



## 2 The Sixteenth Century

### New Techniques for New Levels of Expression

By 1500 painters had for the most part settled on oil as their medium of choice, enabling them to move further away from the received template and closer to a personal version of their subject, first by exploring its transparency and then its variable texture. We know that compared to egg, oil is translucent. While it is true that egg can be thinned with water to drape the Madonna's head in exquisitely delicate diaphanous veils or wrap Botticelli's Graces in enticingly sensuous see-through raiment, it is the nature of egg to cover and of oil to be permeable to light (see fig. 1.26). This translucency made possible the use of a tinted imprimatura, which had both aesthetic and practical consequences.

The education of the artist changed in the sixteenth century. The traditional workshop system broke down and gave way eventually to academies. Many artists no longer remained in a local workshop for all their training, but instead traveled to Rome to study the ancient monuments and modern masters. When a painter came to Rome in the early Cinquecento, he was offered a choice of color styles, more distinct from one another than ever before. By the second decade, he could select from among four distinct modes developed by Leonardo, Raphael,

Sebastiano del Piombo, and Michelangelo. All these modes except Michelangelo's exploited the transparency of oil by selective use of priming, or tinted imprimatura. Because it is the first layer, colored imprimatura provided the basic tonality and determined the mood of the painting.

#### SFUMATO, UNIONE, CHIAROSCURO, CANGIANTISMO

Leonardo's sfumato (smoky) mode is characterized by muted color, even monochrome, with edges softened as if seen through smoke (see fig. 1.15). Leonardo's technique of undermodeling (a monochrome version of the light and darks) may be seen as the precursor of a middle-toned imprimatura, lending a darker, unifying tonality to all the colors placed on top. Raphael invented the unione mode to preserve the gentle fusion of tones achieved by Leonardo, but to reintroduce the beauty of color.<sup>1</sup> For his harmonious unity of colors he reduced the contrast of light and shade as well as the saturation of his tones by using a pale imprimatura. The chiaroscuro mode as practiced by Sebastiano del Piombo and late Raphael introduced a dark imprimatura. It opened up the range of value between the lights and the darks and used brilliant

Fig. 2.31 detail



saturated color in the mid-tone for dramatic effect. By the end of the century, Tintoretto and Caravaggio would develop a dark imprimatura for stunningly dramatic effects. Michelangelo adapted from Trecento and Quattrocento practice the technique of modeling by shifting from one hue to another (*cangiantismo*), but by enlarging the scale and putting it at center stage he turned it into a mode. Because colors in nature do not shift, *cangiante* colors are artificial and highly ornamental. Unlike the other modes, *cangiante* is high in value and takes advantage of the inherent brilliance of the pigments; it therefore uses the white of the support without tinted imprimatura.

In the past, our young painter would have learned his master's style; then when he went out on his own he might vary it according to his needs, borrowing occasionally from his peers. Now he could choose his color style, even changing and adapting it as needed. If he arrived in Rome after September 1513, and if he was lucky, he might meet up with any one of these masters of the trade. To be sure, the aging Leonardo was hiding inside the Vatican at the Villa Belvedere, working principally on alchemy and rarely seen, and Michelangelo was holed up in his studio working on the *Moses* for Pope Julius's tomb, but both Sebastiano and Raphael were at work there.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps our young painter could trail along in the entourage of fifty artists who were said to accompany Raphael to the Vatican every morning. We will see how these modes were taken up and developed, combined, used selectively in fresco, and even hybridized by the painters in central Italy in the course of the century.

#### THE UNIONE MODE AND THE TINTED IMPRIMATURA

By the time Raphael painted the devotional tondo of the Madonna and Child with Saint John in Rome (the picture known as the *Alba Madonna*) for an unknown patron, he had mastered the coloring system we now call *unione*, of which it is perhaps the ultimate exemplar (fig. 2.1).<sup>3</sup> *Unione*, as the name implies, is the mode that sought coloristic consonance. With a palette limited to blues, greens, red, and brownish tones to set off the chain of flesh tones descending from center to left, the painter links the figures to one another and to their landscape: the blue of the Virgin's robe, echoed in paler tone in the sky and in the distant hills; the delicate greens picked up in her turban; John's sheepskin balanced at the right with the tree trunk and then reverberating in the

greenish-brown ground and the buildings behind. We recall that ultramarine was the crown jewel of the early Quattrocento palette, and that the painters learned that in oil it needed to be diluted with lead white. Nowhere before has it been so successfully harmonized with the surrounding tones as here, where the painter makes a virtue of its paled, diluted form. The Virgin's red robe has likewise been toned down to blend with the flesh tones adjacent. Yet despite the studied reduction in the saturation and value range, Raphael gives us more color than Leonardo had allowed. He has learned from Leonardo's *sfumato* but made his own adjustments in favor of *unione*. It is as though he recognized both the virtue and the shortcoming of *sfumato*: he reintroduces beautiful color without sacrificing the appealing softness of *sfumato*.

Raphael departed here from his former procedure found in his Florentine pictures of applying an off-white imprimatura, which rendered the colors laid on top bright and lively.<sup>4</sup> Here, surprisingly, he introduced a granular yellow imprimatura, which contributed to the more muted and harmonious tonality.<sup>5</sup> Clearly he was seeking an alternative to his own earlier practice, which derived from the early Renaissance and had been used by Van Eyck and his followers to enhance the jewel-like sparkle of their colors, and he also did not want the murkiness of Leonardo's dark underpaint.

Antonio da Correggio's use of a pinkish imprimatura is an easier to understand choice of priming because its effect is readily visible. The warm glow of flesh that permeates Correggio's pictures, whether devotional or mythological, and the sensuous blending of tones make his pictures unique. Correggio painted his *Madonna of the Basket* in the 1520s (fig. 2.2). Born in 1489, he had by then discovered his mature style. In his teens he was one of the very first painters to explore a darkish priming, learned presumably from Leonardo, but he soon recognized that his particular talent lay in adapting Leonardo's *sfumato* without its component of dark monochrome, to create sweetly blended contours and gentle transitions. The tonality he made his own was based in a soft gray and flesh, enhanced by an undertone of what conservators have described in this picture as "a light pinkish gray priming."<sup>6</sup> Working independent of Raphael, as far as we know, he arrived at a similar coloristic solution, his own version of *unione*.

If we compare it with a Quattrocento treatment in



FIG. 2.1. Raphael, *Alba Madonna*, c. 1510. Oil on panel transferred to canvas, 37<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (94.5 cm) diam. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

tempera of a similar half-length devotional Madonna and Child by Verrocchio, dated c. 1476–78 (fig. 2.3), we see how Correggio has exploited the qualities of his medium to soften and blend. Verrocchio's modeling looks harsh, his drapery folds pleated. As arresting as the Virgin's prayerful adoration of her infant is, the tender intimacy of Correggio is lacking. This is of course due to the difference in pose, and intimacy was clearly

not Verrocchio's intent; his formal and more distanced arrangement with angels present is well served by his more severe and more hard-edged style. He seeks contrast and clarity, as he made clear when he chose to fill the corners with curtains sharply demarcated against the sky.

Correggio's tender portrayal is equally well served by his close interweaving of mother and child, both of them



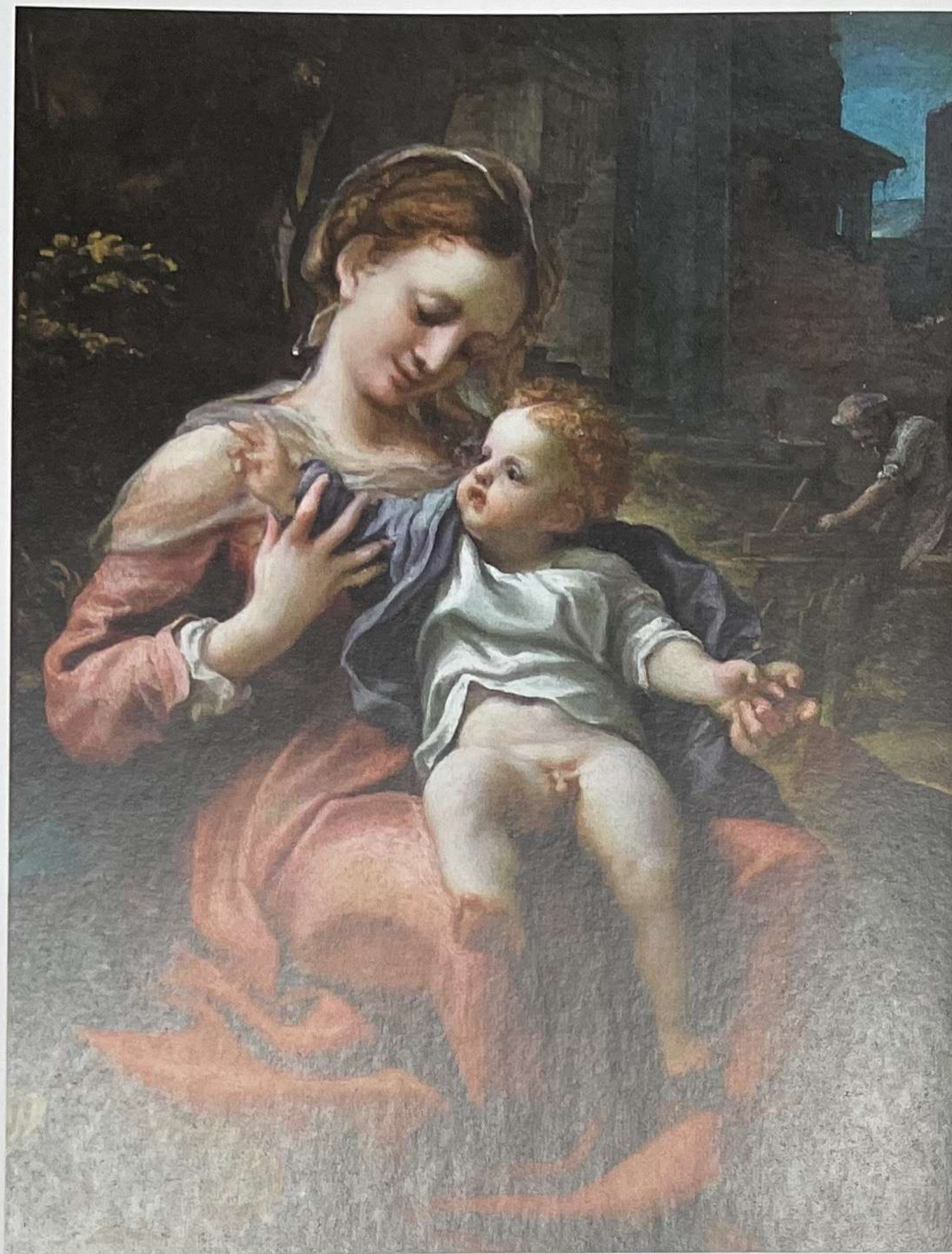


FIG. 2.2. Correggio, *Madonna of the Basket*, c. 1524. Oil on panel, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$  × 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (33.7 × 25 cm). National Gallery, London.

intent on unveiling the breast the child eagerly seeks. So too is his close unity of colors, their contrasts reduced because they are desaturated, their values pulled together as if seen through a softening haze. From below the visible surface, that grayish-pink undertone infuses the whole color scheme. A rare grayish pigment, stibnite, has been found in a number of his paintings.<sup>7</sup> He may have sought this unusual material to create the special grayish tonality that marks his coloring. Viewers of Correggio's little picture are not encouraged to assume a devotional attitude, as they are before Verrocchio's; rather they are invited to feel the poignant love that binds Correggio's mother and child together.

Harmony, serenity, perhaps even comfort and reassurance are the feelings we take away from our encounter

with Correggio. Raphael in his early career sought much the same effect. The series of Madonna and Child devotional panels he executed during his Florentine sojourn between 1504 and 1508 are variations on a theme, and he was experimenting not only with setting, pose, and composition, but also with color. These pictures are remarkably consistent, however, in achieving a new gentle blending of tones and in rejecting the sharper contrasts both of hue and of value that mark his predecessors' pictures, even Perugino's, who was also working in oil and was a master of coloring. The cartoon Raphael prepared for *La Belle Jardinière* in black chalk (fig. 2.4), stumped to convey the shadows, reveals his careful study of Leonardo's cartoon. Like Leonardo he is studying here the chiaroscuro of the whole composition, and the



FIG. 2.3. Andrea del Verrocchio, *Madonna and Child*, c. 1476–78. Tempera on panel, 38 × 27 $\frac{3}{4}$  in. (96.5 × 70.5 cm). National Gallery, London.

additive effect of Perugino's design has been put behind him. Clearly there is a new hierarchy of priorities operating here: the effect of the whole is more important than any individual hue. The trend that Michael Baxandall found initiated in the second half of the fifteenth century has here reached its culmination: the skill of the painter is valued more than the materials themselves.<sup>8</sup>

#### RAPHAEL IN THE STANZE

It was the frescoes that Raphael was executing in the Vatican at the same time as the *Alba Madonna* that assured his position in Rome. Current research indicates that he was hired one room at a time and that there were competitors surrounding him. This was Pope Julius's modus operandi: he would hire multiple artists and put them all to work simultaneously, then choose the one he preferred. The others were left to languish. In the case of the Stanza della Segnatura, Raphael replaced Il Sodoma, who had planned and executed part of the ceiling, while Perugino worked on the ceiling of the adjacent room, the



FIG. 2.4. Raphael, *La Belle Jardinière* (cartoon), c. 1507. Black and white chalk on paper, 36 $\frac{15}{16}$  × 26 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (93.7 × 67 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Stanza dell'Incendio, where Raphael would eventually fresco the walls.

The Stanza della Segnatura was the first of the rooms that Raphael was commissioned to paint in a series that would be continued after Julius's death in 1513 by his successor, Pope Leo X. The Segnatura has been identified as Julius's library, where his 218 volumes were housed, divided into four large groups: Philosophy, Theology, the Arts, and Jurisprudence. (The remaining principal field of the world of knowledge in the Renaissance, Medicine, did not concern the pope.) The decorations were accordingly conceived to reflect both the divisions of the disciplines and their unity. The theme of the ceiling is the convergence of the four forms of inspiration in a single truth. The traditional iconography of libraries was to represent a collection of famous men, often depicted with their books, and indeed, that is the kernel of Raphael's scheme here. At the center of the *Disputa*, for example, representing Theology, are the four doctors of the Church, each with his books, titles plainly legible, around him. Plato





FIG. 2.5. Raphael, *Parnassus*, 1511. Fresco, 21 ft. 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (670 cm) wide. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican, Rome.

FIG. 2.6. Raphael, *The School of Athens* (cartoon), c. 1508. Charcoal, black chalk, white heightening on paper pricked for transfer, 9 ft. 6 in. × 26 ft. 3 in. (280 × 800 cm). Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

and Aristotle, books in hand, are the focal point of the fresco dedicated to Philosophy, the *School of Athens*.

The way Raphael redesigned the traditional scheme was illustrated by Ernst Gombrich in a brilliant visual comparison of Perugino's illustrious men for the Cambio, created less than a decade before work was begun in the Segnatura (see fig. 1.18).<sup>9</sup> Perugino's figures stand in an orderly file, each embodying the virtue symbolically represented on the cloud over his head. They are separated compositionally with no overlapping, and each is distinguished coloristically. Raphael transformed this traditional lineup into a dramatic interaction among the actors, who are engaged in speaking or demonstrating or listening. History becomes a dialogue, a lively interchange shared eagerly among participants who pass on their learning. The humanist passion for unearthing and reconstructing the history of ideas is captured by Raphael's dramatization.

In his coloring, Raphael found a style that expressed the essence of the message. The generous humanist concept of the unity of all knowledge, pagan or Christian, secular or religious, expressed in different languages but bearing witness to a single truth, is given visible expression in the colors, which although composed of distinct hues are woven together in a harmonious and interactive flow (fig. 2.5). It is the look of all the colors participating with one another that distinguishes the Segnatura frescoes and the *unione* mode. The eye moves from one figure to the next effortlessly, with those in groups or sequences harmoniously related because the brilliance of their drapery is rendered at the same level. In technical terms, the colors are similar in value and in saturation. The use of a full cartoon, of the kind that has survived for the *School of Athens* (fig. 2.6), made possible the preparation of the pattern of light and shade and of tonality across the whole composition that both the *unione* and *chiaroscuro* mode depend upon. This overall unified and dramatized rendering sets these Cinquecento works apart from the more staccato compositions of the Quattrocento, such as Perugino's. As was discussed in Chapter 1, cartoons in the Quattrocento were not made for the whole composition typically but for individual figures. It has been suggested that the *School of Athens* cartoon was installed temporarily on a wall of the Segnatura and that substitute cartoons were made for the individual parts, keeping the vision of the whole before the eyes of everyone working on the fresco. With the full-scale



FIG. 2.7. Samples of pozzolana showing a range of color.

cartoon, Raphael could entrust with confidence the execution of sections of this large wall—it measures more than twenty-six feet at the base—to his assistants.

No one has explained how Raphael achieved the effect of *unione* in these frescoes. I would like to propose the hypothesis that, as in the case of his use of priming, Raphael was introducing a new procedure here. The practice of preparing the wall for fresco was not identical in Florence and Rome, as Michelangelo learned to his chagrin in the Sistine when his plaster began to mold a couple of months after he frescoed it. He was advised to change the mixture to compensate for the damper climate of Rome and to add more *pozzolana* to the mix.<sup>10</sup> Pozzolana, a volcanic ash available locally and not used in Florence, has a tint, either brownish, grayish, or even purplish. Samples show the range of tints found in *pozzolana* (fig. 2.7). Normally, Roman frescoists, in order to mask the color of the *pozzolana*, applied a white layer over the *intonaco* (the final layer of plaster), which was called *intonachino*. There are two documented instances in which this *intonachino* was omitted in Roman frescoes of this period. Sebastiano del Piombo made use of the purplish cast of his *intonaco* when he painted his *Polyphemus* at the Villa Farnesina for Agostino Chigi,<sup>11</sup> and at almost the same moment Raphael used the grayish tinge of the *intonaco* in his *Isaiah* fresco in Sant'Agostino.<sup>12</sup> (We will come back to Sebastiano, who plays an important part in this story.) Looking at the Segnatura frescoes, we need to account for their unprecedented color. Is the extraordinary *unione* of the Segnatura frescoes the result of a similar omission of *intonachino*, in order to make use of the de-saturating effect of a slightly brownish *intonaco*, a tint lent by the *pozzolana*? This would adjust the tonality of his fresco in a way analogous to a tinted *imprimatura* in oil painting. The watercolors applied on top would be neutralized and pulled together into an overall concord such as what we see.





FIG. 2.8. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Pietà*, c. 1515. Oil on panel, 8 ft. 6¼ in. × 7 ft. 4½ in. (260 × 225 cm). Museo Civico, Viterbo.

Julius, even though preoccupied with wars and claiming no particular intellectual authority, must have recognized that Raphael had achieved a unique marriage of content with form, for he hired him to carry on with the next room, the Stanza di Eliodoro.

#### THE CHIAROSCURO MODE

The subjects for the Eliodoro were of a different order, and Raphael must have felt they called for a different mode of coloring. These are historical moments, chosen to highlight achievements of the living pope whose portrait was included in each scene, and they required an intensification of drama. Contrast, especially of light and shade, conveys the violent expulsion of the thief Heliodorus, who would rob the temple treasury. In the *Mass at Bolsena*, sharply contrasted primary colors, set off with black, distinguish the contemporary Swiss Guards on the right from the anonymous original witnesses to the miracle of the bleeding host, who are rendered in soft sfumato pastels on the left. Black shadows, which are nowhere to be seen in the Segnatura, are substituted here for the gentler transitions seen there. Did

Raphael make use of a darker pozzolana here to facilitate his chiaroscuro?

The acme of his accomplishment in this new chiaroscuro mode would not be seen by Julius, for the *Liberation of Peter from Prison* was painted after his death in February 1513. (So also was *Pope Leo I Repulsing Attila the Hun*, in which Leo X stands in for his fifth-century namesake, Leo I.) The savvy Raphael, recognizing how difficult it is to see the subtle color effects he had created in his *Parnassus* in the Segnatura, limited his palette essentially to four colors for his fresco in a similar position above the window here, and relied on sharp contrast of light and shadow to tell the story. An eerie moonlight sets off the guards at the left. A grid of bars daringly scores the central scene, where an angel in a blaze of golden light invades the blackish cell where Peter sleeps.

Raphael had begun to substitute the chiaroscuro mode for unione in some of the oil paintings at this time, although he continued to use unione and a lightly tinted imprimatura in his altarpieces, notably the *Sistine Madonna* and the *Saint Cecilia Altarpiece*.<sup>13</sup> As we will see, most of his works after 1515 employ a dark priming and the chiaroscuro mode. Who invented the chiaroscuro mode is still an unsettled question, whether Raphael or Sebastiano del Piombo, but the weight of evidence favors Sebastiano. By 1515 Sebastiano had created his nocturne, the *Pietà*, unmistakably in the chiaroscuro mode and using a tinted imprimatura (fig. 2.8).<sup>14</sup> Sebastiano was probably the most technically innovative painter of the Cinquecento. Even before he departed Venice for Rome in 1511, in his *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* he was working with a very pale gray priming.<sup>15</sup> In his early years in Rome he famously used drawings supplied by Michelangelo, which he combined with his own strong sense for the power of color. According to Vasari, Michelangelo supplied a cartoon for his *Pietà*.<sup>16</sup> Although Michelangelo's *disegno* of the principal figures is powerful indeed, the *colorire* of the landscape setting, eerie and mysterious, creates an atmosphere of melancholy that conveys the Virgin's emotions even better than her gesture and face.

A few years later, in 1517 in his *Raising of Lazarus* (fig. 2.9), for the notorious competition with Raphael's *Transfiguration*, Sebastiano again made use of sketches by Michelangelo. His manner has become more Roman and more Michelangelesque, with monumentally sculptural figures, especially the commanding Christ. His



FIG. 2.9. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Raising of Lazarus*, 1517–19. Oil on panel transferred to canvas, 12 ft. 6 in. × 9 ft. 6 in. (381 × 289.5 cm). National Gallery, London.



coloring has changed too, but it is no less impressive. Conservator Jill Dunkerton reminds us that this huge panel has suffered greatly, but we can nonetheless see that Sebastiano, the foreigner from the Veneto, intended to create a showpiece of Venetian coloring, throwing down the gauntlet to Rome and the divine Raphael.<sup>17</sup> His technique is complex, making full use of Venetian-style glazing, adapted to Roman taste, but this is clearly a painting in what we would come to designate the *chiaroscuro* mode. He laid down an *imprimatura* of light to mid-brownish gray color, still light enough for lines of black underdrawing to be clearly visible to the painter. He underpainted every drapery with a contrasting color, sometimes mixtures, sometimes multiple layers, then used translucent glazes in contrasting colors. He is striving for richer and more complex effects and, as we will see, Raphael's late style adopted a similar layering procedure. This darker and more dramatic picture reflects the taste for *chiaroscuro* that was taking hold of Rome in the second half of the 1510s.

In his coloring of Christ we can see a vestige of the reverence for lapis lazuli as a precious material that had prevailed in the Quattrocento. In the mantle and robe of Christ, Sebastiano used pure, unadulterated ultramarine in the shadow and added white lead for the highlights.<sup>18</sup> The contrast with Raphael's use of ultramarine in the *Alba Madonna* tells us something about the difference between the *unione* and the *chiaroscuro* modes and about the evolution of taste in Rome. Raphael, we saw, had willingly sacrificed the brilliance of the blue for tonal unity; Sebastiano treasured the intensity of the pigment and the high contrast it contributes to his color scheme. Raphael would adopt a similar palette of high contrast and saturated colors in this half decade, culminating in his final *Transfiguration*.

#### MICHELANGELO AND THE MODE OF CANGIANTISMO

At the same time that Raphael was beginning his frescoes in the *Segnatura*, across the way in the Vatican Palace, Michelangelo had begun work in the Sistine Chapel. His task was to paint the vault, which had been damaged when structural problems caused a crack running the whole length to open in 1504. The chapel had to be closed for six months while repairs were made and tie rods were installed to stabilize the vault. The blue sky with gold stars that had completed the decoration commissioned by Sixtus IV in the 1480s had to be repainted.<sup>19</sup> Julius decided

not simply to repair or repeat what had been there, but to replace it with an altogether new decoration.<sup>20</sup>

The coloring style Michelangelo chose was not that of his contemporaries, either Raphael or Pinturicchio or Perugino or his friend Sebastiano, although it was an elaboration of the Quattrocento device of *cangiantismo*, which all of these painters used in small passages for variety or ornamental effect (fig. 2.10). *Cangianti* passages can be found in Raphael's *Segnatura* (see fig. 2.5), and Perugino used the device liberally in his vault fresco in the *Incendio* and in his *Famous Men*: note the two figures standing at the right (see fig. 1.18). Michelangelo took this familiar technique and amplified it. What had in the past been a peripheral ornament became in his hands a new mode of coloring, in which its anti-naturalism became the signal of supernatural content. Instead of creating shadows with a darker monochrome, Michelangelo went back to the Cennini style of modeling up with white, or he created modeling by juxtaposing hues of graded value—that is, with *cangiantismo*.

Michelangelo had experimented with *cangiantismo* already in Florence in his panel painting of the Holy Family, the *Doni Tondo* (see fig. 0.1). There he put on display the sculptor's rejection of Leonardo's fuzzy-edged *sfumato*, creating figures as if hewn in marble and crisply contoured. His distaste for the softening effect possible with oil is made apparent in his solid colors, which, in the manner of egg tempera, shift boldly rather than transitioning seamlessly. His remark, made much later—to Sebastiano del Piombo, who had prepared the wall of the Sistine for the *Last Judgment* with his personal formula for oil mural—that oil painting is for old ladies and lazy people, did not refer only to painting in oil on the wall, it seems.<sup>21</sup> He never painted in oil again, and when paintings were required of him, he managed to find a surrogate to do the actual painting after his cartoon.<sup>22</sup>

Michelangelo's coloring can be called a new mode because not only does it make use of *cangianti* passages on a scale never before conceived, but also because it does not imitate *sfumato* or undertake to create the musical harmonies of *unione*, nor does it employ the dramatic dark shadows of *chiaroscuro*. Like the Quattrocento up-modeled fresco style from which it is derived, it utilizes the whiteness of the plaster to create high values and whitened highlights, with pure color or a shift of hue to create the shadows. Because Michelangelo's coloring depends upon the white plaster,

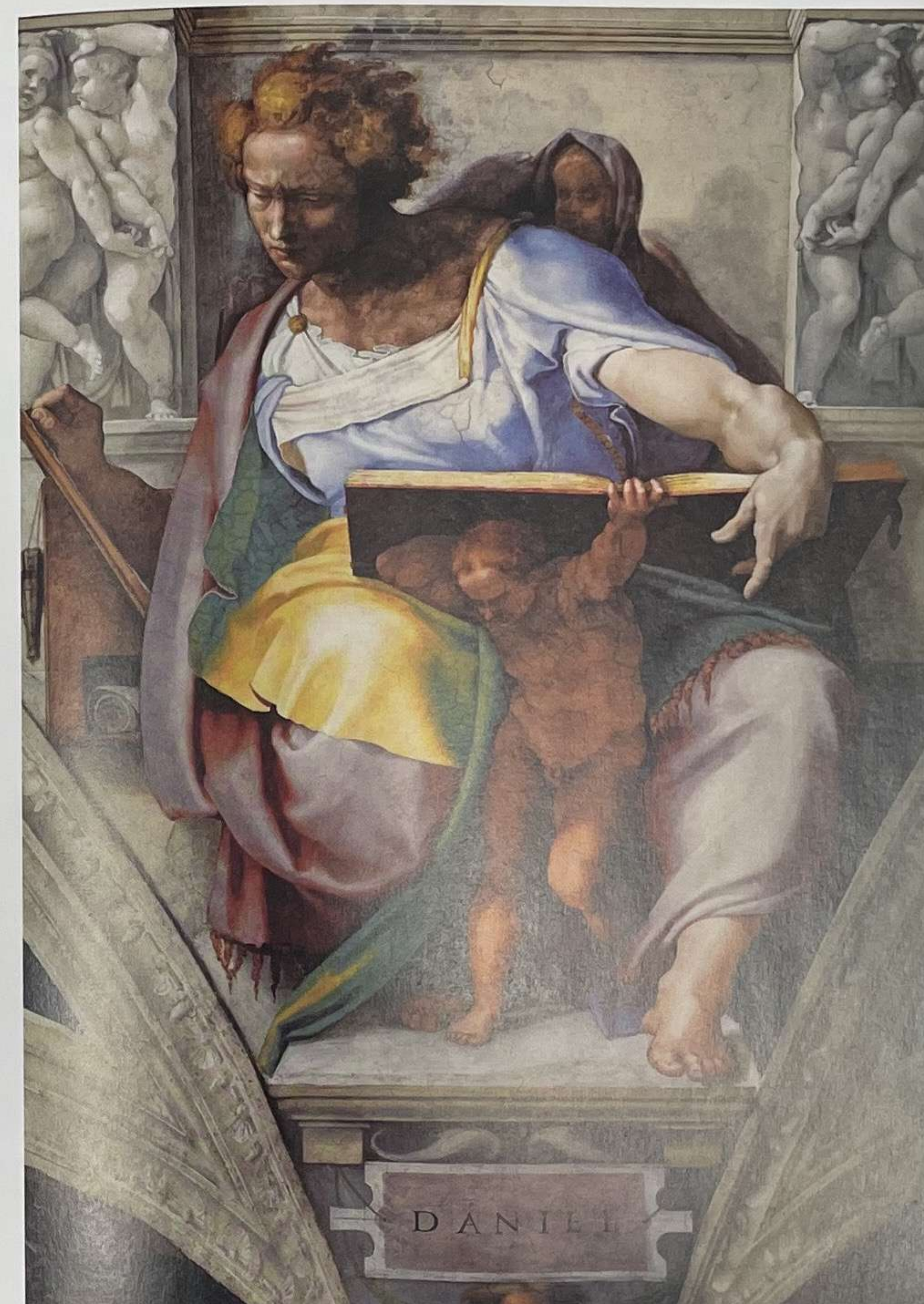


FIG. 2.10. Michelangelo, *Prophet Daniel*, 1508–12. Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome.

he used *intonachino*, unlike Raphael who, I contend, preferred the dulling or neutralizing effect imparted to the plaster by the tint of the *pozzolana*.<sup>23</sup> Naturally, not every drapery shifts in hue; the mode of *cangiantismo* is marked not only by the prominence of *cangianti* but also by the blond tonality achieved by up-modeling and the brilliance of the colors.

Why did Michelangelo depart from the coloring of his contemporaries? As Venetian critics make clear, there were many who did not appreciate his fantastic inventions.<sup>24</sup> We need to think about the special conditions of his project: the spine of the Sistine vault is more than sixty feet above the head of the viewer and not brilliantly lit, so legibility was a problem, as the painter discovered

after he had completed the first of the Genesis panels, the *Deluge*. He never thereafter attempted a similar deep space, but arranged his figures in the foreground in a frieze or relief-like arrangement at the surface. He recognized that a high-value tonality with large planes of color made the desired impact. There are small-scale *cangiante* passages in the *Deluge*, but they are too delicate to project to the viewer on the floor. It is in the Delphic Sibyl adjacent to the first bay that he enlarged his *cangianti* drapery to monumental scale for the first time. At this point it is fair to say that he has invented a new coloring system, a mode distinct from what is being practiced by his contemporaries.

A second reason that Michelangelo may have sought



a new mode of coloring for the Sistine is the subject. Taking place as his scenes do on the ceiling, their position invokes the heavenly realm, and the last half of the Genesis scenes take place in the heavens. The exalted theological content seems to require a level of abstraction to match and convey it. Raphael was Michelangelo's nearest model and rival. The unione coloring system he had evolved derived from Leonardo and Perugino, but moved beyond them toward an idealized mode that represented a plausible but perfected reality. The accidents and imperfections of nature have been excised, leaving only the essential. There is an element of abstraction in Raphael's distilling process, but what we see does not violate the laws of nature, as Michelangelo's does. Raphael is most often concerned with representing the divine present in this world, thus his color system is well chosen. The space inhabited by his divine figures is subtly transformed and perfected by their presence.

Certainly Raphael's coloring could have been made to work on the Sistine vault, but Michelangelo was not an artist who imitated his peers. The system he invented made use of artifice and ornament to separate the realm of his images from the world we know and suggest their exalted content as no other could.

#### LATE RAPHAEL

During these years Raphael had become the most important person on the Roman artistic scene. He was a good administrator and he was always gracious, a far easier person to work with than the prickly Michelangelo. Pope Leo piled diverse tasks on him, including making him Bramante's successor as the architect of Saint Peter's. In order to fulfill his obligations, he had to invent the new organization for an efficient and productive workshop that is described below. In fact, his pupils, especially Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga, as well as Giorgio Vasari, later imitated the methods he shaped, and they transformed artistic production.

After 1515 he developed his painting technique for efficiency and consistency. The pale imprimatura of his Florentine period and his early years in Rome gradually became darker, accommodating his increasing preference for chiaroscuro rather than the look of unione.

The next operation was to transfer a drawing onto the support from a full-scale cartoon. Such underdrawings are visible in infrared reflectogram, such as one for the *Holy Family of Francis I* (fig. 2.11). None of Raphael's

cartoons from this period has survived, but we know that one existed for the *Saint Michael* because Raphael made a gift of it to a would-be patron, Alfonso d'Este, for whom he did not have time to make a commissioned painting.<sup>25</sup> A cartoon has been preserved for the *Stoning of Saint Stephen*, which was probably commissioned of Raphael by Gian Matteo Giberti after he was named *commendatore* of Santo Stefano in Genoa in 1519 (fig. 2.12). Raphael died before the painting was delivered and Giulio Romano executed it, but the cartoon may have been made while he was alive and certainly reflects the practice of his workshop.<sup>26</sup> More than thirteen and a half feet tall, the cartoon shows the chiaroscuro composition in charcoal and black chalk. It would have been based upon a *modello*, which in turn was built from preceding compositional sketches and figure studies. The *modello* would be squared so that its transfer to the panel was a mechanical process that any number of assistants in the workshop could be entrusted with. Raphael would have supervised the entire preparatory process and normally would have been involved in making figure studies and fixing the composition. There are masterful figure studies in red and black chalk surviving for his last painting, the *Transfiguration*, that give us an idea of this intense stage of preparation.<sup>27</sup> Although he relied heavily on his workshop and entrusted assistants with particular tasks, there was no place for their personal style. He wanted every piece that left his studio to bear the marks of a Raphael. As had been true in the Quattrocento, the best assistant was the one who had best assimilated the master's style and could simulate it.

Raphael's technique truly distinguished itself in the final paint layers that he applied in two different colors. With a top layer thin enough to allow the lower layer to peek through, he could create a vibrancy of color. The tonality was not that of pure pigments, but he was not using physical mixtures. It strikes the eye as fresh, something newly invented, which stands out in just the right degree from the dark background. He put a pink layer under a thin layer of glaze of lapis or green, for instance, which could create a cangiante effect. On the sleeve of the *Madonna della Perla* (1519–20), the pink underlayer is modulated into blue-tinged shadow (fig. 2.13). In this way he avoids the harshness of blackish shadow in this highlighted area, and the tones merge into one another. To what extent Raphael permitted his most-skilled assistants to execute these final layers is not knowable, but whoever

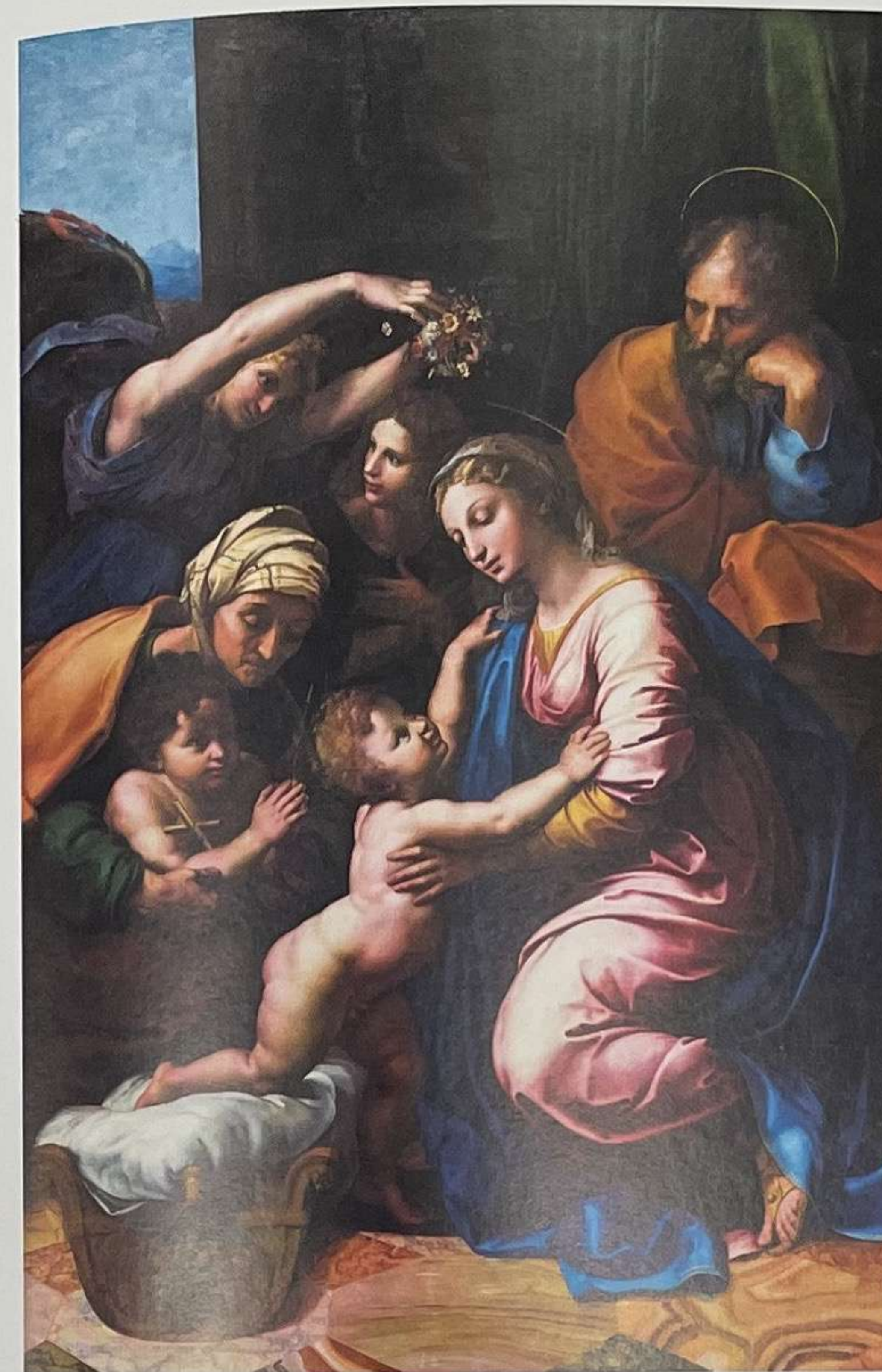


FIG. 2.11. Raphael, *Holy Family of Francis I*, 1518. Oil on panel transferred to canvas, 81 × 55 in. (207 × 140 cm). Louvre, Paris.



FIG. 2.12. Raphael and Giulio Romano, *Stoning of Saint Stephen* (cartoon), c. 1520–21. Charcoal and black chalk on paper, 13 ft. 7 1/4 in. × 9 ft. 4 1/4 in. (412 × 285 cm). Musei Vaticani, Rome.



FIG. 2.13. Raphael, *Madonna della Perla*, c. 1519–20. Oil on panel, 58 × 45 2/3 in. (147 × 116 cm). Prado, Madrid.



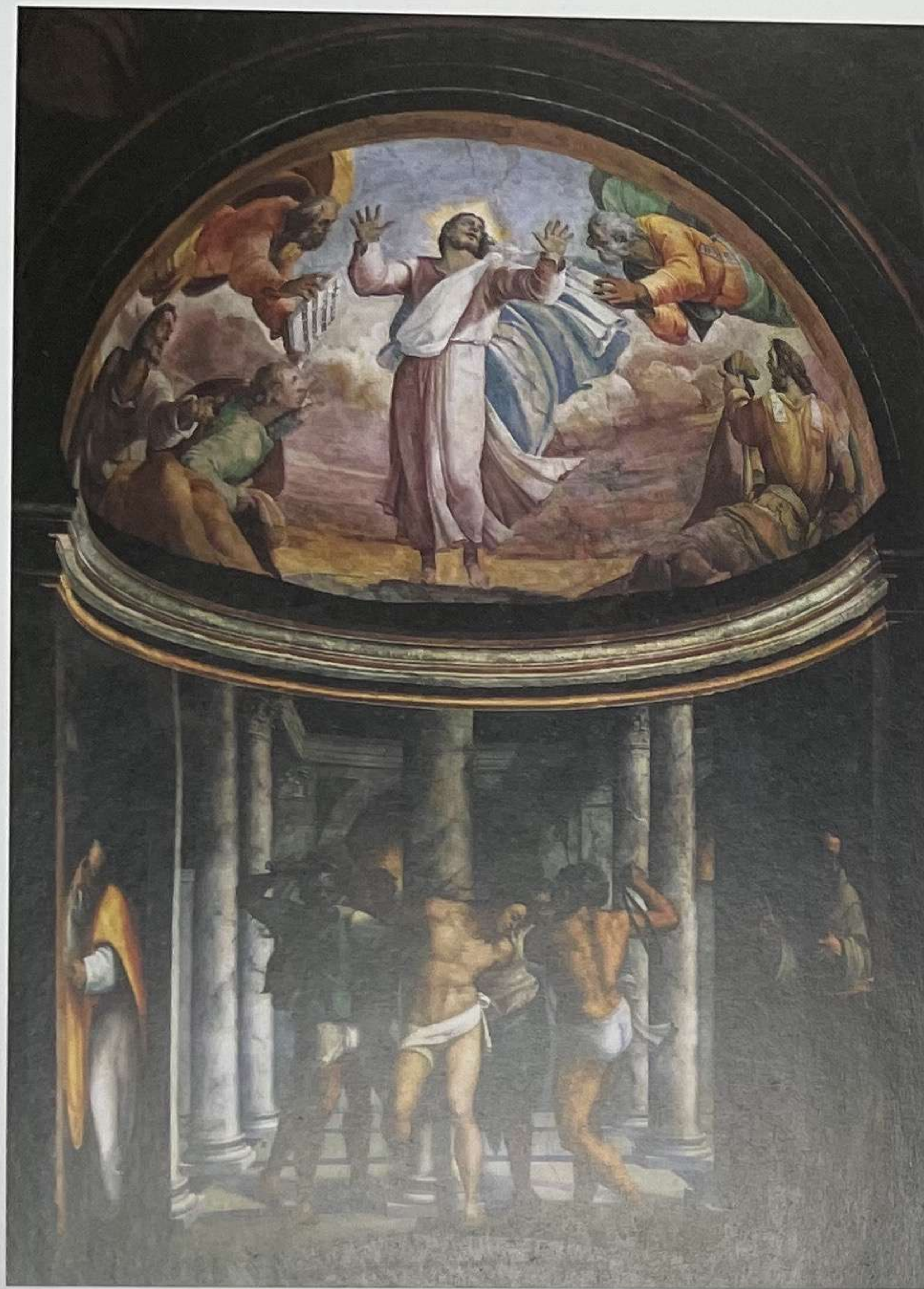


FIG. 2.14. Sebastiano del Piombo, *Flagellation*, 1516–24. Oil mural. Borgherini Chapel, San Pietro in Montorio, Rome.

painted them, they bear the stamp of Raphael and not the assistant's hand.

This *cangiantismo* is very different from Michelangelo's. Michelangelo juxtaposed large fields of contrasted color for a more sedate and grandiose effect. The two artists had different purposes and different tasks. Michelangelo sought to command the eye of his distant viewer and impress him with the authority of his biblical hero. Raphael sought to entice his with the tender, delicate femininity of his Virgin.

Just how distinctive and demanding Raphael's painting technique was is revealed by the fact that even his prize pupil and most accomplished successor, Giulio Romano, did not follow it once Raphael had died and he was working on his own. Giulio abbreviated the process, giving up the two-layered structure and using thicker

paints of physical mixtures and fewer hues.<sup>28</sup> The opaque, blackish, and sometimes muddy tonality we associate with him is the result.

#### SEBASTIANO VERSUS THE RAPHAEL WORKSHOP

Since 1516 Michelangelo had been in Florence, sent off there by Pope Leo, who was perhaps a little scared of him, to work on a project that would bring further glory to the Medici: to create a richly sculpted façade for the church of San Lorenzo, the Medici family parish. Michelangelo threw himself into the project, only to have the commission canceled by the pope in what must have been a disappointment on the scale of his loss of Pope Julius's tomb a little more than a decade earlier. While Michelangelo was absent, Sebastiano became his surrogate in Rome, constantly exchanging letters and keeping

him informed of all that was going on. If a patron in Rome wanted a work by Michelangelo, the most he could hope for was that Michelangelo would supply drawings to Sebastiano, who would then execute the painting, as he had done in the cases of the *Pietà* and the *Raising of Lazarus*. This was the understanding Pierfrancesco Borgherini had with respect to his chapel and the *Flagellation* (fig. 2.14), and indeed Michelangelo did send Sebastiano drawings for it.

Sebastiano, although he was close enough to Michelangelo to use his drawings in his paintings, did not follow Michelangelo in coloring. In fact, he moved in the opposite direction from *cangiantismo* with his *chiaroscuro*. He even pioneered the *chiaroscuro* wall painting in his *Flagellation*, where he abandoned fresco and substituted oil. The painting forms the altarpiece of the Borgherini Chapel, which took him eight years to complete, beginning in 1516. Work was suspended for two years while he labored over the *Raising of Lazarus*. When he returned to work on the chapel, sometime after May 1519, he executed the fresco in the lunette, a *Transfiguration*, that scholars take to be his response to Raphael's last altarpiece. Then finally in the late summer of 1521 he was ready to begin executing the altar wall, the *Flagellation* flanked by Saint Peter and Saint Francis.<sup>29</sup> The delay may well have been prolonged by his experiments with the new technique he was introducing. Recognizing that fresco, because it is watercolor over white plaster, is necessarily high in value and not suitable for somber events, he sought to create the same drama in fresco that he had achieved in his easel paintings by using the same medium of oil. His image of Christ on the concave wall surrounded by his torturers envelops the worshipper with its mood of pathos and suffering nobly endured. The deep, resonant blackish tones of oil-bound darks could never have been accomplished with fresco. Sebastiano painted the first successful oil mural—succeeding not only where the great Leonardo had failed, but perhaps also Raphael and his workshop in their experiments in the Sala di Costantino.<sup>30</sup>

Modes of coloring were one expression of the rivalry and competition that were central to the lives of artists working in Rome in these years.<sup>31</sup> The contest over the commission to decorate the Sala di Costantino can give us insight into this combative arena. When Raphael died in April 1520, the Sala di Costantino had been barely begun. How much, if any, had already been

Painted is unknown, but there ensued a scramble in which Sebastiano sought to wrest the commission from the heirs of Raphael, Giulio Romano and Gianfrancesco Penni. Six days after Raphael's death, Sebastiano wrote to Michelangelo, asking him to support his bid to take over the Sala di Costantino. Michelangelo was reluctant and made only a half-hearted attempt on Sebastiano's behalf. Sebastiano reported that the word on the street was that Raphael's workshop—which Sebastiano disparagingly referred to as the *garzoni* ("shop boys")—intended to paint it in oil. In fact, two trial figures in oil were executed and were eventually incorporated into the final scheme, the allegories of *Comity* and *Justice* (fig. 2.15). Whether they were done under the oversight of Raphael himself before his death is unknown, but it does seem possible. By this time Sebastiano must have been convinced that his own experiment with oil mural, still kept secret even from Michelangelo, was going to succeed, so he must have been doubly eager to have the opportunity to display his skill at the center of the Vatican. When it became clear that he would not secure the commission, he urged Michelangelo to obtain it for himself, hoping no doubt to work beside the great master. Sebastiano continued to badger Michelangelo in his letters, implying that this commission would restore the prestige he had lost with the withdrawal of the San Lorenzo contract. He makes clear with his language how high feelings were running in this contentious situation. He writes to Michelangelo that he "wants to carry out your vendettas and mine in one fell swoop, and to give those malign people to understand that there are other demigods besides Raphael of Urbino and his *garzoni*."<sup>32</sup> In the end, the workshop persuaded Pope Leo that they had Raphael's drawings, and they painted the Sala in buon fresco.<sup>33</sup>

What Giulio and Penni intended to create was an alternative mode of coloring in fresco to Michelangelo's *cangiantismo*. In place of his high saturation and high-value color, they produced coloring that was naturalistic and serious without being somber. There is a smoky gray tonality that suggests atmosphere, in contrast to the airless brilliance of the Sistine vault. The initial experiment with oil mural in the two allegorical figures, which are very dark, suggests they were searching for an innovative facture that would correspond more closely to the look of easel paintings in oil, one that would provide a plausible naturalism for the historical narratives of the emperor Constantine. Their rejection of the oil experiment was



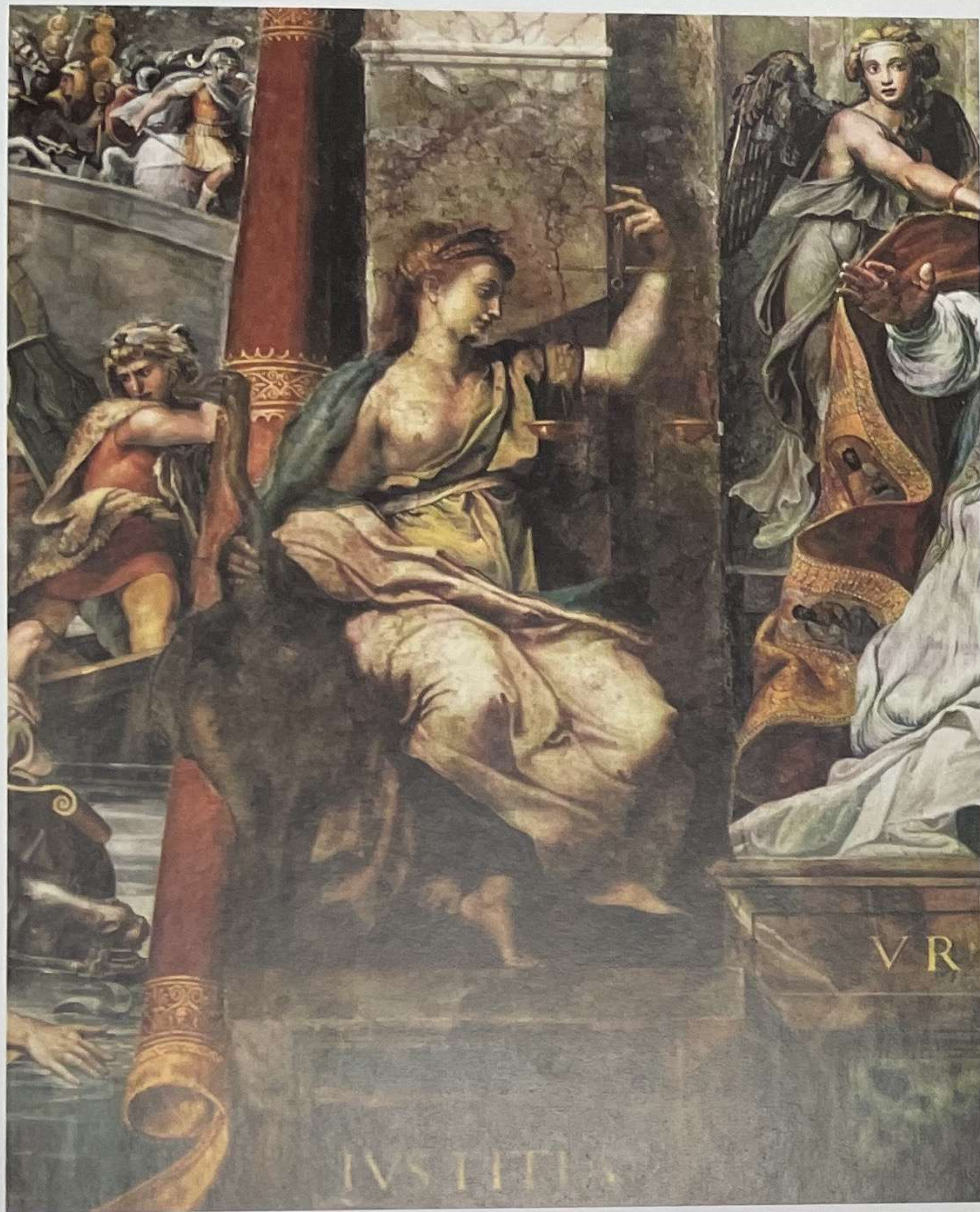


FIG. 2.15. Raphael's workshop, *Pope Clement VII* (fresco) and *Justice* (oil), 1520–24. Sala di Costantino, Vatican, Rome.

based, I assume, on the decision that it would make the room too dark.<sup>34</sup>

The tug-of-war here is of a kind that could not have occurred in Quattrocento Florence. Certainly there was a competitive environment in Florence with rival workshops vying for business. In Rome, however, the choices patrons made were based less on practical matters such as the bottega's reputation for speed, efficiency, cost, and the quality of materials used, and more on style. Painters in Rome felt freer to experiment. In fresco they could choose among three options: an oil mural executed in deep and somber tones, a light-toned traditional fresco, or Michelangelo's anti-naturalistic cangiamento, with its brilliant and ornamental look. The modes offered clear aesthetic choices, allowing the patron to express his particular taste.

#### RESPONSES TO MICHELANGELO AND HIS CANGIANTISMO

The painting usually gathered under the rubric of mannerism is distinctive in its coloring. It owes much to Michelangelo's cangiamento, especially in the medium of fresco. Easel paintings, especially altarpieces, remain more conservative in their coloring and frequently pay homage to Raphael, as, for example, in Perino del Vaga's *Nativity* (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, 1534). There is a moment of experimentation early on in Florence in the 1520s, however, when Jacopo Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino ("Red the Florentine," nicknamed for his red hair) take up cangiamento, creating some of the most daring, surprising, and memorable altarpieces of the Cinquecento.

We often note the idiosyncratic proportions and perspective of Pontormo's and Rosso's pictures, but we note



FIG. 2.16. Rosso Fiorentino, *Deposition*, 1521. Oil on panel, 11 ft. 2 1/4 in. x 6 ft. 7 in. (341 x 201 cm). Pinacoteca, Volterra.

less often the source of their eccentric coloring. These painters experimented with cangiamento in panels for palace decoration (for example, Pontormo's Joseph series for the Borgherini family) and in altarpieces. The earliest such experiment is Rosso's *Deposition* in Volterra (fig. 2.16).

Against an unnaturally brilliant blue sky and a grid of ladders and cross, men struggle to lower Christ's body. Excited reds encircle it. At the lower right, John, bent with grief, is the target of a theatrical beam of white light that also reaches to the shoulder of one of the supporting Maries. What is striking is that none of the colors is modeled down in the shadows. The coloring is the artificial mode of Michelangelo, with a few ornamental cangiante passages, such as the turban of the old man leaning over the top of the cross, or the drapery of the one at the left who screams and points helplessly.

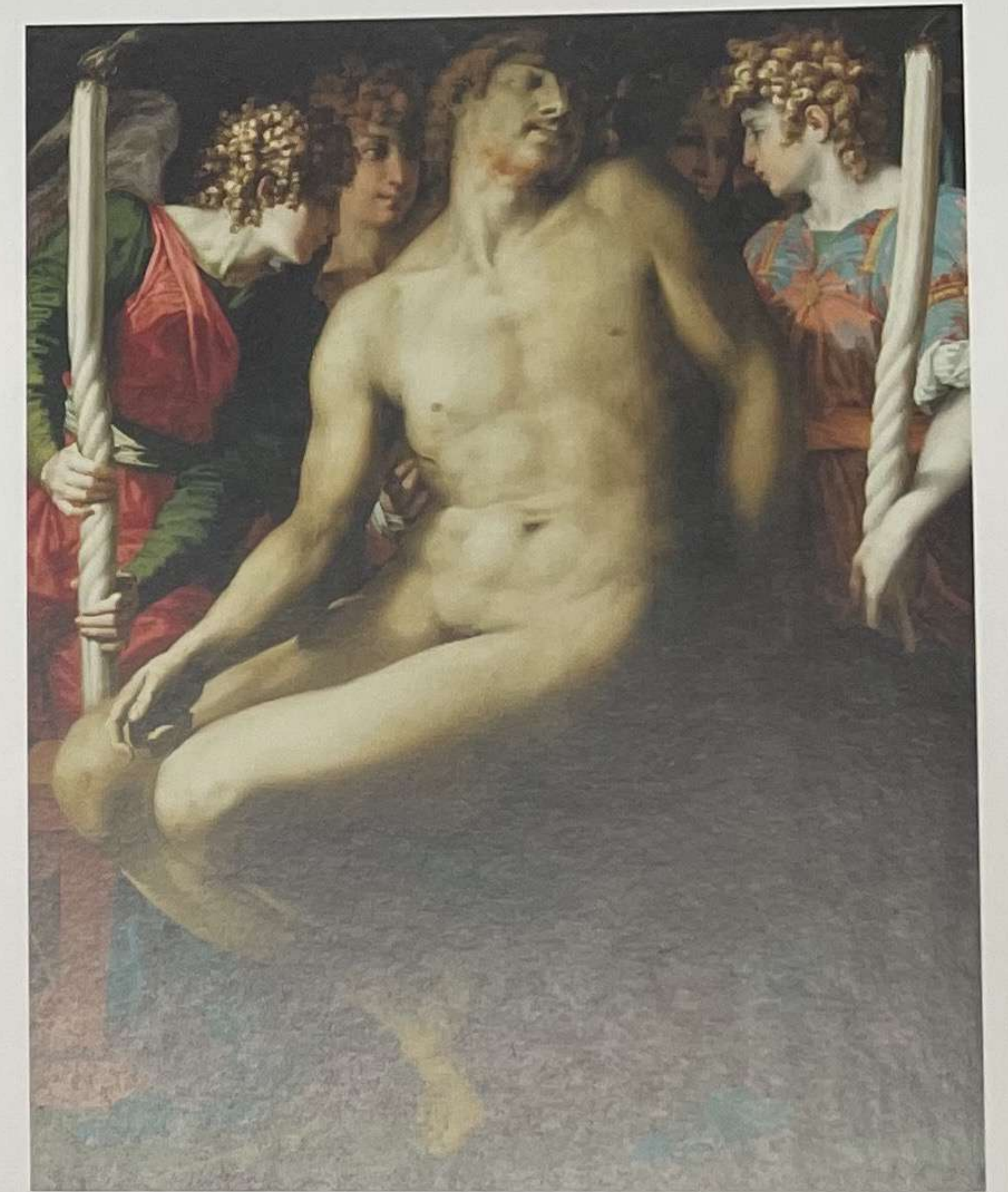


FIG. 2.17. Rosso Fiorentino, *Dead Christ in the Tomb*, c. 1524–27. Oil on panel, 52 1/2 x 41 in. (133.3 x 104.1 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

It was indeed an experiment, for in his next altarpiece, the *Marriage of the Virgin* (Florence, San Lorenzo), commissioned by Carlo Ginori, Rosso has abandoned the blond tonality in favor of a dark, Leonardo-derived background out of which brightly colored passages sparkle, with limited cangiamento. Rosso was the pupil of Andrea del Sarto, and it is from him that he would have learned to use a dark imprimatura.<sup>35</sup> In what is perhaps Rosso's masterpiece, the startling *Dead Christ in the Tomb*, created after he had departed Florence for Rome, the scene takes place within the tomb, where the dark background was required (fig. 2.17). The darkness is overcome, literally and figuratively, by the Easter dawn light entering as the stone is rolled away. One angel adds dazzle with a cangiante passage of orange shifting to pale blue in his drapery. Such a cangiante does not necessarily





FIG. 2.18. Pontormo, *Visitation*, c. 1528. Oil on panel, 79½ × 61⅜ in. (202 × 156 cm). Pieve di San Michele Arcangelo, Carmignano.



FIG. 2.19. Pontormo, *Entombment*, c. 1525–28. Oil on panel, 10 ft. 3 in. × 6 ft. 4 in. (313 × 192 cm). Santa Felicita, Florence.

derive from Michelangelo, of course, nor does the label “cangiantismo” mode fit altogether comfortably here, but neither does “sfumato,” “unione,” or perhaps even “chiaroscuro,” though the last is the closest match.

What we see in the wake of the Sistine vault is experimentation and artists combining modes in novel ways, sometimes creating new hybrids. Pontormo’s altarpieces fit the categories even less well than Rosso’s: the mysterious *Visitation* (fig. 2.18) and fascinating *Entombment* merit a close look. The *Visitation* disconcerts us with the appearance of two women (presumably serving women) who look out at us, giving them importance not merited

by their anonymity, at the same time that they each eerily echo the features of the protagonists. It is as if we see Mary and Elizabeth simultaneously in profile and in full face. The groups’ resemblance to the antique Three Graces—plus one—deepens the mystery, and the disparity of scale between the women and the men at the left adds further to our discomfiture. But the coloring is equally outlandish. The very large fields of color with minimal modeling recall the Sistine, and so does the bold hue shift in Elizabeth’s drapery.

The *Entombment* (fig. 2.19) shares with *The Visitation* a blond palette. In his life of Pontormo, Vasari remarked



of this picture that it is “painted without shadows,” by which he meant that there is no dark monochrome added to the shadow, as is also the case in Rosso’s *Volterra Deposition* and the *Visitation*. Vasari, from his perspective writing at mid-century, found such a return to early Quattrocento practice anomalous. These panels are all painted without a dark imprimatura. Is there a tinted priming at all? We would like to know, but there are no technical examinations yet. Pontormo’s *Entombment* is the altarpiece of the Capponi Chapel, which also contains by him a stained-glass window and a fresco of the *Annunciation*. What Pontormo achieves here is a consonance of coloring among the three works in the chapel. This could explain his choice here, but it does not account for it in the enigmatic *Visitation*. Seemingly dissatisfied with the classicism and idealized color that his predecessors, Raphael and Andrea del Sarto, used as vehicles to suggest the supernatural, Pontormo turned to the anti-naturalism of cangiamento. Enhanced by his eerily elongated bodies and compressed or inflated space, the colors propel these scenes out of the sphere of the mundane to an otherworldly reality. We might ask: For a subject of grief, why did he not choose chiaroscuro, the mode that best expresses a dark mood? Closer examination of the interpretation the painter is giving us may reveal the reason for his choice. We are told that originally there was a lunette above the wall opposite the altar, now destroyed, of God the Father with arms extended to lament his son.<sup>36</sup> The mother raises her hand in a gesture of farewell. The subject then is the lamentation of earthly Mother and heavenly Father, and the portent of coming resurrection. The coloring, calling attention to itself with its unexpected ornamental quality, startling cangiante, and transcendent beauty, points to the mystery half concealed here.

#### AFTER RAPHAEL AND THE SISTINE

What we see in the coloring of the painters in Rome who succeeded Michelangelo and Raphael is a kind of artistic schizophrenia. For their frescoes they adapted the coloring style of Michelangelo, and for their easel paintings a chiaroscuro that derived from Raphael’s late Roman works. An example is Michelangelo’s close follower Daniele da Volterra. It is no surprise to find him embracing cangiamento for his frescoes. What is surprising is that for his oil altarpieces he preferred chiaroscuro. Perhaps for these painters, aware of their position as

epigones, this was a way to pay homage to each of the giants. It was also a practical solution. Cangiamento, with its blond tonality, was suited to decorate large rooms, in particular palace walls. As we noted earlier, blackish walls do not make cheerful surroundings. The fantastic quality of cangiamento suited the hyperbole and playful humor that Perino del Vaga and Francesco Salviati introduced to leaven the dynastic extravaganzas they were required to create for the Medici, the Farnese, and the would-be pope, Cardinal Ricci.

Perino’s assignment for the frescoes in the Sala Paolina was to celebrate his patron, Pope Paul III (Alessandro Farnese), in two interlocked narratives. One identified him with Alexander the Great, his natal name, the other with Saint Paul, his papal name. Perino was wise enough to understand that the only way to make such a conceit palatable was with humor. He contrasts Michelangelesque sculptures in faux bronze for the Deeds of Alexander with Raphaelesque unione, enlivened with delicate cangiante touches, for the life of Saint Paul. The enormous faux bronze reliefs become mock-heroic when Perino stuffs them with oversized Michelangelesque figures in serpentine poses (fig. 2.20). The spiritual heroics of Saint Paul, such as his martyrdom by beheading, he renders in small roundels, which are trivialized by the swirl of pastel ornaments that surround and even overlap them (fig. 2.21). Even here in the reclining nudes, Perino seems intent upon combining the two great masters by sweetening and feminizing, in a Raphaelesque manner, figures that derive their initial inspiration from the doughty *Ignudi* of the Sistine vault. The sophistication and wit of these conceits relieves what could have been unbearable pomposity.

Vasari and Salviati were childhood friends. They met in Florence in 1523, according to Vasari’s account in his life of Salviati. In the 1530s they were both in Rome, and Vasari reported that there was nothing of importance that they did not copy. When the pope left town, they gained admission to the Vatican and “remained there from morning to night with nothing to eat but a morsel of bread, and where they were almost benumbed with cold.” During these years their coloring styles in easel paintings followed the current taste for a kind of chiaroscuro, a dark background setting off brighter colors. When in 1538 Salviati painted his *Visitation* fresco in the Oratorio di San Giovanni Decollato, however, he followed Raphael in the early Stanze, with some



FIG. 2.20. Perino del Vaga, assisted by Pellegrino Tibaldi, *Alexander Cutting the Gordian Knot*, 1542–47. Fresco. Sala Paolina, Castel Sant’Angelo, Rome.

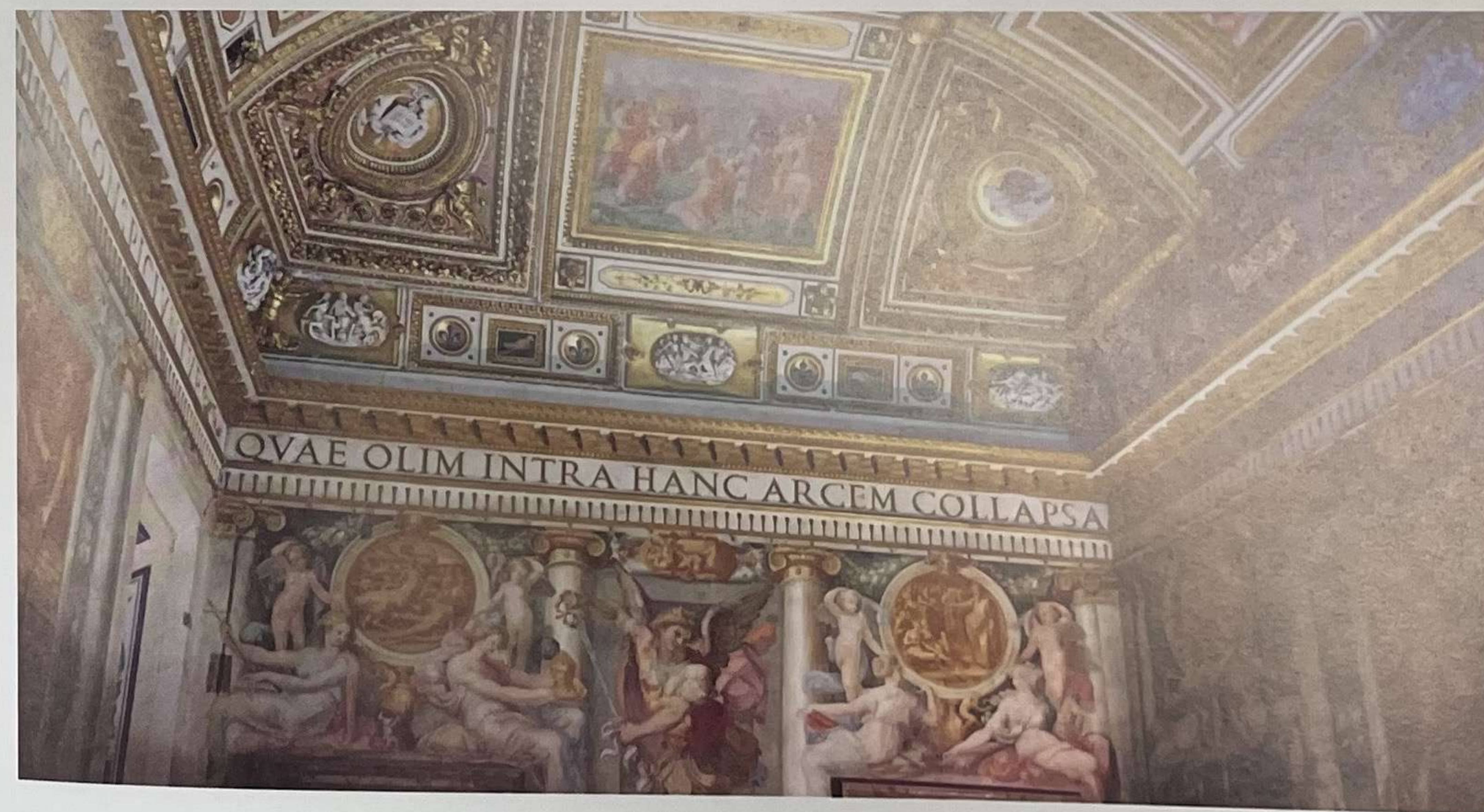


FIG. 2.21. Perino del Vaga, *The Muses Erato and Thalia and the Blinding of Elymas*, roundel at right, 1542–47. Fresco. Sala Paolina, Castel Sant’Angelo, Rome.



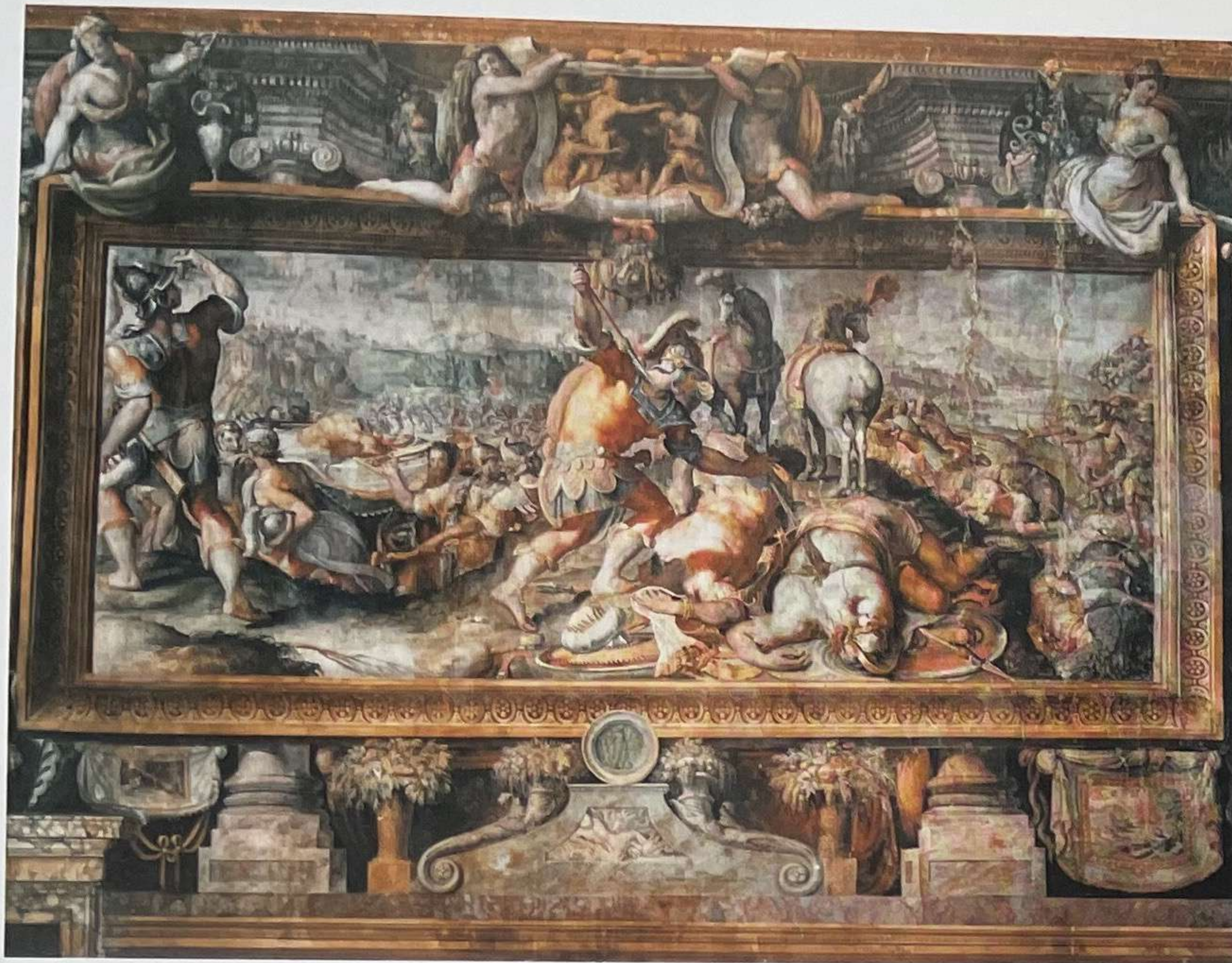


FIG. 2.22. Francesco Salviati, *Death of Saul*, c. 1553. Fresco. Sala Grande, Palazzo Ricci-Sacchetti, Rome.

added ornamental flourishes in poses and in cangianti. Hereafter, however, he exploited cangiantismo in his fresco cycles, first in Florence for Duke Cosimo's Sala dell'Udienza, and then in Rome, where he replaced Perino after his death in 1547 as the favorite of the Farnese and the papal court. Cosimo, the duke called back to Florence from exile, saw himself as reincarnated in the Roman hero Camillus returning home in triumph. To celebrate Cosimo's military and political successes Salviati employed a style simulating Roman sculptural relief, and to enhance the effect of relief he avoided deep shadow with scintillating cangianti and kept the viewer's eye on the surface.

In Rome, for Cardinal Ricci's *Salone*, he painted a very eccentric version of the life of King David. The long walls challenged him to unify them not only compositionally but also coloristically. In the *Death of Saul* he avoided chaotic variety by using bright cangiante passages in orange shifting to yellow for the major figures, the fallen Saul and the triumphant Jonathan, depicted twice, while muting the other colors and keeping them in the range of gray (fig. 2.22). This description fits his frescoes of the *Fasti Farnese* in the Farnese Palace as well. His limited palette in these large fields, which virtually eliminates blues and greens, does not seem at all



FIG. 2.23. Francesco Salviati, *Trumpeting Allegory*, 1553–63. Fresco. Palazzo Farnese, Rome.

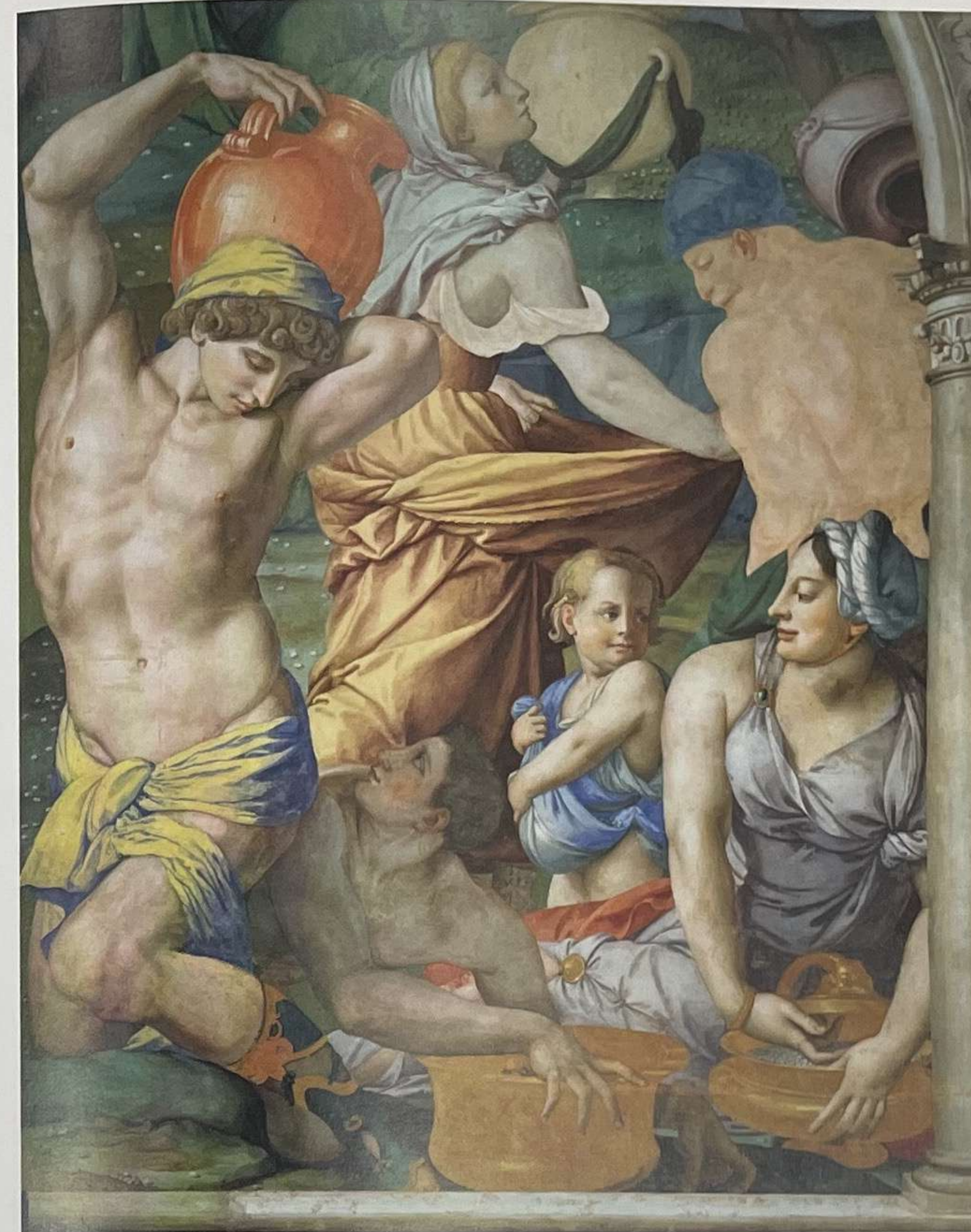


FIG. 2.24. Bronzino, *Gathering Manna*, 1540–42. Fresco. Chapel of Eleonora, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

impoverished, and the huge expanse is tied successfully together by the repetition of shades of orange and gold. In compartments on the sides, such as the one depicting a *Trumpeting Allegory* (fig. 2.23), he admits a wider range of tones, as he would also do in the smaller fields in the chapel of the pope in the Cancelleria. Salviati also applied the cangiantismo mode to his easel paintings, often minimizing the dark background preferred by his contemporaries. His coloring may seem far removed from Michelangelo's large passages of unmodeled cangianti, but we need to remember that Salviati's scenes were not on a vault sixty feet from the viewer's eyes. His is cangiantismo executed on a smaller and more delicate scale. Particularly notable is the absence of down-modeling with dark monochrome.

Agnolo Bronzino, working in Florence, shared with his Roman contemporaries a divided mind when it came to coloring. In his frescoes he imitated Michelangelo, but

in his panel paintings his model was Raphael. The tiny Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio is a showcase of up-modeled cangiantismo, where there is scarcely a drapery that is not conspicuously shifting in hue (fig. 2.24). But for the original altarpiece of the *Pietà*, now in Besançon, Bronzino rejected the prevailing taste for chiaroscuro, avoiding blackened shadows and filling his sky with a luminous lapis (fig. 2.25). The effect is closer to Raphael's *unione*—to his *Saint Cecilia* altarpiece (Bologna, Pinacoteca), for example—but he may also have been seeking a consonance between the tonality of the walls and the altar such as his master Pontormo had achieved in the Capponi Chapel (see fig. 2.19), to which Bronzino is evidently indebted for elements of his composition.

The schizophrenia of Rome and Florence did not apply to Giulio Romano. He steered a career of great success as a frescoist in Mantua from 1524 until his death in 1546, but he did not embrace Michelangelo's





FIG. 2.25. Bronzino, *Pietà*, 1543–45. Oil on panel, 8 ft. 9½ in. × 5 ft. 8 in. (268 × 173 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Besançon.



FIG. 2.26. Giulio Romano, *Madonna and Child with Saints (Fugger Altarpiece)*, 1521–22. Oil on panel. Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome.

cangiantismo. For his patron, Federico Gonzaga, he was called upon to create extravaganzas similar to those invented by Perino and Salviati, but he chose to remain close to the orbit of his mentor, Raphael. Giulio had always loved chiaroscuro. The pieces Raphael assigned to him in the busy years, such as the portrait of Doña de Requesens y Enriquez de Cardona-Anglesona (Paris, Louvre, 1518), reveal his predilection. After Raphael's death, whatever Giulio painted in Rome has an inky background with saturated colors jumping out. Particularly characteristic is his use of black in the shadows, creating a harsh contrast that Raphael had avoided. With his extreme chiaroscuro he was able to introduce drama even in such a staid and inherently static subject as the *sacra conversazione*, as in his *Madonna and Child with Saints*, known as the *Fugger Altarpiece*, where a brightly lit

glimpse into a reconstructed Roman ruin (the Market of Trajan) heightens the effect of the dark behind the figure group (fig. 2.26).<sup>37</sup>

Giulio covered the walls of Gonzaga's pleasure palace, the Palazzo Te, with extraordinary and often fantastic frescoes, which allowed him to exercise his considerable imagination. He and his patron were compatible, sharing a sometimes bawdy sense of humor. There is a range of color styles on display at the Palazzo Te, where the plan was to unfurl one fantastic conceit after another for the delectation of the guests as they moved from one room to the next. The color style varies according to the subject. In the *Sala dei Giganti*, the most flamboyant of the decorations, Giulio has the walls appear to collapse and crush the titans. Everything is exaggerated, the modeling and especially the scale of the titans who parody





FIG. 2.27. Giulio Romano, *Sala dei Giganti* (detail), 1526–34. Fresco. Palazzo Te, Mantua.

Michelangelo (fig. 2.27). Even the doors are frescoed so that the illusion of cataclysm is uninterrupted. Nowhere, however, either here or in the other rooms, is the coloring Michelangelesque. Giulio remained true to Raphael and developed his own coloring from the Sala di Costantino. Its muted hues and grayish-beige undertone can be seen in the room dedicated to the story of Cupid and Psyche. Interestingly, in the vault, Giulio depicted a night sky for the final triumph of Psyche when the gods receive her. For this he needed chiaroscuro exceeding what is possible in fresco, so he took up a version of Sebastiano's oil mural.<sup>38</sup>

Michelangelo's legacy was a mode of coloring that was found satisfactory to most of the frescoists working in his wake. It was still very much in use in the 1570s, for example, in the Passion cycle in the oratory of the Gonfalone, where some seven painters must have agreed in advance to employ it. It also solved a problem that had plagued artists since the introduction of down-modeling in the Quattrocento. Painters who found that mixing their colors and adding dark monochrome in the

shadows gave them the desired increase in naturalism also found that this technique did not work well in fresco. As thinking about modes matured and was incorporated into practice, the viability of employing different modes for different mediums gradually took hold.

The modes opened choices to the painter that had never been available before. In choosing to match a mode to a mood or a medium, or to mix modes, he distinguished himself not just in terms of his superior craftsmanship but intellectually. The traditional system of training apprentices in the workshop assured proper training in the craft and assured continuity, but it did not foster creativity. As long as it was in place, artists traded freedom to express themselves for a measure of job security. In the course of the sixteenth century the workshop system broke down and was eventually replaced by academic training for artists, which not incidentally accorded them higher social status. The transition from one system to the other was not smooth or painless or quick.

#### TRAINING OF THE PAINTER

In the course of the sixteenth century, the training of painters evolved from the apprentice system as described by Cennino Cennini at the beginning of the fifteenth century to something more like the modern system of paying for instruction. As happens today, artists who were not yet equipped to earn their livelihood undertook to obtain as much experience on their own as possible, to avoid having to pay for it. In the medieval system Cennini described, a boy was indentured to a master for around seven years, during which he would be taught the trade and given room and board in exchange for service.<sup>39</sup> The youngest apprentices swept the floor and carried the firewood, and with instruction, they learned to grind the pigments. They were taught drawing, first on erasable wax tablets, and then as they gained proficiency, in pen, metalpoint, and chalk on paper. They were taught to draw from the model. From time to time they were called upon to model a pose for the other apprentices or even for the master.<sup>40</sup> Especially for fresco, where drying time was a factor, they were indispensable in preparing the plaster, mixing the pigments, and transferring the design to the wall. Normally when the apprentice reached the age of seventeen, he could matriculate in the guild and work on his own or work as a paid associate in a workshop. By the end of the century a successful painter like Giovanni Bellini or Pietro Perugino might have a large bottega with a number of such paid affiliates. Raphael would have come into Perugino's workshop on this basis around 1500, when he reached the age of matriculation.

Raphael went on to set up his own shop, of course, and by the time he had worked in Rome for a few years, he was in such demand that he needed a small army of assistants whom he employed on his multiple projects. An expert manager, as Perugino also was, Raphael organized his workshop in a revolutionary way as a collaborative team. Rather than the assembly line arrangement typical of the Quattrocento, in which assistants were required to reproduce the master's drawings, he allowed them to develop his invention or *concetto* according to their own particular talents. He might correct these drawings, and another assistant might be assigned the task of developing the next stage of the design so that the end product was distinctly a "Raphael," but there was not the danger that he would repeat himself as Perugino had done and—a further advantage—the pupils were given leeway to develop their own styles.<sup>41</sup> After his death, his pupils

Giulio Romano (in Mantua) and Perino del Vaga (in Genoa and then in Rome) went on to establish their own shops along similar lines.

Raphael's system certainly had advantages in efficiency, and he certainly trained excellent masters using it, but it contributed in the long run to the breakdown of the traditional workshop system and the deterioration of conditions for young artists. As Rome became increasingly a mecca for young artists, many came with rudimentary or no prior training with a master. They competed for jobs while at the same time scrambling to educate themselves, making drawings after the Raphaels and Michelangelos and the myriad of antique fragments around them. Giovanni Battista Armenini, when he wrote *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting* (1587), described the vicious cycle he and others had confronted when he arrived in Rome around 1550 as an eager young painter. Masters who wanted as much work for the money as they could get paid their assistants by the job or by the day "as though they were wretched peasants," or even "by the span."<sup>42</sup> The result was that speed took precedence over quality, as the young artist quickly learned. Vasari, describing the early career of Raphael in Florence, in which he shed his provincial past and taught himself by studying Leonardo and Michelangelo, created the model of the first self-fashioned artist. In the new system, artists who no longer depended upon a single master for their training were freed to fashion their own artistic identities; however, living in poverty, working without guidance, and scrambling for hack jobs for their daily bread, they had little opportunity to do so.

Throughout our period, until well into the nineteenth century, the norm was that painters were trained in a master's studio. They were taught traditional practices with oversight until they were deemed ready to go out on their own. Just how standardized the process was varied with time and place, as was its success in readying them for the marketplace. Where guilds were in control, a glut of artists could be avoided. Without guild control, as in late Renaissance Rome and in nineteenth-century Paris, the situation for would-be painters could become perilous.

Looking closely at the period described by Armenini, we see that after Raphael's student Perino del Vaga died in 1547, there were very few workshops operating on a continuous basis in Rome. Michelangelo kept no students, and by 1549 he was finished with painting the



Pauline Chapel and was devoting himself to overseeing the building of Saint Peter's. Francesco Salviati, who took Perino's place as the favorite painter of the papacy, traveled back and forth between his native Florence and Rome, and he was absent altogether in 1556–58, working in France. He received the major commissions, such as the decoration of Cardinal Ricci's newly acquired palace and the Cappella del Pallio in the Palazzo della Cancelleria, but he did not maintain a Roman workshop where he trained apprentices or employed assistants on a sustained basis.

We can get a sense of how the workshop was operating at this time by looking closely at the assistants hired by Salviati during his busy years at mid-century. He hired a large number of local assistants, but he had not trained them. For Cardinal Ricci's palace, he himself painted only in the principal room, the Salone with the story of David (see fig. 2.22). For the ten adjacent rooms the cardinal required to be painted, he gave *carte blanche* to his trusted collaborators, Poncio Jacquio and Marc Duval. He also picked up painters who were available—for example, Pellegrino Tibaldi, who had assisted Perino del Vaga in the Castel Sant'Angelo until his death, and Domenico Zaga. At the Cappella del Pallio the busy master himself executed the altar in oil and the frescoes in the lunettes, but above the second register he limited his involvement to supplying designs, and we do not find his hand.

Nicole Dacos has identified the work of two Spaniards, Roviale Spagnuolo and Gaspar Becerra, there.<sup>43</sup> Vasari also listed them as collaborators in his decoration of the Sala dei Cento Giorni in 1546, and Dacos has also found Becerra's hand in the Della Rovere Chapel of Daniele da Volterra. So for these large-scale projects there was a corps of freelance assistants, many of whom were foreigners, who moved from job to job and master to master. They could not be expected to acquire the style of each new master. Evidently the patrons tolerated a wider disparity of style than had previously been acceptable.

The situation described by Armenini was one in which the traditional workshop system had broken down. From the point of view of the artist, it was dire: many painters had to abandon their career. For the master, the new situation created new challenges and new possibilities. Patrons wanted larger and larger spaces covered, and sometimes, as in the case of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, they wanted it done with great

speed. Vasari executed the large Sala dei Cento Giorni in the hundred days specified by the patron by exploiting the labor market. He had to assemble a workshop quickly in Rome, so he used what must have been a group of painters who had worked together before to execute the entire upper zone. Filling it with copious ornaments, they created a coherent design, but one that is quite distinct from the lower zone. Here Vasari himself took charge of the important histories showing the deeds of Pope Paul III, making use of those painters who were able to work in his style and follow his designs.

These masters, Perino, Salviati, and Vasari, exercised less control and oversight than their predecessors had, but unlike Raphael, they took all the credit. Their assistants, even though they were mature artists, never achieved independent status or the prestige to be hired as masters themselves. Of the assistants working for Perino, Salviati, and Vasari, only Pellegrino Tibaldi, who was born in 1527 (making him twenty-one or so when he was working for Salviati), became a master with commissions of his own, and he achieved this position by moving back home to Bologna, away from the killing competition of Rome.<sup>44</sup>

As a result, painters had to rely on educating themselves.<sup>45</sup> Federico Zuccaro, who would later found the Roman Academy, made a series of drawings showing his brother Taddeo suffering as an apprentice under an abusive master and having to train himself by copying the works of Raphael, Michelangelo, the façade decorations of Polidoro da Caravaggio, and the antique ruins everywhere around.

In the seventeenth century in Rome, the conditions described by Armenini in the late sixteenth century continued to prevail. Patrizia Cavazzini, who worked from court records, describes part-time painters who declared that their careers were painting, but worked as soldiers, paint-grinders, or something else. Some had other vocations such as notary before learning drawing and becoming painters. Their options were to pay to join a studio and learn from a master, or they could attempt to teach themselves by copying the art around them, as Taddeo Zuccaro had done. These studios or schools seem to have been focused on copying much more than on theory. There was a surprising mobility from one school to another, so it was not a question of learning the style of the master, as it had been in the workshop. Even apprentices (usually called *servi*, or servants,

significantly) moved around.<sup>46</sup> An apprentice might be required to do the work of a household servant such as making beds, housecleaning, grocery shopping, tending the fire, and carrying water.<sup>47</sup> When the shop boy moved up to become an assistant he was entitled to some pay, but it was usually held until he left the master's service. Permission might be given him to sell independently and keep the profit.

In seventeenth-century Rome there were art dealers—such as a certain Pellegrino Peri, who had a shop where he sold his pictures—who contracted with foreign painters upon their arrival in the city to paint for him, both copies and original work. The terms were a kind of indenturing, but they gave the painter a job and a start. He lived with the dealer and worked on the premises, as in the old-fashioned master/pupil system. The best of them broke free after a year or so and went out successfully on their own. Peri also lent them money, sometimes to their regret.<sup>48</sup> Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, who came from Genoa, was quickly identified as a talented painter by Peri, who therefore tried to keep him out of sight by urging him to paint upstairs. The sage Castiglione, however, insisted on staying in the shop, where he presumably hoped to be noticed by potential clients.

The creation of academies was intended to provide an alternative and more dignified manner of training artists and preparing them for careers. They appeared first in Florence, then in Rome and Bologna, and eventually in France. When in 1563 Vasari persuaded Duke Cosimo to sponsor the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, he was fulfilling a lifelong ambition to raise the status of the artists to that of the poets, and artistic practice to that of a liberal art. It has been shown that subsequently the Accademia became a useful tool by which the state controlled the arts, but this was not the intention at the outset, nor was it the purpose of the Roman Accademia di San Luca.<sup>49</sup> In Rome the motivation was to replace the broken workshop system and to provide training of artists.<sup>50</sup> The Carracci too recognized the need for professional instruction and instituted their Accademia degli Incamminati in Bologna in 1582. The opportunity to draw from the model virtually disappeared when the traditional workshop dissolved; it was too expensive for young artists to undertake on their own. It was the principal benefit the academies would offer.<sup>51</sup>

In addition to drawing from the model, the academies offered instruction in perspective, anatomy, and

other essentials, and once Federico Zuccaro took charge in the Roman Accademia, lectures in theory became an important offering. The French would imitate the Roman Accademia di San Luca when they founded their own Académie Royale in the mid-seventeenth century, but because it was immediately commandeered to serve the monarch and the state, the training of French artists was closely controlled, a story we will pick up in Chapter 4.

The plight of artists described here is the story of the underclass and especially immigrants to Rome. In seventeenth-century Rome, the papal court and the cardinals continued to spend lavishly and large workshops such as Bernini's flourished, but those working in them were no longer dependent solely on a master for their training, which was augmented and professionalized by the Accademia. In Venice, the presence of a guild controlled many aspects of training, production, and sale so that the traditional workshop, often family based, continued to function.<sup>52</sup> There in the sixteenth century the use of canvas largely replaced wood supports. Especially in the hands of Titian, its use would open up the new world of textured surface.

#### TITIAN AND OPEN BRUSHWORK

We have seen that early in the Cinquecento, painters began allowing the tinted priming to show through the translucent oil layers to unify the tonality of their painting. It took longer for them to avail themselves of another of the qualities of oil, its capacity to create a textured surface, and to make use of the expressive power of impasto. A perfectly smooth surface had always been one of the marks of good craftsmanship, so it was not an easy transition for artists or patrons to learn to value texture, but the use of canvas as a support helped ease the way. Canvas was pioneered in Venice, where because it was a shipbuilding center and a port, varying weights and weaves for sails were available in abundance. Cheaper, less heavy than wood, and easier to transport because it can be rolled, canvas had practical advantages over panel.

Canvas had been used in the Quattrocento, particularly when weight was a matter of concern—for example, for banners to be carried in processions. The early users of oil on canvas prepared it as they did a panel, with layers of gesso to create a perfectly smooth surface. Only slowly did they test the possibility of allowing the texture of the weave to show through. Once oil painters discovered that all they needed to do was apply an isolating





FIG. 2.28. Titian, *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, 1523–26. Oil on canvas, 69 × 76 in. (175 × 193 cm). Prado, Madrid.

layer between the canvas and the paint, the combination of oil on canvas won the field and would eventually replace all other supports.<sup>53</sup>

It was Titian who was most important in exploring the texture that oil paint could offer. His paintings before 1540 that have been studied in the laboratory were found to have a gesso preparation. It was not necessarily thick enough to fill in the interstices of the weave but just to cover the tops of the threads, so the texture of the fabric was not suppressed, only diminished.<sup>54</sup> Most often Titian primed his canvas with lead white and some black, giving the imprimatura a light-gray appearance. He experimented with various tints, but he became less consistent in this practice toward 1530, and by the mid-1540s he was painting directly on the gesso, as he would choose to do increasingly in his later career. Only after he had been painting on canvas for decades and had begun to appreciate the advantage of exploiting the weave did he try out the effect of mixing thin and thick paint side by side.

In the preparation of the design, Venetian practice diverged from that of central Italy. It used to be thought that Giorgione, and following him Titian, dispensed with a careful preparation and at most sketched only rough outlines before beginning to paint. Recent research has

revealed fine brush underdrawings in early sixteenth-century works on both panel and canvas by Giovanni Bellini, Cima da Conegliano, Sebastiano, and even Giorgione, but we know that Giorgione allowed himself a great deal of freedom in the process of painting, as we saw in his exquisite little canvas *The Tempest* (see fig. 0.4), where he painted the woman on top of the already-painted landscape.<sup>55</sup> A central Italian painter would have planned it out and left space reserved for the figure.

It now appears Titian only brushed in major figures with broad, fluid lines in black paint. He did not work entirely freehand, to be sure; nevertheless, his procedure is more improvised than his contemporaries', and it is certainly a far cry from Raphael's regular practice of transferring a detailed cartoon. This was Titian's first step in his long career that would eventually lead him to an innovation that would open a new dimension of expression.

Using only a rough underdrawing, he made changes as he went along. He would develop the composition in the painting process, repainting with additional layers to make corrections or canceling an area by painting it out. Frequently he made changes to reposition a head to increase the interaction between figures. Rather than



FIG. 2.29. Titian, *Danaë and the Shower of Gold*, 1560–65. Oil on canvas, 51<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 71<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (129.5 × 181.2 cm). Prado, Madrid.

reserving an area for a figure, he might paint the figure on top of the landscape, as Giorgione had done.<sup>56</sup> His spontaneous approach made it difficult to delegate to the workshop, as Raphael learned to do. Titian's assistants in his early and mature period were largely limited to preparing his materials and making replicas.

Titian experimented in these years with impasto and the direction of his brushstroke, which is occasionally visible. He developed a keen awareness of which areas required fine finish because they were prominent and could be seen at close range and in good light, and which areas could be given more summary treatment. For example, he lavished attention on details in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* for the Camerino of Duke Alfonso d'Este (fig. 2.28), but left the distant God the Father at the summit of his great *Assunta* in the Frari in bold impasto. His treatment of flesh is literally sensuous, appealing to the sense of touch, as Roger de Piles said was true of Rubens.<sup>57</sup> (Rubens made careful study of Titian and of Veronese.)

In 1545 Titian sojourned in Rome and made pictures for the Farnese, including *Danaë and the Shower of Gold* for the chancellor, Alessandro. After returning home to Venice he seems to have decided to cast his lot with the emperor rather than the pope. He visited Charles V in Augsburg, made his portrait, and one of his son Prince Philip, soon to become king of Spain. Titian then initiated a bold undertaking. He created

another version of the Danaë (fig. 2.29) and sent it as a gift to Philip, a maneuver that resulted in the agreement to make a further six mythological paintings known as *poesie*. Philip did not determine the subjects, or even the timetable. Titian was granted the extraordinary freedom to choose the subjects and to dispatch the pictures on his own schedule. In keeping with the boldness of the gesture, he pushed beyond his previous boundaries to work with an unprecedented spontaneity. Techniques he had previously used in selective passages he now applied to the entire painting. He had explored unblended brushstroke experimentally in his portrait of his friend Pietro Aretino (Florence, Pitti). Aretino reportedly liked the portrait, but significantly he felt the need to explain away the rough texture, saying if the painter had been paid more he would have given it a more finished appearance.<sup>58</sup> In his portrait of Philip, he rendered the armor in excruciating detail. But for the lovely Danaë imprisoned in her tower, he contrasted long, languid strokes on her flesh with the way he painted her wizened warden. The old woman, who greedily holds up her apron in the hope of capturing some of the treasure, is treated with rapid impasto blobs—*macchie*, as Vasari called them. The sheet beneath the Danaë is rendered with agitated impasto strokes that express her eagerness, set beside passages where the canvas shows through thin paint.



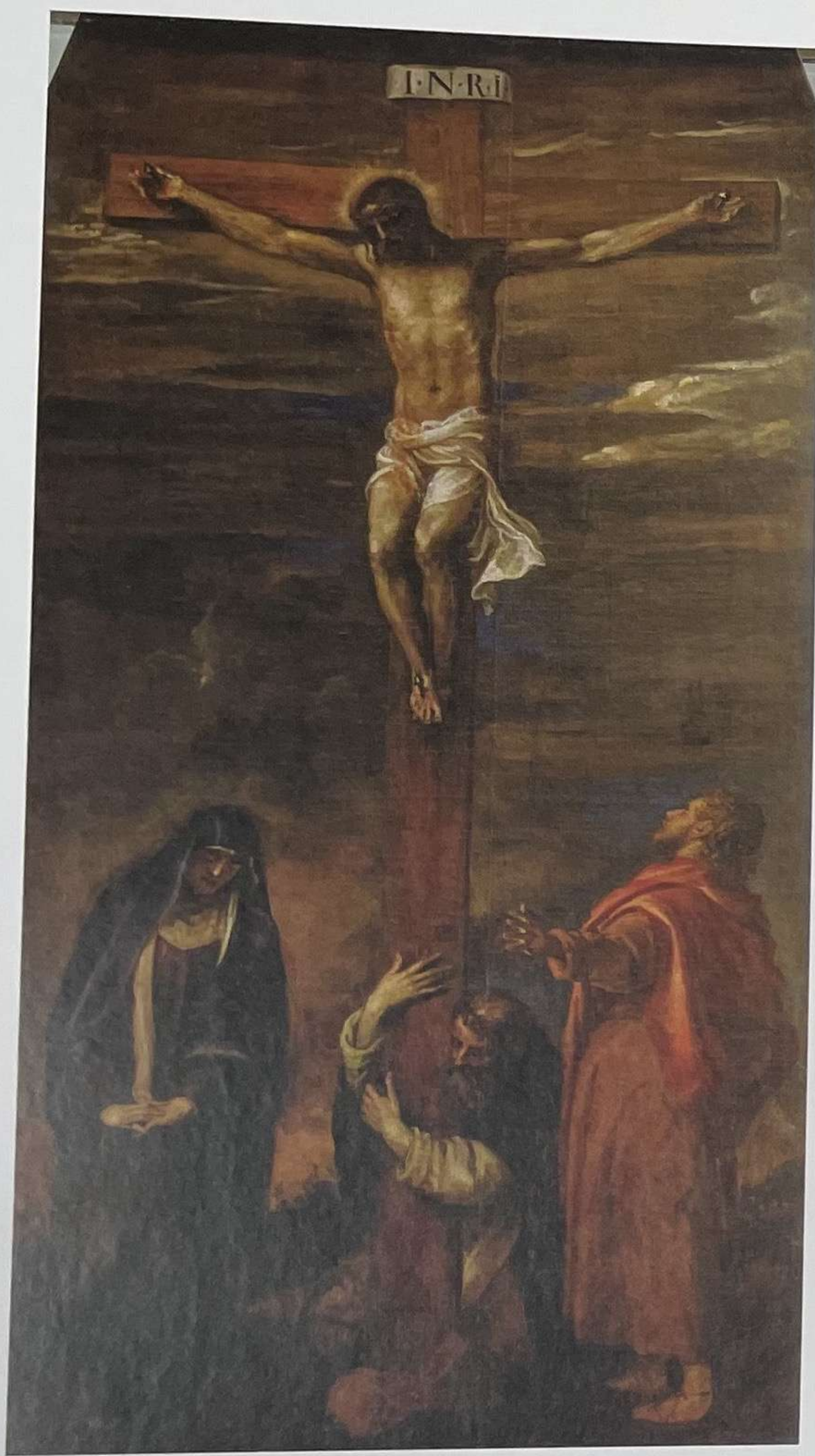


FIG. 2.30. Titian, *Crucifixion*, 1558. Oil on canvas, 12 ft. 2 in. × 6 ft. 6 in. (371 × 197 cm). San Domenico, Ancona.

Coarse canvas of the sort Titian grew to prefer in his later years allows the brush to bounce slightly across the tops of the threads. The color of underlying layers can remain visible in the gaps. When a brushstroke is laid with a quick, light touch over a layer that is already dry, especially with a stiff paint containing lead white, the fresh paint may be slightly repelled by the underlying layer. Again the color beneath may show through. We are calling this “open brushwork,” and with its apparent

unfinish, it opens an invitation to the viewer to engage as never before.<sup>59</sup>

The sensuous Danaë and her open-mouthed acceptance of Jupiter’s penetration of her sanctum entice the viewer to a new level of emotional participation. Titian has recognized that the traditional smooth finish keeps the viewer at a remove. The perfect poise of a well-designed contrapposto figure invites admiration but not empathy. His second Danaë has lost the composure of her more demure sister. She has discarded the drape, which opens a dark triangle between her legs that the painter daubed suggestively with dark, unblended strokes. The daring technique is well matched to the unexampled titillation he explores here.

Several years passed before Titian came to terms with how he might apply his new technique to a religious work. In the Ancona *Crucifixion* he has used rough texture to incite the worshippers to spiritual emotion (fig. 2.30). They are urged to engage with the unrestrained grief of the actors. Mary here has lost her grace and equanimity, Dominic clutches the cross, John throws open his arms in anguish. The brooding sky sets off the lonely figure of Christ, whose face, concealed in shadow, must be completed by the beholder. Titian has understood that his own feeling is transmitted in his brushstroke, creating a new kind of bond with the beholder.

In paintings prepared with a full-scale cartoon to which the hands of various assistants have contributed, the creator’s imaginative idea is transcribed and refined into a cerebrated distillate. The perfection of the design is what is sought. Titian, bypassing the process of preparatory drawing, transcribed his idea directly onto the canvas with his brushstroke. His idea is recorded in the stroke with vigor and feeling, and viewers respond with their own emotion to that energy.

Titian was ahead of his time with his discovery of open brushwork and the appeal of unfinish, but the ground had been prepared by the increasing freedom that painters exercised in their handling. Note, for example, the broad brushwork in the drapery of Rosso’s *Dead Christ in the Tomb* (see fig. 2.17). As the painters’ status rose, collectors became interested in their process of conception: cartoons and drawings began to be collected. Increasingly collectors could appreciate how the painter’s imagined idea is conveyed directly to the viewer in the sketch or the apparently unfinished work. Vasari was able to appreciate the power of the sketch, but he held

conflicting ideas. He remarked of Giulio Romano that often his drawings were much better than his paintings, because they were made when he was fired up with the idea.<sup>60</sup> But at the same time he took Titian to task for his *pittura di macchia* (“blobs”).

Titian’s contemporaries were as reluctant to accept “imperfection” in painting as they were in sculpture: They replaced missing limbs of Roman statues such as the Laocoön. They were both intrigued and bewildered by Michelangelo’s *non finito*. For example, the Medici duke inherited sculptures of the four slaves (Florence, Accademia), left in various stages of unfinish in Michelangelo’s workshop because he had decided against using them on the tomb of Pope Julius. Unwilling to display them inside the palaces, the grand duke decided to incorporate them into a fantastic grotto in the Boboli Gardens, designed by Bernardo Buontalenti, where their rough condition would seem consonant with this evocation of an anomaly of nature, with its cave-like walls and stalactite ceiling.

Marco Boschini in the next century understood that, up close, Titian’s (and Tintoretto’s) paintings are a mass of blobs, but when the viewer moves back and sees them from an appropriate distance, the chaos resolves into a coherent image. This movement that the spectator makes engages him as a participant with the painter in the creative act.<sup>61</sup> Titian discovered that forms painted with impasto, paint raised on the surface, seem closest to the viewer’s eye, so he could create space by making the distant objects smooth and untextured. This kind of unfinish would grow in popularity as time went by. Collectors in the seventeenth century increasingly sought to buy rough sketches because they appreciated the intimate glimpse of the artist’s process that they provide. We will return to the aesthetic of the sketch with Delacroix and the Impressionists.

Titian, like Rembrandt, who in his later years would learn much from him, abandoned the facture of finish and the perfected poise of the classical model. A figure off-balance or overwhelmed with grief, in becoming vulnerable, invites our empathy. See, for example, his precariously balanced Europa on the back of the abducting Jupiter/Bull (Boston, Gardner Museum); or Saint Margaret (Madrid, Prado), whose disheveled garments express her terror of the dragon at her feet; or Andromeda (London, Wallace Collection), whose pose Titian reworked throughout the process of painting, only

finally achieving the poignant veering curve away from the monster in the sea that unbalances her.<sup>62</sup> Perfection, he seems to say, distances and excludes the beholder. A rough-textured painting can express more and engage the viewer better than the perfectly finished one.

#### VERONESE AND BROKEN COLOR

A remark attributed to both Titian and Degas—“It is the business of the painter to use Venetian red [a dull earth pigment] and make it look like vermilion”—distills the genius of Veronese. We can account for his genius with science only up to a point; some of it is inspired intuition, his innate sense for color harmony.

Paolo Veronese, as his name implies, was not a native of Venice but moved there from Verona in 1553. He arrived, with his own style fully formed and distinct from Titian’s and Tintoretto’s, to execute a state commission of ceilings for the Ducal Palace. By this time Titian was famous internationally and would be the first choice for any Venetian commission, but these ceilings were to be done in fresco, a medium Titian no longer practiced and one in which Veronese had considerable experience. He would become the favorite of patrons who preferred his joyous creations and his high-value palette over Tintoretto’s blackish chiaroscuro. Today, Veronese is often dismissed as a lighthearted decorative painter. Perhaps he does not show enough angst for our taste—Van Gogh, Caravaggio, Rembrandt are the Old Masters preferred in these days—but this is to seriously underestimate him.

Veronese’s ill-deserved reputation for frivolity and superficiality may be encouraged by a misunderstanding of the transcription of the notorious hearing before the Inquisition in 1573. Called before them to answer questions about his *Last Supper*, recently installed in the refectory of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Veronese responded that he had included a dwarf and a German soldier because he was trying to fill up the space. His answers might sound flippant, but he was honestly giving voice to the dilemma of the painter commissioned to fill a canvas measuring more than eighteen feet high by forty-two feet long, when the scripture accounts for only thirteen participants. The fault lay with the patron, not the painter. Veronese was renowned by this time for his paintings of banquets—he had made four for refectories before this one. He captured a party atmosphere better than anyone. His strength was in celebratory subjects rather than somber



ones, and his coloring style was ideally suited to them. The patron of the refectory where they wanted a Last Supper, the Dominican friar Andrea de' Buoni, should have understood that the premonition of the Passion, which needs to be a part of the subject, was not easy to convey with Veronese's radiant style. Eventually the case was settled and all parties were satisfied with a compromise: the title was changed to *Feast in the House of Levi*.

In light of our contemporary appraisal of Veronese, it is interesting to read that Théophile Gautier wrote in 1860 that Veronese was the greatest colorist who ever lived.<sup>63</sup> In curious contrast, the seventeenth-century French academician Roger de Piles remarked: "He does not show any great intelligence of the *claro oscuro* in his dispositions. He did not understand it as a principle of his art."<sup>64</sup>

Both these critics, one approving, the other censuring, were responding to what we now know was Veronese's distinctive practice. The examination of his paintings in the laboratory has revealed that he used a very pale tinted imprimatura and occasionally painted directly on the gesso. Even when Tintoretto and Bassano were using dark primings, Veronese adhered to his choice of a lead-white priming, to which he might add a touch of carbon and a little ochre.<sup>65</sup> The nineteenth-century critic Gautier appreciated Veronese's practice because it corresponded to the way painters of his day, precursors to the Impressionists, were beginning to paint, in rebellion against the academic tradition represented by de Piles, which promoted tinted imprimatura, or by Gautier's time a monotone underpainting. Veronese did indeed avoid dark shadows, both those that can be assisted by colored imprimatura and those achieved with *chiaroscuro* by the addition of dark monochrome.

He modeled his draperies with a darker consonant color. In the *Dream of Saint Helena*, for example, her mustard-yellow skirt is shaded with the same red lake that is used in the overdress. In the *Allegory of Love, Happy Union*, the man's bright-yellow drapery is shaded in a deep bluish green, which echoes the verdigris of his sleeve just above (fig. 2.31).<sup>66</sup> These examples of his shading are a clue to the way he composed with color. He created a rich tone made up of several related pigments, then he colored an adjacent figure by picking up one of the components and combined new related pigments. The two colors he has created are akin but distinct, and richly harmonious. Because his color is so vibrant, it is tempting

to think that he is working like an early Quattrocento Cennini-style artist using pure, fully saturated pigments, but he is not. This is the magic referred to by Titian/Degas: he makes an incandescent effect by the way he arranges standard materials. This use of contrasting color for modeling might seem to be related to *cangiamento*, but its purpose is the opposite. *Cangiante* colors shift to hues that contrast and thereby call attention to their disparity. They are not inimical pairings, to be sure, but they are artificially combined, not combinations you see in nature. Veronese models with a contrasting but friendly color, which looks natural. The eye does not see them as vibrant reverberations, enhancing one another, though indeed they are.

Critics praise Veronese's treatment of textures, especially textiles. There is no more stunning display of heavy brocades, filmy veils, shiny satins, fur, and velvet to be found in paint. Only Titian equaled his handling of flesh, but a distinction can be drawn between their ways of handling it. Titian painted his nudes to move the viewer's emotion; Veronese evokes admiration for his nudes just as he commands our awe in his handling of fabrics. In fact he appeals not so much to the emotions as to the senses. In his *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (Caen, Musée des Beaux-Arts), he played off the rippling muscles and tawny skin of the satyr against the pearly-white flesh of the demonic temptress. He insists on the sense of touch: the woman presses her long, curved nails delicately into the palm of the hand Anthony raises to protect himself. Veronese often evokes the sense of hearing by including orchestras and choirs in his pictures. One of his delightful inventions shows Venus covering the ears of Adonis, asleep on her lap, to prevent his hounds, impatient for the hunt, from rousing him with their barking (fig. 2.32). Touch is everywhere in Veronese's pictures, religious or mythological, and its sensuousness is enhanced by his coloring. At the center of his masterpiece, the *Mystical Marriage of Saint Catherine* (Venice, Accademia), the Christ Child reaches to grasp Catherine's finger as the boy beside her tenderly lifts her hand to touch the Child's body. In his *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, a cascade of touches begins with Mars caressing Venus, who in turn tousles Cupid's soft curls as the boy reaches up in alarm to grasp his mother's wrist, and the puppy jumps eagerly on him (fig. 2.33). The chain of gestures is linked together with strokes of gold, beginning on Mars's helmet and armor, moving over and down



FIG. 2.31. Veronese, *Allegory of Love, Happy Union*, c. 1575. Oil on canvas, 73 3/4 x 73 1/2 in. (187.4 x 186.7 cm). National Gallery, London.

to Venus's hair and garments, descending finally to the spotted puppy. None of the golden tones is identical, but they relate visually and are echoed in the sky behind.

Philippe de Champaigne, in lecturing on Titian's *Entombment* (Paris, Louvre) before the Académie Royale in the 1660s, called attention to his use of broken color in the red shades on the Virgin's blue robe.<sup>67</sup> It was the Académie that gave the name "broken color" to Veronese's color and considered him its exemplary practitioner. An understanding of what is meant by "broken color" has only recently come into focus. There seems to be no sixteenth-century term, and no equivalent Italian

term, but one finds seventeenth-century references in English, Dutch, and German.<sup>68</sup> Vasari showed an appreciation for the kind of harmony being discussed here when he criticized its absence as "when the colours are laid on brightly and vividly in a disagreeable disharmony so that they are tinted and loaded with body."<sup>69</sup> None of the theorists in the sixteenth century discusses Veronese's color. Armenini does not mention him at all, and Raffaeolo Borghini's short biography lists a number of works but does not comment. Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo merely remarks that "he displayed his supreme art of coloring" in *The Marriage at Cana*.<sup>70</sup>





FIG. 2.32. Veronese, *Venus and Adonis*, c. 1580. Oil on canvas, 63 3/4 x 75 1/4 in. (162 x 191 cm). Prado, Madrid.

It is likely that the origin of *couleur rompue* (literally, “broken color”) refers to the old concept of (cor)rupted color—that is, mixed—creating a color that falls between the hues. The various writers at the Académie, where the term acquired its definitive meaning slowly, experienced difficulty sorting out whether it should be used for the judicious juxtaposition of tones to achieve an effect of unity (union) through optical mixing, as De Piles argued in describing Veronese, or whether it should be reserved for physical mixtures, as André Félibien contended in his dictionary entry of 1676–90:

Colours are broken when they are not used all pure and simple, but when one mixes two or more together to weaken or subdue one that is too vivid; such as to diminish the vividness of lake one blends in a bit of terre verte; or when taking away the brilliance of vermilion one blends in a brown-red, either while mixing the paints on the palette or while working on the canvas after applying them there. If a drapery that is of a bright yellow is shaded with a dark lake one says that this drapery is *yellow broken by red*. It is yet better said that it is *yellow shaded with lake*, if the two colours are separate, because the word “broken” is only used

accurately when the colour is not pure but mixed with another one. And finally a broken colour, among painters, is one that is extinguished, and of which one diminishes the force; which serves well to create the union and the agreement which ought to exist among all those [colours] that compose a painting. Titian, Paul Veronese and the other Lombards have all made happy use of them.<sup>71</sup>

Certainly what Félibien described matches what cross sections reveal of Veronese’s structures. Veronese excelled at glazing one color on top of another to create a third. His structures are deceptively simple, as we have seen: a mixture of two opaque pigments glazed with a third, judiciously chosen to maintain clarity. De Piles went beyond Félibien to describe an effect more difficult to analyze. What de Piles admired beside his mixtures and layering was Veronese’s artistry in the placement of colors in relationship.

Ultimately what was recognized as *couleur rompue* by the academicians was an effect that could be achieved by several techniques. Titian and Tintoretto, in the view of the Académie, also achieved it, but if we accept the narrower and more manageable definition of Félibien, that

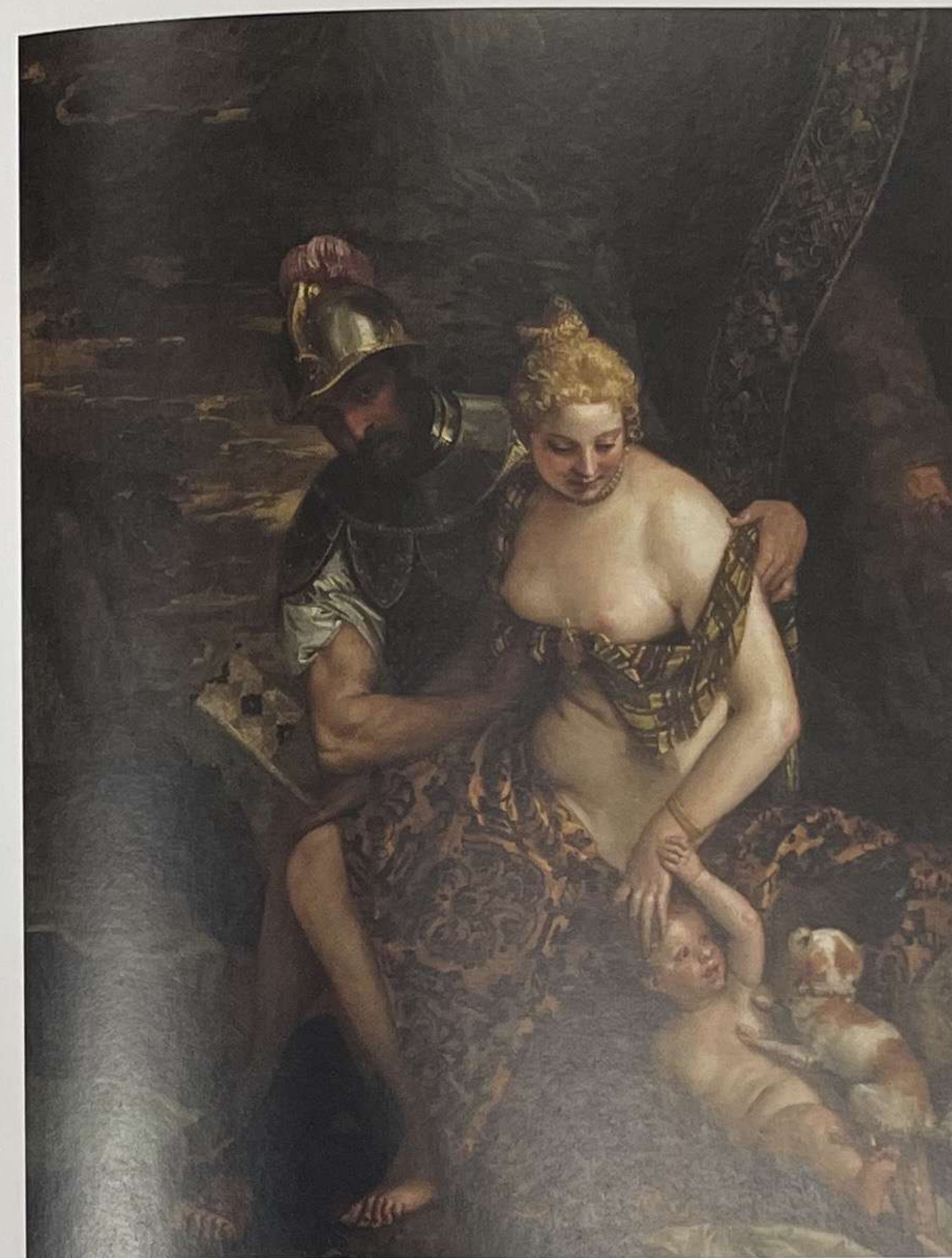


FIG. 2.33. Veronese, *Mars, Venus, and Cupid*, c. 1580. Oil on canvas, 65 x 49 4/5 in. (165.2 x 126.5 cm). National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.

broken color is a technique of mixing and layering, then only Veronese’s practice fits the definition. In Dutch landscape painting of the next century, the technique was an essential addition to the painters’ repertory.

It is clear that what Veronese was doing, and what Félibien is describing, is unique in Cinquecento practice, and the academicians were right to try to isolate it and describe it. The practice would have a rich life in the succeeding century, particularly, of course, in France.

#### BAROCCI

The Council of Trent in its decree on sacred images (1563) had endorsed images in churches that appealed to the emotions of the viewers but avoided any taint of the lascivious. Federico Barocci developed a style that could perfectly answer these requirements, so that his altarpieces were in demand for Counter-Reformation churches in Rome and throughout central Italy.<sup>72</sup> Working in Urbino, Raphael’s natal city, he studied early

Raphael and adapted from him and from Correggio a pale-gray imprimatura. At a time when a dark palette was being used widely, he introduced clear, clean colors, softened with a sfumato derived from Leonardo and Correggio in what could be called a revival of the unione mode. His contemporaries spoke of the *vaghezza*, meaning “loveliness,” of his coloring. The description suggests its particular appeal: he created images that had a sensuous allure, without crossing the line into the sensual or the erotic, much as Correggio had done.<sup>73</sup> The viewer was drawn in to participate empathetically, an approach that would be cultivated in Baroque religious images.

Barocci’s coloring more than anyone else’s poses the question of whether it should be defined as cangiamento or broken color. His shifting hues are unquestionably ornamental, yet he is committed to plausible naturalism. His use of a light imprimatura resembles Veronese’s, but his coloring is more frankly decorative. In fact Rubens



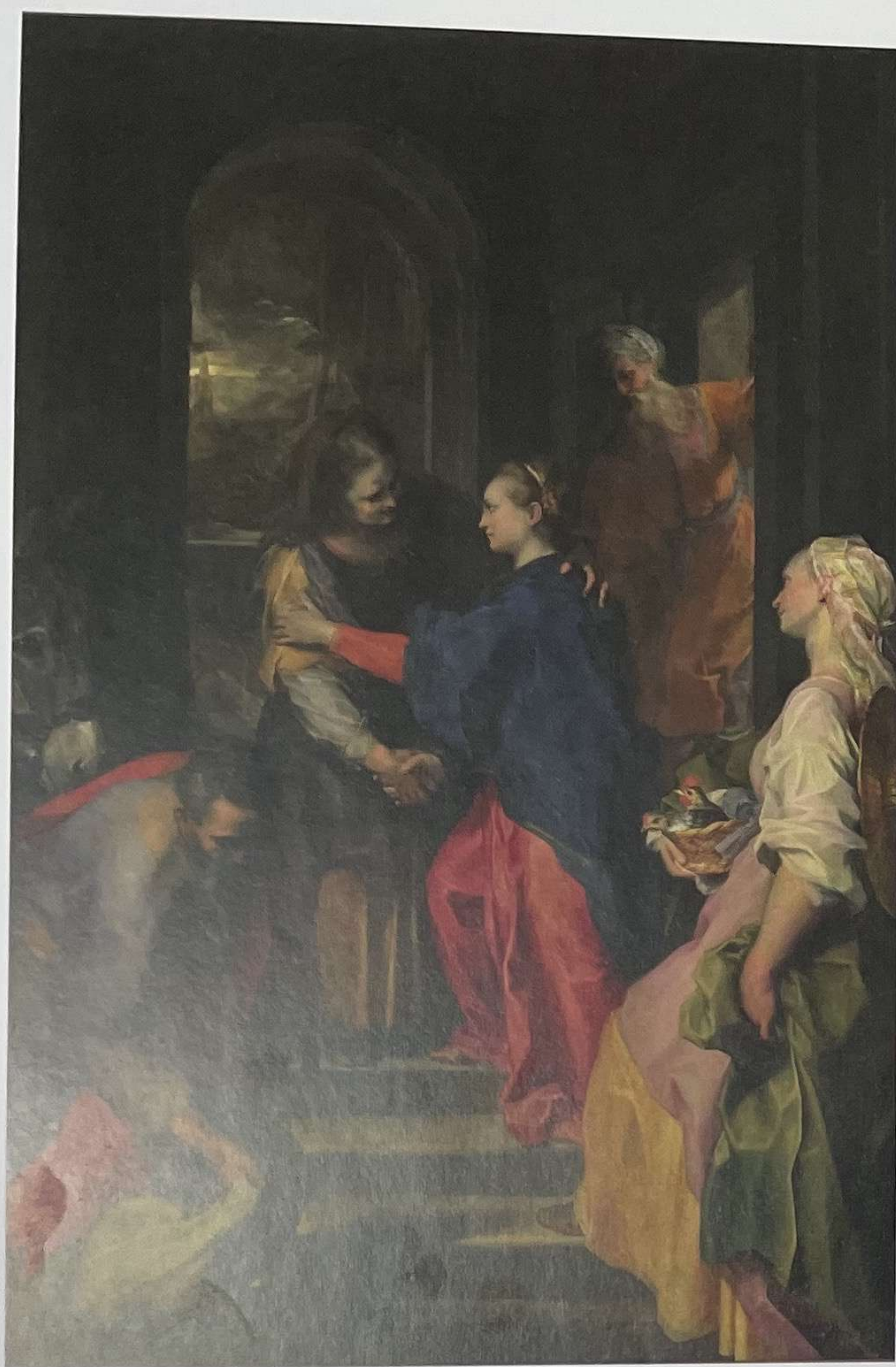


FIG. 2.34. Federico Barocci, *Visitation*, 1584–86. Oil on canvas, 9 ft. 2 in. × 5 ft. 10 in. (280 × 180 cm). Pozzomiglio Chapel, Santa Maria in Vallicella, Rome.

studied Barocci during his sojourn in Italy in the first decade of the new century. Barocci had made two altarpieces, the *Visitation* and the *Presentation of the Virgin*, for Santa Maria in Vallicella (the Chiesa Nuova), the church of Filippo Neri's Theatine Order, where Rubens would eventually contribute the high altarpiece. Barocci put aside the artificial and self-consciously graceful postures his contemporary painters were striving for. Modeling a religious ardor for the viewer, the actors in his pictures give themselves over to their emotions. In the sweetened atmosphere they seem to radiate generosity and goodwill. Barocci painted without restricting contours so that one form blends with another and

energy flows freely. Neri was particularly fond of the *Visitation*, and he would sit and meditate in front of it for hours (fig. 2.34). For him it emanated a spiritual energy that conveyed him to an ecstatic state and caused him to swoon. According to the testimony at his canonization trial, he was found passed out in front of the painting on several occasions.<sup>74</sup>

Barocci suffered from a chronic illness and was able to work only a few hours a day. He was notoriously slow to produce, and his patrons learned to exercise patience. He would make multiple preparatory studies for each painting, beginning with studies from the model in charcoal or pastel. Next, according to the critic Giovanni Bellori,

who seems to have been well informed, he made clay or wax figurines from these drawings; then he clothed them, and then he would drape the live model and make a small monochrome cartoon in gouache or oil. Along the way he made lighting studies, perspective studies, nature studies, and color studies, often using pastels and sometimes oil sketches. These oil sketches were not common practice, but some seventeenth-century painters such as Rubens followed Barocci's example. Finally he would move to a full-sized cartoon, which would be incised on the prepared canvas. He had a large workshop to assist at various stages. By the time he reached the cartoon, the picture was so meticulously prepared that he could rely on assistants for much of the work.<sup>75</sup>

Barocci's single-handed revival of the *unione* mode of early Raphael and Correggio was noted by the Carracci in Bologna, who were seeking alternatives to the depleted *maniera* of central Italy. They too returned to drawing from the model to revitalize postures and gestures and eliminate the artificiality of late *maniera*, and to a light imprimatura, in strong contrast to the *chiaroscuro* of Tintoretto and then Caravaggio.

#### DARK IMPRIMATURA, TINTORETTO, AND CARAVAGGIO

Both Tintoretto and Caravaggio were technically inventive, developing the dark imprimatura that Sebastiano del Piombo and Giulio Romano (on the basis of his work alongside Raphael) had explored earlier in the century. For both Tintoretto and Caravaggio, the dark priming allowed an expressive spontaneity and greater efficiency, and for both of them these were interlocked. Tintoretto created excitement with his quick, unblended brushstrokes that could convey a sense of rapid movement, where carefully studied execution would have frozen the action. He sought to convey more an impression than a calculated effect. An air of premeditation was something Caravaggio also sought to avoid.

Tintoretto found that a dark priming could contribute not only to the theatrical effects he sought, but was also economical in terms of materials and his time. His clients, primarily artisans and confraternities, sought him out because he gave them good value for their money. He often let the ground show through and serve as a middle ground. When he was painting very large canvases, as he often did, the dark priming saved on pigment and labor.<sup>76</sup> In contrast to our expectation of Venetian painters and to the image of spontaneity Tintoretto staged of his

procedure, he prepared his compositions carefully, drawing from wax figurines, which he could place or hang in a stage-like box.<sup>77</sup> He could experiment with the lighting, adjusting it until he found what he wanted. He was not the first or the only artist in the Cinquecento to use such figurines: both Barocci and El Greco are recorded as having used them. Michelangelo had relied on them to study the poses of the more than four hundred figures in the *Last Judgment*, for instance, but Tintoretto is the most famous.<sup>78</sup> Once these drawings were squared and transferred to the canvas, he could turn over the execution to his workshop. His imprimatura varied from dark reddish brown to dirty browns to almost black. Although Joyce Plesters and Lorenzo Lazzarini's speculation that he used his palette scrapings for his priming has now been denied, it suggests how arbitrary and varied his choices seem to be. Sometimes only part of the canvas was undercoated with dark, while another part where the composition was to be brightly illuminated would not be primed.<sup>79</sup>

Tintoretto only moved to a dark imprimatura in the 1560s, and even then he was never consistent, preferring always to experiment. His coloring in the 1550s and earlier, for example *Susanna and the Elders*, is built on a warm brown ground, exploiting the contrast between nude Susanna's luminescent flesh, affirming her innocence, and the dark foliage behind her, the pool, and the hedge, which screens the peeping elders (fig. 2.35).<sup>80</sup> Their bald heads at either end rhyme and are connected also by the repeated reddish drapery, which by fading in intensity dramatically speeds the recession. Susanna is surrounded with glittering objects—pearls, her comb, the silver vessel that holds her oil—that catch the light, as do her jewelry and golden braids, enhancing her sensuousness. Such a picture can rival any in Titian's poesis for erotic appeal.

The painter moved away from such languor to tenser compositions in the 1560s, where his abbreviated application of paint creates something that is more energized and drier and certainly less dependent on delectable coloring. Now the contrasting patterns of light and shade already visible in *Susanna* take control and manage the viewer's attention. The enormous *Crucifixion* for San Rocco is dominated in its tonality by the dark sky that dampens the colors (fig. 2.36). Painted in indigo, it has faded to a gray brown, but the composition coheres because of the *chiaroscuro*.<sup>81</sup> A triangle of light points inward to the cross and an aureole of light emanates





FIG. 2.35. Tintoretto, *Susanna and the Elders*, 1555–56. Oil on canvas, 57½ × 76⅓ in. (146 × 194 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

from Christ; around it are, rhythmically arrayed, the sundry groups. Nothing is drawn to our attention by means of color so much as by light and dark. His *imprimatura* could become even darker in the 1580s and 1590s, and hue was less and less important even as the tension intensified. Only Caravaggio matched him in arresting dramatic effect by the time he painted his final *Institution of the Eucharist* (fig. 2.37). As translucent angels swirl

around a flaming candelabra, Tintoretto invoked all his powers to make manifest the miracle of the transubstantiation of the host.

Caravaggio's technique was designed to capture the expression of emotion, often intense emotion. His method of work was, as far as we now know, unique. He would pose the model before him and, working on the dark primed canvas, paint directly on it. There is no

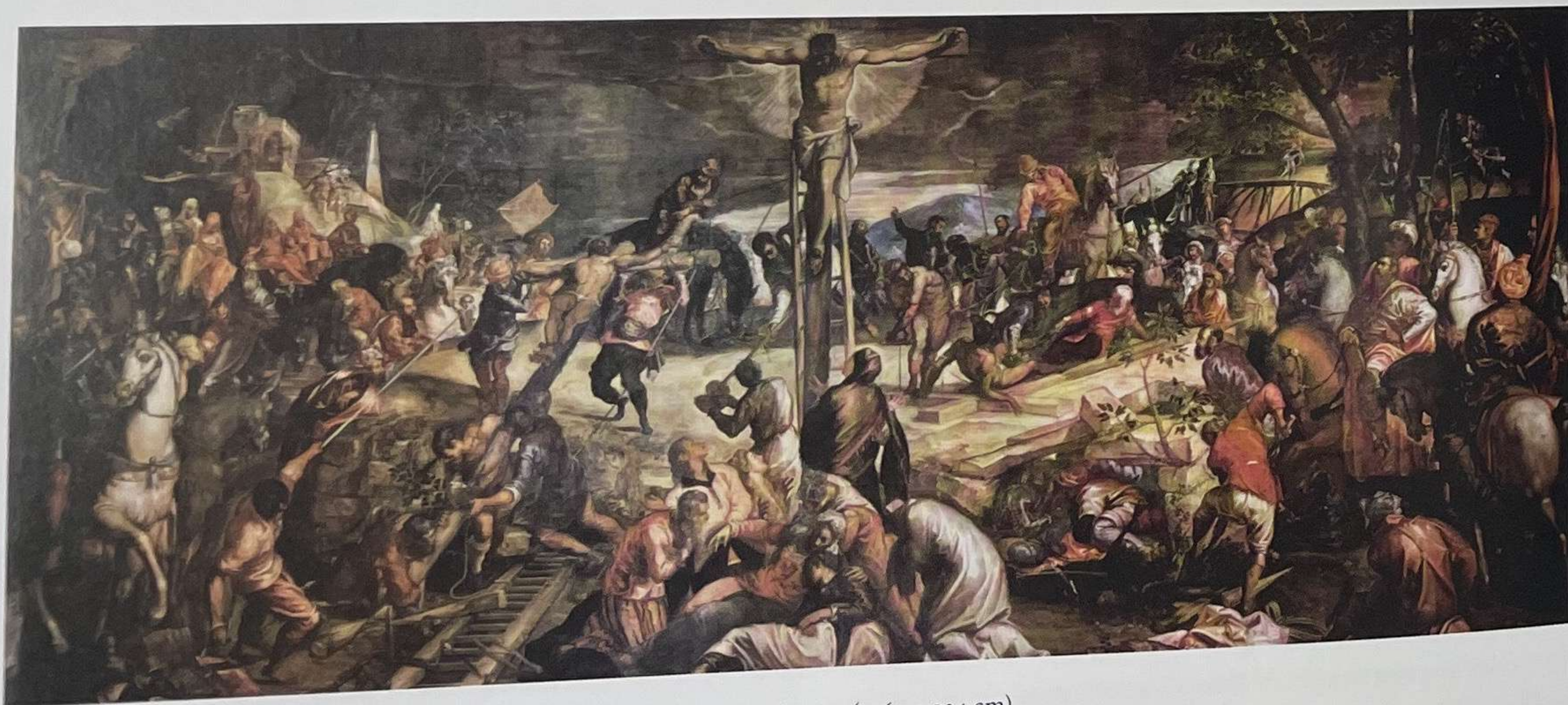


FIG. 2.36. Tintoretto, *Crucifixion*, 1565. Oil on canvas, 17 ft. 7 in. × 40 ft. 1 in. (536 × 1,224 cm). Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice.



FIG. 2.37. Tintoretto, *Institution of the Eucharist*, 1594. Oil on canvas, 12 ft. × 18 ft. 8 in. (365.7 × 569 cm). San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice.

surviving evidence that he made preparatory drawings. Small incisions in the wet paint indicated the position of the sitter, so that when they returned after taking a break he could arrange the sitter exactly as he had been positioned. Presumably he felt that he could capture expression more convincingly than if he worked from preliminary studies, where there is always the danger of overworking and losing the unconstrained directness that he sought. Rapid execution with very little reworking helped him capture often startlingly convincing expressions. By preparing the canvas in advance with the dark priming, he could accelerate his execution. He rarely added background or even middle ground, allowing the priming to serve. The dark ground serves to remove his scene from a specific setting, effacing historical period and bringing a moment from the past into the present.

This is not to say that Caravaggio did not make corrections. In his early half-length paintings of figures such as the *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* (London, National Gallery) or the subtly seductive *Bacchus* (Florence, Uffizi), we see him studying facial expression. In this he is the opposite to Tintoretto, who regularly turned heads and concealed faces. Tintoretto's expression is conveyed more in body language and gesture than in studied faces, which would have slowed the action. With Caravaggio we are sometimes invited to prolonged contemplation by certain ambiguities, secondary figures who seem to be puzzled by what they are witnessing, such as the groom holding

the horse in the *Conversion of Saul* (Rome, Santa Maria del Popolo), or the innkeeper in either version of the *Supper at Emmaus* (London, National Gallery; Milan, Brera). There is no painter before Caravaggio as concerned with facial expression.

His ability to convey extremes of emotion is no less compelling, and he did not shrink from the distortion that suffering can invoke. Saint Andrew is shown at such a moment (fig. 2.38). According to the story, he never ceased preaching and proselytizing while he hung on the cross for an excruciating two days until his final moment, when Caravaggio depicts him. Everything works together to insinuate Andrew's fortitude, which is so poignantly absent from his body, face, and posture. The dark priming sets the tone out of which soldiers and onlookers partially emerge. The pained woman at the left has no more of the ideal or heroic about her than does the emaciated saint. Caravaggio had originally painted her with her hand over her painfully disfiguring goiter, but then repainted it with her hand at her side, reinforcing the downward pull of Andrew's sagging body.

Caravaggio introduced a new kind of sacred image in Counter-Reformation Italy, shorn of transcendence and depicting sacred persons as desacralized. In his *Calling of Saint Matthew* (see fig. 0.3), for example, the only suggestion of divine presence is the light entering at the right and the gesture of Jesus evoking that of Michelangelo's God creating Adam on the Sistine ceiling. The setting



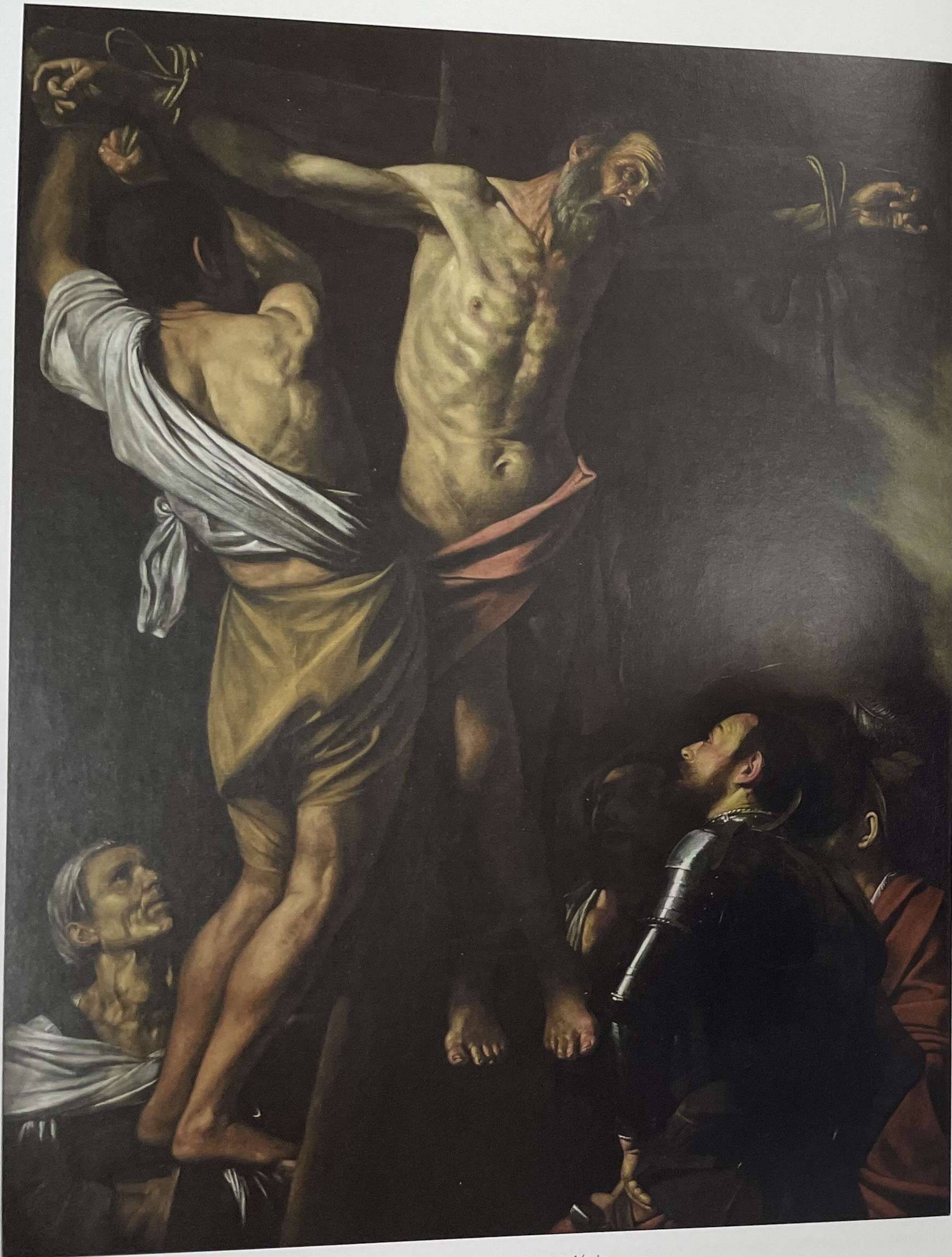


FIG. 2.38. Caravaggio, *Martyrdom of Saint Andrew*, 1606–7. Oil on canvas, 79<sup>11</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 60<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in. (202.5 × 152.7 cm). Cleveland Museum of Art.

has no hint of lofty classical architecture, but is rather an ordinary street in which Matthew is seated at a table collecting taxes. The man counting the money is so intent on his task he is unaware of Jesus's gesture calling him. Caravaggio, drawing upon the Antwerp tradition of "dirty feet and filthy fingernails" identified by Koenraad Jonckheere, painted Matthew's thumb with which he holds the coin rimmed with dirt, signifying his sinful humanity.<sup>82</sup>

Caravaggio's colors often seem brighter than they actually are. As Janis Bell showed, it is their placement that makes them seem vivid.<sup>83</sup> According to Bellori, Caravaggio called vermilion and bright blue "poison."<sup>84</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Sixteenth-century painters explored the potential of oil. They began with experiments in tinted imprimatura and the creation or expansion of the modes in coloring, sfumato, unione, chiaroscuro, and cangiamento. Sfumato cannot be said to have survived as a mode in its own right, but the soft edges associated with it often informed later coloring styles when sensuousness was desired; it was also often built into unione. Michelangelo's mode proved to be well suited to the hyperbole and artifice of maniera, especially in fresco, but as a mode of coloring it did not survive into the Seicento. Unione, on the other hand, became the defining mode of coloring for classicism, and the revivals of classicism instituted by the Carracci and the Académie Royale depended upon it. Chiaroscuro, achieved with a dark imprimatura, became the indispensable means to manipulate light and to create drama right up until the mid-nineteenth century, when the Impressionists definitively discarded it.

The changes in materials and the range of ways they were used in the Cinquecento sent out waves that, by affecting what the painter could do, ultimately helped to elevate his status in society. The painter could now create a mood, or give expression to his interpretation of a subject; the painter using egg or even tempera grassa was much more circumscribed. Sensuous flesh, such as we see in Correggio, now became a part of the painter's repertory and thus opened the whole realm of classical mythology as a subject for secular decoration. As memorable and appealing as Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* is, it is more an intellectual puzzle than an appeal to our sense of touch. Compare Botticelli's *Venus* with Correggio's in *Venus, Cupid, and Mercury* (fig. 2.39): the

airless atmosphere of Botticelli gives way in Correggio to a moisture-laden mist that softens contours and eases transitions. Correggio's soft modeling brings the flesh to life in all its alluring roundness, and the viewer's senses are aroused. Linear contour, so important to Botticelli in creating his lyrical, abstract rhythm, has vanished. Texture is difficult to imitate in egg tempera, but oil, with its variable viscosity, enables the painter to distinguish flesh, feathery wing, hard, shiny metal, hair, lush vegetation, satiny fabric, and conditions of weather and light. Giorgione makes us feel the shimmering stillness of the impending thunderstorm in his *Tempest* (see fig. 0.4). Titian can re-create the carefree spirit of a summer day with scudding clouds passing randomly overhead and diffused light, as he did in the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (see fig. 2.28).

These new expressive possibilities distanced the painter further from his medieval role as artisan, a process begun in the Quattrocento but still far from completed in the early Cinquecento. The breakdown of the traditional system of training apprentices in the workshop, though creating a chaotic and painful period of transition, ultimately contributed to liberating the artists to do what the literary artist does—to express mood and construe his subjects. The goal of equality with the poet first articulated by Alberti in *On Painting* was achieved at least symbolically with the founding of the Accademia del Disegno in Florence in 1563.

Evidence is abundant of the struggle for status that artists were engaged in from Alberti on. It was the attitudes and habits of patrons that needed to change. Michelangelo, who was particularly conscious that his family connections distinguished him from others in his trade, once remarked with disdain that he had never run a shop, like those who made parade banners and painted cassone (bridal chests); he had only worked on commissions of popes, civic governments, and members of the elite.<sup>85</sup> An important motivation for Vasari to write his *Lives* was to insist on the status of the artist as the equal of the poets. He took to task abusive patrons and praised the liberality of others.

Conditions changed very slowly, but they changed first in Italy. When El Greco moved from Italy to Spain, he was dismayed to find himself required to submit to treatment that, after his decade in Venice and Rome, he regarded as medieval.<sup>86</sup> Artists in major centers such as Rome, Venice, or Florence, if they were fortunate, were



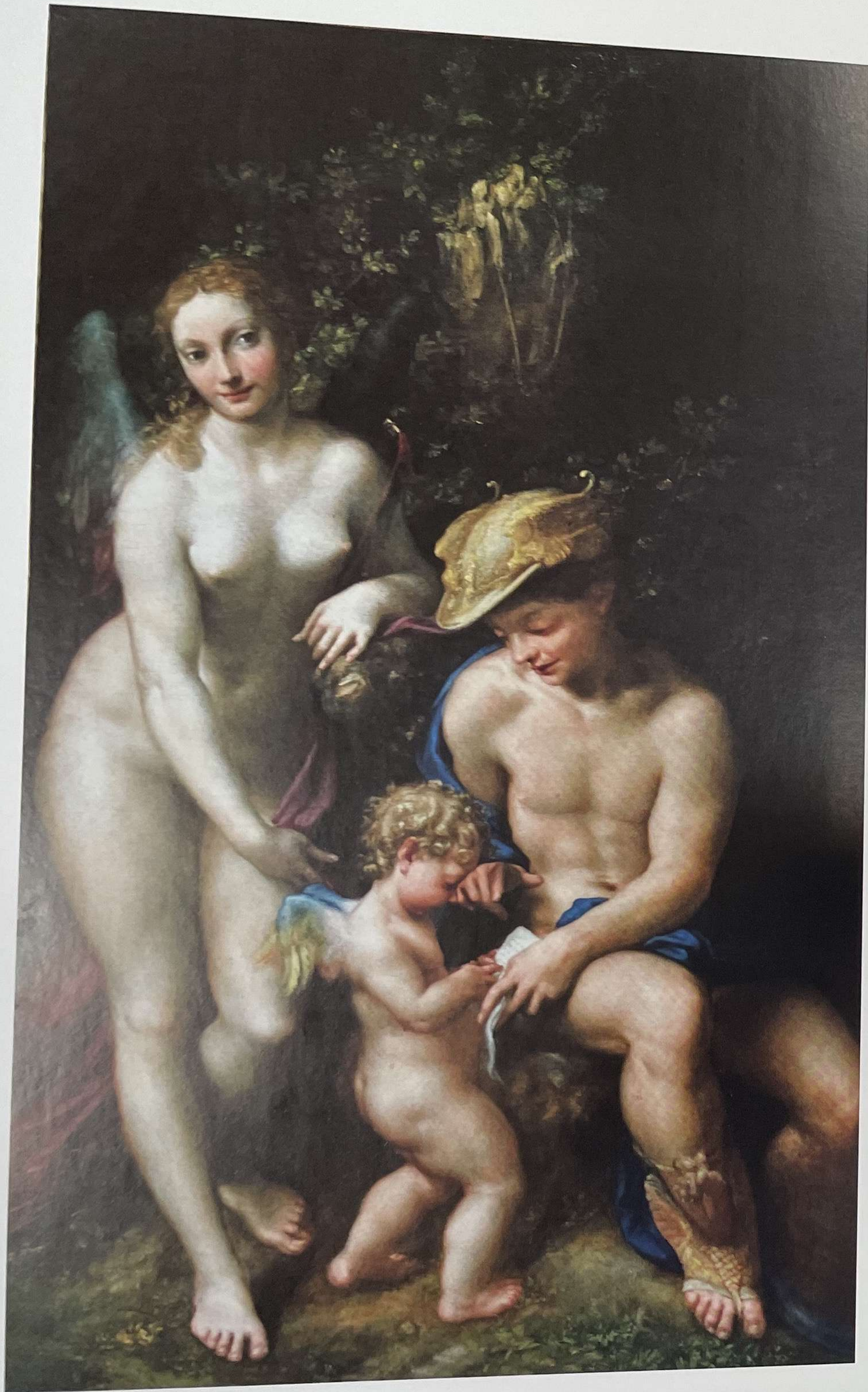


FIG. 2.39. Correggio, *Venus, Cupid, and Mercury*, c. 1525. Oil on canvas, 61¼ × 36 in. (155.6 × 91.4 cm). National Gallery, London.

increasingly entrusted by patrons with interpreting their subjects and, little by little, even with selecting the subject themselves. Collectors eager to acquire the work of a particular painter would sometimes suggest that they would accept any picture the master would send them. Even as early as the beginning of the Cinquecento the very demanding Isabella d'Este, marchesa of Mantua, instructed her agent that if Leonardo was pleased to make a picture for her studiolo, then she would leave the subject and the schedule to him to decide.<sup>87</sup> As the artist's training shifted from workshop to academy, the elevation of his status was codified.

As the century progressed, creative painters were increasingly willing to discard time-honored requirements such as a smooth and polished surface. Titian discovered that oil could be textured to create an agitated surface, with thick impasto played off against paint so

thin the canvas showed through, and that with visible brushstroke he could create excitement and solicit the emotional participation of the viewer. Willingness to violate another prohibition, the one against the physical mixture of pigments, opened up a new realm of coloristic freedom. This "corrupted" or broken color could yield a brilliant ornamental palette, as Veronese revealed, or, as we shall see, a more naturalistic one, which allowed landscapists in the seventeenth century to shift away from idealized mythologies to recording the look of the world around them.

In central Italy the battle lines were drawn between the Carracci, revivalists of early Raphael and Correggio, with their pale priming, and the advocates of a theatrical tenebrism in the manner of Caravaggio. The rivalry between these two schools would dominate the scene in the opening decades of the seventeenth century.