicissitudes of the Tasso family, who in 1520 saw the murder of Domenico’s brother Alvise, bishop of Recanati and Macerata, and continuing threats until 1521 to Domenico himself. Her opinion is accepted and elaborated by Colalucci (1991), who recalls in this context the Lenten sermon of the Lateran priest Don Pietro Ritta from Lucca (in whose published texts the theme of Christ’s farewell to his mother, which took place during Lent, is amply treated), as a possible further stimulus to the commissioning of the painting. It is certain that Elisabetta’s brother-in-law, Bishop Alvise Tassi, was present at the last of Ritta’s sermons, preached in the square in front of Santo Spirito on 20 April of that year (at that time the churches of Bergamo were closed because of papal interdiction), and perhaps she was also there with her husband. On that occasion, asked his opinion on the interdiction, Don Pietro predicted various calamities, and one of these seems effectively to have taken place some months later with the murder of Bishop Tassi. According to Colalucci, then, during her meditation on the beginning of the Passion, Elisabetta internalizes her anguish at the death of her brother-in-law and her fears for her husband; her precognition of his death would then be reflected in the painting. Colalucci refers to an earlier interpretation by Gentili (unconvincing as Domenico

Tassi died only in 1538), in which the undisturbed bed in the distant room, the *hortus conclusus* in the background, and the little dog symbolizing faithfulness were taken as evidence of her widowhood, forcing a reading of the picture to include signs of Elisabetta’s fear and anguish at the thought of remaining a widow.

As to style, Cortesi Bosco considers the painting’s interpretation of the sacred in intimately domestic terms consistent with contemporary Lombard art and, following Brizio (1965), the result of a precise contact with Lombard and Piedmontese art, in particular that of Gaudenzio Ferrari. She does not state when and where such a contact took place, but her text implies that it would have occurred between the end of Lotto’s stay in the Marches and the beginning of his sojourn in Bergamo. But according to the information currently available, Lotto could never have encountered Gaudenzio Ferrari, thus the iconographical analogies between the two stem mainly from their common interest in Leonardo’s art, visible here in the elderly pious woman, Mary Salome, standing behind the Virgin. Lotto could have known Leonardo in his youth, when the master was in Venice in the early months of 1500, or when Lotto had just arrived in Bergamo, before Leonardo left nearby Milan for Rome. But, even if the two did not meet, the tradition established by Leonardo continued to flourish in the Milanese duchy, and it would have been easy for Lotto to be aware of it.

This interpretation is counterbalanced by that of Gould (1981), who says that to have chosen such a rare subject, Lotto must have known Correggio’s painting now in the National Gallery, London, but which came from his home town, with the inevitable consequence that in his trip from the Marches to Bergamo Lotto must have stopped in the Emilian town to see the work of the younger master. It is difficult to believe, however, that in 1512–1513, after having encountered the modern geniuses Raphael and Fra Bartolomeo, Lotto might have known, or bothered to try to know, a young artist at that time still unknown to the wider public.

Instead, the painting clearly evinces a strong sympathy with the intense emotional charge of northern painting, at least in part unheeded of the classical compositional norms prevalent in Italy. This is even more evident in the iconography of the picture’s pendant, which, as Jacobsen had already indicated (1911), finds its sources, for example, in a painting by a follower of Gerard David in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, or as later scholars have added, in the *Nativity* by Geertgen tot Sint Jans in London (Humfrey 1997). Massi hypothesized that Lotto was briefly in Venice in 1520, when he could have seen the analogous image of the *Grimani Breviary*, acquired by Cardinal Domenico in just that year.

This surge of emotion is sustained in the Berlin painting by the gentle symmetries of classical derivation, echoing the Florentine work of Raphael and Fra Bartolomeo, on which the composition is based, and on the capacity to communicate intense emotion through gesture, which Leonardo had elaborated during both his periods of residence in Milan; this is the case, for example, of Saint Peter glancing over his shoulder, of the idea of the sweetly

inclined heads, of the crossed hands on Christ's chest, even the expressive face of Mary Salome on the right. In effect, Lotto's mental dialogue with Raphael, on the one hand, and Leonardo, on the other, seems never to cease during his stay in Bergamo. Typical of Lotto, however, is his capacity to lift emotion to great heights, deeply involving the spectator. For just this reason, the painting appeared to Frizzoni (*Archivio*, 1896) as "a strange mixture of beautiful and repulsive things," with the figures "among those least happily resolved during his Bergamo period, overdone and badly proportioned."

Lotto's intimate obedience to the psychological truth of the story, so strong as to win out over any compositional norm or convention, reveals itself in the shifting light of a sun low on the horizon, as Massi noted, projecting through the oculus of the building to create in the vast, silent space a succession of receding planes. Extraneous elements to this emotion of interior silence are the cherry and orange branches, which support the letter bearing the artist's signature. These have been interpreted (Cortesi Bosco 1976, 1980) as symbols of sin to be redeemed (the orange) and the joys of Paradise (the cherry), or as symbols of the Virgin as co-redeemer (Massi 1991), or as Lotto's homage and good wishes for prosperity and serenity addressed to Elisabetta Rota (Colalucci 1991).

Colalucci is the only scholar to have noticed that this "still life," situated on a plane of vision that is perfectly perpendicular to the eye of the beholder and in a completely different perspective from the interior of the painting, openly declares that it belongs to another space, another dimension. These are objects that pretend to be resting on the picture's frame, and because of their size in relation to the figures, appear to be balanced dangerously on the edge, between the physical reality of the viewer and the fictional reality of the image. These are thus objects from the world of Lorenzo Lotto and Elisabetta Rota, which for just this reason must be stripped of their usual symbolic meaning in pictorial representations. In this sense, Colalucci's idea to move them "from a traditional deciphering of their symbolic meaning . . . [toward] a completely original code of emblems, created each time in relation to the daily experience of the painter or of his patrons" seems much more well-founded, enabling them to take on the significance of homage and good wishes for Elisabetta Rota as she attempted to emerge from one of the darkest moments of her life.

PROVENANCE: Domenico Tassi, Bergamo, by 1525; his heirs; Count Giambattista Zunchi, late eighteenth century; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, by 1821

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 1: 144; Tassi 1793, 1: 125; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 512, 532; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 182–184; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 207–208; Berenson 1901, 146–147; Berenson 1907, 114; Thieme-Becker 1929, 23: 411; Venturi 1929, 40–41; Berenson 1932, 308; Berenson 1936, 264; Biagi 1942, 11; Gould 1948, 286–289; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 74; Brizio 1953, 22; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 42; Morassi 1953, 295; Perocco 1953, 264; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 454; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 93; Zampetti 1953, 69–71; Nicco Fasola 1954, 109, 111; Berenson 1955, 76–77; Bianconi 1955, 47–48; Ansaldi 1956, 5, 8; Berenson 1957, 101; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 123; Pallucchini 1965, 55; Freedberg 1971, 202; Mascherpa 1971, 38–40; Cohen 1975, 131; Mariani Canova 1975, 96; Zampetti 1975, 1; Cortesi Bosco 1976, 11–17; Bock 1978, 246; Freedberg 1979, 306; Pallucchini 1979–1980, 659; Caroli 1980, 128; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 43, 52; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 50–51; Puppi 1980, 84–85; Cali 1981, 265–267; Gentili 1981, 421–423; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 46, n. 13–14; Schleier 1985, 334–335; Christiansen 1986, 168; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 143; Ricciardi 1989, 98; Colalucci 1991, 27–61; Cortesi Bosco 1991, 16, 234–235; Massi 1991, 103–119; Humfrey 1997, 56–58

Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Catherine

1522

oil on canvas, 74 x 68 (29 1/8 x 26 3/4)

signed, lower right: Laurentius Lotus 1522

Palma Camozzi Vertova Collection, Costa di Mezzate, Bergamo

ALTHOUGH PUBLISHED AS EARLY AS 1895 by Berenson, this splendid canvas has yet to receive the critical attention it deserves. It is in a private collection, which makes it less accessible to the public, and photographs of it are not of high quality. Most scholars had agreed that this was a version of a painting in the National Gallery in London (formerly on deposit in Birmingham), but after Goffen's publication (1978) of an analogous painting in Boston (cat. 24), it was thought to be a replica with variations of that picture. The Camozzi Vertova canvas, however, is qualitatively quite superior to the painting in London and is certainly in better condition than the one in Boston; this fact is already evident in Tassi's testimony (1793) that "in the Pezzoli house above the shoe market can be seen a very fine work, and so well preserved that it does not seem to have been painted in the year 1522 but appears to have been finished just now; in this is represented the Virgin with the child at her breast, Saint Catherine, and Saint John the Baptist. . . ." There is no evidence that, as Mascherpa reported (1971), this painting corresponds to the "figure of Our Lady with two saints at her side" recorded by Ridolfi (1648) in the house of Cavalier Gussoni in Bergamo; according to Piccinelli's notes to Tassi, instead (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959), "in 1820 it passed through a legacy to Count Gio. Batt. Vertova and now in 1865 is possessed by the nobleman Gabriele Camozzi," and from him came down to its current owners through inheritance.

The central group of the Virgin and child repeats with some slight variations the figures in the London and Boston paintings. The Virgin's veil, for example, is so diaphanous as to be almost invisible compared to those in the other versions, the Child's head is turned in a slightly different way, and the cruciform rays of light, easily visible in the other two, are absent here; the folds of the mantle and cushion are also slightly different. With regard to the other paintings, though, while the setting is in an interior, there is no opening onto the landscape. The saints, too, are radically altered; Saint John the Baptist is similar to the one that appears, in reverse, in the San Bernardino altarpiece of 1521 and in the Ponteranica polyptych. The figure of Saint Catherine of Alexandria is curious; she wears a crown of laurel and periwinkles, from which hangs a jewel similar to the one worn by the same saint in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* of 1523

(cat. 22). Mascherpa (1971) interprets the work as a portrait of the patron, who evidently was named Catherine. This seems unlikely, though, as it was relatively rare for a woman to independently commission a painting; moreover, the saint's features do not appear to be naturalistic enough for a specific portrait. She also holds in the fold of her sleeve a squirrel, which she is trying with her right hand to keep from moving about. The squirrel's presence is difficult to explain, except as a reference to the popular belief that the animal was blessed with a particularly lively intelligence and foresight, as reported by Pliny the Younger and Vincent de Beauvais (*Di Tanna, "Bestiario,"* 1990). In this case, it would symbolize the foresight of those who, seeing the baby Jesus, could understand Christ's destiny as the Savior and Redeemer of mankind, and entrust themselves totally to him, as does Saint Catherine who holds the animal. The lack of textual sources, however, leaves this interpretation completely open. It may be that Lotto merely included the squirrel to add a touch of grace and innocent vivacity. As Di Tanna (*"Bestiario,"* 1990) noted, the squirrel's habitat is in the Orobicche region and Bergamo, and it appears, in fact, without any visible symbolic significance, in at least two Bergamasque paintings just slightly earlier than this one, the *Virgin of the Squirrel* by Gian Giacomo Gavazzi da Poscante, dated 1512 (Sant' Alessandro in Colonna), and in the *Portrait of the Albani Family* by Giovanni Cariani, dated 1519.

Compared to the Boston version (cat. 24), this painting seems more timid and has slightly more archaic tendencies. Although the two central figures were evidently created from the same cartoon, the small variations made to the basic drawing and the handling of paint tend to distinguish them significantly. Where the Bergamo canvas seems to use color to define form, allowing the figures to emerge from the surrounding darkness, the Boston picture depends on a more polished description of shiny, enamellike volumes and on sudden flashes of gleaming light, so that, for example, the draperies appear more swollen and solid. These characteristics belong to a moment in the development of Lotto's style later than 1522. Thus, far from being a derivation of the paintings in Boston and London, the picture is more likely a prototype. In fact, the Child's face is easily comparable to that in the San Bernardino altarpiece of the preceding year, but is far removed from the London and Boston paintings.



The pyramidal composition of the principal group, with the two saints on the sides placed in the middle ground, reveals still strongly its origins in early classicism, especially the work of Raphael, while the dissolving outlines in the twilight recall the artist's experience of Leonardo. Nonetheless, the notable divergence between the heads of the Virgin and the child, the difference in size between the heads of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine, the accentuation of the diagonal line in depth from the illuminated side of the wooden casket toward the Precursor, and the attitude of the Virgin who openly turns to look out at the viewer, all lend the painting a sense of unsteady balance. This feeling, almost, of an unresolved emotional knot, locates the painting among those episodes of deviation from the classical norm, which, when not a conscious negation of it, are manifestations of a greater emphasis on the emotions that exploded almost contemporaneously in various parts of the Po Valley toward the end of the second decade of the sixteenth century.

M L

PROVENANCE: Casa Bergamo, Pezzoli, by 1793; Count G. B. Vetrova, by 1820; Gabriele Camozzi, by 1865; Camozzi's heirs

LITERATURE: Tassi 1793, I: 125; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 186–187; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 432; Berenson 1901, 149–150; Berenson 1907, 114; Venturi 1929, 42–43, 114; Berenson 1932, 308; Berenson 1936, 265; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 75; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 15, 42; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 93; Zampetti 1953, 79–80; Berenson 1955, 78–79; Bianconi 1955, 48; Berenson 1957, 101; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 123; Pallucchini 1965, 53; Mascherpa 1971, 40–43; Cohen 1975, 132; Gould 1975, 137; Mariani Canova 1975, 97; Zampetti 1975, 48; Goffen 1978, 34–36; Pignatti 1979, 64–65; Caroli 1980, 260; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 55; Di Tanna, "Nozze," 1990, 63; Ekserdjian 1991, 87, 91; Rearick 1993, 314



Saint Catherine of Alexandria

1522

oil on panel, 57.2 x 50.2 (22 ½ x 19 ¾)

signed, on wheel, lower right: Laurentius Lotus / 1522

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

TASSI (1793) RECORDS A "SANTA CATTARINA," formerly in the Sozzi house in Bergamo, "which was taken to Lisbon in 1753"; it is certain that the painting he refers to is the Washington *Saint Catherine*. Piccinelli (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959) notes that "the Saint Catherine brought from Lisbon in the Sozzi household passed in 1804 for the price of 40 gold sequins to Prof. Ceretti of Pavia. At Ceretti's death Prince Ban. . . bought it, and in 1813 it could be seen in the III room of Villa Bonaparte above the door leading to the Study." As Piccinelli took this information from Marenzi's handwritten notes in a copy of Tassi's *Vite*, and Marenzi had been a direct witness to these events, these transfers must be accepted as historical fact. It is quite probable that the mysterious "Prince Ban. . ." is Prince Eugene de Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy in Milan from 1805, who as adoptive son of Napoleon could also call himself Bonaparte. After the fall of Napoleon's regime in 1814, he fled to Munich, the birthplace of his wife Augusta Amelia, daughter of Maximilian I of Bavaria, whom he married in 1807, receiving the titles of Herzog von Leuchtenberg and Furst von Eichstadt (see Miller 1990). These dates coincide perfectly: the painting, which left Bergamo only in 1804 to go to Pavia, was purchased by the viceroy of Italy for his collection, where it appears in 1813. Thirty years later, it was listed as no. 62 in the catalogue of the Leuchtenberg collection, then in the Passavant catalogue of 1852 as no. 20. At the death in 1852 of the heir to the collection, Duke Maximilian, his widow the Grand Duchess Maria Nicolaieva, daughter of Tsar Nicholas I, returned to Russia, taking the collection with her to Saint Petersburg. There Lotto's picture was studied by Waagen (1864), Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1871)—the first to connect it with the passage from Tassi (1793)—Hark (1896), and Néoustroïeff (1903). During the upheaval of the 1917 revolution, 93 of the 252 paintings in the collection were moved, through the offices of a certain Dr. Nyblom, to Stockholm, where they were shown, as preparation for a sale, at A. B. Nordiska Kompaniet; 39 of these were then taken to the company's offices in Buenos Aires, and from there disposed of (Miller 1990). It is not known when and how the painting left the Leuchtenberg collection, where it is still cited by Venturi in 1929 (although the date may be incorrect); during this period it was purchased by Contini Bonacossi, who sold it in 1933 to Samuel H. Kress, who then donated it in 1939 to the National

Gallery. Here it appears for the first time in the 1941 catalogue.

It is not at all certain that the painting is the one Ridolfi (1648) described as a "Saint Catherine tied to the wheel, half-figure" in the house of Cavalier Gussoni in Venice (Hadeln [1914], referring to Tassi). She is not in any way tied to the wheel, yet this identification was accepted as certain by Mascherpa (1971), who spoke of a Gussoni collection in Bergamo.

Cavalcaselle (in Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871) considered the work to have been "spoiled by abrasion and retouching." In about 1934 the panel was first restored by Pichetto, and other minor restorations are noted in 1943, 1944, 1948, 1951, 1955 (by Modestini), 1979, and 1981. Another complete restoration was done in 1984. At this time the repainted cross on a chain, which appeared as early as an engraving by Johannes Nepomuck Muxel, for the Leuchtenberg catalogue of 1851, was removed, and under it were found traces of the original cross. The signature had also been gone over fairly consistently, but on top of strong traces of the original; the halo is a modern repainting. X-rays show that the head was moved slightly from Lotto's original design and that the hands were also altered. The greatest change was carried out by Lotto himself: on the right there was a window with a landscape and on the left the folds of a curtain completely different from the current background.

These alterations were probably made because of a change in the destination of the work; perhaps it was originally planned as an image for private devotion and then transformed for public display in a church. Even today, in fact, in the parish church of Celana in the province of Bergamo, there is a nineteenth-century copy of a *Saint Catherine* given to Lotto (Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan), which, in turn, is a summary copy of the painting in Washington (Rossi 1978–1980). Therefore, there are good reasons to believe that the Washington painting came nearly from its creation to the Celana parish church, where in 1527 Lotto's *Assumption* altarpiece arrived from Venice. These circumstances suggest that the original owner of *Saint Catherine* was thus inspired to donate it to the church, after first having Lotto change the background. The modifications revealed by the X-rays could have been done relatively soon after the first version of the painting (twenty or thirty years later); they have penetrated the original paint so that both layers have crystallized to the same degree.

The Poldi Pezzoli painting is cited for the first time in Celana as the work of Lotto (though there is no trace of a signature on the picture), around 1670, then was removed in the nineteenth century (Rossi 1978–1980); it was purchased by Frizzoni and finally entered the Milan museum in 1919. Clearly the establishment of a local tradition in favor of Lotto's authorship implies something stronger than would have attended an anonymous copy. The gaps in the painting's history easily leave enough time for the painting, placed in the church after a brief period in private hands, to be copied, around 1550–1590, according to Natale (1982), or even later, as I maintain, before returning to private hands, appearing sometime before 1753 in the Sozzi household.

Some scholars (Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953; Boehm 1985) have remarked on the intensely portraitlike quality of the panel, beginning with Frankfurter (1938), who feels that it is simply the metaphorical portrait of a Venetian lady named Caterina.

Already in Waagen's catalogue (1864) the Correggesque poetic grace of the image had been remarked upon; Freedberg, however, emphasized an intensification—almost exaggeration—of grace and refinement, elaborated in openly Mannerist terms. Although it is not possible to confirm any contact with Correggio, the parallels between this painting and Correggio's so-called *Portrait of Veronica Gambarà*, for example (State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, c. 1518–1519), are tempting: the pose, presupposing an attentive and involved spectator; the delicacy of the gradations and the masterful handling of the shadows; the luster of the pearls. On all of this Lotto superimposes the beauty and brilliance of his bright colors, as compact as enamel, deriving from Venetian tradition as filtered through Raphael, as well as his characteristically convoluted folds of the draperies.

Finally, Trevisani (1985) has noticed that the red velvet in the background is identical to that used to drape the throne in the Santo Spirito altarpiece of 1521 (cat. 16), and it is the same piece of fabric, evidently part of the workshop furnishings, that Lotto reuses in different contexts.

Almost two decades later, Moretto da Brescia, whose esteem and friendship for the artist are well known (see, in particular, Lotto's letter to him of 8 December 1528, in Chiodi 1962, no. 33), evidently had this panel in mind when he painted his *Salome* (Pinacoteca Tosio-Martinengo, Brescia, inv. no. 81) and the *Portrait of a Woman as Saint Agnes* (private collection; Begni Redona 1988, nos. 67, 66).

PROVENANCE: Casa Sozzi, Bergamo and Lisbon, 1753–1804; Prof. Ceretti, Pavia, 1804; Eugene de Beauharnais, Milan, by 1813; Leuchtenberg Gallery, Munich and Saint Petersburg, by 1843; Maria Nicolaieva, Saint Petersburg, by 1852; Contini Bonacossi, Florence, until 1933; Samuel H. Kress, New York, 1933–1939; National Gallery of Art, Washington

LITERATURE: Tassi 1793, I: 125; Passavant 1852, 4, pl. 20; Waagen 1864, 376; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 512–513, 533; Berenson 1894, 116; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 81, 187–188; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 446; Harck 1896, 430; Berenson 1901, 150; Néoustroïeff 1903, 344–345; Berenson 1907, 116; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912, 3, 409; Reinach 1918, 4, 601; Venturi 1929, 114; Frankfurter 1938, 166, 168; *National Gallery* 1941, 115; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 75–76; Brizio 1953, 23; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 42; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 455; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 93; Zampetti 1953, 82; Berenson 1955, 79; Bianconi 1955, 48; Suida Manning 1955, 50; Berenson 1957, 106; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 123; Shapley 1968, 161; Freedberg 1971, 203; Mascherpa 1971, 43–44; Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 113, 384, 645; Mariani Canova 1975, 97; Rossi 1978–1980, 95; Freedberg 1979, 306; Shapley 1979, 275; Caroli 1980, 136–137; Zampetti 1980, 169; Merkel 1980, 279; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 55; Markova 1981, 148; Natale 1982, 131; Cristaldi 1984, 209; Boehm 1985, 123; *National Gallery* 1985, 234; Trevisani 1985, 225; Di Tanna, "Nozze," 1990, 60, 63; Colalucci 1990, 83; Rearick 1993, 314

20
Nativity

1523
oil on panel, 46 x 35.9 (18 1/8 x 14 1/8)
signed, on wood, lower right: L. Lotus / 1523
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

SHAPLEY (1968), THE FIRST TO discuss this painting in depth, believed it to be “the nativity, in which the baby gives light to the whole painting” that Michiel had reported in the house of Domenico Tassi in about 1525 (Morelli 1800). That painting—a pendant to *Christ Bidding Farewell to His Mother* of 1521 (cat. 17)—presumed a night scene, however, which is absent here. Shapley also proposed that the block of wood at lower right was a mousetrap, and referred to Shapiro’s essay (1945) on the symbolism of this object in Robert Campin’s *Merode Triptych* (The Cloisters, New York). In support of her argument she cited a passage from Saint Augustine: “*Exultavit diabolus quando mortuus est Christus, et ipsa morte Christi est diabolus victus, tamquam muscipula escam accepit. . . . Muscipula diaboli, crux Domini: esca qua caperetur mors Domini*” (The devil rejoiced when Christ died, but by that death of Christ the devil was vanquished, like the trap captures the bait. . . . The cross of the Lord is the trap of the devil; the death of the Lord the bait with which he will be captured; *Patrologia Latina* 38, 1210). But as Shapley confesses, Shapiro himself expressed doubt that the object was a trap, but its presence, along with the crucifix on the other side in the painting, seemed proof to her of Lotto’s message of salvation. Equally skeptical was Mariani Canova (1975), who thought the object was a carpenter’s plane and considered that if it were a mousetrap, “the theological interpretation would be even more subtle.” Nevertheless, she judged this one of Lotto’s masterpieces and a fundamental text for the development of painting in Brescia and all of Lombardy until Caravaggio. Her opinion was more enthusiastic than any other commentator on the work, especially after Freedberg’s observation (1971) on the “rougher,” popular religious connotations of the image.

More recently, Colalucci (1990) has demonstrated that the object is actually a piece of wood prepared to be joined to another at right angles. Thus, it alludes to the profession of Saint Joseph, who for the first time is placed on the same level as the Virgin; the result is an image of loving parents, attentive to their lively newborn. This emphasis on Saint Joseph and the rethinking of his role and figure (in earlier representations he had been reduced almost to a comic buffoon), is consistent with a new feeling of domesticity. He is now seen as a participant, in some way, in the plan for Redemption and as the provider of protection and the needs of

his family (for example, here he has with great foresight prepared food and water for the Flight into Egypt). Colalucci connects this new attitude toward Saint Joseph with the Lenten sermon preached in Bergamo in 1512 by Fra Girolamo Castro of Piacenza, of the congregation of the Servi di Maria; the most immediate result of this preaching was the creation, in the Servite church of San Gottardo, of the Scuola di San Giuseppe, invoked as protector against war, pestilence, and other adversity. This school, which commissioned the altarpiece by Cariani of 1517–1518, had as members the leaders of the local aristocracy, such as Francesco Albani, Luca Brembati, and Domenico Tassi. Tassi had already demonstrated his devotion to Joseph by placing the saint as mediator between him and the Child in a painting of 1521 in the Accademia, Venice (whether destroyed original or a copy), a pendant to the Berlin painting (cat. 17) (Humfrey 1997).

X-ray and reflectograph investigation have yielded answers that significantly influence the reading of the painting, and in some cases have cleared up doubts that arose on first viewing. For example, infrared reflectography has shown that the piece of wood seems to have been added at the last minute, almost as if to have something on which to place the signature. The first version of the painting also did not include the cradle, and the baby was placed on a sheet spread on straw that continued to the right edge of the painting. Such a composition would have seemed closer to Costa’s work, supporting Mascherpa’s reading (1971) of “the typically Emilian scheme in the arrangement of the main group.” Saint Joseph’s staff was initially higher, and his sleeves and drapery were altered, as were those of the Virgin. The most substantial change involves the background. The wall with the crucifix was added at the last minute; in an earlier variation the wall supported a beam like those holding up the shed’s roof. The beam was later removed and the wall completed with a capital and the beginning of a large arch. This required the addition of a corresponding arch on the other side of the painting. The shed in the background originally extended more to the left, to end on the same line as Saint Joseph’s head. The group of trees and the shepherd with his flock, the ladder leaning against the wall, the pegs on the shed, the turtledoves on the pole, and even the current aspect of the building, which in the beginning was more clearly a hay loft, with fodder hanging



from the beams, all belong to a later version of the composition. The same can be said of the ox and ass, who initially were looking out the door, and of the hovering angels, for whom Shapley indicated a source (to be sure, not compelling) in Dürer's engraving of the *Adoration of the Magi* of about 1503 (Bartsch 87). Along the upper edge of the sky, where the painting touched the original frame, were traces of gilding.

The crucifix, therefore, which seemed to Shapley (1968) to confer theological weight on the image, is a late—possibly much later—addition by Lotto; it is no coincidence that Berenson (1955) found in it surprising analogies with the one in his private collection, still today in Settignano, painted about twenty years later. Nonetheless, even admitting that this belongs to the final version of 1523, the revolutionary idea of concentrating in one image the initial and final moment of Redemption seems to derive from Venetian ideas, from that “brevity” that Pino would theorize about some years later (1548) as particularly fitting for *poesie* or “poems” (that is, those paintings that summarized representationally, without following the text literally, long and complex mythological stories). Even though this is a small picture, suited for private devotion, its sense of intimacy, of adherence to the humble but infinitely variable appearance of things, and the degree of emotional involvement that it presupposes in the viewer is, albeit on another plane, not unlike that of a *poesia*.

The cool, misty tone of the landscape recalls that of the *sacra conversazione* in Boston (cat. 24) and the *Trinity* altarpiece in Sant’Alessandro in Bergamo (cat. 23), and Saint Joseph’s face is similar to that of Saint Peter in the Ponteranica polyptych. The handling of the draperies and a certain liquid ease in the brushstrokes recall the Trescore frescoes. Considering that in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22), delivered in June 1523, the pigment is applied more compactly, the conclusion is that *The Nativity* was painted in the second part of the year, for an unidentified patron.

PROVENANCE: Conte Morlani, Bergamo; Bonomi, Milan; Contini Bonacossi, Florence, until 1937; Samuel H. Kress, New York, 1937–1939; National Gallery of Art, 1939

LITERATURE: *National Gallery* 1941, 116; Longhi 1946, 62; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 43; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 76; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 43; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 108; Berenson 1955, 80; Bianconi 1955, 48; Benesch 1957, 411; Berenson 1957, 107; Shapley 1968, 161–162; Freedberg 1971, 203; Mascherpa 1971, 46–47; Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 113, 269, 646; Mariani Canova 1975, 98; Cortesi Bosco 1976, 30; Goffen 1978, 40; Freedberg 1979, 306; Shapley 1979, 280–281; Caroli 1980, 262; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 55; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 43; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 319; Colalucci 1990, 71–88; Humfrey 1997, 58, 60–61

Marsilio Cassotti and His Bride Faustina

1523

oil on canvas, 71 x 84 (27 1/16 x 33 1/16)
signed, on yoke, left: L. Lotus pictor/ 1523
Museo del Prado, Madrid

AROUND 1525, MICHEL REPORTED that in the house of Giovanni Cassotti “two pictures were from the hand of Lorenzo Lotto” (Frizzoni 1884). Only three centuries later was it possible to determine what paintings these might be, on the basis of the *Cunto de li quadri facti de pictura per mi Lorenzo Loto a miser Zanin Casoto* (Account of pictures painted by me Lorenzo Lotto for Mister Zanin Cassotti), discovered and published by Locatelli in 1867. In the meantime, the painting had left Bergamo and appeared for the first time in 1666 in the inventory of the Alcazar in Madrid, from which it was moved in the last century to the Prado. Only a reading error can explain Boschetto’s statement (1953), repeated later by Mascherpa (1971), that in the eighteenth century the painting was still in Italy, as it is perfectly recognizable in a catalogue of paintings for sale published by Campori (1870); there is no doubt that the picture published was this painting, but the catalogue was from the seventeenth century, even though its date was not specified. Moreover, the same catalogue includes many other Prado paintings that came from the Alcazar, and they are also registered in 1666.

In the *Account* the picture is described as “the painting with the portraits, that is Messer Marsilio and his wife with the little Cupid, regarding the representation of those clothes of silk, bonnets [*scufiotti*], and necklaces, d. 30.” The price was later reduced in a marginal note to 20 ducats, so that what is reported is not so much an “account” as a “discount” (Mascherpa 1971; Chioldi 1981; Gentili 1989). In place of “scufiotti,” a man’s cap elaborately woven with gold, worn underneath the hat (clearly visible in the painting), Locatelli (1867) and everyone after him until Zampetti (*Libro* 1969) had read “seu ficti,” which makes no sense. In effect, the careful execution of that piece of headgear, painted almost with drops of light, justifies the artist’s mention of it, along with the clothes and jewels, as one of the most difficult and complex parts of the work, one that would obviously drive up its price. But also in this case, as always with his Bergamasque patrons, Lotto did not succeed, whether out of innate goodness or timidity, in charging a price that he thought fair. The *Account* is not dated, but it cites two paintings, one dated 1523 and the other 1524; Gentili’s opinion (1989) that the *Account* was compiled in the last months of 1525, in preparation for Lotto’s departure for Venice, is contra-

dicted by the fact that the note was for Zanin Cassotti, who died on 16 February of that year.

Van Hall (1976) made a careful iconographical study of the painting, and according to her reading, the “little Cupid” is a transformation of the ancient motif of *Juno Pronuba* or *Jugalis*. Over the centuries, this figure variously appears as a Christ, a cherub, or even a priest blessing a marriage. Lotto’s source for the Cupid may have been a Roman stele that he could have seen while in the city between 1509 and 1511, or known through the *Epigrammata Antiquae Urbis Romae*, by Jacopo Mazocchi of Bergamo, published in 1521. The stele was thought to represent the god Fidio, protector of truth; the image showed a man and a woman with right hands united, and behind and between them a young boy.

The Cupid is placing a yoke on the shoulders of the bride and groom, a clear reference to the duties that each party undertakes in marriage. This is reinforced by the linguistic allusions linked with the object itself, like the *subjugatio* of a woman upon entering into wedlock, or the term used to refer to a partner in marriage, *conjugium*, which gives rise to *vincla jugalia*, conjugal ties. In a certain sense, the yoke is self-evident. The laurel leaves, which seem to be budding from the yoke itself, appear also in the background of the painting and signify *Virtus*. In this case, the virtue is chastity and the promise of an eternal union—if not of love (though the crown of laurel on Cupid’s head is in this sense unequivocal) than at least of matrimony.

These symbols fell on fertile ground in the humanistic culture of the period, from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, printed in 1499, to Piero Valeriano and Alciati, whom Lotto, according to van Hall (1976), knew from the early years of his apprenticeship. In brief, the painting represents the central moment of the celebration or solemnization of the wedding rite, which at the time was not a standardized ceremony. Using the term coined by Hinz (1974, 209–210), this is an *Eheschliessungsporträt* or marriage portrait. By looking out of the painting, both partners make the viewer a conscious witness to their marriage, confirmed by the fact that Marsilio is placing the ring on his bride’s finger. The moment, therefore, is no longer the one of the matrimonial bond enacted with the *dextrarum junctio*, nor is it the one represented by Lotto in his *Portrait of a Married Couple* in Saint Petersburg (cat. 25); if anything, the



situation is similar to the one portrayed in the *Berthold Tucher and Christina Schmidtmayer* by the “Master of the Landau Altar” (Anhaltische Gemäldegalerie, Dessau), painted toward 1484 even though it bears the date of 1475 (Hess 1996, 18-19), or in an engraving by the “Bg Monogramist” (Wilk 1978; Hess 1996). In any case, the iconographical connection of this painting with German art has already been well established (Pope-Hennessy 1966).

An iconographical reading of this sort is well-founded and certainly unarguable, but such a serious approach to the question does not lead to a complete resolution, as it does not take into consideration another of the essential components of the image, as noted by Berenson as early as 1895: “This is perhaps the first consciously humorous interpretation of a psychological situation which Italian art gives us, and it would never give us another one as perfect. The characters are presented with a penetration worthy of a modern psychological novel, to the point that no doubt remains in our minds about who will take the reins in this new ‘menage.’” Although one can detect in these words the sensibility and ideology of a contemporary of Oscar Wilde or Feydeau, they do make clear the comical, slightly teasing, intention that lies behind the painting and opens some new insight into the life of the protagonists.

At the time of his marriage, Marsilio was still a very young man, just barely twenty-one, an age when most men are not yet thinking of marriage. Ruggiero (1985, 26–27) has calculated, on the basis of ample documentation, that in the capital, Venice, men were married, on average, at thirty; and it is in Venice that Fra Paolino Minorita, in his treatise of 1313–1315, *De regimine Rectoris*, had explicitly stated that women should not marry before the age of eighteen, and men before twenty-one, a rule that was evidently still in effect two centuries later. Marsilio thus takes this step earlier than many others, and on his choice must certainly have weighed the fact that his father, Zanin (Venetian dialect for Giovanni) Cassotti, had emancipated him the preceding year, in 1522, when he was only twenty, significantly earlier than the usual entrance into adult life, conventionally established as the twenty-fifth birthday (Petro 1992). Emancipation consisted of freeing the son from the obligation of obedience to his father and granting him a part of the family fortune so that he could try to enlarge it through his own efforts; in a word, to put him in a position to act independently, following his own will and not that of others.

Since, as is clear from the account book, it is Giovannino Cassotti who is paying for the painting, he must also have been the one to commission it; therefore, the comic intent must be attributed to him, not Lotto or Marsilio. He is the one who, with the transparent intention of making a gift to his son and daughter-in-law, orders a painting that good-naturedly teases his son who is in such a hurry to grow up, a painting that would help Marsilio to understand that marriage is a yoke (this is, in fact, how Cesare Ripa, in his *Iconologia* of 1618, prescribes that it be represented), no matter how “light” (the device that Lotto had represented in his

San Bartolomeo altarpiece), an undertaking that was sometimes burdensome, in which one had to call on various virtues, from fidelity to chastity, and more often that of putting up with each other with a smile. With time, seeing themselves so serious and solemn, maybe even the bride and groom would learn to smile at themselves and at the moment represented here.

Nonetheless, Marsilio, wounded by Cupid’s arrows, wants to be married soon; moreover, his life with Faustina was destined to be brief, as he died just five years later, while his wife lived until 1580. Her surname is not known; Petro (1992) surmises from the will of Giovanni Antonio Cassotti, the couple’s first son, drawn up in 1580, that she was an Assonica. In that case, she could be the sister of Laura Assonica, the first wife of Marsilio’s older brother Gian Maria, but there is no documentary evidence to confirm this.

In this painting, the youngest son of the Cassotti family is portrayed in the crowning moment of his “caprice,” when he seems to be feeling with his fingers for the vein that, according to Isidoro of Seville or, more recently Fra Cherubino of Siena or Spoleto (c. 1480), leads from the ring finger of his wife’s left hand directly to her heart.

The mention in the account book of the fine clothing and jewels worn by the bride and groom is in keeping with the importance imparted to them during the wedding ceremony; Faustina, for example, is dressed in red, apparently the preferred color for wedding dresses, according to the popular sixteenth-century verses published by Molmenti (1928): “Beautiful darling, we’re at the feast days/ what color should we wear?/ Dress yourself in red, my love/ it’s the best color in the world.” She wears a pearl necklace, the symbol, according to Marco Antonio Altieri (1511), of the submission of the woman to her husband (Elena Rossoni brought these details to my attention). Her position of social inferiority is ratified here also by her “lesser” position, lower than her husband and more diagonal, compared to his imposing, central placement (Hughes 1986; Humfrey 1997). Everything indicates that, no matter how metaphorical, the painting *actually* represents the central moment of the exchange of wedding vows.

Stylistically, Lotto’s composition is related to German models (Pope-Hennessy 1966; van Hall 1976; Wilk 1978; Humfrey 1997), showing once again his increasingly vivid interest in art beyond the Alps, but it also reveals his extraordinary inventiveness. In its ability to recount wittily a very complex psychological situation, the painting goes far beyond anything represented before. Lotto created an iconographical “type” that, based on the “double portrait” stemming from Giorgione and Raphael, can be used to show not the emblems of social status or profession so much as the more complex interpersonal relationships between the persons portrayed, especially as regards the emotions, as would be seen in the *Portrait of a Married Couple* (cat. 25) or, many years later, in the *Family of Giovanni della Volta* (National Gallery, London).

Cupid’s varicolored wings, in blue, pink, and yellow, and especially the curious detail of a single feather that pulls away at the

top from the others, compare well with those of the Archangel Gabriel in the polyptych at Santi Vincenzo e Alessandro, Ponteranica, in which Lotto used the same color scheme and detail, while these are not present in the San Bernardino and Santo Spirito altarpieces (cat. 16) of two years earlier. Also, Cupid's face resembles that of the Virgin Annunciate in that same polyptych, which helps to date this latter work between 1522 and 1525.

M L

PROVENANCE: Giovanni Cassotti, Bergamo, by 1525; Alcazar, Madrid, by 1666; Prado, Madrid

LITERATURE: Locatelli 1867, 463; Campori 1870, 453; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 514; Frizzoni 1884, 140; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 192–194, 323; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 208–210; Berenson 1901, 154–155; Berenson 1907, 115; De Madrazo 1913, 50; Venturi 1929, 44–46, 114; Berenson 1932, 309; Suida 1932, 172; Berenson 1936, 266; Biagi 1942, 23; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 76; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 15, 43; Morassi 1953, 296; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 453–455; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 97; Nicco Fasola 1954, 112; Berenson 1955, 82; Bianconi 1955, 49; Berenson 1957, 103; Gaya Nuño and Crea 1961, 40; Pallucchini 1965, 58; Gould 1966, 46; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 227; Verheyen 1968, 220–227; *Libro* 1969, lv; Ballarin 1970, 50; Mascherpa 1971, 48–49; Van den Berg-Noë 1974, 147, 161; Mariani Canova 1975, 98; Zampetti 1975, 1; van Hall 1976, 292–297; Caroli 1980, 140–141; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 31, 55; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 52, 55; Markova 1981, 148; Cristaldi 1984, 225; Christiansen 1986, 168; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 343; Hughes 1988, 20–21; Ricciardi 1989, 100; Cortesi Bosco 1991, 16, 235; Cortesi Bosco 1992, 48; Cortesi Bosco 1993, 336; Dal Pozzolo 1995, 38; Cortesi Bosco 1996, 59–60; Humfrey 1997, 70–71

Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi

1523

oil on canvas, 189.3 x 134.3 (74 ½ x 52 7/8)
signed, on footstool: Laurentius Lotus / 1523
Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo

THE PICTURE WAS SEEN around 1525 by Michiel, who described it thus: "In the house of M. Niccolò di Bonghi. The painting of our Lady with Saint Catherine and the Angel, and with the portrait of M. Niccolò, was from the hand of Lotto" (Frizzoni 1884). More than a century later, Ridolfi (1648) provided an explanation for the work's current fragmentary state: "Also in Bergamo in the houses of the Bonghi family is a picture of the wedding of Saint Catherine Martyr, which during the time when the French occupied the city was placed for safety's sake in San Michele, but the soldiers, not respecting the sacred places, invaded the church, and one of them, captivated by the town seen through a window with Mount Sinai, cut it off the picture, and it is still that way." The French occupation to which Ridolfi refers is probably that of 1527 (Rossi 1979) or 1528 (Mascherpa 1971), witnessed also by a letter from Lotto to the Misericordia of 21 November 1528, explaining his delay and eight months of silence, "because he understood the many sufferings caused by war, famine, and plague; and Bergamo is bare between dead and missing and the Misericordia has other things to do in taking care of the poor" (Chiodi 1962).

The record of Bonghi's commission is lost, and the whole family has in fact died out; the painting passed next into the possession of Count Giacomo Carrara, where it is reported by Tassi (1793), who was the first to identify the figure on the left, behind the Virgin, as a self-portrait of the artist. This hypothesis was convincingly taken up by Locatelli (1867), but not Piccinelli (in Bassi Rathgeb 1959): "That this is a portrait of Lotto is a common tradition, but from the antique manuscript published in 1800 by the abbot Morelli entitled *Notizie d'opere di disegno*, it appears instead that this is Mr. Niccolò Gonzio, owner of the painting while Lotto was alive." At the same time, despite Locatelli's precise statement that the French occupation occurred during the "battles for the occupation of the duchy of Milan and the possessions on the mainland of the Republic of Venice," a story began circulating that the picture was mutilated during Napoleonic times (which is totally absurd and impossible, as the mutilation was reported by Ridolfi in 1648); the hypothesis appears, for example, in the catalogue of the Accademia Carrara published in 1930. Locatelli is the source, instead, for the idea that the view of Sinai on the piece of missing canvas was "who knows. . . the city of Bergamo," an idea that has

often been repeated even in recent times (Rossi 1979; Zampetti, *Genius*, 1983). Di Tanna ("Nozze," 1990), in any case, observes that the view must have occupied a smaller section of the painting than has been cut away, as there is an interruption between the two carpets (which would imply at least the existence of a vertical window plinth or even of a solid wall), and also the shadows are particularly thick on the right, dissolving slowly toward the left; above the angel, then, what probably appeared was not an opening but a wall, with a carpet hanging on it. At any rate, the contrast between the presumably light area of the distant landscape and the dusky shadows of the room would have created an effect similar to that of the *Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Nicholas of Tolentino* in Boston (cat. 24) (Humfrey 1997).

Chiodi (1968) has found from archival research that the work was given by Lotto to his landlord, Niccolò Bonghi, as payment for a year's rent on 22 June 1523, when their rental agreement was dissolved. On the basis of an estimate on which they both agreed (an exception in Lotto's professional life), the painting was valued at 60 ducats, and the difference between the lower price of the rent and the value of the painting was made up by Bonghi with a sum of money. Lotto left the house, located very near to those of Bonghi himself and of Battista Suardi in the little square of San Michele al Pozzo Bianco (where he had been living at least since the summer of 1519, as appears in a document published by Cortesi Bosco in 1982) to move to Trescore to work for Suardi (Chiodi 1968; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980). This amicable dissolving of any legal obligations between Bonghi and Lotto is registered also in a note by a friend of Lotto, the surgeon Giovanni Battista Cucchi, patron of the *sacra conversazione* now in Ottawa (Cortesi Bosco 1981). In his free time he was organist for the Misericordia of Bergamo (he was known by the nickname "Battista dagli Organi," Battista of the Organs), and his note was found, not coincidentally, in the archives of the Misericordia (Chiodi 1968).

Some useful information about the life of Niccolò Bonghi has been traced by Di Tanna ("Nozze," 1990). The will of Niccolò's father, Bartolomeo, dated 1475, states that his son, at the time thirteen years old, was born in 1462, or more probably (according to the sixteenth-century system of reckoning dates) 1463. At the time of the portrait he thus was about sixty or sixty-one, not forty-five



as imagined by Berenson (1955), and he had recently retired from public life; he died just three years later, in the early months of 1526. The absence of a family administrator helps explain the choice, made evidently by his widow Dorotea, minister of the Scuola del Corpo di Cristo in San Michele from 1525 and reelected on 1 May 1527, to deposit the painting inside the church during the French occupation of 1528, entrusting its safety to other persons who were on her same level but publicly more visible and powerful. Dorotea was the cousin of Andrea Passi, father of the Girolamo who commissioned from Lotto the frescoes in the left chancel chapel in San Michele al Pozzo Bianco. According to Di Tanna, Niccolò Bonghi had his portrait painted, "seated comfortably in his own home," behind the Virgin and child, because he suffered from a very painful gout, a fact that is verified from February 1524; she thus made his illness date back at least ten months or so to explain his relative height with regard to the divine group. In reality, his pose appears rather to be that of someone kneeling in devotion, hardly possible when one is suffering from gout; also, Bonghi appears to be in the best of health and vigor, despite a network of lines, the result of age, across his face.

Di Tanna has posited that as in the case of some paintings for Zanin Cassotti, this canvas may have been a "chamber picture," which is certainly possible. Considering that in 1526 Bonghi left to his wife Dorotea all the furnishings contained in their bedroom on the condition that she accept the normal clause of widowhood, which is to never marry again, this would reinforce the hypotheses described above concerning the safekeeping of the painting. But to move from this, on the basis of expressions of affection used by Niccolò Bonghi in his will but without any real documentation, to the idea that Dorotea De' Passis was still quite young, making it even more urgent to safeguard the honor of her husband by remaining a widow, is to leap into the void without any supporting evidence.

Several scholars (Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895; Pignatti 1968; Mascherpa 1971; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980) have pointed out the portraitlike intensity of the figures and the "humbly domestic dimension" of the work (Mariani Canova 1975), in which there is no hierarchical distance between the divine and human figures; it has also seemed possible that the faces of the Virgin and Saint Catherine concealed real portraits. Di Tanna ("Nozze," 1990), after affirming the possibility that the Virgin and Saint Catherine were portraits of Dorotea, the wife, and Elisabetta, Niccolò's illegitimate daughter, who in 1526 would have been about thirty years old, in the end decided that Saint Catherine was a portrait of Dorotea, on the basis of a totally unfounded assumption (that Dorotea was quite a bit younger than Niccolò) and a problematic equation of saints: Dorothy as Catherine. But the legend linking the two is contained in texts that are much more rare and far-fetched than the well-known *Legenda Aurea* familiar to all artists (in which it does not appear); it is thus highly unlikely that Lotto was aware of them. And too, if the idea was to celebrate a Dorothy, it is hard to understand why one would

do this through a Catherine. Even more difficult to comprehend is why in a married couple the husband would have appeared as himself while the wife was concealed in a metaphorical portrait, and all of this just to make the banal, universally known statement, that divine love is superior to human love.

Nonetheless, this very flimsy base is used for other deductions. It would appear that Bonghi's wife Dorotea can be recognized in Saint Catherine because the saint is dressed in white, the color of wedding dresses (but, in that same year, 1523, Faustina, the bride of Marsilio Cassotti, wore red for her wedding; see cat. 21), and because she has a string of pearls braided into her hair, from which hangs a ruby pendant. Pearls, states Di Tanna, were in the sixteenth century the symbol of purity and chastity, while the ruby aided in the repression of lust and the achievement of great intellectual heights. These are certainly indispensable virtues for a saint, especially for Saint Catherine, and very good also for a bride to possess, but it is difficult to see why they are necessary to this Dorotea in particular. Nor can the references to Franciscan spirituality and the relationship of the Bonghi family with the order's church in Bergamo make this identification of Saint Catherine as a portrait of Dorotea De' Passis any more convincing or well-founded.

The large, restful chromatic fields, the opulence of the saturated colors, especially in the large red area of the Virgin's dress, the emotional serenity, make this work one of Lotto's great masterpieces. Nonetheless, it did not appeal to Berenson, who found it "ruined by the intrusive presence of Niccolò Bonghi," an individual so full of himself as not to be interesting even in the hands of an extraordinary portraitist like Lotto. Berenson did appreciate the painting's simplicity and naturalness, however, taken to such heights that "it is difficult to find anything better in Italian art."

The grace of the psychological invention and treatment of the light have suggested a reference to Correggio (Ansaldo 1956), while the free arrangement of the figures, constructed on a descending diagonal but articulated in complex spatial relationships with respect to the apparent parallelism of the plane on which they rest, and the flowing richness of the draperies and forms have led some to speak of certain seventeenth-century paintings, making the work appear to be almost proto-Baroque (Morassi 1953). On the other hand, in the opinion of Hauser (1965) and later Freedberg (1971), "this predilection for the extravagant, this tendency toward the eccentric and bizarre. . . that are part of the distinctive criteria of the style" characterize this work as one of the key moments of Mannerism in Italy. All these interpretations contain, of course, a part, and even a substantial part, of truth. The essence of Lotto is in each and all of them at the same time. His attention is clearly focused on the psychological truth of the event, manifested in contemporary costume, rites, and ideas. His lively naturalism investigates reality with an immediacy that is not idealized or is even anti-idealized. Every face he paints can only be a portrait: that of the Virgin, a keen-minded mountain woman with red cheeks, that of the Child, even too self-possessed as he faces a role that is too big

for him, or that of Catherine, not particularly fine-featured but armed only with the beauty of youth, of fine clothes and jewelry. The portrait of Bonghi is so serenely real and ironic, even in the fixed frontality of his pose, as to constitute an early opening toward the best products of this genre, which was not particularly appreciated by the Bergamasque people, that appeared later, in the fourth and fifth decade of the century.

Fitting as it does into the first half of 1523 (or perhaps with its roots in the last part of 1522), the painting is stylistically completely analogous to the *Saint Catherine* in Washington (cat. 19), whose rich color, magnificently flourishing forms, and taste for lustrous surfaces and luminous highlights it shares. It is not easy, however, to find the models for the formal solutions adopted in these paintings, and especially the trend toward a close-up view and enlargement of the images to encompass the entire figure that Lotto manifests in the third decade. Humfrey (1997) has suggested a parallel with the elaborate *sacre conversazioni* with saints immersed in a landscape that Palma Vecchio had been sending to his Bergamasque clientele since about 1515. With respect to these, however, the compositional arrangement in a descending diagonal appears to be clearly inspired by contemporary Lombard painting after Leonardo, from the elderly Foppa to Solario, giving a much more dynamic result capable of suggesting a more modern reality in the postures and attitudes.

Suida (1923) noted a partial copy of the painting in the museum in Graz; many other copies were made in Bergamo but almost all during a later period. Among the best is one, completed with an imaginary landscape in the background, painted in a smaller format by Giovanni Canini of Ponte di Nozza in 1862 (Mascherpa 1971), now in the Collegio Arcivescovile di Sant' Alessandro in Bergamo.

M L

PROVENANCE: Niccolò Bonghi, Bergamo, 1523 (on deposit in San Michele, 1528); Giacomo Carrara, Bergamo, by 1793

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 1: 144; Tassi, 1793, 1: 124–125; Locatelli 1867, 92–95; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 513; Frizzoni 1884, 141; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 190–192; Berenson 1901, 152–153; Berenson 1907, 113; Debrunner 1928, 122; Venturi 1929, 44, 114; Oettinger 1930, 13; Berenson 1932, 307; Berenson 1936, 264; Biagi 1942, 12; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 76; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 15, 42; Morassi 1953, 295; Perocco 1953, 264, 266; Pignatti, "L'arte," 1953, 454; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 93–97; Zampetti 1953, 82–83; Pouncey 1954, 334; Berenson 1955, 80–81; Bianconi 1955, 49; Ansaldi 1956, 7; Benesch 1957, 411, 412; Berenson 1957, 100; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 123; Hauser 1965, 199; Chiodi 1968, 11–12; Pignatti 1968, 11; Ballarin 1970, 50; Freedberg 1971, 203; Mascherpa 1971, 49–53; Mariani Canova 1975, 97–98; Zampetti 1975, 1, 44; Freedberg 1979, 306; Pignatti 1979, 66; Caroli 1980, 138–139; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 8, 56; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 52; Zampetti, *Genius*, 1983, 176; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 19; Ricciardi 1989, 100; Colalucci 1990, 78; Di Tanna, "Nozze," 1990, 58–67; Rossi 1991, 45; Longhi 1995, 18; Humfrey 1997, 65–67

23 Trinity

1523–1524

oil on canvas, 170 x 115 (66 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 45 ¹/₄)

Sant’Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo

THE TRINITY ORIGINALLY HUNG IN Santa Trinità, facing Santo Spirito, where it was described by Michiel, in about 1524 or 1525, as “from the hand of Lorenzo Lotto.” The correspondence between the title of the painting and the name of the church suggests that it was positioned above the high altar, where it is described as the work of one “Lot” in the pastoral visit of Bishop Corneli in 1573.

Santa Trinità belonged to the confraternity of the *Disciplinati della Santissima Trinità*, founded on 20 March 1506 (Matthew, “Lotto,” 1988). In the late eighteenth century, the church was remodeled and the interior was reduced to three naves, with three portals. In addition to the high altar, it contained four altars of unknown dedication, one of which, according to Tassi (1793), housed a *Dead Christ on the Lap of the Virgin, with Saint Joseph and Another Martyred Saint*, also by Lotto. Suppressed in 1808, the church was razed in 1919. Shortly after the church was closed at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Lotto’s painting was bought by the curate Don Giovanni Conti (see Gasdia 1924, 94–96) at one of the many auctions of government property (Piccinelli, cited by Bassi Rathgeb [1959, 122], dates the auction to 1807, while Mascherpa [1980] dates it to 1808 and erroneously identifies the curate as Bernardino Conti). In 1818, Conti bequeathed the painting to the sacristy of Sant’Alessandro, where it remains.

It is not known exactly when the corners of the canvas were trimmed to fit it into a shaped frame; this may have been the result of a restoration carried out in 1793 by a certain Francesco Rospis as part of an overall refurbishing of the building. This operation, mentioned by Piccinelli (Bassi Rathgeb 1959), left the canvas in a “rather compromised condition.” Pagnoni gives the name of the restorer as Rospis or Rossis (Tardito 1980, 62). The painting was restored once again in 1980 by the Laboratorio di Restauro in Bergamo, which revealed its fine characteristics of style.

The *Trinity* is one of the most astonishing and intriguing of Lotto’s fantastic creations, and a totally new iconographical invention. Earlier, the Trinity had been represented by a group of symbols, such as the Hand of God creating the world, the mystic Lamb of Christ, and the Dove of the Holy Spirit; or three heads grouped together; or the elderly God the Father, shown full-length, holding the cross on which Christ is crucified, beneath the Dove of the Holy Spirit.

In this painting Lotto chose to represent Christ as the risen Redeemer, but with his wounds, as is typical in the iconography of the *Pietà*. Behind Christ is an ethereal God the Father, a ghost of pure light. So astounding is this presence that Gasdia (1924) identified the work as an Ascension. The inversion of the light source, with illumination streaming from God the Father to highlight the clouds and imbue the figure with a burning pathos, is among Lotto’s most daring experiments in Bergamo. The marvelous landscape below, wrapped in the mists of a grayish veiled light, corresponds yet once more to the ideas of Solario and Savoldo and seems to anticipate in its pockets of shadow the scene at the bottom of the Carmini altarpiece of 1527–1529 (cat. 28), as pointed out by Berenson.

Most scholars have agreed with Berenson in dating the altarpiece to c. 1517—the exceptions being Mascherpa (1971, 1980), at first uncertain about a date between 1514 and c. 1525–1529, and then proposing c. 1519–1520, and Zampetti (1975), who dates it around 1522—but there are good reasons for dating it somewhat later, toward 1523–1524. For one, the flights of fancy and emotionalism strongly charged with pathos, almost Germanic in origin, link it to the last part of Lotto’s sojourn in Bergamo, when he was painting the frescoes of Trescore, San Michele al Pozzo Bianco, and the Ponteranica polyptych. As Mascherpa (1971) noticed, Christ’s face and the subtle tilt of his head match that of *Christ as Vine* on the side wall of the Suardi oratory in Trescore, of 1524, as does the same figure at the center of the upper register of the Ponteranica polyptych (which Lotto worked on in 1521–1522 and finished by 1525). Furthermore, the ghostlike image of God the Father, providing the internal light source for the entire composition, recalls the almost phosphorescent luminosity of Lotto’s *Annunciation* in Ponteranica. Also, Christ’s draperies twist and turn in the lazy air with evident appeal to a northern taste, with its distant antecedents in Memling, but appear more agitated than those of the angels of the San Bartolomeo altarpiece (1516), and recall even more precisely those in Ponteranica, or even the angel in the Jesi *Annunciation* (c. 1526), or the *Assumption* in the parish church in Celana (signed and dated 1527). Finally, the invention of the landscape as viewed from a high vantage point, following northern custom, with its rustic buildings that can be seen in practically every painting or engraving made



beyond the Alps, and laid out without any attempt at a studied structure of receding planes, has close parallels both in the Ponteranica polyptych and in numerous passages from the Trescore frescoes.

Perhaps because of the state of conservation, the canvas has not enjoyed great favor with the critics, even as early as Pasta (1775), according to whom "it is not one of his more well-thought-out and distinguished efforts" (but Tassi [1793] found that "it does not have any part that is not beautiful in itself"). Frizzoni (*Emporium*, 1896, 200) considered it "unfortunate" in its figures, but beautiful as to landscape, while for Berenson (1955) it was a weak little work that could be considered a failure. Bianconi (1955) underlined the aspect of oleographic piety of the figure, which to Mariani Canova (1975) appeared characterized by a Leonardesque languor. In actuality, the work's success was affirmed from the beginning, only to cease at the end of the eighteenth century. In fact, many copies of the painting were made, also with variations, beginning with one by Giovan Battista Moroni of about 1556 in the parish church of Albino in Bergamo, where Christ is represented as *Rex mundi*, holding the sphere of the world with its continents, and continuing to that of Giovanni Pietro Lolmo in the Accademia Carrara of around 1582.

Finally, it must be noted that the *Blessing Redeemer* at the center of the upper register of the composite polyptych in the Gozzi chapel in Santo Spirito, Bergamo, signed by Previtali (but executed in part by Facheris) and dated 1525, seems to descend in some ways from this image, and thus constitutes a valuable terminus ante quem; the inclination of the head toward the left shoulder and the swirl of draperies allude unequivocally to the Christ in this *Trinity*.

M L

PROVENANCE: Santa Trinità, Bergamo, 1523/1524–1808; Don Giovanni Conti, Bergamo, 1808–1817; Sant'Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo, 1817

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., I: 144; Pasta 1775, 121; Tassi 1793, I: 121–122; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 524; Frizzoni 1884, 137; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 160; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 200; Berenson 1901, 128–129; Berenson 1907, 113; Gasdia 1924, 26–27, 99–100; Venturi 1929, 114; Pinetti 1931, 24; Berenson 1932, 307; Berenson 1936, 264; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 72–73; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 41; Berenson 1955, 66; Bianconi 1955, 46–47; Berenson 1957, 100; Bassi Rathgeb 1959, 122; Mascherpa 1971, 30; Zampetti 1975, 45; Mariani Canova 1975, 95; Rossi 1979, 177; Caroli 1980, 258; Mascherpa, "Fama," 1980, 65–71; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 46–47; Tardito 1980, 53–64; Oldfield, "Venice," 1984, 145; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 330–332; Cortesi Bosco 1991, 15; Rossi 1991, 45; Rodeschini Galati 1994, 26–27; Humfrey 1997, 172

Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Nicholas of Tolentino

1523–1524

oil on canvas, 94.3 x 77.8 (37 1/8 x 30 5/8)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Charles Potter Kling Fund

LOTTO'S AUTHORSHIP OF THIS PAINTING has never been seriously doubted, although when it first appeared Gould considered it a workshop copy of a painting in the National Gallery, London (Gould, in Goffen 1978). He changed his mind immediately afterward, though, to judge it "almost identical, but superior in quality" to the other picture (Gould 1959, 1975). In fact, the two paintings are practically identical; the distinct difference in quality seen in old photographs has diminished considerably after a recent cleaning of the painting in London, which revealed the signature: Laurentius Lotus/ 1522.

Nonetheless, knowledge of the painting in London has partially impeded a reading of the Boston picture. For example, the saint on the right had always been identified as Saint Anthony of Padua, until Ekserdjian (1991) noted that the halo of light on his breast indicated that the figure was, in fact, Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, whose iconography is almost identical to that of the Paduan Franciscan except for this detail and his darker habit. Likewise, the date has always been thought to be 1521, because this was what could be read in the London painting, despite the fact that Gould (1959, 1975) had warned that "in their present state both signature and date are unreliable."

Goffen (1978) made a careful iconographical study of the painting in Boston, especially of its central group. According to her, mother and child are seated on a marble slab symbolizing the altar table. Beneath Christ's feet is a small coffin, alluding to his future sacrifice for the Redemption of man; another clear funerary allusion is the cushion on which he rests. The placement of the Virgin, at his side, reconfirms her role as co-redeemer. The large lily held by Nicholas of Tolentino refers to the initial moment of the process of Redemption, namely, the Annunciation; as a parallel, the crucifix held by Saint Jerome expresses the final moment of sacrifice. Christ's Passion, and its commemoration through the Mass, is synthesized in the Boston painting.

Humfrey (1997) believes that the presence of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino indicates that the painting was commissioned by someone connected with the Augustinian order. This idea would be reinforced by the inclusion of Saint Jerome, on the left; as a hermit, he was among the favorite saints of that order. Mascherpa (1971), who did not yet know the version in Boston, hypothesized that

the so-called Saint Anthony of Padua on the right in the London painting was actually a portrait of the patron (bearing the same name) who commissioned the work.

According to Goffen, the changes the artist made in the course of his work on the image, as revealed by X-rays and reflectography, indicate that this is the prototype for the London and private collection (cat. 18) paintings; Ekserdjian and Humfrey agree. But scientific examinations of the work in London (apparently transferred from panel to canvas) also prove that on this version, certainly the lowest quality work of the three, many changes were made; for Humfrey (1997), this indicates that this is another original, and that Lotto worked on both paintings at the same time. Currently, no scientific documentation exists for the 1522 painting in a private collection (cat. 18).

Accepting the date on the London canvas as "1521," despite the retouches existing at that time, scholars agreed in dating the work to c. 1521; there are, however, reasons to place it a few years later (see also cat. 18). The magnificent landscape (which parallels the creations of Solario, such as that of the *Lamentation over the Dead Christ*, in Washington), in which two travelers and an ass walk around a rocky mass behind their escort, a soldier armed with a large spear and harquebus, is not consistent with that of the exquisite *Madonna* of 1518 (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden), but rather with the one veiled in mists and shadows in the *Trinity* in Sant'Alessandro della Croce (cat. 23). Saint Jerome, with the tear shining in his eye socket like a rare pearl, appears almost as a copy of the *Moses* on the short wall, or even of the Saint Jerome inside one of the circles formed by the mystical vine of Christ in the Trescore frescoes of 1524. The Child, with his large, wide-open eyes, finds a parallel in the cherubs of the ceiling at Trescore (particularly the one in the frame with the inscription: "Melchisedech Rex Panem et Vinum Obtulit"), and the Virgin's physiognomy and pose make her seem the sister of Laura Assonica as she appears in a portrait of the same date (cat. 25). The rays of light that take the form of a cross above the Child's head recur in the Ponteranica polyptych. Furthermore, the swelling and crinkling of the drapery can be seen again in the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* of 1523 (cat. 22) and the Ponteranica polyptych, but apparently not before. The similarities point to a date around



1523–1524, implying that the higher quality does not necessarily mean a priority of invention for the composition, a priority that perhaps should be given to the painting of 1522 in private hands (cat. 18).

Stylistically, the classical, Raphaelesque, and Leonardesque origins of the image are evident, as is an awareness of Correggio in the smooth, soft flesh and the arresting optical subtlety of such details as Saint Jerome's bushy eyebrows or the gleam of light on his fingernail. How such an awareness could have come about, when, and through what path, is at the moment impossible to determine. Lotto has transformed these exceptional examples of classicism with a strong emotional surge, almost as if the figures were literally flattened and driven mad by the inner force of their feelings. Lotto's adherence to psychological rather than optical truth allowed him to transcend any restrictions of a compositional or representational nature. This is the period in Lotto's art that Longhi (1929) described as the "magical period. . . that moment of his of 'sensiblerie,' of mysticism of the affections that. . . seems to make him kin to Grünewald."

M L

PROVENANCE: Robert M. Dawkins, Oxford, 1911–1955; Rudolf J. Heinemann, New York, 1955–1960; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1960

LITERATURE: Gould 1959, 53; *Museum of Fine Arts* 1960, 57; Faison Jr. 1970, 33–35; Whitehill 1970, 750–752; Fredericksen and Zeri 1972, 112, 340, 565; Gould 1975, 137; Goffen 1978, 34–41; Pignatti 1979, 64–65; Murphy 1985, 170; Ekserdjian 1991, 87–91; Rearick 1993, 314; Humfrey 1997, 64

Portrait of a Married Couple

1523–1524

oil on canvas, 96 x 116 (37 ¹/₁₆ x 45 ¹/₁₆)

The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

RIDOLFI (1648) AND TASSI (1793) recorded this painting as in the house of Jan and Jakob van Boeren in Antwerp. Attribution of the work to Lotto was made by Liphart (1915) and immediately accepted; the same can be said for identification of this painting as the one cited by Ridolfi and Tassi, made for the first time by Boschetto (1953). Berenson (1905), without knowing the painting directly but deducing his ideas from a copy then in the Guggenheim collection in Venice, proposed a date around 1535. Most scholars now agree on a date around 1523, as proposed by Coletti (1953). Only Müller-Hofstede (1967) dates it c. 1525, and Rearick (1981) dates it c. 1521, while Ballarin (1970) believes it contemporary with the Trescore frescoes of 1524. Cortesi Bosco asserts that the painting was made in Bergamo by June 1523, before Lotto went to Trescore to paint the frescoes of the Suardi oratory.

The most striking aspect of the work is its unusual iconography, which has been misinterpreted by scholars until now. That this is a portrait of a husband and wife is unanimously agreed upon, but it can be said with equal certainty that it does not fall into the category of “wedding portraits,” as investigated by van Hall (1976) and Hess (1996). For this couple, their wedding ceremony—central, for example, to the contemporaneous portraits of *Marsilio Cassotti and His Bride Faustina* in the Prado (cat. 21)—has been over for some time.

The emblematic and symbolic meaning of the image is tied above all to the man’s gesture as he points to the squirrel, while holding a piece of paper with the inscription *HOMO NUM/QUAM*, making an unequivocal distinction between man and animal. Locatelli Milesi (1929) has interpreted the gesture as reinforcing the image’s moralistic-pedagogical aspects: “In it Lotto has celebrated conjugal fidelity by multiplying the symbols and allusions. In fact, the symbolic dog is balanced symmetrically by the squirrel, symbol of lust, with the statement on the paper: ‘Man never,’ an affirmation of chastity underlined by the strong gaze of a man who knows how to master himself. Also the landscape alludes to the no longer fresh age of the personages and to the winds of fortune.”

Since then, a certain negative connotation has been attached to the animal, even when Seidenberg (1964) misidentified it as a weasel. In 1970 Androsov (in Fomichova 1992, 196) proposed that

the reference is based on a medieval legend that states in the winter, when food is scarce, the male squirrel turns the female out of the den. Thus, “*Homo numquam*” declares that the man would never do this, making himself by contrast a positive symbol. Despite the weakness of the source, found in a passage from Réau (1955), this interpretation has been sustained by Fomichova-Kustodieva-Vsevolozhskaja (1977), Zampetti (1983), and Artemeva (1990). Galis (1977) added another dimension by pointing out that the woman appears in a higher position than her husband, almost as though she were socially superior, and dominating him by placing her hand on his shoulder. For Galis, the salient aspect of the squirrel is not its symbolic meaning, but that it is asleep; the man should thus not let himself go to sleep, losing those traits of intelligence and mental agility associated with the squirrel and letting himself be “surpassed” by his wife.

Without offering a clear explanation, Mariani Canova (1975) states that the inscription “contains a clear allusion to the duties of partners in a marriage to be faithful to each other.” Cortesi Bosco (1987), observing the gray-brown color of its coat, identified the animal as a dormouse, which, as Petrus Berchorius stated in the Middle Ages, can be compared to false friends who are faithful in happy times but disappear when trouble comes. Thus, “the gentleman expresses his firm resolve not to follow the example of the dormouse, which becomes a promise on the part of the husband to be a good friend for better or for worse, and the wife reciprocates with an affectionate promise of faithfulness, symbolized by the little dog.” But Di Tanna (“*Bestiario*,” 1990) has unequivocally demonstrated that this is not a dormouse but indeed a squirrel (*sciurus vulgaris*), an animal whose habitat encompasses the Orobian region, including Bergamo, and which appears also in other Lotto paintings, such as the *Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Catherine of 1522* (cat. 18). In the end, however, her whole discussion becomes inconclusive because she ignores the inscription. Instead, she sees the couple “protecting themselves from the whirl of passions and the wind of temptation metaphorically bending the two fragile trees in the background” by staying in the safe refuge of their house. Thus, they are examples of *virtus* opposed to the *voluptas* that just outside their door is shaking the world, a message that is almost too reassuringly banal.



Taking up Pope-Hennessy's analysis (1966) of the relationship between this canvas and its preparatory drawing in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, published by Berenson (1955), Hughes (1988) observes that, with respect to the Amsterdam sketch in which the poses are more natural and closer together, the canvas clearly emphasizes symbolic elements: the dog, for fidelity, and the squirrel, prudent and capable of accumulating the food which constitutes all its worldly goods. For Hughes, the inscription should not be read in terms of opposition between man and animal, but as a reference to a passage from Cicero, which says that the man who stays closed within the wall of his home and does not participate in the life of the world cannot be the cause of the world's corruption. Seen with its connotations as a historic document, the canvas would be nothing more than a reinforcement of matrimonial ties and the progress of domesticity.

Before proposing a new interpretation, however, the identity of the couple must be addressed. In 1929, Voss noticed that the man's face seemed to be the same as one in the large *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with the Donor Niccolò Bonghi* (cat. 22), signed and dated 1523; thus he identified the man as Bonghi, who in that same year was Lotto's landlord in Bergamo. (This suggestion is still considered valid by Artemeva [1990] and Fomichova [1992], and perhaps also by Caroli [1980].)

More recently, Amaglio (1992) has proposed an identification of the couple as Antonio Agliardi—a prominent man of wealth in Bergamo and an acquaintance of Lotto—and his wife Apollonia Cassotti; this idea is based on the fact that the woman is wearing a headdress (*capigliara*) identical to the one worn by Agnese Avinatri, wife of Paolo Cassotti, in Previtali's *Sacra Conversazione* (Accademia Carrara, Bergamo). In essence, two women belonging to two different branches of the Cassotti family would have received as a wedding gift from their respective father and husband identical *capigliare*.

Cortesi Bosco (1993) followed this path, investigating further the lives of the couple; but finding no documentary support for an opposition of the man and the squirrel, she repropounded the interpretation of a refusal to behave in the same unfruitful way, "the commitment not to draw back from the responsibilities of his public office, to face adversity, not to let his wife suffer from lack of support, promising her a loyal friendship." But given that these, whether respected or not, have been the cornerstones of Christian morality regarding marriage for more than a millennium, why would Lotto have chosen to hide them beneath a "device" with a completely new and distinct aspect?

Before proposing a new interpretation, it is necessary to start at the beginning. First, around 1523, Antonio Agliardi, as Cortesi Bosco (1993) has calculated, was at least fifty-two years old, and as was commonly believed at the time, had already entered "old age" (Gilbert 1967); the man in the painting appears "mature" (that is, older than twenty-five), but not much older than Marsilio Cassotti (cat. 21), who was twenty-one in 1523. (On a visual level, he also

appears younger than the thirty-seven-year-old gentleman depicted in Lotto's painting in the Doria Pamphilj, Rome.)

Second, the idea that the *capigliara* passed from Agnese Avinatri Cassotti to Apollonia Cassotti Agliardi is both illogical and ahistorical. If the *capigliara* is used as evidence of a subject's connection to a certain family, the *capigliara* is granted a valence of "family emblem"; but what logic or blood tie exists between an Avinatri and a Cassotti? Certainly, the two are related; they are aunt and niece. But in terms of hereditary passage of family emblems, this tie is meaningless. It would be different, perhaps, if they were mother and daughter, but at a time when married women could not administer their own money, it is rather doubtful that even a mother could have freely decided the passage of a family emblem to her daughter. In fact, in contemporary legal practice, the line of inheritance for such objects passed through the male rather than the female line. If a particular type of *capigliara* was a sort of emblem of the Cassotti family, then there certainly would have been very few of them, and they would have been worn by the wives of the males of the principal branches of the family, not the women who were born Cassotti but upon marrying lost even the name of the family from which they came. In fact, it is worn by the older Agnese Avinatri, a Cassotti only by marriage; it would have been worn by Margherita Arrigoni, wife of Zanin Cassotti, and also Laura Assonica, wife of the oldest son of the couple, Gian Maria—but it certainly would not have been worn by the young Faustina, wife of the younger brother Marsilio, who in the Prado canvas has a completely different headdress, nor Apollonia Cassotti, who at her marriage became an Agliardi.

Third, the most surprising anomaly of the painting is that the woman is depicted in a more prominent position than her husband; this is unprecedented not only in figurative documents but also goes against the customs and laws of the time. Under sixteenth-century marriage law, a woman is completely subordinate to her husband. Is it then possible to believe that this is a "normal" married couple, when the woman is placed higher than her husband? Or does this anomaly have another justification, for example, in a symbolism that alludes to a suspension of earthly laws?

What is most striking on close examination of the painting is the great contrast in the flesh tones of the two faces: his skin is quite red, particularly around his eyes and the tip of his nose, while hers is exceptionally pale, almost ghostly. She is separated from her husband; she touches his arm, but her position on the other side of the table seems to symbolize a more radical break in condition or dimension. Her unnatural fixed gaze and her unearthly pallor, her eyes turned slightly upward as though abandoning herself to sleep, a faint, or death, suggests that she, the faithful companion, has died, and is no longer of this world. As for the possibility of reading the painting as a mediated symbol, these are the years in which Lotto identifies Lucina Brembati by inserting the letters CI into the moon ("luna") to form her name Lucina. That living and dead persons can be seen together in the same painting,

according to figurative conventions that are not yet completely clear, is guaranteed half a century later by at least two examples by Lavinia Fontana: the *Portrait of the Gozzadini Family* (Pinacoteca, Bologna) and the *Portrait of a Widow with Her Family* (Brera, Milan; see Murphy 1996).

Looking closely at the painting, it is obvious that the man is crying; this is indicated with a white brushstroke slightly in relief along the lower edge of his eye, wonderfully simulating a film of tears, alluded to also by the red eyes and nose. The inscription “Homo numquam” implies that the man will never act like the squirrel, but what exactly is the squirrel doing? He is sleeping, and, as reported by Pliny and Vincent de Beauvais, the squirrel sleeps when the wind is blowing most strongly, when there is a storm like the one that, seen through the window, is tormenting the landscape in the background and bending the trees. He sleeps and waits for it all to pass. In his darkest moments, in the most dramatic storms of his life, such as in the days following his wife’s death, the man is thus not allowed to be like the squirrel who in sleeping finds suspension of his pain.

This idea can be reconciled with what we know of the Cassotti family. Gian Maria Cassotti, shortly before 1524, when Lotto was preparing his list of paintings for Gian Maria’s father Zanino, was happily married to Laura Assonica; they had two small daughters, Lucrezia and Isabeta, painted by the artist together with their parents in a picture (now lost) that was in their house in Via Pignolo. Soon afterward, Laura had died, because her husband was remarried at the beginning of 1525 to a certain Eufrasina, whose family name is unknown (Petrò 1992). Thus, Laura Assonica is wearing the *capigliara* of the Cassotti family because she is the wife, newly deceased, of the oldest son of the family, Gian Maria; he is mourning her and is lamenting that he cannot do what the squirrel can, that is, sleep and momentarily forget his pain, the storm that is blowing in his soul. This claim to be an inconsolable widower may appear to modern eyes contradicted by the fact that he remarried more or less a year later, but this was the custom of the times, when it was thought that a man could not handle the running of a household and the raising of children. It also seems that a certain emphasizing of feeling in relationships between couples was the norm in that family; Bartolomeo Cassotti de Mazzoleni started his statement of personal property, dated 8 February 1526, with the words: “Possessions of myself Bartolomeo Caxotto, my first good being my wife. . .” (Petrò 1992).

Given all these facts, the painting can be dated with more precision sometime between the second half of 1523 and 1524. Its later date with regard to *Marsilio Cassotti and His Bride* (cat. 21) in the Prado is unequivocally confirmed, and it becomes clear why the picture does not appear in the *Account*, as it was commissioned not by Zanino but by his son.

The drawing in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, published by Berenson (1955), should be considered a preparatory sketch for this image; as such, it has been discussed by Pouncey (1965) and Pope-

Hennessy (1966). The only dissenting voice is Ruggeri (1966), who considers the sketch a copy by Romanino. Berenson (1905) has indicated a copy of this composition in Venice, in the Guggenheim collection, but it is not known if this is the same one later (1955) in the Luigi Fagioli collection in Bergamo, which Berenson thought (1957) was an autograph replica.

M L

PROVENANCE: Jan and Jakob van Boeren, Antwerp; acquired by the Russian Imperial collections, by 1773; Gatchina Palace, early nineteenth century–1924; sold at auction (lot 102) by the Soviet government through the Lepke gallery in Berlin, 4 June 1929; State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 1: 146; Tassi 1793, 1: 127; Liphart 1915, 5–6; Voss 1929, 41; Wescher 1929, 290; Locatelli Milesi 1929, 96–98; Thieme-Becker 1929, 23: 411; Pallucchini 1944, xxxi; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 43; Morassi 1953, 296; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 77; Berenson 1955, 83–84; Bianconi 1955, 49–50; Berenson 1955, 83–84; Berenson 1957, 101, 103; Seidenberg 1958, 190–192; Seidenberg 1964, 78; Pouncey 1965, 12; Gould 1966, 46; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 231–233; Ruggeri 1966, 63–64; Müller Hofstede 1967, 74–75, 93; Ballarin 1970, 49; Mascherpa 1971, 56–58; Fomiciova 1974, 473; Hinz 1974, 187; Cohen 1975, 135; Mariani Canova 1975, 98; Zampetti 1975, 1; van Hall 1976, 292; Galis 1977, 237–240; Fomiciova-Kustodieva-Vsevolozhskaja 1977, 29; Pignatti 1979, 66; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 31; Caroli 1980, 262; Ost 1981, 136; Rearick 1981, 29; Zampetti, *Genius*, 1983, 176–177; Rosenauer 1983, 306; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 127–128; Hughes 1988, 21–23; Di Tanna, “Bestiario,” 1990, 44–50; Artemieva 1990, 56; Amaglio 1992, 17–19; Cortesi Bosco 1993, 336–349; Dal Pozzolo 1995, 38; Humfrey 1997, 70–72

Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine, with Saints

1524

oil on canvas, 115 x 98 (45 ¼ x 38 ⅙)
signed, on top step of throne: Laur.tius Lotus/1524
Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome

CAVALCASELLE (IN CROWE AND CAVALCASELLE 1871) described this painting as “a sparkling canvas,” one of Lotto’s best. He would have seen it in the Quirinal Palace, where it hung above a door in the state apartments. Although at one time considered lost (Morelli 1890; Berenson 1895, who remembered an earlier attribution to Correggio; Frizzoni 1903), the painting had only been relocated to another part of the palace; in 1920 Roberto Papini rediscovered it in a room above the stables (Zampetti 1953). Later the picture was moved to the Palazzo Corsini, before being transferred to its present location in Palazzo Barberini.

The painting is easily identifiable in the *Account* Lotto compiled for Zanin Cassotti: “The picture for the chamber of Mr. Marsilio and in the middle the Virgin with her son in her lap. . . d 15; on her right side Saint Jerome. . . d 8; Saint George. . . d 6; Saint Sebastian, taking into account Saint Jerome’s lion. . . d 4; on her left side Saint Catherine. . . d 10; Saint Anthony. . . d 6; Saint Nicholas of Bari. . . d 4,” for a total of 53 ducats, later drastically reduced to 36 (*Libro* 1969, 260). Thus, this is a painting connected with the exclusively private side of religion, and for this reason was destined for Marsilio’s chamber rather than to the public spaces of their palace in Via Pignolo, where the wedding portrait of Marsilio and his bride, now in the Prado (cat. 21), probably hung.

Considering Lotto’s social position during his period in Bergamo and his relationship with his patrons, it is interesting to see how he draws up his bill in the manner of craftsmen, calculating the cost of the figures according to their difficulty of execution. Thus, Saint Catherine is more expensive than Saint Jerome, though they are the same size, because her representation requires the expenditure of more time and attention for the elaborate costume and jewels. Likewise, the two figures farthest in the background, Saint Sebastian and Saint Nicholas of Bari (who would be almost unrecognizable without Lotto’s note, as one of the golden balls he holds—his attribute—is barely visible in the thick shadows) cost the same, because the greater attention required of the bishop’s crozier is balanced by the head of the lion in the foreground.

This famous and well-loved painting is perhaps the least studied of all those executed by Lotto while in Bergamo. The surge of passion running through each figure, contorting the bodies, despite the order imposed by the carefully arranged directional lines (such

as the giant arrow of Saint Sebastian that meets a fold in the curtain above the Virgin’s head, forming an X, or Saint George’s tournament lance balanced symmetrically by Saint Nicholas’ crozier) did not meet with Berenson’s favor, who called it “curiously mawkish.” Bianconi (1955) saw in Saint Catherine a “Correggesque sensuality,” and Ansaldo (1956), after having noted once again the precedent of Correggio, discovered in the Virgin reminiscences even of Garofalo. Although there is no evidence that the paths of Lotto and Correggio ever crossed, or that they even were aware of each other, there is a certain parallel between the two artists at this period. Lotto’s Virgin, for example, is fairly close in pose and facial shape to the one in Correggio’s *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (Uffizi, Florence), and the foreshortening of Saint Catherine’s head strongly echoes that of Mary Magdalene in Correggio’s *Noli me tangere* (Prado, Madrid), both from the early 1520s. Also common to both is that almost tangible quality of the shadows that lovingly envelop the figures, leaving them transformed through color and light.

The composition is still clearly that of a traditional Venetian *sacra conversazione*, here enlarged from half-length to full-length figures. Only Pignatti (*Lotto*, 1953) has noticed Venetian influence, connected presumably with a trip Lotto was supposed to have made to the capital in 1523; unfortunately, this idea is based on misinterpretation of a document regarding a trip to the Marches. Twenty years later, Pignatti (1973) wrote of a “Gothicizing” crowding of the composition, related to a knowledge of northern painting, Dürer in particular, gained by Lotto during his youth. This idea may owe something to Pallucchini who, in his unpublished university lectures of 1965–1966, said that the artist “no longer orders his composition in a clear, classically arranged manner, but fills it to overflowing with a sensibility of ‘horror vacui’ that is truly neomedieval.” Berenson had also described “Flemish-like figures,” but it is not clear exactly to what he was referring: perhaps the highlights on Saint George’s helmet and armor, which seemed pre-Caravaggesque to Zampetti (1953), and the various gleams of the jewels, or the thin haloes that define sanctity. It is probably this conscious archaism, strong evidence of an optical “truth” that is capable of speaking also to the humble and unlettered, to which Freedberg is referring (1971) when he cites the work as an example of “inspired vulgarity.”



In fact, the mental distance from the Venetian compositional model at the base of this one can be measured here precisely by the lack of balance between mass and void, and in the suppression to all intents and purposes of the latter. Thus, without conceding an instant of visual rest, and in spite of a structure marked by a symmetrical, lucid order, the entire painting appears to vibrate before our eyes, emerging with difficulty from the dense Leonardesque shadows of the background. The *parerga*—what “happens” figuratively in these filled “voids”—is just as exciting as what is seen in the more pervasive “masses.” On this stage, crossed in every direction by blades of light, the tilt of a head is enough to send the face into shadow or to highlight the Child’s halo. Surprise reigns supreme: in the light, a “flickering, wandering breeze” (Longhi 1946) that constantly changes source and direction; in feeling, which gives rise to an extraordinary variety of psychological attitudes, revealed by gesture; and even in the physical types, all described with individual, representational incisiveness. Thus, the childlike, somewhat plain, and melancholy Virgin, absorbed in the drama of what she foresees as she turns the pages of the great book, or the young Saint Catherine, with her best dress and beribboned hair, betraying her emotion in the gift of a rose, are in this sense memorable characters.

More attention has been given to the iconography of the painting than its style, beginning with the observation that despite the traditional title of *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine*, it actually shows a later moment, as Catherine already wears the ring on her finger. As the painting was made for the chamber of Marsilio Cassotti, it constitutes the ideal “private” pendant to the “public” one now in the Prado (cat. 21). Cortesi Bosco (*Affreschi*, 1980; 1987) and Gentili (1989) have indicated that, if the Prado picture alludes to the earthly love of a married couple, the one in Rome speaks of an ecstatic union of the soul with the divine, of a *virtus* that has blossomed and won out over the initial *voluptas*. From Saint Catherine’s belt hangs a small container, like those for holding writing implements, on which a tondo with the picture of a heart appears below the inscription “Christi.” This custody of the heart of Christ in the most precious of jewel boxes alludes once again to a mystical union with the divine.

Galis (1977), on the other hand, believes that the underlying theme is wisdom, as the foreground is occupied by Jerome and Catherine, the victor in debate with the philosophers of Alexandria. A clue to the interpretation of the painting as a representation of divine love is the Cupid, who hovers in the air above some scales depicted in the cameo on Saint Catherine’s belt; Bianconi (1955) and Galis (1977) pointed out that the same image is found in an inlay in Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo, accompanied by the motto “Nosce te ipsum,” as it is in the so-called *Portrait of a Thirty-seven-year-old Gentleman* in the Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome (the connection between the Doria painting and the inlay in Bergamo was made by Morelli in 1890). Grabski (1981) considers it a copy of an antique cameo of “un putin” or cherub, which Lotto lists in his

will as one of his possessions. Cortesi Bosco (*Affreschi*, 1980; 1987) conducted an extensive alchemical examination of this emblematic image, maintaining that it shows love in the balance, an invitation to contain oneself with equilibrium and to elevate oneself through one’s own divine nature.

Galis (1977) asserts that Lotto created the emblem for this painting and then reused it in 1527 for the inlay in Bergamo. In fact, as Cortesi Bosco has demonstrated, the design for the inlay had to have been among those consigned on 20 August 1524. At the time Lotto was working on the frescoes at Trescore, and his last letter to the Misericordia, dated 6 March 1532, mentions that some drawings, definitively delivered in Bergamo on 4 October 1524, had been earlier sent to him “in val traschor” (in the Trescore Valley) for the necessary corrections (Cortesi Bosco 1987, 2: 26). The emblem of the inlay is considerably more elaborate than the one seen here, so Cortesi Bosco has properly maintained that the former is the prototype, requiring that the painting in Rome be dated precisely to the last four months of 1524. Its affinity with the frescoes in Trescore is further confirmed by numerous details: the cluster of feathers on Saint George’s helmet is seen again in the two soldiers in white on the right of the wall with scenes from the life of Saint Barbara; the sharp foreshortening of Saint Catherine’s face reappears in the Saint Barbara who, nude, is brought clothes by an angel as she is released from prison, and in the prophet Jeremiah or Saint John the Evangelist at the foot of the cross in the scene of Saint Brigid taking the veil.

M L

PROVENANCE: Marsilio Cassotti, Bergamo, 1524; Quirinal Palace, Rome; Palazzo Corsini, Rome, 1922–1953; Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Antica, Rome, 1953, inv. 2610

LITERATURE: Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 514; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 197–198; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 14–15; Berenson 1901, 157–158; Frizzoni 1903, 178; Venturi 1929, 115; Berenson 1932, 311; Berenson 1936, 267; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 77–78; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 43; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 104; Zampetti 1953, 84–85; Berenson 1955, 85; Bianconi 1955, 49; Ansaldi 1956, 5; Benesch 1957, 412; Berenson 1957, 105; Pallucchini 1965, 53; *Libro* 1969, 260; Freedberg 1971, 203; Mascherpa 1971, 58–61; Pignatti 1973, 271; Cohen 1975, 133; Mariani Canova 1975, 98; Galis 1977, 146–147; Freedberg 1979, 306; Caroli 1980, 152–153; Cortesi Bosco, *Affreschi*, 1980, 55; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 55, 56; Albani Liberali 1981, 427; Grabski 1981, 388; Zampetti 1983, *Genius*, 177; Cristaldi 1984, 209–210; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 340–349; Gentili 1989, 156; Cortesi Bosco 1993, 336; Dal Pozzolo 1995, 25; Humfrey 1997, 155, 170

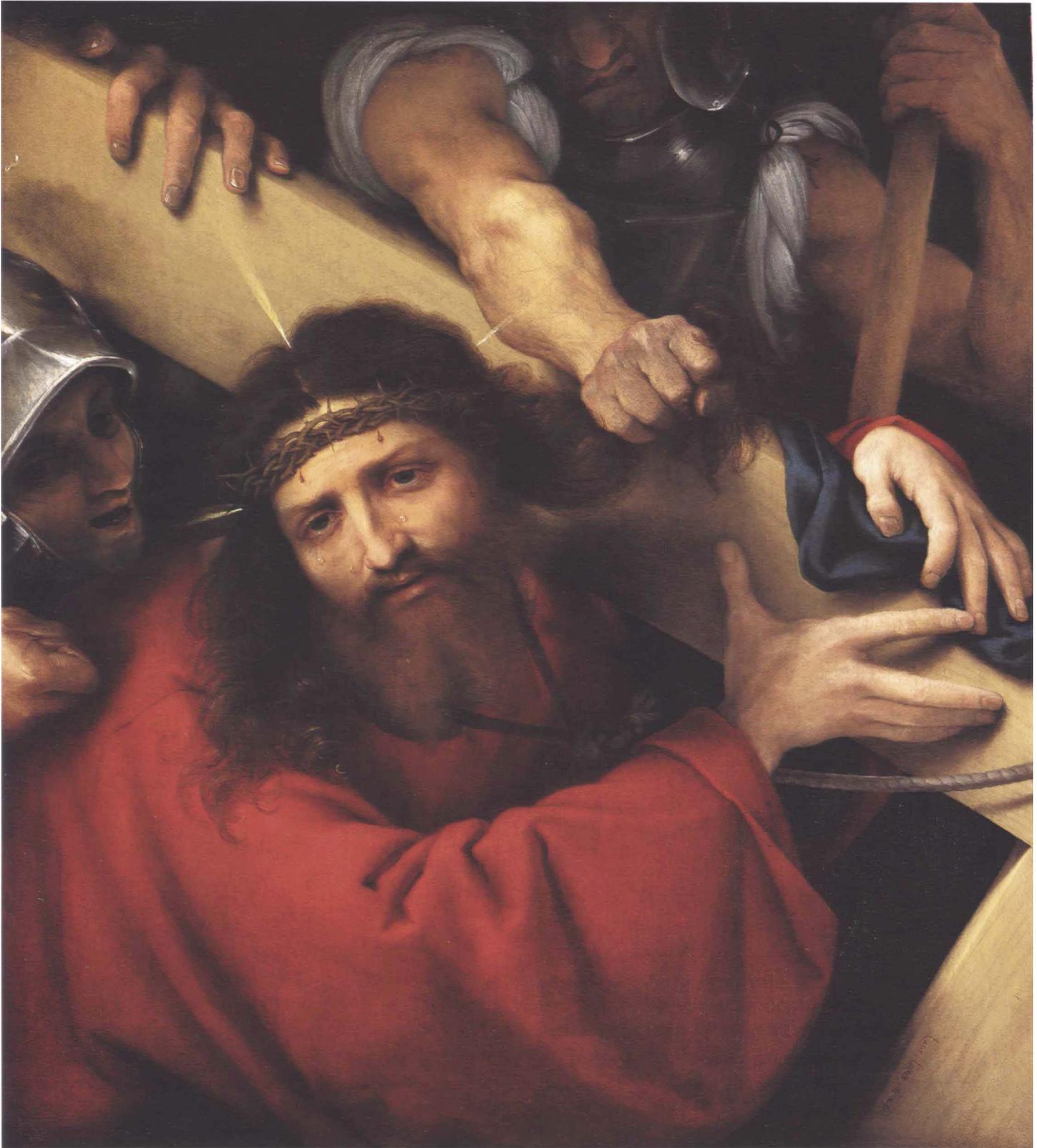




A detail from a Renaissance painting, likely by Titian, depicting the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. Mary is on the right, wearing a dark green gown with a red mantle and a gold cross necklace. She holds a large, dark red book. The Christ Child is on the left, nude, with a halo, and is being held by a hand in a blue sleeve. The background shows a landscape with trees and mountains under a blue sky.

PETER HUMFREY

The Later Works in
Venice and the Marches



Christ Carrying the Cross

1526

oil on canvas, 66 x 60 (26 x 23 3/8)

signed, on wood of cross, near lower right-hand corner: laur. lotus 1526

Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris

THIS POWERFUL AND ARRESTING image represents Lotto's highly personal contribution to a pictorial type that enjoyed widespread popularity in northern Italy in the final years of the fifteenth century and the early decades of the sixteenth. As in other examples of the type, the biblical episode of Christ carrying his cross to Calvary is presented in a dramatic close-up of his face, surrounded by his tormentors, and gazing out at the spectator in sorrowful appeal. The inscription on the wood of the cross, oddly placed upside down, shows that the work was painted in Venice, in the year after Lotto's return from a twelve-year residence in Bergamo.

Nothing otherwise is known of the early history of the picture, which entered the modern Lotto literature only in 1982, when the Louvre acquired it indirectly from the nunnery of the Congregation of Saint Charles Borromeo at Puy-en-Velay. Presumably, it was one of the "molti quadri e ritratti" by Lotto, which, according to Vasari (1568, 1976 ed., 552) "in Vinezia sono per le case de' gentiluomini" (many pictures and portraits in Venice in the houses of gentlemen). A century later, Ridolfi (1648, 1914 ed., I: 145 and H, 56) recorded two pictures that have both been tentatively identified with the present work. "Mr. Jacopo Pighetti, a gentleman from Bergamo, whose literary accomplishments do honor to his native region, owns a piteous Redeemer, with the cross on his shoulder" and a second work, in the collection of Nicolas Regnier (Niccolò Renieri), "Christ led to Mount Calvary by attendants, by Lorenzo Lotto." The first description was later paraphrased by Tassi (1793, 127–128), but clearly he had not seen the picture. A passing reference by Martinioni (in Sansovino 1581, 1663 ed., 378) to a picture by Lotto in Regnier's collection almost certainly refers to the second work. Chastel (1982) had no doubt about identifying the Louvre picture as that which had belonged to Pighetti, whose small but distinguished collection of paintings was displayed in the reception room of his palace at Sant'Angelo in Venice (Savini Branca 1965, 122, 259–260). According to Chastel, it was not the Regnier picture, because Ridolfi implied that the figures were represented in full-length. Béguin (1993) was more cautious, observing that Ridolfi's description of the Pighetti picture did not specify that it represented the story of the carrying of the Cross. Indeed, it had already been suggested that this work was identical with a *Blood of the Redeemer* in the D'Arco collection, Mantua, in which Christ

holds up a cross against his shoulder (see Perina 1964). Further support for Chastel's theory is provided by a 1664 inventory probably made by G. P. Bellori, of Lelio Orsini's collection in Rome: "Christ carrying the cross, with half-length figures, by Lorenzo Lotto" (*Nota delli Musei* . . . 1664, 1976 ed., 82). That the picture was already in Rome by 1664 tends to point to the Pighetti provenance. Jacopo Pighetti's pictures presumably were dispersed after his death in 1646, whereas Regnier's picture was still in Venice in 1663. The Regnier provenance cannot definitely be ruled out; nor indeed can the possibility that the Louvre picture had left Venice before 1648, and that it does not correspond to either of the works mentioned by Ridolfi.

A more precise reference in an Orsini inventory of 1696 confirms the identity of the Louvre picture with that recorded by Bellori in Rome in 1664: "Our Lord with the cross on his shoulder, with two other figures, by Lorenzo Lotto of Venice" (Rubsamen 1980, 20). The recorded dimensions of "palmi 3 incirca in quadro" (about three palms square) also correspond (as a Roman palm was about 33 centimeters). By 1723, the picture had disappeared from the Orsini collection. Subsequently it seems to have belonged to Bishop Armand de Béthune, whose château at Monistrel contained a "*Christ portant sa croix*" (by an unnamed painter), and who was a major benefactor of the Congregation of Saint Charles Borromeo at Puy-en-Velay (Béguin 1993, 493).

Ringbom (1965, 147–155) interprets the half-length image of Christ as an expansion of the simpler and more static image of Christ alone with his cross, as represented, for example, by Giovanni Bellini, and before that, of the even more basic image of Christ crowned with thorns, seen in close-up and gazing piteously out at the spectator. Alternatively, the mature image may be interpreted as a condensation of full-length narrative representations of the gospel episode (Matt. 27: 27–32; Mark 15: 20–21; John 19: 17), as portrayed in woodcuts and engravings by German masters such as Schongauer and Dürer, or in paintings by turn-of-the-century Lombard artists such as Boccaccio Boccaccino. In either case, Lotto's picture and others like it may be seen as combining, in a highly expressive synthesis, the intimacy of the half-length format—the head of Christ dominates the picture field and thereby establishes a close emotional link with the spectator—with the

drama of the full-length narrative—Christ, staggering under the burden of the cross, is being beaten and mocked by the soldiers who accompany him to the hill of Calvary.

An essential prototype for Lotto's composition was provided by Leonardo da Vinci, whose silverpoint drawing *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), probably dating from the earlier 1490s, seems to have been made in preparation for a full-scale cartoon, now lost, but recorded in a workshop painting in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan. Leonardo's composition was evidently known both in Venice where it is reflected in the painting in the Scuola di San Rocco, attributed variously to Giorgione or the young Titian, and in Lombardy, where it inspired several versions by Andrea Solario, as well as by Leonardo's more direct followers. Although he had recently moved to Venice, Lotto's composition is closer to the Lombard versions, in which Christ moves diagonally forward toward the spectator, with the tormentors behind him, than to the Giorgione/Titian version, in which Christ, his head outward, is depicted in a side view, confronted by the ugly profiles of his tormentors. Lotto also retains the Leonardesque motif of a tormentor's clenched fist brutally tugging at Christ's hair. In other respects, Lotto reverted to an earlier Venetian prototype, as represented by a picture attributed to Antonello da Messina in collaboration with his son Jacobello (location unknown), in which Christ is fully clothed (as in Matt. 27: 31), and makes a simple forward movement.

As often is the case with Lotto's portraits, where the figure is cut at waist or thigh level, Christ's pose is hard to interpret. It is not clear, for example, whether he is supposed to be stooping, kneeling, or lying. It is certain that the picture has not been cut. Chastel (1982) pointed out that the truncation of the forms of the two visible tormentors, as well of Christ himself, is quite deliberate, since it implies that the image is not self-contained, but instead corresponds to a close-up, or to a zoom-in, of a much larger scene, in which the innocent and suffering Christ is jostled by a vast throng of evil, gesticulating tormentors.

In a letter written to Bergamo in the same year, Lotto spoke of the sincerity of his Christian conviction ("sono di natura et religion christiana") (*Libro* 1969, 265); and this is perhaps also evident in the communicative power of this image of Christ appealing to his followers. Explicit keys to how representations of this subject were meant to be read by contemporary viewers are provided by the texts appended to contemporary prints. A late fifteenth-century Milanese woodcut, for example, carries the text from Matthew 16: 24: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The inscription on an early sixteenth-century Lombard woodcut (fig. 1) consciously sets out to stir the devotee's emotions: "O sinner, break the stone of your hard heart. See your loving Christ carry the heavy cross to Mount Calvary and suffer terrible death for the sake of sinners." Yet while a large part of Lotto's purpose would have been to melt the pious viewer's heart, the extraordinary refinement of the pictorial han-

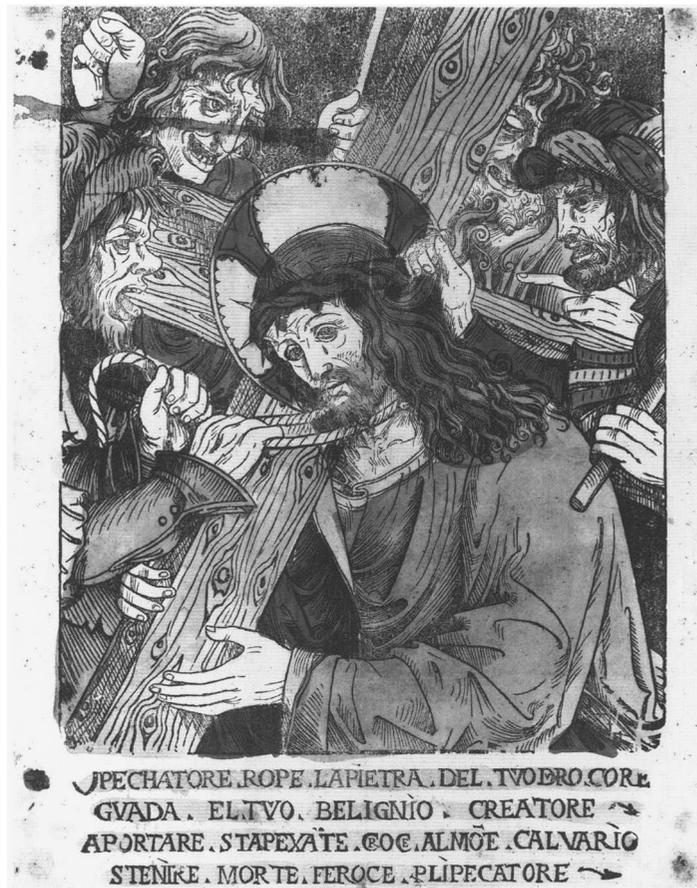


fig. 1. Northern Italian, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, woodcut with hand coloring. National Gallery of Art, Washington, Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund, 1984.12.1

dling—evident in the subtle interplay of light and shadow, in the metallic glints on the armor, and in the miniature-like precision of passages such as the crown of thorns—also reveals his intention to appeal to the aesthetic sensibilities of the original owner. More generally, in the first year of his return to his native city after an absence of more than twenty years, Lotto would have felt the need to advertise his presence with works, which although quite unlike the more broadly painted pictures of Titian, would nevertheless appeal to the most sophisticated of connoisseurs. Similarly, while it is not quite clear why he chose to place his signature on the cross upside down, the very self-consciousness of this detail reveals a desire to draw attention to his own artistry.

P H

PROVENANCE: Possibly Jacopo Pighetti, Venice, by 1648; Lelio Orsini, Rome, 1664; Bishop Armand de Béthune (?); Congrégation de Saint Charles-Borromée, Puy-en-Velay; Musée du Louvre, 1982

LITERATURE: Chastel 1982; Chastel 1983; Béguin 1993, 493–494; Béguin 1995, 23; Cortesi Bosco 1996, 37; Humfrey 1997, 98

Andrea Odoni

1527

oil on canvas, 104 x 116.6 (40^{15/16} x 45^{7/8})

signed: Laurentius lotus/ 1527

Lent by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

ONE OF THE FINEST and most inventive of Lotto's portraits, *Andrea Odoni* may be interpreted as a deliberate challenge to Titian's supremacy in the field of portraiture, and as a demonstration to the Venetian public of an alternative, more richly detailed and allusive mode of portrayal. Expensively dressed in a dark fur-lined coat over a black doublet, with a gold chain round his neck and surrounded by choice pieces of classical sculpture, Odoni is presented as a man of wealth and taste; his pensive expression, and the placing of his hand and of a crucifix against his heart, also proclaim him to be a person of thought, feeling, and religious piety. The inscribed date of 1527 provides a valuable point of stylistic reference for Lotto's portraits in the period following his return to Venice from Bergamo.

The identification of the sitter is based on a fairly unambiguous reference to the portrait by Marcantonio Michiel, who visited Odoni's celebrated art collection in his house on the Fondamenta del Gaffero at Santa Croce in 1532, and recorded (Frimmel 1888) in the owner's bedroom: "el retratto de esso M. Andrea a oglio, meza figura, che contempla li fragmenti marmorei antichi fu de man de Lorenzo Lotto" (the half-length portrait in oil of Messer Andrea, contemplating the fragments of antique marble, by the hand of Lorenzo Lotto). Ten years later, during his 1541–1542 visit to Venice, Vasari saw the portrait and nine years later, in the first edition of the *Lives*, mentioned: "[Lotto] painted the portrait of Andrea Odoni, whose house in Venice is richly adorned with painting and sculpture." The picture may then be identified with the portrait of Odoni listed in the inventory of the possessions of his late brother and heir, Alvise, in 1555, and subsequently sold out of the family. Half a century later, the portrait was acquired, almost certainly in Venice, by Flemish merchant and shipowner Lucas van Uffelen, who resided in the city c. 1617 but later transferred his art collection back to Amsterdam. By the time of Van Uffelen's death in 1639 the portrait had acquired an attribution to Titian. Although the Lotto attribution was briefly revived when it was in the collection of Charles II—presumably on the basis of the signature—during the later seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries, the portrait was generally considered to be by Correggio. Waagen (1854) was the first to propose the correct attribution, apparently on the evidence of style alone; and soon afterward, Sir

Charles Eastlake made the connection with the reference by Michiel, whose notebooks had been published by Jacopo Morelli in 1800. Lotto's authorship was finally confirmed in 1863, when the picture was cleaned, and the signature and date rediscovered.

Andrea Odoni (1488–1545), whose father had emigrated from Milan, and whose uncle Francesco Zio was also an important collector, was a wealthy merchant and prominent member of the Venetian *cittadinanza*. He held occasional office in the Republic's civil service, and had contacts with such members of the Venetian cultural establishment as the sculptor Tullio Lombardo, the architect Sebastiano Serlio, and the writer Pietro Aretino (Battilotti and Franco 1978). Michiel's description of the contents of Odoni's palace shows that he was a collector not just of painting and sculpture, but also of antique vases, coins, and gems, and of natural-historical curiosities worthy of a later sixteenth-century *Wunderkammer*: a cup made of petrified root, crabs, petrified snakes, a dried chameleon, rare seashells, crocodiles, and strange fish. His distinguished collection of pictures included works by contemporary Venetian painters—Giorgione, Catena, Titian, Palma Vecchio, Cariani, Savoldo, and Bonifacio de' Pitati—and French and Flemish painters. His collection of sculpture included modern works, such as marble heads of Hercules and Cybele by Antonio Minello, and a nude Mars by Simone Bianco, as well as numerous classical antiques. Additional items of classical sculpture—or in many cases, more probably plaster casts after the antique—are listed in his brother Alvise's inventory of 1555. Odoni won the admiration of his contemporaries both for the encyclopedic range of his collection and for his liberality in making it accessible to like-minded antiquarians and connoisseurs (Franzoni 1981).

During the past three decades, scholars have succeeded in identifying most of the pieces represented in Lotto's portrait as versions of well-known classical originals, although areas of dispute remain (Larsson 1968; Galis 1977; Shearman, *Italian*, 1983; Coli 1989). Following Burckhardt (1898), the statuette held by Odoni in his right hand is generally interpreted as an image of Diana (or Artemis) of the Ephesians, the multibreasted, mummylike figure whose shrine at Ephesus in Asia Minor constituted one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The image was well diffused in Roman statues and on coins, and Lotto had already included two very simi-



lar figures in his designs for intarsia covers of the *Rebellion of Absalom* and the *Lament of David*, sent off to Bergamo in February 1527 (see Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 425–426, 428). Galis (1977) rejects the identification with Diana, asserting that the statuette is not endowed with her essential attribute of multiple breasts. But this attribute does indeed seem to be suggested, albeit in a stylized manner, in the treatment of the figure's close-fitting garment; and the identification is confirmed by Lotto's probable derivation of all three figures from the throne of Raphael's *Philosophy*, on the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura, in which two unambiguous representations of Diana of the Ephesians similarly have their legs bound to form a single trunk. The female torso in the lower right of the portrait bears a general resemblance to the Venus in Lotto's *Allegory of Chastity* of c. 1530 (Palazzo Rospigliosi Pallavicini, Rome), the source for which Clark (1955, 217) traced to a nereid sarcophagus in the Vatican; however as Shearman (*Italian*, 1983, 146) points out, the torso in the portrait, with its enclosing cloak, appears to have been based on a statue rather than a relief. Confirmation of this is provided by the recent observation by Bambach (1997) that a drawing by Filippino Lippi (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence) represents the same, presumably antique but as yet unidentified, statue. By contrast, the large male head next to the female is clearly identifiable as that of Emperor Hadrian, best represented by the bust now in the Museo Nazionale, Naples (Larsson 1968). The urinating male at the left equally clearly corresponds to a *Hercules Mingens*, known as a small-scale bronze and in drawings after the antique. The identity of the crouching female figure, apparently a bronze, is less clear: she may represent the bathing Diana or more probably the bathing Venus. The male torso behind Odoni's left arm was identified by Larsson as Bacchus, but by Galis more plausibly as Hercules; however, the skin of the Nemean lion actually looks more like that of a wolf. The group at the far left unambiguously corresponds to a well-known *Hercules and Antaeus* group, in the Vatican in the early sixteenth century (in the courtyard of Palazzo Pitti in Florence by 1568; see Haskell and Penny 1981, 232–234).

Of all these, only the head of Hadrian can be identified with a piece actually owned by Odoni—the “Adrian de stucco” mentioned in the inventory of 1555; the others are more likely to have been known to Lotto either from the time of his brief sojourn in Rome in 1508–1509, or from copies, in the form of drawings and/or casts. Favaretto (1990) has even suggested that the works of sculpture are based on casts belonging to Lotto himself, who is indeed known to have used small-scale figures and reliefs in wax and plaster as workshop accessories. In any case, as recognized, the pieces that surround Odoni cannot portray a selection of treasures from his own collection, but constitute rather an ideal assembly, brought together, in the manner of the various symbolic objects found in Lotto's other portraits, to provide a commentary on the identity, circumstances, or personal philosophy of the sitter (Pope-Hennessy 1966 and Larsson 1968). While little consensus exists about the reasons for the particular choice of objects and their relation to one

another, most critics have agreed with Burckhardt (1898) that Lotto intended a contrast between the statuette of Diana of the Ephesians, so prominently held by Odoni and presumably signifying nature, and the other pieces of sculpture, most of them fragments, signifying art. The interpretative problem has been how much relative value Lotto and his patron meant to be attached to these antithetical concepts. Wazbinski (1968) implicitly related the portrait to other images of scholars and art lovers surrounded by the objects of their study, in which these are seen as alluding to the superiority of art, with its civilizing and humanizing power, over mere nature. Larsson (1968) similarly interpreted the picture as an allegory of artistic creativity, but he suggested that the emphasis given to the Diana implies rather a characteristically Venetian preference for fecund nature over the decaying fragments of classical antiquity. Developing this interpretation, Shearman (*Italian*, 1983) suggested that while wanting to express his passionate devotion to art, Odoni declares that his final preference is for nature, and in particular for the nature of gardens. This is based on the supposition that the sitter owned land on Murano, where the plentiful gardens were often favorite haunts of patricians and humanists; however, it is clear from Odoni's tax return of 1540 and from his will of 1545 (Battilotti and Franco 1978, 81) that Odoni owned instead “three and a half fields,” presumably used for agriculture, at Mirano, a village on the road from Venice to Padua. There is no mention in the documents of any villa or country house that might have formed the nucleus of an arcadian retreat.

Also among the rather forced attempts to develop the sparse biographical facts known about Odoni are the interpretations by Puppi (1981) and Coli (1989). The latter inferred from the prominence of the head of Hadrian that Odoni wished to identify himself with the emperor. Hadrian, like Odoni, was a lover of art, and also like him was childless, despite his many sacrifices in honor of Venus. Coli maintains that the portrait expresses the hope that, partly through the fecund mother-goddess Diana, the sitter's marriage will be blessed with children, and that the future will not consist merely of the decay symbolized by the battered fragments that surround him; however, an X-radiograph of the lower right-hand corner shows that the head of Hadrian, and the lifting of the tablecloth above it, constituted additions to the original design (Shearman 1968). Therefore, it seems unlikely that the visual relationship between Odoni and the emperor was intended as a key element in the portrait's symbolic program. Puppi, by contrast, without developing a detailed interpretation of the picture, proposed that the Diana statuette carries a talismanic significance, associated with the occult philosophy of Giulio Camillo Delminio, a key figure in a social and intellectual circle that supposedly included Odoni and Lotto (see cats. 32, 38).

Consistent with her rejection of the commonly accepted identification of the statuette (and hence, too, of the interpretation of the symbolism as an antithesis between art and nature), Galis (1977) interpreted it as a simple idol, and read the picture,

with reference to Petrarch's *De Remediis*, as a warning against the laying up of false treasures on Earth. According to Galis, the portrait was conceived as a thematic pendant to another picture (now lost) recorded by Michiel in Odoni's bedroom, showing a young woman with an old woman behind her, clearly referring to the transience of earthly beauty. But apart from the unconvincing nature of Galis' attempt to interpret Lotto's portraits in general as moralizing admonitions, it seems most improbable that Odoni would have wished for such a purely negative significance to be attached to his activities as a collector.

In their various efforts to decode the portrait, all postwar critics have been seriously hampered by overpainting of a small but crucial iconographic detail during a restoration of 1952–1953. This is the crucifix held by Odoni between his left thumb and forefinger, and made visible again only very recently, during the treatment undertaken for the present exhibition. The implied contrast of ideas now appears to be not so much between nature and art, as between the true religion of Christianity, focused on the one Savior, and the false, polytheistic religion of pagan antiquity. Although Odoni's bedroom contained at least two pictures with Christian subjects (Giorgione's *Saint Jerome* and Titian's *Virgin and Child with Saints*), his house as a whole—like the portrait—was dominated by images of the classical world, and it may have been precisely because of his deep interest in antique civilization that he felt impelled to stress that his ultimate loyalty remained with Christ. The choice of the cult image of Diana of the Ephesians as a counterpoint to that of Christ on the Cross may have been determined by Diana's having been the object of explicit biblical condemnation (Acts 19: 24–41). Against this background, it may be reasonable to interpret the book in front of Odoni as a religious text, perhaps a New Testament; however, the significance of the coins, and of the glass bowl and beads to the right, remains elusive.

Lotto had already used an elaborate symbolism in the portraits of the preceding Bergamasque period, such as *Lucina Brembati*, *Marsilio Cassotti and His Bride*, and *A Married Couple* (cats. 15, 21, 25), but its even greater subtlety and complexity in *Andrea Odoni* may be in part a response to the more sophisticated cultural environment of Venice, and in part a sign of the painter's ambition to attract a new circle of patrons. As a way of accommodating the profusion of symbolic detail, Lotto adopted the broad format, hitherto reserved by him for double portraits, and included at least an indication of a domestic interior, defined by the L-shaped table against which the sitter leans. Although differing in all these respects from Titian's portraits of the same period, the picture shares the broad format, and also the expansive gesture, with Savoldo's so-called *Gaston de Foix* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), usually dated slightly later than the *Odoni* (Martin 1995), but possibly dating from earlier. At the same time, as in the closely contemporary *Saint Nicholas in Glory* (cat. 29), some accommodation is made with the art of Titian, as is evident in the relatively atmospheric handling (although account should be taken of the abraded



fig. 1. Cornelis Visscher after Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Andrea Odoni*, engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elische Whittelsey Fund, 1951 (51.501.6621)

surface), in the deliberate restriction of the color range, and especially in the subtle modulation of the light.

Evidence that Titian himself knew and was impressed by Lotto's portrait is provided by the *Jacopo Strada* of 1567–1568 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), in which, exceptionally among Titian's portraits, the sitter—appropriately enough, an art dealer, holding a piece of sculpture—is in an active pose within a furnished interior. Later reflections of the *Odoni* include Palma il Giovane's *Portrait of a Collector* (Bartolomeo della Nave[?]) of c. 1595 (City Art Museum, Birmingham), Van Dyck's *Lucas van Uffelen* of c. 1623 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and Rembrandt's etching of *Jan Lutman* of 1656, the artist's only etched portrait to adopt a broad format (Shearman, *Italian*, 1983).

In 1653 Cornelis Visscher engraved the picture (in reverse; fig. 1) as a Correggio, when it was in the Reynst collection in Amsterdam. The iconographical importance of the crucifix was not lost on the engraver; he slightly enlarged it. Despite the wider format of the engraving, the painting seems not to have been cut at the sides.

P H

PROVENANCE: Andrea Odoni, Venice; Alvise Odoni (a brother), by 1555; Lucas van Uffelen, Venice and Amsterdam, probably by 1623; Gerrit Reynst, Amsterdam, from 1639; acquired by the States of Holland by 1660; Charles II of England, 1660

LITERATURE: Vasari 1550 and 1568, 1976 ed., 552; Waagen 1854, 2: 356; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 519–520; Bampo 1886, 169–176; Frimmel 1888, 84; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 218–219; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 210; Michel 1896, 35–44; Burckhardt 1898, 265; Biscaro 1901, 152–161; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 416; Collins Baker 1929, 97; Longhi 1929, 1968 ed., 124; Venturi 1929, 65–66; Coletti 1930, 467–470; *Exhibition* 1930; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 81; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 132; Zampetti 1953, 107–108; Nicco Fasola 1954, 103–115; Bianconi 1955, 58; Berenson 1956, 98–99; Seidenberg 1964, 58; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 228–231; Larsson 1968; Wazbinski 1968, 27; Caroli 1975, 208; Marianni Canova 1975, 109; Galis 1977, 225–229, 375–385; Caroli 1980, 178; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 113, 142; Franzoni 1981, 216; Puppi 1981, 395; Shearman, *Italian*, 1983, 144–148; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 177–178; Huse 1986, 279–281; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 410, 425–426, 428; Lucco 1988, 162; Coli 1989, 183–204; Favaretto 1990, 75–79; Humfrey 1995, 178–179; Martin 1995, 21–23; Humfrey 1997, 106–107

Saint Nicholas in Glory with Saints John the Baptist and Lucy

1527–1529

oil on canvas, 335 x 188 (131 7/8 x 74)

Santa Maria dei Carmini, Venice

THIS AND THE *Saint Antoninus Giving Alms* of 1542 (Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice) are the two finest of only four altarpieces that Lotto painted for his native city. The *Saint Nicholas*, dating from the phase immediately after his first return to Venice, to some extent reflects his firsthand contact with the undisputed leader of Venetian painting, Titian; at the same time, the work retains a characteristic distance from Titian in its color range, and also in its composition, which reveals Lotto's interest in northern European sources.

Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra in the fourth century, was highly venerated in the maritime city of Venice because of his power to protect ships at sea. In opposition to the rival claims of Bari, the Venetians claimed that the saint's body was preserved in the church of San Niccolò di Lido. Lotto shows the saint enthroned on a bank of clouds, flanked by three angels respectively holding his miter, crozier, and customary attribute of three golden balls, symbols of the bags of gold that he gave to charity. Seated in front of him are Saint John the Baptist, with a rustic wooden cross, and Saint Lucy whose attribute of a vessel containing her two eyes—a reference to her name, meaning "light"—is behind her left foot. In the landscape below, to the right, are the diminutive figures of Saint George and the dragon, with the fleeing princess.

The painting remains in its original position in the left aisle of the former Carmelite church, above the altar next to the side door leading onto the Campo Santa Margherita. The original frame, carved in Istrian limestone and incorporating marble Ionic columns, is inscribed on the base: "Tempore de lh. Baptista Donati guardian et Georgii de Mundis vicari et sotior[um] MDXXVII." (In the time of Giovanni Battista Donati, guardian, and Giorgio de Mundis, vicario, and their colleagues, 1527.) The work is mentioned by Dolce (1557) and Vasari (1568), as well as by all the principal Venetian sources. According to Ridolfi (1648), Zanetti (1771), and Moschini (1815), presumably on the basis of a now lost inscription, the picture was completed in 1529. Although modern technical investigation has found no trace of any inscription on the picture surface, this date is entirely plausible on stylistic grounds, and it would have been perfectly consistent with business practice for an altar painting to be installed two years later than its frame. A few years earlier, in 1524, the newly elected prior general of the Carmelite

Order, Niccolò Audet, had initiated a restoration campaign for the fourteenth-century church (Pedani 1991, 104–105), and this move is likely to have provided the impetus for the commission especially since the titular of the altar, Nicholas, was the general's namesake.

The inscription on the frame, with its reference to office-holders, makes it clear that the altarpiece was commissioned by one of the many *scuole*, or lay confraternities, of Venice. Niero (1965) identified the confraternity as the Scuola dei Pescivendoli (guild of fishmongers), and this identification has been followed by a number of critics, including most recently Augusti (1993) and Cortesi Bosco (1996). But Vio (1974) and Gramigna and Perissa (1981) have determined that the altar of the fishmongers, dedicated to the Purification of the Virgin, was on the opposite side of the nave, and rights to the altar dedicated to Saint Nicholas belonged to Scuola dei Mercanti. According to its *mariegola* (statute book), this confraternity was founded in 1319; its membership, exclusively male, comprised merchants with businesses at Rialto, and was limited to two hundred; and its officers were elected annually on the eve of the feast of its patron saint. It was the duty of members to pray regularly "for the souls of all our brothers, alive and dead, and so that God maintain Venice in peace and prosperity. . . so that God and Saint Nicholas protect and save all the fleets and ships of this city on the open sea, with all who sail in them, and bring them safely to port" (Vio 1974). The confraternity owned a communal sepulcher in the floor of the church, in front of the altar, and maintained a small meeting house in the Campo outside.

The *mariegola* does not mention any saint other than Nicholas, to whom the members of the confraternity were particularly devoted, and the figure of John the Baptist is certainly included as the name saint of guardian Giovanni Battista Donati, who took responsibility for commissioning the work. Similarly, the tiny episode of Saint George and the dragon is included in honor of Donati's deputy, Giorgio de Mundis. The reason for the prominence of Saint Lucy is less clear, but since her body was preserved in the church of Santa Lucia in Venice, she enjoyed a popular cult in the city; furthermore, as pointed out by Matthew ("Lotto," 1988, 419), the sacred relics owned by the church included one of Saint Lucy's teeth.

The *mariegola* also mentions that the confraternity possessed an altarpiece as early as 1331. This work was probably identical with





fig. 1. Jan van Scorel, *Crossing of the Red Sea*. Private collection

a now lost relief panel representing the enthroned Saint Nicholas, surrounded by narrative scenes, which by 1771 was in the confraternity's meeting house (Zanetti 1771, 5); presumably it had been moved there from the church to make way for the new altarpiece by Lotto. According to Zanetti, the *Saint Nicholas* relief resembled the *Saint Donatus* relief of 1310 still in Santi Maria e Donato on Murano. Augusti (1993) has drawn attention to the archaizing symmetry and frontality of Lotto's Nicholas, and perhaps that in this respect the figure was deliberately meant to evoke the displaced wood sculpture.

Counterbalancing the careful alignment of the Saint Nicholas with the vertical axis of the picture field is a scarcely less insistent horizontal, created by the uplifted edges of the saint's cope, and corresponding to the entablatures of the columns and pilasters of the frame. But the figures surrounding the firmly anchored form of the bishop are arranged in a much more dynamic equilibrium, with the two angels on the left asymmetrically balanced by only one on the right, and the relative positions of John the Baptist and Saint Lucy resembling shifting weights on a scale. The dynamism of the figure composition is then further heightened by the fluttering draperies, and especially by the drama of the light and shade.

The composition as a whole, with its large-scale figures floating high above a panoramic landscape seen in bird's-eye view, is highly original in the context of Venetian altarpiece design of the period, but precedents in Lotto's own work include the *Saint Vincent Ferrer* fresco of c. 1512 (which originally included a landscape below) and the *Trinity* of c. 1523–1524 (Sant' Alessandro della Croce, Bergamo) (cat. 23). The painter was evidently inspired here by Dürer: by woodcuts from the *Apocalypse* series such as *Saint Michael and the Dragon* (Galis 1977, 230), or by *Ecstasy of Saint Mary Magdalen*, a woodcut of c. 1504–1505, which similarly includes both mountains and sea, or by *Nemesis*, an engraving of 1502. The highly poetic landscape itself, with its tiny but precisely described figures and layers of depth measured by blues and greens, seems to have been inspired by Netherlandish pictures then in Venice, including one attributed to Jan van Scorel (or his studio) in the Ca' d'Oro, Venice (Moschini Marconi 1962, 284–285). It is perhaps significant that the bird's-eye view of the latter's work, like that of Lotto, includes a stormy sky, distant mountains, windtossed trees, and a harbor with

ships. Fellow artist Joachim Patinir's Netherlandish *Martyrdom of Saint Catherine in a Landscape* also includes a view of a harbor. Even closer is the resemblance of Lotto's landscape to that of a recently published painting by Scorel of the *Crossing of the Red Sea* (private collection, Milan; fig. 1), which similarly shows the passage of a storm from left to right; indeed, the closeness of the resemblance lends further weight to the suggestion by Meijer (1992, 1–2) that this painting is identical with one recorded by Michiel in the collection of Francesco Zio, a large part of which was inherited before 1525 by Zio's nephew, Andrea Odoni, whose portrait (cat. 28) Lotto painted in the very year in which he began the *Saint Nicholas in Glory*. The borrowing by Lotto from Scorel of the motif of the passing storm may be seen as particularly appropriate to its new context, since it echoes the prayer to Saint Nicholas incorporated in the confraternity statute. Thus for merchants whose livelihood depended on the safe transport of cargo from one seaport to another, this vision in their altarpiece of a serene sky following quickly behind the dark storm clouds must have provided a constant source of spiritual solace.

The earliest commentator on the picture, Lodovico Dolce (1557), was insensitive to its beauty and originality, and complained that it was a "very notable example of a bad use of color" (*assai notabile esempio di cattive tinte*). This comment should be interpreted in the light of the writer's polemical support of Titian, and in particular of his admiration for Titian's warmly glowing and harmoniously fused palette. Following his return to Venice from Bergamo in 1525, Lotto clearly made a special effort to emulate Titian's pictorialism, and the contours of the forms are notably softer than usual, and his color range warmer; even so, the painter's taste is for cool and dissonant colors and for daringly piquant juxtapositions, as for example, in the setting of the orange of Lucy's cloak against the pink of her scarf.

P H

PROVENANCE: Santa Maria dei Carmini, Venice

LITERATURE: Dolce 1557, 184; Vasari 1550 and 1568, 1976 ed., 552–553; Lomazzo 1590, 158; Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 145; Sansovino 1581, 93–94; Sansovino 1581, 1604 ed., 184–185; Scannelli 1657, 240; Sansovino 1581, 1663 ed., 262; Boschini 1664, 369–370; Zanetti 1733, 350; Zanetti 1771, 208; Tassi 1793, 126; Moschini 1815, 2: 263; Ricci 1834, 2: 93; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 521, 527; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 231–232; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 220–222; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 417; Longhi 1929, 1968 ed., 115; Longhi 1941, 1979 ed., 16; Pallucchini 1945, 70; Longhi 1946, 22; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 37–40, 84; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 132–135; Zampetti 1953, 122–123; Bianconi 1955, 60; Berenson 1956, 76; Niero 1965, 51–52; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 310; Caroli 1975, 224; Mariani Canova 1975, 113; Galis 1977, 230–232; Caroli 1980, 194; Gramigna and Perissa 1981, 70; Humfrey and Mackenney 1986, 330; Lucco 1988, 162–163; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 418–422; Augusti 1993, 415–416; Humfrey 1993, 145–146, 112; Cortesi Bosco 1996, 36–37; Humfrey 1997, 96

30
Christ and the Adulteress

c. 1527–1529
oil on canvas, 99 x 126 (39 x 49 5/8)
Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris

THE SUBJECT IS TAKEN FROM the Gospel of Saint John (8: 3–11), in which the scribes and Pharisees bring before Christ a woman who has been caught in the act of adultery. In an attempt to trap him into contradicting Mosaic law (Lev. 20: 10; Deut. 22: 22), they asked him whether she should be stoned to death; but Christ answered: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Abashed, the accusers dispersed, and Christ told the woman to go and sin no more. Lotto dramatizes the moment by creating a sharp physiognomical contrast between the quiet and noble figure of Christ, at the center of the composition, and the ugly, threatening faces of the accusers. Similarly, the vulnerability of the beautiful, humiliated, and frightened woman is heightened by the sensuous contrast between her delicate white flesh and the hard glittering armor of the soldier who brutally tugs at her hair.

For several decades after 1510, half- or three-quarter-length representations of Christ and the adulteress became highly popular in Venetian painting, and examples survive by such painters as Marco Marziale, Niccolò de’ Barbari, Titian, Palma Vecchio, and especially Rocco Marconi. According to Ringbom (1965, 190–192), the compositional formula, like the related one of *Christ carrying the Cross* (cat. 27), developed from a simple iconic image of the bust-length Christ, to which narrative elements were added. The expressive use of physiognomical contrast was inspired by the example both of Leonardo and Dürer, whose *Christ among the Doctors* of 1506 (Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid) similarly shows Christ at the center of a tightly packed group of grotesquely portrayed Pharisees, against a dark, undefined background. Although it is not clear whether Dürer painted his picture before he left Venice in the early fall of 1506 or shortly afterwards in Rome, Lotto could have seen it in either city.

Lotto’s painting is undated, but scholars have generally accepted the dating to the early 1530s first suggested by Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895), by close stylistic analogy with the main panel of the *Saint Lucy* altarpiece, completed in 1532. The jostling throng of Lucy’s tormentors certainly does resemble that surrounding Christ and the adulteress, except that in the present instance the use of contemporary costume—a device often employed by Lotto to lend the scene a topical relevance—is combined with the use of oriental headgear, as a way of stressing the Jewish character of the

Pharisees. But both the *Christ and the Adulteress* and the *Saint Lucy* panel (commissioned in 1523) may date from the later 1520s rather than the early 1530s, as both appear to be stylistically closer to Lotto’s most Venetianizing works, such as the *Saint Nicholas in Glory* (cat. 29), than to the pictures he painted in the Marches after c. 1533.

Another version of the picture, of lesser quality and clearly later in date, exists at Loreto (Palazzo Apostolico), where it was recorded by Vasari (1568, 1976 ed., 554). This Loreto version probably corresponds to an item described as “El quadro de la adultera,” which Lotto included in the unsuccessful auction of his surplus stock at Ancona in 1550 (*Libro* 1969, 128), and also to a picture commissioned by one Zuan Donà Uspier in Venice in 1548 (*Libro* 1969, 29, 194–195). The original version, painted some twenty years previously, must have already reached France by 1581, since it was engraved by Marc Duval, who died in that year. As pointed out by Brejon de Lavernée (1987), Duval worked extensively for the leading member of the Protestant party, Philippe de Mornay, and the latter may well, therefore, have owned the picture. When later in the French royal collection, its format was enlarged by about 12 or 13 centimeters on all four sides. After conservation in 1980 these additions were retained, but were covered by the present frame.

P H

PROVENANCE: Possibly Philippe de Mornay (1549–1623), Paris; sold by M. de la Feuille to Louis XIV of France, 1671

LITERATURE: Lépicié 1752–1754, 2: 89–90; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 429; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 235–236, 334; Engerand 1899, 124; de Ricci 1913, 78; Hautecoeur 1926, 77; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 85; Adhémar 1954, 63; Bianconi 1955, 61; Berenson 1956, 82; Ringbom 1965, 191; Caroli 1975, 234; Mariani Canova 1975, 114; Béguin 1978, 112–113; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 172; Béguin 1981, 102–103; Brejon de Lavergnée 1987, 320–321; Béguin 1993, 496



Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Thomas

c. 1528–1530

oil on canvas, 113.5 x 152 (44¹/₁₆ x 59¹³/₁₆)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

A PICTURE OF EXCEPTIONAL refinement, this representation of the Virgin and child informally seated with saints in a sunlit landscape conforms to a devotional type made popular in Venice by local painters such as Titian, Paris Bordone, Bonifacio de' Pitati, and especially Palma Vecchio. Nothing is known of the original owner, but the quality suggests that the picture was painted for the delectation of an aesthetically sophisticated patron in the privacy of his palace. The male saint is usually called James the Greater, whose attribute is a pilgrim's staff; but as Cortesi Bosco (1987) pointed out, the object depicted is a spear; therefore, the saint must be the apostle Thomas. Indeed, he was identified as such in Mechel's catalogue of the Austrian imperial collection of 1783.

The picture is first recorded by Marco Boschini in his 1660 Venetian dialect poem *La Carta del Navegar Pittoresco*, by which date it already belonged to the imperial collection in Vienna: "Del Palma vecchio el raro imitador, / Quel Bergamasco Loto sì famoso, / Voi nominar, col dir d'un prezioso / Quadro, che è un vero razzo de splendor; / Dove maria con Cristo e Catarina / Con modesta armonia concerta insieme, / Che chi se imbate là, devoto teme / De disturbar la congrega divina. / La maestà, che xe int'el venerando / Devoto Sant'isepo vecchiarelo, / Per mi l'esprime l'unico penelo; / Ben singular penelo, e memorando!" (I want to mention that rare imitator of Palma Vecchio, the famous Bergamasque Lotto, and talk about a precious picture, a true ray of splendor, in which Mary, Christ, and Catherine commune with one another in restrained harmony, so that whoever approaches is devoutly fearful of disturbing their divine colloquy. The majesty to be found in the venerable and devout old Saint Joseph is for me expressed by only one brush: a brush that is most singular and memorable!) Boschini, who never visited Vienna, presumably knew the picture purely on the basis of a description by his agent there; this would account for his mistaken identification of Thomas as Joseph. Otherwise the writer's accurate evocation of the pictorial qualities of the work is remarkable.

With the principal exception of Pallucchini (1944), who proposed a date of c. 1533, critics have generally followed Berenson (1896) in placing the picture contemporary with or directly after the *Saint Nicholas* altarpiece of 1527–1529 (cat. 29). Certainly it is one of Lotto's most self-consciously Venetian works, both in its

expressive and poetic use of color, light, and shade, and in its adherence to a compositional type particularly associated with Palma Vecchio. According to Vasari (1550 and 1568, 552), Lotto was a close friend of Palma; and since the latter died prematurely in 1528, this almost unique contribution to the type by Lotto may be a homage to his late colleague. At the same time, the comparison with similar representations by Palma underlines the much more unstable character of Lotto's composition, which is based on intersecting diagonals without any firm base, sharp, decidedly un-Venetian coolness of colors, and a nervously flickering quality of light. At some time in its history the painting was overcleaned: the blues of the Virgin's robe, in particular, have lost much of their original glazing, and the original paint of the angel's left hand and right foot has virtually disappeared.

P H

PROVENANCE: Austrian imperial collection, Vienna, by 1660

LITERATURE: Boschini 1660, 1966 ed., 334; Storffer 1730, 2: 227; Mechel 1783, 68; Tassi 1793, 128; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 522; Engerth 1884, 192–193; Zimmerman 1888, pl. 9; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 220–221; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 428; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 2: 418–419; Venturi 1929, 66–67; Pallucchini 1944, xxxii; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 33–35, 83; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 126; Bianconi 1955, 59; Berenson 1956, 70–71; *Katalog der Gemäldegalerie* 1960, 1: 72; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 308; Mariani Canova 1975, 112; Carioli 1980, 266; Zampetti 1980, no. 33; Huse 1986, 265; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 466; Humfrey 1995, 176; Cortesi Bosco 1996, 36; Humfrey 1997, 101–103





Portrait of a Young Man

c. 1530

oil on canvas, 98 x 111 (38 ⁷/₁₆ x 43 ¹¹/₁₆)

Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

THIS PICTURE IS ONE of the finest of a group of ambitiously composed portraits painted during Lotto's principal Venetian period, in the years following his return from Bergamo. The central work in the group is the 1527 *Andrea Odoni* (cat. 28), but other major examples include the *Man on a Terrace* (Cleveland Museum of Art), the *Man with a Golden Paw* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), and the *Portrait of a Lady as Lucretia* (cat. 38). All of these portraits share the characteristics of a broad (rather than vertical) format, three-quarter-length pose, and circumstantially described surroundings filled with objects that appear to carry a symbolical significance. In all these respects, Lotto's portraits differ from those painted by Titian in these years—although it should also be said that Lotto never worked to a formula, and even within the group there exists a great variety of compositional solution and human expression.

Apart from Coletti (*Lotto*, 1953), who suggested a surprisingly early date of c. 1515, critics have been more or less evenly divided about whether the portrait should be dated slightly before the *Odoni* or slightly after it. The latter is preferable, since the handling is perceptibly more precise and less painterly than the *Odoni*, and begins to approximate the *Lady as Lucretia*, which is datable on external grounds to 1533. A date of c. 1530 is proposed here for the *Young Man*.

The identity of the sitter is unknown. In his attempted reconstruction of Lotto's circle of friends, Puppi (1981) suggested one Alessandro Cittolini (born 1500), a young disciple of occult philosopher Giulio Camillo Delminio, both of whom with Lotto witnessed the will of the architect Sebastiano Serlio on 1 April 1528. While this identification cannot be ruled out, the evidence is simply insufficient to prove it; Cortesi Bosco (1987, I: 159) has shown Puppi's related proposal that the *Man with a Golden Paw* portrays Delminio is incorrect. According to an alternative, but also inconclusive, suggestion by Mascherpa (*Invito*, 1980), the *Young Man* may be a member of the Rovèr family of Treviso, since the portrait was in the collection of that family when it was rediscovered by Luigi Coletti in the 1920s, and Lotto had dealings with one Alvise da Rovèr in Treviso in 1544 (*Libro* 1969, 123).

As with the *Odoni* and *Lucina Brembati* (cat. 15), the various objects represented in the portrait—the horn and the lute in the left background; the dead bird hanging at top right; the book, the

lizard, and the scattered rose petals on the table—may be symbolic in purpose, alluding in some way to the personality of the sitter. In combination, these objects are presumed to comment on his particular character and situation, analogous to that provided by the separate covers of Lotto's earliest portraits (cats. 2–5). To date, only two detailed interpretations of the iconography have been proposed: by Galis (1977); and by Gentili (1981). According to Galis, the objects on the wall (lute, horn, dead bird) refer to the pleasures of music and the hunt; and that the sitter turns his back on them and is occupied with a book implies a decision to reject the frivolous pleasures of his youth in favor of a serious life of study. The flower petals serve as a warning against placing trust in objects of only transient beauty, and the reptile, identified as a chameleon, alludes to the sitter's resolve to transform his life. Gentili corrects a number of details in Galis' interpretation—the reptile is a lizard, and the large volume on the table is likely a mercantile ledger—but shares Galis' view of Lotto's repertory of symbols as essentially moralizing in function, and he goes even further in constructing a fictional biography for the sitter. Thus the young man is from a mercantile family, but has misspent his youth in the courtly pursuits of music and hunting, as well as love; his failure in the last is symbolized by the dead bird (signifying sexual frustration) and the lizard (a cold-bloodedness, signifying insensitivity to love). The portrait would then have been commissioned—perhaps by the sitter's father—to commemorate his return to good sense and to the profession of his family.

In the absence of certain information about the sitter, all this has gone too far. There is no necessity to infer from the visual evidence that the sitter has resolved to change his way of life; rather, the symbols may refer simply to the essentials of his character. As suggested by Lucco ("Schede," 1994) with reference to the later *Portrait of a Man* (cat. 42), the key may be the prominent rose petals, since as may be judged from a treatise by the eminent French physician André du Laurens (Andreas Laurentius) (1599), a cure for melancholy widely recognized throughout the sixteenth century was to scatter the petals of flowers, including roses, around the sufferer's room (Starobinski 1960, 42–44). It is possible to interpret this somberly dressed, pale-complexioned, apparently hypersensitive young man as a habitual melancholic, whose nature is like that

of a cold, dry lizard, and who prefers to occupy himself with a book—whatever its contents—than with the extrovert, social pleasures of the hunting horn or lute.

A number of *pentimenti* are clearly visible in the composite X-radiograph published by Valcanover (1981) and Nepi Scirè (in *Venezia* 1986).

P H

PROVENANCE: Count Eduardo di Rovèr, by the 1920s; acquired by the present owner, 1930

LITERATURE: Coletti 1930, 112–113; Suida 1932, 173; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 26, 81–82; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 25; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 128; Zampetti 1953, 112–113; Bianconi 1955, 58–59; Berenson 1955, 59; Moschini Marconi 1962, 131–132; Seidenberg 1964, 61; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 228; Mascherpa 1971, 58; Caroli 1975, 214; Mariani Canova 1975, 110; Galis 1977, 233–234, 423–429; Caroli 1980, 184; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 113, 136–137; Gentili 1981, 420–421; Puppi 1981, 398; Valcanover 1981, 316; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 32; Huse 1986, 278–279; Nepi Scirè in *Venezia* 1986, 122; Nepi Scirè in *Renaissance* 1988, 42; Humfrey 1997, 107–110

Portrait of a Goldsmith in Three Positions

c. 1530

oil on canvas, 52.1 x 79.1 (20 ½ x 31 ¼)

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE sitter from three different viewpoints makes this portrait highly unusual within Lotto's own work and within Italian Renaissance portraiture generally. Together with the approximately contemporary *Andrea Odoni, Portrait of a Young Man*, and *Portrait of a Lady as Lucretia* (cats. 28, 32, 38), the *Goldsmith* illustrates both the wide range of compositional solutions employed by Lotto in his portraits, and the broad social range of his sitters.

Although Lotto's authorship of the portrait was forgotten by the early seventeenth century, its unusual composition allows it to be traced back to three major princely collections. In 1627 it is listed, with no attribution, in the collection of Vincenzo II Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua: "Un quadro sopra la tela dipinto un ritratto del naturale d'un goioliere in trei faccie con cornice di noce" (A picture on canvas with the life-size portrait of a jeweler in three faces, with a nutwood frame) (Luzio 1913, 165–166). Soon afterward the portrait, attributed to Titian, is identified in a letter of 13 June 1631 from Daniel Nys, agent in Venice of Charles I of England, to Thomas Cary in London: "Three heads in one picture" (Sainsbury 1859, 336–337). It was then acquired by Charles I, and is listed in Abraham van der Doort's 1638–1640 catalogue of his collection at Whitehall Palace: "Picture another Picture conteyning 3 heades: One full faced and 2 Sidefaced houlding all 3 to a ring Case Being all 3 done by one Jewello'. In a Black waved Ebbone frame. Done by Tictian" (Millar 1960, 20). After the king's execution, the portrait was consigned in 1651 to one of the creditors, tailor David Murray (Millar 1970–1972, 300), who sold it to Don Alonso de Cárdenas, Spanish ambassador, who was acting for Philip IV (Loomie 1989, 261, 264). Subsequently, it found its way to the imperial collection in Vienna, where it is recorded in the Storffer catalogue of 1733, and attributed to Marten de Vos, and in the Mechel catalogue of 1783, attributed to Johann von Calcar. Despite the revival of the attribution to Titian in the Engerth catalogue of 1884, Morelli (1892) considered the portrait to be by an Italianizing painter from northern Europe. Crowe and Cavalcaselle had correctly reattributed it to Lotto in 1871, followed by Wickhoff (1896); and although lingering doubts led Berenson to omit it from his monograph of 1895, by the following year he had apparently come round to the view, never subsequently disputed, that the portrait was indeed by Lotto (see Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896). Since the Lotto exhibition of 1953

scholars have generally agreed that it dates from c. 1530—although some critics have preferred a slightly earlier dating, c. 1529 (Mariani Canova, Mascherpa), and others a slightly later one, c. 1530–1535 (Banti and Boschetto, Bianconi, Seidenberg). Points of stylistic comparison are provided by the Vienna *Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Thomas* of c. 1528–1530 (cat. 31), where the head of Thomas closely resembles that of the portrait, and by the main panel of the Saint Lucy altarpiece, completed in 1532, where a very similar head appears, with curly hair and beard.

The identity of the sitter is not known, nor is it clear why he is presented in three different views; but a clue is surely provided by the box placed prominently at the lower edge of the picture. Kerr-Lawson (1905) interpreted this object as a game of lottery, popular in the sixteenth century, and further proposed that it was introduced by the painter as a play on his own name, and hence that the picture should be seen as a self-portrait. This attractive proposal had the advantage of accounting both for the intimacy of the image and the unusual choice of a triple view, as if the artist were scrutinizing himself with the aid of a set of mirrors. Most critics up to the time of the Lotto exhibition of 1953 (Venturi, Della Pergola, Banti and Boschetto, Zampetti) accepted the self-portrait theory. Examination of the picture at the exhibition, however, led to the realization that the foreground object was not a gambling game, but a case of rings, making it clear that the sitter was not the painter but a goldsmith. Numerous entries in Lotto's account book demonstrate that he had a particular interest in goldsmith work and jewelry and had several goldsmiths among his closest friends. The most important of these was Bartolomeo Carpan, a craftsman originally from Treviso, who had a workshop in Venice on the Ruga del Sole. A number of critics (Bianconi, Mascherpa, Vertova, Fontana) have tentatively identified Carpan as the sitter. In favor of this identification is the intimacy of the presentation in relation to Lotto's other portraits of this period. Although the painter's association with Carpan is not definitely recorded before the 1540s, a document of 1532 (*Libro* 1969, 297) shows that Lotto knew their mutual friend Giovanni dal Saon by this date and provides some evidence that the artist was also already friendly with Carpan. As a variation of the Carpan theory, Grabski (1981) suggested that the portrait might represent Bartolomeo Carpan with



his brothers Antonio and Vettore, also goldsmiths. This suggestion remains unconvincing, since despite a certain difference in the treatment of the beards, the heads appear too similar even to represent brothers. Yet Grabski's further suggestion, that the triple viewpoint constitutes a rebus alluding to their native city (Treviso), lends additional weight to the identification of the sitter as Bartolomeo Carpan.

Two other possible reasons behind the triple presentation of the sitter have been discussed in detail by Vertova (1981). According to the first of these, the portrait would represent a contribution to the *paragone* debate on the relative merits of painting and sculpture (for which see Barasch 1985, 164–174). The parameters of this debate had been established by the ideas of Leonardo da Vinci, who while arguing that the art of painting was intrinsically better equipped to convey the colors and textures of nature, also found ways of countering the argument by sculptors that only a sculpture could show the same object from a variety of different viewpoints. In Venice, a practical demonstration had supposedly been provided by Giorgione, who according to Vasari painted a figure from behind, but with his front and side views visible to the spectator in the form of reflections, variously thrown by water, shining armor, and a mirror. Lotto's *Goldsmith*, however, does not include reflective surfaces, and it appears to owe less to any Giorgionesque essay in Leonardism than to Leonardo's own so-called *Cesare Borgia* drawing (Biblioteca Reale, Turin), which similarly shows the head in frontal, three-quarter profile, and full profile views. Traditionally dated 1502 because of its supposed connection with Cesare Borgia, this drawing has been authoritatively redated to the later 1490s by Pedretti (1975, 10–11); and it may well be, therefore, that Leonardo brought this or a closely related drawing with him on his documented visit to Venice in 1500. If so, it may have served as a model and inspiration not only for Lotto's *Goldsmith*, but also for a number of other Venetian compositions representing a group of three figures seen in waist-length and with their heads set at contrasting angles, such as Giorgione's *Three Ages of Man* of c. 1500–1505 (Palazzo Pitti, Florence) or Palma Vecchio's *Three Sisters* of c. 1520–1525 (Gemäldegalerie, Dresden).

But while taking full account of the Leonardesque background to Lotto's portrait, Vertova was disinclined to see the *paragone* debate as a motivating force behind its composition, and preferred to see the triple view as more practical in function. The portrait was already compared by Seidenberg (1964) with Van Dyck's portrait of *Charles I in Three Positions* of 1635 (Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II), which was sent to Bernini in Rome as a model for the carving of the king's bust; and while wishing to play down this particular analogy, Vertova suggested that Lotto's *Goldsmith* was painted to guide or at least to inspire a sculptor in the carving of a portrait bust. Vertova has pointed out that the eminent Florentine sculptor Jacopo Sansovino and an unnamed colleague arrived in Venice in 1527 as refugees from the Sack of Rome; and indeed, there is strong evidence to suppose that Lotto and Sansovino met

and became friends at this time. On the other hand, Vertova's argument that the painter provided designs for Sansovino's sculpture on other occasions, and in particular for the Medici Tabernacle's *Christ in Glory* of 1542 (Bargello, Florence), has been decisively refuted by Boucher (1991, 69, 332–333). It is also doubtful that a mere goldsmith, even though belonging to an aristocracy among artisans, could have aspired to commission a sculpted bust of himself, let alone from a sculptor of the reputation of Sansovino.

It may be then, after all, that the abstract idea of the *paragone*, rather than any more practical purpose, lies behind Lotto's composition. Although the sitter's case of rings implies that he specialized in small-scale jewelry, rather than large-scale goldsmith work involving the modeling of figures, his craft is clearly related to that of the sculptor, and Lotto may have meant to allude to it by employing the compositional idea based on Leonardo. At the same time, any allusion to the rivalry between painting and sculpture is made in the spirit of a private joke between colleagues and friends.

P H

PROVENANCE: Duke Vincenzo II Gonzaga of Mantua, by 1627; Charles I of England, 1631–1651; Philip IV of Spain; Austrian imperial collection, Vienna, by 1733

LITERATURE: Stoffer 1733, 3: 8; Mechel 1783, 25; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 530 n. 2; Engerth 1884, 360–361; Zimmerman 1888, pl. 18; Morelli 1892, 358; Morelli 1893, 277; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 436; Wickhoff 1896, 135; Kerr-Lawson 1905; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 427; Venturi 1929, 116; Della Pergola 1952, 187; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 86; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 46; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 126–128; Zampetti 1953, 140–141; Bianconi 1955, 60; Berenson 1956, 101; *Katalog* 1960, 72; Seidenberg 1964, 70–71; Mascherpa 1971, 100; Caroli 1975, 242; Mariani Canova 1975, 110; Galis 1977, 269–273, 429–435; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 114, 147; Grabski 1981, 385–387; Puppi 1981, 397; Vertova 1981; Fontana 1984, 360; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 164; Marani 1987, 43; *Die Gemäldegalerie* 1991, 78; Marani 1992, 35; Martin 1995, 59, 75; Humfrey 1997, 110–111

34

Saint Lucy at the Tomb of Saint Agatha

35

Saint Lucy before Paschasius and Saint Lucy Harnessed to Oxen

36

Teams of Oxen

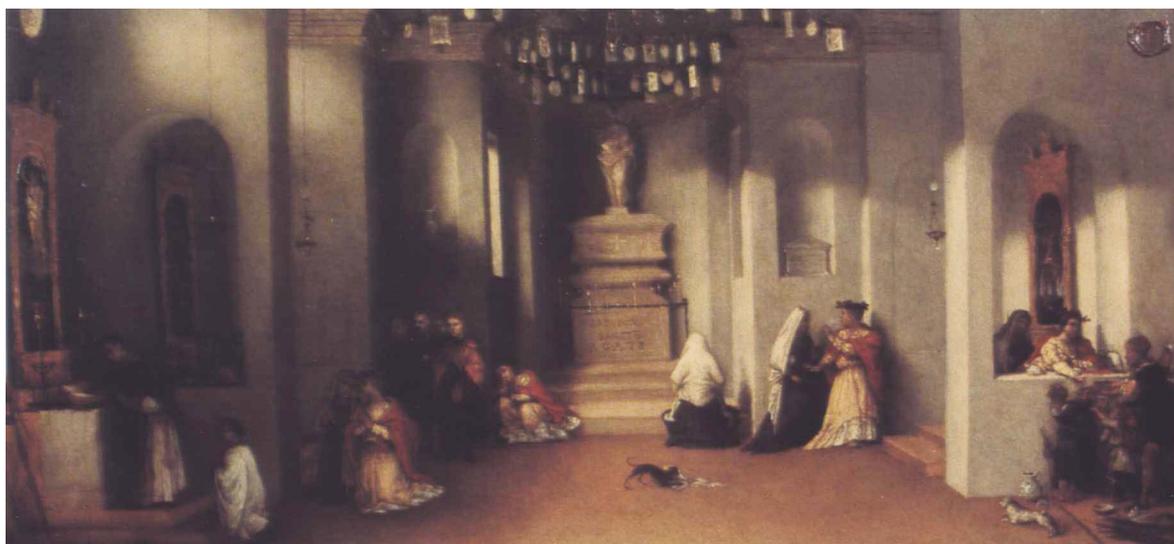
completed 1532
oil on three panels, 32 x 69 (12 ⁷/₁₆ x 27 ³/₁₆), each
inscribed, main panel: L. Lotus 1532
Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi

THE THREE PANELS CONSTITUTE the predella of a major altarpiece commissioned from Lotto by the Confraternity of Saint Lucy in Jesi in 1523, and completed in 1532. Like the predella scenes of the earlier Martinengo altarpiece (cats. 12–14), they reveal Lotto's talents as a painter of lively narrative scenes, here made all the more vivid by the play of light and shadow and by the expressive freedom of the brushwork.

According to the contract, the altarpiece was commissioned on 11 December 1523 by the priors and deputies of the confraternity, for its altar in the Franciscan Conventual church of San Floriano, Jesi (Annibaldi 1980). Lotto, at that time still living in Bergamo and halfway through the execution of the frescoes in the Oratorio Suardi at Trescore, made the long journey to the Marches, probably by way of Venice, to sign the contract. The artist agreed "to make and paint an altarpiece in wood with figures, as shown in the drawing on paper made by the same Master Lorenzo"; it was to be "better and more beautiful" than the altarpiece he had painted for the Confraternity of Buon Gesù in the same church (the *Entombment* of 1512, Pinacoteca Civica), and was to be completed within two years. When finished, he was to have it transported by sea at his own expense to Case Bruciate, a nearby landing stage on the Adriatic coast (present-day Marina di Montemarciano), hauled overland by ox cart to Jesi, and then installed above the altar. For all this, Lotto was to receive 220 ducats, in installments, beginning with a down payment of 50 ducats. For his part, Lotto appointed as his legal representatives two Bergamasque merchants, the brothers Balsarino and Giovanni Marchetti—patrons of the altarpiece of 1521 for Santo Spirito in Bergamo, and regular visitors to the Marches on business—and authorized them to receive payments from the confraternity officials in Jesi on his behalf.

Further documents published by Annibaldi illustrate the subsequent progress of the commission. On 22 April 1525 Giovanni Marchetti duly received an interim payment of 50 ducats; most critics (most recently Cortesi Bosco 1996, 16–17) interpret the document to mean that the painter returned to Jesi on that occasion, but such an interpretation is open to dispute. Distracted, perhaps, by the upheaval of his move from Bergamo to Venice at the end of the same year, Lotto failed to meet the deadline for completion of the work; and in 1528 the impatient and frustrated officers of the confraternity offered the commission to another painter, Giuliano Presutti of Fano. While creating still further delays, Lotto succeeded in retaining the commission for himself, and in February 1531 the officers must have been convinced of the imminent arrival of the altarpiece, as they sold a house to raise funds to pay for it. The work was completed, according to the inscription *L. Lotus 1532* on the main panel, in the following year; but it may not have been finally installed until 1533, the probable date of Lotto's departure from Venice for a prolonged sojourn in the Marches.

Despite the protracted period of execution, that Lotto's design for the altarpiece was approved at the 1523 signing of the contract indicates that the iconographical program must also have been settled at the outset. Unusual for the period, the main panel shows not a timeless group of saints, nor even a scene from the life of Christ or the Virgin Mary, but an episode in the life of Saint Lucy belonging to the same narrative sequence as the scenes in the predella (fig. 1). In depicting the story Lotto faithfully followed the account given in the celebrated compendium of saints' Lives known as the *Golden Legend*, compiled in the late thirteenth century by Jacobus da Voragine, and by the early sixteenth century widely available in Italian translation (see *The Golden Legend* 1969



cat. 34



cat. 35



cat. 36



fig. 1. Lotto, main panel of the *Saint Lucy altarpiece*, completed 1532, oil on panel. Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi

ed., 34–37). The painter had employed the same source for the succession of scenes from the *Life of Saint Barbara*, which he had probably painted earlier in the same year, 1523, on the walls of the Oratorio Suardi; and despite the differences of scale and function between the two works, a similar narrative technique is evident in his treatment of the lives of the two virgin martyrs.

The story of Lucy begins in the left predella panel, in which the future saint, daughter of a noble family of Syracuse, visits the shrine of Saint Agatha with her mother Euthicia, who for four years has been suffering from an incurable issue of blood. The two women kneel near an altar during the celebration of mass, during which the priest reads the passage from the gospel describing the miraculous cure by Jesus of the woman suffering from the same affliction as Euthicia. Euthicia prays at the shrine for a similar cure while Lucy, asleep, experiences a vision of Saint Agatha surrounded by angels. When she awakens, Lucy cures her mother, and begs to

be released from her promise to marry, so that she can give away her dowry to the poor. The story in this panel closes with the women distributing alms to beggars in rags.

Lotto sets the scene in a Renaissance church, the architectural spaces of which provide distinct areas for the successive events, much as do the various architectural structures in the scenes from the *Life of Saint Barbara* at Trescore. The simple bare walls of the church also provide a neutral foil for the highly evocative treatment of light. The account of Saint Lucy's life in the *Golden Legend* begins with the words "Lucy means light," and it is significant that the left side, depicting a moment before the miraculous healing, is deep in shadow, while the right, showing the beginning of the saint's ministry, is radiantly illuminated. The three altarpieces, complete with carved and gilded frames, represent respectively a *Resurrection*, a *Virgin and Child in Glory with Saints*, and a *Saint Christopher*. Saint Lucy, represented four times, is immediately

identifiable by her yellow robe, red cloak, and laurel crown.

The second scene is restricted to a narrow field on the left of the central predella panel, bounded by the green curtain. Lucy's fiancé, enraged at losing her dowry, has complained to the Roman consul Paschasius, who now questions Lucy about her religious beliefs and demands that she worship idols. After an angry altercation, Paschasius orders her to be removed to a brothel. The graceful arcade of the consul's palace, continued in the scene on the right and repeated in the main panel, bears a strong and hardly accidental similarity to that of the upper-story loggia in the courtyard of the Palazzo della Signoria in Jesi, which had very recently been built according to designs by Andrea Sansovino (1519–1525) (Mascherpa 1984).

Cortesi Bosco ("Polittico," 1984, 63–64) has convincingly explained the motif of a wheel, placed at the top of the green curtain, both as a reference to the rolling passage of time and as a way of leading the spectator's eye through the correct chronological sequence. Thus a similar wheel appears in the lower foreground of the next scene in the story, which is not, as one might have expected, the episode depicted to the right of the curtain, but the *Saint Lucy Seized by the Panders* in the large-scale, main panel of the altarpiece. In this scene, Paschasius summons the panders to "invite the crowd to have pleasure with this woman, and let them abuse her body until she dies; but when the panders tried to carry her off, the Holy Ghost made her so heavy that they were unable to move her." At the extreme right, partly cut by the frame, the disappointed fiancé assists the panders in their fruitless efforts.

The story then moves back to the predella, where the right-hand section of the central panel unites with the right panel, with its atmospheric townscape, to form a single extended scene. Paschasius, whose progressively slanting pose contrasts with the steadfast verticality of Lucy, furiously orders her to be dragged away by teams of oxen. Again the Holy Ghost (the white dove) intervenes on Lucy's behalf. The extension of this fourth scene across more than half the width of the entire predella, resulting in a drastic compression of the second scene (*Saint Lucy before Paschasius*) into a narrow field to its left, represents a highly original and unprecedentedly flexible approach to predella design. By thus creating space for the representation of no less than eight teams of powerful oxen, and by implying still more by the gap between the central and the right panel and by the cutting of the forms at the far right, Lotto gives eloquent expression to the physical weight of the dark forces pitted against the courageous and innocent young virgin.

A fourth predella-like panel, of identical dimensions, executed in a generically Lottesque style, and representing *The Attempted Burning of Saint Lucy at the Stake* (Museo Diocesano, Jesi; currently exhibited in the Pinacoteca Civica), has sometimes been regarded as a copy of the now lost part of the predella (see Dal Poggetto in *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981, 317). Cortesi Bosco ("Polittico," 1984) has rejected this theory, rightly arguing that the total width of the four panels is excessive in relation to the width of the main

panel, and pointing out that it would have been unusual and unsatisfactory for there to have been an even number of predella panels, with a caesura coinciding with the central axis. (In addition to these arguments, the episode of Saint Lucy at the stake represents yet another unsuccessful attempt to have her martyred, and iconographically it is not a necessary complement to the other scenes.) Cortesi Bosco has proposed that this fourth panel is a copy after an option that Lotto decided to reject. More probably, it was a late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century addition *ex novo*, made after 1761, when the church was rebuilt and the predella detached from the main panel and placed in the neighboring convent.

The drawing in black chalk on blue paper (private collection), corresponding to part of the left side of the *Saint Lucy Harnessed to Oxen*, has also been regarded as a copy after the predella, but was accepted as autograph and preparatory to the painting by Tietze and Tietze Conrat (1944, 185 no. 767), by Berenson (1956), and by Pouncey (1965, 12). The pen drawing (Musée du Louvre, Paris) corresponding to the composition of the main panel that has been generally accepted as a late sixteenth-century copy after Lotto instead may record the painter's original design, presented to his patrons in 1523 at the time of signing the contract (Pouncey 1965, 22–23; Cortesi Bosco 1996, 18).

P H

PROVENANCE: Church of San Floriano, Jesi; ceded to the Comune, 1870

LITERATURE: Ricci 1834, 2: 91–92; Müндler 1855–1858, in "Travel Diaries" 1985, 250–251; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 531; Tschudi 1879, 294–296; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 232–233; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 222; Annibaldi 1900, 207; Abbruzzetti 1902, 65–70; Annibaldi 1905, 15–23; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 428; Serra 1921, 34; Venturi 1929, 74–76; Pallucchini 1944, xxxii; Zampetti 1950, 36–37; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 41–42, 85; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 18; *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1953, 50–51; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 139–141; Zampetti 1953, 52; Bianconi 1955, 63–64; Berenson 1956, 80–81; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 310; Mascherpa 1971, 66; Caroli 1975, 230; Mariani Canova 1975, 203–206; Annibaldi Jr 1980; Caroli 1980, 208; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 54–55, 153–155; Cordaro 1981; Dal Poggetto 1981, 317–321; Cortesi Bosco, "Polittico," 1984; Mascherpa 1984; Muraro 1984, 164; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 20, 429; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 364–366; Zampetti 1989, 231; Cortesi Bosco 1996; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996, 23–26, 110–119; Humfrey 1997, 115–118

Holy Family with Saint Catherine of Alexandria

1533

oil on canvas, 81.5 x 115.3 (32 1/16 x 45 3/8)
signed and dated: Laurentius Lotus 1533
Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti, Bergamo

THIS IS THE EARLIEST and finest of several known versions of this composition. Quite exceptional among devotional images of this type, it is not the Virgin but Joseph who occupies the center and performs the principal action. In its subject and half-length format the picture is related to Lotto's early *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* of c. 1506 (Alte Pinakothek, Munich); there is no mystic marriage, however, and Catherine merely prays. The motif of the sleeping Christ child has a humanly touching and naturalistic aspect; it also implies a premonition of Christ's later Passion and death. Beyond this, Goffen (1978) has interpreted the foreground ledge as a symbolic altar table, the white cloth as a eucharistic corporal, and the fig tree on the left as a reference to Christ and the Virgin as the new Adam and Eve. Hull (1993) has related Joseph's gesture to an episode in the fourteenth-century *Revelations of Saint Bridget of Sweden*, in which the Virgin revealed the genitals of the newborn Christ child to the shepherds at the manger, so that they could be sure that he was indeed the male Savior foretold by the prophets.

Lotto seems to have left Venice early in 1533, the date inscribed on the picture, for a seven-year stay in the Marches. It is possible that he painted it before leaving, contemporaneously with the *Portrait of a Lady as Lucretia* (cat. 38), in which the sitter's pointing gesture is very like that of Joseph; more probably, however, Lotto executed the work on arrival in the Marches, perhaps at Monte San Giusto, where he went to paint the monumental *Crucifixion* still in place in Santa Maria in Telusiano. Stylistically, the *Holy Family* suggests a recent interest in the art of Paris Bordone, as is particularly apparent in the restless wriggings of the drapery folds, and in the use of a dissonant pink sheen on Catherine's olive-green dress. At the same time, the Bordonese rigidity of the gestures, and the new emphasis on plane and silhouette, separate the *Holy Family*, like the *Crucifixion*, from Lotto's previous, more Titianesque phase, and mark the beginning of the style he was to practice for the remainder of the decade in the Marches.

The artist and his patrons evidently had a particular attachment to the composition, since at least six other versions are known: in a private collection in Bergamo, published by Zampetti (1956); in another private collection, published by Caroli (1988); in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Kress Collection; Shapley 1968,

163); in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg (Fomichova 1992, 128); (formerly?) in Palazzo Rospigliosi, Rome; and formerly in the Osmitz Collection, Bratislava. The last two were mentioned by Berenson (1956), but have never apparently been published. The version published by Zampetti is inscribed with a signature and the date 1529, and so at first it appeared to be the prototype of the series; but the inscription has turned out to be false, and the work is probably a replica, perhaps executed in the mid-1530s by Lotto in collaboration with his assistant Durante Nobili. The version published by Caroli is also signed; but although the author dated it slightly earlier, c. 1529, its simpler color scheme, reduction of detail, and broader handling all imply a much later date, probably, as pointed out by Lucco ("Schede," 1994, 356 n. 29), in the 1540s. The Hermitage and Houston versions probably also date from this period, and are even weaker in quality. The motif of the sleeping Child is also repeated in three more known variants, comprising a simple Madonna and child: in the Ringling Museum, Sarasota; in the Museo Civico, Vicenza (Sgarbi 1981); and in a private collection (Caroli 1993). Two of these may be linked to a reference in Lotto's account book for 19 January 1547 to "doi quadri del putin che dorme" (*Libro* 1969, 105); one of them, valued at 25 scudi, was then sold in Rome on Lotto's behalf by the Bergamasque merchant Francesco Petrucci in 1551 (*Libro* 1969, 68).

A picture by Lotto showing the full composition is recorded at least twice in the context of seventeenth-century collecting: in the will of Roberto Canonici, Ferrara, in 1632 (Campori 1870, 119); and in the possession of Ambrogio Bembo, Venice, in 1663 (Luzio 1913, 311–312). Given the number of extant versions, it is impossible to know whether either, both, or neither of these records refer to the Accademia Carrara picture, the first definite mention of which dates from 1829, when it was acquired in Milan by Count Guglielmo Lochis.



PROVENANCE: Professor Vincenzo Moschetti, Milan; acquired from him by Count Guglielmo Lochis, Bergamo, 1829; Lochis Bequest to the present owner, 1866

LITERATURE: Müндler 1855–1858, in "Travel Diaries" 1985, 74, 162; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 523; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 428–430; Frizzoni 1907; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 419; Longhi 1929, 1968 ed., 117; Venturi 1929, 85–86; *Kunstschätze der Lombardei* 1948, 272; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 87; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 143; Zampetti 1953, 87; Bianconi 1955, 64; Berenson 1956, 84; Zampetti 1956, 185–186; Caroli 1975, 244; Mariani Canova 1975, 209; Goffen 1978, 36–39; Caroli 1980; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 156; Zampetti in *I Pittori Bergamaschi* 1980, 44–45; Zampetti 1980, no. 36; Sgarbi 1981, 232–233; Hull 1993, 96

Portrait of a Lady as Lucretia

c. 1533

oil on canvas, 95.9 x 110.5 (37³/₄ x 43¹/₂)

The Trustees of the National Gallery, London (bought with contributions from the Benson Family and the NACF)

A MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE of a female portrait by Lotto, the *Lady as Lucretia* is considerably more ambitious in scale and composition than the earlier *Portrait of a Lady* painted in Treviso (cat. 4) and *Lucina Brembati* painted in Bergamo (cat. 15). The drawing held in the sitter's left hand represents the Roman heroine Lucretia, who having been raped by (Sextus Tarquinius) Tarquin, committed suicide with a dagger, preferring death to dishonor for herself and her husband. The inscription on the paper below—*NEC VLLA IMPVDICA LVCRETIAE EXEMPLO VIVET*—is a quotation from the standard account of the episode by Livy (1: 58), although a more direct source may have been Boccaccio's *De Mulieribus Claris* (C, 46). Literally translatable as "Nor shall any unchaste woman live through the example of Lucretia," the words do not mean "that Lucretia's example will ensure that henceforth no woman shall survive the loss of her honor; they mean that no woman who in the future wishes to go on living after she has lost her honor will be able to appeal to Lucretia's case as a precedent" (Sparrow 1969, 78). The explicit way in which the sitter draws attention to the two sheets of paper suggests first that she wishes to uphold the highest standards of marital virtue, and second that her own name is Lucrezia. A further reference to female chastity is also provided by the sprig of wallflower on the table.

The portrait was first attributed to Lotto by Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1871), when it was in the Holford collection in London. Previously it had been attributed to Giorgione; as a Giorgione it can be traced back to the collection of the Venetian patrician family of Pesaro in the late eighteenth century. On the reasonable assumption both that the sitter married into the Pesaro family and that her name was Lucrezia, Jaffé (1971) identified her as Lucrezia, daughter of Francesco Valier, who married Benedetto Francesco Giuseppe Pesaro da San Benetto on 19 January 1533. If the identification is correct, as it seems to be, this date would provide a terminus post quem for the picture; that the sitter's hair is tied up under her cap indicates she is a married woman, and no longer a bride. The portrait is unlikely to have been painted long after the wedding, because after making a will on 28 January 1533 (Ludwig 1905, 131), Lotto is no longer definitely recorded in Venice for another seven years. He seems to have left for the Marches some time in the spring of 1533. Before Jaffé's identification of the sitter, the portrait was gen-

erally dated slightly earlier, to c. 1527–1530; but a dating on external grounds to the early months of 1533 remains perfectly consistent with the evidence both of style and of costume.

Quite different interpretations have been proposed by Ost (1981) and Fletcher (1996). On the basis of an inscription ("Portrait einer venezianischen grande puttana") reputedly on an old copy of the portrait (present location unknown; formerly Liechtenstein Collection, Vienna), Ost denied the notion that the sitter is a respectable member of the Venetian nobility, and asserted instead that she is a courtesan. He argued that the evidence of the undated inscription is supported by the yellow color of her veil and by the way in which the rich necklace is stuffed into her bodice. He also interprets the quotation of the Lucretia story as ironical. In other words, just as the husband in the Hermitage double-portrait (cat. 25) contrasts his conduct with that of the squirrel, so the courtesan declares that although her virtue is lost, she has no intention of imitating the example of Lucretia. It is inherently unlikely, however, that the portrait would have been devised to express so cynical a message. The apparent immodesty of the placing of the necklace, and of the disarray of the veil, which should properly be tucked into the bodice, may be an indication of the sitter's readiness to imitate the ancient heroine by baring her innocent white chest to a potential dagger. While not identifying the sitter as a courtesan, Fletcher too has rejected the identification with Lucrezia Valier on the grounds that she shows insufficient aristocratic reserve, and because of the allegedly provincial character of her dress. Fletcher obliquely refers to an episode of 1541 (*Libro* 1969, 213; Humfrey 1997, 179), when the daughter of the painter's cousin and landlord, Mario d'Armano, became pregnant out of wedlock, but seems to have confused this young woman, called Armana, both with her sister Lucrezia, a nun in the convent of San Bernardo, and with their mother, Mario's wife, whose name is not recorded. In any case, Fletcher's assertion that the sitter was a relative of the painter is unsubstantiated. Further, a dating of the portrait to the 1540s is too late, on the grounds both of style and of costume.

Adhering, like the *Andrea Odoni* and the *Portrait of a Young Man* (cats. 28, 32), to the broad format introduced by Lotto into Venetian portraiture, the *Lady as Lucretia* also represents a com-



paratively rare local example of a straightforward female portrait, as opposed to the ideal, erotic, and anonymous type so popular in early sixteenth-century Venice. Both innovations may be a product of Lotto's experience in provincial Bergamo, where the broad format developed naturally in response to a demand for double-portraits (cats. 21, 25), and where there were fewer social inhibitions about female portraits (cat. 15) than in the metropolis. The sitter's somewhat stilted pose lacks the elegant naturalness of Titian's portraits, and the emphasis on diagonals gives the composition an inherent instability; on the other hand, these features are well calculated to draw the spectator's attention to the underlying idea of the portrait, and to the implied historical parallel. Similarly, the color range, involving a dissonant combination of orange and crimson, lacks the chromatic harmony of Titian's palette; but Lotto would have been well aware of his own ability to offer his Venetian patrons pictorial effects that were all the more striking for being so distinctive. Without letting it detract from the expressiveness of the sitter's gesture, and especially from her engagement of the spectator's attention with her frank outward gaze, the painter does full justice to the material magnificence of her orange and green striped silk dress with luxurious fur trim, and to the display of jewelry on her breast. As is clear from numerous references in his account book, Lotto had a particular personal interest in jewelry, both as a dealer and as a collector; and three of his closest friends, the Carpan brothers, were goldsmiths. Here the exceedingly sumptuous ornament consists of a large gemstone, a ruby and a pendant pearl, framed by a pair of gold putti and cornucopie, and suspended from several strands of gold chain (Hackenbroch 1979).

X-rays and infrared photography have revealed that Lotto made a number of changes during the execution of the painting. As is just perceptible to the naked eye, the drawing of Lucretia was originally of a different composition and color; the Latin inscription was slightly altered; and at one stage both the tablecloth and the background showed a pattern of stripes.

The results of a technical examination of the portrait, and of other pictures by Lotto in the National Gallery, London, will be published by Jill Dunkerton, Nicholas Penny, and Ashok Roy in a forthcoming issue of the *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*.

PROVENANCE: Ca' Pesaro, Venice, before 1797; Abate Celotti, Venice, until c. 1828; James Irvine; Sir James Carnegie, Kinnaird Castle, Scotland, by 1854; R. S. Holford, London, 1855; by inheritance to G. L. Holford; his sale, Christie's, 15 July 1927; acquired by the National Gallery, London, 1927

LITERATURE: Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 159–160, 532; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 238–239; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 210–212; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 430; Venturi 1929, 87; Pallucchini 1944, xxxii; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 40, 83; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 141; Bianconi 1955, 60; Berenson 1956, 99; Seidenberg 1964, 64–65; Sparrow 1969, 78–80; Jaffé 1971, 696–701; Caroli 1975, 222; Gould 1975, 137–138; Mariani Canova 1975, 114; Hackenbroch 1979, 24–25; Caroli 1980, 24; Ost 1981, 131–136; Cortesi Bosco 1987, 1: 127–128; Humfrey 1995, 179; Fletcher 1996, 135; Humfrey 1997, 110

39

Adoration of the Shepherds

c. 1534

oil on canvas, 147 x 166 (57⁷/₈ x 65³/₈)

signed: LOTTUS

Musei Civici d'Arte e Storia, Brescia

A DEVOTIONAL MASTERPIECE probably dating from Lotto's second period in the Marches in the 1530s, this vision of the harmonious and affectionate coexistence of natural and supernatural in the stable at Bethlehem successfully communicates the painter's own deep religious sensibility. To judge from its size and shape, and from the refinement of its handling, the work was painted for the walls of a private palace, where it could be admired for its pictorial beauty as well as for its expression of religious devotion. The family resemblance between the physiognomically particularized shepherds has often been noted, and it is reasonable to assume that they constitute donor portraits of brothers. In keeping with their roles in the gospel narrative, they wear coarse rustic tunics; but these are unlaced, and clearly visible beneath them are the elegant black clothing of noblemen, with leggings of quilted silk.

Although signed, the picture is not dated, and some confusion exists in the literature about its provenance. Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895) tentatively equated it with a work by Lotto described by Ridolfi (1648, 1914 ed., I: 144) as "the Virgin adoring the child" (la Vergine, che adora il bambino) in the church of the Gesù (Padri Riformati) in Treviso. Rigamonti (1767, 19) and Tassi (1793, 128) had attributed it to Bavarian painter Carl Loth, implying that Ridolfi had confused the names of the two painters. This cannot have been the case, as Loth was only sixteen when Ridolfi was writing. In the 1776 edition of his book, Rigamonti reattributed the picture to Fiumicelli, under whose name it entered the Brera in Milan in 1811 (Rigamonti 1767, 24). The *Nativity* from Treviso cannot now be traced, and although it cannot be excluded that it was, after all, by Lotto, it is unlikely to be the Brescia picture, which Count Paolo Tosio acquired on the Florentine art market in 1824. According to another tradition, apparently also based on Ridolfi and current in nineteenth-century Brescia, the shepherds constituted portraits of two brothers of the Gussoni family, presumably the Venetian patrician family of that name (Brognoli 1826). But none of three pictures mentioned by Ridolfi (1648, 1914 ed., 145), in the possession of "Signor Cavalier Gussoni," represented a *Nativity*. In any case, according to Giovanni Querci della Rovere, the dealer from whom Tosio acquired the picture, it was painted for the "counts Baglioni" of Perugia (Panazza 1958). Although this information, too, is not necessarily reliable (especially since the Baglione did not hold the

rank of count in the sixteenth century), it is at least consistent both with the choice of subject and the likely date.

Like the Recanati *Annunciation* (cat. 40), which it indeed closely resembles stylistically, the *Adoration* has almost without exception been dated by modern criticism to c. 1527–1528. This tradition began with Berenson (1896), who grouped both pictures with the *Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Thomas* (cat. 31), and who assumed a Venetian provenance. Béguin (1981) proposed the much later date of c. 1535–1539 for the *Adoration*, pointing out that the figure of the child is virtually identical to that in the *Holy Family with Angels* (cat. 43), and comparing the pattern made by the angels' wings with that of the *Virgin and Child with Angels* (formerly Palazzo Comunale, Osimo). Although neither of these last two works is securely dated, both are traditionally placed in the mid- to late 1530s; and in the case of the latter, this dating is in part confirmed by the close proximity of Osimo to Ancona, in the general area of which Lotto was working in these years. Béguin's dating of the *Adoration* is perhaps slightly too late, and a date of c. 1534 may be preferred; yet her observations may be accepted as essentially correct, and they are consistent with the arguments presented elsewhere in this catalogue for redating the Recanati *Annunciation* to Lotto's second Marchigian period. Despite a similar, characteristically Lottesque tenderness of religious sentiment between the Vienna *Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Thomas* and the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, the former is more obviously Venetian in the preoccupation with effects of space, air, and texture, while the latter shows a greater emphasis on bold, simple shapes and silhouettes. The limbs, especially the head and neck of the Virgin, are elongated in the *Adoration*, and the draperies fall in broader, more unbroken planes. Similar effects may be observed in other works of the mid-1530s, such as the Osimo *Virgin and Child with Angels*, or the *Visitation* (Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi), or the *Virgin and Child with Saints Anne, Joseph, and Jerome* of 1534 (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence).

A redating of the *Adoration* to c. 1534 may also lend greater credence to a Baglione provenance, since although Perugia and the March of Ancona are separated by the high mountains of the Apennines, they are not far distant from one another, and in the sixteenth century both formed part of the papal states. Perugia



in this period suffered from constant civil unrest, with different branches of the Baglione family usually taking different sides in the power struggle. It is difficult to say which pair of Baglione brothers is most likely to have crossed the mountains (on a pilgrimage to Loreto?), and to have commissioned a relatively large and ambitious painting from Lotto. To judge from the apparent ages of the shepherds, the most plausible candidates are the sons of Grifonetto Baglione: Braccio II (1495–1559), who with papal support won temporary ascendancy in Perugia in the years 1533–1534, and his younger brother Sforza (see the family tree in Baglioni 1964, 462–463). In keeping with the Perugian connection is the choice of a subject that emphasizes Joseph and the Holy Family. The most venerated relic in Perugia, housed in a chapel dedicated to Joseph in the cathedral, was the Holy Ring, supposedly the very object used for the marriage of the Virgin; it may well be significant, therefore, that Lotto's Virgin displays a ring on the fourth finger of her right hand, which is unusual in a Nativity scene.

Probably while he was in Venice in the late 1520s, Lotto painted an earlier version of the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, now lost but recorded in a mid-seventeenth-century engraving by Jeremias Falck (Béguin 1981, 101–102; Humfrey 1997, 98–100). Like the closely related subject of the *Nativity* of 1521 (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena), this earlier *Adoration* was a nocturne, with the principal source of illumination miraculously provided by the tiny figure of the Christ child at the center of the composition. It was probably this work, with its particular emphasis on the bucolic character of the stable, which was shortly to inspire the various nocturnal Nativity scenes by Lotto's colleague in Venice, Savoldo. By contrast the Brescia c. 1534 *Adoration*, which Savoldo is unlikely to have seen, is not a true nocturne but seems to take place in evening twilight. Outside the stable the evening sky is still suffused with the magical radiance of the angelic glory, while inside the Holy Family unites with animals, angels, and shepherds to adore the newborn Christ child. The intimate communion of spirit between such different orders of worshiper is emphasized by the placing of all their heads within a narrow band in the upper part of the composition; and also by the gestures of the angels, who by placing their hands on the shepherds' shoulders, encourage them to present their gift of a lamb to the Child. Implicit in the way that the child reaches out for the lamb, a biblical symbol of an innocent sacrificial victim, is the idea of Christ embracing his own future Passion. At the same time, the mood of the picture, although hushed and meditative, is by no means sad or elegiac, but rather is deeply expressive of the emotions of wonder and tenderness appropriate to its subject.

PROVENANCE: Possibly Baglione family, Perugia; acquired by Count Paolo Tosio from Giovanni Querci della Rovere, Florence, 1824

LITERATURE: Brognoli 1826, 216; Müндler 1855–1858, in "Travel Diaries" 1985, 85, 203; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 552; Berenson 1896, 223–224; Nicodemi 1927, 40; Longhi 1929, 117; Venturi 1929, 71; *Pitture in Brescia* 1946, 118–119; *Kunstschatze der Lombardei* 1948, 271–272; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 33–35, 82; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 46; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 108; Zampetti 1953, 116–117; Bianconi 1955, 59; Berenson 1956, 72; Panazza 1958, 135; Mascherpa 1971, 90; Panazza and Boselli 1974, 58; Caroli 1975, 218; Mariani Canova 1975, 111; Caroli 1980, 188; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 146; Béguin 1981, 102; Caroli in *Giovanni Gerolamo Savoldo* 1990, 287–288; Matthew 1994, 167; Humfrey 1997, 131–135

Annunciation

c. 1534–1535

oil on canvas, 166 x 114 (65 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 44 $\frac{7}{8}$)

signed, on the Virgin's prie-dieu: L. Lotus

Pinacoteca Civica, Recanati

WITH THE REDISCOVERY OF Lotto after centuries of neglect, the Recanati *Annunciation* has become one of his best-loved works, above all for its refreshingly original and unrhetoical treatment of a very familiar theme. The holy figures are represented in a way that is touchingly direct, almost naive, and the scene is lent a further immediacy by the detailed description of the Virgin's bedchamber and garden beyond and by the quasi-humorous prominence of the frightened cat.

The picture is first recorded in 1601, in the oratory of the Confraternity of Santa Maria sopra Mercanti, Recanati, by local historian G. F. Angelita ("di cui [Lotto] è anco un'Annonciata molto bella nell'Oratorio della Confraternità de' mercanti"). This confraternity, the members of which included leading citizens and merchants, was one of the oldest and most prestigious in the town (Fini 1978, 327–331), and it is reasonably assumed that the confraternity commissioned the *Annunciation* as the principal altarpiece of the oratory. The present building dates from the seventeenth century, but it replaces an earlier one on the same site, first occupied by the confraternity in 1533 (Vogel 1859, I: 276), and it is arguable on stylistic grounds that the painting too dates from about the time of the confraternity's transfer to a new building.

Ever since Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895) first suggested a date of c. 1527–1528, critics have shown a rare unanimity in dating it to the late 1520s. Berenson gave no particular reason for his suggestion, except that he found close stylistic similarities between the *Annunciation* and the *Virgin and Child with Saints Catherine of Alexandria and Thomas* (cat. 31), which he also dated to this phase. In time it has come to be generally accepted that the *Annunciation* was one of two altarpieces mentioned by Lotto in his 12 August 1527 letter to the Consorzio della Misericordia, as having just been dispatched, together with their frames, from Venice to the Marches (*Libro* 1969, 276); however, more plausible candidates for this pair of altarpieces are two that he painted around this time for churches in Jesi (both now in the local Pinacoteca Civica): the *Virgin and Child with Saints Joseph and Jerome*, which is inscribed 1526; and a now dismembered *Annunciation* triptych, the outer wings of which represent the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin Annunciate. Significantly, neither of the Jesi altarpieces consists of a single, unified field, and so both would absolutely have required their frames to be sent with them.

While the Jesi *Annunciation* wings are not dated, they are always, and justifiably, seen as close both to the Jesi *Virgin and Child with Saints Joseph and Jerome*, and to their counterparts in the Ponteranica polyptych of c. 1525, because of the similar effects of phosphorescent light glowing against a mysterious, voluminous darkness (see most recently Cortesi Bosco 1996, 24–26). Although superficial similarities exist between the Jesi *Annunciation* and the Recanati *Annunciation* (including the characteristic use of an icy blue for the angel's robe), the rhythms of the former are more fluent, and the folds of the draperies thicker and more billowing. The somewhat more rigid gestures and draperies of the Recanati *Annunciation* have much more in common with those Lotto used in the mid-1530s: in the *Virgin and Child with Saints Anne, Joseph, and Jerome* (1534; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), the *Virgin and Child with Saints Andrew and Jerome* (1535; private collection, Rome), the *Virgin and Child with Angels* (Palazzo Comunale, Osimo), and the *Visitation* (Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi). The last two, although undated, are universally accepted as belonging to Lotto's second Marchigian period. In all these the physiognomy of the Virgin is relatively narrow, and the rather pale shadows, light color range, and smooth surfaces are distinctly different from Lotto's more self-consciously Venetianizing works of the late 1520s.

If the Recanati *Annunciation* dates from soon after Lotto's return to the Marches in 1533, it is contemporary with the *Crucifixion* in Monte San Giusto and the *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian* (cat. 41), painted for the basilica of nearby Loreto. A central element of the decoration of the basilica—serving, in effect, as its high altarpiece—is Andrea Sansovino's marble relief representing the *Annunciation* (1521) on the west face of the shrine of the Holy House. As Matthew ("Lotto," 1988, 291–292, 308–309 n. 17), has suggested, Lotto seems to have taken certain elements from Sansovino in his own rendering of the subject, including the placing of the Virgin in front of a curtained bed, and the presence of a cat. But the motif of the bed, which identifies the room as the *thalamus Virginis* (the Virgin's nuptial chamber) and with the detailed display of still-life objects on the wall beside it, strongly suggests the inspiration of Netherlandish painting. This source of inspiration seems confirmed by Lotto's composition, which, most unusual in Italian painting, shows the angel approaching the Virgin from



behind, rather than the left foreground, an arrangement that was not uncommon in northern Europe. Indeed there are good reasons to suppose that a particularly beautiful Netherlandish example, Dirk Bouts' *Annunciation* of c. 1450 (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles), together with the pentptych to which it originally belonged, had been in Venice since soon after it was painted (Humfrey 1993, 159). If so, Bouts' painting may have been a compositional source for two other Venetian altarpieces that slightly precede Lotto's: Titian's c. 1520–1523 *Annunciation* for the Cathedral of Treviso (in situ); and Savoldo's c. 1530 *Annunciation* for San Domenico in Venice (Museo Civico, Pordenone). But compared especially with Titian's version, where the scene is set in a majestic, classicizing loggia, decorated with pagan reliefs and paved with marble, Lotto's rendering represents a deliberate reversion to the modest, domestic interior evoked by Bouts. The garden beyond the open doorway, although entirely Italian in its vegetation, is characterized by an orderly neatness quite different from the extensive, rolling landscape portrayed by Titian. And, as was more common in Annunciations of the previous century, this motif clearly alludes to the *hortus conclusus* (enclosed garden) of the Virgin, symbolizing her purity.

The interest displayed by Lotto in Netherlandish sources, and perhaps also in earlier Venetian sources such as Carpaccio's *Life of the Virgin* cycle for the Scuola degli Albanesi (c. 1503–1506), probably reflects the artist's desire to recount biblical stories in a way that would be simple, direct, humane, and free of conventional rhetoric. However one interprets Lotto's attitude toward the religious crisis of his age, it seems clear that he was personally sympathetic toward those currents that favored an institutional reform of the church, and a more intense personal commitment of the individual toward God; and there are also sound visual arguments for supposing that he was responsible for designing the woodcut frontispiece for the Italian translation of the Bible by Antonio Brucioli, published in 1532 (Romano 1976). It is evident from the Recanati *Annunciation* that Lotto, who did not know Latin, had read the gospel texts carefully and had reflected on their relevance for his own life and for the lives of his public. Thus, in keeping with the words of Luke 1: 29, he shows the Virgin troubled by the words of her celestial visitor, and pondering their meaning. But the angel, too, with his awkwardly constrained pose, appears equally diffident, and as if unaccustomed to being sent on so momentous a mission. Finally, the central episode of the frightened cat, while aptly serving as a symbol of evil put to flight by the coming incarnation (Barolsky 1978), adds a further touch of gentle wit and everyday realism to the scene, in a way that lends concrete credibility to the miracle that is about to unfold.

PROVENANCE: Oratory of the Confraternity of Santa Maria sopra Mercanti, Recanati by 1601; transferred to the present owner, 1953

LITERATURE: Angelita 1601, 34v; Calcagni 1711, 297–298; Gianuzzi 1894, 41; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 221–222; Venturi 1929, 67; Pallucchini 1944, XXXI; *Mostra* 1950, 120–121; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 32–33, 82; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 17; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 110; Zampetti 1953, 118–119; Bianconi 1955, 59; Berenson 1956, 71–72; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 308–310; Caroli 1975, 216; Mariani Canova 1975, 110–111; Barolsky 1978, 184; Caroli 1980, 186; *Lorenzo Lotto a Loreto e Recanati* 1980, 62–63; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 112–113, 141; Zampetti 1980, no. 29; Cova 1981, 163–167; *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981, 310–311; *Genius of Venice* 1983, 178; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 291–292, 410–411; Zampetti 1989, 230; Cortesi Bosco 1996, 35–36; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996, 24–25, 27–28, 92–99; Humfrey 1997, 1–2, 126–127

Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian

c. 1535

oil on canvas, 275 x 232 (108 ¼ x 91 ⅝)

signed: Laurentii Loti pictoris opus

Delegazione Pontificia per Il Santuario della Santa Casa, Loreto

THIS UNUSUALLY DRAMATIC image of a group of saints, in which a colossal Saint Christopher dwarfs his two companions, represents one of several altarpieces that Lotto executed in the Marches in the 1530s. It was also the first work that he painted for the Basilica of Loreto, the holy city where he finally was to settle and die as a lay brother twenty years later.

The circumstances of the commission are obscure. When Vasari recorded it in 1568, it hung in a chapel on the right of the entrance to the basilica. Then in 1583, in response to a request to the cardinal protector of Loreto from Vincenzo Casali, governor of the Holy House, the picture was placed above the altar of the second chapel on the right, where it remained for the next three centuries (Grimaldi and Sordi 1988). Its original position was probably, therefore, the neighboring chapel, the first on the right; consistent with this is the strong illumination from the right in the painting. That the picture was the property of the Holy House in 1583 suggests that one of Casali's predecessors may well have originally commissioned it. Certainly, all three saints have intimate connections with the cult of the Madonna of Loreto, one of whose principal roles was as a protector against the plague, and with the shrine of the Holy House as a goal for pilgrims in search of a miraculous cure from disease (Matthew, "Lotto," 1988; Grimaldi 1987; Grimaldi 1993, 211–257, 340). Roch, who draws the spectator's attention to the bubo on his upper thigh, and Sebastian, transfixed with arrows symbolizing the wounds caused by the pestilence, were two of the most popular plague saints of the later medieval period, and Christopher was frequently invoked as a protector against sudden death. That Christopher is ferrying the Christ child across a stretch of sea instead of the more usual river serves to reinforce the connection with Loreto, which is situated on a ridge overlooking the Adriatic.

Almost certainly connected with the curative and prophylactic powers of the saints is the curious motif in the central foreground: a paper scroll, inscribed with an eye and the painter's signature, wrapped round a snake. As with many of the pseudohieroglyphics that Lotto designed for the intarsias of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, the precise meaning remains elusive, but the general one seems clear enough. The snake is an obvious symbol of evil. The eye, as in several of the intarsia covers, including the *Creation*,

the *Sacrifice of Abraham*, and the *Moses Given the Tablets of the Law*, alludes to the all-seeing eye of God. In combination, then, the motif signifies the power of God over evil, and perhaps over the evil of plague in particular.

The c. 1535 date first proposed by Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895) has won general acceptance. Some critics, notably Banti and Boschetto (1953) and Mariani Canova (1975), have preferred a slightly earlier dating, c. 1532–1534, perhaps partly because of the stylistic resemblance of the picture to the Monte San Giusto *Crucifixion*. Thus both works differ from those of the preceding Venetian period in showing a calculated tension between effects on the one hand of space and volume, evident in the *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian*, in the energetically twisting poses, and on the other of flat pattern, emphasized by the ornamental flourishes of Christopher's red cloak and trailing loincloth, and by the almost abstract quality of the shapes created by the contrasting areas of light and dark. But in 1981 the date of 1531 inscribed on the *Crucifixion* was revealed to be spurious, and there is good circumstantial evidence to suppose that Lotto painted it in 1533–1534, on his return to the Marches from Venice. The execution of the *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian* might then have followed on directly, and indeed, in style and color range it is also very close to the recently rediscovered *Virgin and Child with Saints Andrew and Jerome* (private collection, Rome), signed and dated 1535. Perhaps it was the donor of the *Crucifixion*, papal vice legate to the Marches, Niccolò Bonafede, who introduced Lotto to his colleagues at Loreto. Or perhaps since Lotto's reputation was already well established, his prospective patrons at Loreto knew his triptych of 1531 (surviving fragments in Berlin, Staatliche Museen) for Castelplanio, near Jesi, which includes the figures of Christopher and Sebastian in poses very similar to those later adopted for the Loreto altarpiece.

More closely related to the Loreto *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian* than to the Castelplanio version is a drawing (Museo Civico, Pesaro) showing the figure in full length. Giardini (*Dipinti* 1993) interprets it as a copy after Lotto's altarpiece; Lucco ("Schede," 1994) interprets it as a preparatory work preceding the painting by perhaps two to three years.



PROVENANCE: Basilica of Santa Maria di Loreto

LITERATURE: Vasari 1568, 1976 ed., 554; Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 146; Scannelli 1657, 240; Bellori 1672, 1976 ed., 603; Tassi 1793, 130; Ricci 1834, 2: 93–94; Mündler 1855–1858, in “Travel Diaries” 1985, 229; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 527 n. 4; Tschudi 1879, 288; Gianuizzi 1894, 43; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 250; Burckhardt 1898, 47; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 424; Serra 1920, 24–25; Serra 1921, 40; Venturi 1929, 84–85; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 86–87; *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1953, 52; Bianconi 1955, 63; Berenson 1956, 80; Mariani Canova 1975, 114; Caroli 1980, 270; *Lorenzo Lotto a Loreto e Recanati* 1980, 64–65; Cova 1981, 165–166; Varese 1981, 326–327; *Ancona e le Marche* 1982, 284; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, 180; Muraro 1984, 163–164; Grimaldi and Sordi 1988, 27–28, 89–90, 326–327; Matthew, “Lotto,” 1988, 369–373, 290–296; Zampetti 1989, 232; Giardini in *Dipinti e Disegni* 1993, 284–285; Arcangeli 1994, 103; Lucco, “Schede,” 1994, 349–351; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996, 31–32, 128–138; Humfrey 1997, 124

Portrait of a Man

c. 1535

oil on canvas, 118 x 105 (46 ⁷/₁₆ x 41 ⁵/₁₆)

Galleria Borghese, Rome

THIS DEEPLY MELANCHOLY portrait, with its direct and forceful communication of the sitter's state of physical or spiritual pain, was probably painted during Lotto's second period of residence in the Marches in the mid-1530s. As in several of the Venetian portraits (cats. 28, 32, 38), the sitter is next to a table, on which rest symbolic accessories. At the same time, with its austere sobriety of effect, the picture already looks forward to the portraits that Lotto painted in Venice and Treviso in the 1540s (cats. 46, 47).

The portrait was first attributed to Lotto by Mündler (1869); previously, as far back as a Borghese inventory of 1790, it was thought to be by Pordenone. Della Pergola (1952) equated it with a portrait by Lotto listed in the 1682 inventory of the Roman noblewoman Olimpia Aldobrandini—"un quadro di tela ritratto di Lorenzo Lotti alto palmi incirca di mano del medesimo" (a portrait on canvas by Lorenzo Lotto, about four palms high, by the hand of the same)—and then posited that it had formerly belonged to Olimpia's uncle, Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, and thus it constituted a self-portrait. Although the self-portrait theory was accepted by some scholars, notably Zampetti (1953; *Lotto*, 1983), most others remained skeptical. It has been variously pointed out that the rings on the sitter's fingers identify him as a married man; that Lotto would have been age fifty by 1530, rather older than the sitter appears to be; that the phrase "del medesimo" probably merely signifies that the portrait in the Aldobrandini inventory was by Lotto, not of him; and that there would be no particular reason for Lotto to include in the background of a self-portrait a scene of Saint George slaying the dragon. To all these objections may be added one other: four Roman palms were the equivalent of about 90 centimeters (35 inches)—considerably less, in other words, than the height of this portrait.

Of the two other main attempts to identify the sitter, that by Puppi (1981), suggesting the occult philosopher Giulio Camillo Delminio, a member of Lotto's circle in Venice, is purely speculative and not based on any further evidence. The more recent proposal by Ricciardi (1989) that the sitter is Mercurio Bua, an Albanian *condottiere* in the service of the Venetian government, is much more detailed, and gained authoritative acceptance by Béguin (1993). Ricciardi based her identification on the following three main considerations: as a soldier and a native of the Balkans, Bua would

have had a natural devotion to the oriental warrior Saint George; the city in the background resembles Treviso, where Bua founded a chapel dedicated to Saint George in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, and where he was buried some time after 1541; and from 1524 Bua was a widower, a circumstance that would explain his black dress, sorrowful mien, and the wearing of a matching pair of rings on the little finger of his left hand. The plucked flowers and the tiny skull on the table—an obvious *memento mori*—would constitute further references to his bereavement. But none of these arguments is conclusive (Lucco, *Siècle*, 1994; Humfrey 1997). The resemblance of the background to Treviso is only generic; numerous contemporary portraits show that the wearing of pairs of rings by no means denotes the wearer as widowed; and if really a soldier by profession, the sitter is much more likely to have been portrayed in military dress, or at least, with the air of one accustomed to command. Further, according to Ricciardi's own research, Bua was born c. 1478, and so was even older than Lotto; and the style of the portrait suggests a date of c. 1535—by which time Lotto had left for the Marches—rather than the usually accepted date of c. 1529–1530.

The earlier dating was first suggested by Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895), on the basis of the close resemblance of the vignette representing Saint George to the similar one in the foreground landscape of the *Saint Nicholas in Glory* of 1527–1529 (cat. 29). In composition, however, the portrait differs from Lotto's portraits of his first Venetian period (cats. 28, 32, 33, 38). It has more vertical proportions and the earlier diagonal and spatially dynamic poses have been replaced by a more upright one that places a greater emphasis on silhouette. The light-keyed landscape background likewise seems closer to Lotto's mid-1530s landscapes than to those of the Venetian period; and as Béguin (1993) observed, a particularly apt stylistic comparison is with the *Saints Christopher, Roch, and Sebastian* of c. 1535 (cat. 41). Realizing that this date did not square with her acceptance of Ricciardi's identification of the sitter as Mercurio Bua, Béguin did not exclude the possibility that the portrait was painted five or six years later, after Lotto's return from the Marches to Venice. But this dating seems too late, especially if it is accepted that the much more softly executed *Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat* (cat. 44) corresponds to a 1541 reference in the *Libro di spese diverse*.



The still unidentified sitter is likely a patron that Lotto met in Jesi, Fermo, Loreto, Recanati, or another of the Marchigian cities in which he worked between about 1533 and 1539. As in the *Saint Nicholas in Glory* (cat. 29), the battling Saint George was probably included as a reference to the patron's baptismal name. The distant townscape refers to the city of Silena in Libya, whose inhabitants, according to *The Golden Legend* (1969 ed., 233–235), George saved from destruction by slaying the monster that had long been terrorizing them. The nature of the sitter's sorrow remains unexplained, but as in the earlier *Portrait of a Man* (cat. 32), there is no necessary reference to a specific event in his life; as Lucco (1994) suggested, he may simply be portrayed as a man habitually suffering from melancholic temperament, in which case the gesture of his left hand indicates his spleen, commonly believed to be the seat of the melancholy humor, and as in the other portrait, rose petals scattered on his table help soothe his spirit, especially when troubled by thoughts of mortality.

P H

PROVENANCE: First recorded in the present collection in 1790

LITERATURE: Mündler 1869, 58; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 528; Morelli 1892, 235; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 237–238; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 13; Venturi 1929, 76–77, 115; Della Pergola 1952; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 84; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 12, 46; Zampetti 1953, 136; Bianconi 1955, 61; Della Pergola 1955, 117–118; Berenson 1956, 100; Seidenberg 1964, 68–69; Pope-Hennessy 1966, 228; Freedberg 1971, 315; Caroli 1975, 226–227; Mariani Canova 1975, 113; Caroli 1980, 198; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 144; Gentili 1981, 422–423; Puppi 1981, 398; Zampetti, *Genius*, 1983, 178–179; Ricciardi 1989; Béguin in *Le Siècle de Titien* 1993, 497–498; Lucco, *Siècle*, 1994, 45–46; Humfrey 1997, 2: 136–137

The Holy Family with Angels

c. 1536–1537

oil on canvas, 150 x 237 (59 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 93 $\frac{3}{16}$)

Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris

THIS EXTENDED HOLY FAMILY comprises, besides the Virgin and the Christ child, Joseph (at the left), the child John the Baptist, his mother Elizabeth (the Virgin's elder sister), and his father Zacharias (at the right). Although all of these made at least brief appearances in the Gospels, pious legends elaborating on their biographies were highly popular in the later medieval and Renaissance periods. A particularly well-read source for the biography of the child Baptist was the early fourteenth-century *Vite dei Santi Padri* by the Dominican Fra Domenico Cavalca (Lavin 1955), whose account includes two episodes of particular relevance for the present picture. In the first, the six-month-old Baptist went with his parents to visit the newborn Christ child in the stable at Bethlehem; and in the second, the two children met in the desert, where the Baptist was already living as a hermit under the protection of Archangel Uriel, during the Flight into Egypt. Lotto represents neither episode literally, and his picture may be interpreted rather as a variation on the traditional Venetian pictorial type representing the Virgin and child with saints in a landscape (cat. 31), with alterations and additions inspired by the apocryphal legends of the childhood of Christ and the Baptist. It is accordingly difficult to know whether or not the prominent, central figure in the trio of angels is specifically meant to represent Archangel Uriel. As in the Brescia *Adoration* (cat. 39), the Child reaches up to receive a symbol of his future Passion, in this case the rustic cross held between the Baptist and Elizabeth; but again, this tragic reference is not allowed to disturb the mood of idyllic pastoral serenity.

The picture is undated, but without exception critics have accepted the dating to c. 1535–1539 proposed on stylistic grounds by Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895). The recent documentary confirmation of the date of the Ancona altarpiece as 1538–1539, with its very similar Virgin, also serves to confirm the correctness of Berenson's dating; at the same time, the Louvre picture seems slightly earlier than the Ancona altarpiece, and still close to the Brescia *Adoration* of c. 1534 (cat. 39), with its similarly undulating draperies, its similar patterning of the angels' wings, and its near-identical figure of the Child. The picture must, then, have been painted in the Marches, presumably for a local patron; but for some reason it remained in Lotto's possession, because he lists it in his account book, together with five other pictures left with

Jacopo Sansovino in Venice to be sold, at the time of his final departure from the city in June 1549 ("un quadro grande de la Madona, Jesu Christo, santa Helisabet, Zacharia e Joan Baptista con Josep e tre angeli"; *Libro* 1969, 100). Sansovino failed to sell any of the pictures, and he later forwarded them to Lotto in Ancona. Lotto then included the picture in the auction of his works held in the Loggia dei Mercanti, Ancona, in August 1550; but again, it remained unsold (*Libro* 1969, 128). It has sometimes been argued that this unsold work should be identified with the evidently later and weaker version of the same composition still at the Palazzo Apostolico in Loreto, on the seemingly plausible grounds that Lotto must then have left it to the religious community there after his death. But as pointed out by Mascherpa (*Invito*, 1980), Lotto specifies in his references to both of the unsuccessful sales that the picture contained three angels, whereas in the Loreto version there are only two. Presumably, therefore, Lotto took the Louvre version with him to Loreto, but finally did manage to sell it, as he had done in the case of six other pictures sent to Rome in December 1551 (*Libro* 1969, 162); and then, before parting with the original, he made a second version for the members of the religious community. Nothing more is heard of the Louvre picture until 1662, when it was included as a work by Dosso Dossi in the famous sale by the dealer Everhard Jabach to the French Crown (Brejon de Lavergnée 1987). The attribution to Dosso was maintained by Félibien (1672) and other French writers until 1849, when it was correctly recognized as a Lotto by Villot.

P H

LITERATURE: Félibien 1672, I: 69; Lépicicé 1752–1754, 2: 86; Villot 1849, I: no. 525; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 532; Engerand 1889, 62–63; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 281–283; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 429; Hautecoeur 1926, 2: no. 1351; Longhi 1929, 1968 ed., 117; Venturi 1929, 87–89; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 88; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 143; Bianconi 1955, 64; Berenson 1956, 86–87; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 310; Caroli 1975, 246; Mariani Canova 1975, 116; Constans 1976, 167 n. 30; *Lorenzo Lotto a Loreto e Recanati* 1980, 70; Caroli 1980, 216; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 135, 165; Béguin 1981, 102; *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981, 448; Brejon de Lavergnée 1987, 171; Béguin 1993, 496–497; Humfrey 1997, 135–136



Portrait of a Man with a Felt Hat

1541 (?)

oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 57.8 x 46.4 (22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{4}$)

Piero Corsini, Inc., New York

THIS ACUTELY CHARACTERIZED and sensitively painted portrait has only recently reemerged and nothing is known of its previous history. The unpretentious costume and large felt hat imply that the sitter is of relatively modest social rank, a servant perhaps, or someone employed on the land, such as a farmer or estate manager. Similarly, the constrained pose and diffident facial expression imply a person ill at ease with the unaccustomed business of having his portrait painted. In the first of only two published references to the work, Moro (1994) accepts the obviously correct attribution to Lotto, but unconvincingly identifies the sitter as the same person as the goldsmith of c. 1530 (cat. 33). Pignatti (1996), by contrast, sees the portrait as a late work of c. 1550, and compares it with the *Fra Gregorio Belo* of 1547 (cat. 50). But a slightly earlier dating may be suggested here since the muted color range, the somewhat streaky treatment of the flesh, and the quick delineation of the hair and beard with the tip of the brush all have

close stylistic parallels in portraits such as the *Febo da Brescia* 1543–1544 (cat. 46), and particularly the *Portrait of a Gentleman with Gloves* (cat. 45), identifiable as Liberale da Pinedel, painted in Treviso in 1543. For various reasons, none of the hitherto unidentified portraits mentioned in Lotto's account book during the second period in Treviso can be identified with the *Man with a Felt Hat*; the very unusual use of a paper support suggests, however, that the portrait may well be identical with one of eight "life-size heads, colored in oil on paper," which Lotto painted in Venice in March 1541 for Ottavio da Macerata (*Libro* 1969, 221), a customer whom he presumably met during his previous period in the Marches. The account book does not say who these eight heads represented.

P H

LITERATURE: Christie's 1991, lot 129; Moro 1994, 15, 20; Pignatti 1996, 82, 85



Portrait of a Gentleman with Gloves

1543 (?)

oil on canvas, 90 x 75 (35 ⁷/₁₆ x 29 ¹/₂)

signed, upper left corner: L. Loto

Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

CLOSELY RELATED IN STYLE and format to the *Febo da Brescia* of 1543–1544 (cat. 46), this work has always been regarded as one of the finest of Lotto's portraits for its subtly nuanced expression of the sitter's face, and in the quality of the execution, at once bold and delicate. Scholars generally agree that this picture, like *Febo*, dates from the 1540s, and probably from the second Trevigian period (1542–1545). It presumably corresponds to one of several not certainly identified portraits mentioned in Lotto's account book for these years. Although Malaguzzi Valeri (1908) left open the question of the sitter's identity, he is credited for identifying the sitter as one Liberale da Pinedel, whose portrait Lotto painted in 1543 (*Libro* 1969, 120–121, 247). Ricciardi (1993) has recently lent considerable weight to this suggestion, by pointing out that in the late sixteenth century there existed marriage ties among the family of Pinedel and those of *Febo da Brescia* and *Laura da Pola* (cat. 47), hence concluding that these connections would account both for the common provenance of all the three portraits (see also Dezuanni 1996). To these observations may be added that in his account book Lotto specified the portrait of Pinedel was of life size ("di naturale"), for which he received 20 ducats (*Libro* 1969, 120). By contrast, the only other two serious candidates for the present picture, the portraits of Macello Framberti of Mantua (1543), and of Ludovico Avolante of Treviso (1544), were probably of a smaller, waist-length format, since the painter received only 15 ducats for each of them (*Libro* 1969, 134, 122). (It is true that he also received a total of 30 ducats for the "di naturale" portraits of *Febo da Brescia* and *Laura da Pola*, but in this instance he complained that he had been underpaid.)

Lotto undertook the portrait of Pinedel in February 1543, soon after his arrival in Treviso, and completed it in June of the same year. (The starting date of February 1542 given in the *Libro* [1969, 120] cannot be correct, since Lotto did not move to Treviso until October of that year, and in his itemization of his expenses "Per l'Arte," the painter records the acquisition of the canvas and stretcher for the portrait in March 1543.) As shown by Ricciardi (1993, 317–320), Pinedel's family was originally from San Stefano di Pinidello near Ceneda, but had settled in Treviso in the fourteenth century. Pinedel was born in 1495 and died shortly before 1548; in 1543, therefore, he would have been aged forty-seven or forty-

eight. Although Berenson (*Lotto*, 1895) called the sitter of the present portrait a man whose "skin has the texture of old age," his beard is still golden red.

The Pinedel family was originally employed as barrel-makers, but by the mid-sixteenth century it was closely associated with the legal profession, and in 1593 it was admitted to the ranks of the local nobility. As a rising member of Trevigian society, Pinedel is portrayed wearing an expensive, although somber costume, with the few but telling accessories of a gentleman: gold chain, heavy gold ring, embroidered white handkerchief, and gloves.

Even more than in the *Febo da Brescia*, the compositional formula resembles that evolved by Titian for his own aristocratic portraits, as in the *Young Englishman* (Palazzo Pitti, Florence) of about the same date, and Lotto has entirely discarded the strong colors and emblematic allusions of his earlier portraits. The sitter exudes nothing of the self-confident optimism characteristic of Titian's portraits. With his tense, slightly stooping pose, and his sensitive, introspective face, he seems prey, like Lotto himself in these years, to a mood of deep anxiety and self-doubt.

P H

PROVENANCE: Count Castellane Harrach, Turin, by 1856; acquired by the present owner from Baslini, Milan, 1859

LITERATURE: Mündler 1855–1858, in "Travel Diaries" 1985, 180; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 529; Bampo 1886, 171; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 275, 320–321; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 212; Michel 1896; Biscaro 1901, 152; Ricci 1907, 219; Malaguzzi Valeri 1908, 103–104; Venturi 1929, 104–105; *Exhibition of Italian Art* 1930, no. 106; Coletti 1930; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 91; Zampetti 1953, 164; Nicco Fasola 1954, 144; Bianconi 1955, 67; Berenson 1956, 118; Seidenberg 1964, 74; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 315; Caroli 1975, 262; Mariani Canova 1975, 116, 118; Caroli 1980, 262; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 171; Chiappini di Sorio 1981, 329; Humfrey 1990, 154; Lucco in *Pinacoteca di Brera* 1990, 163–165; Ricciardi 1993, 320; Dezuanni 1996, 77–80; Humfrey 1997, 145



46
Febo da Brescia

1543–1544
oil on canvas, 82 x 78 (32 ¼ x 30 ¾)
signed, lower left corner: Laurent. Loto. p.
Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

47
Laura da Pola

1543–1544
oil on canvas, 90 x 75 (35 ¾ x 29 ½)
signed, lower right corner: Laurent. Loto
Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

TWO OF LOTTO'S PICTORIALY most sophisticated works of his late period, these portraits were convincingly identified by Berenson (1895, 273–274) with a pair commissioned from Lotto in Treviso in April 1543, as recorded in the artist's account book (*Libro* 1969, 56–57): "In Treviso circa el principio de April del 43 misser Febbo da Bressa in Treviso die dar per dui quadri de retrati grandi de naturale meze figure cioè la sua propria effigie et quella dela donna sua madona Laura da Puola" (In Treviso, around the beginning of April 1543, I undertake for Mr. Febo da Brescia two portraits in half-length and of life size, depicting himself and his lady Laura da Pola). A series of payments amounting to 30 ducats followed, together with a gift to the painter from an obviously satisfied patron of "a pair of golden peacocks" in May 1544. Lotto was disgruntled, and noted that for the time he had spent on the portraits he should rightfully have been paid at least 40 ducats. The slightly lesser height of the *Febo*, and the greater closeness of the head to the frame, suggest that the canvas has been trimmed at the upper edge.

The sitters' families, originally from Brescia and Pola respectively, had settled in Treviso in the fourteenth century, and by the early fifteenth were counted among the wealthiest in the city. Febo (or Deifebo) Bettignoli da Bressa was born in 1503 and died violently in 1547, perhaps in battle. Laura Pola, much younger than her husband, was born in 1524 and died in 1596 (Dezuanni 1996). A tombstone commemorating Febo and the couple's two sons was placed in the family chapel in the now demolished church of Santa Chiara in Treviso (Schulz 1983, 38).

Although as members of the provincial nobility the luxuriously dressed sitters belonged to the same social class as Lotto's principal Bergamasque patrons, such as the Brembati (cat. 15), the Cassotti (cats. 21, 25), or the Bonghi (cat. 22), the painter endows

the Trevigian couple with a more markedly aristocratic air—a greater elegance of deportment and a greater degree of psychological reserve. Paradoxically, much more than in the elaborately detailed portraits that he painted in Venice (cats. 28, 32, 38), Lotto has adopted a format and approach close to those customarily employed by Titian for his own high-ranking sitters: vertical field; planar poses; relatively neutral background; restriction of the accessories to a few, but telling symbols of status; and a limited palette and emphasis on tonal modulation rather than bright, contrasting colors. As in the earlier Cassotti double-portrait (cat. 21), and in contrast with Titian, Lotto represents his sitters seated, and provides a hint, in the background curtains and Laura's prie-dieu, of a domestic environment. Characteristic of this phase of the painter's development is bold brushwork, especially evident in the dabs of paint that evoke the ostrich feathers of Laura's fan, and the highlights on the embroidery on her shoulders and cap. Despite their aloof dignity, the sitters convey the sense of thoughtful inner life that was so central to Lotto's practice as a portrait painter. Febo in particular is in the grip of an introspective melancholy.

Laura's death in 1596 was followed closely by that of her grandson and only remaining direct heir, and the portraits passed to the family of her brother rather than to the family of her husband. They are probably identical, therefore, with a pair recorded by Federici in Palazzo Pola, Treviso, in 1803. Since Federici believed the *Febo da Brescia* to represent a "doctor," the portrait may further be identified with the "doctor" earlier seen in the palace by Ridolfi (1648) (Lucco 1990, 168). The Palazzo Pola, and probably the portraits, remained in the family until the death of the last male heir in 1841 (Dezuanni 1996).

PROVENANCE: Inventory of Laura da Pola, Treviso, 1595; Antiope Spilimbergo (widow of Laura's brother, Paolo), 1596; probably remaining in Palazzo Pola, Treviso, until 1841; Count Castellane Harrach, Turin, by 1856; acquired by the Pinacoteca di Brera from Baslini, Milan, 1859

LITERATURE: Ridolfi 1648, 1914 ed., 144; Tassi 1793, 128; Federici 1803, 2: 6; Mündler 1855–1858, in "Travel Diaries" 1985, 180; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 528–529; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 274–275, 321; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 212; Ricci 1907, 222; Malaguzzi Valeri 1908, 104–105; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 425–426; Venturi 1929, 100–104; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 47, 90; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 15; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 168–169; Zampetti 1953, 167–169; Bianconi 1955, 67; Berenson 1956, 118; Seidenberg 1964, 190; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 315; Caroli 1975, 228–231; Mariani Canova 1975, 116, 118; Caroli 1980; Gargan in *Lorenzo Lotto a Treviso* 1980, 21; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 178; Zampetti, *Genius*, 1983, 182; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 39; Humfrey 1990, 151–153; Lucco in *Pinacoteca di Brera* 1990, 165–168; Humfrey 1997, 145







48

Saint Jerome

1544 (?)

oil on canvas, 53 x 42 (20 ⁷/₈ x 16 ¹/₁₆)

Società Arti Doria Pamphilj, Rome

PROBABLY IDENTIFIABLE with a picture commissioned in April 1544, this *Saint Jerome* constitutes one of four versions of the subject painted by Lotto during or directly after his second period in Treviso (1542–1545). Of approximately the same size as the version for Bernardo de' Rossi painted in the same city nearly forty years earlier (cat. 6), the present picture vividly illustrates both the extent of Lotto's stylistic development over the intervening period, and the essential continuity of his approach to a subject that was highly congenial to his artistic and religious temperament. Compared with the 1506 version, and with 1509, c. 1513–1515, and 1515 versions (cats. 8, 10, 11), this picture is executed more broadly and atmospherically, with a drastic simplification of foreground details and background landscape. But even more than in the *Saint Jerome* of c. 1513–1515 (cat. 10), the active pose serves to communicate the passionate intensity with which he contemplates the crucifix. Naked, and with his arms raised, it is as if he is imitating his crucified Savior in both body and spirit.

Previously bearing a curious attribution to Annibale Carracci, the picture was first attributed to Lotto by Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1871), who pointed out that another version of the same composition, larger and on panel, exists in the Prado Museum, Madrid. Both of them clearly dating from Lotto's late career, the two paintings have been associated in varying ways with the four Saint Jeromes recorded in Lotto's account book between 1544 and 1546. The first, commissioned in April 1544 and now lost, is irrelevant in the present context, since the saint was shown accompanied by a donor portrait of Girolamo Mocenigo (*Libro* 1969, 90–91). The second, also commissioned in April 1544 (“uno de santo Hieronimo a l'heremo in penitentia”) was one of a pair, with a *Saint John the Baptist in the Desert*, painted for Niccolò da Mula. The pair was sent to the patron in Venice in July 1545, but Da Mula was unwilling to pay Lotto's 25-ducat fee, so in May 1546 the painter sold that *Saint Jerome* to Giovanni Battista Erizzo for 14 ¹/₂ ducats (*Libro* 1969, 152–153, 96–97, 88–89). Lotto also agreed to paint a substitute for Da Mula, presumably another version of the same composition (“Et li refeci un altro in loco del primo”; *Libro* 1969, 152). The fourth *Saint Jerome* (“un quadro de san Hieronimo in penitentia a l'hermo”) was undertaken for Lotto's friend Vincenzo Frizier at the special price of 8 ducats in 1546, soon after the painter's return from Treviso to Venice (*Libro* 1969, 182).

Noting that Lotto refers to the two versions painted for Da Mula as “quadretti,” whereas the Prado picture is relatively large (99 x 90 centimeters), Giammarioli and Di Mambro (1983) suggested that the last must correspond to Frizier's *Saint Jerome*. Much less convincingly, however, they proposed that Da Mula's original was the Bucharest picture (which, following Mariani Canova, they dated to this period), and its replacement the present picture. Aikema (1984) similarly identified the Prado picture with the one of Frizier, but suggested that the Doria version was painted afterward, also for Frizier, as a smaller, undocumented variant. In 1992, yet a third version of the composition, on canvas and even smaller than the present picture, appeared on the London art market, and in publishing this new version, Aikema (1993) changed his mind about the Doria picture, which he decided was the one originally painted for Da Mula in 1544–1545. According to Aikema, the new, smaller variant would then be the replacement for Da Mula, and the Prado version, for Frizier, becomes the last of the series.

Although ultimate proof would depend on the reemergence of the lost pendant to Da Mula's *Saint Jerome*, the *Saint John the Baptist in the Desert*, this latest interpretation is probably correct. Da Mula's picture, unlike that in the Prado, was a canvas (*Libro* 1969, 4), and the newly discovered, smaller variant may be a cheaper substitute for the present picture. The Da Mula commission almost certainly came about through Andrea Renier, Venetian *podestà* of Treviso, since in January 1544 Lotto had painted for him a small picture (now lost) of his name saint Andrew (*Libro* 1969, 4), and Da Mula was Renier's brother-in-law (*Libro* 1969, 152). Giovanni Battista Erizzo, who acquired the picture after its rejection by Da Mula, is the Venetian senator and collector (1522–1586) who soon afterward commissioned Jacopo Bassano's *Last Supper* (Galleria Borghese, Rome); Aikema (1993, 1996) has provided evidence that Erizzo and Frizier were members of a circle who shared a common sympathy for the religious ideals of evangelism and a common taste for the art of Lotto and Bassano.

P H

LITERATURE: Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 525; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 278; Venturi 1929, 105, 116; Banti and Boschetto 1953; Bianconi 1955, 66; Berenson 1956, 121–122; Mariani Canova 1975, 119; Giammarioli and Di Mambro 1983; Aikema 1984, 344, 347; Aikema 1993; Aikema 1996, 69

49 Pietà

1545

oil on canvas, 185 x 150 (72 13/16 x 59 1/16)

signed, lower right: Laurentio Loto

Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan

THE SOMBER MOOD OF this altarpiece, appropriate to its tragic subject, also reflects the artist's unhappiness during his second period of residence in Treviso (1542–1545). The most important surviving example of a number of works he is known to have painted for churches in and around Treviso in these years, the *Pietà* is clearly identifiable as the “paletta” (small altarpiece), recorded in the artist's account book for February 1545 as having been commissioned by

the prioress of the Dominican nunnery of San Paolo: “una Pietà, la Vergine tramortita in brazo de san Joane et Jesù Christo morto nel gremio de la matre, et dua anzoleti da capo, e da piedi, sustenar el nostro Signor” (a *Pietà*, with the Virgin swooning in the arms of Saint John, the dead Christ in his mother's lap, and two angels supporting Our Lord, one at his head and the other at his feet) (*Libro* 1969, 154–155). The commission was obtained for the artist by “reverendo mastro in theologia mastro Vincentio” of the Dominican convent of San Nicolò in Treviso, and Lotto received his final payment in July 1545. On 11 August a carpenter was paid for the frame (now lost) and boards to support the construction at the back. Despite a small supplementary payment on 16 November not recorded in the account book (*Lorenzo Lotto a Treviso* 1980, 22 n. 21), his total fee of little more than 16 ducats reflects the rather low public esteem in which his art was then held at least in Venice and the Veneto.

The church of San Paolo, destroyed after the suppression of the nunnery in 1810, had three chapels at the east end; the *Pietà* was placed in the chapel to the left of the high altar (Rigamonti 1767). In the eighteenth century the chapel was dedicated to the “Beata Vergine della Pietà,” and the subject of Lotto's picture would have been highly appropriate to such a dedication. Although there is evidence to suppose that in the sixteenth century the chapel was dedicated to the Holy Sacrament (Matthew 1993), Lotto's iconography, emphasizing the body of Christ, would have been no less appropriate.

Even more than in Lotto's earlier versions of the Lamentation theme, painted in 1512 for San Floriano, Jesi (fig. 1), and about 1521 for Sant' Alessandro in Colonna, Bergamo, the *Pietà* is characterized by a mood of profound melancholy, expressed both by the anguished facial expressions and by the encircling darkness. Tragic emotion is powerfully communicated by the relieflike composition, which in a manner curiously reminiscent of Botticelli's *Pietà* (Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan), a work that Lotto could have seen thirty years earlier in Florence, presses the figures close to the picture plane in defiance of naturalistic logic. The painter may have been responding to one of the most important examples of central Italian Mannerism seen in Venice, Francesco Salviati's similarly relieflike *Lamentation over the Dead Christ* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan), painted



fig. 1. Lotto, *Entombment*, 1511–1512, oil on panel. Pinacoteca Civica, Jesi



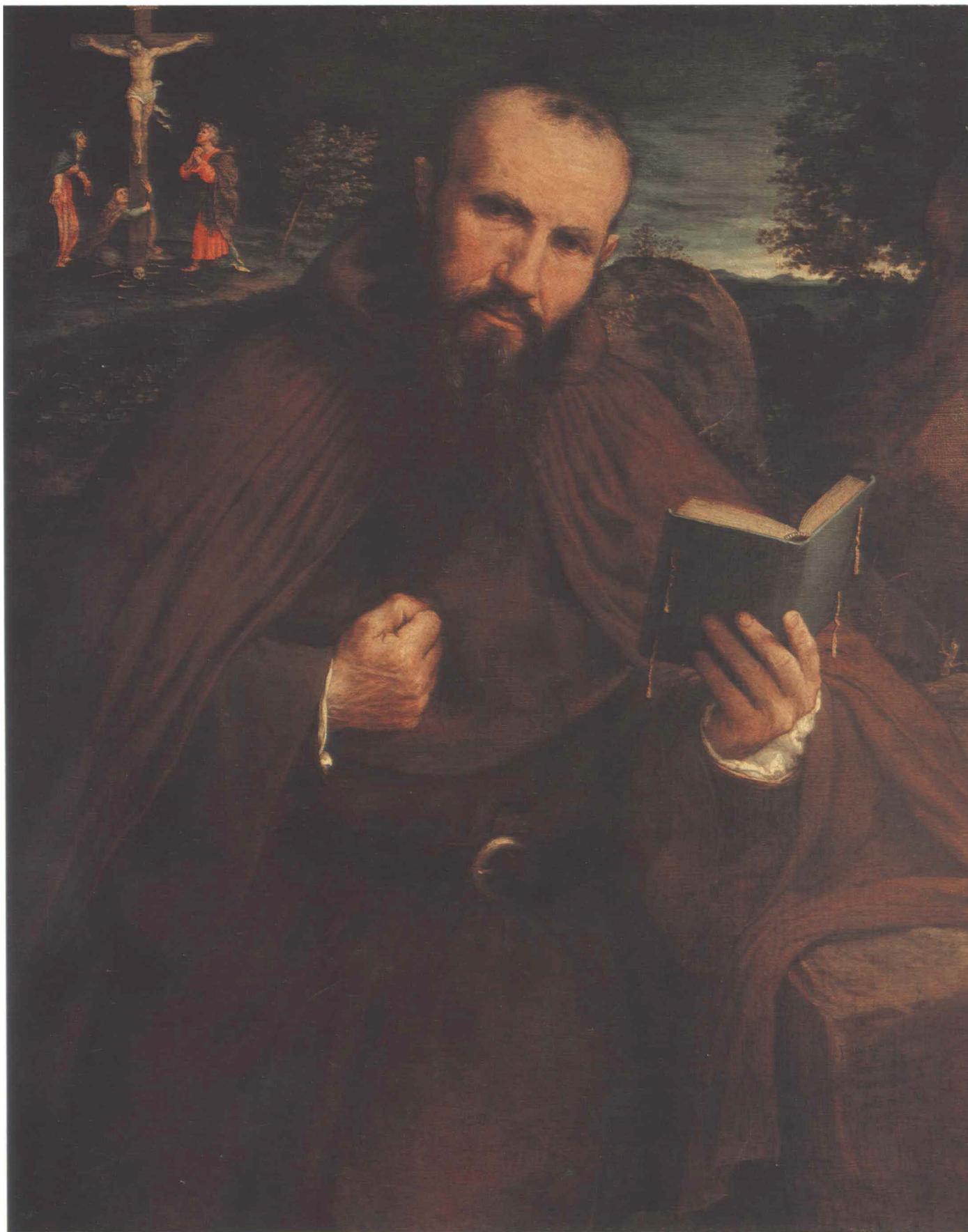
for another Dominican nunnery, that of the Corpus Domini, during 1539–1541. Lotto made no attempt to imitate the self-conscious grace of Salviati's painting; on the contrary, the expression of emotional and physical suffering is pursued to the point of ugliness, and Lotto's customary attention to beauties of detail is rigorously suppressed.

Common both to the present *Pietà* and the c. 1521 version in Bergamo is the motif of the Virgin falling into a deathly swoon. Although the motif is entirely consistent with Lotto's own highly charged religious sensibility, that he mentioned it in his account book when undertaking the commission implies that the motif had been specifically requested (or approved) by the prioress and her theological adviser, Master Vincenzo. This is curious, since in the early years of the century the Dominicans had engaged in lively controversy with the Franciscans about the appropriateness of showing the Virgin in a state of helpless unconsciousness. The Franciscans considered that following the Crucifixion, the Virgin suffered a spiritual death paralleling the physical death of her son, whereas the Dominicans argued that her prescience of the coming Resurrection would have allowed her to endure the ordeal with stoicism (Hamburgh 1981). But although the latter point of view was later championed in the post-Tridentine period by reformers such as Cardinal Paleotti (*Trattati d'Arte del Cinquecento* 1960, 374), during the middle years of the century the Franciscan attitude prevailed, even in a Dominican context, as here.

PROVENANCE: Church of San Paolo, Treviso; acquired by the present owner, 1811

LITERATURE: Rigamonti 1767, 38; Tassi 1793, 128; Federici 1803, 2: 6; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 525; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 277; Frizzoni, *Archivio*, 1896, 435, 437; Bailo and Biscaro 1900, 26, 92; Malaguzzi Valeri 1908, 106; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 421; Venturi 1929, 105; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 92; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 49; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 180; Bianconi 1955, 67; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 313; Caroli 1975, 234; Mariani Canova 1975, 119; Caroli 1980, 234; Cortesi Bosco 1980, 137; Gargan in *Lorenzo Lotto a Treviso* 1980, 22; Chiappini di Sorio 1981, 331; Mariani Canova 1981, 343; Lucco 1988, 209, 215; Matthew, "Lotto," 1988, 374–378; Humfrey 1990, 156–158; Lucco in *Pinacoteca di Brera* 1990, 168–170; Matthew, "Pietà," 1993; Humfrey 1997, 144–145





50
Fra Gregorio Belo

1547

oil on canvas, 87.3 x 71.1 (34 ³/₈ x 28)

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1965

THIS POWERFUL AND immediate image of a friar in the brown habit of the Hieronymite order illustrates the continuing expressive intensity and compositional inventiveness of Lotto's portraits at a time when his large-scale works were beginning to show a decline in inspiration. According to an entry in his account book (*Libro* 1969, 74–75), the painter undertook the commission to paint a life-size portrait of Fra Gregorio of Vicenza, a friar at the convent of San Sebastiano in Venice, on 9 December 1546; interim payments followed in April and May 1547; and the portrait was completed by October. In tribute to the patron of his order, Fra Gregorio is portrayed as an imitator of Saint Jerome, beating his breast in penitence, while meditating on a passage in the book he holds, the *Homilies* of his own namesake and Jerome's fellow church father, Gregory the Great. Just as representations of Jerome in the wilderness frequently show him in deep contemplation of a crucifix (see cats. 10, 11), so the visionary representation of the Crucifixion on the left appears as if taking place in the mind's eye of the sitter. The dark, stormy, windswept landscape, evoked with a raw energy quite unlike the controlled refinement of Lotto's earlier works, is eloquently expressive of the penitential turbulence in the friar's soul.

The friar's full name and age are given in the inscription at the lower right: F. Gregorii belo de Vicentia/ eremite in hieronimi Ordinis beati/ fratris Petri de pisis Anno/ etatis eius. LV. M.D.XLVII. Fra Gregorio had been made prior of Santa Maria Maddalena, Padua, in 1526; was sent to Cremona to resolve a property dispute in 1528; and was made prior of Santa Maddalena, Treviso, in 1549 (Giammaroli and Di Mambro 1983). While in Treviso in 1544 Lotto had painted a small altarpiece (now lost), representing the Virgin and child with Saints Sebastian and Roch for this convent (*Libro* 1969, 135), and one "Fra Gregorio" had intervened to settle a disagreement between the painter and the convent over his fee. It is reasonable to assume therefore, that, as with many of his later portraits, Lotto knew the sitter well. This personal acquaintance, perhaps a close friendship, would account for the forceful directness of the presentation, and the painter's evident empathy with the sitter's state of mind.

PROVENANCE: Acquired in Venice (as Paolo Veronese) by Johann Matheus, Count von der Schulenberg, 1738; by inheritance to Georg Ludwig, Count von der Schulenberg, Berlin and Hehlen, and to his heirs until 1965; acquired by the present owner, through Jean Marchig, Geneva

LITERATURE: Berenson 1956, 126; Zeri and Gardner 1973, 40–41; Mariani Canova 1975, 121; Pignatti 1979, 68; Caroli 1980, 286; Giammaroli and Di Mambro 1983, 119–124; Binion 1990, 73, 276; Humfrey 1997, 156

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

1552–1556

oil on canvas, 172 x 136.5 (67¹/₁₆ x 53³/₄)

Delegazione Pontificia per Il Santuario della Santa Casa, Loreto

ALWAYS RECOGNIZED AS LOTTO'S last autograph painting, datable to c. 1552–1556, this work may also be his final, moving statement of personal religious faith. Vasari's 1568 description of the works by Lotto at Loreto suggests that the picture was painted as part of a cycle of the early life of Christ for the apse of the basilica: "Having decided to end his days living at the Holy House in the service of the Madonna, he began a series of narrative pictures with figures of about a *braccio* high or less, to be placed round the choir above the stalls of the clergy. In one picture he showed the Nativity of Christ, and the Adoration of the Magi in another; and these were followed by the Presentation to Simeon, and then by the Baptism by John in the Jordan." Of these works, the first three are iconographically appropriate to the function of the basilica as the shrine of the Holy House of Nazareth. Like the *Presentation*, the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Baptism* remain at Loreto, but unlike the first they are collaborative works, executed largely by Lotto's assistants.

The subject is taken from Luke 2: 25–39, describing the encounter between old Simeon—traditionally identified as the high priest in the Temple at Jerusalem—and the Holy Family, who in obedience to Mosaic law have brought the infant Jesus to the Temple seven weeks after his birth. The Holy Ghost had told Simeon "that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ"; and having recognized the Child and taken him into his arms, he recited in gratitude the *Nunc Dimittis* ("Lord now lettest thy servant depart in peace"). The gospel goes on to relate that witness to this event was the eighty-four-year-old prophetess Anna, who also recognized the Child as the Redeemer foretold by the prophets. In Lotto's representation she is clearly identifiable as the aged nun opposite the Virgin and child and the priest Simeon. Joseph is presumably to be recognized as the most prominent figure in the group of men at the right.

In composition—loosely grouped, relatively small figures against a background of different architectural spaces—the *Presentation* recalls the frescoes of the Oratorio Suardi at Trescore, and the intarsias for Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, the cartoons for which remained in Lotto's possession after the unsuccessful auction in Ancona in 1550, and probably until the end of his life. The raised, stagelike space of the church interior in the middle-ground recalls Saul's throne room in the *David and Goliath* intar-

sia. But even taking account of the probability that the picture is not quite finished, it is clear that Lotto's style has lost the meticulous precision and brilliance of color of the Bergamo period thirty years earlier. The paint is applied loosely and sketchily, perhaps over a minimal underdrawing, and in an austere limited range of colors. Vasari records that the painter had virtually lost the power of speech in his final years, and these figures seem similarly inarticulate, with awkward, shuffling gestures, and facial expressions reduced to a painterly shorthand. On the other hand, the two protagonists, Simeon and Anna, appear as if enlightened by an inner, spiritual vision, as they struggle to comprehend the revelation that has been granted to them. The representation of the altar as a table supported by human feet shows that despite the disappointments and anxieties of his later years, Lotto's characteristically quirky sense of humor never abandoned him.

P H

PROVENANCE: Basilica of Santa Maria di Loreto

LITERATURE: Vasari 1568, 1976 ed., 554; Ricci 1834, 94; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 2: 528 n. 4; Annibaldi 1892; Berenson, *Lotto*, 1895, 291–292; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1871, 1912 ed., 3: 424; Venturi 1929, 108–111; Banti and Boschetto 1953, 54, 95; Coletti, *Lotto*, 1953, 23; Pignatti, *Lotto*, 1953, 181; Zampetti 1953, 180; Bianconi 1955, 70; Berenson 1956, 134; Freedberg 1971, 1975 ed., 313; Mariani Canova 1975, 122; Caroli 1980, 248; *Lorenzo Lotto a Loreto e Recanati* 1980, 78; Mascherpa, *Invito*, 1980, 163, 175; Varese in *Lorenzo Lotto nelle Marche* 1981, 460–461; Zampetti, *Genius*, 1983, 182; Zampetti, *Lotto*, 1983, no. 40; Arcangeli 1994, 104; Mozzoni and Paoletti 1996, 10, 37, 161–163; Humfrey 1997, 163–164



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COMPILED BY GRETCHEN HIRSCHAUER

Assistant Curator, Italian Renaissance painting
National Gallery of Art

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