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Always Reppin' Padua: An Examination of *Campanilismo* in the Works of Andrea Mantegna

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ABSTRACT

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The Paduan painter Andrea Mantegna (1431 – 1506) was one of the most innovative and influential artists of the Italian Renaissance. His works have been the focus of numerous studies often focusing on his many connections within the city of Padua, his training under Francesco Squarcione (1397 – 1468), and other artists he encountered there during his youth. None, however, have investigated evidence of Paduan *campanilismo* within his body of work. *Campanilismo* is an important aspect of Italian identity, where individuals feel a strong sense of belonging, identity, and pride to the location of their birth, more powerful even than any sense of national or regional identity. At a time when Venetian painters and sculptors were working feverishly to create pro-Venetian propaganda with the aim of reinforcing the city's mythical past, it is curious that Mantegna's works have not been viewed as a counter to this movement in the form of pro-Paduan propaganda. As Padua had a true ancient past pre-dating Rome, a rich intellectual and humanistic tradition formed in large part by its famous university, and a strong Christian tradition linked to Saint Peter, Paduans would necessarily desire to push back against their Venetian rulers and affirm their own true identity. This thesis will argue for evidence of Paduan *campanilismo* within Mantegna's oeuvre and that it was used to reclaim and reaffirm the city's long-standing traditions and culture.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Andrea Mantegna (1431 – 1506) is one of the most highly studied and revered artists of his time. Known for his brilliant use of foreshortening to create realistic spaces, he was a master of perspective. He was an antiquarian and humanist who studied ancient sculptures and reliefs to perfect not only his representation of the human form, but also Roman architectural elements, which frequently adorned his works. While Mantegna's works have often been scrutinized to determine inspiration, meaning, and his relationship with his in-laws, the Bellini family of Venice, there is one glaring hole in the body of scholarship currently surrounding the artist: the overwhelming number of references to his boyhood home, Padua. These references are rarely subtle and are intended for the sole purpose of promoting the city and displaying his own form of civic pride or *campanilismo.*

To say that Andrea Mantegna was fortunate to have spent his formative years in Padua would be to grossly understate the role the city played in not only his development, but his entire body of work. For it was in Padua where he developed a fascination for the world of ancient Rome and natural phenomena, and a passion for simulating the appearance of stone. There, he began to gravitate towards the company of scholars: natural philosophers (scientists), mathematicians, and above all antiquarians and humanists fiercely dedicated to the study of classical literature. From a young age, Mantegna was identified as a prodigy, and the sheer technical brilliance of his work was celebrated by the Paduan literary elite who wrote elegant verses to compliment his many achievements and crown him the new Apelles.

Padua boasted a classical past, which predated Rome, and was the seat of a famous university. Civic antiquity had long been a source of pride for the city and led to the erection of a monumental tomb in 1283 for their legendary founder, the Trojan Antenor.[1] It was also there where many classical activities were revived, such as the ceremonial crowning of a poet laureate. It was the hometown of the historian Livy (59 BCE – 17 CE) and the location where Francesco Petrarch (1304 – 1374) chose to spend his final years. The religious ambience of Padua necessarily affected Mantegna's formation with its many sacred buildings, shrines and images, and its ever-present clergy. As a boy, Mantegna was surely to be found among the huge crowds that attended the sermons of the famous Franciscan revivalist Bernadino of Siena (1380 – 1444) in 1443 or mingling with the many pilgrims who came to visit the Basilica of Saint Anthony (il Santo).[2] The city also boasted a connection with Saint Peter through their first patron saint, Prosdocimus.

The nearby Euganean Hills provided ample opportunities to gaze at rock formations, which would appear in many of his works. His numerous humanist friends certainly drew his attention to the Roman author Pliny's (23/24 CE – 79 CE) *Natural History* (77 CE – 79 CE) with its discussion of geology and glorification of the skill of ancient Greek artists. Mantegna's passion for script and epigraphy was formed in Padua thanks in large part to the work of Bishop Donato and Giovanni Marcanova (c. 1418 – 1467). Mantegna was familiar with Marcanova – a Doctor of Medicine and professor at the university.[3] Marcanova composed the inscription for the base of Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi's (better known as Donatello) *Gattamelata* (Fig. 1) – Donatello's bronze equestrian statue placed outside il Santo. Mantegna was known to travel with his friends, like Felice Feliciano (1433 – 1479), to visit ancient monuments and study their

inscriptions. Throughout his works, Mantegna delighted in drawing attention to his knowledge of script and ancient languages through cleverly placed inscriptions.

Much has been made over the true origin of Mantegna's style, whether it can be called Paduan or if he should instead be grouped with the well-established Florentine school. The Florentine writer, painter, and architect, Giorgio Vasari (1511 – 1574), was quick to point out the Florentine influence on Mantegna's style by specifically mentioning the drawings of Tuscany and Rome Mantegna studied while in the workshop of Francesco Squarcione (1397 – 1468).[4] In *Mantegna: Paintings, Drawings, and Engravings,* E. Tietze-Conrat lays out the argument:

> Vasari's views were taken up by [Paul Oskar] Kristeller and still more emphatically by [Giuseppe] Fiocco, who, in his first book on Mantegna, declared that the influence of the ceiling of San Zaccaria in Venice, which Fiocco had himself identified as the work of Castagno, had been decisive in Mantegna's early development. Paduan scholars, however, headed by Andrea Moschetti, opposed this disparagement of Squarcione, whom they considered a representative of that local tradition which was the foundation of Mantegna's art.[5]

Others have pointed to Donatello's ten-year residence in Padua as an important point in Mantegna's development in the Florentine style.[6] Tietze-Conrat contends a work created in Padua is necessarily Paduan in style. As part of his argument, he discusses the Florentine painter and architect, Giotto di Bondone (1267-75 – 1337), whose work in the Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel noticeably differs from that in Santa Croce in Florence.[7] He states the difference exists because of Padua's contribution.[8] In the works created in Padua by Giotto, Donatello, and Altichiero there is combination of Florentine, Veronese, Venetian, and even Flemish influence, yet it is fundamentally different from even Ferrarese art, which incorporated similar influences.[9] It is important to note the term "Paduan" refers to not only a nuance of artistic expression, but also a spiritual attitude.[10] The university and prevailing humanism with its subsequent hunger for

theory and antiquity therefore became part of the Paduan contribution to their works. Under this definition, Mantegna's style can be established as Paduan for he incorporated a similar combination of influences in his work but was chiefly inspired by the humanist movement and the city of his youth.

Over the course of his career, Mantegna produced religious and mythological narratives, devotional themes, iconic compositions, and portraits. He experimented with architecture and sculpture and excelled at the art of engraving. Throughout his works a common theme emerges regardless of the subject matter – an overwhelming sense of Paduan *campanilismo.* Even after passing under Venetian rule, Padua maintained her own distinct identity through her ancient Roman past, rich intellectual and humanistic culture, and Christian heritage. These qualities are utilized by Mantegna to subtly, yet profoundly, promote Padua. Even after moving to Mantua to serve as court painter to the Marchese Lodovico III Gonzaga (r. 1444 – 1478), references to Padua continue to be present in his works.

As Venice had diligently worked to develop creation myths by forcefully appropriating imagery and iconography, Paduans who were so boldly proud of their own true foundation would have been rightfully annoyed. While becoming part of the Venetian Republic was certainly beneficial in terms of security and financial well-being, no Paduan would identify as Venetian. As much of the iconography utilized in Mantegna's works had been appropriated by the Venetians to further their agenda, some may infer this use as pro-Venetian propaganda. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather Mantegna is reclaiming Padua's status as the true Christian Republic, thus reaffirming her true ancient past.

This thesis examines Mantegna's works at various points in his career to identify references to his Paduan *campanilismo*. While the works of Mantegna have been endlessly

studied and scrutinized, to this author's knowledge no similar exercise has ever been undertaken. Chapter two, "Andrea Mantegna," provides the biography of Mantegna. Many have written on the life of Mantegna; however, Ronald Lightbown's prosopography is by far the most comprehensive and was utilized heavily for this purpose. Chapter three, "Padua," establishes Padua's identity, through a scholarly investigation into the history of Padua based largely on the work of Cesare Foglino. Chapter four, "The Ovetari Chapel," analyzes the fresco cycle of the Ovetari Chapel (1448 – 57; Fig. 2). A specific examination of *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom* (1454 – 57; Fig. 3) and comparison with Giotto's *Judgment of King Solomon* (c. 1306 – 1309; Fig. 4) will show Mantegna's reclaiming of the virtue of Justice from Venice. Placement of contemporary housing alongside classic Roman architecture will demonstrate a link between Padua and her Roman imperialist past. Chapter five, "Saint Sebastian," investigates Mantegna's three Saint Sebastians (Figs. 5, 6, and 7). Created over the course of his life and at different locations, each speaks to Padua's role as a true Christian Republic by linking Sebastian to the city and emphasizing him as a more powerful saint than Venice's Saint Rocco (Saint Roch). Additionally, a conversation on the debate of *disegno* (drawing/design) versus *colorito* (coloring) will lead to a discussion of the borrowing of Mantegna's schemes and motifs by Venetian artists including his brother-in-law, Giovanni Bellini (1430 – 1516). Chapter six, "The Engravings," explores Mantegna's collection of engravings. Here Mantegna's focus on *disegno* is most fully realized. Through *Battle of the Sea Gods* (1475 – 1488; Fig. 8), he focuses on the vice of Envy and contrasts it with Padua's virtue of Charity. His use of ancient literary works, sarcophagi, and coins as inspiration speak not only to Padua's Roman past, but also her rich humanistic and intellectual tradition.

Although a focused analysis of Mantegna's works for the purpose of identifying Paduan *campanilismo* has not been undertaken previously, the work of Lightbown and Keith Christiansen in analyzing both the life and works of Mantegna played a vital role in this examination. This thesis asks a necessary question and fills this gap in the study of Mantegna's works. By not only acknowledging the influence Padua played on Mantegna's formation, but actively looking for and identifying *campanilismo* within his works, a greater understanding of the artist and this important city is achieved. Fifteenth-century Padua was a fiercely proud city. Her ancient Roman past, rich intellectual and humanistic tradition, and Christian heritage were important elements of any Paduan's identity. To believe a proud son would not look to advance the interests of his hometown through his trade is short sighted.

CHAPTER II

ANDREA MANTEGNA

Andrea Mantegna was born in 1431 in Isola di Cartura – a small village north of Padua. His father, Maestro Biagio, was a master carpenter (*marangone*) and died in 1449 when Mantegna was eighteen years old.[11] Mantegna had one older brother, Tommaso, who lived in Padua and worked as a tailor.[12] Giorgio Vasari describes the family in his *Lives of the Artists* (1568) as being from "most humble stock."[13] Ronald Lightbown further explains their situation stating they "belonged to the class of small craftsmen, of little means and less social standing, which occupied, a precarious position above the lowest class of all, that of journeymen and peasant labourers."[14] In his youth, Mantegna was charged with herding cattle in the fields around his village.[15] And yet, this boy born into such humble beginnings through his art was raised from obscurity to renown, nobility, and wealth.

Mantegna's career began as an apprentice to the painter Francesco Squarcione in either 1441 or 1442.[16] It has been suggested that his brother Tommaso orchestrated the arrangement. Tommaso was faring well as a tailor and had made investments in both cattle and land by this time including leases of property in his native village.[17] Others believe it was Squarcione's connection with the de Lazara family that provided the necessary connection. The de Lazaras were steadfast patrons of Squarcione and in 1437, the Bishop of Vicenza – who was also feudal lord of Isola di Cartura – named Francesco de Lazara fief of the village.[18] Therefore, it is possible de Lazara brought Mantegna into Squarcione's shop.

Upon entering Squarcione's atelier, Mantegna performed well and Squarcione adopted him as a son. This practice was not uncommon in Padua and has been found among both earlier

and contemporary painters.[19] In fact, Mantegna was not the only pupil he adopted. Squarcione's motives for adopting his students is best exemplified in the case of Marco Zoppo (1433 – 1498), whom he adopted in 1455:

> The surviving adoption contract required Squarcione to provide room, board, and instruction in art, as well as making Zoppo sole heir to all of his possessions, including the workshop (Squarcione had no natural son at that time). In return for this attractive offer, Squarcione was to receive all profits accruing from the labor of his adopted son. In essence, Zoppo became an uncompensated partner. Adoption, therefore, allowed Squarcione to exploit the talents of a young painter without being obligated to pay for his labor.[20]

For this situation to be financially beneficial to Squarcione, the adopted son would need to have reached a productive stage in his artistic development. Zoppo was twenty-three and had been a student of Squarcione's for two years before the adoption contract was finalized.[21]

From a lawsuit Mantegna initiated against Squarcione in November 1455, we learn that "master Andrea had remained and lived with master Francesco for six continuous years."[22] Additionally, the litigation, dated 26 January 1448, marks their separation by means of a *compromissum* (compromise/agreement).[23] It is not clear, however, when Squarcione legally adopted Mantegna. Based on the Zoppo example, it is plausible Mantegna worked for a period prior to the adoption taking place. One of the benefits of adoption was sons of a master in the *fraglia,* or guild of painters, were excused from paying full dues.[24] Squarcione entered the guild in 1441 and Mantegna first appears on the registry in 1445 as Squarcione's son.[25] Based on this date and the Zoppo example, it seems reasonable to place the date of Mantegna's adoption in 1444/45.

The figure of Squarcione is one shrouded in ambiguity and controversy. The greatest gap appears to be in the eminent role he assigned himself as founder and teacher of a school for

painters and the mediocre caliber of his works. Vasari described Squarcione as "not the most talented painter in the world."[26] Additionally, Bernadino Scardeone (1478 – 1574) describes Squarcione in his *Historiae de Urbis patavinae antiquitate et claris civibus patavinis* (Stories about the antiquity of the city of Padua and the famous citizens of Padua, 1560) as "a man assuredly of the greatest judgement in his art, but, so it is said, not much exercise in it (*exercitii*)."[27] While many works have been attributed to the school, only two surviving works have been assigned to Squarcione. Both have a provenance through the de Lazara family. The first, an altarpiece (Fig. 9), was painted between January 1449 and May 1452.[28] The central figure of the altarpiece is Saint Jerome in his study with side panels of Saint Lucy, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Anthony Abbot, and Saint Justina of Padua. Leone de Lazara commissioned the work for the family's chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine.[29] The second, a signed *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 10) was completed in 1455. While one does not have to be a skilled artist to be an exceptional art teacher, additional problems arise when reviewing the accusations brought against Squarcione by his own pupils. According to Lightbown, "Squarcione's pretensions as a teacher were called seriously into question by one at least of his pupils, and his motives in taking pupils at all were attached as crooked and self-interested by more than one."[30] There are, however, some positive accounts of Squarcione's teaching and motives recorded by Scardeone:

> He was not content to know be alone in knowing it, but being full of humanity, he delighted in teaching the art in which he was skilled to a future generation and in teaching as many pupils as possible, so much so, that as he asserts of himself in a certain little book (*libellus*), he had in all from different cities one hundred and thirty-seven pupils.[31]

Squarcione was the son of Giovanni – a notary who worked for the ruling da Carrarra family.[32] His father died in 1414 and his uncle – a tailor – became his guardian.[33] In 1418,

Squarcione married and moved into the household of his wife's family in the contrada di Pontecorvo (neighborhood of Pontecorvo)– on a street near the Basilica of Saint Anthony of Padua (il Santo).[34] The first documentation of Squarcione working as a painter date from 6 April 1426, when we he was commissioned to paint an altarpiece for the chapel of Saint John Baptist in the church of the Olivetan monastery of San Giovanni Battista at Venda.[35] Scardeone records Squarcione's transition from tailor to painter:

> From boyhood he had taken the greatest delight in the study of painting, and shortly (as he writes of himself), on emerging from adolescence and being able from his age to live for himself after his own fashion, he determined to see the world and travel to distant cities and through different people and nations. Wherefore he sailed to Greece and wandered all over that country, whence he brought home with him, both in his mind and in drawings, many things worthy of note that seemed likely to promote skill in his art. He journeyed in similar fashion all over Italy and won the friendship of many noblemen by his affability and virtuous disposition.[36]

This trip most likely took place in 1427 and would have included time in Constantinople.[37] Shortly after returning to Padua, Squarcione began accepting pupils. The greatest attraction of his new school would have been his collection of drawings, which he accrued during his travels abroad and throughout Italy, from which students could study and copy. Vasari tells us that to this collection, Squarcione added "plaster casts taken from ancient statues and paintings on canvas."[38] Scardeone stresses the importance of the collection for the students and specifically Mantegna stating Squarcione taught "from the statues and very many paintings he had, by whose mastery and art he instructed Andrea and the rest of his fellow pupils, rather than from originals (*archetypae*) he had executed himself or worked up from new models (*exempla*) provided for copying."[39] As time passed, Squarcione was dedicated to increasing the size and importance of his collection. To that end, supplies necessary for making plaster casts were built into the contracts of some of his apprentices. Notably, Zoppo was required to provide

a "quantity of plaster 'for shaping to figures and images'" as part of his tuition.[40] The importance of Squarcione's collection in attracting students cannot be understated. Many of the apprenticeship contracts included verbiage ensuring access to his drawings. One such contract written in 1467 stipulates, "the pupil shall be allowed to copy figures from Squarcione's stock of drawings, touching them in *biacca* (white lead) on a copy sheet (*carta d'esempio*)."[41]

Some students questioned Squarcione's ability to teach and believed he did not live up to his end of their contracts. One such student was Maestro Agnolo who wrote:

> It is ever the custom that he ever seeks to delude them with his promises, boasting about things he does not have and about knowledge he does not have and he promises people to do things for them until such time as he has worn them out and squeezed all the juice out of them and then picks a quarrel with them…This is what he is now trying to do with Maestro Agnolo he gave him to understand that he would teach him the true method of perspective and of all other things pertaining to the painter's craft, telling the said Agnolo, 'It was I who made a man of Andrea Mantegna, who worked for me and I will do the same with you.' Agnolo, knowing Mantegna's great fame and believing the said Francesco's words, was content to agree with him and has been with him for some time and with this own hands has made many things which the said Francesco has converted to his own profit and never has taught or showed him anything, indeed he knows not how, either by his own work or by any words of explanation to do the things he promised the said Agnolo.[42]

Despite the negative connotations surrounding Squarcione, his most successful students often boasted their connection with him. Even Mantegna and Zoppo, who are known to have brought lawsuits against him, referenced his teaching, and would use his last name long after reverting to their original.[43]

The school naturally also acted as a *bottega* with pupils assisting in the workshop. Students' tuition and place would be determined based off their age, knowledge, skill, and usefulness. As such, Lightbown explains:

> some were to be maintained by him, but paid no salary; some paid him for their maintenance and instruction, while to others gave both maintenance and salary. When his pupils became skilled, or if they were already skilled, he recompensed himself for the expenses of their keep and instruction by selling the paintings they executed for him in his workshop…such an arrangement might well lead to abuse; it left much to desire from its vagueness and looseness, and the different valuations that could be set by master and pupil on work done by the pupil on the master's tuition easily gave rise to disputes and quarrels.[44]

Several of Squarcione's pupils including Mantegna and Zoppo believed they had overpaid their master with their paintings in return for tuition, room, and board and entered litigation against him.[45] In addition to selling the artwork of his students, Squarcione often acted as an agent. He would receive a commission from a patron and then either share it or hand it over completely while keeping a cut of the price for himself. This was the case with the Ovetari Chapel – one of Mantegna's first works.

While little is known of Mantegna's time with Squarcione, certain artistic elements can be attributed to his atelier and influenced Mantegna's work. According to Lightbown, some of these techniques can be seen in the *De Lazara Altarpiece*:

> There is the use of foreshortening in depth, as in St Jerome's simple rustic table, the tree used to mark a plane in the picture, the introduction of ruined classical architecture, with simulated real cracks, a wattle fence marking the foreground and the marking of the background by architecture, the pebble-strewn rocks which form the ground and the single plants growing from them, the simulated wooden shoe marking a plane before the fence, the illusionistic rings from which two classical swags depend that are used to decorate the bases on which the saints stand, the employment of contrasting poses – pure profile, three-quarter profile – to suggest movement.[46]

These devices – still in the early stages of development – would later be fully explored by Mantegna in his own work.

Many of the surviving paintings created by the Squarcionesques (pupils of Squarcione) are Madonnas. In them several common elements are found.[47] First, the foreground is marked with a parapet behind which the Madonna stands before a throne or niche – establishing the middle ground. The background is typically of little importance. The division of the picture plane is then reinforced by additional devices. Suspended classical swags were quite popular in the shop. According to Lightbown, "the suspended classical swags of leaves and fruit which hangs by rings from the architectural framework, marking its relative position in space and simultaneously, by swinging forwards of it, breaking down the barrier between the real space in which the spectator stands and the artificial space of the picture and so establishes a continuum between the two."[48] Finally, still-life motifs are placed in the foreground to aid in the illusion of naturalistic recession from the spectator. Often fruit was set on the parapet or a crumpled *cartellino* – an illusionistic portrayal of a written note – placed in front.

While these techniques may have been heavily utilized by the Squarcionesques, they were not invented by the workshop. The use of a classical parapet was first seen in the Flemish painter Jan van Eyck's (1390 – 1441) portrait, *Leal Souvenir* (Fig. 11), dated 10 October 1423, and the earliest known *cartellino* was painted by Fra Fillipo Lippi (1406 – 1469) in his 1437 *Madonna and Child* (Fig. 12). Lippi was an artist known to and admired by Squarcione.[49] The classical swags were undoubtedly inspired by antique sarcophagi (Fig. 13). At the time Squarcione's shop was refining these motifs, others in the Veneto were beginning to employ them. The Venetian painter and draughtsman Jacopo Bellini's (1396 – 1470) *Tadini Madonna* of 1448 shows the Virgin and Child standing behind a parapet with a *cartellino* attached and book lying atop (Fig. 14).

One convention that was almost exclusive to Squarcione's shop was "the preference for strong, brilliant, at times almost metallic colour – gay and bright hues, yellows, reds, olive-greens, [were] their favorites."[50] Lightbown explains, "That this was a conscious preference in Squarcione is revealed by his criticism made some years later, about 1455–6, of Mantegna's Ovetari frescoes of St. James, that their colours were not bright and strong enough."[51] In contrast, most Venetian painters preferred warm and glowing colors – a heritage which stems from Venice's early history under Byzantine rule.[52] Mantegna's *San Luca Polyptych* (1453; Fig. 15) shows the use of strong, metallic color he learned while studying under Squarcione.

In all, those who desired to learn from Squarcione were attracted by the style of Renaissance painting being produced by his atelier. There was an emphasis on perspective based on Leon Battista Alberti's (1404 – 1472) *De Pictura* (*On Painting*, 1435) and the antique.[53] It was the study of ancient sculpture that enabled the Squarcionesques to "give their figures the firmness of volume, that clarity of contour, that smoothness of planes."[54] These qualities remained a fixture in Mantegna's works throughout his life:

> For Mantegna ancient sculpture, and in particular the classical relief style he had first learnt to admire in his youth, were to remain perennial ideals. To the end of his life he was to imitate or emulate in paint reliefs in marble or bronze, designing compositions of figures silhouetted against a background of neutral black or simulated marble.[55]

Mantegna's formal break from Squarcione in 1448 is well documented as is their disagreement over wages. It appears, however, that Mantegna must have acquired some form of emancipation from his master by 1447, as it was at that time, he received his first solo commission to create an altarpiece for the high altar of the church of Santa Sofia, Padua. Documents record that on 20 December 1447, "the Confraternity of St. Anthony of Padua, acting

as heirs of a Bartholomeo *fornario,* notified *Magister Andreas pictor* that he should complete with in the allotted period of time (unspecified), '…the altarpiece which he was bound to make for the said late master Bartholomeo.'"[56] Mantegna was only sixteen and was to be paid forty gold ducats for his work.[57] Although still legally the adopted son of Squarcione, documents show the full wage was given to Mantegna and he was given an additional thirty-five lire and sixteen soldi for making additional pieces above the original commission.[58] The altarpiece has since been lost, however, Vasari describes it as "a work which seemed done by an older and more experienced man rather than a young boy."[59] Scardeone recorded that upon completing the work in 1448, Mantegna signed it in Latin: "ANDREAS MANTINEA PAT (AVINUS) AN(NOS) SEPTEM & DECEM NATUS, SUA MANU PINXIT, M.CCCC.XLVIII (Andrea Mantegna, Paduan, seventeen years old, painted this by his own hand, 1448)."[60] It is interesting to note that this is the only known work prior to 1470 to which he signed his name in Latin and the only time he utilized the spelling Mantinea.[61] In all other works signed in Latin, he preferred to Latinize his name with the spelling Mantinia.[62]

Upon leaving Squarcione, Mantegna took up residence in the contrada di Santa Lucia in Padua – almost certainly living in the household of his brother Tommaso – and established an independent practice.[63] Although he had not reached the age of twenty, Mantegna was already being lauded as a great talent. Keith Christiansen states: "The earliest encomium, by the Venetian humanist poet Ulisse degli Aleotti, singled out the way [Mantegna's] mind and hand worked in concert, so that the image formed in the mid was indelibly inscribed ('sculpted' is the verb employed) into paintings 'that are really alive and true.'"[64] It was this fame that saw Mantegna along with Niccolò Pizzolo (c.1420 – 1453) – a fellow former pupil of Squarcione – contracted to decorate the Ovetari Chapel of the Church of the Eremitani in Padua.[65] Their task was to paint

the frescoes of the tribune and the histories of Saint James the Greater on the left wall of the chapel. The two, however, quickly fell into disagreement and in July of 1449 invoked the assistance of arbitrators – Giacomo Alvarotti (c.1385 – 1453) and Francesco Morosini to delineate the task.[66] Alvarotti's attempts quickly failed as he was friends with both Mantegna and Pizzolo.[67] Morosini, a Venetian patriarch, then awarded the majority of the work to Mantegna following an inspection of the chapel "with experts and more especially with maestro Francesco Squarcione and after a conference with him."[68] The agreement was "that Mantegna should paint all the histories of St. James except that on the bottom left, Pizzolo no doubt insisting on at least this one opportunity to display his powers as a painter of histories, which otherwise would have been denied him. The award also stipulated expressly that Mantegna was to paint the framework enclosing the histories."[69] Unfortunately, Pizzolo was murdered in 1453 leaving Mantegna to complete the entire Saint James cycle. According to Vasari:

> To tell the truth, Niccolò did few paintings, all of which were very good, and if he had taken as much delight in paintings as he did in arms, he would have become an excellent painter and, perhaps, he would also have lived much longer, but, since he always went about armed and had a great many enemies, he was attacked and treacherously murdered one day when he was returning from work.[70]

Mantegna painted the fresco cycles within the chapel from 1448 to 1457. Still a young man, his works have been praised as "a succession of masterpieces in which illusionism, perspective and foreshortening are used with ever-increasing sophistication and virtuosity."[71]

In 1453, Mantegna married Nicolosia Bellini – daughter of Jacopo Bellini, and sister to Gentile (active c. 1460 – 1507) and Giovanni Bellini (c. 1435 – 1516).[72] According to Vasari, Jacopo arranged the marriage due to his rivalry with Squarcione and because he saw greatness in Mantegna: "People began to have great expectations of Andrea and to consider it highly probable

that he would succeed, as he later did; Jacopo Bellini, the Venetian painter (the father of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and Squarcione's rival), arranged things so that Andrea would marry a daughter of his who was Gentile's sister."[73] Lightbown explains the arrangement benefited both Mantegna and Bellini family:

> The marriage certainly emancipated Andrea from Squarcione and transferred him to the protection of the leading master of Venice, giving him a father-in-law to replace his own dead father and family of artists with whom he could learn and study. Mantegna's art was to affect profoundly the art of his brother-in-law Giovanni, the greatest of the Bellini, but in his youth.[74]

While with the Bellini family, Mantegna certainly spent time going through Jacopo's two drawing albums. These albums now divided between the British Museum in London and the Musée du Louvre in Paris comprise the greatest collections of drawings by an artist of that time.[75] The albums consist of architectural, landscape, and figural studies executed in pen (Fig. 16).[76] And while Mantegna certainly benefited from access to this father-in-law's albums, study of these drawings show Jacopo was also influenced by Mantegna.[77]

While engaged with the Ovetari frescoes, Mantegna completed many other smaller works. Art historians date these pieces to the early or middle 1450s.[78] Throughout his life, Mantegna was two things, consistent and slow. For over three decades the stability in his style is applied to "conceptions of setting, figure, and costume and of the relationships which ought to exist between the various parts of a picture."[79] With respect to speed, Mantegna tended to pick up and put down work as his mood drove him or as he worked through complex problems with each piece.[80] Many of these early works show the influence of Jacopo's drawing books. The earliest of Mantegna's surviving paintings, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (c. 1450; Fig. 17) presents realistic representation of peasants that draw from Jacopo's drawings, which include several

realistic studies of rustics.[81] *The Agony in the Garden* (1455/6; Fig. 18) draws comparisons to a drawing by Jacopo of the same subject, in which Christ, on the extreme left side of the composition, kneels at Gethsemane (Fig. 19).[82] However, Mantegna's composition is more refined in its placement of architecture, figures, and landscape. Also evident is Mantegna's powerful use of color and expressive light.

Presentation at the Temple (1455; Fig. 20) and *Saint George* (c.1460; Fig. 21) also created during this period are notable in that they are the last works for many years in which Mantegna utilizes the marble window frame to separate the viewer from the pictural space.[83] Mantegna included likenesses of himself and his wife, Nicolosia in *Presentation at the Temple*. It has been speculated that the work was created as a votive celebrating the birth of the couple's first child.[84] Adding to this supposition, recent analysis of the painting show it was developed in an ad hoc fashion when compared to Mantegna's normally meticulous standards.[85] This may lend credence to the likelihood it was painted for private, family reasons. Giovanni Bellini later transcribed the work to create his own *Presentation at the Temple* (1460; Fig. 22). Giovanni's painting is wider to accommodate the inclusion of two additional figures, but the main figures were traced from Mantegna's original. At one time, it was believed the additional figures were meant to represent the Bellini family, but that hypothesis is no longer held.[86]

By the late 1450s, word of Mantegna's genius had spread beyond the city of Padua. For by this time, Mantegna had received the commission for the *San Zeno Altarpiece* (1456 – 1459; Fig. 23) for the Basilica di San Zeno, Verona, and an invitation from Lodovico III Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua, to enter his service. The invitation alone speaks to the eminence of Mantegna's reputation as he was not yet thirty years old and the former Gonzaga painter had been the great Antonio di Puccio Pisano (called Pisanello, 1395 – 1455).[87] Mantegna accepted

Lodovico's invitation by 3 January 1457, but informed him he was bound to complete the altarpiece before traveling to Mantua.[88] Lodovico encouraged him to go to Verona to fulfill his obligation as an outbreak of plague was soon expected in Padua.[89] In spite of this, Mantegna remained in Padua to complete the work.[90] The altarpiece was commissioned by Gregorio Correr (c.1411 – 1464), abbot of the ancient Benedictine monastery of San Zeno in Verona.[91] The altarpiece is a true turning-point in the history of painting in the Veneto:

> In Correr Mantegna had found a true humanist patron, who did not demand of him a Gothic triptych or polyptych altarpiece, with its separate panels for each saint, its formal gold background, its floridly pinnacled framework…Instead, he was encouraged to deploy the canons and graces of the new art.[92]

Mantegna's creation transformed a traditionally Gothic scheme and accompanying iconography into a new Renaissance form using perspective and classical architecture.

In 1459, Mantegna traveled to Mantua to formally enter the service of the Marchese. A diploma dated 30 January 1459 granted to: "Andrea Mantegna, painter of Padua, a very dear member of our household (*familiarem*), whom we have lately taken into our service, the right of using the Gonzaga coat of arms."[93] The grant was made at Mantegna's request and allowed him the use of a slightly different coat of arms than that used by Lodovico. It displayed "a sun in splendour encircled with a scroll bearing the motto *par un désir* [like a desire] in Gothic letters on a white field."[94] Mantegna utilized the seal until at least 1468 when he replaced it with a seal of Julius Caesar's head (1472 – 1492) after which time he employed a simple M (1505 – 1506).[95] In addition to the use of the family coat of arms, Lodovico gave Mantegna three and a half braccia (approximately 2 yards) "of crimson damask brocaded with silver to make a *guippone* or doublet. He was making him a grant of livery, for crimson and silver were the Gonzaga colours,

and the doublet was to be part of his court dress."[96] Mantegna then returned to Padua to complete the still unfinished *San Zeno Altarpiece*.

Mantegna delivered the altarpiece to Verona by the end of July of 1459, but did not settle in Mantua until June of 1460.[97] It appears Mantegna questioned whether he should have accepted Lodovico's invitation as there were many in Padua who strongly dissuaded him.[98] In order to protect himself if things went poorly, he bought the sub-lease of a house in Padua in the quarter of Santa Lucia.[99] In addition to securing property in his hometown, Mantegna had family matters to settle prior to the move. In 1456, Tommaso died leaving Mantegna as the sole guardian of his two daughters, Caterina and Elisabetta.[100] Tommaso's death also left Mantegna with significant financial difficulties, such as securing Caterina's dowry.[101] Nevertheless, once his accounts were in order, he moved his family to Mantua to begin his tenure as court artist to the Marchese.

Lodovico had passions expected of a great nobleman, such as, hunting, falconry, horses, and dogs. However, his tutor, Vittorino de Feltre (1378 – 1446) also provided him with one of the best humanist educations of the time: "Under Vittorino he studied first Virgil, Homer, Cicero, and Demosthenes, including the rules of Latin and Greek grammar from these authors, and then went on to the study of dialectic and rhetoric. Afterwards came mathematics, arithmetic, geometry, astrology, and music."[102] Evidence of Lodovico's humanist education can be found in the family library to which he added texts of the classics, works of natural science, and poems and romances in Latin and French.[103] An interest in classical antiques is displayed in a 1476 correspondence between himself and Angelo del Tovaglia, a Florentine merchant with close ties to the Medici family.[104] The two discussed tracking down a book of drawings "of certain antique sculptures, which for the most part are battles of centaurs, of fauns and of satyrs, and also of men and women on horseback and on foot and other similar things."[105]

Lodovico was a great patron of humanists and in return received tributes of an epic poem and a history to celebrate his family. Giovanni Pietro Arrivabene (1440 – 1504) wrote the epic poem, *Gonzagidos* (*Gonzaga,* 1460 – 1470) and Bartolommeo Platina (1421 – 1481) scribed *Historia inclyte Urbis Mantuae et serenissimae familiae Gonzagae* (*The History of the City of the Famous City of Mantua and the Most Serene Family Gonzaga,* c. 1460 – 1464), which glorified Mantua and the Gonzaga family in Latin.[106] Following a narration of the wars between Filippo Maria Visconti and Venice – battles in which Lodovico had served as general for each side – Platina describes how Lodovico "turned to the works of peace, and set about adorning the city with buildings public and private and the countryside with agriculture for both pleasantness and delight."[107] Lodovico was indeed committed to improving Mantua:

> He strengthened the city's fortifications and embanked the Mincio to prevent it from flooding; he paved many of the streets and piazzas, began in 1450 the great new hospital of San Leonardo, erected in 1470–3 a clocktower with an ingenious mechanical clock by Bartolommeo Manfredi, and between 1462 and his death nearly completed a new market-house. The poor were helped by the foundation in 1462 of the Camera dei Pegni, a public pawnshop, and for a time usury was officially forbidden. In the territory around Mantua he drained marshes, dug irrigation canals and built aqueducts. Under his rule, in spite of the almost annual ravages of the plague, the city's population increased from about 26,000 in 1463 to about 40,000 in 1478, the year of his death.[108]

In addition, Lodovico's ambitious building campaign included numerous churches, palaces, and castles in and around Mantua.[109]

Mantegna's time in Mantua can be divided into three separate large works; the decoration of the chapel in the Castello di San Giorgio (1460 – 1464), the *Camera degli Sposi* (also known as the *Camera Picta*, 1465 – 1474), and *Triumphs of Caesar* (1486 – 1505). Prior to 1459, Lodovico decided to move his permanent residence to the Castello di San Giorgio, which had been built c. 1390 – 1406 to defend the city.[110] The transformation of the brick fortress to a

suitable living space for the Marchese required drastic renovation to the interior. Among the many changes, a chapel was to be incorporated into the design with Mantegna providing the decoration. Lodovico himself added greatly to the design of the renovated Castello and would often dictate to the architect the changes he saw fit. In 1472, he sent his architect, Florentine Luca Fancelli (c.1430 – 1494), not only instructions, but "a drawing done by the hand of Andrea Mantegna which we believe will give occasion for the master to understand the pupil."[111] Here, Lodovico was referring to himself as the pupil as he had been tutored in architecture by Fancelli.[112] While Mantegna may not have been the architect, his ability to draw what was required displays a sound knowledge of the subject.[113]

For the chapel Mantegna painted a cycle of frescoes, which was proudly exhibited to visitors for many years. In February of 1492, Lodovico's grandson, Marchese Francesco Gonzaga conferred a grant of land on him noting specifically the work he had done in the chapel.[114] Sadly, between 1560 and 1570, the Castello was remodeled, and the chapel destroyed.[115] Little is known of the chapel except "that it was close enough to the Camera Picta for Lodovico, when ill in that chamber, to hear mass through the doorway. Of its appearance we know only that it was small. As might be expected of a chapel that was really only a large-scale oratory, and that it had a dome resting on four arches, two of which were engaged in the walls on either side."[116] For the decoration of the chapel, it is believed Mantegna executed one – possibly two – cycles of religious paintings. The paintings traditionally associated with the chapel are *The Adoration of the Magi* (1462; Fig. 24)*, The Circumcision* (1460 – 1464; Fig. 25), *Death of the Virgin* (1462 – 1464; Fig. 26)*,* and *The Ascension of Christ* (1461; Fig. 27).[117] A number of engravings have also been attributed to its decoration: *The Flagellation* (c.1465 – 1470; Fig. 28)*,*

The Deposition from the Cross (c.1465)*, The Entombment* (c. 1465)*,* and *The Descent into Limbo* (c.1475).[118]

The next large work to be undertaken by Mantegna in Mantua was the *Camera degli Sposi* (*Camera Picta*)*.* The *camera* was the state chambers but was utilized for more than the traditional bedroom: "In modern terms a painted chamber was at once a bedroom, a sitting-room where the family met together with its privy courtiers, waiting-women and attendants, and entertained itself or was entertained by others, and an audience-chamber, where the head of the household could transact business both formal and informal."[119] The paintings for the *Camera Picta* were executed in fresco with the exception of the fireplace wall, which was painted *a secco* (dry fresco).[120] The use of the *a secco* method is curious as Mantegna was not known to use it previously. Lightbown explains the process:

> The surface of the wall was first covered with a hard plaster, which was then rubbed and smoothed down until it had lost almost all its porousness. Into this dry surface the colours did not sink as in true fresco, where the wet plaster absorbs and fixes the paint; on the contrary, although the paint adheres closely to the plaster, it adheres as a separate layer. The ultimate consequence was disastrous, for the layer of paint has scaled and flaked in many areas where the plaster itself remains intact. But the immediate effect was no doubt unusually warm and splendid, since the white of the plaster did not add a chalky tone to the pigments.[121]

For the tempera, Mantegna made a special preparation of pigments, which rendered them thick and brilliant.[122] It has been suggested Mantegna utilized these innovations to imitate the techniques of ancient Roman painting as described by Pliny and Vitruvius.[123]

The room is cubical in shape, with each side measuring 8.2 meters.[124] An overall illusionistic program was developed by Mantegna with the oculus at the center of the ceiling as the zenith. Feigned ribs are painted into the ceiling to ease the transition from the circular railed opening to the square room below. Except for a few ribbons on the ceiling grounds of feigned

gold mosaic, which are created from stucco in low relief, the entire illusion is created by Mantegna's brush.[125] Each detail is carefully executed as he "sustains the minutest attention to simulation in all the motifs he designed for its decoration, prominent or subordinate, decorative or significant, in form, colour, recession, and projection, and some of his tricks have continued to deceive the eye until present day."[126]

On 11 June 1478 Lodovico succumbed to the plague and his son, Federico (1441 – 1484) succeeded him as Marchese.[127] Federico extended the same courtesies and favor to Mantegna as his father had. Documents show Mantegna assisted in the exterior design of the Domus Nova – a residence intended to replace the Castello and to function as more of a palace than fortress – and in the decoration of his *camera* in the Castello.[128] Mantegna, while not an architect, took great interest in the subject and designed his own home in Mantua.[129] The home was based off the Roman model of a cube shaped building with a circular open-air courtyard at the center.[130]

Federico's reign was short-lived as he died suddenly in his sleep on 14 July 1484 and was succeeded by his nineteen-year-old son Gianfrancesco – commonly known as Francesco (1466 – 1519).[131] Francesco was, more than his predecessors, interested in the art of war and in becoming a great general. As such, any decoration he commissioned would display military victory or triumph:

> For the Castello Mantegna was commissioned to paint *The Triumphs of Caesar*, seven of whose canvases were later transferred to the Palazzo di San Sebastiano and completed by the addition of canvases by Costa celebrating the Triumph of Francesco. For Marmirolo Mantegna's son Francesco painted from 1491 the Triumphs of Alexander, while at Gonzaga in 1496 the theme was 'the victories of the most Illustrious and Excellent Lord,' Francesco's grandfather Lodovico, probably chosen in emulation of the victories of Francesco Sforza which Lodovico il Moro had painted on great canvases in the Castell of Milan.[132]

The pairing of the Caesar and Alexander – the greatest captains of classical antiquity – was not unique to Francesco. To the knights and nobles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "they were heroes, and this was as true of the International Gothic age, with its romantic cult of chivalry, as of the Renaissance, when that cult was infused or overlaid with humanism."[133] The panels created by Mantegna so inspired Francesco's bride, Isabella d'Este (1474 – 1539) she wrote to her sister-in-law in 1507 of her desire to visit Rome "not to see the court and different nations…but to see the antiques of the famous ruins of Rome and contemplate what it must have been like when a victorious general was celebrating a triumph."[134] Opposed to Mantegna's other great decorative works, *Triumphs of Caesar* were completed on separate canvases rather than as frescoes or wall paintings. One of the benefits of working on canvas was that it allowed him to work more quickly and for the pieces to be preserved for a longer time.[135]

While the majority of Mantegna's works in the second half of his life were completed in Mantua, he made trips throughout Italy to complete other commissions. One such trip saw him visit Rome in 1488. As Mantegna could not accept commissions without the Marchese's permission many requests were sent directly to Francesco. This was the case with Pope Innocent VIII (r. 1484 – 1492). The Pope had built the Villa Belvedere and requested Mantegna to decorate the chapel.[136] The young Marchese, seeing this as an opportunity to ingratiate himself to the Pope, accepted the invitation and instructed Mantegna not to accept payment beyond what was needed for supplies.[137]

The chapel of the Belvedere was dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Pope – born Giovanni Battisa Cibo.[138] In 1780, under the direction of Pope Pius VI (r. 1775 – 1799) the chapel was destroyed. One point that is known of the chapel's decoration is that Mantegna undertook the exercise alone. In a letter to Francesco dated 15 June 1489, Mantegna

writes, “The work is great for a single man who desires to have honour from it, above all in Rome where there are so many worthy men of good judgement.”[139] The only impressions that remain of the chapel are those that are deduced from Mantegna’s own chapel in Mantua, which is “of a lively splendour of blue and gold, the costliest of colours and in the eyes of fifteenth-century patrons the most beautiful, and of a decorative illusionism that drew the maximum of architectural and ornamental effect possible from a very confined space.”[140]

The chapel was dedicated in 1490 and Mantegna returned home to Mantua carrying a brief from the Pope to Francesco thanking him for allowing Mantegna to decorate his chapel and praising his work.[141] In addition, the Pope urged Francesco to confer on Mantegna a reward.[142] This must have bothered Mantegna to some extent as the Pope gave him no present during the years he had spent decorating the chapel. According to a story related by Paolo Cortese – a contemporary of Mantegna’s – the chapel decoration required the addition of the seven cardinal and theological Virtues to round out the symmetry of the lunette: “Mantegna irked by Innocent’s failure to make him any present throughout the two years he had spent on the chapel, at first sketched out the figure of a woman on the chapel wall. When the Pope asked him what it represented, Mantegna replied ‘Ingratitude,’ whereupon Innocent slyly remarked that the figure of Patience would go well beside it.”[143] While the Pope may have not rewarded Mantegna monetarily, there is evidence he conferred a title upon him as Mantegna signed the chapel as *Comes Palatinus* (count of the palace) and *Eques auratus* (knight of the golden spur).[144] The knighthood refers to the title he was given in 1484 by the Gonzagas. The title of *Comes Palatinus* could only be conferred by an Emperor or Pope.[145]

In 1490, sixteen-year-old Isabella d’Este (1474 – 1539) married Francesco and entered Mantua. Isabella was the daughter of Ercole I d’Este, Duke of Ferrara and had been tutored by

humanist scholars Giovanni Battista Guarino (1434 – 1503) and Mario Equicola (1470 – 1525).[146] Isabella aspired to be a cultivated lady of the High Renaissance, "distinguished above all others by the great collection of works of art, antique and modern, that she assembled around herself with a persistence equaled only by her taste."[147] To this end, Isabella worked diligently to improve her own understanding of letters, Latin, poetry, and music. While Francesco was away on military expeditions, the duty of governing Mantua fell to Isabella.[148] She quickly went about creating a small suite of private apartments for herself within the Castello to include a *studiolo* (little study).[149]

On returning from Rome, Mantegna took steps to have himself recommended to Isabella. He approached her tutor, Guarino, and requested he speak to her on his behalf. Guarino did just that in a letter dated 22 October 1490:

> Messer Andrea Mantegna prayed me much to commend him to Your Excellency, having persuaded himself that my words have some weight with you. To whom I answered that gifted and virtuous men (*uomini virtuosi*) like him have no need of recommendation to Your Excellency, for of yourself you are exceedingly inclined to love and favour those who are deserving, but yet that I would do so, and thus I pray you to entertain him lovingly and hold him in good esteem, for in truth besides his excellence in his art, wherein he has no equal, he is all courtesy and kindness, and Your Ladyship will get from him a thousand good conceits in designs and other things that will befall; he is fitted to do honour to that illustrious Lord and city.[150]

Mantegna then began to provide Isabella with counsel on designs for her *studiolo* and the decorations it would include.[151] The first picture Mantegna created for the *studiolo* was *Parnassus* (1497: Fig. 29). As Isabella began to seek works from Giovanni Bellini and Pietro Perugino (1446 – 1523), Mantegna completed a second work, *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue* (1502; Fig. 30). Giovanni and Perugino had still produced nothing by this time and Isabella began to change the arrangement of the *studiolo* and her expectations for the other

paintings around Mantegna's works: "There can be no doubt that Mantegna's two paintings set the pattern for the paintings by other masters, not only in their crowd of figures occupying a romantic landscape, but in the actual proportions of those figures."[152] It soon became clear that Mantegna's works were the metric Isabella measured all others against. Upon completion of his work for the *studiolo*, Isabella's first reaction to Perugino's piece was that "It pleases us from being well drawn and well coloured, but had it been finished with greater diligence, having as it does to hang beside those of Mantegna, which are supremely neat, it would have been to your greater honour and more to our satisfaction."[153]

As Mantegna approached the end of his life, he continued to work on commissions from the Gonzaga family, but also turned his attention to his own funerary chapel. In 1504, Mantegna acquired the rights to the chapel in Sant'Andrea, Mantua's main church.[154] The decoration of the chapel was not completed until 1514, eight years after his death. As part of the decoration, a bronze self-portrait bust (Fig. 31), which Mantegna had created in the early 1490s, was "placed against a marble roundel with a central disk made from Roman imperial porphyry, one of the hardest of stones."[155] A Latin inscription is placed below the bust that reads, "You who see the bronze likeness of Aeneas Mantegna, know that he is equal, if not superior, to Apelles."[156]

Virgil describes the adventures of Aeneas, son of the Trojan Anchises and the goddess Aphrodite, in *The Aeneid*. Aeneas, along with Antenor – founder of Padua – led his family out of Troy and founded Rome. Mantegna is thus naming himself a founder or great pioneer – a new Giotto.[157] Apelles was the most famous painted of antiquity and had worked for Alexander the Great.[158] James Hall states, "In the inscription, Mantegna is cast as both man of action and artist."[159] The bust shows Mantegna looking out horizontally with his head turned to the right. His face scowls as shoulder-length matted hair brushes against his bare chest and shoulders,

which add to the heroic allure. His head is adorned with a wreath of laurel leaves as was used to honor great leaders and poets in ancient times.

Mantegna viewed himself as an innovator and the greatest painter of his lifetime. Born into poverty, his genius propelled him to the highest levels of society. Sought after by nobility and popes so that they might say they owned a work by his hand, Mantegna's fame spread throughout Italy at a rapid pace. His style, developed in Padua under the tutelage of Squarcione wavered little during his lifetime. A love of classical architecture, epigraphy, and a desire to replicate nature drove him to create some of the greatest works of his time.

CHAPTER III

PADUA

To understand the works of Mantegna, one must first acknowledge the city of Padua and her unique history – especially when compared to her Venetian neighbors. Despite their proximity – a mere twenty-three kilometers separates the cities – Venice and Padua are two distinct geopolitical areas. Venice is built into the water on multiple islands on a lagoon in the northern Adriatic Sea. In contrast, Padua was founded in the hinterland, in the Southern Po Plain at the edge of the Euganean Hills. These decidedly different topographical locations yielded opposing histories and traditions. Padua was founded in antiquity and by legend boasts a history predating Rome.[160] Venice, on the other hand, has no ancient past. Her rise came about following the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the founding of Constantinople.[161] The subsequent necessity of sea travel and trade routes through the Eastern Mediterranean made Venice both a wealthy and influential city in Northern Italy. As her power grew, Venice felt the need to create an identity for herself through false histories and myths.[162] Padua, on the other hand, had long-established traditions based on her ancient roots, rich intellectual history, and Christian heritage.[163]

Padua claimed its descent from a hero of classical antiquity, the Trojan Antenor – a figure first seen in Homer's *Iliad* (eighth century BCE).[164] The *Iliad* is an epic poem based on the waning years of the Trojan War. According to Greek myth, the war began with the judgment of Paris. Eris, the goddess of discord, was not invited to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Displeased with the slight, Eris brought a golden apple with the words "to the fairest" inscribed on it to the wedding. Three goddesses, Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena, each believed she was the

rightful owner of the apple. In the end, they agreed to have Paris of Troy choose which of them was indeed the fairest. Aphrodite bribed Paris to name her champion by promising him the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta, wife of Menelaus. Paris agreed, proclaimed Aphrodite to be the winner, and took Helen to Troy. In return, the Greeks invaded Troy demanding Helen's return.

In the *Iliad,* Antenor is described as a trusted advisor and elder. He recommends Helen be returned to the Greeks to put an end to the fighting:

> And now the Trojans collected high on the crest of Troy. They were shaken, distracted men at Priam's gates but the clearheaded Antenor opened up among them: 'Hear me, Trojans, Dardans, all our loyal allies, I must speak out what the heart inside me urges. On with it – give Argive Helen and all her treasures back to Atreus' sons to take away at last. We broke our sworn truce. We fight as outlaws. True, and what profit for us in the long run? Nothing – unless we do exactly as I say.'[165]

Despite his pleas, the Trojans refused to return Helen and the war continued. Many of Antenor's eleven children fought and died for Troy and his wife, Theano, was the fairest priestess at the Temple of Athena. For ten years, the war progressed either despite of or – perhaps more accurately – due to multiple interventions by the gods. Ultimately, Achilles defeated the Trojan prince Hector in retaliation for Hector killing his friend Patroclus. Achilles then drug Hector's body behind his chariot for many days before agreeing to return him to his father, King Priam. Hector was buried and the city mourned.

Virgil's *Aeneid* (29-19 BCE) then picks up the story and describe the events of the infamous Trojan Horse.[166] The Greeks constructed a large wooden horse and several warriors, including Odysseus, hid inside. The remainder of the Greek forces then pretended to sail away, and the Trojans brought the horse into the city gates to celebrate their victory. After nightfall, the

stowaways climbed out, opened the city gates allowing the remainder of the Greek army to enter, and burned the city. Antenor, Aeneas, and their families were spared due to the hospitality they had shown the Greeks throughout the war and their council of peace:

> Now first of all it is sufficiently established that, Troy having been taken, the utmost severity was shown to all the other Trojans; but that towards two, Aeneas and Antenor, the Greeks forbore all the rights of war, both in accordance with an ancient tie of hospitality, and because they had ever been the advisers of peace, and of the restoration of Helen.[167]

Upon fleeing Troy, Aeneas went on to found Rome and Antenor, Padua. The *Aeneid* lays out the timeline that Padua was founded prior to Rome as Venus laments to Jupiter the fact that Antenor had founded Padua while her son, Aeneas, had not yet fulfilled his prophecy to found Rome:

> Antenor, from the midst of Grecian hosts,
> Could pass secure, and pierce th' Illyrian coasts,
> Where, rolling down the steep, Timavus raves
> And thro' nine channels disembogues his waves.
> At length he founded Padua's happy seat,
> And gave his Trojans a secure retreat;
> There fix'd their arms, and there renew'd their name,
> And there in quiet rules, and crown'd with fame.
> But we, descended from your sacred line,
> Entitled to your heav'n and rites divine,
> Are banish'd earth; and, for the wrath of one,
> Remov'd from Latium and the promis'd throne.
> Are these our scepters? these our due rewards?[168]

Despite his reputation as a sagacious advisor, rumors swelled regarding Antenor's role in the Greeks' defeat over Troy. Polygnotus suggested Antenor hung a leopard's skin over his doorway so the Greeks would spare his family in his "Destruction of Troy" at Delphi.[169] While there is no suggestion of such treachery in Homer, Livy, or Virgil's accounts, the story gained traction leading the Florentine poet Dante Alighieri (1265 – 1321) to name the second zone of

Cocytus, Antenore.[170] In Dante's *Inferno* (c. 1308 – 1321) Cocytus was the ninth and final circle of hell reserved for those who committed the sin of treachery. Antenore was where traitors to one's homeland could be found.

Despite the negative connotations that followed Antenor, Padua took pride in their founder and ancient history. There is evidence that up until imperial times, games were celebrated every thirty years in Antenor's honor. The games are described as boxing matches, which were quite popular with the Greeks and Trojans.[171] Tacitus provides an account of the festivities when describing the circumstances surrounding the death of Thrasea Paetus at the hands of Nero. Tacitus records Thrasea attended the games in his native Padua but chose not to take part in the *Juvenalia* (or *Ludi* Juvenales, games instituted by Nero in 59 CE to commemorate the first time he shaved his beard and thus passed from youth to manhood) Rome.[172] This, along with suggestions of Nero's jealousy towards Thrasea, led to his untimely death.[173]

In 1275, during excavations of the hospital grounds in Padua, the corpse of a knight was discovered.[174] Alongside the body were two jars filled with golden coins and a well-preserved sword. A Paduan judge and Latin poet, Lovato de' Lovati, claimed it to be the remains of Antenor and declared a monument (Fig. 32) should be erected.[175] The memorial was completed in 1283 and bears an inscription (Fig. 33) declaring it to be the final resting place of Antenor. The inscription is made of rounded letters based on the Caroline uncial, which was heavily studied in Padua at the time.[176] The inscription reads:

> INCLITUS ANTERNOR PATRIAM VOX NISA QVIETEM
> TRANSTVLIT HVC ENETVM DARDANIDVMQVE FVGAS
> EXPVLIT EVGANEOS PATAVINAM CONDIDIT VRBEM
> QVEM TENET HIC HVMILI MARMORE CESA DOMVS

> Illustrious Antenor, a voice in search of a peaceful homeland,
> Brought to this place the Enetian and Dardanian refugees.
> He expelled the Euganeans and founded the city of Padua.
> It is he whom this humble marble home holds here.[177]

In her essay, "Calligraphy, Epigraphy, and the Paduan-Venetian Culture of Letters in the Early Renaissance," Debra Pincus states, "Lauding Antenor as an antique hero, in both form and content the epitaph stands as a deliberate attempt to make the tomb radiate antique *vetustas.* It may even be the case that the sarcophagus itself is an antique artifact in second use."[178] The monument is composed of the tomb, which is made of rough stone, four columns, and a pointed roof. Reliefs cover each of the four sides.[179]

In addition to the legendary founding of the city, Padua's connection with Rome is well documented. When Gallic war chief Brennus sacked and occupied Rome in 390 BCE, his exit was hastened not only by the efforts of Marcus Furius Camillus, but by a Paduan invasion of Brennus's homeland.[180] Padua then fell under Roman protectorate sometime in late fourth century BCE. Padua continued to support Rome through additional military excursions and in 225 BCE were extended an alliance. Cesare Foligno describes how the bond between two cities grew in *The Story of Padua*:

> Even during the second Punic War, when Hannibal defeated one Roman general after another, slew thousands of Roman soldiers and succeeded in organising a general rising among her enemies, while at the same time he sowed disaffection among her friends, the Paduans not merely shrank from joining in the rebellion, but fought side by side with the vanquished Romans in the battles on the Trebbia and at Cannae… Soon afterwards the Paduans began gradually to acquire Roman rights; for, having abstained from joining in the social war (90-89 BC), they were granted Latin citizenship, and were in 45 BC inscribed in the Fabian tribe.[181]

In addition to her strong ties with Rome, Padua was a large and prosperous city under the Roman Empire. Results of the Augustan census show Padua was second only to Rome and Cadiz in population and was rich in both commerce and agriculture.[182]

While Padua enjoyed wealth, prosperity, and protection during early imperial times, the rise and invasion of the Huns in the fifth century brought destruction. Padua was sacked and much of the city burned. Those who survived were forced to rebuild using wood and straw.[183] The once strongly fortified city was reduced to a struggling provincial town. However, the second half of the medieval period brought about the establishment of trade guilds, which began to bring order and wealth back to the commune.[184] The fields that once provided a large source of income for Padua and had become overgrown and barren were restored to their original state thanks in large part to the efforts of monks. Agriculture again became a dominant industry for the Paduans:

> The beautiful plain, which had seduced with her loveliness the invading Cymbrians and filled the cars of the plundering Huns, had, since the continuous barbarian inroads, been forsaken by the plough. Bushes, marshes, inextricable jungle covered the land, that once yielded corn, wine and fruit in plenty. During the tenth and the eleventh centuries, mainly through the endeavors of the monks…prompted by the knowledge of the ancient fertility of the soil, agriculture, and economic farming were endowed with a new life. Woods were cut down, marshes drained; once more the slow and majestic step of the oxen drawing the plough became the symbol of Paduan wealth.[185]

And so, Padua began to reassert herself as a source of strength in Northern Italy.

As Padua continued to rebuild, multiple battles with neighboring communities began to take its toll. One such skirmish, the Battle of Tomba, was the result of a disagreement with Venice.[186] To increase water flow to their crops, the Paduans had cut the banks of the Bretna. While the effects of this action greatly benefited Padua, some marshes were flooded exacting

damage on the property of Venetian landowners. Other channels dried up, preventing trade through the area. Venice sent an embassy to Padua requesting a reversion to the previous condition. "'We Paduans,' was the proud answer, 'do not receive orders from Venice.'"[187] Venice responded by soundly defeating the Paduan forces, killing many and taking over four hundred prisoners.[188]

As time progressed, Padua often found herself embroiled in military conflicts. Despite her position as the leader of the free communes, Padua knew alliances would be required for a period of peace to exist. In 1262, she formed a league with Vicenza, Verona, and Treviso aimed at preserving peace in the region.[189] Following years of war and dictatorship, these provinces were aware that a time of peace was required for their economies to thrive:

> Padua, having thus secured a predominant position, longed for peace. Her favourable situation in the plain made her a natural emporium; the wool and thread-spinning industries, now in a flourishing condition, required peace to facilitate further development; the middle classes…were naturally inclined for peace; peace was necessary to the University which, founded in 1222, after a short if brilliant period of good fortune, suffered greatly during the oppression.[190]

Except for short periods of limited warfare aimed to defend or assist her allies, Padua's desire for peace prevailed allowing the government to focus on municipal matters. In 1271, the first Paduan coins since her liberation were struck and a period of civic improvement began.[191] The end of the thirteenth century saw Padua at her height:

> The University had obtained an immense development and was recognised even by the government as a most important element of wealth and glory. Great expenses were incurred to pave the city, to decorate churches, particularly S. Anotonio and the Cathedral, and to provide a convenient building for the official records (1297).[192]

Following this time of great prosperity, conflicts with Venice began to arise. Multiple aggressions were made towards Padua, who remained steadfast in her desire for peace. As such, she continued to focus efforts on internal reform and react only when necessary.[193]

Padua's seat during the fourteenth century was surrounded by the Venetian, Ferrarese, and Veronese dominions. Padua lay directly between Venice and the plains of Lombardy. As such, she was of great commercial significance to the Venetians. As Venice's power grew, she required a reliable means of exporting her eastern goods as well as a dependable food source. Padua could provide each of these things. To separate herself from Venice, Padua took a position of power whenever opportunity arose. During a time of famine in the Venetian province, Padua refused to provide aid to their island neighbors.[194] Padua also fought against Venice for the Polesine, an area located to the south of Padua and Venice defined to the north and south by the Po and Adige rivers, knowing a victory would have granted them independence from Venetian influence.[195]

As the communes on the mainland grew in power, Venice needed to take control to advance her own commercial and political agendas:

> For over a century the Republic [of Venice] had been more and more attracted by commercial and political interests towards the mainland. The far-sighted Signory had keenly watched the proceedings and the struggles in Friuli, as in Ferrara, Treviso, and Padua. The time when small friendly states, too weak to be dangerous, removed any necessity for her openly to intervene on the continent, and the consequent ominous jealousies of other bigger states, seemed to be passing away. The formation of a Venetian state on the mainland was the sole other course open to the Signory, and though she had long foreseen this necessity it was only now her final decision was taken.[196]

Thus resolved, the Venetians began an aggressive front to overtake her mainland neighbors. After a year of fighting and sieges, the Paduans submitted to Venice on November 22, 1405. The ruling family of Padua, the Carraras, were sentenced to death.[197]

The majority of Paduans, war weary and ready for peace, embraced the new leadership and Venice took great strides to endear themselves to commune. When the Palazzo della Ragione – Padua's market hall, town hall, and palace of justice – was damaged by fire in 1420, Padua was exempted from paying taxes to hasten their rebuilding efforts.[198] Of greatest importance to Padua was her university and rather than removing the school, Venice supported and protected the institution. The school was celebrated for its scholarship in law, the classics, and medicine and from 1443, Venetians were forbidden to study elsewhere.[199]

The University of Padua was established in 1222 when Jordanus, Bishop of Padua (*fl.* 1280 – c. 1330), petitioned William of Gascogone (*fl.* 1205 – 1226), professor of Decretals at the university in Bologna, to transfer to Padua.[200] Upon agreeing to the move, William invited his colleague Peter the Spaniard (*fl.* thirteenth century) to join him. The two well-respected professors instantly brought credibility, prestige, and several of their Bolognese students to the fledgling school.[201] In addition to William and Peter, Albertus Magnus (c. 1200 – 1280), the famous teacher of the Dominican theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), was an early member of the faculty.[202] His presence indicates that while theological degrees could not yet be conferred, theological teaching was an important part of the curriculum. In 1261, Pope Urban IV (r. 1261 – 1264) bestowed papal privileges upon the school allowing them the right to confer the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor.[203]

At the university, students elected their own officials including the Rector, his council, and their professors.[204] Students of various nationalities attended the school and grouped

themselves as such. Those who could not afford tuition were supported by the city. In 1342, the university provisionally divided into two bodies, *Universitas legistarum* (students of laws) and *Universitas artistarum* (students of other faculties).[205] The split was officially recognized in 1399.[206] The fame of the university grew such that in 1271 the professors were appointed to decide the legality of the Council of Lyon, which was chiefly concerned with reuniting the Eastern and Western church, and in 1360, Pope Urban V (r. 1362 – 1370) bestowed upon the school the right of conferring theological degrees, a right which had previously only been held by Paris and Bologna.[207]

As the humanistic Renaissance began to influence scholarly thought, the methods of teaching employed at the university transformed:

> Students of the higher degrees of the curriculum were often allowed to lecture on minor arts. We frequently find here, as students, men who had already obtained their degrees in other universities. It is amazing to us to see the strenuous spirit of self-sacrifice that inspired medieval scholars: uncomfortable journeys, dangers, terrible labours did not quench their sacred thirst for knowledge. Students were allowed, provided they gave notice in due time to the authorities, to start controversial debates on particular arguments, a practice that was only stopped in 1605 on account of the grave disorders caused by one of these debates.[208]

The students believed themselves to be champions of free thought and fought against racial and religious discrimination. Both Venice and Padua persevered to preserve as far as possible the greatest intellectual freedom possible for the students.[209] The fame of the university and her inclination towards humanism attracted scholars from across Europe. Notable alumni and faculty include Torquato Tasso (1544 – 1595), Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1642), William Harvey (1578 – 1657), and Oliver Cromwell (1599 – 1658).[210]

While universities have often been considered meccas of free thinking, humanistic thought in Padua was not limited to the school grounds. Innovative thinkers and talented

individuals flocked to Padua throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries leaving their mark on the city. The Florentine painter and architect Giotto frescoed the Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel between 1303 and 1305. Giotto's contribution to art cannot be minimized. In his 1550 *Lives of the Artists,* Vasari lauds Giotto's achievements:

> That very same debt painters owe to Nature, which continuously serves as an example to those who strive always to do their best by selecting her best and most beautiful parts in order to reproduce and imitate them, is also owed, in my opinion, to Giotto, the Florentine painter; for when the methods and outlines of good painting had been buried for so many years by the ruins of war, he alone, although born among inept artists, revived through God's grace what had fallen into an evil state and brought it back to such a form that it could be called good.[211]

Giotto's works became an inspiration for many young artists and the Scrovegni Chapel a place where young Paduan artists could study his techniques.

Padua's awareness of its ancient past made it a popular location for innovative Florentine artists. Among them, Fra Filippo Lippi who was documented in the city in 1434 and Niccolò Baroncelli (*fl.* 1434 – 1453) who created commissions for the Basilica of Saint Anthony of Padua (il Santo) and the Church of the Eremitani.[212] Perhaps most importantly, Donatello, the most influential sculptor of his time, lived in Padua from 1443 to 1453.[213] During that time Donatello completed two significant commissions. The first was the crucifix and the high altar for il Santo, which he completed in bronze. The second was an equestrian statue called *Gattamelata* (1447 – 53; Fig. 1) for the Condottiere Erasmo da Narni (1370 – 1443). The statue was the first free standing equestrian monument created since antiquity.[214] In her essay, "Cultural Transfer in Microcosm," Brigit Blass-Simmen describes *Gattamelata* as a "landmark of the antiquarian and classicizing achievements of the Renaissance."[215] She continues to explain the monument altered the cityscape of Padua and the trajectory of its art: "The allusions the *Gattamelata* monument

provided to ancient Rome recalled Padua's status in the empire and continued the symbolic language of venerable origins that distinguished Padua's pedigree from her overlord Venice's post-antique settlement."[216] Donatello's work influenced and motivated Paduan artists to embrace their ancient lineage and promote their city through their works.

In addition to attracting scholars and artists, the vibrant humanistic movement in Padua was alluring to poets. The most influential being Petrarch. Petrarch, considered the central figure of Italian literary culture in the mid-fourteenth century, visited Padua often during his life and spent the last four years of his life in Arquà, a small town in the province of Padua.[217] He is credited with initiating the transition from the disjointed humanism of the late Middle Ages to the more organized classicism of the Renaissance.[218] His appreciation for art and archaeology is well documented, but he had a special appreciation for Giotto and the Sienese painter Simone Martini (c. 1284 – 1344).[219] One of his prize possessions was Giotto's *Virgin and Child*, which he bequeathed to his patron, Francesco I da Carrara, ruler of Padua.[220] In his essay, "Petrarch and the Decoration of the *Sala Virorum Illustrium* in Padua," Theodor Mommsen supposes the influence Petrarch's opinions on art must have had at the time:

> That the greatest poet then living in Italy distinguished himself also as a connoisseur and collector must have helped the "new" art considerably and increased the critical regard for it of the people of his generation. It is noteworthy that Petrarch remained faithful to his original love although, after the middle of the fourteenth century, there developed among his younger contemporaries a certain kind of adverse criticism of the work of Giotto and his followers. Of Petrarch's 'fervent, yet systematic and scientific labors devoted to antiquity,' it has justly been said that they mark a phase of the greatest moment in this development.[221]

Perhaps more instrumental in the advancement of the humanist movement and Renaissance than his personal leanings were his literary works that provided inspiration to artists for many generations to come. While it is true that much of Petrarch's influence was posthumous, his main

historical work, *De viris illustribus* (*On Illustrious Men*) – a collection of biographies of great Roman stateman and generals – was adapted by painters during his lifetime.[222] Petrarch's patron, Francesco I da Carrara commissioned frescoes representing Petrarch's historical work in the palace at Padua. Unfortunately, the palace suffered a large fire around the turn of the fifteenth century, which caused irremediable damage to all the frescoes except the portrait of Petrarch.[223] The hall was redecorated in the following century but was not an exact replication.

Petrarch became interested in history at a young age after a trip to Rome in 1336. At this time, he resolved to write a "great historical work in the form of a collection of biographies of 'the illustrious men of all countries and ages.'"[224] Moving forward he realized the only history he was truly interested in was Rome and limited his work to writing only biographies of the famous statesmen of Rome. He began to work in earnest on his compilation until other interests monopolized his attention. It was not until Francesco I da Carrara requested that he "collect his scattered biographies in one book" that Petrarch completed *De viris illustribus.*[225] Petrarch inscribed the work to the Paduan ruler as a token of their intimate friendship. The two men shared an appreciation for Roman history and a desire to lift those former leaders they saw fit. Mommsen states:

> Throughout all his writings Petrarch endeavored to recall to the memory of his Italian contemporaries the great personifications of the antique virtus Romana. In the preface to his work *De viris illustribus* he declares: 'Indeed, if I am not mistaken, it is the fruitful task of the historian to make known that which the reader should imitate or which he should avoid, so that of these two a number of illustrious examples are available.'
>
> In the Sala Virorum Illustrium of Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara in Padua, Petrarch's conception of the exemplary value of the history of Rome personified by her great men found its visual expression. And the words written by Lombardo della Seta to the prince who commissioned this unique decoration might also have been addressed as an admonition and a challenge to every beholder of these pictures:

> 'Keep always in sight these men whom you ought to be eager to love because of the greatness of their deeds.'[226]

The Paduan palace thus became a visual reminder to the leaders of Padua those Roman rulers they should emulate. Padua's Roman past and humanistic leanings made the decoration both timely and appropriate.

The history of classical Rome was not the only part of the ancient past that interested Paduans. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the study of calligraphy and epigraphy became quite fashionable. In February of 1434 Pietro Donato, bishop of the Cathedral of Padua, was assigned one of three presiders over the Council of Basel (1431 – 1436).[227] The Council was called by Pope Martin V (r. 1417 – 1431) shortly before his death and was tasked with answering questions regarding papal supremacy and the Hussite heresy. While not performing his official duties, Donato spent time manuscript-hunting in nearby German and Swiss monasteries.[228] The manuscripts he collected and brought back "fueled a school of calligraphy in Padua destined to rank among the finest in Italy."[229] Two of the most important manuscripts Donato brought with him to Padua were the *Chronikon* (Chronicle of Eusebius) and the *Notitia Dignitatum* (*List of Offices*).[230] The Eusebius Chronicle was a compilation of world history prepared in the early fourth century. The document was later translated into Latin by Saint Jerome and is characterized by its use of both the Carolingian majuscule and minuscule letters.[231] The *Notitia Dignitatum* was written in the fourth century and recorded military and civic offices of the late Roman Empire.[232] As such, this manuscript provided a rare view of the ancient world. In 1436, Donato had an opulent copy of the document created. The copy is one of the first attempts at careful recreation of the Carolingian style and was successful in part to the efforts of Cyriacus of Ancona (1391 – 1453/55).[233] Cyriacus, often referred to as the "Father of Archaeology," was a frequent

visitor to Padua and close friend of Donato.[234] Debra Pincus provides further evidence of Cyriacus and Donato's collaboration when describing Hamilton 254:

> Hamilton 254 is an intriguing compendium that includes inscriptions, drawings after antique monuments, and studies of individual letter forms. Compiled between, roughly, 1442 and 1443, it is one of the earliest pieces of evidence for inscription collecting in the Renaissance and is considered to have functioned as a model for later epigraphic collections. The volume has acquired a certain fame for its inclusion of a drawing of the Parthenon, fol. 85r, almost certainly a fair copy after an original by Cyriacus. But the manuscript needs to be celebrated as much – or even more – for its attention to letters, the letters of inscriptions and individual studies of antique Greek and Latin letters done freely in pen. Alphabets such as those on fol. 90v. honor these antique letter forms, making them available as models. A personal touch by Cyriacus, writing in green ink in his characteristic florid hand, provides headings in Greek and Latin for both alphabets.[235]

The work of Cyriacus and Donato in Padua inspired others to study and emulate the ancient letterforms.

While Donato studied manuscripts to learn ancient letterforms, others, such as Feliciano a close friend of Mantegna, began to examine ancient stone monuments. His manuscript, *Alphabetum Romanum* (*The Roman Alphabet*), is the first manual on the construction of ancient letters to utilize evidence from ancient epigraphy.[236] Feliciano is also credited with recording the story of an inscription hunting boating trip along the southern end of Lake Garda. He lists his companions as the painter Samuele da Tradate, Mantegna, and Giovanni 'Antenoreo' of Padua.[237] In their article, "Mantegna and the Men of Letters," David Chambers, Jane Martineau, and Rodolfo Signorini describe the event:

> Samuele was named the commander, *imperator*, of the group, while the *viri primarii,* Mantegna and Giovanni 'Antenoreo', were *consules.* Samuele was garlanded with myrtle, periwinkle, ivy and other plants; he sang, accompanying himself on a lute, and the boat was extravagantly decorated with carpets and branches of bay. Even taking into account Feliciano's literary pretentions in writing this description, it illustrates the friends' romantically antiquarian and even

> whimsical turn of mind. They ended by giving up prayers and thanks to the Virgin and her son for having granted them 'the wisdom and the will to seek out such delightful places and such venerable ancient monuments.'[238]

While the story is considered by most to be fictive, it displays the zeal with which the ancient Roman letterform was pursued by fifteenth-century calligraphers and epigraphers of the Veneto.[239]

The influence of the humanist movement in Padua cannot be understated, however, her identity as a Christian Republic remained a constant from medieval times. Padua claims four patron saints: Saint Prosdocimus, Saint Justina, Saint Daniel, and Saint Anthony. According to tradition, Saint Prosdocimus was of Greek origin and a disciple of Saint Peter. After Saint Mark was recalled to Rome, Prosdocimus was consecrated first bishop of Padua and charged with evangelizing the Veneto.[240] Depictions of Prosdocimus consistently show him dressed in a Benedictine habit and holding a water jug as seen in Mantegna's *San Luca Polyptych* (1453; Fig. 34). His strong ties with Peter led their placement next to each other in Renaissance paintings, such as Giovanni Antonio de' Sachis's (Il Pordenone; 1484 – 1539) *Saints Prosdocimus and Saint Peter* (c. 1515 – 1517; Fig. 35) and the dedication of the Cathedral at Feltre to the pair. Alban Butler's (1710 – 1773) *Lives of the Saints* (1756) tells us Prosdocimus's was martyred under Nero.[241] The saint is credited with curing thousands in the region of plague through his prayers.[242] Among his number of converts was Vitalian, a rich nobleman and prefect of Padua. Vitalian and his wife had a daughter named Justina.[243] Legend states Justina was baptized by Prosdocimus - though this is no longer held, the story drove Prosdocimus's common depiction with a water jug.[244] At a young age, Justina dedicated her life to Christ and took the vow of perpetual virginity. Following her father's death, Maximian was named prefect and persecutions of Christians in Padua increased. Justina would often visit the prisons to comfort and encourage

the incarcerated Christians. Maximian learned of her activities and ordered her arrest. She was brought before him, and he was overtaken by her beauty. Despite his many advances, Justina maintained her vow of chastity and was martyred by sword.[245] Saint Venantius Fortunatus (530 – 609), the early seventh century Bishop of Poitiers, considered Justina to be among the Church's most distinguished virgins and encouraged those who pilgrimage to Padua to kiss her sacred tomb.[246] Saint Justina's attributes are the sword, which pierced her breast, and a palm branch (Fig. 36). Saints Prosdocimus and Justina are venerated by an altar located above their remains in the Basilica of Saint Justina in Padua. Girolamo Romani's (also known as Girolamo Romanino; 1485 – 1566) *Altarpiece of Saint Justina* (1513- 1514; Fig. 37) was created for the church and contains the images of both saints.

In 1050, Bishop Bernard of Padua had a dream in which a venerable saint came to him and showed him where the bodies of Saint Julian and the Holy Innocents were buried.[247] The Holy Innocents are the male children that were killed by order of Herod in his search for the infant Christ Child. After many days of prayer and fasting, Bernard led the clergy and people of Padua to the Basilica of Saint Justina. They began to excavate between the altars of Prosdocimus and Justina and discovered two tombs with bodies interred. The group then continued their excavation towards the entrance gate of the basilica and uncovered two additional tombs, which contained the bodies of Saints Maximus and Saint Felicita.[248] Their discovery was recognized and blessed by Pope Leo IX (r. 1049 – 1054) in 1052.[249]

In 1075, the body of Saint Daniel was discovered beneath the Basilica of Saint Justina when a poor blind man who was sleeping in the church in hopes of having his sight restored awoke healed and claiming to have been given the knowledge of the location of the saint's remains:

> He [Bishop Odelrico] commanded a general fasting, and amidst great exultation and joy on Christmas Day of 1075, exactly under the paving stone on which the poor Tuscan had been lying, a tomb was discovered, wherein the body of a Bishop was found in full pontifical attire, fixed between a wooden board and a marble stone by many long nails, which pierced the whole of his body. A sweet scent emanated from the tomb when it was opened, thus witnessing to the saintliness of the body. Next day a long procession accompanied the Saint, who was to be entombed in the cathedral; but after a short time, and at a certain point, a terrible hurricane arose, the wind and snow and hail blinding everybody; the procession was compelled to stop in terror, fearing the Saint's evident wrath. Prayers availed nought, but on Bishop Odelrico pledging himself to erect on that very spot a chapel. In honour of St. Daniel, his wrath was appeased; the whirlwind ceased, the sun burst forth from the clouds, and finally, amidst the greatest excitement, the procession was able to reach the cathedral.[250]

Like Saints Justina and Prosdocimus, Saint Daniel was martyred in Padua for his belief. He was a deacon to Saint Prosdocimus and assisted in missionary efforts. His martyrdom occurred during the persecutions of Marcus Aurelius in 168 CE. Daniel was nailed to a table and left to die of shock and blood loss (Fig. 38).[251]

When reviewing Padua's first three patron saints and their relics – especially Prosdocimus – it is worth exploring how Venice's veneration and acquisition of relics for their saints differs. Saint Theodore, a Greek warrior who served in the Roman army, held the title of Venice's first patron saint.[252] Theodore was steadfast in his belief and refused to abandon it even when brought before the governor of the province in which he served three separate times.[253] He went so far as to burn a pagan temple to display the seriousness of his resolve.[254] For this, he was beaten with whips and finally martyred by being burned alive in a furnace.[255] Theodore's intercession was believed to have the power to drive out demons and followers of his cult would apply his relics to their eyes, mouth, and ears while asking for his assistance.[256] Theodore's Greek heritage, however, proved troublesome for the Venetians as they attempted to distance themselves from the Eastern Roman Empire.[257] And so, in 828, Venetian merchants, Buono da

Malamocco and Rustico da Torcello covertly removed the body of Saint Mark from Alexandria – the site of his miracles and place of martyrdom – and transported his remains to Venice. To dissuade the muslims from searching their cargo and discovering the saint, they hid him between layers of pork and cabbage. Mark is said to have been baptized by Peter and then commissioned by him to evangelize northern Italy.[258] He is also credited with translating the teachings of Peter from Aramaic into Greek, which comprise the second Gospel, which bears his name.[259] Once Mark's relics arrived in Venice, a reliquary church was built between the Palazzo Ducale and the chapel of Saint Theodore, which was later consumed by the larger structure.[260] The Venetians used Saint Mark to separate themselves from Constantinople while simultaneously attempting to place themselves on equal footing with Rome.[261]

In the thirteenth century, Venice expanded the story of the saint's life numerous times to highlight the connection between both Mark and Venice and Mark and the West, specifically Peter and Rome.[262] Perhaps the most important expansion of his story was the *praedestinatio*.[263] The *praedestinatio* describes Mark's travels through the lagoon that would later become Venice. During his passage, an angel appeared to the saint in a dream and told him this was the location where his body would be placed in honor after his death.[264] The *praedestinatio* was displayed in mosaic form in the Basilica di San Marco in the late 1260s (Fig. 39).[265]

Other saints popular within Venice shared a similar provenance to Mark. The plague saint, San Rocco's body was stolen from his birthplace, Montpelier, and transposed to Venice during a time of plague in 1485.[266] In a similar fashion to their handling of Mark, the Venetians quickly built a confraternal church to the saint in 1490. Thus, for Venice, the role of a patron saint was not just a powerful protector, but also a political symbol to be used to her advantage. Opposed to the saints of Padua, who had been martyred and properly buried in the city, Venice

stole the relics of Mark and Rocco and created myths to legitimize their claim. As such, Padua's connections to Peter and thus Rome were more legitimate than Venice's as Prosdocimus, disciple of Peter, was martyred and buried in Padua.

While Prosdocimus, Justina, and Daniel were each venerated within the city, none enjoyed the level of popularity of Saint Anthony of Padua. Saint Anthony (1195 – 1231) was born Fernando de Bouillon of Lisbon. His family name, de Bouillon, indicates he was a descendent of Godfrey de Bouillon who served as a chief in the First Crusade.[267] T. A. Finlay provides a comparison between Saint Anthony and his ancestor in "Saint Anthony of Padua:"

> There was a full strain of knightly blood in his veins. And his endowment was not within its effect in the career of one who aimed at loft sanctity. The saint has much in common with the soldier; the warfare of the spirit calls for many of the qualities which win success in the conflict of earthly arms. A generous enthusiasm for lofty ideas, and an equally generous forgetfulness of personal aims and interests, resolute submission to the hardships and privations which belong to a career of self-sacrifice, promptness to face danger without calculation of the risk involved – these are the qualities which make the soldier of the chivalrous type; and these, too, are the qualities without which no one may hope to hold a high place in the Kingdom of God. The summons 'Leave all things, take up your cross and follow Me,' appeals to instincts that are heroic as any that stir in the breast of the soldier at the call to arms.[268]

And so it was with Fernando, who left home at the young age of fifteen to join the Augustinian Canons located at Saint Vincent's outside the city walls. The first son of a noble family, Ferdinand's mother had dedicated him to the Blessed Virgin and fostered in him a deep devotion to Her.[269] At seventeen, Fernando requested to be transferred to the monastery of the Holy Cross at Coimbra to avoid frequent interruptions to study and prayer from family members and local friends.[270] He spent the next nine years in Coimbra applying himself to his studies. His intellect and memory were applauded by all as he seemed to recall everything he was taught or read.[271]

On January 16, 1220, five Friars Minor – also known as members of the Franciscan Order – were martyred in Morocco. At the time, Fernando was the guest master at Coimbra and as such entertained those who came seeking food. The five martyrs had stopped at his door on their way to Morocco and their bodies were returned to the Augustinians of the Holy Cross at Coimbra.[272] Fernando became engrossed in the idea of becoming a martyr and asked to join the Friars Minor:

> These events opened before Fernando de Bouillon possibilities of self-sacrifice and self-sanctification which he could not find within the cloisters of the Canons Regular. He resolved that he, too, would be one of the poor of Christ, that he would be of those foolish ones according to the world who were elected to confound the wise, one of the weak ones who were chosen to confound the strong. He passed out of the cloisters of the monastery of Santa Cruz and took up his residence with the Franciscan Community in the hamlet close by. He had little to learn from his new associates as to the manner in which self-renunciation should be practiced. In three months, he made his profession as a Franciscan, and immediately afterwards set out for Morocco in the hope of winning there the martyr's crown at the hands of the infidel.[273]

Upon joining the Franciscans, Fernando requested to change his name to Anthony, patron of their chapel.[274] Upon reaching Morocco, Anthony did not find martyrdom, but instead grave illness. Downtrodden, he decided to return to Portugal. However, adverse winds drove the ship off course, and he was delivered instead to Sicily.

Anthony spent the next few years moving throughout Italy and concentrating on prayer. In 1222, he went to Forli and was ordained. The story goes that following their ordination, the group went to the Dominican monastery for dinner. Rather than the typical table reading the suggestion was made that one of the newly ordained should deliver a speech. When all declined, the superior chose Anthony to speak. When he finished, all those present knew him to be a man of profound knowledge and filled with the Holy Spirit.[275] He was then appointed preacher to

northern Italy. During this time, Saint Francis of Assisi (1181/82 – 1226), founder of the Franciscan Order, appointed Anthony lector of theology making him "the first of all lectors in the Seraphic Franciscan Order."[276] Thus, Anthony spent his time teaching the young friars, preaching, and correcting those who were teaching false doctrines. Anthony also spent time in France where he taught at the universities at Toulouse and Montpellier before returning to Italy where we would die in Padua at the young age of thirty-five.

Despite his skill in preaching, Saint Anthony is perhaps best known today as the patron saint of lost items. He was said to have a book of Psalms that contained many notes and comments to assist him when teaching his students. When a young novice decided to leave the hermitage, he stole Anthony's prized book. Upon discovery of its absence, Anthony prayed for its return. The thief returned the book and reestablished his place within the Order. His kind and loving nature make him a saint to whom children feel comfortable praying, "St. Anthony of Padua, please look around; something is lost and must be found."[277] His sensitive nature was not limited simply to assisting in the search for lost articles. In Padua, he was credited with assisting in the creation of the first bankruptcy law, which reads, "At the request of the venerable friar (and holy confessor), Anthony of the Order of Friar Minor, it was established and ordained that henceforth no one was to be held in prison for any pecuniary debt or debts, whether past, present, or future, if he shall have agreed to relinquish his possessions."[278] His gentle nature and ability to speak plainly made him a man greatly admired by both the lay people and his colleagues.

Word of Anthony's preaching ability spread throughout Europe and led Pope Gregory IX (r. 1227 – 1241) to request an audience. The Pope had Anthony preach before him and when he had finished referred to Anthony as an "ark of the covenant:"

> As the original Ark contained the Scriptures, so did St. Anthony possess them in himself. His wonderful versatility in making a mosaic of Scripture texts to prove a point or draw an analogy rested in part on his memory. He knew both Testaments by heart. He knew the Bible in two ways: first, by study whereby he had committed the Scriptures to memory and sought out their meaning; and second, by the light of the Holy Spirit, which he had merited by his prayerful and penitential life.[279]

Saint Anthony was canonized by Pope Gregory IX in 1232 – one year after his death – and was proclaimed a Doctor of the Gospel by Pope Pius XII (r. 1939 -1958) on January 16, 1946.[280] The Basilica of Saint Anthony was begun in Padua in 1232 and completed in 1310.

Padua was a city confident in her ancient Roman roots, rich intellectual history, and Christian heritage. Despite being overtaken by the Venetians, she maintained a distinct identity, which was manifested in the artwork created there and through the activities of her citizens. Relating more to the Florentines than the Venetians in their desire for humanism, the Paduans were a proud and confident people who viewed themselves as a true Christian Republic. Paduan *campanilismo* is apparent in not only the pride they took in their civic antiquity, but also to their dedication to the university, and veneration of their four patron saints.

CHAPTER IV

THE OVETARI CHAPEL

One of Mantegna's most significant works was completed during his time in Padua. Despite his youth, the fresco cycle of the Ovetari chapel in the Eremitani in Padua was one of the most significant and influential artistic schemes of the Italian Renaissance. Originally commissioned to be completed by two teams consisting of two artists each, the cycle included scenes from the lives of Saint James the Greater and Saint Christopher. Unfortunately, on 11 March 1944, the chapel was destroyed in a bombing raid of World War II.[281] Only *The Martyrdom of Saint Christopher* and *The Assumption* were saved as they had been detached from the wall in the nineteenth century and placed in safekeeping.[282] John Guthrie described the loss as "one of the most tragic announcements that has ever been declared in the whole of the history of Art."[283] When examining the rubble, the majority of pieces recovered were no larger than one square inch with the largest being four square inches.[284] Fernando Forlati wrote, "The Church of the Eremitani was a remarkable monument, and its destruction is an irreparable loss to the beauty of the world. Even if it were possible to reconstruct, when the war is over, the architectural whole of the Church, nothing could give us again the paintings of the tribune, the great apse, of the Cappella Dotto, and above all of the great apse of the Cappella Ovetari."[285] All that remains of today, save the two frescos which had been previously removed, are photographs taken shortly before the bombing.

In his will, Antonio Ovetari outlined terms to have the family's chapel in the church of the Augustinian Hermits in Padua decorated.[286] On 16 May 1448, contracts for the project were drawn up at the bidding of one of Ovetari's executors, Francesco Capodilista.[287] The agreement

called for two teams to work alongside each other to complete the work. Venetians, Giovanni d'Alemagna (1411 – 1450) and Antonio Vivarini (1415 – 1480) – the Vivarini partners – comprised the first team with Paduans, Pizzolo and Mantegna forming the second.[288] Work was to be completed by the end of December 1450 and each team would receive three hundred fifty gold ducats.[289] The majority of the work was to be given to the Venetians who were to embellish the right wall of the chapel with scenes from the life of Saint Christopher, the main cross vault with the four Evangelists, and the entire entrance arch with figures of saints and the stories of the Passion.[290] The left wall depicting the life of Saint James the Greater, the tribune vault with standing saints, and the back wall of the tribune with an Assumption of the Virgin went to the Paduans.[291] Ian Holgate notes, "the Vivarini partners were entrusted with the most prestigious, the most visible and the most challenging parts of the fresco scheme; the right wall and entrance arch were the only parts of the decoration visible from the nave of the church – in contrast the left wall and tribune space were difficult to see without entering the chapel itself."[292] Unfortunately, the Vivarini partners work progressed slowly and only the vault had been completed by the time Antonio abandoned the project, following the death of Giovanni in the spring of 1450.[293]

Due to previously discussed disagreements between Pizzolo and Mantegna and Pizzolo's untimely death in 1453, Mantegna is credited with completing the majority of the fresco cycle: the six scenes depicting the life of Saint James the Greater, two scenes depicting the life of Saint Christopher, the *Assumption of the Virgin*, and three of the saint spandrels.[294] Mantegna's works display significant use of triumphal arches, ancient figures, and perspective to create an authentic setting and space. In doing so, he strove to place the stories of Saint James the Greater and Saint Christopher in their proper context.

One of the first decisions Pizzolo and Mantegna made when decorating the chapel must have been the adoption of a system of illusionistic architecture that would provide it with a more modern appearance and integrate the various figural components:

> The ribs of the vault were transformed into swags flanked by feigned stone mouldings from which further swags were shown as though suspended in space, in front of figures of saints and God the Father. Flanking a circular window below the vault were painted stone oculi, projected *di sotto in sù* [from below upwards]– again with swags suspended from iron rings – through which the four Doctors of the Church were portrayed at work in their studies. A feigned cornice separated this portion of the tribune from the lower walls, pierced by four tall windows surrounded by painted Renaissance mouldings. An identical moulding at the centre of the tribune framed the *Assumption of the Virgin*, with the apostles spilling into the space of the tribune itself. The same system of feigned stone mouldings, decorated with clusters of fruit and sculpted busts, was carried over into the Chapel as a framework for the scenes of the lives of SS James and Christopher, and here again swags of fruit as well as frolicking putti and shields bearing armorial devices were used to increase the illusionistic effect.[295]

The use of swags of fruit inspired by ancient Roman sarcophagi was utilized heavily by Squarcione's shop and it is not surprising to see Pizzolo and Mantegna – both students of Squarcione – employing the technique here. That the majority, if not all, of the stonework was completed by Mantegna is suggested by their arbitration, which while giving Pizzolo one scene of Saint James's life, stipulated Mantegna was to paint all of the framework.[296] The fictive stonework was completed in monochrome while the swags of fruit done in brilliant color to enhance the contrast.[297] In the apse, the two patron saints of the chapel – Saint James the Greater and Saint Christopher – appeared near the cycles of their lives, while the two principal apostles, Peter and Paul are positioned next to God the Father.[298]

Pizzolo spent time as an assistant to Donatello beginning in 1446.[299] There he learned an innovative approach to figural painting where sculpted models were draped to obtain a three-dimensional effect.[300] Use of the approach is evident in Pizzolo's *God the Father* (1448 – 1453;

Fig. 40), which was in the apse of the chapel: "The cavity between the legs was articulated by a heavy fold of cloth and the sleeve of the left arm was bunched up above the elbow."[301] Some speculate Mantegna adopted this technique from Pizzolo and the effect is readily apparent in his *Saint Peter* (1445 – 1450; Fig. 41).[302] In the fresco, Peter's drapery clings to his body like "wet cloth dipped in gesso."[303] When comparing Pizzolo's *God the Father* with *Saint Peter*, it is easy to see why it had originally been attributed to Pizzolo. Despite Vasari attributing all four of the evangelists to Mantegna, scholars held *Saint Peter* to be the work of Pizzolo based on its stylistic similarities to *God the Father.* It was not until the document assigning and delineating responsibilities to each of the artists was published in 1928 that Mantegna's role became clear – Mantegna had indeed painted *Saint Peter*.[304] Use of the technique is also evident in Mantegna's earliest surviving picture, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* (1448 – 1449; Fig. 42).

Mantegna's discipline of studying from sculptural forms greatly influenced his drawing style, which aimed at describing the underlying form "with quick, probing, but frequently sketchy penstrokes overlaid with a network of parallel lines to suggest tonal effects."[305] This focus on *disegno* is readily apparent in *Saint Peter* and Mantegna's other works within the chapel. It was his strict adherence to the sculptural form that led to criticism of the work by others – specifically Squarcione. Vasari shares the account:

> And above all else [Squarcione] mercilessly attacked the paintings Andrea had done in the Chapel of Saint Christopher, declaring that they were poorly done because Andrea had imitated ancient marbles; he claimed that one cannot learn to paint perfectly by imitating sculpture, since stone always possesses a hardness and never the tender sweetness which flesh and other natural objects that bend move possess, adding that Andrea would have painted those figures better and more perfectly if he had given them the colour of marble rather than such a variety of colours, since his pictures resembled ancient marble statues rather than living creatures, and other like remarks.[306]

This appears to be the earliest statement of the antithesis founded on the "opposition between a conception of art as the imitation of nature in its individuality and a conception of art as the creation of an ideal nature."[307] The theory of ideal art does not promote unnatural beauty, but rather the taking of the finest things of nature and combining them into something more perfect than can be found in nature.[308] For Mantegna, the ancient sculptors had already produced such figures and therefore he took them as his models.[309] Vasari records,

> Andrea always held the opinion that good ancient statues were more perfect and more beautiful in their particulars than anything in the natural world. He maintained that, according to what he judged and observed in such statues, those excellent masters had selected out from many living people all the perfection of Nature, which seldom brings together and joins all forms of beauty in a single body, making it necessary to select one element from one body and another element from yet another body; and besides this, he found ancient statues to be better finished and more exact in depicting muscles, veins, nerves, and other particulars than natural figures, in which certain defects are concealed and covered by soft, pliable flesh, except in the case of certain old or emaciated individuals whose bodies, however, are avoided by artisans for other reasons.[310]

Mantegna was necessarily stung by his former teacher's words and endeavored through the Saint Christopher frescoes to display "how perfectly able he was to draw lively similitudes from nature if he so chose."[311] This may explain why so many of the figures are dressed in contemporary costume. Of all the histories Mantegna created throughout his life, contemporary figures never appear as prominently or in such numbers as they do here.[312] Mantegna took as models for the project several friends for some of the figures and spectators, even Squarcione is portrayed as "an ugly, paunchy figure carrying a lance, with a sword in his hand."[313] Vasari provides a list of others featured in the works: "Noferi, son of Messer Palla Strozzi, the Florentine, Messer Girolamo dalla Valle, an excellent doctor; Messer Bonifazio Frigimelica, a doctor of law; Niccolò Pope Innocent VIII's goldsmith; and Baldassarre da Leccio – all good

friends of his."[314] Each of these figures he dressed in white dress of archers.[315] Others portrayed include Anotonio Borromeo, a member of the great Paduan banking family, and the Hungarian humanist and poet Janus Pannonius (1434 – 1472).[316] The final effect "left everyone pleased" and the work "acquired for Andrea a very great reputation."[317] Throughout the Saint Christopher frescoes, Mantegna continued to utilize and expand upon the imaginative use of perspective of the Saint James frescoes.

The illusionistic perspective exhibited in the Saint James frescoes, particularly in *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom* (1454 – 1457), considers the viewers' position and reading of the scene. This was the one scene that had been assigned to Pizzolo following their arbitration in July of 1449, which Mantegna took on after his death.[318] The placement of the scene created a special problem for Mantegna. While the lowest on the wall, it was set just above the spectators' eye-level, with a baseline approximately two meters from the floor.[319] In order to create a realistic setting for the viewer, Mantegna took a point of sight below eye level by foreshortening figures. As a result, "the spectator, who is envisaged as standing on the floor of the chapel, not, as in the two frescoes above, on the base-line of the painting itself, has the sensation of watching actual figures enacting a scene on a platform just above his eye-level."[320] To reinforce the illusion, the shoes of the front figures appear to protrude into space beyond the edge of the platform.[321] The tower in the right background is represented at an angle in order to suggest the curvature of the street, which created additional problems with respect to the horizontal lines of the palace, which needed to be drawn parallel with the ground level. Mantegna masterfully addressed each of these problems, although as Lightbown suggests not without intense mathematical study: "His solutions must have involved him in much geometrical and mathematical speculation: his reward was the rigorous perfection of his design, with its

extreme precision of intervals and solids according to a mathematically calculated scheme."[322] The end result was the most dramatic and powerful work of the entire sequence.

It has been argued that Mantegna adopted this dramatic approach from Donatello's *Ascension of Saint John* (1434 – 37; Fig. 43).[323] Moreover, various other similarities have been noted between the two works. These similarities include the style of architecture placed along the right side of the compositions as well as some of the figures found within:

> On the right of both the painting and the relief, one can see a building receding at a dizzying angle, its windows consequently drawn in an extremely steep line. In each work, another building is placed next to this first distorted façade and is shown at an oblique angle with a corner foremost. Some of the figures are similar as well. The soldier in the front of the fresco, with forearms raised and head partly hidden by his shoulders owing to the angle of vision, matches the astonished witness in the front of the tondo, just to the right of its center. The striding soldier on the right of the Saint James scene, who pushes back the crowds, has a counterpart in a figure striding off between two pillars on the right of the *Ascension*. As in Donatello's relief, the foreshortening in the fresco heightens the drama of the miraculous event.[324]

These similarities seem to suggest Mantegna was borrowing not only Donatello's perspectival scheme, but also very specific ideas from his composition. Each of the devices he chose to utilize greatly increases the dramatic impact of the scene. As Mantegna was not known to have traveled to Florence at this point in his life, one can assume he had no first-hand knowledge of Donatello's *Ascension of Saint John*.[325] However, it is plausible that it was available to him through drawings brought to Padua by Donatello himself.[326]

Jacobus de Voragine's (c. 1230 – 1298) account of Saint James in *The Golden Legend* (c. 1260) tells of how the saint stopped on his march to martyrdom to heal a paralyzed man lying on the side of the road. Upon witnessing the miracle, the scribe Josias, who had placed the noose around the saint's neck, dropped to his knees and asked for forgiveness:

> And when he was led to be beheaded by the commandment of Herod, a man having the palsy cried to him. And he gave him health and said: In the name of Jesus Christ, for whom I am led to be beheaded, arise thou and be all whole, and bless our Lord thy Maker. And anon he arose and was all whole. A scribe named Josias, which put the cord about his neck and drew him, seeing this miracle fell down to his feet and demanded of him forgiveness and that he might be christened.[327]

This is the scene Mantegna chose to illustrate in *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom.* The triumphal arch, which dominates the left half of the composition, divides the picture plane into two parts. The left side focuses on the story told in Voragine's *Golden Legend* and the right consists of contemporary architecture and figures. While the arch and placement of figures directs viewers' attention to the main scene of Saint James blessing the scribe Josias, the turned head of a distracted onlooker then leads the viewers' gaze to an altercation on the right side of the plane. The worn soles of Josais's shoes tell us about the "peripatetic and poorly remunerated life of a Renaissance scribe" adding to the sympathy the viewer feels for him.[328] In contrast to the compassionate action of the saint, a soldier uses his lance to restrain an angry man who reacts by kneeing him in the groin. The turbaned figure shouts and holds a long pole with a banner affixed. Through the shouting figure, Mantegna takes up a *topos* of Renaissance praise "by which a painting was said to be so excellent that it lacked only a voice. He gave his figure that voice, turned up to full volume."[329] The scales of Justice sit atop the pole and sway precariously back and forth. Keith Christiansen suggests the inclusion of the scales of Justice acts to clarify the scene:

> This brilliant detail makes clear that the confrontation is about a miscarriage of justice, and to emphasize it the banner is ingeniously framed by the zigzag of the foreshortened cornices of the buildings lining the street. People drawn to their windows by the commotion furtively observe the scene. The houses are not those of ancient Rome but of Mantegna's time: the Renaissance viewer was clearly meant to experience the episode as an extension of his or her own everyday world.[330]

Mantegna's focus on the concept of justice and use of contemporary architecture alongside the ancient while depicting a sacred episode may lead some to believe he is referencing Venice.

As Venice carefully crafted and invented her own identity she selected "the interpretive complex of Solomon, Justice, and Wisdom as embodying the highest virtues of their Republic.[331] While many medieval states chose to identify themselves with the cardinal virtue, Venice merged her identity with Justice. The two effectively became one. This concept of a single identity was manifested in a roundel on the Palazzo Ducale. Roughly dated to the mid-fourteenth century, *Venecia* (c. mid-fourteenth century, Fig. 44) is seated on a Solomonic throne. Wrath and pride writhe at her feet. She holds the sword of Justice in her right hand and a scroll declaring her victorious over the furies of civil discord and military threat in her left.[332] The inscription, FORTIS / IUSTA / TRONO / FURIAS / MARE / SUB PEDE / PONO, translates as "Strong and just, enthroned I put the furies of the sea beneath my feet."[333] David Rosand argues, "The maritime dimension of this triumphant figure confirms her identity as Venice herself, ruler of the Adriatic."[334] The construct of Venice as Justice was utilized throughout the decorative scheme of the Palazzo Ducale. While the individual elements associated with the figure vary from one example to the next, she is most often depicted with both sword and scales. Thereby she is viewed as Venice in the form of Justice. However, the close resemblance of the numerous Venetia and Iustitia figures adorning the Palazzo Ducale suggests one thing: Venice is Justice.

Padua, however, had its own association with Justice that predated her passing under Venetian rule. The Salone of the Palazzo della Ragione – Palace of the Paduan Commune – contained a vast fresco cycle part of which was substantially supplemented with allegorical compositions by Giotto during the rebuilding campaign of 1306 – 1309.[335] The Palazzo was the first secular public building in Padua. As part of its function, it "united diverse functions and

offices under one roof, including the general council and various law courts, principally those of the Podestà's jurisdiction.[336] From 1300 – 1310, "the palace's function was predominantly juridical. In the center of the Salone stood the 'stone of ignominy and bankruptcy' (*Lapis vituperii et cessionis bonorum*), where insolvent debtors were exposed to public ignominy."[337] Eva Frojmovič describes the public nature of the administration of justice and how Paduans interacted with the Salone in the fourteenth century:

> The thirteenth-century statutes decree that the four main doors of the Salone, which were directly accessible from the two public squares by four exterior staircases, had to be continuously open. The Podestà, entering the Salone by a fifth, eastern door connected to his residence by a footbridge, presided over three tribunals: two *disci malefuciorum* for criminal cases, and the *discus sigilli* ('bench of the seal'), an appeal court for civil matters. In addition, starting in 1309 one of the Podestà's judges acted as *judex victualum*, investigating cases of smuggling, false weights and measures, and tax evasion…Civil and private jurisdiction was administered by the large and powerful body of Paduan judges inscribed in the College of Judges (*Collegium judicum*) and the notaries organized in the Guild of Notaries (*Fratalea notariorum*). On each market day a specified number of judges had to be available to the public. To anyone entering the Salone through one of the four doors, the spatial proximity of the Podestà's law courts to the numerous law courts served by the College of Judges would have had a symbolic meaning transcending its purely functional aspect. The spatial and visual coherence was meant to represent the political unity of the commune itself.[338]

The decoration of the Salone had the practical purpose of identifying the different tribunals, with some possibly having been represented by animals.[339] Giovanni da Nono (c. 1275 – 1346) – a Paduan judge and writer – describes the embellishment of the ceiling: "Twelve heavenly signs [of the Zodiac] and seven planets with their attributes will shine in this ceiling, wonderfully wrought by Giotto, the greatest of painters; and other golden stars with mirrors and other compositions will equally shine below."[340]

The only surviving scene from Giotto's work on the lower register is a representation of the *Judgment of Solomon* (c. 1306 – 9; I Kings 3:16 – 28; Fig. 4), which occupies the space

above the large triple window in the center of the south wall.[341] A personification of Justice can be seen rising from behind the kneeling true mother while two men in contemporary dress watch. On the left of the composition, the false mother displays a banderole with the passage: "*Nec mihi nec tibi sed dividatur* (Let it be neither mine nor thine but divide it)."[342] The executioner stands ready to dismember the child. Solomon, placed as the central figure, is seated on his throne, and raises his hand to stop the work of the executioner.

Hartman Schedel of Nuremberg studied in Padua from 1463 – 1466 and during that time recorded excerpts from classical authors and inscriptions from Paduan monuments in his *Memorabilienbuch* (*Memorabilia Book*).[343] From the *Judgment of Solomon* he records the following inscription, "He who has decided against anything without having heard the other part, even if he has made a just decision, has not been just."[344] Frojmovič provides the origin of the text, "it is a literal quotation from Seneca's tragedy *Medea*, a rare example of an inscription in a fresco at this period that is identifiable as a specific classical quotation."[345] Lovati – Paduan judge and Latin poet – had rediscovered Luciu Annaeus Seneca's (c. 4 BCE – 65 CE; often referred to as Seneca the Younger) dramatic works around 1300 and sparked a revival of interest in the ancient dramatist's works in Padua:

> [Lovati's] pupil Albertino Mussato wrote the *Evidentia tragoediarum Senecae*, analyzing the ancient poet's metre; Mussato's own *Ecerinis*, held to be the first post-classical tragedy, is a conscious Senecan imitation. The same passage from *Medea* used in the *Judgement of Solomon* was quoted by Geremia da Montagnone in his *Compendium moralium notabilium* (1295 – 1305), where he inserted it, not surprisingly, into this chapter on justice.[346]

The newly rediscovered interest in Padua of the ancient poet by three politically active proto-humanists assisted in creating the iconographic concept for the *Judgment of Solomon*. By

combining a biblical subject with a classical quotation, they succeeded in highlighting Padua's strong Christian values and antiquarianism.

As the Salone was a major gathering place within the city and Mantegna was involved in his fair share of litigation – even at a young age – one can safely assume he knew of and had studied Giotto's work. By placing the scales of justice within this sacred image he referenced the personification of justice in the *Judgment of Solomon* and Padua's role as a defender of justice. His use of contemporary figures and the theme of justice is a nod to proto-humanists of the early fourteenth century who paved the way for Mantegna and other humanist Paduans who followed.

Mantegna's *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom* (Fig. 3) illustrates the themes of Padua as Justice and her strong Roman past in its placement of contemporary architecture alongside the ancient and its inclusion of the scales of Justice. While the focal point of the work is the benevolent action of Saint James blessing the scribe Josias, modern architecture and figures located behind and to the right of the triumphal arch allow viewers to enter the scene. Mantegna remains true to the period in which the episode occurred in his treatment of both the figures and architecture on the left side of the composition but alters the surroundings to create an environment in which the viewer would feel comfortable. By incorporating the scales of Justice, Mantegna highlights the great injustice that is about to occur – the martyrdom of Saint James the Greater while simultaneously alluding to Padua's role as a defender of justice. As the turbaned figure holding the pole upon which the scales are placed lashes out against the injustice about to occur, so too Padua opposes acts of injustice and stands for righteousness.

While the turbaned figure promotes Padua, his presence is linked to Venice and the Bellini family. The elite class of Venice was unique when compared with their medieval counterparts in that they gained their wealth as international merchants rather than as feudal

landowners. Built upon "a group of marshy islands in a shallow lagoon, they had no natural resources excluding salt, and only gradually acquired a hinterland."[347] Thus, their economy was based on trade and thereby necessitated travel outside of the Republic. At the same time, Venice's location made her an ideal seaport bringing travelers and merchants from across the Mediterranean to the city. This constant exchange of goods and diversity of travelers resulted in an increase in both eastern and northern influences in the artwork produced in Veneto. Interest in the east seems to have only intensified following Gentile Bellini's visit in 1479 to the court of Sultan Mehmet II in Istanbul.

Mantegna's relationship with the Bellini family provided a great source of inspiration and influence. As the son-in-law to Jacopo Bellini, Mantegna would have had access to the master's workshop as well as his drawings. Unfortunately, all of Jacopo's frescoes and most of his panel paintings have been destroyed, leaving his two drawing albums to constitute much of his surviving works. These albums show "a singular synthesis in which antiquarian initiatives are skillfully embedded in a matrix that preserves traditional Venetian values."[348] While Jacopo never represented an eastern or Islamic setting, turbaned bystanders can be found in numerous drawings, such as folio 8 of the Louvre sketchbook.[349] Catarina Schmidt Arcangeli states, "His drawings became one of the principal sources of inspiration for the Oriental mode, and it is Jacopo rather than Gentile Bellini who could be called the Father of Venetian Orientalism."[350] This eastern influence is apparent in the turbaned figure of *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom* as well as various other works including the *San Zeno Altarpiece* and *Adoration of the Magi* (1495-1505; Fig. 45). Further, "the way Jacopo depicts biblical events as a synthesis of the ancient past and the Venice of his day was extraordinarily influential."[351] While not comparable to Mantegna's skill in rendering architectural forms, Jacopo's drawings can be

viewed as a precursor to Mantegna's works. Mantegna certainly drew inspiration from his father-in-law's drawings and utilized them to develop his own nuanced approach:

> The charm and inexhaustible invention of these drawings cannot help but impress, but the elaborate compositions, with their emphasis on a deep, tunneling perspective, richly ornamented architectural settings and figures often shown merely milling about, can seem placid and lacking focus. By contrast, Mantegna never sacrificed the narrative to a mere demonstration of his mastery of perspectival space, and his passive spectators are always used to set off those who are fully engaged.[352]

Mantegna's use of classical architecture alongside modern recalls Padua's Roman heritage:

> It should be noticed that the medieval tower-homes fronting both sides of the street make a cunning contrast with the severely noble antique architecture and rich sculptural ornament of the great triumphal arch, attributed in its inscription to the great architect Vitruvius, whose work on architecture was already being eagerly studied by humanists and artists, and with the classically designed palace in the right foreground. These two, arch and palace, unite to form a proscenium of antique magnificence…With subtle verisimilitude the re-created glories of Roman imperial architecture are profiled against a background of the tall brown houses of everyday.[353]

It has been suggested the inspiration for the triumphal arch came from the Arco dei Gavi at Verona, which was destroyed by the French in 1805.[354] Mantegna added an attic in the form of an arched gallery to the arch, which he copied from the upper gallery of the Roman gate of Verona known as the Porta dei Borsari.[355] This amalgamation was not due to any archaeological ignorance on the part of Mantegna, but rather typical of his use of known archaeological monuments.[356] Mantegna often utilized these monuments simply as models often inserting inscriptions and motifs from one monument into another.[357] His classical architecture was meant to recall all of Roman antiquity and not a single source. His placement of the antique next to the

contemporary to highlight the architecture of Roman imperialism acts to reinforce Padua's Roman history.

In *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom*, Mantegna creates a dramatic scene through his inventive use of perspective. He draws viewers into the drama through narrative expansion and digression. He does not sacrifice detail or singularly focus on one event, but rather provides viewers with an immersive experience allowing them to enter the scene themselves. By utilizing familiar architecture, he sets viewers at ease and makes them feel comfortable in the setting.

In the work, Mantegna draws inspiration from many places, but his use of contemporary architecture intermingled with the classical is a direct reference to Roman imperialism and Padua's role in the Roman Empire. Through his employment of the scales of justice, Mantegna reclaims the virtue as Paduan, not Venetian. Finally, by referencing Giotto's *Judgment of Solomon* and the inscription on the Triumphal arch attributed to Vitruvius, Mantegna displays *campanilismo* as he emphasizes Padua's humanist, intellectual, and Christian history.

CHAPTER V

SAINT SEBASTIAN

According to Voragine's *The Golden Legend*, Saint Sebastian was a Roman officer in the Praetorian Guard and a man of great faith. He "was so well beloved of Diocletian and Maximian, emperors of Rome, that they made him master and duke of their meiny and power, and he was always with them in habit of a knight, and was girded with a girdle of gold above like as was used."[358] Upon learning of Sebastian's Christian faith, Diocletian became so enraged he ordered him to be taken out to a field, tied to a stake, and shot with arrows. *The Golden Legend* describes the saint as being shot "as full of arrows as an urchin is full of pricks, and thus [the archers] left him there for dead."[359] The next day Saint Irene discovered him and nursed him back to health.[360] Sebastian returned to Rome and confronted the emperor over his treatment of Christians. He was subsequently beaten to death with clubs and stones and his body thrown into the great sewer of Rome. He appeared to Saint Lucia in a dream, and she had her household staff retrieve, wash, and bury his body in the catacombs on the Via Appia alongside Saint Peter and Saint Paul.[361] This privileged burial next to the first patron saints of Rome concretely ties Sebastian to the city and more specifically Peter. This is expressly important when comparing Sebastian to Rocco whose remains were illicitly transported to Venice.

Saint Sebastian was martyred in 288 CE and was designated Rome's third patron saint by Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590 – 604).[362] Thus, veneration of the saint was originally largely limited to Rome – the site of his martyrdom and locus of his mortal remains. His cult originated sometime prior to 354 at the site of his tomb and quickly flourished thanks in part to the many pilgrims that visited the basilica built above the catacombs – the Ecclesia Apostolorum.[363]

Sebastian's biographical *passio* (passion) is believed to have been composed during the pontificate of Sixtus III (r. 432 – 440) by a monk from the monastery neighboring the Ecclesia Apostolorum.[364] In the *passio,* no association is made between Sebastian and any disease. Rather, it lays out the events of his life, martyrdom, and posthumous history.[365] One of the earliest surviving images of Sebastian is a fresco from the crypt of San Cecilia at the church of San Callisto in Rome. Here Sebastian stands between Saint Polycamus and Saint Quirinus. Each is posed as a philosopher, beardless and dressed in a white tunic fastened with clasps (Fig. 46).[366] Sebastian's strong association with Rome was employed to Emperor Justinian's (r. 482 – 565) advantage at the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna:

> Sebastian was depicted in the mosaics on the right wall of the nave, dating from about 570. He stands amidst a long cortege of saints, all dressed identically as they homage to an imperially robed Christ. Like the other saints in this retinue, Sebastian can be identified with a distinct political territory to which Emperor Justinian claimed dominion as Constantine's successor and as the defender of religious orthodoxy.[367]

Sebastian is one of twenty-six martyrs depicted in Ravenna (Fig. 47). Each of the figures shares an identical expression, white tunic, sandals, and holds a martyr's crown.

The spread of Sebastian's cult among the Byzantine, Lombard, and Frankish kingdoms can also be linked to his strong territorial association with Rome.[368] It is most certainly what drove the introduction of his cult to the Lombard capital of Pavia in 680, which was at that time experiencing a period of plague. Paul the Deacon (c. 720s – 799) relates details of the epidemic that severely decimated the population of Rome and Pavia in *Historia Longobardorum* (*History of the Lombards* 1514):

> It visibly appeared to many that a good and a bad angel proceed by night through the city and as many times as, upon command of the good angel, the bad angel,

> who appeared to carry a hunting spear in his hand, knocked at the door of each house with the spear, so many men perished from that house on the following day. Then it was said to a certain man by revelation that the pestilence itself would not cease before an altar of St. Sebastian the martyr was placed in the church of the blessed Peter which is called "Ad Vincula." And it was done, and after the remains of St. Sebastian the martyr had been carried from the city of Rome, presently the altar was set up in the aforesaid church and the pestilence itself ceased.[369]

Modern historians have placed this event as the origin of Sebastian's plague cult – a cult predicated on the belief that Sebastian had special powers against plague.[370] However, Shelia Barker contends, "It is far more likely that Sebastian's efficacious intervention against the plague of 680 was anticipated on the basis of his martyr's status, his privileged burial near the apostles Peter and Paul, and the miraculous power of his relics – and not was not due to any particular sanitary application of his cult."[371] A late seventh-century mosaic (Fig. 48) that decorated the area of the original Sebastian altar at San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome shows him as an elderly man with a white beard, holding a martyr's crown, and dressed in a white tunic.[372] As the image contains no reference to plague imagery, it "dispel[s] the deeply problematic theory that Sebastian was first invoked to protect against plague because his appearance and his arrow attribute had invited the superstitious to conflate him with the pagan plague deity Apollo."[373]

As the cult of Sebastian spread, his life began to interest those making a pilgrimage to Rome.[374] In the late tenth century, the church of Santa Maria in Pallara – now known as San Sebastianello – was built on the area of the Palatine hill where Sebastian was shot with arrows.[375] It is here the first depiction of the events of Sebastian's *passio* were presented. The narrative fresco cycle contains five events: the archers' attempt to kill Sebastian, his convalescence at Irene's home, the disposal of his body in the sewer, transportation of the body to the catacombs, and his burial.[376] As this cycle notably omitted the actual episode of Sebastian's death by bludgeoning, it may be the reason nearly all representations of Sebastian from that time forward

show him pierced by arrows, as if this were the cause of his death.[377] It was only at this time that the arrow began to serve as an attribute of Sebastian. A mid-thirteenth-century fresco at Prato's Ospedale della Misericordia e Dolce, shows Sebastian with a blonde beard, dressed in an embroidered tunic, and carrying an arrow.[378] Both the image of Sebastian with archers and Sebastian holding an arrow "became standard in his imagery at a time when Sebastian's cultic associations and applications often reflected his spiritual role as militant defender of the church and his worldly career as a professional soldier."[379]

It was not until Voragine's *The Golden Legend* was published that the story of Sebastian's intercession against the plague in Pavia and Rome became well known. Voragine explains he relayed Paul the Deacon's account "because many do not know the history of this people," implying many of his contemporaries were ignorant of the story.[380] He concludes his Sebastian legend with a passage he ascribed to Saint Ambrose: "Lord, the shedding of the blood of the blessed martyr Sebastian for the confession of your name shows your wonderful works: you confer strength in weakness and success to our efforts, and at his prayer give help to the infirm."[381] It was Voragine's retelling of the story of the Pavian plague and Ambrose's endorsement of Sebastian as an advocate for the infirm that created the necessary associative chain to give rise to the application of Sebastian's cult to the problem of plague.[382] From 1330, Sebastian's powers were funneled into the specific function of combating the plague:

> That year, a chronicler noted that Sebastian's annual feast day was traditionally celebrated at San Pietro in Vincoli in Pavia with the distribution of two different blessed items, each serving a distinct prophylactic purpose: bread rolls called *avicule* were eaten by humans and animals alike to ward off pestilence, and miniature arrows made by parish goldsmiths were worn as protection against arrow wounds.[383]

At that time, the bread, not the arrows, was believed to transmit Sebastian's protection against plague.[384] Interestingly, then, resistance to plague was seen as not only due to heavenly intercession, but also from proper nourishment.[385]

As a series of plagues swept over Europe beginning with the Black Death in 1348, Sebastian's popularity as an intercessor for plague continued to grow. It was this rise in favor that continued to drive Sebastian's portrayal in the first act of his martyrdom – being shot with arrows – rather than his ultimate death. Arrows had been viewed as metaphors for plague since ancient times.[386] In Homer's *Iliad*, Apollo sends arrows of plague upon the Greek camps causing the deaths of many soldiers.[387] Additionally, the metaphor appears multiple times in the Bible. Job writes, "For the arrows of the Lord are in me, the rage whereof drinketh up my spirit, and the terrors of the Lord war against me" (Job 6:4). Thus Christians, who were ravaged by the disease, prayed to Sebastian as their intercessor to protect them from God's wrath so that they might survive the plague arrows just as Sebastian had survived his own wounds.

While Sebastian enjoyed popularity across much of Europe in his role as a chief intercessor for the plague, San Rocco (also known as Saint Roch; c. 1295 – 1327) was held in higher regard throughout Northern Italy – particularly Venice.[388] The cult of Rocco began to spread through France, Northern Italy, and Germany in the 1420s and 1430s. Several confraternities dedicated to the saint were founded in Venetian territories in the late 1470s and his relics were brought to Venice in 1485.[389] The relics were then transferred to the *Scuola Grande di San Rocco* – the new confraternal church of Saint Roch – in 1490. His life and miracles are chronicled in *The Golden Legend,* the anonymous *Acta Breviora* (c. 1430) and Francesco Diedo's *Vita Sancti Rochi* (1478). Rocco was born with a red cross emblazoned upon his chest to elderly, devout parents who had long yearned for a son. He was orphaned at the age

of fifteen and left his native Montpellier – located in southern France – to make various pilgrimages throughout Europe. During his travels, Rocco performed miraculous healings of those afflicted with plague. In some cases, he is credited with eradicating entire regions of the disease.[390] While caring for the sick, Rocco contracted the plague and was subsequently healed by an angel. Thus restored, Rocco began to return to his homeland when he was wrongfully accused and arrested as a spy in Angera. He passed away before his release.[391]

Paintings of San Rocco emphasize his role as a pilgrim. He is typically shown with a traveler's staff and wearing a scallop shell. He carries a gourd of water; a white cloth is tied to his staff for the purpose of transporting food, and he is often accompanied by a dog. Rocco's plague bubo, typically placed on the thigh, was a popular attribute when depicting the saint. An angel often attends to him by lancing or applying a salve to the bubo. Despite the presence of the bubo, Rocco is never shown to be in distress or suffering. Thomas Worcester writes:

> Roch [Rocco] does not appear to be terribly ill: Apart from the bubo, he shows none of the symptoms of plague, which included extreme fever, insomnia, continual vomiting, a horrid stench, a blackened tongue and lips. By showing a healthy-looking Roch [Rocco], with what often appears as a rather benign bubo, painters could both maintain artistic decorum, and encourage viewers hoping for recovery from the plague.[392]

Rocco was a particularly powerful saint with respect to healing plague as he was believed to have been afflicted with the disease and recovered. This contrasts with Saint Sebastian who never contracted the illness but was also venerated as a healer of pestilence.

VIENNA *SAINT SEBASTIAN*

The subject of Saint Sebastian seems to have been of particular interest to Mantegna as he returned to it at least three times during his life. The first, a small work often referred to as the Vienna *Saint Sebastian* (1457-1459; Fig. 5), is believed to be the *operetta* Mantegna was commissioned to paint for the noble Venetian scholar and soldier Jacopo Antonio Marcello (1398 – 1463).[393] Marcello was a humanist and served as the chief magistrate of Venice. He had family ties to Rome and his property in Monselice boasted ruins with Roman inscriptions and reliefs. It is rumored that Jacopo Bellini, Mantegna, and Feliciano sketched and studied the ruins.[394]

Thus, Mantegna's choice of Sebastian is bewildering. It is plausible Mantegna's interest in the Roman past and Marcello's ties to the city played a large part in the saint's selection. However, it is perhaps more likely Mantegna's regard stems from his Paduan origin. The Cathedral of Padua boasted a reliquary *armadio* decorated by Niccoló Semitecolo in 1367. Two rows of three panels adorn the exterior face of the *armadio*. The central images depicted the Trinity and Madonna of Humility, while the four corners presented scenes from the life of Saint Sebastian. The inner face was decorated with half-length depictions of Saint Sebastian and Saint Daniel flanking a Dead Christ with Mary and Saint John the Evangelist. As the reliquary cabinet was housed in Padua Cathedral, one can safely assume Mantegna had visited it frequently and understood the meaning and circumstance behind its creation. Commissioned shortly following two waves of plague, a Saint Sebastian cycle focused on his prolonged physical suffering would have resonated with its viewers. Thus, for Mantegna – and all the inhabitants of Padua – Saint Sebastian's martyrdom begins as an act of prolonged physical and psychic suffering. Additionally, cathedral documents indicate the presence of a Saint Sebastian altar in the nave

from the mid-thirteenth century until 1533.[395] Despite the prominence of Sebastian's imagery, it is interesting to note there is no official record of the cathedral owning his relics until 1472.[396] It is important to point out Sebastian's relics were justly brought to Padua opposed to the illegal acquisition of San Rocco's relics by the Venetians.

The Black Death struck Padua multiple times in the mid-fourteenth century. A first wave of the disease swept through Europe in 1348 followed by a second twelve years later. As the Ufficio di Sanità (Health Office) in Padua was not established until 1438 there is little documentation of the epidemic. However, Petrarch's letters offer insight into the gravity of the situation. He writes of the death of his son in Milan and that of numerous deaths throughout Italy. With regards to Padua, he communicates his own abandonment of the city for Venice in 1362 to escape the disease.[397]

Within three years (1348 – 1350), the pandemic known as the Black Death killed at least a quarter of the population of Europe with that number rising to a third in the next fifty years.[398] It was without question the worst disaster that has even befallen mankind. The plague was caused by the organism, *bacillus pestis*, which is known in three forms, all of which are highly fatal: "pneumonic (attacking primarily the lungs), bubonic (producing buboes, or swellings, of the lymph glands) and septicemic (killing the victim rapidly by poisoning the blood)."[399] The disease is transmitted by fleas carried by rats or other rodents and its victims suffer from high fever, pain, and weakness with death typically following within five to six days.[400] It is, of course, important to note that it was not until the nineteenth century that the disease or how it was transmitted was fully understood. The Black Death was so named for the dark blotches produced by hemorrhages in the skin of those afflicted.[401] The pandemic began in the ports of Italy, brought by merchant ships from Black Sea ports, and gradually spread through Italy and

the rest of Europe to Scandinavia.[402] Following the initial surge of plague in 1348, a long series of outbreaks occurred throughout Europe.[403] In the Veneto the Black Death struck twenty-three times between 1348 and 1576.[404] Plague epidemics were often accompanied by severe outbreaks of typhus, syphilis, and English sweat – "a deadly form of influenza that repeatedly afflicted not only England but also continental Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century.[405] In Florence, the population was reduced from 90,000 to 45,000 and Siena from 42,000 to 15,000.[406] While there are not accurate records of the plague's toll on Padua, Venice totaled 46,721 deaths between 1576 and 1577 out of a population of 160,000.[407] Eighty percent of those infected with the plague died within two or three days, usually in agonizing pain.[408]

As there was no known cure or preventative measure for the disease at that time, the medical profession was largely helpless. Many believed the disease was a punishment from God for human sins, "but there were arguments whether the Deity was sending retribution through the poisoned arrows of evil angels, 'venomous moleculae' or earthquake-induced or comet-borne miasmas.[409] A chronicler of Viterbo called the plague, "a divine plague from which no doctor could possibly liberate the stricken."[410] The belief was man's only contribution had been his sins. Even humanists, such as the Petrarch's close friend Louis Sanctus of Beringen and chroniclers such as the Friar Barolomeo of Ferrara "reported similar tales of the plague's origins – floods of snakes and toads, snows that melted mountains, black smoke, venomous fumes, deafening thunder, lightning bolts, hailstones, and eight-legged worms that killed with their stench."[411] Many appealed to Saint Sebastian, San Rocco, and the Virgin for protection. In the streets, half-naked flagellants marched in processions whipping each other and warning people to purge themselves of their sins believing the end times were near.[412]

The psychological toll was overwhelming as the population lived in constant fear of death and one another: "Husbands and wives deserted each other, parents sometimes even abandoned their children and people went mad with terror and committed suicide."[413] People died in the streets and gravediggers were scarce. Those who were hired for the job were often criminals who could not tell the dead from the dying. Corpses and near corpses were thrown into carts and dumped into huge pits outside the town walls.[414] The economic effect of the Black Death was a continent-wide depression, economic stagnation, and decline.[415] In Florence, Genoa, Venice, and most of northern Italy, "expenditures on warfare increased exponentially after the Black Death to the fifteenth century, as shown by the soaring of state indebtedness."[416] Siena saw the fall of the most durable political regime in the history of the Italian city-states – the Nove – which had ruled since 1287.[417] In all, the time of the Black Death was one of uncertainty and fear during which people looked to God and the saints to provide protection from the pestilence.

Mantegna's Vienna *Saint Sebastian* (Fig. 5) depicts the saint bound to a column and standing in exaggerated *contrapposto* on a square stone. The rope that binds his feet forms a large, loose loop. Architectural and sculptural ruins dominate the fore and middle ground. In the background, a path leads away from the site of his martyrdom and towards a town. The archers, having completed their task, walk away from the scene. A waterway and mountains can be seen in the distance to the right and a pair of rabbits graze in the grassy field directly behind the saint. All identifiable ruins are located on the left side of the panel, not the right. A completed arch covers the right side and features a wingless victory and vegetal motifs. The arch to the left is broken just above Sebastian's head. The marble has fallen away to reveal bricks and Mantegna's signature, written in Greek. In the sky the clouds take the form of a man on horseback.

As stated previously, Sebastian was most often shown in his first act of martyrdom. Mantegna followed this tradition in the Vienna *Saint Sebastian*, but what is most striking is his portrayal of the saint's suffering. Jack Greenstein writes in *Mantegna and Painting as Historical Narrative*, "to a degree unmatched by earlier artists, Mantegna graphically portrayed the pain and suffering of the martyr's ordeal. Although many other artists focused attention on the arrow-laden body of the saint, no earlier and few later artists depicted the physical and psychic effects of the execution in such gruesome detail."[418] While previous artists had placed the arrows as merely attributes of the saint, Mantegna's recall the event of the execution. Their radial placement throughout his torso suggests a semi-circular arrangement of archers and blood trickles from each wound. Two of the arrows, which pierced the saint's legs reemerge on the other side and the two strike his head entering through the chin and between the eyes. In addition, the lengths of the streams of blood flowing from Sebastian's wounds suggest a prolonged sequence of shots.[419] Mantegna's representation is so graphically physical when compared to that of his contemporaries throughout Europe it drove one scholar to characterize his portrayal as "almost sadistic" in its insistence on the physical torment the saint must endure for his martyrdom.[420]

Mantegna's insistence on relaying the physical and psychic effects of the martyrdom continue through the affective expression of Sebastian's pain. Despite the tradition of depicting the saint filled with arrows, none of Mantegna's contemporaries had represented the event as an agonizing ordeal. In most representations, Sebastian appears unmoved by the arrows' effects. Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi's (better known as Sandro Botticelli; 1445 – 1510) *Saint Sebastian* (1474; Fig. 49) and Pietro Perugino's (1146 – 1523) *Saint Sebastian* (1495; Fig. 50), were created at roughly the same time as Mantegna's Vienna *Saint Sebastian* and show the saint

in no visible sign of distress. Botticelli's *Sebastian* stands only, bound to a stake. His torso and thigh have been pierced with arrows, but his facial expression is passive and calm. Perugino's depiction is like Botticelli's in that the saint is secluded and bound to a column. Only two arrows are present. One strikes Sebastian's chest and the other his right arm. The saint's body is relaxed and his facial expression, reflective as he looks to heaven. When discussing Mantegna's treatment of Sebastian when compared to other quattrocento artists Greenstein states:

> Nor is it correct to describe the unagonistic saint in these paintings as stoic, for that would imply that his calm front was the result of his willfully refusing to succumb to a felt pain, whereas the depictions give no sense of a physical pain to overcome. Moreover, in the few Quattrocento paintings in which Sebastian does seem uneasy, his discomfiture takes the form of a heartfelt melancholy or a soulful disquiet at his predicament, rather than a sensed physical aching. These images…sacrifice physical plausibility to the portrayal of the spiritual quality that underlay Sebastian's' role as protector against the plague, namely, the God-given grace that enabled him to withstand the physical effects of the arrows.[421]

In contrast, Mantegna made the saint's endurance of physical agony the focus of his representation. The number of arrows piercing his body combined with the exaggerated *contrapposto* of his stance and collapse of his midriff are outward signs of severe physical pain. While the saint does not scream out in agony, his eyes are tilted upwards, and his mouth distorted into a grimace.

Mantegna's unexpected focus on the physical suffering of the saint has led many scholars to question his objective. However, upon examination of Semitecolo's reliquary cabinet, Mantegna's intention becomes clear. As previously discussed, Semitecolo's cabinet featured a narrative cycle of Sebastian's life on its exterior. The cycle focuses on key episodes in the saint's painful and protracted martyrdom rather than his apotropaic abilities. These events include *Saint Sebastian before Diocletian and Maximian*, *Saint Sebastian Shot by Arrows* (Fig. 51), *Saint*

Sebastian's Beating and Death, and the *Burial of Saint Sebastian*. The first panel, *Saint Sebastian before Diocletian, and Maximian*, shows Sebastian with his back towards the imperial authorities and instead facing a group of three men and one woman, behind whom stand a larger grouping of Roman soldiers. His positioning reflects the moment in the saint's life when he began to actively convert Romans for the Christian community and abandon his former life. Having affirmed Sebastian's dedication and commitment to Christianity, Semitecolo directs the viewer to *Saint Sebastian Shot by Arrows* (Fig. 51). Sebastian is seen standing completely nude on a wooden board and tied to a simple wooden stake. He is surrounded by a semi-circular arrangement of archers while Diocletian and Maximilian look on from an arcade directing his execution. A group of Roman soldiers watch from the side. Arrows fly through the scene with some lying on the ground at the saint's feet. Blood spatters the wooden board on which the saint stands and flows from each wound. His body is twice the size of his executioners and dominates the scene. Ashley Elston writes, "Sebastian's imposing body is pierced by dozens of arrows shot from the bows of the soldiers surrounding him. The emphasis on the saint's physical presence and pain reaches an apogee in this scene."[422] The remaining scenes – *Saint Sebastian's Beating and Death* and the *Burial of Saint Sebastian* – further emphasize the humanity and suffering of the saint. It is significant to note that none of the narrative panels represent the saint's miracles or posthumous appearances to the faithful. Instead, Semitecolo focused on the saint's piety, bodily suffering, and martyrdom.

When considered alongside Semitecolo's narrative cycle, Mantegna's focus on suffering no long appears out of place. Rather, he is in direct conversation with the imagery of his youth. As a native of Padua, Mantegna's first exposure to Sebastian would have been through the *armadio.* By emphasizing the physical presence and pain the saint experienced on the exterior of

the cupboard, Semitecolo allows for transcendence to occur once it is opened and the relics within revealed. The depiction of Sebastian on the interior of the *armadio* is devoid of physical suffering. He looks towards Christ with the Virgin and Saint John the Evangelist and Padua's local saint, Saint Daniel. Local patron saints were often looked to as the first line of supernatural defense.[423] Louise Marshall states: "At the heavenly court, the local saint could be relied upon to plead the community's cause with all the vigor and passion of a citizen on an urgent embassy to a foreign dignitary."[424]

In addition to his physical suffering, Mantegna's Sebastian is isolated and alone. The archers have abandoned him and perhaps even more cruelly, there is no hint of Saint Irene's imminent arrival. The carved figures and small bird roosting on the pier turn their heads. This sense of isolation is significant in his role as a plague saint. Gabriele Helke explains in her essay, "The Artist as Martyr: Mantegna's Vienna *Saint Sebastian*:"

> Given Sebastian's role as plague saint his abandonment is all the more significant. Desperate loneliness counted among the worst pains plague victims had to endure. We have Boccaccio's drastic report that those struck by the pestilence were left to their own devices, with even their families fleeing in panic, 'caring for nobody by themselves they abandoned the city, their houses and estates, their own flesh.' Depopulation of wide stretches of the countryside and the desertion of towns were among the effects of a pandemic: the deserted city on the left in Mantegna's picture, obviously once a noble hill-town but fallen prey to the doings of Time, may also allude to places thus ravaged – and gives off a distant echo of our saint's abandonment.[425]

This sense of abandonment speaks directly to the Paduan experience of the Black Death. As noted previously, Petrarch's letters spoke of himself and others fleeing the city in hopes of avoiding the disease.

The question now becomes why these two specifically Paduan representations of Sebastian – both Semitecolo's and Mantegna's – focus so heavily on the physical suffering of the

saint when others do not. The answer lies in the power of the saint. San Rocco, the popular plague saint of Venice is never shown suffering despite the fact he contracted the painful disease. He is simply viewed as a healer. By emphasizing Sebastian's ordeal Mantegna highlights him as a Christ-like figure. Binding the saint to a column, references Sebastian's *imitatio Christi* (imitation of Christ) and recalls the nailing of Christ to the cross. Just as Christ suffered the excruciating Crucifixion and was resurrected, Sebastian suffered a painful martyrdom – being shot with arrows – and survived. Even Sebastian's isolation and loneliness following the event references Christ's Crucifixion. As the Sebastian's would-be executioners march off in the background, so too many Crucifixion scenes show "executioners about to leave the *lieu du crime*, while those intimately involved with the Passion of Christ would be closing in upon the cross and/or withdrawing, as if absent-minded, their attention from the sight they are unable to bear."[426]

Despite the high regard San Rocco enjoyed in the Veneto, Mantegna and Padua align themselves with Sebastian. The Roman guard with his privileged burial next to Saints Peter and Paul and whose relics they housed, while not a patron saint of the city, shared many of Padua's attributes. Specifically, their shared Roman heritage and connection with Saint Peter – first Bishop of Rome – made Sebastian an ideal saint for the city to venerate. Whereas Rocco was a pilgrim in Italy, Sebastian was born in Lombardy – a fellow northern Italian. Sebastian's Christ-like martyrdom and portrayal then speaks directly to Padua's role as the true Christian Republic.

Venice had chosen as her foundation date, March 25th – the same date as the Feast of the Annunciation – to stake her claim as a Christian Republic chosen by God:

> The Roman Empire had been destroyed by the barbarian tribes; pagan might was fallen, and God in his infinite wisdom saw to a proper, Christian succession. On March 25 began as well the new era of political grace. As the Archangel Gabriel

> had announced the conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary of a Savior to redeem humanity from Original Sin, so did God assure the political salvation of mankind through the foundation of this Christian republic [Venice] on the very same date.[427]

Venice embraced her self-assigned role as a new Jerusalem, a city loved by God, and made the Feast of the Annunciation an integral part of the state calendar.[428] Equal parts religious and patriotic, the feast day provided the opportunity for an official *andata in trionfo*, the triumphal procession of the doge and Signoria.[429] Venice adopted the Virgin as her special patroness and began to actively and aggressively appropriate her image for its own self-representation: "That appropriation begins with the Venetian identification with the Annunciation, that date in March that saw the conception of a divine savior and, four centuries later, the foundation of a political savior.[430]

For a city like Padua, which had ties to the foundation of the Church and had been a faithful servant to Rome, Venice's claim would have been considered both an audacity and a slight. While Padua had remained steadfast in her support of Rome, the Venetians often found themselves in conflict with the papacy. In the early sixteenth and seventeenth centuries these disputes came to a head as Venice found herself under papal interdict (1606 – 1607) and excommunication.[431] Throughout, Venice asserted her relationship with Saint Mark was equal to Rome's with Peter making them equal to the seat of the pontiff.[432] By choosing Sebastian, the powerful Christ-like figure, as their plague saint, Padua was affirming her own position as a Christian Republic. A role not created but earned. Their saint through his close ties to the foundation of the Church and martyr status was more powerful than Venice's San Rocco. His suffering, similar to that of Christ, stood out in Mantegna's imagery to differentiate Sebastian

from Rococo. Mantegna was clearly identifying Sebastian as the powerful protector of Padua, a city loved by God.

Just as Mantegna's focus on Sebastian's physical suffering and isolation stemmed from his Paduan roots and pride, so too his interest in and knowledge of the classical past, particularly sculpture and architecture. Therefore, Mantegna's decision to place Sebastian in ruins is of great interest, especially as they would not have been ruins during the saint's life. Rather, Mantegna has transported Sebastian to his present and allowed the ancient to fall to pieces.[433] The message of the painting seems clear: Christian triumph over paganism and antiquity. The careful placement and selection of elements, however, makes it doubtful that the work is this simple.

The head, torso, and left foot dressed in a Roman military sandal rest at Sebastian's feet.[434] Helke theorizes they represent the defeated former self of the saint. To follow Christ and become a Christian martyr, he had to shed that aspect of himself.[435] Thereby he himself is defeating the pagan through his actions. Other interpretations of the grouping point to Giotto's representation of *Faith* in the Arena Chapel (Fig. 52). Giotto's personification of Faith presses her staff down on a pagan statue. As such the pagan statue is meant to symbolize the faithless. This reading may also align with *The Golden Legend* as it relates to Sebastian's conversion of Chromatius, a prefect of Rome. To restore the health of Chromatius, Sebastian with the assistance of a priest, destroy more than two hundred idols within the prefect's home. When his health was not restored, Saint Sebastian said to him, "Why hast thou not received the health whilst we brake the idols? Thou keepest yet thy misbelief or else keepest yet some idols."[436] Then Chromatius showed them a secret chamber in which he could see the future. And Saint Sebastian told him, "As long as thou keepest this whole thou mayst never have health, and then he agreed it should be broken."[437] At this point, Chromatius was healed. Thus, the grouping of

broken statuary relates to both the ideal of Christian triumph over the pagan and Sebastian's story within *The Golden Legend.* It also suggests Padua's role as a Christian Republic. Padua held many Roman ruins, including an ancient Roman amphitheater. The amphitheater was built around 70 CE in the Claudian-Flavia age and was used mainly for gladiatorial games. It was on this site, the Scrovegni Chapel – often referred to as the Arena Chapel in reference to the amphitheater – was built. By appropriating the location of barbaric pagan games to create a chapel, Padua was exhibiting her own Christian triumph over paganism just as many other ancient cities had done. Venice, however, had no ancient ruins to convert. Thus, by accentuating the theme of Christian triumph over the pagan, Mantegna is referring to Padua's role of defender of the faith and Christian Republic.

The center of the composition is dominated by the form of Sebastian who Mantegna has tied to a column rather than a wooden stake or tree. While this was not a new invention – Donatello utilized a column for his *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (1386; Fig. 53), which is believed to have been created during his time in Padua – Mantegna's placement of the saint in the center of the composition while tied to a column was without precedent. By doing so, he is recalling the flagellation of Christ.[438] A tiled floor was utilized by many Renaissance artists to signify Pilate's palace – the location of Christ's suffering – including Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation of Christ* (1455 – 1460) and Mantegna's engraving by the same name. Mantegna's use of the tiled floor in the Vienna *Saint Sebastian* adds to this allusion. Both images – Sebastian bound to a column and a wooden stake reference his *imitatio Christi* and therefore ultimate Crucifixion. The use of the column by Mantegna alludes to his preference for Roman architecture and his reference to the flagellation shifts the scene from Christ's death to the beginning of his suffering thereby alluding to the entire Passion rather than a singular event.

The large edifice in which the event takes place has also drawn much discussion. While Sebastian's victory over death reflects Christianity's victory over paganism, the architecture which dominates the scene has few Christian connotations. It has been suggested the two arches under which Sebastian stands were once part of a triumphal arch.[439] However, the arches in Mantegna's work are of equal size whereas triumphal arches never are. A city gate, colosseum, or colonnade from a basilica have also been proposed and dismissed. City gates are never ornate, a colosseum is curved, and the space appears too narrow to be a basilica aisle.[440] Nevertheless, Mantegna's accuracy in representing classical architecture displays archeological expertise. While in Padua, Mantegna studied ancient Roman ruins and met with other humanists interested in the study of epigraphy.[441] His intimate knowledge of ruins coupled with his inventive nature, led to borrowing ancient motives to project Christian triumph and Padua's superiority.[442] The amphitheater in Padua consisted of eighty-two tiered arches and two large access gates. Just as the amphitheater and Scrovegni Chapel relate to Padua's triumph over paganism, so too the edifice Mantegna chooses for the scene reflects the same.

Mantegna's interest in epigraphy is what undoubtedly led him to inscribe his name in Greek onto the column upon which Sebastian is bound. Where ornament has fallen away, the stone maker's inscription "*to ergon toy Andreoy*," translated as "this is the work of Andrea" is visible. With its respected university and Roman ruins, Padua was the intellectual center of Italy during Mantegna's lifetime. There he interacted with numerous humanists and scholars, making lifelong friendships.[443] At the time, Greek had only just begun to come into fashion among the elite. While it is uncertain whether Mantegna himself had learnt the language, many of his connections within Padua most certainly had.[444] Up to this time, Mantegna had often signed his works in Latin: "*opus Andreae Mantegnae.*" These works include *Saint Luke's Altarpiece*, *Saint*

Eufemia (1455), and *Agony in the Garden* (1455). In the Vienna *Saint Sebastian*, Mantegna prominently displays his signature central to the work rather than placing it closer to the margin as was the custom. Helke notes:

> Cut with precision into the ancient monument's stone, it has become an unprecedented eye-catcher, which owes its character not only to the central position of its extravagant lettering: set into the empty space of unstructured surface in bright and uniform colouring, the signature is all the more conspicuous as it is written vertically, forming a 'column' of words.[445]

Mantegna breaks from Greek convention in his use of the word *ergon* and the presence of triangles as a form of punctuation not found in Greek writing. Ancient Greek artists would often utilize the verb *epoiesen* (he made it) versus the noun *ergon* in their signatures. While triangles were commonly used in Rome as a form of punctuation, their usage here appears to be Mantegna's own invention.[446]

The entirety of the scene in *Saint Sebastian* is Roman, from the ruins, which dominate the scene, to the saint depicted. This begs the question why would Mantegna choose to sign his name in Greek? The answer may stem from a desire to create an ancient artistic lineage for himself. All myths of the origin of art including architecture originated in Greece. Helke theorizes Mantegna's inscription was an attempt to place himself in the lineage of the Greek artist Phidias.[447] Thanks in large part to Petrarch, Phidias had only just been "rediscovered" for his reputation as an "all around" artist. Phidias was known to have mastered painting, sculpture, and architecture. Here, Mantegna is claiming to be the same. As a Paduan artist, Mantegna looked to set himself above his Florentine and Venetian contemporaries. Through his knowledge and accessibility to inscriptions and scholars in Padua, he placed a mark on *Saint Sebastian* accentuating his skill and highlighting the intellectual achievements of his native city. Also, by

creating his inscription in Greek vice Latin – as was far more common for Mantegna – he emphasizes Sebastian's role as a Christ-like figure as the New Testament, which relays the life of Christ, was originally written in Greek.

Along the broken wall that separates the foreground from the background rests a single head and a fragment of a bacchic bas-relief with putti and grapes. Keith Christiansen argues "the beauty with which these archaeological fragments are painted partly undercuts the message of Christian victory, for we cannot help but lament the destruction of these once great works, regardless of the fact that they were made by pagans."[448] This may have been Mantegna's aim. In the preface to his *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Vasari laments the destruction of pagan imagery within the Christian context:

> But what brought infinite harm and damage on the said professions, even more than all the aforesaid causes, was the burning zeal of the new Christian religion, which, after a long and bloody combat, with its wealth of miracles and with the sincerity of its works, had finally cast down and swept away the old faith of the heathens, and, devoting itself most ardently with all diligence to driving out and extirpating root and branch every least occasion whence error could arise, not only defaced or threw to the ground all the marvelous statues, sculptures, pictures, mosaics, and ornaments of the false gods of the heathens, but even the memorials and the honours of numberless men of mark, to whom, for their excellent merits, the noble spirit of the ancients had set up statues and other memorials in public places.[449]

It is possible that while promoting the ideals of Christian victory over paganism, Mantegna was also projecting nostalgia and regret over the ruination and loss of the ancient masterpieces. As someone who had spent countless hours studying and replicating ancient statuary and architecture, Mantegna had a deep appreciation for the classical past. It is widely documented that his fascination with everything ancient – especially Roman – began during his time in Padua.

Mantegna and Giovanni Bellini's connections ran deeper than their familial ties. Through their works, they conversed with and challenged one another. Where Giovanni focused on poetic interpretations in his art, adopting the aesthetic of *colorito*, Mantegna was master of detail, championing *disegno*.[450] Vasari firmly established the importance of drawing as the foundation of painting, sculpture, and architecture:

> On the broadest historical scale, *disegno* provides the measure of progress in the arts from their rebirth with Giotto to the overwhelming teleological achievements of Michelangelo. More specifically, drawing is viewed as the key to the entire imaginative process, the medium of the painter's every thought as well as of its concrete expression. From the initial conception of the idea through its formal statement in sketches to its final execution in a finished cartoon, the entire creative procedure is defined by Vasari essentially in terms of *disegno*.[451]

According to this aesthetic, the quality of the drawing is the critical measure of a painting and the significant criteria for judging a painting included line and shading, form, and proportion.[452] Color was thus considered to contribute only superficially to the basic design. The principles of *disegno* affirmed that, "beyond the study of nature and the works of the best modern masters, the young artist should copy the sculpture of the ancients, in which a selection of the purest elements of nature had already been made."[453] By drawing from and studying classical sculptures and reliefs, the artist was allowed to concentrate on the ideal. *Disegno* was considered "the key to the mastery of composition, of proportion and anatomy, the very foundations for Renaissance painting."[454]

The development of painting in Venice was predicated on two factors: the oil medium and the canvas support.[455] In the lagoon setting with his high humidity and salinity, plaster failed to set properly and therefore colors adhered poorly to the wall.[456] After failed attempts at frescoes in the environment, artists turned to the use of canvas. Vasari notes the usefulness of canvas for

large-scale decorative projects by citing the Palazzo Ducale in Venice.[457] The use of canvas support provided the necessary premise for the Venetian transformation of traditional oil medium.[458] Developed in the Netherlands, the oil medium gained importance in Venice by the late fifteenth century. By 1475, both Giovanni Bellini and Antonello da Messina were exploiting its possibilities: "The light that is so impressively suffused throughout Bellini's compositions – whether in the Byzantine glow of sacred architecture or in the symbolically weighted illumination that transposes his natural landscapes to a spiritual key – depends upon the exploitation of this medium."[459] By applying colors in glazes with darker tones overlying a lighter ground, the artist was able to create a light that appeared to emanate from the depths of the picture.[460] Millard Meiss noted, "With these methods…the diffusion of light could become a major pictorial theme."[461]

By the sixteenth century, Venetian painters led by Zorzi da Castelfranco (famously known as Giorgione, c. 1478 – 1510), began to experiment further with oil medium. Rather than constructing layers of transparent pigment first, Giorgione worked from a dark base: "The canvas was built up with a brown ground, a middle tone over which lights and darks were applied: and light now meant opaque white, which became the thickest part of the painting."[462] In addition, Giorgione was known for working directly on the canvas without any preparatory studies drawn on paper. While conceding to the greatness of Giorgione, Vasari disagreed with his abandonment of *disegno*, "Drawing on paper is not only essential for the proper preparation of paintings, it is also an exercise by which the artist develops new ideas; drawing fixes in his mind all the forms of nature so that he does not always have to depend on having the model before his eyes or to hide the alluring beauty of colors his inability to draw, as the Venetian painters have done for many years."[463] Through the use of oils, Venetian painters forewent cartoons and drawings in

favor for beginning their picture on the canvas. Paints could be layered or scraped away allowing rework without damaging the final composition. By failing to utilize the principles of *disegno*, Venetians divorced painting from drawing.[464]

In her article, "As Time Goes By: Temporal Plurality and the Antique in Andrea Mantegna's *Saint Sebastian* and Giovanni Bellini's *Blood of the Redeemer*," Beverly Louise Brown contends that Giovanni's *Blood of the Redeemer* (1465; Fig. 54) draws in large part from Mantegna's *Saint Sebastian*.[465] In each of the works, the main figure – Christ in Giovanni's and Saint Sebastian in Mantegna's – stands in *contrapposto* in the center of the composition. Pagan temple architecture and sculptural ruins dominate the foreground and middle ground of Mantegna's *Sebastian* painting. In contrast, Giovanni places Christ in an uncluttered space. A sole angel kneels before Him and raises the chalice – referencing the Eucharist. A parapet stands behind the figures separating them from the contemporary landscape of the background. Along the parapet, Giovanni shows relief sculptures in red porphyry and green marble. Similarly, Mantegna's work shows a contemporary scene in the background. The imagery shown on the column to which Saint Sebastian is tied and the reliefs behind Christ are meant to reflect the Eucharist.[466] Each painting separates Christ or his surrogate, Saint Sebastian, from both the pagan past and landscape in the rear, which Brown states represents eternal life.[467] In contemplating the paintings, the viewer must therefore abandon the ruins of antiquity and through Christ and the Eucharist pass on to eternal life on the other side.[468]

In addition to a shared meaning, the paintings contain other similarities. Each challenge contemporary conventions by displaying the sacred as a full figure against a natural background rather than a plain or gold ground. The main figure is placed in the center of the work and fully exposed to the gaze of viewers thus emphasizing the nature of bodily sacrifice.[469] The body of

Giovanni's Christ is similar in stature to Mantegna's Sebastian with its horseshoe shaped ribcage and well-defined stomach muscles. One striking difference between the figures is Giovanni's characterization of Christ's face, which speaks directly to the Northern European influence of Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399 – 1464).

Despite their differing styles and aesthetics, Giovanni often drew inspiration from Mantegna's works. In this case, the similarities center on the positioning and stylization of the main figure along with Mantegna's decision to place a sacred figure in a natural landscape and then separating the sacred from nature via a low wall – a technique which Mantegna employs in the Louvre *Saint Sebastian* as well. The creativity and inventive nature of Mantegna's works inspired many of Giovanni's pieces.

As *disegno* and *invenzione* (invention) were intimately linked in the Renaissance, it is not surprising that Mantegna was often the originator and Giovanni the copyist. Although these works were often similar due to Giovanni's appropriation of Mantegna's work, the meanings behind the corresponding pieces were not always aligned. As a Venetian, many of Giovanni's works contained pro-Venetian propaganda. As a result, some scholars have been tempted to read Mantegna's work accordingly. However, this is not Mantegna's aim. As with the Vienna *Saint Sebastian*, many of his works contain evidence of *campanilismo* as they exhibit a clear goal of promoting Padua as superior to Venice. He subtly undermines their invented mythical and Christian origin stories by referencing the true Roman and Christian past of Padua.

LOUVRE *SAINT SEBASTIAN*

As seen in the Vienna *Saint Sebastian*, Mantegna was beginning to challenge the traditional convention of placing sacred figures in a solid or gold ground by instead placing them in nature. Others, particularly those in Venice were attempting to make a similar leap.

In their article, "Counterfeiting Nature: Artistic Innovation and Cultural Crisis in Renaissance Venice," Arthur Steinberg and Jonathan Wylie explore the use of natural landscapes within the sacred works being created in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Venice.[470] Through the development of oil painting and a focus on *colorito* (Venetian style of painting that placed emphasis on the importance of color over drawing), the Venetians were able to create more realistic and lifelike images than those previously conceived with tempera:

> In tempera painting, grass and foliage had to be painted almost blade by blade or leaf by leaf, or else as a more or less solid field of color. Now they were painted in broad and narrow strokes of dense, dark greens. These were highlighted with dashes of yellow and light greens, and the whole was covered with a greenish glaze. The effect is of light playing on tremulous vegetation.[471]

This heightened naturalism allowed artists to achieve such direct renderings of reality that they were said to feign nature. Although remarkable, this feat intensified an already expanding conceptual dilemma inherent in sacred works. Steinberg and Wylie describe the predicament:

> Foliage, flesh, sky, cloth, armor, even the gods and demigods of classical myth were all profane objects or could be construed as such. Depicting them naturalistically posed no problem. Sixteenth-century Catholics though, however, postulated the existence of a sacred order of reality as well as a profane one – and if a sacred figure could be depicted as if it were part of profane reality, its sacredness became ambiguous or even risked disappearing entirely. The risk was especially great in the case of figures, most notably Venice's protectress, the Virgin Mary, who mediated relations between the two orders of reality by combining sacred and profane figures.[472]

The issue became how to differentiate the sacred from the things of this world. If the Virgin were placed in a contemporary space and styled as a modern woman, how would her divine nature be indicated to the viewer? The solution was the development of a new space-time construct, *natura* or "natural painting."[473]

The most notable Venetian painters to experiment with *natura* were Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione, and Tiziano Vecellio (better known as Titian; c. 1485/90? – 1576). Giovanni began by dividing the elements of the painting into separate picture planes as seen in *Blood of the Redeemer* – a technique he borrowed from Mantegna. If this were not sufficient to delineate the sacred from the worldly, he would then mark the sacred figures through the addition of cherubs or halos. Giorgione and Titian experimented further by twisting scenes and ultimately reducing the number of markers of divinity required.[474] Giovanni's progression towards *natura* is perhaps most obvious in his representations of the Madonna and Child. Sixty-four of these works have survived to present day. In those examples created in the 1480s and 1490s, eighty-four percent contain either a landscape or the cloth of honor – a traditional backdrop for the Virgin and Christ Child – and sixty-eight percent feature both.[475] It has been suggested that the presence of the cloth of honor marks Giovanni's hesitance to place the sacred figures in a profane setting:

> His unease is particularly clear in one of the rare Madonna-and-Child paintings of this period, which has a landscape but lacks a cloth of honor (Pignatti no. 116). Not only did Bellini place an especially elaborate landscape far away, but he also marked the central pair's divinity by equipping them with halos and placing six disembodied reddish cherubs above their heads. This was the only time he used cherubs in a Madonna and Child.[476]

Moving forward, however, Giovanni began to abandon the cloth of honor in favor of the landscape background. Of those Madonna and Child paintings created after 1500, one hundred percent contain a landscape with only fifty-five percent also employing the cloth of honor. While

these statistics seem to suggest achievement in separating the sacred from the worldly contemporary landscape in Giovanni's works, the opposite is true. While he was able to place sacred figures within the same composition as a landscape, Giovanni failed to create a believable and synthesized space, which would be accessible to the viewer. Rather, he effectively combined two paintings into one. Take, for example, *Madonna in the Meadow* (1505; Fig. 55). Steinberg and Wylie explain:

> The *Madonna in the Meadow* essentially comprises two separate paintings: the foreground, and the setting behind the central figures. The latter is further developed into a middle ground and a background. The background depicts the real world quite straightforwardly, while the heavy symbolic loading of the middle ground effectively removes the foreground figures to another order of reality. The middle ground thus becomes the functional equivalent of the cloth of honor.[477]

While the *Madonna in the Meadow* includes natural scenery, the lack of synthesis with the sacred figures results in a work that cannot be characterized as natural.

As Giorgione and Titian began to experiment with the technique, they utilized the same basic structure as *Madonna in the Meadow*. Dividing space into multiple picture planes, they placed markers, which delineated one layer from the next:

> Each picture plane was set off from its neighbors by such devices as cliffs, folds in the landscape, or bodies of water; and each contained a characteristic set of items. These items included: in *the near foreground*: a gravel border and a sprig of vegetation; in *the middle foreground* the central figures, a crafted item like a sword, ewer, musical instrument, or piece of cloth; immediately behind them, as a kind of backdrop, in the *rear foreground*: a cliff-edge with overhanging verdure, a bare branch, a mass of leafy trees, and a stump; in *the near distance*: a reclining figure or one with a staff or spear, a few freestanding trees, and a path or road, animals, and a farmhouse; in the *middle distance*: a townscape, often behind a body of water; and in *the far distance* a frieze of bluish hills whose outline is punctuated by the silhouettes of towns and a partly clouded sky.[478]

While separation of the planes aided in creating a convincing depth of field, it did not completely solve the dilemma of fabricating a space in which the sacred and worldly could co-exist. Rather additional devices were necessary to aid in obscuring the transitional areas from sacred to worldly settings. One such device was shifting the spectator's point of view through the utilization of close perspectives and low angles, which effectively eliminates the middle ground. This technique was employed by Titian in *Saint Mark Enthroned, with Four Saints* (1511; Fig. 56). Another device would be crowding the picture plane with figures as was common in a *sacra conversazione* – a "holy conversation" depicting the Virgin and Child amidst a group of saints in an informal grouping – to block out most of the background.

While many of these techniques were not fully realized in Venetian painting until the mid-sixteenth century, Mantegna was employing them at least in part by the second half of the fifteenth century. For example, the second of Mantegna's Sebastian series, referred to as the Louvre *Saint Sebastian* (1480; Fig. 6), employs multiple layers in conjunction with low angles and close perspectives – a technique unseen in Titian's work until 1511. Like the Vienna *Saint Sebastian* (Fig. 5), the saint is placed in the center of composition and bound to a column. The grouping of broken statuary at his feet is replaced with a single sculptural foot of a high-ranking Roman military official.[479] To the right, the archers gather their belongings and prepare to leave. The background is dominated by a cityscape complete with ancient ruins. It is unclear whether the background is meant to simply suggest the time in which the saint lived or if it carries deeper meaning. Along the path, a small piazza is evident with horsemen and a fountain (Fig. 57). On the left is a temple with bas-relief panels and an arch dominates the center of the space. Four scenes are evident on the temple. Joan Caldwell identifies them as "(1) part of a scene with a magistrate seated on a *sella curulis*; (2) a centauromachia; (3) a riding scene of pacification; (4)

restoration motif."[480] The equestrian and centauromachy scenes are of particular interest as they appear in scenes of Mantegna's *San Zeno Altarpiece* (1460, Fig. 58). In their article, "Fictionality in Mantegna's San Zeno Altarpiece," Felix Thurlemann and Cheryl Spiese McKee discuss the presence of antique scenes in the relief panels above the Virgin and saints' heads. As all of the scenes portray either humans fighting with animals or half-human figures, they represent "humanity's struggle against the bestial elements of its nature."[481] As these elements are at what they refer to as the R1 level they represent the highest level of unreality in the panel with the Virgin, Christ Child, and saints representing the most real.[482] This is similar to how Mantegna divides the picture plane in *Saint Sebastian*. Instead of placing the elements within the same space and then delineating them through levels of relief and reality, he divides them into foreground and background. Those elements in the background of *Saint Sebastian* correlate to the R1 level of the *San Zeno Altarpiece.* Mantegna seems to make the comparison clear through the repetition of equestrian and centauromachy imagery. In this system, paganism becomes subordinate to Christianity:

> Conforming to the program of Christian humanism developed by the Fathers of the Church, Mantegna's altarpiece integrates antiquity into the image in a subordinate role in the service of the Christian world. While Mantegna's painting, on the stylistic level, has a direct connection with classical models, there is, on the intellectual level, a radical rejection of classical values.[483]

Therefore, a contradiction exists between the modes of relationship to the antique. There is an acceptance on a stylistic level and rejection on the intellectual. This acceptance and rejection seem to echo Vasari's sentiments. Christianity has triumphed over paganism, but there remains a respect for the classical past. There is a desire to hold on to those aspects of antiquity, which the humanists find admirable and which tie Padua to her ancient Roman past.

While his Venetian counterparts were still struggling with and developing methods to place a sacred figure in a contemporary landscape, Mantegna incorporates a landscape and an ancient pagan city complete with a temple decorated with mythological themes. His *invenzione* provided the needed inspiration for their development of *natura*.

CA' D'ORO *SAINT SEBASTIAN*

The third and final of the Sebastian series is the Ca' d'Oro *Saint Sebastian* (1506; Fig 7). Originally intended for the Mantuan bishop-elect Lodovico Gonzaga, this work remained unfinished in Mantegna's workshop at the time of his death.[484] It is radically different from his previous two representations of the saint as it is devoid of any Roman ruins. Rather than being bound to a column, only Sebastian's hands appear to be constrained behind his back. The lack of background is explained by the framing in which he is placed. By removing the ruins and classical elements from the work, Mantegna has made Sebastian the sculpture. He steps forward toward the viewer from an architectural niche – like those in which saint statues were often placed. A single candle affixed with a warning has been placed by his left foot (Fig. 59). The warning reads: N<IH> IL NISI DIVINUM STABILE EST CAETERA FUMUS (Nothing but the divine is stable, the rest is smoke),[485] Andrea Bolland explains:

> In terms of the antithesis this articulates – heavenly versus earthly, stable versus evanescent – Mantegna's actual painting, a material product of human artifice, is unquestionably part of the latter realms. Just as Sebastian's (and the forewarned viewer's) flesh will eventually be reclaimed by the earth, the skin of pigment-covered canvas on which the former is represented is also part of the temporal realm of contingency.[486]

Yet, it is interesting to note, that Sebastian appears to be more stone than flesh. Indeed, this was a common criticism of Mantegna's work during his lifetime. After their separation, his former teacher, Squarcione, commented on the stone like quality of his painting.[487] In this case, however, the reference to sculpture appears deliberate. While the lively body of Saint Sebastian was surrounded by sculptural and architectural remains of the classical past in the previous two works, here they are "collapsed into a single entity: as rendered by Mantegna, Sebastian seems almost a work of human artifice, a walking statue."[488] The narrative has been removed; there are no archers or towns in the background, rather a solitary figure. In addition to reinforcing the overall theme of the series, Padua's Christian triumph over paganism, Mantegna appears to reference the *paragone* – painting versus sculpture.

While the Ca' d'Oro Sebastian lacks the classical elements of the Louvre and Vienna versions, Mantegna continues the theme of nostalgia over the loss of antiquity through the *contrapposto* stance in which he places the figure. By leaving the saint's legs unbound, Mantegna gives a sense of motion as the right foot is placed in front of the left. Although his weight is distributed to the front leg rather than the back, the stance is reminiscent of the Riace Bronze Warrior (c. 460-430 BCE; Fig. 60). Even the musculature throughout the chest and abdomen appears similar. It is important to note that while the Riace Warriors were lost at sea and not rediscovered until 1972 off the coast of Calabria, sculptures of the same type were readily available throughout Italy as inspiration to Mantegna.[489] In the Ca'd'Oro, Sebastian has become the classical element within the work. He is both the sacred and the profane.

Each of Mantegna's Sebastians contain similar qualities and a singular overarching theme – Padua's Christian triumph over paganism. The suffering of the saint is paramount in each. Sebastian's physical discomfort reaches a climax in the Ca' d'Oro where his facial expression

suggests what it might look like to look into the eyes of Death.[490] His use of suffering Saint Sebastian as a powerful Christ-like defender of Padua overshadows Venice's passive and peaceful San Rocco. By combining classical elements and creatively solving the problem of placing sacred images in a contemporary landscape complete with pagan imagery he highlights his skill in both *disegno* and *invenzione*. Additionally, he emphasizes Padua's Roman past through his clever use of ancient architectural elements throughout the works. In each, an overwhelming sense of Paduan *campanilismo* is evident as Mantegna brings together elements, iconography, and motifs to underscore the city's ancient history and Christian heritage.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENGRAVINGS

Mantegna was a man of many artistic talents. He dabbled in architecture, sculpture, and engraving in addition to painting. Perhaps the greatest of these three secondary pursuits was his gift in engraving as it was intimately linked to his drawings. Vasari credits Mantegna's skill and notes the importance of his work on the art of engraving:

> [Andrea] enjoyed engraving the prints of figures in copper, which is truly a most singular convenience through which the world has been able to see not only Bacchanals, the Battle of the Sea-Monsters, the Deposition from the Cross, the Entombment of Christ and His Resurrection along with Longinus and Saint Andrew (all works by Mantegna himself), but also the individual styles of all the artisans who have ever lived.[491]

In 1550, Simone Fornari (1500 – 1560) went so far as to claim, "the art of engraving on copper impressions of figures was his [Mantegna's] invention."[492] A letter written by Giulio Campagnola (1482 – 1515), which was used as evidence by both Vasari and Scardeone, provides the origin of Mantegna's interest in engraving. While discussing Barco Baldini (1436 – 1487), a Florentine goldsmith and engraver, Campagnola stated that "not much having the gift for drawing, all he did was from the invention and design of Sandro Botticelli. This came to knowledge of Andrea Mantegna in Rome and was the cause of his beginning to engrave many of his own works."[493] In 1560, Scardeone wrote, "[Andrea] painted [sic] small brazen pictures, engraved with shapes so as to make the Roman triumphs, and the feasts of Bacchus and the sea gods. Also, the deposition of Christ from the cross, and his entombment in the sepulchre, and very many other things. Now these pictures are all held in the highest estimation, and only a few have them."[494] Surely the fame of these engravings was well-known throughout Northern Italy as

records show Mantegna dealt with other artists stealing his plates or at the least his drawings in order to create plates of their own.[495] The fact that Mantegna considered his printmaking to be a serious endeavor of which he took pride in is beyond doubt. In them, he most fully and emphatically affirms his belief in that "hard and wirey line of rectitude," *disegno*, which he held as the foundation of Italian art.[496]

Engraving was an art form many artists were beginning to explore in the fifteenth century as a means of increasing revenue from a single work. Lightbown explains, "The rise of the art of copperplate engraving must be connected with the discovery by artists that their drawings could be reproduced and sold to a wider clientele, if not for as much as a painting, then certainly for enough money to make it worth their while to have their drawings engraved."[497] Many artists, hired engravers to make the plates for them, which they could then maintain as their own property.[498] Others, like Sandro Botticelli, sold their designs to engravers.[499] Given how busy Mantegna must have been as a court painter, one would assume he was anxious to recruit an engraver to reproduce his designs. However, Vasari and others lead us to believe Mantegna engraved many of his own plates. There is some support to this claim based on an exchange between Francesco and Mantegna:

> In 1491 Andrea presented the Marchese Francesco with a '*quardretino*' (little picture), which from subsequent it transpires was an engraving. Francesco decided to make a present of it to someone in Milan, presumably a personage about the Sforza court, and by 6 December it had been safely packed up in a case with a ring for suspension so that the courter would not damage it in transit. On 21 December Mantegna wrote to Francesco that having heard the Marchese had given it away, he was sending him another: 'however there still remain with me the plates to make others of them, but by the grace of the glorious Virgin Mary from whom I have ever obtained many more graves than I have ever deserved.'[500]

While it is possible Mantegna had these plates engraved by another, his pride in the work and the fact that he maintained the plates seems to indicate they may have been by his own hand.

There is documentation that Mantegna hired a goldsmith named Gian Marco Cavalli in April of 1475 to engrave copperplates after his designs. According to the agreement:

> Mantegna was to retain the plates engraved by Gian Marco, and heavy fines would be levied if the terms were not met. One passage runs, 'item: the same Giovan Marco promises Messer Andrea, both for himself and his heirs, that he will not show the designs and plates nor allow said designs to be copied by anyone without permission from Messer Andrea, under penalty of being fined 100 ducats.'[501]

It is unknown whether Mantegna's relationship with Cavalli was exclusive or how long it lasted, but the strong penalty built into their contract relays the importance Mantegna placed on his engravings as what we would refer to today as "intellectual property."[502] Additionally, Mantegna retained a core group of engraved plates, which he then passed on to his son, Leonardo as seen in a post-mortem inventory of Leonardo's effects in 1510.[503] Some scholars assign the engraving of Mantegna's *Hercules and Antaeus* (c. 1497) and *Four Dancing Muses* (c. 1497) to Cavalli as they were engraved on the front and back of a single copperplate, which was listed in the 1510 inventory of Leonardo's property.[504] If this is indeed true, the works would have been completed twenty years after their initial agreement was signed.[505]

The engravings of Mantegna then fall into three distinct categories: those taken from his drawings, but executed by an engraver working under his supervision, those engraved and drawn by him, and those that are after his drawings, but engraved without his control.[506] Of those to which Mantegna both drew and engraved himself, scholars attribute the following seven: *The Entombment of Christ*, (1475; Fig. 61)*, The Virgin of Humility* (c. 1490; Fig. 62)*, The Risen Christ between Saint Andrew and Saint Longinus* (1460 – 1475; Fig. 63)*,* the two *Bacchanal with*

Silenus (1475; Fig. 64), and the two *Battles of the Sea-Gods* (1475 – 1488; Fig. 8).[507] The dating of Mantegna's engravings has proven incredibly difficult, however for *Bacchanals* and *Battle of the Sea-Gods* there exists a *terminus ante quem* as copies produced by Albrecht Dürer (1471 – 1528) have the year 1494 inscribed on the right half of the picture.[508]

The seven, which Mantegna is attributed with engraving himself, appear to embody the entire breadth of his repertoire and form a conscious and conspicuous group. Keith Christiansen writes,

> When seen together in a single gallery the seven engravings did, indeed, seem to form a real group…the subjects could be seen to embrace the range of Mantegna's output – a religious narrative, a devotional theme, an iconic composition conceived *di sotto in sù*, and two mythological narratives that emulate the artistic language of classical sarcophagi. It was, indeed, difficult to avoid feeling that the engravings were actually conceived by Mantegna as a manifesto on his art …In short, the prints Vasari singled out as a conspicuous aspect of Mantegna's legacy really do provide a summary of the artist's ambitions and achievements. It hardly seems surprising that, with his strong sense of artistic identity, Mantegna should have turned to the nascent art of engraving to publicise himself, or that his involvement was a temporary one and the subjects treated so purposefully selected.[509]

Christiansen continues claiming the engravings were meant as "a coherent and focused project, the germ of which lies in those model-books and albums that were produced in the workshops of Pisanello, Jacopo Bellini, Squarcione, and Marco Zoppo."[510] If the creation of a model-book was indeed Mantegna's goal, he was successful. The seven engravings were carefully mined by other artists for this exact function.[511] Notably, Andrea Riccio (1470 – 1532) utilized *Battle of the Sea Gods* for the decoration of the Paschal Candlestick in il Santo, Padua and for a bronze statuette of a triton and nereid.[512] While some question whether Mantegna engraved these plates or had another – possibly Cavalli – execute them for him, the higher quality and wonderfully inventive nature of these compositions lead most to attribute the engravings to Mantegna.[513] Additionally, a

technical analysis by Shelley Fletcher, of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. "has underscored their special status in the history of printmaking and given reason to view them as the products not of a professional goldsmith applying an established technique, but of an artist experimenting in an unfamiliar medium, which he pushed in a new direction."[514]

The *Battle of the Sea Gods* (Fig. 8) was engraved across two copperplates, which were placed together to form a continuous composition, suggesting the format of a classical frieze.[515] The scene consists of nine figures, including tritons, nereids, and hippocamps, battling amongst themselves in a low, marshy area. Envy, personified as an emaciated old hag, rides a sea monster on the left side of the composition. She extends her arm out towards the others holding a plaque inscribed with the Latin word for envy, INVID [IA] and the year 1493 – although many question the date.[516] Neptune stands just beyond her reach, his back to the scene, facing a distant hill-top city.[517] A round circular mirror positioned to his right, allows him to observe the scuffle indirectly.[518]

Mantegna's inspiration for the scene has been the source of much discussion amongst scholars as there appears to be no clear literary or visual source linking envy with the action of the battle. The sea monsters have been tied to Roman relief sculptures of the sea thiasos type as seen on sarcophagi, such as the one at Pisa (Fig. 65).[519] Alternatively, Katharine Shephard contends Mantegna's inspiration for the sea monsters was derived from a work of similar subject by the fourth-century Greek sculptor Skopas:

> According to Pliny, this work, which unfortunately has not survived, was a large sculptural group with representations of sea monsters, including also Poseidon, together with Thetis, Achilles, and Nereids riding hippocamps and sea dragons. There were Tritons, also, and the train of Phorkys, besides fishes and other sea creatures.[520]

The group was begun in Asia Minor and eventually moved to a temple built by Gnaeus Domitius (2 BCE – 41 CE) in the Circus Flaminius in Rome, where the base remains today.[521] As the group resided in Rome for some period, it would have been available for study and copying. It has been suggested a small Tritoness, discovered at Ostia, may be a Roman copy of a figure in the group.[522]

That the vice of envy has stirred the event is evident. The portrayal of Envy as an emaciated hag was first seen in the works of Giotto in the Scrovegni Chapel (1306; Fig. 66). The decoration of the Scrovegni Chapel was commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni in the early fourteenth century.[523] The chapel was intended as a small private chapel for Enrico's family and to also function as his burial place.[524] The meaning of the chapel's fresco program has generated much debate over the years with most scholars today accepting that "Enrico had the chapel built and decorated to expiate the sin of usury through which his father, Reginaldo, had amassed a fortune."[525] Images of Judas and others being hung by the strings of their money bags lends credence to this theory. As part of the cycle, Giotto included each of the seven Christian virtues and vices. Each is completed in *grisaille* – monochrome painting carried out mostly in grey to resemble sculpture. Virtues adorn the north wall while vices decorate the south. Matthew G. Shoaf explains how Giotto's *Envy* had an immediate, visceral effect on the viewer, "physical scratches, slashes, and blows to the wall it occupies demonstrate the capacity of Envy's painted image to provoke viewers in the years, perhaps centuries, after Giotto's work in the Arena Chapel was completed."[526] Giotto's *Envy* has grown a horn and vomits a serpent. She has an elongated ear and emaciated face and neck. Her head appears in profile, concealing the right side of her face from the viewer. Her left eye is almost entirely effaced: "This deliberate damage to the eye suggests that it was most 'striking' among *Invidia's* singular attributes. The application of

dark pigment for the socket and light pigment around…allows us to suppose that the eye appeared sunken in and shaded."[527] *Envy's* counterpart is *Charity* (1306; Fig. 67), who is crowned with roses, poppies, corn, pomegranates, and wheat. Money bags sit at her feet. Her contrast with *Envy*, who clutches a money bag – similar to Giotto's portrayal of Judas – is explicit.[528] While Mantegna does not craft his *Envy* with all the same characteristics as Giotto, it was assuredly his inspiration. Having grown up in Padua, Mantegna would have been familiar with the chapel and specifically *Envy.* By linking his own work to Giotto's, he is recalling the Christian Republic and high values of his Paduan upbringing.

The use of mythological creatures was commonplace in Renaissance art as their half-man, half-bestial nature indicates man's baser nature:

> Poets have not uttered lying fictions when they have given new shape to men: if you look only at the faces of sirens, of satyrs, of Pans and sea-nymphs, you would think them men, but if you look at their bodies you will see they are beasts. Those men who are guided partly by reason, partly by the senses are two-formed Centaurs and Minotaurs, monsters of a double and ambiguous race, which signify that minds sunk in love continually degenerate into the nature of dumb beasts.[529]

Mantegna was not the first of the Renaissance to use sea gods or even the image of sea gods fighting as they had been part of the ornament utilized by book-illuminators previously.[530] Two battling Tritons were used by the Putti Master of Venice to decorate the lower margin of a copy of Livy printed in 1470.[531] Mantegna did, however, "transmute such incidental ornaments, whose ancestry lies in the long medieval tradition of drolleries, into deeply felt allegorical exemplifications of man's bestial nature."[532]

Similarly, swampy locales were often associated with vice. This long-standing Platonic notion drove Pope Pius II (r. 1458 – 1464) when hearing that Venice had outmaneuvered him in acquiring the town of Cervia to write, "What do fish care about law? As among brute beasts

aquatic creatures have the least intelligence, so among humans the Venetians are the least capable of humanity, and naturally, for they pass their lives in the water, companions of fish and crowds of marine monsters."[533] The swamp is contrasted with the city or fortress on the hill, the *Tugendburg,* to which Neptune gazes.[534] The *Tugendburg* has come to mean a fortress of or path to virtue.[535] The term appears to have origins in *The Life of Saint George* (c.1231 - 1253) by Reinbot von Dürne (*fl.* 1230s/1240s).[536] As part of the epic poem, George enters the *Tugendburg* where the doorframes are inscribed with the individual virtues.[537] Saint George was a Roman soldier and member of the Pretorian Guard under emperor Diocletian. He was born to Christian parents in Cappadocia and when faced with the persecution of Christians in Rome, turned from the emperors:

> Now at this time Diocletian and Maximian were emperors, and under them there was such great persecution of Christians that within a month twenty-two thousand were martyred. For this reason, some were so afraid that they denied God and sacrificed to the idols. Seeing this, Saint George abandoned his knight's raiment, sold all that he had, gave it to the poor, and put on the raiment of a Christian brother.[538]

Saint George was beheaded in 303 CE.[539] The contrast between the swamp – Venice – and *Tugendburg* – Padua is striking. As Saint George was a Roman soldier, Padua would naturally akin herself with him based on their shared Roman heritage. Their aligned values and shared Christian faith rise above the greed and envy of Venice – immersed in commerce and trade. As the mythical sea creatures battle one another at the bidding of Envy, Neptune looks up to the city on the hill, Padua, as the antithesis of envy, charity. Just as Saint George had given his life to the faith, so too, Padua exemplifies the Christian virtue of charity. Padua does not distract herself with accumulating wealth, but rather intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

While the motif of Padua's virtue appears to be clear, one may wonder if the artist intended more and if he utilized literary sources to develop a further meaning. Katharine Shepard explores these possibilities:

> There is a delightful description of an imaginary classical relief in the *Hypernotomachia Polyphili* of Francesco Colonna of 1499, but it would be too late to have inspired Mantegna…Richard Förster, mentioned by Hind, suggests that the subject is derived from the account of the "Ichthyophagi" in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheke*, used by Mantegna as the background of an allegory on the power of Envy to move even those without feeling to strife.[540]

Förster's claim has been widely rejected as "the text provides no specific connection with Envy and the other motifs cited above, but apart from that, the strongest reason for rejecting Förster's proposal has always been that it requires the artist's familiarity with a single, fairly obscure (although available) text."[541] Michael A. Jacobsen offers an alternate explanation, a commonly mentioned race of sea monster, the Telchines, "The Telchines lived at Rhodes, then called Telchinis according to legend, and they were the famous sculptors of that locale. Proverbially spiteful, they are mentioned or described in a variety of texts not only available to Mantegna, but in several instances collected or translated by humanists with ties to the Gonzaga of Mantua."[542] In *Geography*, Strabo (64 BCE – 24 CE) – Greek philosopher, geographer, and historian – provides the most detailed description of the Telchines:

> These Telchines are called by some writers charmers and enchanters, who besprinkle animals and plants, with a view to destroy them, with the water of the Styx, mingled with sulphur. Others on the contrary say, that they were persons who excelled in certain mechanical arts, and that they were calumniated by jealous rivals, and thus acquired a bad reputation; that they came from Crete, and first landed at Cyprus, and then removed to Rhodes. They were the first workers in iron and brass, and were the makers of Saturn's scythe.[543]

Strabo also reports there were nine Telchines – a number which corresponds with Mantegna's engraving – and that they quarreled often with rival artists: "Since the Telchines excelled in workmanship, they were themselves misaligned by rival workmen and thus received their bad reputation."[544] Jacobsen tell us "the *Geography* was translated by Guarino of Verona and by Francesco Filefo both known at the Mantuan court, and according to Millard Meiss, the Strabo manuscript now at Albi was illuminated in Mantegna's shop soon after the artist began working for Lodovico Gonzaga."[545] Nonnos describes the Telchines as "spiteful" and compares them to envy in *Dionysiaca* (c. fifth century CE), "Swift lept up Envy moving through the lower air…with a mind armed for deceit and mischief as the Telchines."[546] The Telchines then, were a *topos* representing those who were swift to anger, linked to Envy, and were artists. Given Mantegna's circle of humanist friends and ready access to the numerous documents which describe the Telchines, it is reasonable to believe he was familiar with them.

Scholars argue that perhaps then the additional meaning to the work lies within the artist's own life.[547] Mantegna had often found himself dealing with "small men ruled by envy."[548] This concept is the theme of at least one other work by Mantegna, *Virtus Combusta* (1490 – 1506; Figs. 68 and 69). Although he did not engrave the two plates that compose the work himself, it is indisputable Mantegna invented and designed the subject.[549] In the print Fortune and Mercury are contrasted: "Representing the virtue of intellect, Mercury rescues an unfortunate soul fallen victim to the vices personified in the upper half of the composition. Their foul council leads to the pit of ignorance."[550] The inscription "S.A.I." is evident in the lower left and according to Förster stands for "*virtutis semper adversatur ignorantia"* (ignorance is always opposed to virtue), a phrase which is seen twice in Mantegna's letters.[551] In one of these letters, the sentiment is linked to envy.[552]

Mantegna often found himself the source of others' envy, whether it be his former master, Squarcione, who Mantegna sued for fair pay and had once criticized his work, or those who plagiarized his works. One such event occurred in 1475 when the plagiarist printmakers Zoan Andrea (*fl.* 1475 – 1519) and Simone da Reggio began issuing unauthorized copies of Mantegna's work. On 15 September 1475, Reggio who described himself as a '*pictore e taliatore di bolino'* (painter and engraver with the burin) sent a petition to Marchese Lodovico regarding his treatment in Mantua:

> When I came to Mantua, Andrea Mantegna made me many offers, making show of being my friend. Now I have been a friend for a very long time of Zoan Andrea, painter in Mantua, and when in conversing with him he told me that he had been robbed of his engraved plates, drawings, and medals, it moved me to compassion that he should be so badly treated and I told him I would remake the said engraved plates for him and I worked for him for about four months. When that devil Andrea Mantegna learnt that I was remaking the said plates he sent to threaten me by means of a Florentine, swearing he would pay me for it. And in addition to this, Zoan Andrea and I were assaulted one evening by the nephew of Carlo de Moltone and over ten armed men so as to kill us, and I can give proof of this. And again Andrea Mantegna to prevent the said work from continuing has found certain knaves who to serve him have accused me of sodomy to the *Malegicio*, and he who has accused me is called Zoano Luca de Novara. The notary who has the accusation is kin to Carlo Moltone. Being no stranger perforce I had to flee and at present I am in Verona so as to finish the said plates.[553]

To restore his honor, Reggio demanded the arrest of Mantegna:

> You will see then if ever I did such evil knavery and will discover who it is who had me accused. Wherefore, my lord, I pray your lordship to make such demonstration of justice that neither I nor my kin may be tempted to take vengeance on him for I believe I have been in about forty cities without ever a word said in despite of my good name, save now at last from Andrea Mantegna with his pride and dominion over Mantua and if your lordship does not restrain him, great scandals will come about on his account.[554]

Lodovico went about setting the matter straight by inviting Reggio to Mantua to state his grievance.[555] Beyond this, little more is known of the affair as Lodovico assuredly sought to keep the matter as private as possible. However, following his audience with Lodovico, Reggio is not seen again in Mantua.[556] While Reggio's claim may read as one who was being pushed out to minimize competition in the area, the inclusion of Zoan Andrea leads many to believe the works were plagiarized. Zoan Andrea was from Mantua and had been in the service of the Gonzaga family from at least 1469 to 1471 when he was dismissed by Lodovico. On 28 April 1471, Lodovico "wrote to one of his officers that he was to pay Zoan Andrea his demand, telling Andrea Mantegna of the business, 'and then the quicker he is allowed to take himself off the better it will be.'"[557] Based on this previous relationship and apparent poor behavior by Zoan Andrea, Kristeller theorizes "that Zoan Andrea had come by some of Mantegna's designs and was seeking to pirate them, and that for this reason Mantegna had Simone driven out of Mantua."[558] Given the dating of the *Battle of the Sea Gods*, it is possible Mantegna had just this event in his mind when creating the work.

However, instead of referencing his own troubles with envious men, Mantegna is recalling Venice's envy of Padua. Padua had everything Venice did not: a true ancient Roman past, a strong heritage as a Christian Republic with ties to Saint Peter through Saint Prosdocimus, and a rich intellectual history. The use of mythological creatures inspired by ancient Roman sarcophagi point to Padua's classical past. In addition, Neptune looks up to the *Tugendburg* – Padua – as the fortress of virtue. Mantegna's image of Neptune – adorned with a wreath and holding his usual attributes (the dolphin and trident) – was most assuredly inspired by an ancient coin, the *Sestertius of Agrippa* (Fig. 70).[559] The collection of coins and medals was an important part of Renaissance humanist investigation into the antique.[560] Isabelle d'Este was known to

collect coins as was Squarcione and many others in Padua.[561] That the sestertius of Agrippa was known and available to Mantegna as source material is almost certain based on the similarities between the two representations. The marshy setting and use of sea monsters to show man's baser nature most certainly speaks of Venice. The theme of envy driving discord and bringing out the true nature of man can be found in the writings of Saint Peter, "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men (I Corinthians 3:3)." By placing Padua on the hill above the ruckus and turmoil, Mantegna is speaking to its purity and strong Christian morals. As a pilgrimage location, Padua a destination where many medieval and Renaissance Christians journeyed to become closer to God and strengthen their own faith.

The final question is why Mantegna chose to create this composition as an engraving. As referenced earlier, it was through engraving that Mantegna most fully and emphatically affirmed his belief in *disegno*, which he held as the foundation of Italian art.[562] This was in direct contrast to the Venetian preference of *colorito*. Where *disegno* placed strong emphasis on the importance of drawing and the intellect, *colorito* placed primacy on the use of color, application of paint, and emotion. Venetian painters often applied paint to the canvas without any preliminary drawing.[563] The circular mirror placed next to Neptune is meant to represent art as the mirror of nature.[564] The artists ability to create compared to Nature's was a common theme of Renaissance criticism.[565] Cicero noted, "no perfect imitation of a thing was ever made by chance."[566] And perfect imitation was Mantegna's chief interest.[567] Whether imitating human artifacts or nature, Mantegna's works showcased his ability to precisely imitate through drawing. By creating *Battle of the Sea Gods* as an engraving, Mantegna is displaying Padua's intellectual superiority to Venice by highlighting *disegno* as the premiere method for creating art and imitating nature.

Returning momentarily to the *Virtus Combusta*, it is worth discussing Mantegna's use of Mercury – the messenger of the gods, patron of travelers, and god of thieves – within the work. In the *Iliad,* as part of his role as messenger of the gods and patron of travelers, Mercury – or Hermes as the Greeks referred to him – safely transported the Trojan King Priam into the Achaeans camp.[568] Just as Mercury had provided for the safety of King Priam within the enemy's camp, so too Antenor had provided similar accommodations to King Odysseus and Menelaus when they traveled to Troy seeking Helen's release.[569] In *Virtus Combusta*, Mercury – identified by his caduceus – rescues those who have fallen victim to the vices. For those who follow their advice surely fall into the pit of ignorance. By utilizing Mercury for this task, Mantegna is referencing Antenor's sage council given in the *Iliad*. The founder of Padua, like Mercury, attempted to save his countrymen by continually advising the return of Helen. Although Troy ultimately fell, Antenor's life was spared due to the part he played in attempting to end the war He was then allowed to travel across the sea to found Patavium. Indeed, the Trojans failure to follow Antenor's wise advice led to their ruin. The phrase "ignorance is always opposed to virtue" is telling when placed in this context. Through his use of Mercury, Mantegna linked the meaning of the work to Antenor and ultimately the city he founded, Padua. Padua's intellectual humanism strove to shed light in the darkness by reviving the works of the ancient masters and inspiring creative and forward thinking. She did not create false identities, as Venice had, but rather took pride in her ancient past and used it as a reminder of the importance of virtue and avoidance of vice.

The remaining engravings attributed to Mantegna draw additional focus to his mastery of the art of *disegno*. The *Entombment of Christ* (Fig. 61) is a near perfect manifestation of Leon Battista Alberti's (1404 – 1472) treatise on painting, *De Pictura* (1450). The scene includes ten

figures, which Alberti dictates as the recommended number for an *istoria* when he wrote "In an *istoria* I strongly approve of the practice I see observed by the tragic and comic poets, of telling their story with as few characters as possible. In my opinion, there will be no *istoria* so rich in variety of things that nine or ten men cannot worthily perform it."[570] Additionally, by isolating a weeping Saint John to one side, he becomes Alberti's choric figure, whose response serves as an emotional cue for the viewer.[571] Christiansen remarks,

> The saint's face, contorted by grief, is marvelously contrasted with another grieving figure who covers his face with a cloth, an obvious allusion to the ancient painting by Timanthes mentioned by Pliny and Alberti. Timanthes' painting illustrated the sacrifice of Iphegenia, and to express the inexpressible – the grief of Iphegenia's father – Timanthes hit upon the idea of showing him with his head covered with a veil, 'and thus,' as Alberti said, 'he left more for the onlooker to imagine about his grief than he could see with the eye.'[572]

The woman on the left side of the composition throws her arms out in grief was derived from a sarcophagus of the death of Meleager (c. 180 CE, Fig. 71), which had been previously served as inspiration for Donatello's great marble relief in Padua and was highly admired by Alberti.[573] Finally, all ten of the figures are clad in windblown drapery, which was highly prized by Alberti as it allowed the underlying form of the body to be described.[574] By utilizing multiple signifiers of artistic accomplishment, Mantegna enhances the tragic mood and showcases his masterful skill. That what made Mantegna's engravings extraordinary was their close relationship with this drawing technique cannot be overstated, "the way the burin has been manipulated to achieve the ductility of a pen."[575] Mantegna's prints stand out from others as he "conceived of the print medium not simply as a means of recording his *invenzioni*, or compositional ideas, but as an imitation of his manner of drawing, that oneness of mind and hand that had so impressed his admirers from an early stage."[576]

Through engraving Mantegna discovered a means to highlight the art of *disegno* as superior to *colorito*. His subject matter covered the entirety of his repertoire, with religious and mythological narratives, devotional themes, and iconic composition. As can be seen in *Battle of Sea Gods*, Mantegna sought to not only showcase his expert ability in drawing, but to highlight his hometown, Padua, and his own *campanilismo*. The use of Roman sarcophagi, coins, and ancient texts as inspiration for the composition in addition to its suggested continuous frieze, point directly to Padua's Roman past. Mantegna's practice of drawing from sculpture was rooted in his time with Squarcione. Padua, with her Roman ruins and avid collectors provided ample examples from which to learn. His clever use of literary sources speaks to the humanistic and intellectual culture of the city. Finally, even this mythological scene explores the motif of virtue, specifically charity as opposed to envy. His placement of Padua as the *Tugendburg* to which Neptune looks clarifies his true intention – Padua is a city beyond reproach, of which he is a proud son.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Andrea Mantegna was a man who rose from general obscurity to renown, nobility, and wealth, and he did so through his great talent. However, like anyone who has achieved such a task, he did not do it alone. Mantegna's time and experiences in Padua provided him with ancient sculptures and great paintings from which to study and hone his craft. Through the expansive library of his teacher, Squarcione, and drawing books of his father-in-law, Jacopo, Mantegna was inspired to create nuanced versions of the scenes and motifs he was presented with. He drew inspiration from the Florentine, Veronese, and Flemish styles to create his own refined and authentically Paduan style. Throughout the entirety of his career, Mantegna held firm to the fundamental concept of *disegno* as the foundation to the creation of art. This concept was instilled in him through his study of ancient sculptures and monuments while in Padua. His intellectual curiosity, which led him to befriend scholars and specifically humanists and antiquarians, provided him the knowledge required to create realistic imagery and scenes. His Catholic identity was cultivated within the city through their numerous churches and established Christian heritage.

The city of Padua imprinted herself upon this ambitious youth and supported him throughout his career. Through their eulogies and encomiums, they broadcast his greatness throughout Northern Italy allowing him to receive prestigious commissions and the position of court artist to the Marchese of Mantua. Even while in Mantua, Mantegna retained a home in Padua and visited frequently, both to attend to his affairs and to continue to draw inspiration from this unique location. It is not overstating to say there was a not another city like Padua

throughout all of Italy. Her ancient Roman past provided her with a sense of antique civic pride, which they put on full display. Indeed, it inspired visiting artists like Donatello to create works which reflected their Roman past. Her university cultivated a place where innovative and progressive thought was celebrated. It was here that humanism found a true home beginning in the early fourteenth century with prominent Paduans like Lovatii, Mussato, and Montagnone. A love of the ancient text and script was brought to the forefront by the work of Bishop Donato, Feliciano, and Cyriacus. The religious culture of the city, focused around their four patron saints, provided Padua with a clear and undeniable link to the Church and Saint Peter. It is right to assume Mantegna would not have achieved the level of success he did without the influence and support of his hometown. It was a love affair between a city and its native son, one he bore out through his art.

It was not enough for Mantegna to simply take what he had learned in that great city and move on. Rather, through his works, specifically the Ovetari chapel, the trio of Saint Sebastians, and his collection of engravings, Mantegna's overwhelming sense of *campanilismo* is evident. He used his art to advance the city that had given him so much by distinguishing her from her ruler, Venice, and continually drawing attention to the city's ancient Roman past, rich intellectual and humanistic tradition, and Christian heritage. Of all the inspirations identified in Mantegna's work, Padua is the most apparent and predominant. Across his lifetime, Mantegna utilized his skill to create both beautiful and inspired works of art and to promote the city that had given him so very much, Padua.

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APPENDIX A

IMAGES

Figure 1. Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi (Donatello), *Equestrian Statue of Gattamelata*, 1447 – 1453. Bronze, 780 x 410 cm. Piazza del Santo, Padua.

Figure 2. Ovetari Chapel, Padua. Photograph of bombing damage from 11 March 1944. Church of the Eremitani, Padua.

Figure 3. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint James the Greater Led to His Martyrdom*, 1454 – 1457. Photograph of fresco destroyed in 1944 in the Ovetari Chapel, Church of the Eremitani, Padua.

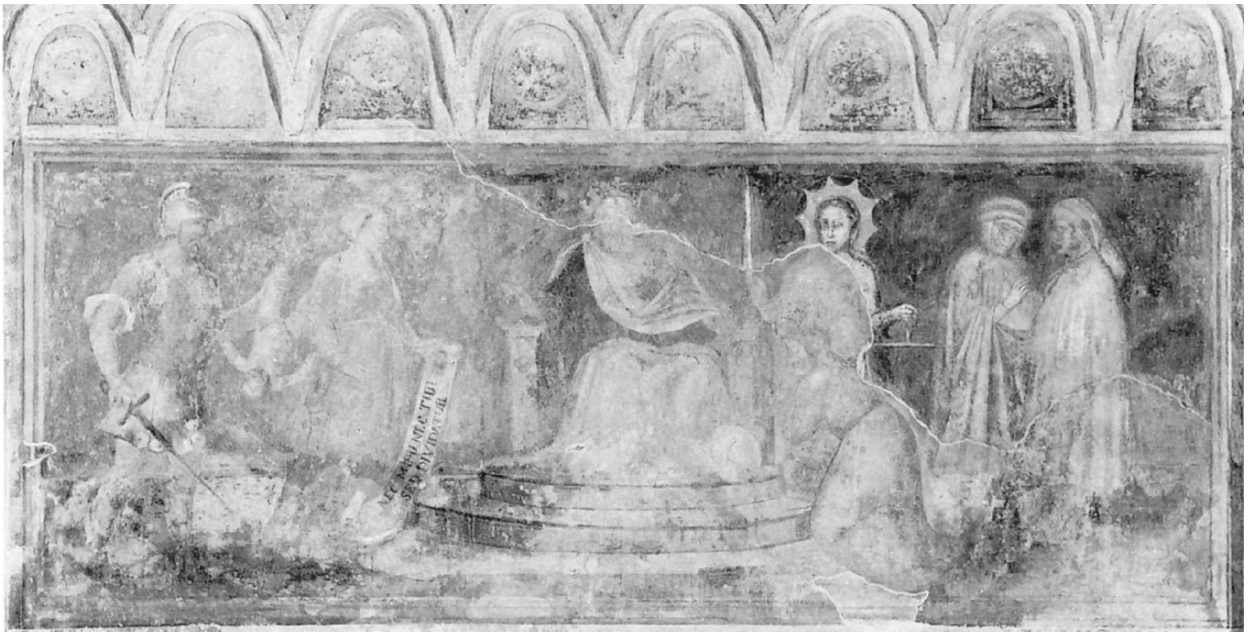

Figure 4. Giotto di Bondone (Giotto), *The Judgment of Solomon*, c. 1306 – 1309. Fresco. Salone of the Palazzo della Ragione, Padua.

Figure 5. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Sebastian*, 1457-1459. Oil on poplar panel, 68 x 30 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Figure 6. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Sebastian,* 1480. Tempera on canvas, 255 x 140 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 7. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Sebastian,* 1506. Oil on canvas, 210 x 91 cm. Ca' d'Oro, Venice.

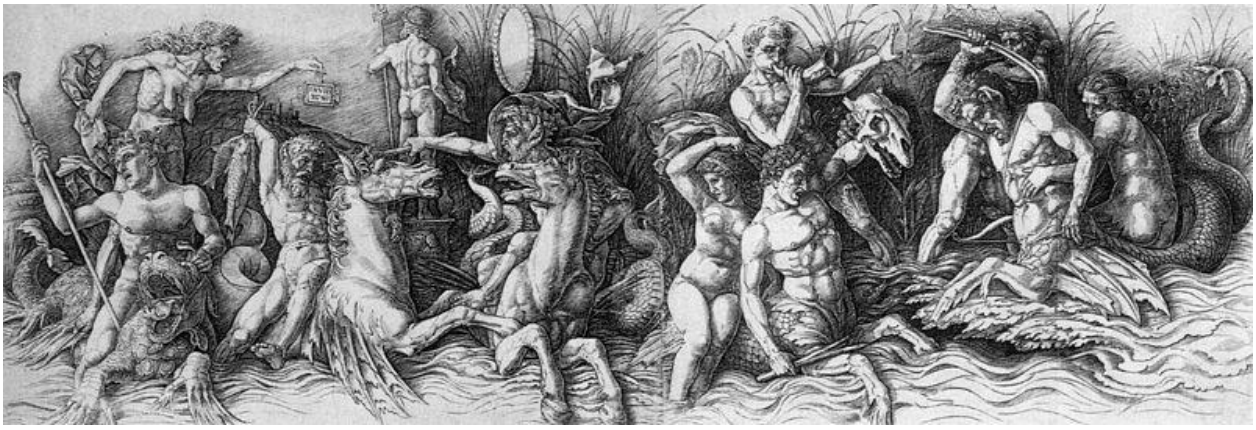

Figure 8. Andrea Mantegna, *Battle of the Sea Gods*, 1475 – 1488. Engraving print on paper, 28 x 82.7 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Kensington.

Figure 9. Francesco Squarcione, *De Lazara Altarpiece,* 1449 – 1452. Tempera on panel, 175 x 220 cm. Museo Civico, Padua.

Figure 10. Francesco Squarcione, *Madonna and Child*, 1455. Tempera on poplar panel, 82 x 70 cm. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

Figure 11. Jan van Eyck, *Léal Souvenir*, 1432. Oil on oak panel, 33.3 x 18.9 cm. National Gallery, London.

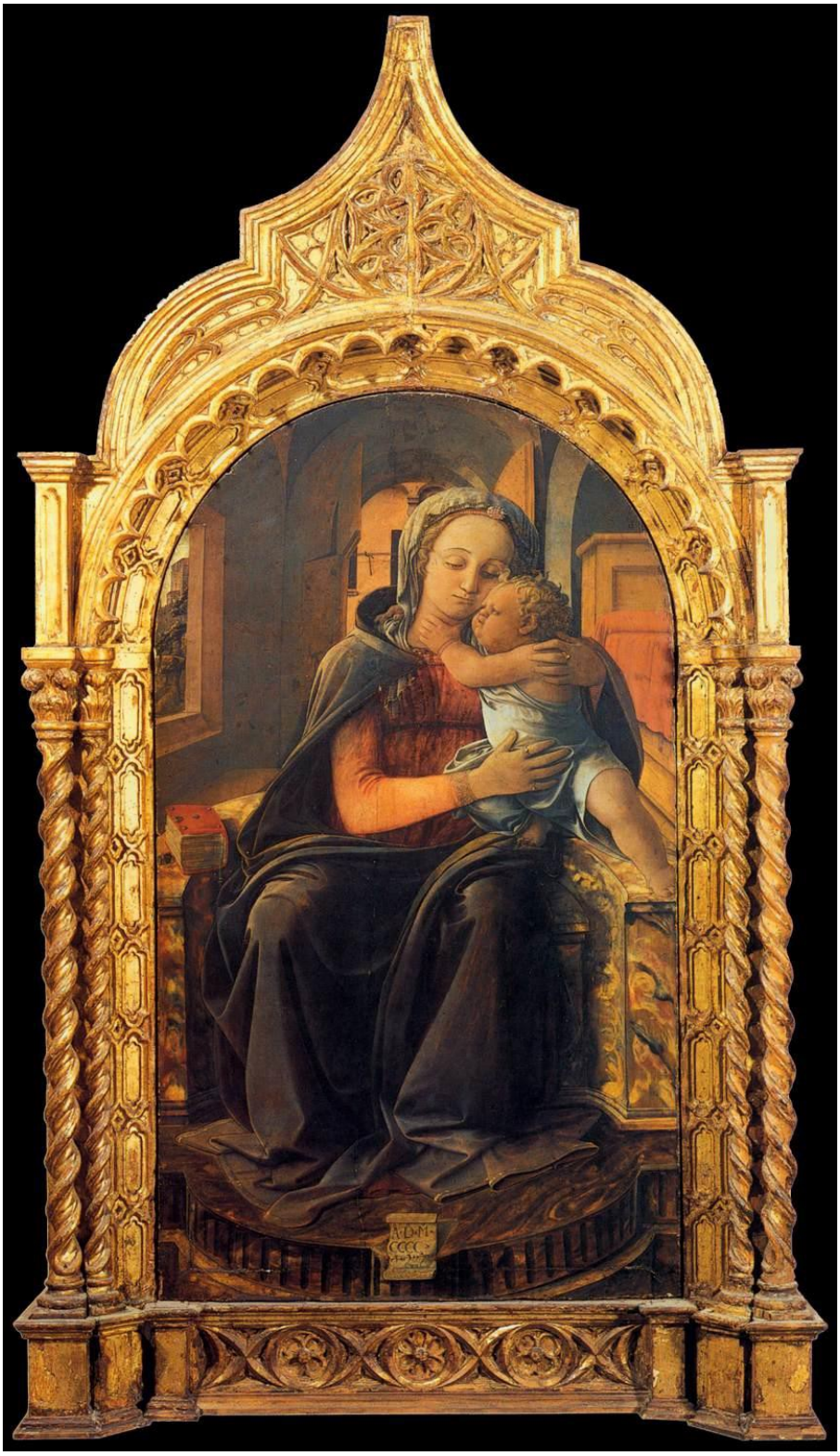

Figure 12. Fra Filippo Lippi, *Madonna with Child,* 1437. Tempera on panel, 151 x 66 cm. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome.

Figure 13. Unknown, *Roman Sarcophagus*, ca. 2 CE. Marble, 87 x 227 x 97 cm. The British Museum, London.

Figure 14. Jacopo Bellini, *Tadini Madonna*, 1448. Tempera on canvas transferred from panel, 110.5 x 69.7 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

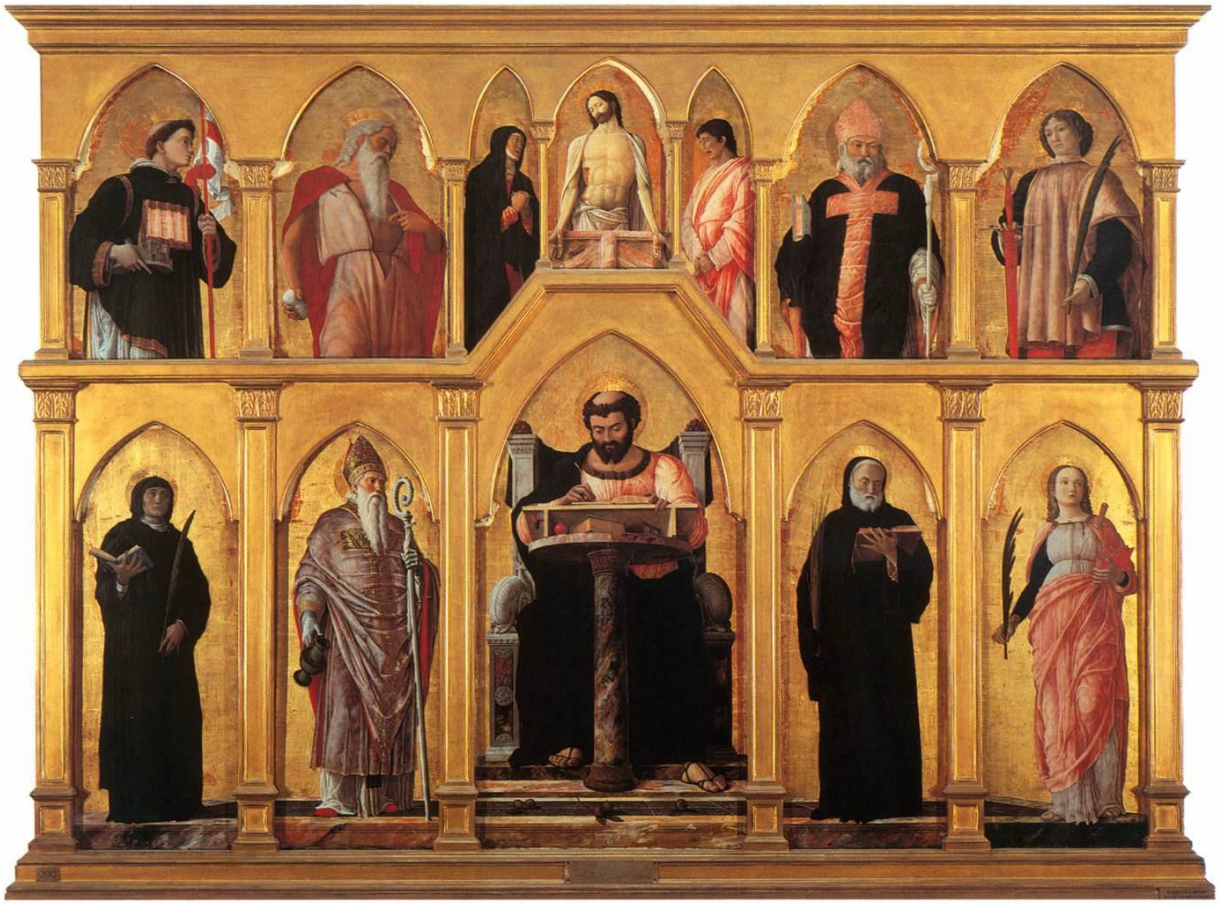

Figure 15. Andrea Mantegna, *San Luca Polyptych*, 1453. Tempera on panel, 177 x 230 cm. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 16. Jacopo Bellini, *Saint John the Baptist Preaching,* 1440s. Leadpoint on paper, 20 x 33 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 17. Andrea Mantegna, *The Adoration of the Shepherds,* c. 1450. Tempera on canvas transferred from panel, 37.8 x 53.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 18. Andrea Mantegna, *Agony in the Garden*, 1455/6. Tempera on panel, 62.9 x 80 cm. The National Gallery, London.

Figure 19. Jacopo Bellini, *The Agony in the Garden,* 1450. Leadpoint on paper, 41 x 33 cm. The British Museum, London.

Figure 20. Andrea Mantegna, *Presentation at the Temple*, 1455. Tempera on canvas, 68.9 x 86.3 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Figure 21. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint George*, c.1460. Tempera on panel, 66 x 32 cm. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

Figure 22. Giovanni Bellini, *Presentation at the Temple*, 1460. Tempera on panel, 80 x 105 cm. Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice.

Figure 23. Andrea Mantegna, *San Zeno Altarpiece*, 1456 – 1459. Oil on panel, 460 x 212 cm. Basilica di San Zeno, Verona.

Figure 24. Andrea Mantegna, *The Adoration of the Magi*, 1462. Tempera on panel, 76 x 76 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 25. Andrea Mantegna, *The Circumcision,* 1460 – 1464. Tempera on panel, 86 x 42 cm. *Galleria* degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 26. Andrea Mantegna, *Death of the Virgin*, 1462 – 1464. Tempera and gold on panel, 54 x 42 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Figure 27. Andrea Mantegna, *The Ascension of Christ*, 1461.Tempera on panel, 43 x 86 cm. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 28. After Andrea Mantegna, *The Flagellation*, 1465 – 1470. Engraving in ink on paper, 44.2 x 34.3 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, Kensington.

Figure 29. Andrea Mantegna, *Parnassus*, 1497. Tempera and gold on canvas, 159 x 192 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 30. Andrea Mantegna, *Pallas Expelling the Vices from the Garden of Virtue*, 1502. Tempera on canvas, 160 x 192 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 31. Andrea Mantegna, *Self-Portrait*, c.1490. Bronze, 47 cm. Cappella di Giovanni Battista, Sant'Andrea, Mantua.

Figure 32. Tomb of Antenor, 1284, Padua.

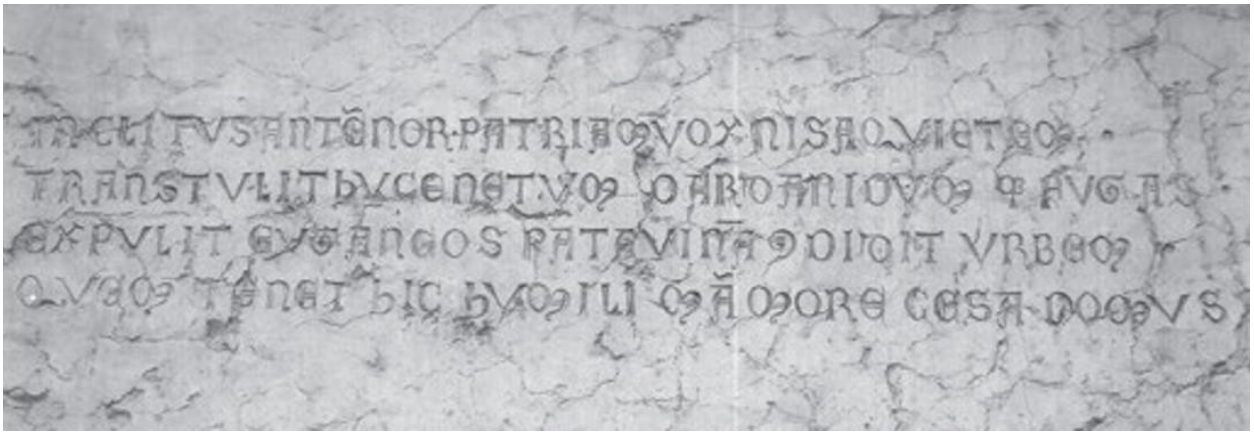

Figure 33. Epitaph, Tomb of Antenor, 1284, Padua.

Figure 34. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Prosdocimus*, detail of *San Luca Polyptych*, 1453. Tempera on panel, 177 x 230 cm. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 35. Giovani Antonio de' Sachis (Il Pordenone), *Saint Prosdocimus and Saint Peter*, c. 1515 – 1517. Oil on poplar panel, 87.6 x 61.3 cm. North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh.

Figure 36. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Justina*, detail of *San Luca Polyptych*, 1453. Tempera on panel, 177 x 230 cm. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.

Figure 37. Girolamo Romani (Romanino), *Altarpiece of Saint Justina*, 1513 – 1514. Tempera on panel, 677 x 403 cm. Musei Civici agli Eremitani, Padua.

Figure 38. Francesco Bertos after Tiziano Aspetti, *Saint Daniel of Padua Nailed between Two Planks of Wood*, c. 1740 – 1750. Bronze, 47.9 x 72.4 x 8.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 39. Unknown, *Praedestinato*, c. late 1260s. Mosaic. Vault of South Portal, Basilica di San Marco, Venice.

Figure 40. Niccolò Pizzolo, *God the Father*, 1448 – 1453. Photograph of fresco destroyed in 1944 in the Ovetari Chapel, Church of the Eremitani, Padua.

Figure 41. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Peter*, 1445 – 1450. Photograph of fresco destroyed in 1944 in the Ovetari Chapel, Church of the Eremitani, Padua.

Figure 42. Andrea Mantegna, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, 1448 – 1449. Tempera on panel, 48 x 36 cm. Museu de Arte, São Paulo.

Figure 43. Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi (Donatello), *The Ascension of Saint John*, 1434 – 1437. Polychrome stucco, diameter 215 cm. Old Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence.

Figure 44. Filippo Calendario, *Venecia*, c. mid-fourteenth century. Stone. West façade, Palazzo Ducale, Venice

Figure 45. Andrea Mantegna, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1495 – 1505. Distemper on linen, 48.6 x 65.6 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Figure 46. Unknown, *Saint Sebastian, Saint Polycamus, and Saint Quirinus,* c. eighth century. Fresco. Crypt of San Cecilia at the Church of San Callisto in Rome.

Figure 47. Byzantine, *Procession of Martyrs*, c. 570. Mosaic. Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna.

Figure 48. Unknown. *Saint Sebastian*, seventh century. Mosaic. San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.

Figure 49. Alessandro di Mariano di Vanni Filipepi (Sandro Botticelli), *Saint Sebastian*, 1474. Tempera on panel, 195 x 75 cm. Germäldegalerie, Berlin.

Figure 50. Pietro Perugino, *Saint Sebastian,* 1495. Oil on oak panel, 176 x 116 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

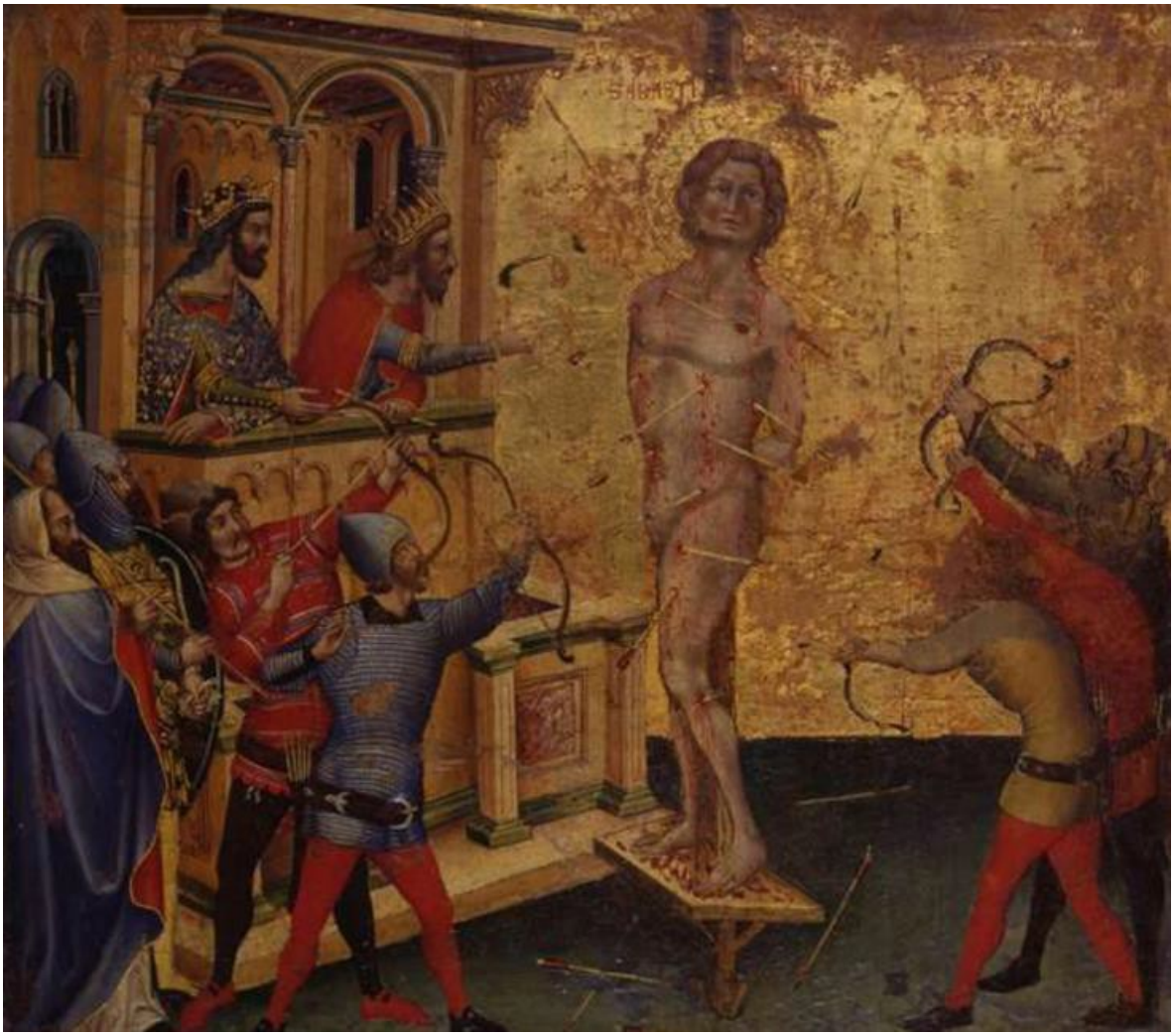

Figure 51. Niccoló Semitecolo, *Saint Sebastian Shot by Arrows*, 1367. Tempera and gold on panel, 53 x 60 cm. Museo Diocesano, Padua.

Figure 52. Giotto di Bondone (Giotto), *Faith*, 1306. Fresco, 120 x 55 cm, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua.

Figure 53. Donato di Niccolo di Betto Bardi (Donatello), *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, 1386. Bronze partially gilt, 22 x 16 cm. Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris.

Figure 54. Giovanni Bellini, *Blood of the Redeemer*, 1465. Tempera on panel, 47 x 34.3 cm. National Gallery, London.

Figure 55. Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna of the Meadow*, 1505. Oil and egg on synthetic panel, transferred from panel, 66 x 86 cm. The National Gallery, London.

Figure 56. Tiziano Vecellio (Titian), *Saint Mark Enthroned, with Four Saints*, 1511. Oil on panel, 218 x 149 cm. Santa Maria della Salute, Venice

Figure 57. Andrea Mantegna, detail of *Saint Sebastian,* 1480. Tempera on canvas, 255 x 140 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 58. Andrea Mantegna, detail of *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints*, San Zeno Altarpiece, 1460. Oil on poplar, 212 x 460 cm. Basilica di San Zeno, Verona

Figure 59. Andrea Mantegna, detail of *Saint Sebastian,* 1506. Oil on canvas, 210 x 91 cm. Ca' d'Oro, Venice.

Figure 60. Ancient Greek, *Riace Bronze: Statue of a Young Man with Helmet,* c. 460-430 BCE. Bronze, 198 cm. Museo Nazionale della Magna Grecia, Reggio Calabria.

Figure 61. Andrea Mantegna, *The Entombment of Christ*, 1475. Engraving and drypoint, 29 x 41.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 62. Andrea Mantegna, *The Virgin of Humility,* c.1490. Burin, 27.7 x 23.1 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Figure 63. Andrea Mantegna, *The Risen Christ between Saint Andrew and Saint Longinus*, 1460 – 1475. Engraving on laid paper, 32.9 x 30.6 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 64. Andrea Mantegna, *Bacchanal with Silenus*, 1475. Engraving with dry point, 30.5 x 43.8 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 65. Unknown, *Sea Thiasos Sarcophagus,* end of second century CE. Marble, 65 x 181 x 60 cm. Camposanto Monumentale di Pisa

Figure 66. Giotto di Bondone (Giotto), *Envy*, 1306. Fresco, 120 x 55 cm. Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua.

Figure 67. Giotto di Bondone (Giotto), *Charity*, 1306. Fresco, 120 x 55 cm. Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua.

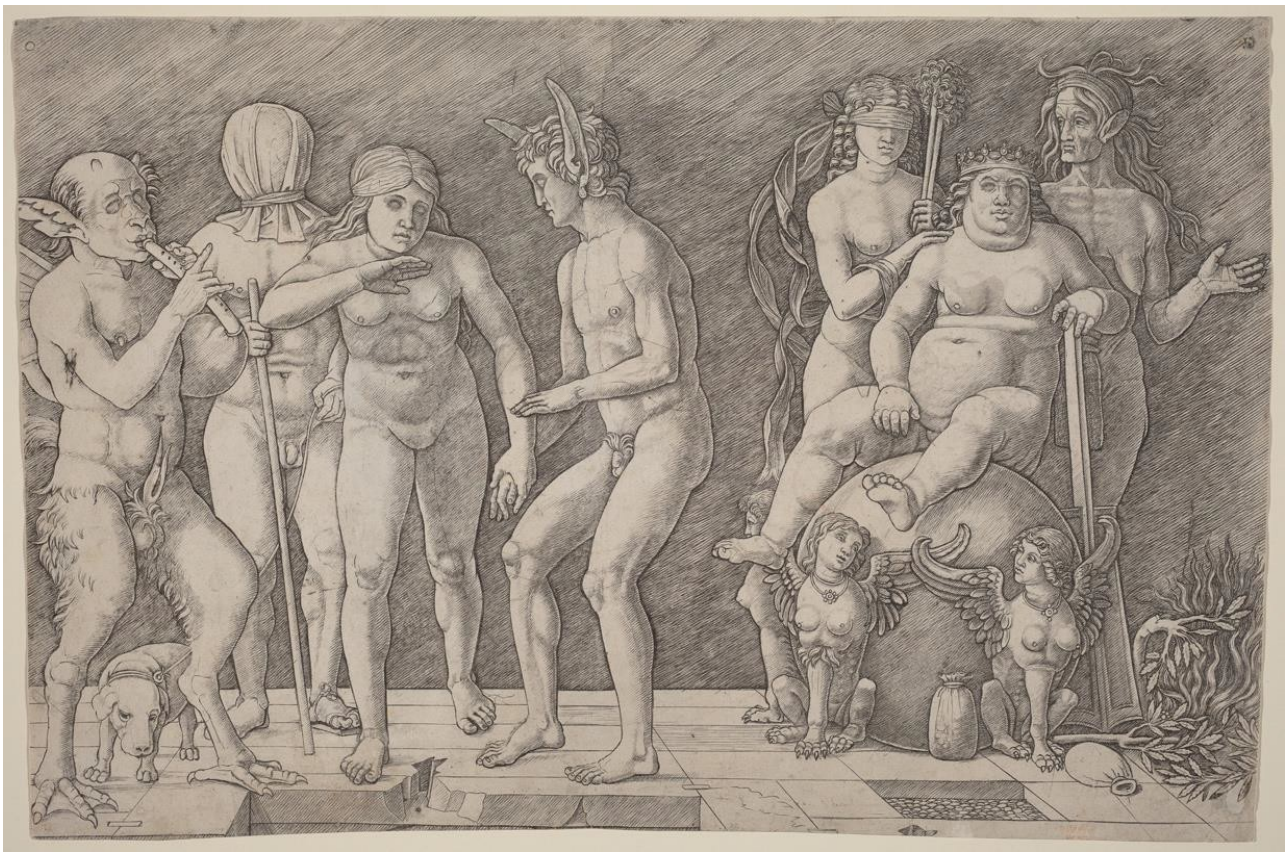

Figure 68. Andrea Mantegna, *Virtus Combusta*, 1490 – 1506. Engraving on laid paper, 27.3 x 40.7 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

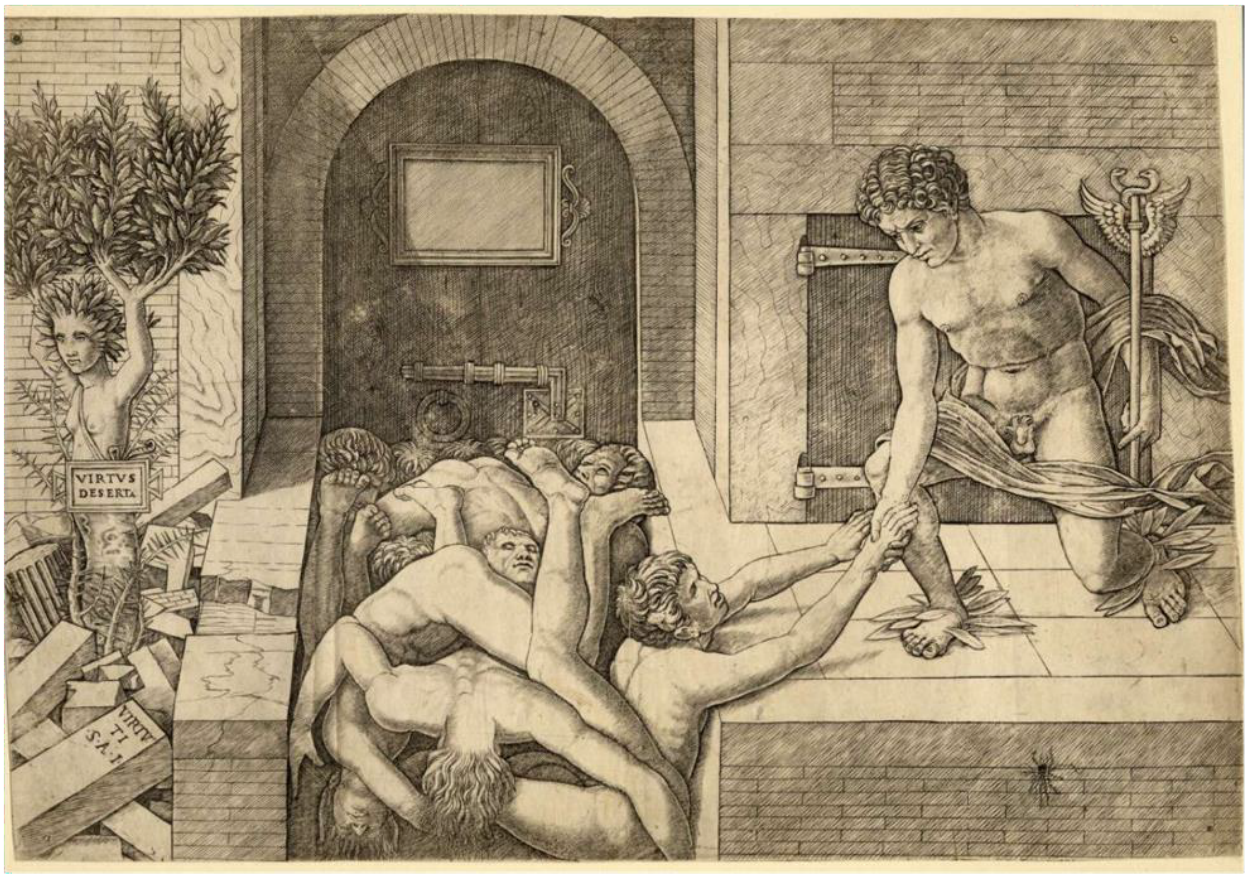

Figure 69. Andrea Mantegna, *Virtus Combusta (Virtus Deserta)*, 1490 – 1506. Engraving on paper, 29.8 x 43.2 cm. The British Museum, London.

Figure 70. Roman, *Sestertius of Agrippa*, c. 37 – 41 CE. Brass, 2.7 cm.

Figure 71. Roman, *Death of Meleager, panel of a Roman Sarcophagus*, c. 180 CE. Marble, 720 x 2006 x 640 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

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