La Donna e La Maniera Devota:
Lavinia Fontana, Sacred Imagery and the Natural Sciences in Sixteenth-Century Bologna

Marlene Misiuk

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By: Marlene Misiuk

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_____Chair
Dr. Johanne Sloan

_____Examiner
Dr. Kristina Huneault

_____Supervisor
Dr. Steven Stowell

Approved by _____
Dr. Kristina Huneault, Graduate Program Director

_____2018 _____
Dr. Rebecca Taylor Duclos, Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts

Abstract

La Donna e La Maniera Devota:
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Women's contribution to the program of Counter-Reformation Christian art has often been overshadowed in scholarship by extensive research into genres typically associated with women in the period such as portraiture, landscape and still life. This thesis newly addresses the sacred artwork of the painter Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614) within the unique context of sixteenth-century Bologna, where the colourful social and intellectual network inspired, endorsed, and influenced her practice. Reassessing Fontana's sacred images through a contextual framework, I focus on two prominent Bolognese figures: the archbishop Gabriel Paleotti (1522-1597), and the natural historian Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605). Fontana's sacred paintings follow Paleotti's post-tridentine art theory by means of her rigorous attention to rendering Scripture clearly and accurately. She may have also enhanced the contemplative possibilities of her images by utilizing her knowledge of natural history. In some cases, paintings by Fontana may call attention to particular flora and fauna species to introduce meaningful symbolism. Upon addressing natural history in Bologna in further detail, it becomes apparent that the Bolognese were highly interested in "New World" knowledge, which undoubtedly had an impact on Italian perception, as well as European Christian art. Scripture, science, and natural history converge in this thesis to shed light on Fontana's often overlooked religious art practice and what it could have meant to her beholders.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother, Liliana Pelini, who was the embodiment of a true Renaissance woman.

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Introduction

"L'Occhio (quando non scopri) e che non fingi
Divini oggetti, a l'hor via piu contento
S'appaga poi ne la tua bella imago."[1]
–Ridolfo Campeggi

In the twentieth century, scholarship on Italian Renaissance art granted female painters their rightful place within the art historical canon, and yet the role of women in sacred art remains a topic overshadowed by extensive studies on their portraiture, still life, and landscape art. The Bolognese painter Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614) was one of the first prolific female artists in early modern Europe to achieve international fame during her lifetime. Fontana's is the largest surviving body of work of any woman artist prior to the eighteenth century, including roughly 150 paintings in portraiture, religious art, and mythological paintings. While numerous scholars to date have catalogued and assessed Fontana's paintings, extensive detailed analysis is lacking for her sacred art. This thesis will reveal Fontana's capacity to create meaningful Christian images, while considering the Bolognese intellectual network that inspired as well as endorsed her practice. Situating Fontana within the unique context of Counter-Reformation Bologna, this thesis will examine four sacred artworks that showcase her skillful approach to providing highly meaningful works of Christian art to her beholders.

Lavinia Fontana, the daughter of the painter Prospero Fontana (1512-1597) was born in Bologna in 1552. Fontana trained in her father's workshop and began working independently at

[1]Fredrika H. Jacobs, *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa: Women Artists and the Language of Art History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 169. "The eye, when it does not detect or imagine divine objects, is now more content and satisfied in your beautiful image." (Her Translation). See also Ridolfo Campeggi, "Alla Signora Lavinia Fontana Pittrice Famosa," in *Delle Poesie Del Signor Conte Ridolfo Campeggi* (Venice: Uberto Faber Et Compagna, 1620).

the age of 23 (she was not endorsed by a court or convent).[2] She achieved a degree as *Dotoressa* from the University of Bologna in 1580, as well as a membership to the prestigious Roman Academy in 1603.[3] Fontana was also a mother and wife, giving birth to eleven children between 1578 and 1595, only four of whom made it past the age of adolescence.[4] As mentioned above, Fontana's paintings were made in numerous genres, which meant that her patrons were equally diverse. The majority of Fontana's patrons were noblewomen (Laudomia Gozzadini, Costanza Isolani, Ginevra Hercolani), scholars (Carlo Sigonio, Girolamo Mercuriale), and clerics such as Gabriel Paleotti and significantly, Ugo Buoncompagni (Pope Gregory XIII).[5] Due to the wide-reaching scope of Fontana's work she became a "civic celebrity" in Bologna.[6]

The first Italian monograph on Fontana was *Lavinia Fontana, pittrice 1552-1614* (1940) written by Romeo Galli. Galli's small volume provides a short biography of Fontana's life, a list of paintings (including some now lost), and most importantly a collection of seminal documents and letters purchased from the Zappi family (Fontana's husband's family) in the eighteenth century.[7] While Galli compiled a very important collection of Fontana's work, a full catalogue

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[2] Information on her biography has been summarized from: Romeo Galli, *Lavinia Fontana, Pittrice, 1552-1614* (Imola: Galeati, 1940), 7-51.

[3] Antonio Di Paolo Masini, *Bologna Perlustrata: Terza Impressione Notabilmente Acrresciuta in Cui Si Fà Mentione Ogni Giorno in Perpetuo Delle Fontioni Sacre, E Profane Di Tutto Lanno: Delle Chiese, E Loro Fondationi, Feste, Indulgenze, Reliquie, Corpi Santi Imagini Miracolose, Altari Priuilegiati, Pitture, E Scolture Di Esse...* (Per L'Erede Di Vittorio Benacci, 1666), 666. https://books.google.ca/books?id=0-Q_AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=fal See also: Jo Eldridge. Carney, *Renaissance and Reformation: 1500-1620: A Biographical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 142.

[4] Romeo Galli, *Lavinia Fontana, Pittrice 1552-1614*, 25.

[5] Caroline P. Murphy, "Lavinia Fontana and Le Dame Della Città: Understanding Female Artistic Patronage in Late Sixteenth-century Bologna," *Renaissance Studies* 10, no. 2 (1996): 190-208. See also Caroline P. Murphy, "'Gentiledame et honeste matrone': Representing the Bolognese Noblewoman," in *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 85-117; Caroline P. Murphy, "Pictures for Scholars, Prelates, Poets and Bankers," in *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 49-85.

[6] Caroline P. Murphy, "Pictures for Scholars, Prelates, Poets and Bankers," in *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 1.

[7] Romeo Galli, *Lavinia Fontana, Pittrice 1522-1614*, ed. Paolo Galeati (Imola: Cooperativa Tip, 1940). The main primary source documents in the book relate to Fontana's marriage, her children and their godparents, and most importantly, it includes letters and contracts between Fontana and some of her clients while she lived in Rome.

raisonné appeared later in 1989 by Maria Teresa Cantaro.[8] Cantaro successfully introduces Fontana's oeuvre in chronological order, highlighting her artistic and stylistic development as an artist. Most significantly, Cantaro includes illustrations of artworks that are not easily accessible to the general public, as well as works that may possibly be attributed to her.

Working at the same time as Cantaro, Vera Fortunati curated the first exhibition of Fontana's artworks in Bologna (1994). This exhibition later appeared at the National Museum for Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C (1998).[9] At the same time, Fortunati edited and contributed to an Italian book on Fontana in 1994, which was then shortened and translated for the exhibition in America.[10] While Fortunati considers Fontana a key painter of religious art at a time when painting was a vital medium to help spread Catholicism, she does express some conservative views on her sacred paintings. Fortunati at times undermines the power of Fontana's religious works by describing them as too feminine, and displaying "over-sweet familial sentiments" or "motifs from domestic life."[11]

One of the most recent authors to contribute scholarship on Fontana is the cultural historian Caroline P. Murphy. Murphy completed her dissertation on Lavinia Fontana in 1996 and from thereon has contributed a unique perspective on her artwork.[12] Murphy's research departs by asking "How and why did Fontana become a painter and how did she come to rise to the top of her profession?"[13] The answer to this question is encapsulated in the title of Murphy's book:

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[8] Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora singolare," 1552-1614* (Milan: Jandi Sapi: 1989).
[9] The exhibition in 1998 marked the first occasion Fontana's works would be displayed for an American viewership.
[10] Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614* (Milan: Electa, 1994). See also Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna 1554-1614*, trans. Lucia Grunella (Milan: Electa, 1998). Fortunati's research as a professor of early modern art history at the University of Bologna contributed a large body of work dedicated to the study of Emilian sixteenth-century art and it's nearly forgotten women artists.
[11] Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna 1554-1614*, trans. Lucia Grunella (Milan: Electa, 1998), 14.
[12] Caroline P. Murphy, "Lavinia Fontana: an Artist and her Society in Late Sixteenth Century Bologna," (PhD Diss., University College, 1996).
[13] Ibid., 13.

Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna (2003).[14] Murphy contends that Fontana's artistic skill and capacity to forge networks with the Bolognese patriciate propelled her work to international fame. Murphy dives into public and private Bolognese archives to gather further evidence on Fontana's life and art contracts. Almost all detailed documentation on Fontana's commissions, however, is linked to her portraits. Due to this, her book prioritizes and elevates the study of her portraiture over sacred art.

The above-mentioned scholars have provided research compiling and exhibiting Fontana's artworks, and have described Fontana's professional networks. In 2014, scholarship on Fontana shifted to an analysis of her sacred art through the research of Patricia Rocco. [15] Rocco's dissertation addresses "the participation of women in the visual program of the Counter-Reformation in the Papal State of Bologna", through mediums such as painting, print, and embroidery.[16] Rocco addresses how religion, science and art theory melded together in the reforms led by the archbishop of Bologna, Gabriel Paleotti. Paloetti is also known for advocating naturalism in sacred art over the Mannerist style, a style prominent from 1520 until the late sixteenth century and which, contrary to naturalism, exaggerated the precise forms and linear perspective of Renaissance art.[17] Rocco valiantly explores a large number of religious artworks by Fontana, although her analysis of individual paintings and the ways they may relate to the religious reforms of her time is quite brief. Nevertheless, Rocco's dissertation was recently

[14] Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
[15] Patricia Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca: Women, Virtue and Visual Imagery during the Counter-Reformation in the Papal States, 1575-1675," (PhD Diss., The City University of New York, 2014).
[16] Ibid., iv.
[17] Mannerism is an art style the emerged after the High Renaissance (c. 1520). Defining features of Mannerism are mainly the exaggeration of the balance, proportion (elongated forms known as *figura serpentinata* or serpentine figure), and linear perspective typical of High Renaissance art. Fontana's artwork is often labeled under the Mannerist style. Although her work has some Mannerist characteristics, her sacred paintings are highly naturalistic and significantly different from the style of Mannerist artists such as Parmigianino (1503-1540) or Pontormo (1494-1577). For more about the history of Mannerism, see John Shearman, *Mannerism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967).

published in 2017 under the title *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue and Visual Culture in Early Modern Italy* and this thesis is highly indebted to her groundbreaking research.

As scholars such as Rocco have emphasized, the context of Counter-Reformation Bologna is vital to understanding Fontana's sacred art. This thesis will analyze Fontana's sacred art in part by exploring the intellectual community of Bologna, focusing on two prominent figures: the archbishop Gabriel Paleotti, and the natural historian Ulisse Aldrovandi. Fontana mobilized knowledge through a colourful social and intellectual network in Bologna, which provided her with prestigious patrons and the resources required to create powerful and affective religious paintings.

Bologna, or Felsina (the Etruscan name for Bologna) was known as an intellectual city. It housed the oldest university in the western world and it was one of the first universities to award degrees to women as early as the thirteenth century.[18] One of the most prolific scholars at the university was Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), who was the first professor of the natural sciences in 1561. Aldrovandi founded the Botanical Garden of Bologna in 1568 and from thereon he dedicated his life to the collection, description, and illustration of natural specimens known as his theatre of nature. Aldrovandi's massive accumulation of natural knowledge, which included species from the so-called "New World", can be divided into four separate categories; the first is the herbarium which included 15 volumes (5000 specimens), the original woodcut illustration of plants (roughly 8000 between plants, animals, and other natural phenomena), the seeds and woods compiled in his museum (opened in 1547), and lastly the array of manuscripts held at the University of Bologna including treatises, letters and unpublished works.[19] Prospero Fontana was

[18] Patricia Rocco, *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue and Visual Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 18.
[19] Andrea Ubrizsy Savoia, "Le Piante Americane Nell'Erbario Di Ulisse Aldrovandi." *Webbia*, no. 48 (1993): 579-598, 593. https://www.academia.edu/12887387/Le_piante_americane_nellErbario_di_Ulisse_Aldrovandi.

a close friend of Aldrovandi's, and this enabled Lavinia to maintain a familial friendship with the naturalist.[20] The art historian Carlo Cesare Malvasia was the first to point out that Fontana's close familial ties to Aldrovandi would have inspired Fontana's meticulous renderings of nature in her art. [21]

In the mid-sixteenth century, the blossoming academic sphere in Bologna influenced all aspects of social life, including exchanges between artists, scholars and clergy. Lavinia's father Prospero became friends quite early on with the archbishop to be, Gabriel Paleotti (1522-1597), as he was assigned the role of supplying stage sets and costumes for the *commedia* of the Bolognese nobility's literary academy, the *Academia Degli Affumati* (Academy of the "Smoked Ones").[22] Paleotti was an educated man who first received a doctorate in canon and civil law, teaching between 1546 and 1555.[23] Paleotti then maintained a significant role within the Church and he participated in the later sessions of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), when the Catholic Church council convened in response to the religious controversies in Northern Europe.[24] In March 1565 Paleotti became a cardinal, then Bishop in Bologna in January 1567, and then first archbishop in 1582.[25] Bologna was the second most important city in the Papal States, in which the bishop had a large share of control. Therefore, Paleotti (as archbishop) was capable of reforming political, religious, and social spheres. Paleotti's presence and engagement within the Council of Trent

[20] Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons*, 52. Murphy notes that after Prospero's death, Aldrovandi recorded a visit to the Fontana house on the 10th of January, 1600.
[21] Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614*, 186.
[22] Adrianna Hook Stephenson, "The Portrait Drawings of Lavinia Fontana: Gender, Function, and Artistic Identity in Early Modern Bologna," (master's thesis, Texas Christian University, 2008), 5. See Patricia Rocco. "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca: Women, Virtue and Visual Imagery during the Counter-Reformation in the Papal States, 1575-1675," (PhD Diss., The City University of New York, 2014), 47. Rocco describes the name of the academy as invoking a reference to "volcanoes and the idea of creative genius as an intellect that is smoking with activity."
[23] Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 456.
[24] Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons*, 4.
[25] Gabriele Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, trans. William McCuaig (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), 14.

inspired him to re-evaluate how powerful Christian art should be made, and he wrote a definitive manual to guide painters, entitled the *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images* (1582). Paleotti utilized his scholarly entourage for feedback when drafting his discourse. He reached out to the historian Carlo Sigonio (1524-1584), and most importantly, both Ulisse Aldrovandi and Prospero Fontana. Paleotti endorsed sacred art that could represent Scripture in a clear manner; that was alive (*viva*), true or naturalistic (*vera*), and that could delight (*delectare*) and move (*movere)* the spirit towards Christianity and ultimately, spiritual cognition. [26]

Rocco has argued that the importance Paloetti placed on naturalism contributed to a revival of the *maniera devota* (devout manner) in Italy, a painting style that went out of fashion before the late sixteenth century due to the popularity of Mannerism.[27] The devout manner was a term initially used to describe fifteenth-century Flemish art that was "naturalistic, pious, and inspiring of devotion in the viewer."[28] This thesis equally contends that Fontana's art engages with the *maniera devota* to render Scripture accurately, and in doing so, enable profound contemplation in the beholder, prompting an affective response. The innovative work by prestigious Bolognese figures such as Aldrovandi and Paleotti surrounding the Fontana family provided a social network that could endorse, influence and inspire her sacred art. While scholars such as Giuseppe Olmi and Paolo Prodi have considered how Aldrovandi and Paleotti influenced the work of Prospero

[26] Vera Fortunati, "Lavinia Fontana: A Woman Artist in the age of the Counter- Reformation," in *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna 1554-1614,* trans. by Lucia Grunella. (Milan: Electa, 1998), 19.
[27] Rocco, *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue and Visual Culture*, 12-13. The term *maniera devota* has a long and complex history. Rocco has retraced the roots of the *maniera devota* to a discussion between the noblewoman poet Vittoria Colonna and Michaelangelo (reported by Francisco de Hollanda). Colonna described Flemish painting as a *cosa devota* or devout thing. Colonna deemed Flemish painting as more devout than Italian painting, and Michelangelo stated that Flemish painting would please the devout more than any other, and that it would also resonate with women, monks, and nuns. Rocco equally argues that the devout manner was a response to the preacher Girolamo Savonarola's (1453-1498) sermons in Renaissance Florence that advocated for simple and pious Christian images.
[28] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca," 2.

Fontana, Lavinia was not included in their analysis.[29] Fortunati, Cantaro, Murphy, and Rocco have considered Lavinia Fontana within Prospero's network in their scholarship, but none have yet explored individual examples of Fontana's sacred paintings in great detail, keeping her influences and contacts in mind. [30]

This study will consider how Fontana's intellectual networks in Bologna may have informed her religious images, and it will explore how she utilized a combination of skill and knowledge working in the *maniera devota* to create memorable images that could appeal to the beholder's emotions as well as intellect. Fontana attentively renders sacred narratives in the *maniera devota* style. For example, her paintings of *The Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (1579) and the *Noli me Tangere* (1581) are rendered with an accurate attention to scriptural details such as location, time of day, and the protagonists' actions. Fontana may have also enhanced her works of sacred art by utilizing knowledge of natural history; in some cases, paintings by Fontana may call attention to particular flora and fauna species to introduce meaningful symbolism.

Due to Fontana's access to a range of different areas of knowledge in Bologna and the diversity of the imagery she produced, several methods will be used to analyze her religious images. Contextual history serves as the groundwork for this thesis research. This will entail exploring how nature and sacred history were studied in Counter-Reformation Bologna, and how this may have impacted Lavinia Fontana's practice as an artist. This study includes archival

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[29] Guiseppe Olmi and Paolo Prodi, "Gabriele Paleotti, Ulisse Aldrovandi, e la cultura a Bologna nel secondo Cinquecento," in *Nell'Eta Di Correggio e Dei Carracci: Pittura in Emilia Dei Secoli XVI e XVII*, (Bologna: Nuova Alpha, 1986), 213-235;

[30] Vera Fortunati, "Lavinia Fontana: A Woman Artist in the age of the Counter- Reformation," in *Lavinia Fontana of Bologna 1554-1614,* trans. Lucia Grunella. (Milan: Electa, 1998), 13-31; Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora singolare," 1552-1614*, (Milan: Jandi Sapi: 1989), 27-54; Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 52; Patricia Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca: Women, Virtue and Visual Imagery during the Counter-Reformation in the Papal States, 1575-1675," (PhD Diss., The City University of New York, 2014), 43-100.

research at the University of Bologna, as well as the study of primary source writings on science and religion.

This thesis also uses the method of feminist revisionism. This research aims to expose an underrepresented facet of Fontana's oeuvre and to reshape our understanding of her skill. Women artists in the early modern period lacked access to studying the nude and they were forbidden from art academies. Therefore, women were relegated to working in the genres of portraiture and still life, and were thought to possess a *donnesca mano* (womanly hand) that could only produce works that were overly diligent, sentimental, affected, and conveying womanly grace.[31] Since women were criticized for lack of skill and intellect if they dared to create religious or historical works, modern scholarship at times mirrored the bias of early modern writers. For instance, in the early twentieth century, Galli remarked that Fontana's "character, habits and mindset rarely brought her to paint real aspects of nature".[32] This thesis aims to re-asses her religious images as indicative of Fontana's virtue and skill, while also contending that they were highly prized and meaningful to their beholders.

Feminist revisionism will also converge with post-colonial theory. By exploring the intellectual and scientific contacts Fontana was closely associated with, it becomes apparent that scholars in Bologna were extremely invested in obtaining knowledge of the "New World". Global knowledge affected all facets of life in Italy, and it may have also influenced Fontana's highly symbolic and naturalistic Christian art. This study situates her within the complex political and colonial events of her time, more so than has been done to date. Taking inspiration from scholars such as Pamela Jones and Byron Ellsworth Hamann, this research explores how global

[31] Fredrika H. Jacobs, "La Donnesca Mano," in *Defining the Renaissance Virtuosa: Women Artists and the Language of Art History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 85-123.
[32] Romeo Galli, *Lavinia Fontana, Pittrice 1552-1614*, 44.

considerations can shed light on the art of the so-called "Old World".[33]

The first chapter will address two non-scriptural religious works by Fontana, the *Holy Family with Saints Margaret and Francis* (1578), as well as the *Apparition of the Madonna and Child to the Five Saints* (1601). I will explore how the explosive appearance of a dragon in the Bolognese countryside when Ugo Buoncompagni (Gregory XIII) was nominated as pope (1572) may have led to a significant shift in the visual representations of dragons. Fontana's *Holy Family* and *Apparition* paintings both depict dragons, and they will be considered within the context of the highly politicized miraculous event. Further, this chapter will explore how Fontana's style and composition invites beholders to connect with her work on a personal and spiritual level. The second chapter will address Fontana's rendering of one of the most iconic saints in the history of Christianity, Saint Francis of Assisi. Fontana's *Stigmatization of Saint Francis (1579)* is a crucial example of Fontana's unwavering faithful representations of Scripture in her art. In addition, the extreme emphasis on landscape surrounding Francis will be examined in light of Counter-Reformation Christian archaeology, natural history, and Franciscan concepts of the divine union between man and nature. The final chapter will shift the focus to an influential female saint, Mary Magdalene, and her encounter with Christ after the resurrection in Fontana's *Noli Me Tangere* (1581). It will explore how Fontana abided by Paleotti's instructions for sacred art and it will address the potential viewership of Fontana's painting within the context of late sixteenth-century

[33] Pamela M. Jones, "Art Theory as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Reception," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650,* ed. Claire J. Farago, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 127-139. Jones utilizes post-colonial methodology in her article on Paleotti as she aims to "uncover the hierarchical world view that Paleotti's discussion of universality and reception presupposes" which has vital implications on the "encounter between Old and New Worlds." See Byron Ellsworth Hamann, "The Mirrors of Las Meninas: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay." (*The Art Bulletin* 92, no. 1-2, 2010): 6-35. In his seminal essay, Hamann utilizes materialist and post-colonial theory to reveal signs of colonial labour within the painting of *Las Meninas* (1656) by Diego Velázquez (1599-1660). Hamann argues that the everyday objects in *Las Meninas* such as a clay cup or *búcaro*, a silver tray, and red cochineal tinted curtains would not have existed without the gruelling work of colonial labourers in the New World.

Bologna. In addition, the chapter will address several key natural components of the image that could have prompted penitential responses in the beholder, as well as a possible contemplation of a disease shared between "New" and "Old" worlds.

Chapter I

Section One:
The Politics of The *Draco Bononiensis*

In the Bible, dragons were synonymous with evil, and at times the devil himself. For example, John of Patmos in the book of Revelations (12:9) claimed that: "the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which decieveth the whole world: he was cast out into the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him".[34] In the later sixteenth century, dragons were no longer understood as the embodiment of Satan as in the Bible. Dragons became creatures classic authors had simply omitted from their accounts of natural history. On the thirteenth of May 1572, the day Ugo Buoncompagni (1502-1585) was to be elected Pope Gregory XIII in Rome, there were reports of a terrifying bipedal dragon in the Bolognese countryside. For some, the frightful dragon would have signaled the worst of omens for the newly elected Bolognese pope. However, by placing the Bolognese dragon (*Draco Bononiensus*) into his immense theatre of natural specimens, Ulisse Aldrovandi avoided tainting his newly elected cousin's reputation. The negative biblical associations of dragons were removed by transposing them into the realm of natural science. For Aldrovandi, the dragon of Bologna was a seminal addition to his museum and career as a naturalist. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Aldrovandi claimed that the appearance of the dragon was a "natural occurrence", and the scholars Paula Findlen and Marco Ruffini have suggested that he used its appearance strategically to endorse his cousin's ecclesiastical career as well as promoting himself as a naturalist.[35]

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[34] Marco Ruffini, "A Dragon for the Pope: Politics and Emblematics at the Court of Gregory XIII," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 54 (2009): 83.
[35] Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 23.

This chapter will explore the academic study of the dragon, and will address how it may have impacted two non-scriptural religious paintings by the hand of Lavinia Fontana. These images, both of which feature dragons, may have been modeled after the naturalistic renderings of dragons created under Aldrovandi's supervision to illustrate his studies. Fontana's interest in naturalistic illustration would also have respected Counter-Reformation theories of sacred art, particularly those promoted by cardinal Gabriele Paleotti in his artistic treatise the *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images* (1582). The chapter will provide readings of Aldrovandi's descriptions of the dragon of Bologna in Italian manuscripts and letters from the Aldrovandi archives in library of the University of Bologna, and in the Latin volume published posthumously entitled *Serpentum, et draconum historiae libri duo* (The History of Serpents and Dragons; hereafter referred to as the *Dracologia*).[36] For the first time, these documents will be considered as inspiration for Fontana's renderings of fauna in her religious images.

The recounting of the dragon's appearance is only described in Aldrovandi's *Dracologia* (1640). According to the *Dracologia*, the fearsome bipedal dragon of Bologna took refuge in a small farm belonging to Lord Peter of Dozza, in a place known as Malavolta.[37] A farmer by the name of Battista of Camaldoli (*Baptista de Camaldulo*) first sighted the dragon on the 13th of May 1572, on a public road beside the farm (roughly a mile from Bologna).[38] Upon hearing a loud

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See also Marco Ruffini, "A Dragon for the Pope: Politics and Emblematics at the Court of Gregory XIII," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 54 (2009).

[36] Ulisse Aldrovandi and Bartolommeo Ambrosini, *Serpentum et Draconum Historiae Libri Duo* (Bologna: Apud C. Ferronium, 1640. Since Bartolommeo Ambrosini published the book posthumously, we must consider that he may have had influence over its content and/or structure. Scholars such as Paula Findlen refer to *Serpentum et Draconum Historiae Libri Duo* as the *Dracologia* since Aldrovandi referred to his book by that title during his lifetime. See Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 18-20.

[37] Aldrovandi and Ambrosini, *Serpentum et Draconum,* 402. "Nam penèa praediolum Domini Petronij de Dosijs in loco Malavolta nuncupato delitescebat, sed tandem post diem Ascensionis Redemptoris nostri eiusdem anni, hora decima septima in via publica iuxta sepem praenominati praedij spatio milliaris à nostra distantis Civitate, à quod á bubulco Baptista nominato de Camaldulo deprehensis fuit."

[38] Ibid.

hissing sound, the ox leading his cattle came to a halt, forcing Battista to survey the surrounding area. Suddenly, the monstrous dragon appeared, and wrapped in fear, Battista "struck the beast's head with his spear upraised and killed it".[39] To ensure the beast was indeed dead, Battista also cut off one of the dragon's front feet with the pike of his iron spear. The corpse of the beast remained in the same spot for two days, until the Bolognese Senator Orazio Fontana gave it to his naturalist brother-in-law, Ulisse Aldrovandi, for research purposes.[40]

A recent biological study conducted by Phil Senter, Larhonda C. Hill, and Brandon J. Moton at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina has shed light on the mystery of the enigmatic Bolognese dragon.[41] The scholars argue that Aldrovandi's dragon was a "taxidermic hoax" commissioned by enemies of the Buoncompagnis and carefully orchestrated in the Bolognese countryside with the hopes of hindering the new Pope's reputation. The "dragon" was made by attaching the forelimbs of a toad and the midsection of a fish to the body of a European grass snake.[42] Similar to Findlen and Ruffini, the authors conclude that Aldrovandi strategically chose to approach the studying of the dragon as a natural occurrence, rather than a hoax, to diminish the potential challenge to Gregory XIII's authority.

Aldrovandi's reputation as a leading naturalist in Bologna afforded him the privilege to dissect the dragon at the University of Bologna with the surgeon Gaspare Tagliacozzi in front of the archbishop, papal legate, senators, and his colleagues in the faculty of medicine at the university. [43] If Senter, Hill, and Moton are correct in their analysis, through Aldrovandi's experience as a naturalist he surely would have realized the specimen was fake. However, for

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[39] Ibid. "Interim, magno audito sibilo, bubulcus circumspiciens admirabilem Draconis figuram deprehendit; & illico pavore affectus elevata hastula, capite belluæ percusso, animal interfecit."
[40] Findlen, *Possessing Nature,* 17.
[41] Phil Senter, Larhonda C. Hill, and Brandon J. Moton, "Solution to a 440-year-old Zoological Mystery: The Case of Aldrovandi's Dragon." Annals of Science 70, no. 4 (2013): 531-537.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 22.

political purposes he may have chosen to insert it into his museum of natural specimens in order to capitalize on the event for his career, and to reduce the negative responses enemies had aimed to impart on the newly nominated Pope. Furthermore, Senter, Hill, and Moton point out that Aldrovandi may have feared exposing the hoax, since if he initiated investigations, he too would have become a "target for revenge".[44] Aldrovandi instead proceeded with the best rebuttle he could offer as a man of science, he wrote a full volume dedicated to the natural history of dragons and serpents. He claimed that his six volume Latin *Dracologia* manuscript was written "in less than two months" after the event, and it dedicates fifteen pages to the *Draco Bononiensus*.[45] Although the book was not actually published during his lifetime, Aldrovandi did widely disseminate his unpublished research, sharing it with students and researchers, and most importantly his network of prestigious figures in religious and political spheres.[46]

The section on the dragon of Bologna in the published version of the book provides a detailed account of its anatomy, which expanded on Aldrovandi's first mention of the dragon in letters and tracts now housed in the University of Bologna Aldrovandi archives. The description of the dragon provided here synthesizes accounts in both the Latin book and Italian manuscripts. In Aldrovandi's analysis, the dragon's body parts are likened to other species, including the viper, as well as the scorpion.[47] In its full form, the dragon measured two Roman cubits, roughly

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[44] Senter, Hill, Moton, "Solution to a 440-year-old Zoological Mystery: The Case of Aldrovandi's Dragon," 537.

[45] Aldrovandi and Ambrosini, *Serpentum et Draconum,* 401-416.
For the purpose of this thesis, the first three pages of the chapter have been courteously transcribed and translated in full by David Douglas, a Classics undergraduate student and researcher from McGill University.

[46] Numerous scholars have published letters of correspondence between Aldrovandi and other prestigious Italian figures where academic and scientific exchange was held. Some examples are: Oreste Mattirolo, "Le lettere di Ulisse Aldrovandi a Francesco I e Ferdinando I Granduchi di Toscana e a Francesco Maria II Duca di Urbino," in *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, ser. II, 54 (1903-1904), 355-401 and Mario Cermenati, *Ulisse Aldrovandi E L'America: Con Frammenti Inediti E Note Esplicative*. (Roma: Voghera, 1906).

[47] BUB*, Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 63r-68r.
BUB*, Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 64v.: "La testa era simile à la Vipera [..]"
BUB*, Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 67v.: "La coda era poi molto simili al color, et figura della coda viperina; ma bisogna avvertiri di nell' estremo della coda era armato d'un aculeo nero perforato come qui del scorpioni; et nella base di detto aculeo era una vesi detta piene di veleno […]"

equivalent to 87.4 cm and a maximum diameter of 4.37 cm.[48] Its cranium was like that of a viper, of a greyish silver tone with a white striped collar in the back of its neck.[49] The mouth was two fingers wide, had two sharp slender teeth on the sides of its mouth, but lacking front teeth like vipers.[50] However, the dragon was endowed with a forked tongue as in most serpents.[51] According to Aldrovandi, the dragon had resplendent golden eyes, varying forms of scales on its body ranging from green and rust, as well as black on its back to a white tint on its belly, all combining on the tail leading up to a black tip that contained a venomous stinger (similar to a scorpion).[52] The dragon was bipedal, with two feet of four digits with short nails. According to Aldrovandi, the extremely rare and fascinating specimen would have been young, since the short nails still had points on them.[53] To Aldrovandi's surprise, the feet were separated by six inches on opposite sides. Furthermore, Aldrovandi described the movements of the bipedal dragon as a marvel, since "the middle part of the body was propelled by progressive motion, whereas the remaining parts, namely the neck and the tail, were moved by curving, flowing movements, after the manner of serpents".[54]

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[48] Phil Senter, Larhonda C. Hill, and Brandon J. Moton, "Solution to a 440-year-old Zoological Mystery: The Case of Aldrovandi's Dragon." *Annals of Science* 70, no. 4 (2013): 534.

[49] BUB, *Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 65v: "Immediate doppo la testa era un cerchietto di color bianco […]" and "La testa era simile à la Vipera; e la parte del capo superiori nell' estremo era di color nigricio; Le squam' del collo erano di color cineriero et nel lor estremo erano argentini."

[50] Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Serpentum, Et Draconum Historiae Libri Duo*. (Bologna, 1640), 403: "Oris hiatus, longitude erat duorum digitorum: lingua tenuis, longa & bifida, more aliorum serpentum, conspiciebatur. Singula oris latera dentes ferrati, & graciles armabant: anterioribus tamen in vipera observatis carebat."
"The opening of the mouth was two inches in length: the tongue could be seen to be long, thin, and forked, as is usual in other serpents. Sharp, slender teeth armed both sides of the mouth; nevertheless, it lacked the front teeth which are to be observed in the viper." (Translated by David Douglas)

[51] BUB, *Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 64r: "la lingua era sottil' et longa, et bifida a guisa de gli altri serpenti." And see, BUB, *Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 65r: "[…] Solamente quei denti da i lati, de quali si servi per magnari."

[52] BUB, *Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 65r: "Havea gli occhi assai grandi in comparatione del suo corpo et erano di color d'oro […]"
BUB, *Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 66v: "Et le sue squame, che erano per tutto sopra il dosso, erano parte verdi, parte di color ferrugin[eo?] parte nere, con i lor finimenti argentini[...]"
BUB, *Ulisse_Aldrovandi*, ms. 6, c. 66v-67r: "[…] nell'estremo della coda era armato d'un aculeo nero perforato come qu[el?, unclear] del scorpione; et nella base di detto aculeo era una vesichetta piena di veleno […]" Vesichetta, as Aldrovandi writes, actually derives from the word "veschichetta" meaning small bladder, it is also defined more generally as a small cavity that contains liquid. See also Aldrovandi and Ambrosini, *Serpentum et Draconum*, 403.

[53] Aldrovandi and Ambrosini, *Serpentum, et Draconum*, 403.

[54] Ibid., 403. "[…] proptereaquòd media pascorporis motu progressive impellebatur; reliquae autem partes, nempè

An illustration of the dragon of Bologna is found in Aldrovandi's *Tavole Degli Animali* book (volume 4, painting 130), and in woodblock print in the *Dracologia* of 1640 (Figure 1 and 2). The accounts of the dragon found in Aldrovandi's manuscripts, letters, and the *Dracologia*'s section, all paint rather similar pictures of the Bolognese dragon. However, the illustrations from manuscript to book are not entirely uniform, nor do they render the dragon accurately as described in Aldrovandi's words. Despite being painted by his full-time illustrator, Aldrovandi's illustrated dragon in the *Tavole* lacks detail, for instance there is no clear distinction between the toes and claws. However, the claws are emphasized somewhat more in the *Dracologia*, where longer lines stretch out of the pointed toes. Furthermore, Aldrovandi described the dragon's tail as having a venomous stinger at the tip, which is not illustrated in great detail visually; it appears as though the tip of the tail has a different color but remains quite thin. The tip of the tail may seem a minor detail, but it is one unique quality Aldrovandi attributes to the Bolognese dragon, and not to the other dragons that are included in the book such as the *Draco Alatus Apes* (winged dragon) (Figure 3) or the *Drago Aethiopicus* (Ethiopian dragon) in the *Dracologia* (Figure 13).[55] The three other dragons do not store venom pockets in their tails. Although, other details such as the variations of color and structure of the scales are rendered precisely in the *Tavole* and the *Dracologia*. Through Aldrovandi's research we see that detailed observation of the natural world was critical. Full understanding of a species or specimen may only be achieved by combining his textual description alongside an image illustrated by his artists.[56] For Aldrovandi, art was a seminal tool for complete scientific knowledge.

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colli, & caudae per lubricos fluxus ritu serpentino, movebantur." Translated by David Douglas: "For the middle part of the body was propelled by a progressive motion, whereas the remaining parts, namely the neck and the tail, were moved by curving, flowing movements, after the manner of serpents."

[55] Aldrovandi and Ambrosini, *Serpentum et Draconum,* 419-420.

[56] Patricia Rocco, *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue and Visual Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 19.

The illustration of the dragon was vital to disseminating knowledge on the monstrous dragon of Bologna. A few weeks after it was sighted, trapped, killed, and displayed in Aldrovandi's museum, the naturalist received an overwhelming number of requests for images and descriptions by prestigious figures throughout Italy. Word of the specimen had spread quickly. In one case, the physician Alfonso Pancio from Ferrara received word of the dragon from the Monks of Certosa, who begged the physician to ask Aldrovandi for more information about the "monstrous serpent with a bird's feet and fish's head."[57] Pancio requested that a picture be sent to his patron first, the Duke Alfonso II D'Este.[58] Further, Pancio later found out that his nephew, Francesco Anguilla, had already seen the monstrous serpent with his own eyes, possibly at Aldrovandi's museum. Similarly, in Padua, naturalists and humanists alike pleaded for news of the marvelous dragon of Bologna. The humanist scholar Giovan Vincenzo Pinelli requested Aldrovandi to disseminate his "history of the two-footed dragon."[59] As late as 1578, six years after the event, patrons of Aldrovandi, such as the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco I, requested information about the dragon.[60] For those who couldn't find a moment to visit Aldrovandi's museum, prints of the dragon were circulated, which, in turn, were intended to encourage patrons to visit Bologna.[61] The dragon of Bologna became the center of Aldrovandi's museum, which Lavinia Fontana visited with her

[57] Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 18-19.
BUB Aldrovandi, ms. 38, II, c.173 (Ferrara, 6 July 1572): "The other day certain Monks from Certosa told me about the monstrous serpent with a bird's feet…and a fish's head found on the Bolognese, and they said that Your Excellence has it and has had it illustrated. They begged me to write you and found out if such a thing were true." (Findlen's Translation).
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 20.
[60] Ibid.
[61] For a catalogue of prestigious visitors to the Museum, see BUB, *Aldrovandi,* ms. 41, c2r (*Liber in quo virinobilitate, honore et virtute insignes, viso musaeo quod. Excellentissimus Ulyssis Aldrovandus Illustriss. Senatui Bononiensi dono dedit, propria nomina ad perpetuam rei memoriam scribunt*). The book begins in 1566 and most importantly, the first signature is that of Gabriele Paleotti. See also, Findlen, *Possessing Nature,* 138-146. Findlen offers pie charts indicating the wide array of visitors that signed the guest books.

father in 1577 as the guest book shows.[62] The museum contributed to Aldrovandi's fame, and it placed Bologna at the center of natural science. Through her friendship with Aldrovandi, Lavinia Fontana had access to a wide array of natural specimens for potential study in the city.

The discovery of the dragon on the day of Buoncompagni's election to the office of Pope was particularly noteworthy because the emblem of the "Drago Nascente" (or rising dragon) was already on the coat of arms of the Buoncompagni family. As Marco Ruffini has suggested, this apparent coincidence therefore gave Buoncompagni's election an air of legitimacy and power.[63] Aldrovandi's *Dracologia* – written shortly after the discovery of the dragon and the pope's election – was dedicated not to the pope himself, but to Ugo's nephew, Fillipo Buoncompagni, also known as Cardinal San Sisto.[64] A year later, in 1573, in the hopes of gaining further favor among the papacy as well as funding for research, Aldrovandi also sent Fillipo a discourse summarizing the majority of his natural history studies, which included a brief description of the dragon of Bologna.[65] Knowledge for Aldrovandi translated into power, both for his own benefit and for that of the Bolognese pope.[66] In his capacity as a naturalist, Aldrovandi asserted that the appearance of the dragon was a scientific fact that could be described and catalogued. This rid dragons of their negative connotations, while associating the appearance of one dragon with the pope's election.

As Ruffini demonstrates, the coat of arms of the Buoncompagni family changed visually when the pope was elected. The dragon illustrated on the arms, which traditionally had recalled the satanic dragon described by John of Patmos, became more naturalistic and detailed, resembling the Aldrovandian dragon. Further evidence of the new study of dragons appears in a book of

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[62] BUB, *Ulisse Aldrovandi*, ms. 136, vol. 24, c. 21-25. See Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and her Patrons*, 52. Fontana's name is written as *Lavinia pictrix* (painter).
[63] Marco Ruffini, "A Dragon for the Pope: Politics and Emblematics at the Court of Gregory XIII," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 54 (2009): 84,
[64] Findlen, *Possessing Nature*, 20.
[65] BUB, *Ulisse Aldrovandi*, ms. 91, c. 516a.
[66] Findlen, *Possessing Nature,* 23.

emblems about Buoncompagni, published in 1588, entitled *Delle allusioni, imprese, et emblemi del signor Principio Fabricii da Teramo, sopra la vita, opere et attioni di Gregorio XIII Pontefice […]* (Of the allusion, [heraldic] devices, and emblems...on the life, works and actions of Pope Gregory XIII).[67] The book was written by a priest from Abruzzi, Principio Fabrizi, and included 256 engravings, some of which contain dragons akin to those catalogued by Aldrovandi (Figure 4). As Ruffini claims, emblem no. 97 with a dragon seated on a platform in front of a country home achieves a complete "reversal" of the dragon's earlier meaning, where the motto states *Felix Praesegium* (Lucky Protector), newly describing the dragon as a good omen (Figure 5).[68] Further, emblem no. 75, entitled *Potestas in Demones* (Over Devils), juxtaposes the six-headed demonic dragon described by John of Patmos (left) in a battle against the "good" Aldrovandian styled dragon (right) (Figure 6). [69] Notably, the Buoncompagni coat of arms in the St Peter's Gregorian chapel is identical to the Aldrovandian dragon on Fabrizi's emblum 75 (Figure 7). Finally, Fillipo Sega, a scholar and president of Romagna, wrote to Aldrovandi stating that the dragon itself was "almost like an emblem, or an *impresa* miraculously revealed by the just God, to declare the true and perfect nature of our dragon."[70] Whether one considers the dragon as an emblem, as Sega did, or as a new species, as Aldrovandi did, or even a "taxidermic hoax" (as was argued in 2013), the impact of the creature upon the religious, social, and political spheres in Bologna in the later sixteenth century was significant.[71] As late as 1693, the English politician William Bromley

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[67] Principio Fabrizi, *Delle Allusioni, Imprese, Et Emblemi Del Sig. Principio Fabricii Da Teramo Sopra La Vita, Opere, Et Attioni Di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo Libri VI. Nei Quali Sotto Lallegoria De Drago, Arme Del Detto Dun Principe Christiano; & Altre Cose ...* (N. Bonifatio, 1588), https://archive.org/details/delleallusioniim00fabr.

[68] Marco Ruffini, "A Dragon for the Pope: Politics and Emblematics at the Court of Gregory XIII," 86.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614* (Milan: Electa, 1994), 167. Cited in Marc Ruffini, "A Dragon for the Pope: Politics and Emblematics at the Court of Gregory VIII." Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome 51 (2009): 91.

[71] Phil Senter, Larhonda C. Hill, and Brandon J. Moton, "Solution to a 440-year-old Zoological Mystery: The Case of Aldrovandi's Dragon." Annals of Science 70, no. 4 (2013): 531-537. The conclusions provided in the article stemmed

(1663-1732) pointed out that the "dragon captured in the Bolognese countryside in 1572" was the most interesting compared to the other "712 natural rarities in glass bottles" housed in Aldrovandi's museum.[72] Despite Aldrovandi not being able to publish his *Dracologia* in his lifetime, much evidence attests to the dragon's impact in countless religious, social, and artistic circles of Italy in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Section Two: Lavinia Fontana's *Holy Family with Saints Margaret and Francis* (1578)

> "Good Lord, if any woman with child travailing call on me, that you will keep her from peril, and that the child may be delivered without any hurt."[73]
> –Saint Margaret of Antioch

Having observed the impact of the dragon of Bologna in political and scientific realms, it is worth reevaluating the presence of dragons in the sacred art of Lavinia Fontana. Several of Fontana's religious paintings depict Saint Margaret of Antioch, who was swallowed by a dragon, though she valiantly escaped thanks to the cross she wore, which upset the demonic dragon's innards. Consequently, the visual attribute used to identify Margaret was the dragon, and she was usually depicted with this creature. Margaret was known as the patron saint of childbirth and of pregnant women since she emerged from the belly of the dragon like a child from the womb of their mother.[74] In the early modern period, for instance, it was common for pregnant woman to have prayer sheets or images of Saint Margaret placed on their belly to assist in childbirth. This section will discuss the inclusion of this female saint and her dragon in Fontana's works. I will begin by assessing the paintings in the light of Counter-Reformation ideals on art, as defined by the

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from a biology undergraduate research course at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina.

[72] Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 28.

[73] Jacobus De Voragine, *The Golden Legend: or, The Lives of Saints*, trans. William Caxton, vol. 4, 7 vols. (London: J.M. Dent and, 1900), 66-72.
https://archive.org/details/TheGoldenLegendV4.

[74] Juliana Dresvina, *A Maid with a Dragon: The Cult of St Margaret of Antioch in Medieval England* (Oxford: Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

archbishop Gabriel Paleotti. From there, I demonstrate how Fontana may have utilized knowledge of natural history and Aldrovandi's research on the dragon as a way of heightening the beholder's experience of the sacred image according to Paleotti's ideals. I will also consider the need for devotional pictures of the saint, such as the high mortality rate of newborn children in late sixteenth-century Italy**.**

According to Caroline Murphy, Fontana created three images of the *Holy Family With Saints* in 1578, and they are her first large devotional images.[75] Murphy argues that the large size of the *Holy Family With Saints* paintings may suggest that they were intended for the private chapels of churches.[76] Of the three paintings, only the location of the *Holy Family with Saints Margaret and Francis* of 1578 is known, though photographic reproductions remain for the other two (Figures 8, 9, and 10). The painting has a nearly symmetrical composition depicting Saint Joseph on the right-hand side with the Virgin below him, holding Christ in the center, and laying him on his ornamental crib while he raises his right hand to make a sign of blessing. On the left-hand side, Saint Margaret kneels with crossed arms before Christ and above her Saint Francis holds a crucifix. The two adult figures on each side of Christ mirror one another, and the color enhances this unity. For instance, the Virgin and Margaret both wear pink attire, and green fabric around the Virgin's waist is echoed by the dragon beneath Saint Margaret. The postures of Joseph and Francis, above the female figures, are nearly identical, and both men wear dark grey and auburn robes. While the composition is balanced, Christ is the center of attention; all four adult figures are leaning towards him in still motion.

Fontana composes the image with a great deal of care. While the figures' physiognomic

[75] Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 47.
[76] Ibid.

traits may resemble one another, there is a thoughtful variation of facial expressions, postures, and textures, from translucent veils to thick robes and flowing tassels. The composition is balanced and free of excess embellishments, making The *Holy Family* worth considering in relation to Counter-Reformation art theory, which may have guided her vision.

Of vital importance to sacred art during the later sixteenth century was first and foremost the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The Council of Trent was an ecumenical gathering held in response the Protestant Reformation (lead by Martin Luther), which heavily criticized the Catholic Church. One of the main criticisms was the catholic worship of sacred images as a form of idolatry. In response, the council maintained that Christian art served a didactic function and that new instructions would be set in place to help artists provide clear, pious, and relatable images. However, the doctrines created during the council remained rather ambiguous. A seminal figure who participated in the later sessions of the Council of Trent (1562-63) was the archbishop of Bologna, Gabriele Paleotti. Paleotti wrote his own treatise in the 1570s, the *Discorso intorno alle imagini scare e profane* (*Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*). Paleotti aimed to reform the art of sacred painting by establishing the meaning and utility of images within the church, and by providing detailed guidelines about how art can best instruct and move viewers towards the Christian faith. The first draft of the book was completed in 1578 and was published in 1582. Though Fontana's Holy Family of 1578 precedes the publication of Paleotti's *Discorso*, it does show evidence of adhering to Counter-Reformation notions, and to Paleotti's ideals. Fontana was possibly exposed early to Paleottian reform, since her father Prospero, and Ulisse Aldrovandi, helped revise Paleotti's treatise. Much like her father, Paleotti recognized Lavinia Fontana as a devout painter at a young age. In 1593, Paleotti commissioned Fontana for the iconic image of the Assumption of the Virgin for his private chapel.

One of the most important aspects of Paleottian reform is an emphasis on visual clarity in Christian images. Paleotti claimed that "paintings are like open books," meant to instruct, delight, and move viewers. However, Paleotti also believed painters were partly like orators, and in this way, unlike authors of Scripture who provided "obscure" knowledge. Painters, like orators, needed to clearly demonstrate their knowledge to beholders of varying degrees of literacy and social class. To Paleotti, the majority of the population was uneducated (*idioti)* and sacred art was first and foremost meant to educate the mostly illiterate Italian population. Painters could thus illuminate the Bible and its leading figures through "divine images" that unite all walks of life. Fontana's Holy Family in that respect is clearly legible and it is an uncluttered image; we only see religious figures and their most significant attributes. Paleotti argued strong imagery would be distinctly compartmentalized (*distintamente compartitita*) so that the beholder "quickly and easily recognizes what it is meant to represent." Visual clarity is one of the several ways Fontana's images may be considered as piously abiding by the *Discourse*.

Rocco has described how Fontana's sacred images correlate with the three main categories of religious images described by Paleotti. The first category, the iconic image, is created by a devout painter and should fuel religious contemplation, urging identification with religious figures and causing strong empathetic feelings. In some cases, the iconic image could lead the viewer to the point of religious compunction, confession, and conversion. The second category is the historical religious narrative, which was "meant to communicate a sacred story by means of historical detail and accuracy," that is, free of unnecessary embellishments or details. Paleotti refers to the iconic image and the historical religious narrative as pictures of "things and operations." Paleotti states that "a painter can paint things or persons, such as the blessed Virgin, the sacred cross...or operations such as the Baptism of the Lord, the Annunciation of the

Madonna." Paleotti therefore distinguishes between images of sacred figures or objects, and the images that tell us a story about a saint or Christ himself. And lastly, Rocco's third category is the religious historiated portrait, which is a sacred image with a donor portrait, usually in the margins of a sacred space or scene. In other cases, like some paintings by Fontana, the donors exist within the sacred space and are active figures in the religious narrative. Rocco claims historiated portraits depict a "virtual pilgrimage," so that the image could be used by the patron in prayer or contemplation, to imagine themselves in a sacred scene. Furthermore, in some of Fontana's images, the saints could be portrayed with the donor's physiognomic attributes- a controversial concept that will be addressed later in this chapter in the light of Paleotti's *Discourse*. Each of Paleotti's categories are distinctly listed, yet they often overlap. Although the painting of the Holy Family with Saints Margaret and Francis shows figures appearing to interact with one another, thereby suggesting a narrative, it mostly has the quality of an iconic image. The painting qualifies as an iconic image by encouraging viewers to contemplate the meaningful connections between the figures, producing an emotional response.

In the upper portion of the painting, Saint Francis on the left is reflected by Saint Joseph on the right. Saint Francis led a life akin to Saint Joseph in that they both never became fathers by blood. Rather, I suggest, they became father figures to their followers. Additionally, Joseph was the foster father of Christ. Saint Joseph is rendered in the image grasping a wooden walking stick, which may represent his modest carpentry profession, and perhaps an allusion to pilgrimage. By the same token, Francis is holding a wooden crucifix, with the signs of the stigmata visible on his hands, reminding the viewer that he was the first saint to bear the wounds of Christ's passion. The pose of the jubilant Christ child in the foreground starkly recalls the crucifix Francis holds, foreshadowing the tragic fate he will openly accept for the salvation of all. In addition, Saint

Margaret's pose may also evoke the *Pietà* pose, where Mary mourns the sacrifice of her son. The crib has also been interpreted by Helen Marie Clements as representing a place of rest (bed) and alternatively, a place of death, similar to a sarcophagus.[77] Here, Christ is pictured as an infant, but he demonstrates the mind of an adult by blessing the saints with his hand gesture. The painting in this respect foreshadows the fate of Christ through sacrifice, but also his return as savior to humanity. Fontana's painting therefore cleverly arranges the holy figures in the image to encourage the beholder to build associations between saints whose lives all uniquely evoke universal feelings of glory, sacrifice, tragedy, and mourning.

A beholder of the *Holy Family* may have also come to consider the similarities between Saint Margaret and the Virgin Mary. Saint Margaret and Mary served as intercessors to pregnant women. Mary was divinely impregnated and she gave birth to the ideal beautiful infant. Unlike the Virgin, Margaret's mother tragically died soon after her birth, and her trial of safely escaping the belly of a dragon is a strong metaphor for labor and its difficulties.[78] All of this supports Murphy's suggestion that the inclusion of Margaret, the Christ child and the Virgin may have held a special personal meaning to the patron or patroness.[79] If a mother or pregnant woman had encountered Fontana's painting, the tender embrace of Mary cradling the Christ child would have immediately been a model to look to in their personal lives. The cherub-like perfect child was an ideal for women in a period where birth defects and high infant mortality rates were rampant.

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[77] Helen Marie Clements, "Painting Beyond the Canvas: An Antithetical Visual Statement by Women Artists of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," (master's thesis: California State University, 2006), 119.

[78] Jacobus De Voragine, *The Golden Legend: or The Lives of Saints*, trans. William Caxton, vol. 4, 7 vols. (London: J.M. Dent and, 1900), 67. Voragine does not explicitly state that Margaret's mother died shortly after childbirth; instead he mentions that a nurse fosters her.

[79] Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons*, 47. It may also have been relevant to Fontana herself. Fontana had her first painful and almost fatal experience of childbirth (fifteenth of January 1578), and she was expecting her second child as of March 1578, when she created the *Holy Family* painting. Like Mary who also lost her first son, Lavinia's first son Horatio sadly did not make it past his first year. See Romeo Galli, *Lavinia Fontana Pittrice 1552-1614*, ed. Paolo Galeati (Imola: Cooperativa Tip, 1940), 113.

Women often also feared pregnancy; they would often begin writing their will before giving birth because they were at a high risk of complications.[80] While the Christ child serves as a model for the perfect infant, the crucifix present in the painting and Saint Margaret's mourning stature would have reminded women of Mary's sadness in sacrificing her child. Mary's bravery would have instilled a feeling of strength and perseverance in women at the face of familial tragedy. Perhaps in that respect the emphasis in rosy hues of the image, almost "neutralizing the male saints", placed a higher emphasis on the women of the image, therefore paying homage to women's unique gift and sometimes burden of childbearing.[81]

Not only would the image have resonated with the concerns of mothers on a physical and emotional level, but such an image could also be a remedy. Palleoti's *Discorso* includes a chapter on the powerful effects of images, in which he repeats the well-known medical belief that images surrounding pregnant women could transfer their attributes to the child in the womb.[82] According to Paleotti, "such strong impressions may be made on our fantasy by the various concepts it apprehends out of the forms of things, that those forms leave alterations and striking signs on the bodies of persons."[83] In response to Paleotti, Aldrovandi similarly discussed his recommendation for women to hang images of beautiful and pious figures in their bedrooms to allow positive attributes to transfer onto progeny.[84] Similarly, in the space of a private chapel, Fontana's painting could have inspired a female beholder to contemplate the image not only mentally and emotionally,

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[80] "Renaissance Childbirth," Victoria and Albert Museum, January 31, 2013, http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/r/renaissance-childbirth/ (accessed July 31, 2018).
[81] Helen Marie Clements, "Painting Beyond the Canvas," 120.
[82] Caroline Murphy, "Lavinia Fontana and the Female Life Cycle Experience in Sixteenth Century Bologna," in *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. Sara F. Matthews Grieco and Geraldine Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 121. For more on the experience of childbirth during the Renaissance, see Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).
[83] Paleotti and Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 120.
[84] Ibid. See also Ulisse Aldrovandi, "Avvertimenti del Dottor Aldrovandi," in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento*, ed. Paola Barocchi (Bari: Laterza, 1961), vol. 2, 511-517.

but the image itself could have transferred positive attributes to her future progeny. Aldrovandi's beliefs on the relationship between images and women's fertility are thus in line with Paleotti's assertions on the power of sacred art to sway emotions. Endorsing the power of images to move feelings, Paleotti cited Saint Gregory in his discourse who once said that "Where the [appearances] of external things are drawn into us, whatever we cogitate while studying artificial images is virtually painted right in the heart."[85]

The sole component of the image that isn't human in the *Holy Family* is the form of the dragon, an attribute of Saint Margaret (Figure 11). Paleotti acknowledged that more than ever in the Counter-Reformation, sacred history should be represented in a historically and scientifically accurate way to ensure its clarity and legibility for the beholder. It is therefore worth considering the dragon in more depth, as it may show the same level of thoughtfulness as the rest of composition. As mentioned earlier, dragons held a meaningful place in Bolognese history of the later sixteenth century. The dragon of Bologna appeared on the 13th of May 1572 (the day Ugo Buoncompagni became pope), Aldrovandi wrote the *Dracologia* within two months after the event and then included the dragon in his museum, which was highly visited in the 1570s, and Fontana herself came to see the museum in 1577, the year before the *Holy Family* image was painted (signed and dated on the tablecloth).[86] For Fontana to insert a saint identifiable by a dragon in her work could have been a means of piously portraying sacred history (the life of Saint Margaret) in a scientifically accurate way through painting. The dragon is only partially visible, unlike the full dragon she will later paint in the *Apparition of the Madonna to the Five Saints* (1601), but a few possible suggestions can be made regarding its meaning and symbolism. Fontana naturalistically

[85] Ibid.,119.
[86] Fontana signs and dates the painting prominently below Christ's bed: LAVINIA FONTANA DE ZAPPIS FACIEBAT MDLXXVIII.

rendered her dragon with a green scale tint unique to dragons (and unlike serpents) as described by Aldrovandi, although it can be admitted that this is already established according to traditional images.[87] Fontana's dragon mirrors the Ethiopian Dragon proposed by Aldrovandi, otherwise known as the *Draco Aethiopicus* (Figure 12 and 13) in the *Dracologia*. The most striking visual similarity between Fontana's dragon and the Ethiopian dragon would be the resplendent large eyes, thick arched brow lines, an upward snout, and a long thin tongue. The Ethiopian dragon's neck is naturally raised upwards in Aldrovandi's representation, which may have been a most important component of its species since none of his other dragons are represented in the same manner. Although it is unclear if this is the direct inspiration, Fontana's dragon is placed in a roaring position, similar to Aldrovandi. Further, a similar sixteenth century study of a dragon exists by a contemporary of Fontana (who had links to Aldrovandi), Bartolomeo Passaroti, which may suggest a common influence among artists of the period (Figure 14). Like Fontana, Aldrovandi recalls in his manuscript that Bartolomeo Passaroti visited the museum with his son, who later was commissioned to illustrate 12 species of birds in 1597.[88] Fontana's accurate representation of a dragon would have ennobled saint Margaret, as it would have legitimized her personal story of escaping the belly of a real animal, and not a mystical creature. Paleotti would have approved an Aldrovandian dragon placed within a religious image, since he proudly claimed his native city as "mistress of studies", the center of progressive theology, as well as natural history.[89]

This section has emphasized that the *Holy family with Saints* imagery played a crucial role in Fontana's plunge into larger scale religious works, ones that may have allowed her to engage with tracts on natural science by Aldrovandi and the artistic reform of the Church through Paleotti

[87] Aldrovandi and Ambrosini, *Serpentum et Draconum*, 403.
[88] Marinela Haxhiraj, *Ulisse Aldrovandi: il museografo* (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2016), 67.
[89] Paleotti and Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 51.

in Bologna. Through her attention to detail, Fontana provided the patron with an image that would permit a sentimental and mystical contemplation, and one that would have resonated with the struggle of women who dealt with painful childbirth and premature deaths in the early modern period. [90]

Section Three: *Virtù* and Virtual Pilgrimage in *The Apparition of the Madonna and Child to Five Saints* (1601)

> "If the face of honesty were discernible with the eyes, it would arouse miraculous love for itself."[91]
> –Cicero

As the previous section demonstrated, one of Fontana's earliest large-scale religious works depicting the *Holy Family* rendered a naturalistic dragon similar to one described by Aldrovandi, and with some attention to Paleotti's *Discourse*. As Fontana gained experience in sacred imagery, the motif of Saint Margaret and her dragon resurfaced again in the *Apparition of the Madonna and Child to Five Saints* of 1601 (Figure 15). This section will provide a contextual and visual analysis of the painting, discuss the work in the light of Paleotti's reform, and finally assess St. Margaret's dragon and how it may be influenced by Aldrovandi's research.

Contemporary scholars on Fontana, Vera Fortunati and Maria Teresa Cantaro have noted that the provenance of the *Apparition* can be ascertained through an account of the work in the first volume of Carlo Cesare Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice: vite de pittori bolognese* (*Lives of the bolognese painters*, 1678).[92] Malvasia provides the oldest surviving account of the work, which states, "the gracious Five Saints were under the Church, in the confessio of the Olivetan monks at

[90] "Renaissance Childbirth," Victoria and Albert Museum, January 31, 2013, http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/r/renaissance-childbirth/ (accessed July 31, 2018).
[91] Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 281.
[92] Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614*, 198.

San Michele in Bosco".[93] The *confessio* is a Latin architectural term for the crypt of a church, sometimes behind the high altar or beneath it, which served as the tomb of saints, containing sacred relics and most prized works of art. Fontana's image was thus in a very sacred space of the church, possibly indicating it was a highly prized work of art. While we do not know who commissioned the painting, commissions were allowed to be placed in the crypt.

Fontana's painting depicts the Virgin Mary and her son, accompanied by wreath-bearing putti and appearing through the clouds to an array of female saints below. Fontana renders a crowned Saint Catherine of Alexandria whose hands are in prayer at the center of the painting with an entourage of female saints. The saints are identifiable by their respective sacred attributes recalling their life stories. From left to right we see Saint Barbara with a book in her hand, Saint Ursula holding a flag, Saint Agnese with her lamb in hand, and Saint Margaret holding a cross in her right hand and a palm in her left as she steps on a dragon. According to Malvasia, Saint Barbara on the left is in the likeness of a younger Fontana, with her signature and date placed below her foot as a clue.[94] Malvasia further bolstered his claim by arguing that Saint Barbara (Fontana) was holding not a bible, but a sketchbook.[95] Murphy has shown the resemblance between Saint Barbara and Fontana's *Self Portrait in the Studiolo* of 1579 (Figure 16).[96] And further, Murphy highlights

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[93] Ibid. My Translation. Fortunati's discussion of the work cites Malvasia: "le graziossime cinque Santine [erano] sotto Chiesa, nel Confessio de'RR Monaci Olivetani, a San Michele in Bosco[…]" Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice* serves as a Bolognese counterpart to the Tuscan and Roman history of art by Vasari in his iconic *Le Vite Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (1550/1568). Malvasia provides the most prominent account of Bolognese artists and their work through his two volumes published in 1678. *Felsina* is the classical latin name for the city of Bologna under Etruscan rule. For a digitized version of the first volume, see, Carlo Cesare Malvasia, Felsina Pittrice: Vite De Pittori Bologresi Alla Maesta Christianissima Di Luigi XIIII ... Cosagrata Dal Co. Carlo Cesare Malvasia .. (Bologna: Erede Di Domenico Barbieri, 1678), https://archive.org/details/pittricevitedepi01malv.

[94] Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora singolare," 1552-1614*, (Milan: Jandi Sapi: 1989), 198.

[95] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca," 91. See also Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana*, 198; and Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, I, 21. Sandra Schmidt claims that Fontana's rendering of herself in the likeness of Barbara may have been autobiographical, a "final artistic and spiritual detachment" from her father; this relates to Barbara's struggles against her father, and the fact that Fontana's father had died four years before creating this image. Sandra Schmidt, "'Un artifice cristiano': Studien zu Lavinia Fontana als Historienmalerin," (PhD Diss., University of Stuttgart, 2015), 49.

[96] Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons*, 195.

that this was not the first time Fontana depicted herself as a sacred figure, arguing that we also see similar features in the *Judith with the head of Holofernes* of 1600 (Figure 17).[97]

While Saint Barbara may be in the likeness of Lavinia Fontana, Vera Fortunati speculates that the saints look like young women of the Bolognese nobility in the manner of a *tableau vivant*.[98] The facial features of the women do appear to have a somewhat generic facial appearance, and yet they are in highly adorned clothing and jewelry reminiscent of Fontana's portraits of the Bolognese female nobility such as the *Portrait of a Noblewoman* (1584) (Figure 18).

If the *Five Saints* were rendered as Bolognese women, then it would not satisfy Paleotti's recommendations on sacred images. In his *Discourse*, Paleotti makes it clear that "saints should never, ever be portrayed with the faces of particular individuals, or worldly folk, or someone whom others would recognize, because not only would it be vain and utterly undignified to do so, the result would be like a king sitting on his throne in majesty wearing the mask of some charlatan or ignoble person." [99] Paleotti's beliefs on portraits in sacred imagery were also a concern in Renaissance Florence. In a sermon, the Dominican friar and preacher Girolamo Savonarola critiqued sacred art depicting contemporaries as saints, claiming that "[…] the figures you have made in the churches are in the likeness of one or another woman, which is very badly done and is in great disregard for what is God's. You painters do badly, and if you knew the scandals that comes from it and the things I know, you wouldn't paint them."[100] However, despite public and widespread criticism of saintly portraiture, the inclusion of contemporary people in sacred images

[97] Ibid., 154.
[98] Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1554-1614*, 202. And see Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana,* 201. *Tableau Vivant* means "living picture", and it was referred to as a person or group of people statically posing as subjects of a painting or sculpture.
[99] Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 214.
[100] Alexander Nagel, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 2011), 14. "[…] perché voi fate dipingere le figure nelle chiese alla similitudine di wuello donna o di quell'altra, il che è molto male fatto e in grande dispregio delle cose di Dio. Voi dipintori fate male, ché se voi sapessi lo scandolo che ne segue e quello che so io, voi nolle dipingeresti."

had a long history, and even the pious artist and Dominican friar Fra Bartolomeo painted a glorifying portrait of Savonarola in the guise of Saint Peter the martyr for the Maddalena monastery at the Caldine between 1498-99 (Figure 19). [101] Bartolomeo, the avid follower, presumably aimed to ennoble Savonarola despite the fact that he had recently been impeached and hanged. However, the painting itself does not follow Savonarola's early recommendations concerning sacred portraiture.

By contrast, Rocco has argued that the portraits Fontana renders in the *Apparition* may have been acceptable to Paleotti, if they depicted women with the same virtues associated with each saint.[102] Rocco argues that Paleotti's ideas on *virtù* complicate his claims on renderings of saints. To Paleotti, "it is highly recommended to depict a person who excelled in the virtue that one wants to signify."[103] If the painting does depict real Bolognese people, the painting may fit into the category described by Rocco as the "historiated portrait".[104] The five saints of the painting do not reside in the heavenly realm of the Virgin but they are distinctly separate. If this interpretation is correct, the painting could have served Bolognese noblewomen in their religious contemplation, to place themselves in the shoes of their name-saints, and to encounter the Virgin while on a virtual pilgrimage. Assessing the work contextually, a virtual pilgrimage may have been likely for a visitor in the crypt of San Michele in Bosco, since it may have held a sacred tomb and/or relics of a saint which was meant to inspire internal reflection and contemplation. Paleotti, for instance, quotes the classic roman orator Cicero who once reflected upon the difficulty of illustrating virtue when he wrote, "if the face of honesty were discernable with the eyes, it would

[101] Magnolia Scudieri, *Museum of San Marco*, trans. Ailsa Wood and Catherine Frost, ed. Augusta Tosone (Florence: Giunti: 2005), 38.
[102] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca," 91.
[103] Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 286.
[104] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca," 68.

arouse miraculous love for itself".[105] Fontana may have hoped to instill her saints with the appearances of virtuous Bolognese women.

While the *Apparition* image may or may not fully conform to Paleotti's views on some levels, it may be inspired by Aldrovandi's studies of dragons. On the opposite side of Barbara, we see Saint Margaret and her dragon. The dragon, whose full form is visible, resembles not the *Draco Bononiensus*, but a dragon in the same family mentioned earlier, known as the *Draco Aetheopicus* (Ethiopian dragon) in Aldrovandi's research (Figures 12 and 13). Some shared attributes between the Bolognese dragon and the Ethiopian dragon are the varying green and red scales, its bipedal nature, long claws, and serpentine tail. In contrast, key differences are the larger serpentine-like scales on the Bolognese dragons' lower body (as opposed to the highly textured circular scales that dominate in the Ethiopian), thin elongated toes instead of stubby toes, and the lack of wings. Facially, the dragons are very different. The Bolognese dragon has the face of a snake, beady eyes and a forked tongue, while the Ethiopian Dragon has pointed ears, a snout, large eyes and a mouthful of sharp teeth. The supposedly Ethiopian dragon was a winged dragon that had negative implications similar to the dragons described in the Bible, and was considered a worldly horror. The Ethiopian dragon that served as a model for Aldrovandi in his research was apparently a dragon from Ethiopia that had been killed, stuffed and sent to Paris.[106] In illustrations by Aldrovandi's workshop, it is rendered as much more menacing than the Bolognese dragon. An Ethiopian dragon could have been chosen by Fontana as inspiration to emphasize the extent of Margaret's divine strength against the demonic dragon, as she remains practically unfazed while graciously trampling its back with her left leg. Fontana may have used Aldrovandi's extensive

[105] Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 281.
[106] Christina Marie Putman, "A New Way of Writing History: Ulisse Aldrovandi's Encyclopedic Cabinet of Nature," (PhD Diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2011), 19.

breath of knowledge on the species to incorporate a specific kind of dragon suited to the religious narrative unfolding within the frame. In that respect, pious artists can amplify sacred narratives and their meaning by utilizing nature's bounty to their advantage.

Given Aldrovandi's analysis of the miraculous Bolognese dragon's appearance, and dissemination of his knowledge throughout Italy, it is plausible that Fontana was motivated to include naturalistic depictions of dragons in her images of Saint Margaret. Aldrovandi's scientific accuracy was influential in the Bolognese artistic school of the later sixteenth century. Interest in scientific accuracy in art was supported on theological grounds by Paleotti and Aldrovandi's belief that the secrets of the Bible existed within nature. While the dragons may be marginal figures in Fontana's elaborate compositions, they nonetheless engage with the scientific, religious, and political aspects Bologna's intellectual culture in the late sixteenth century. Like Paleotti, Aldrovandi asserted, "even still, there is found in the nature of things no animal so small and ignoble that the divine workmanship does not forever shine out in it."[107] The following chapter will further delve into the significance of Aldrovandi's statement in relation to Saint Francis in the work of Lavinia Fontana.

[107] Aldrovandi, *Serpentum et Draconum*, 401. Translated by David Douglas. "Et tamen, nullum animal tam paruum, & ignobile in rerum natura reperitur, quin divinum opus in eo semper elucescat."

Chapter II

Section One:
Navigando Il Paesaggio Sacro
Post-Tridentine Christian Archeology in Fontana's Bologna

> "Ignorance of things, too, renders figurative expressions obscure, as when we do not know the nature of the animals, or minerals, or plants, which are frequently referred to in Scripture by way of comparison."[108]
> –Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*

During the Council of Trent (1545-63) in 1562, Aldrovandi was actively searching for natural traces of the Bible in the Dolomite foothills in the company of Pope Urban VII, Cardinal Paleotti, and Camillo Paleotti.[109] Aldrovandi and Paleotti's goal in the Counter-Reformation was to take up empirical study associated with natural history to assert that nature would illuminate and authenticate Christian Scripture. As Andrew Berns has emphasized, in the later sixteenth century, naturalists and theologians yearned "to see, smell, and touch natural elements from the biblical world". [110] The research undertaken in Trent by Aldrovandi was fruitful, as it accumulated knowledge on various types of woods, such as that of cedar, a wood vital to sacred history. According to Aldrovandi, the body of Christ was preserved for several days after the crucifixion due to his burial in a cedar wood casket, which slowed down the process of decomposition.[111] Berns asserts that for Aldrovandi, "biblical events thought to be miraculous are explicable by research into natural history."[112] Paleotti and Aldrovandi took up a Christian duty proposed by Augustine in the second book of *De Doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Doctrine*), namely, that it would be necessary for devout Christians to understand the natural landscape in Scripture to reach

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[108]St Augustine of Hippo, On Christian Doctrine (Jazzybee Verlag, 2012), https://books.google.ca/books?isbn=384962112X.
[109] Andrew D. Berns, *The Bible and Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy: Jewish and Christian Physicians in Search of Truth*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 63-64.
[110] Berns, *The Bible and Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Italy,* 62.
[111] Ibid., 67. Berns elucidates upon Aldrovandi's book *De Cruce*, a two-volume natural history of Jesus' cross, which can be consulted at the University of Bologna Library Archives (BUB, Ms. Aldrovandi, 51, *De Cruce,*).
[112] Ibid.

a higher state of spiritual cognition. The travels, local or distant, undertaken by naturalists began to be referred to as pilgrimages, or what Findlen has coined, "pilgrimages of science". [113] Aldrovandi provided a commentary on drafts of Paleotti's *Discourse* in the 1580s, and particularly on the topic of the accurate rendering of nature in painting, asserting that "The painter must know the particulars of all the above-mentioned things, be they inanimate or vegetable, so that one can paint them with the appropriate colors, and not knowing them, must consult those who know of them."[114] Artists in this context would be encouraged to reach out to clerics, men of science, or even historians if necessary to perfect their skills. Aldrovandi made it clear to Paleotti that when intermingled; visual art and text (sacred or profane) would allow academics to reach a wholesome understanding of the ancients.[115] In the age of discovery and colonization, Aldrovandi equally informed Paleotti that Guaynacapa, the king of Cusco in Peru had statues in gold and silver of all flora and fauna he encountered, and that Christian princes should emulate the "barbarian prince" by cataloguing nature's bounty.[116] Sacred history and natural history often overlapped during the later sixteenth century, and it inevitably affected Paleotti's reform of religious art in his *Discorso,*

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[113] Findlen, *Possessing Nature,* 155-194.

[114] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca […]," 23 (Her Translation). "Bisogna che il pittore molto bene conosca particolarmente tutte le cose sopra dette, o siano inanimate o vegetabili, accio le possa dipingere con suoi appropriati colori, e non conoscendole, debba consultare quelli che n'hanno cognizione." See Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti del dottore Aldrovandi*, in *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento, fra manierismo e Controriforma, ed. Paola Barocchi* (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960-62), 925-930, 924. This passage is from the second letter Aldrovandi wrote to Paleotti in response to his *Discourse* on November 4th, 1582.

[115] Aldrovandi's work in natural history was deeply influenced by humanistic theory, for this reason, he was alternatively claimed by his contemporaries as a second Aristotle.

[116] Lia Markey, "Aldrovandi's New World Natives in Bologna (Or How to Draw the Unseen *Al Vivo*)," in *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492-1750*, ed. Lia Markey and Elizabeth Horodowich (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2017), 225-48. "Guaynacapa, King of Cusco, was a man of great spirit and he took so much pleasure in the things of nature that in his collection, amidst an infinite number of enormous gold statues that seemed like giants, he had life-sized figures of all the four-legged animals that had come to his attention and all the birds and all the trees and plants that the earth produces… if a barbarian prince had so much spirit that he wanted to form in gold and silver all of the natural things that God in his Greatness produced for man's use, how much more should it be incumbent on Christian princes… to realize in painting all of the things that nature produces in their dominions!" (Translated by Lia Markey) The first letter written by Aldrovandi to Paleotti regarding his *Discourse* on Jan 5th, 1581 can be found in BUB, Ms. Aldrovandi, 124, vol. 6, t.3. The transcription of the first letter is also published in: Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Avvertimenti Del Dottor Aldrovandi,* in *Trattati D'arte Del Cinquecento, Fra Manierismo E Contrariforma*, vol. 2, ed. Paola Barocchi, (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza E Figli, 1960-62), 511-517.

as will be discussed further in this chapter.

While scholars have often outlined Paleotti and Aldrovandi's influence upon artists like Prospero Fontana, Bartolomeo Passarotti, and the Carracci family in the late sixteenth century, Lavinia Fontana must also be discussed in this context for having produced religious images that emphasize flora and fauna. [117] As mentioned in the first chapter, Lavinia Fontana visited Aldrovandi's museum with her father in 1577. [118] As well, Aldrovandi visited the house of the Fontana family on several occasions before and after Lavinia's father passed away in 1597.[119]

The *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* by Lavinia Fontana of 1579 is a modest sized painting, likely commissioned for private devotional use (Figure 20).[120] Fontana renders Francis and brother Leo praying in a dense forest on mount Verna at the break of dawn, where Christ under the guise of a seraph appears to Francis and propels the five wounds of the crucifixion onto his body. Cantaro boldly describes Fontana's painting of Saint Francis as "suspended between reality and imagination, mysticism and rationality, an expression of the rigorous religious sentiment and profound curiosity towards scientific research."[121] Fontana's painting of *The Stigmatization of Saint Francis* is a crucial example of her strong attention to rendering nature and Scripture accurately, allowing them to unite and induce further spiritual contemplation for laymen, and most importantly, laywomen. While we do not know for whom Fontana's painting was commissioned, in Bologna it could have been a private work suitable for female viewership. Saint Francis had a

[117] Guiseppe Olmi and Paolo Prodi, "Gabriele Paleotti, Ulisse Aldrovandi, e la cultura a Bologna nel secondo Cinquecento," in *Nell'Eta Di Correggio e Dei Carracci: Pittura in Emilia Dei Secoli XVI e XVII*, (Bologna: Nuova Alpha, 1986), 213-235.
[118] BUB, *Aldrovandi*, ms. 136, vol. 24, fols 21-25. See Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons*, 52. Fontana's name is written as *Lavinia pictrix* (painter).
[119] Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and her Patrons,* 52.
[120] Vera Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614* (Milan: Electa, 1994), 186. Fortunari states that the painting was commissioned for private devotional use due to its modest dimensions. However, we do not know precisely where it was commissioned for, nor the patron or patroness.
[121] Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana*, 93.

large female following in the early modern period, and recent scholarship by Rocco has shed light on how his cult would have been vital to women in the city of Bologna.[122]

Fontana's unique interpretation of the stigmatization of Saint Francis has most prominently been discussed in regards to the influence of northern art (Flemish or German artists of her time), and the influence of Aldrovandi and Paleotti. The northern style, and more specifically, German art, was praised by Gabriele Paleotti in his *Discorso* when he states that "Of Albrecht Dürer, German painter and mathematician, he who gave clear testimony of how much, in his work, he was observant of sanctity and honesty."[123] Paleotti's admiration for Dürer may have been because, as Rocco states, "he [Paleotti] was attempting to create an accurate history of Christianity in which religious painting would take on the characteristic of history painting: veracity."[124] The extreme attention to detail in northern art and its emphasis on landscape in sacred art was an ideal reference for Paleotti's art reforms. Recent scholarship has also strongly emphasized the exegetic quality of landscape in northern art, how seemingly inanimate natural species take on a dynamic role, interacting with saints and their narratives in religious paintings.[125] Fontana's artwork similarly evokes several qualities of northern art in that respect.

An early northern print similar to the landscape composition in Fontana's *St Francis* is Albrecht Altdorfer's etching of a *Landscape with a Shaded Cliff* made between 1506-1522 (Figure 21). Altdorfer's etching has never been discussed in relation to Fontana's painting, and yet the composition ranging from the mountain to the cityscape and sky above are reminiscent of Fontana's rendering. Earlier scholarship such as that by Vera Fortunati has related Fontana's

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[122] Rocco, *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue and Visual* Culture, 64, 111, 125.
[123] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/ Mano Donnesca," 52 (Her Translation). "Di Alberto Dürer, pittore e geometra germane, e reso nella vita suo chiaro testimonio, quando egli nelle opere sue fosse osservante della santita e onesta."
[124] Ibid., 60.
[125] Denis Ribouillault and Michel Weemans, *Le Paysage Sacré Le Paysage Comme Exégèse Dans L'Europe De La Première Modernité/ Sacred Landscape: Landscape as Exegesis in Early Modern Europe* (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2011), XVIII.

painting of *Saint Francis* to the landscape renderings of Nicolò del l'Abate (Figure 22).[126] Fortunati also discusses the Roman artist Girolamo Muziano's lost fresco of *Saint Francis Receives the Stigmata* as having directly inspired Fontana's work.[127] However, Fontana engaged with Muziano's work not via painting, but by the Flemish artist Cornelis Cort's engraved copy of it (Figure 23).[128] Painted and engraved copies of artworks were a vital means of artistic exchange in the later sixteenth century, and it is likely Fontana could have made use of northern prints to inspire her paintings. Cantaro mentions two copies of Fontana's *St Francis Receiving the Stigmata,* one painting by Ignoto, and an etching by P. Tibaldi (Figure 24 and 25).[129] Fontana took up the popular subject of Saint Francis in two later paintings, one again in 1579, and a third, *Saint Francis in adoration of a crucifix* in 1580 (Figure 26 and 27). Nature emerges as a vital aspect in all three renderings of Francis by Fontana.

This second chapter will first address the varying religious accounts of the life of Saint Francis and his miraculous stigmata, then it will explore Lavinia Fontana's rendering of Francis in more detail, considering Aldrovandi and Paleotti's possible influence on the image. This chapter primarily aims to display how Fontana created an image that could have facilitated the kind of devotion that Aldrovandi and Paleotti were envisioning, with an emphasis on flora that had specific religious significance.

Section Two: Bearing the Marks of Christ: A Historiography of Saint Francis' Stigmata

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[126] Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614*, 186.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid. See Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana*, 95; San Francesco Riceve Le Stimmate, Cort Cornelis; Muziano Girolamo Detto Girolamo Da Brescia – Stampe E Incisioni – Lombardia Beni Culturali, http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/stampe/schede/1q030-00140 (accessed July 31, 2018); The lost fresco by Muziano is said to have been for the church of Santi Apostoli (The Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles) in Rome. However, there is a similar painting of the same subject in the Santa Maria della Concezione dei Cappuccini (Our Lady of the Conception of the Capuchins) church in Rome.
[129] Cantaro, *Lavinia* Fontana, 93. Cantaro discusses Ignoto's painting in detail, but the print by Tibaldi is simply included in the margins. Tibaldi's print is similar to Fontana's painting with his signature on the left side of the image.

> "Laudato sie, mi'Signore cum tucte le Tue creature, spetialment messor le frate Sole, le qual è iorno, et allumini noi per lui. Et ellu è bellu e radiante cum grande splendore de Te, Altissimo, porta significazione."[130]
> –Saint Francis of Assisi, *Cantico di Frate Sole*

Fontana's representation of the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (1579) follows historical accounts of the miraculous apparition of the stigmata on Saint Francis' body one morning while praying on Mount Verna. The stigmatization of Francis is said to have taken place on the 14th of September 1224; there are an array of religious texts and biographies that have described the event. For the purpose of this thesis, the first known biography of Francis and two important later accounts will be used to investigate the varying descriptions that might have influenced Lavinia Fontana's depiction of the event. Walter Friedländer states that the "stigmatization was rarely depicted even in the Italian Quattrocento and in High Renaissance, [though it] is back on top in the second half of the sixteenth century."[131]

The sole mention of the term *stigmata* in the Bible appears in the New Testament (Galatians 6:17), where Paul states, "I bear on my body the marks of Christ".[132] The first biography of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano entitled *Vita prima S. Francisci* (1229) describes the stigmata extensively, and what it entailed for Francis.[133] According to Celano, two years before Francis' death, when he was in a hermitage called Alverna, he witnessed a seraphic vision. Celano

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[130] Francesco D'Assisi, *Cantico De Frate Sole*, ed. C. Segre and C. Ossola, vol. 1 (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), http://www.letteraturaitaliana.net/pdf/Volume_1/t16.pdf.
"Praise be to you my Lord, and to all your creation. Especially Sir Brother Sun, who is our day, and you give us light through him. And he is beautiful, and shines with great splendor. From you, most high he takes his meaning." (Translated by Brian Moloney) See Brian Moloney and Francesco D'Assisi, *Francis of Assisi and His "Canticle of Brother Sun" Reassessed* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), XXV.

[131] My Translation. See Schmidt, "'Un artifice cristiano': Studien zu Lavinia Fontana als Historienmalerin", 50. "San Francesco, il santo visionario più importante e allo stesso tempo il più umano, la cui stigmatizzazione veniva raffigurata ancora raramente nel Quattrocento italiano e nel Pieno Rinascimento, viene di nuovo in primo piano nella seconda metà del sedicesimo secolo".

[132] Arnold I. Davidson, "Miracles of Bodily Transformation, or How St. Francis Received the Stigmata," Critical Inquiry 35, no. 3 (2009), 456. "Ego enim stigmata Iesu in corpora meo porto."

[133] Thomas Of Celano, *Vita Prima Di S. Francesco D'Assisi*, 1st ed. (Tipografia Della Pace: Rome, 1880), https://archive.org/details/vitaprimadisfran00thom.

proclaims that while Francis was praying "there appeared to him a man, like a seraph with six wings, standing above him, with his hands extended and feet joined, fixed to a cross. Two wings were raised above the angel's head, two were extended for flight, and two covered his whole body."[134] Francis was amazed and stunned at the face of the beautiful yet suffering angel, and he didn't know what to make of it. Moments after he witnessed the rare vision, Francis arose to meditate upon what he encountered, feeling a combination of joy and grief. Suddenly, the "marks of the nails began to appear in his hands and feet just as he had seen them before in the crucified man above him."[135] As the description continues, Celano highlights the visceral and gruesome four holy wounds in detail. Celano equally points out that Francis received the fifth holy wound of Christ, that of the lance of Longinus, piercing him in his right side. Further, Celano notes that Francis' wound on his side "often bled, and his tunic and his undergarments were often sprinkled with his sacred blood."[136] Therefore, it is vital to note that the stigmata appeared to Francis while standing, after his seraphic vision, and that he had difficulty comprehending it at the time.[137] The description does not give a sense of what caused the divinely inspired event, and it does not state that the seraph directly caused Francis' physical wounds. Late medieval images, such as Giotto de Bondone's *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* in the Bardi Chapel at Santa Croce in Florence, often depicted the seraph as the cause of the wounds, showing gold rays emanating from the seraph into the hands, feet and side of Saint Francis.

Francis' stigmatization is also described in the most popular account of his life, Saint Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior* or the *Greater Legend* (1263).[138] Bonaventure's writing became

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[134] Arnold I. Davidson, "Miracles of Bodily Transformation, or How St. Francis Received the Stigmata," 459.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid., 460.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Bonaventure, *The Souls Journey into God; The Tree of Life; The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins (Paulist Press, 1978), 179-329.

the seminal source for followers of Saint Francis, to the point that a decree was passed that all other biographies be "destroyed".[139] Therefore, Bonaventure's work became the primary source for later textual and visual interpretations of Francis' life.[140] Bonaventure's description of the stigmatization recounts that Francis was praying on the mountainside, "on a certain morning about the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross."[141] The seraphic vision occurs much like Celano's previous description, except there is no mention of Francis rising after his vision. Bonaventure explains that Francis received the stigmata because he was "Christ's lover."[142] Bonaventure writes "he [Francis] was to be totally transformed into the likeness of Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of the flesh, but by the fire of his soul."[143] In Bonaventure, the relationship between Christ and Francis is highlighted, not solely his vision of the seraph. What Francis marvels at is clearly Christ "under the appearance of a seraph" (*Christo sub specie seraph*), and his all-encompassing flame-like passion for Christ is said to ignite the wounds.[144] However, like Celano, Francis' vision as described by Bonaventure also disappears before the wounds surface.[145]

Another account of Francis' stigmata that became an iconic source for artists in the Renaissance is Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* or the *Golden Legend*. Voragine produced a multi-volume work that catalogues the lives of the saints, and in his small section on Francis, a key point is emphasized in the brief discussion of stigmatization. Voragine notes that Francis had "hid the stigmata from the eyes of all", although, some saw the signs on his body while he was

[139] Davidson, "Miracles of Bodily Transformation, or How St. Francis Received the Stigmata," 466. Davidson summarizes Bonaventure's section on the Life of Saint Francis in the *Greater Legend*.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 467.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.

alive, or "observed them" after his death.[146] Therefore, witnesses were an important means of reinforcing the truth of St. Francis's mystical experience. Voragine's emphasis on witnesses may have influenced artists to include a figure named Brother Leo (a Franciscan monk) surrounding Francis in visual representations of the stigmatization (Figure 29).

Fontana's private devotional painting of the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (1579) housed in Seminario Arcivescovile of Bologna demonstrates her attention to the life of Francis as written by early biographers.[147] Saint Francis is seen at the bottom left of the image and is enveloped in a dense natural landscape. Francis looks to the luminous sky with his arms wide open and knees bent in prayer (Figure 29). We can visually identify his hermitage of Mount Verna above him, and the hazy city of Assisi in the distance on the left, which looks small and insignificant in comparison to the rocky forest that permeates three quarters of the image. Fontana signed her full name and the date in Latin "LAVINIA FONTANA DE ZAPPIS FACEBIAT MDLXXVIII" on a stone several steps away from the kneeling saint (Figure 30).[148]

If we are to consider the writings of Celano and Bonaventure, it is clear that Fontana attentively rendered the saint consumed by an overall sense of awe at the miraculous vision. Francis' mouth is slightly parted and his upward gaze looks to the red seraph that is slowly disappearing into the sunlit sky. The seraph is centered in a yellow circle, looking almost as though it were the sun surrounded by clouds, and its contours are built upon a variation of light yellow, orange and red, which brings a sense of transience to the winged seraph (Figure 31). Upon Francis' hands and feet there is also a subtle light rendering of the stigmata wounds in red, but they have

[146] Jacobus De Voragine and Eamon Duffy, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 601.
[147] Fontana's painting is accessible to visitors upon request. I would like to personally thank Elisa Gamberini for allowing me to visit the seminary and to study the work in person.
[148] Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana*, 93.

not begun bleeding. The wounds have not yet caused him any discomfort, judging by the saint's expression. Fontana unites aspects of Celano and Bonaventure's writing as she places the saint kneeling when the signs of the stigmata appear. However, the saint's kneeling body is arched and conveying a sense of movement; he might stand in the moments to come.

The sun in this painting is to the right of the mountains, and is rising through the hazy sky, following Bonaventure's statement that the event occurred in the early morning. The sunrise illuminates the top right of the painting, where we see faintly rendered red hue through the trees. The morning light, in this respect, creates a naturalistic misty and almost foggy landscape with softened lines and hazy forms (often know as *sfumato*). In the distance on the left, Fontana uses atmospheric perspective to render a hazy city. Fontana's use of colour may help to convey the meaning of the story. The brightness of the sky, with its warm and golden hues, may evoke the "flame" and passionate love of Christ described by Bonaventure. The rest of the painting is more subdued in color, which makes the sky all the more striking. As previously mentioned, brother Leo is a witness to the event, although the light above blinds him since he is rendered covering his eyes. A tall tree separates both figures, forming a spiritual barrier between Leo and Francis' unique seraphic vision.

The most striking visual quality in Fontana's image is the lack of detail accorded to the crucified six-winged seraph. Why might Fontana have depicted the frightening yet awe-inspiring figure in such a small scale, and instead direct her attention to the natural landscape? Fontana's artistic choice to minimize some aspects of the stigmatization like the seraph may be in line with a statement Paleotti made in defense of his artistic reforms in 1581. Paleotti argued that "The Christian princes who know the saying of Saint Paul that the invisible things of God are known through the visible ones should arrange for the depictions of all things that nature is continually

producing in their kingdoms."[149] Christ is not only "*sub specie seraph*" (in the form of a seraph), but he is also positioned within the top left of the image, a force of light stronger than the sun itself. Divine presence is intentionally placed in the painting where the beholder might expect to see the sun. Francis was constantly in tune with and praising nature, which God had created for humanity. In one of Francis' most iconic writings before his death, he sings of the glory of God within all of the natural elements. The sun is given most praise by Francis as he tells us that "Praise be to you my Lord, and to all your creation. Especially Sir Brother Sun, who is our day, and you give us light through him." [150] By praising the sun, Francis was continuing a long tradition; when Christianity was adopted by the Roman Empire under emperor Constantine, Christ's birthday on December 25th became associated with the popular roman sun cult.[151] Under the roman Julian calendar, the winter solstice fell on December 25th, which meant that after Christ was born, days too became longer and brighter. [152] In Fontana's painting, it is possible that by placing the seraph in the left corner where we might expect to see the sun, she encourages the viewer to contemplate the connection between Christ and the sun.

This section has proven that Fontana's rendering of the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* is thoughtfully based on a synthesis of early modern accounts of the life of saint. In her painting, she accurately portrayed the dense mountainous landscape in a *sfumato* style, the early morning time of day, as well as the sun filled illuminated union with Christ. Through one image, Fontana piously

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[149] Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 17. "I principi cristiani, che sanno quell detto di S.Paolo, che invisibilia Dei per ea quae visibilia facta sunt congnoscuntur dove-riano fare dipingere tutte le cose che ne' suoi regni continuamente sono dolla natura prodotte."

[150] Francesco D'Assisi, *Cantico De Frate Sole* (Torino: Einaudi, 1997), I. "Praise be to you my Lord, and to all your creation. Especially Sir Brother Sun, who is our day, and you give us light through him. And he is beautiful, and shines with great splendor. From you, most high he takes his meaning." (Translated by Brian Moloney) See Brian Moloney, *Francis of Assisi and His Canticle of Brother Sun Reassessed* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), XXV.

[151] Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 60-61

[152] Ibid.

narrates several key aspects of the unique sensorial experience that Francis was brave enough to endure, one that filled him with a fire and love strong enough to propel the holy stigmata.

Section Three: The Natural History of Fontana's *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (1579)

Saint Francis emphasized that no plant life can exist without the sun, or without God for that matter, since the sun inherits its meaning from him. While Murphy and Rocco have suggested possible connections between the flora of Fontana's painting of Saint Francis and Aldrovandi, it has not yet been discussed in depth. The painting of Saint Francis by Fontana corresponds once again to knowledge disseminated by Aldrovandi, similar to her renderings of dragons in chapter one. While one may argue that the dense forestry might detract from the sacred narrative at play, Rocco highlights that Paleotti might have approved of this aspect as it suggests the "nature-mysticism of St. Francis and God's creation."[153] Paleotti approved of attention to details in a painting as long as it heightened contemplation of the image's meaning.[154]

The Franciscan contemplation of nature might have been a quintessential point of departure for Fontana's depiction of abundant greenery in her painting of *Saint Francis*. Beyond Francis' own writings, discussed above, the Franciscan interest in nature is evident in Saint Bonaventure's book entitled *The Tree of Life* (1300). This book was an essential reference to Franciscans as it served as a mnemonic aid to remember the life and glory of Christ. Bonaventure wrote to "picture in your mind a tree whose roots are watered by an ever flowing fountain that becomes a great and living river with four channels to water the garden of the entire church."[155] The tree of life is a

[153] Rocco, "Maniera Devota/Mano Donnesca," 60.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Bonaventure, *The Souls Journey into God; The Tree of Life; The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins (Paulist Press, 1978), 120. "On the first branch the soul devoted to Christ perceives the flavor of sweet-ness, by recalling the distinguished origin and sweet birth of her Savior; on the second branch, the humble mode of life which he condescended to adopt; on the third, the loftiness of his perfect power; on the fourth, the plenitude of his most abundant piety; on the fifth, the confidence which he had in the trial of his passion; on the sixth, the patience which he exhibited in bearing great insults and injuries; on the seventh, the constancy which he maintained in the torture and suffering of

metaphor for Christ in all his glory. The fruit-filled tree with twelve branches provides the readers with a sensorial journey, which will spiritually nourish them as they meditate on Christ's life.[156]

Furthermore, the context with which Christ received the stigmata wounds is also highly significant to Christianity more generally. The wooden cross Christ was crucified on may have been made up of not one, but four different types of trees. Medieval writers, The Venerable Bede (c. 673-735) and John Cantacuzenus (c. 1292-1383), argued that the cross was made up of cypress, cedar, pine, and boxwood.[157] Later writings have argued that the main beam of the cross would have been made of cedar, the transverse of cypress, the inscription was carved on a piece of olive, and the footrest was of palm.[158] While the exact materials of the cross are still a topic of debate, numerous tree types gained spiritual significance through this debate, further validating the symbolic utility of depicting various tree species within a rendering of Francis' stigmatization. Aldrovandi dedicated a two-volume study to the topic of the natural history of the cross Jesus was crucified on, entitled *De Cruce*.[159]

Out of all tree types that the cross possibly would have been made of, cypress is the main tree species most probably identifiable within Fontana's image. To the right of the hermitage on the top of mount Verna, we see probable examples of tall and thin green cypress trees. An illustration from Aldrovandi's manuscripts of the *Cipresso Italus* illustrates how contemporaries perceived this tree, and could have served as an excellent reference for Fontana's tall oval shaped trees (Figure 32). The inclusion of cypress trees in this image may have evoked several meanings

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his rough and bitter cross; on the eighth, the victor which he achieved in the conflict and passage of death; on the ninth, the novelty of his resurrection embellished with remarkable gifts, on the tenth, the sublimity of his ascension, pouring forth spiritual charisms; on the eleventh, the equity of the future judgment, on the twelfth, the eternity of the divine kingdom."

[156] Ibid., 121.

[157] J. Charles Wall, "The Origin of the Wood of the Cross," Catholic Exchange, January 26, 2016, https://catholicexchange.com/the-origin-of-the-wood-of-the-cross (accessed July 31, 2018).

[158] Ibid.

[159] BUB, Ms. Aldrovandi 51, *De Cruce.*

in the mind of the beholder. At once, the cypress may have been a part of the holy cross. And further, the cypress could have signalled the words of St. Gregory the Great, who defined the cypress as a symbol of the elect in Heaven, an incorruptible wood.[160] According to legend, when Saint Francis travelled from Rimini to La Verna on his pilgrimage, he planted a cypress tree in the cloister of the convent of Villa Verrucchio in 1213, which still exists and is a highly visited site today (Figure 33).[161] While the cypress represents a part of the crucifixion cross and the well-known cloister of the Franciscan Convent of Villa Verucchio, the final and most seminal interpretation of the cypress is its association with death. The cypress was a tree used in pagan times for cremations, to mask the bodily stench of the dead.[162] Christians adopted the pagan belief and also used the tree for funerals.[163] The cypress thus invites the beholder to contemplate the life and death of Francis and Christ. As well, the cypress evokes Francis's belief in the goodness of nature, which in part enabled him to relive Christ's stigmata. Investigating only one aspect of the detailed flora in the *Sigmatization of Saint Francis* by Fontana demonstrates how the trees in the image are anything but a negation of the sacred narrative unfolding in the foreground. Fontana's rendering of *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* thus engages with accounts of the life of Saint Francis. It may also reflect Paleotti's reforms to sacred art and, through beliefs advocated by Aldrovandi, the manifold meanings of nature, which was a more typical facet of northern artistry.

[160] Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *The garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1977). 122. "Cedrus autem et cypressus imputribilia ligna esse perhibentur. Quibus bene omnes electi figurantur."
[161] Mediterranean Cypress: 'Cipresso Di San Francesco' Villa Verucchio in Verucchio, Emilia-Romagna, Italy, https://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/ita/emiliaromagna/rimini/6971_villaverucchio/ (accessed July 31, 2018).
[162] Levi D'Ancona, *The garden of the Renaissance*, 120.
[163] Ibid.

Chapter III

Section One:
Fontana's *Noli me Tangere* and Sacred Scripture

> "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing."[164]
> –John 15:5

Mary Magdalene, like Saint Francis, was a vital figure to Counter-Reformation piety in the later sixteenth century, and Fontana made sure to include her in her artistic repertoire. This chapter will address how Fontana may have heightened the beholder's connection to Mary Magdalene in her painting of the *Noli me Tangere* (1581) by utilizing her knowledge of natural history to integrate imagery related to one of the most pressing issues of the time: the struggle against the epidemic of syphilis (Figure 34). The first section will explore how Fontana abided by Paleotti's instructions for sacred art, utilizing Scripture to produce an accurate depiction of the *Noli me Tangere* story within the life of Saint Mary Magdalene. The second section will address the potential viewership of Fontana's painting of the *Noli me Tangere*, and will situate Mary Magdalene and her life story at the center of prostitution reforms. The final section will explore nature within Fontana's painting, and how it could have contributed to interpretations of the image, particularly regarding thoughts of disease and holy medicine from across the Atlantic Ocean.

Fontana's painting of the *Noli me Tangere* story visually synthesizes sacred Scripture by the four evangelists who chronicled the moment of Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene after the resurrection. Lavinia Fontana's painting of the *Noli me Tangere* of 1581 most visibly recalls the twentieth chapter of the book of John that tells of Mary Magdalene's visit to Christ's tomb in the hopes of embalming him. According to John, Mary Magdalene approaches Christ's tomb and

[164] John 15:5, http://biblehub.com/john/15-5.htm (accessed July 31, 2018).

encounters an empty burial protected by two angels who proceed to ask her why she is crying. In response, Mary Magdalene states that "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."[165] In that moment, Mary Magdalene swiftly turns around to see a man in the attire of a gardener. Magdalene proceeds to ask where the body of her lord has been placed. The man responds to her by calling out "Mary", and in that moment, she understands Christ has returned. Mary Magdalene responds in Aramaic, "*Rabboni*!" which means teacher. Upon Magdalene's recognition, Christ states, "*Noli me Tangere*" or "Touch me not."[166] Further, he tells Mary Magdalene that he has not yet returned to the father, and that she should inform the apostles of his resurrection. Following the gospel of John, Fontana has pictured the confrontation between Mary Magdalene and her teacher in the foreground of her image, in a luscious garden.

Though Fontana based her depiction mostly on the gospel of John, the scholar Vera Fortunati has argued the painting can be read like a book from left to right, incorporating details from other gospels.[167] For instance, the top left of the painting renders the moment before the conversation between Christ and Mary Magdalene with not one, but three figures arriving at Christ's tomb with burial spices; different gospels identify the figures differently, and even recount different numbers of people (Luke 24:1-11; Matthew 28:1-10; and Mark 16:1-10). Mary is represented twice in the painting, in the background and is recognisable in the foreground with the same colour attire and hairstyle. One figure accompanying Mary Magdalene covers her face, perhaps in mourning, or perhaps from the abrupt almost crashing sound of the angel's appearance.

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[165] John 20:13, http://biblehub.com/john/20-13.htm (accessed July 31, 2018).
[166] Barbara Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden: Mary Magdalene in Noli me Tangere," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Rachel A. Erhardt (Boston: Brill, 2012), 191. Baert translates *Noli me Tangere* as "Touch me not." For a wider study of the statement "Noli me tangere" and its possible translations, see Reimund Bieringer, "*Noli me tangere* and the New Testament: An Exegetical Approach," in *Noli me tangere: Mary Magdalene: One person, Many Images,* ed. Barbara Baert (Leuven: Peeters Publishers: 2006), 13-29. Bieringer translates the statement as either "Do not attempt to touch me" or "Do not come closer to me".
[167] Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614*, 197.

The noisy eruption would have been made by the "angel of the lord" we see sitting on Christ's tomb, as in the book of Matthew.[168] By relegating this scene to the background, the composition emphasizes Mary's encounter with Christ, as written in the gospel of Mark and John, while including details from other gospels. [169] Word and image unite to visually render Mary Magdalene's vital position as a follower of Christ.

The twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent, "On the invocation, veneration, and relics of saints and on sacred images," highlighted the pedagogical utility of sacred images for the illiterate, as long as within them "every superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre be abolished; finally, all lasciviousness". [170] Similarly, Gabriele Paleotti in his discourse claimed that "in accordance with the saying of Saint Paul, 'with the heart we believe unto justice, with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,' and, circumstances permitting, to persuade others to it and imprint in into their hearts, what more expeditious or clear or helpful method could we possibly find than sacred images?"[171] To Paleotti, sacred images served a pedagogical purpose in so far as they could delight the viewer, enhance their spiritual knowledge, and sway their emotions towards the Christian faith by means of spiritual cognition. However, the images needed to be clear, free of embellishment or lasciviousness, and in tune with claims of the Council of Trent. Fontana's painting engages with Tridentine reforms of sacred art by thoughtfully rendering Scripture clearly and accurately, free of excess ornamentation. While several moments in the story are depicted, there is an order and a compositional unity to Fontana's image. Figures are rendered by Fontana tastefully, such as Mary Magdalene who is dressed in noble attire, and Christ's body is fully

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[168] Matthew 28:2, http://biblehub.com/matthew/28-2.htm (accessed July 31, 2018).
[169] Fortunati, *Lavinia Fontana 1552-1614*, 197.
[170] James Waterworth, trans., *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent* ... (London: C. Dolman, 1848), 236.
[171] Paleotti and Paolo Prodi, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, 115. Paleotti dedicates several chapters towards defining how and why Christian images are superior to text in the instruction and conversion of non-Christians.

clothed so that the beholder may not be distracted from the sacred narrative. While the art historian Laura M. Ragg had previously asserted that Fontana lacked skill in rendering anatomy on several occasions, in the case of the *Noli me Tangere*, the modest attire covering the figures' anatomy in Fontana's work may be deliberate, as it does not detract from the narrative.[172] The figures are clothed yet the bodily forms are nonetheless present, which is entirely appropriate to the story since it highlights a profound spiritual connection, rather than distracting the viewer with displays of virtuosity in rendering anatomy. Indeed, it has been argued that touch is prohibited in this moment presumably because "the risen and, therefore, divine body is out of bounds", therefore Fontana's image respects one of the spiritual meanings of the story.[173]

In addition to the Gospels, *The Golden Legend* by Jacopo de Voragine was a vital textual source for Renaissance artists, and helps to unpack the complexity of the *Noli me Tangere* image. Paleotti approved of non-biblical accounts of sacred history, such as Voragine's, when they maintained long and dignified reputations in history.[174] According to Voragine, Mary was known as Magdalene, "which is understood to mean 'remaining guilty', or unconquered, or magnificent."[175] Voragine elaborates on how she was sinful before conversion, armed with penance upon conversion, and after conversion was magnificent and endowed with a "superabundance of grace".[176] What was Mary Magdalene guilty of? Voragine states that Magdalene was renowned for her beauty and wealth, and for giving "her body to pleasure"; before her conversion she was known not as Magdalene but "the sinner".[177]

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[172] Laura M. Ragg, "Lavinia Fontana: The Portrait Painter (1552-1612)" In *The Women Artists of Bologna,* (London: Methuen & Co., 1907), 206. Ragg stated that Fontana was "was incapable of representing vigorous action and muscular play and development."

[173] Baert, 192. Baert's essay asserts that *Noli me Tangere* is a meant to instruct the viewer that corporality in Christianity may reside within a spiritual union that is "beyond the body", a divine union with Christ.

[174] Stowell, *The Spiritual Language of Art*, 289.

[175] Jacobus De Voragine and Eamon Duffy, *The Golden Legend,* 375.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Ibid.

Similarly, in a little-known thirteenth-century Middle Dutch text entitled *Conversio Beatae Magdalenae*, northerners further identified Magdalene's conversion as being linked to her confession, where she fully labels herself as a *leprosa* or prostitute.[178] As in the image of Saint Francis, there is reason to believe Fontana may have been influenced by northern depictions of Mary Magdalene and the *Noli me Tangere*. Maria Teresa Cantaro has suggested that a version of the *Noli me Tangere* by Denys Calvaert, a Flemish artist active in Bologna, may have influenced Fontana's interpretation of the biblical passage (Figure 35), based on a visual comparison. In Calvaert's version, the moment is rendered within a natural landscape that exists beyond a scenic cityscape, Christ is wearing a farmer's hat while holding a shovel, and the Magdalene is wearing some yellow, all much as in Fontana's version. It is worth noting as well that yellow was a color associated with prostitution as early as the Middle Ages.[179] Furthermore, Christ is often rendered as *Christus Hortulamus* (Christ as gardener) in northern iconography. One example of *Christus Hortulamus* is a pall from 1525, now located in the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp (Figure 36).[180] In Fontana's painting Christ is disguised in a farmer's hat, clothing, and shovel mirroring northern iconography, while his body still shows signs of the stigmata on his hands and feet to remind the viewer of his sacrifice. Fontana's *Noli me Tangere,* and its northern counterparts, could have been influenced by the words of Saint Ambrose of Milan. St Ambrose noted that it made perfect sense theologically that Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Christ after the

[178] Baert, "Gaze in the Garden," 205.
[179] Elfriede Regina Knauer, "Portrait Of A Lady? Some Reflections On Images Of Prostitutes From The Later Fifteenth Century," Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome 47 (2002): doi:10.2307/4238794. Knauer highlights that in the Renaissance, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo de Medici, created a sumptuary law on the 19th October 1546 concerning courtesans and prostitutes (*meretrice)*. The law entailled that: "The meretrices should be urged to wear a veil or towel or handkerchief or another piece on their heads that should have a fringe a finger's width of gold or an- other yellow stuff to be worn where it can be seen by everyone." (Her Translation) "Le meretrici... sien tenute portare un velo, o vero sciugatoio o fazzoletto o altra pezza in capo, che abbia una listra larga un dito d'oro o d'altra materia gialla, e in luogo che ella possa esser veduta di ciascuno."
[180] Baert, "Gaze in the Garden," 211.

resurrection. Eve committed the first sin, and in this way, Magdalene's "proclamation" to the apostles of Christ's resurrection was perceived as redemption for Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden.[181]

Section Two: Magdalene Imagery and Reforming Women in Sixteenth-Century Bologna

> "Praises to him who can convert the unchaste with the brush."[182]
> –Jan Vos

One of the first large scale public commissions Fontana completed in Bologna was with her father Prospero, depicting the Magdalene kneeling at Christ's feet in a home accompanied by Martha. Prospero and Lavinia painted *Christ in the house of Martha and Mary* in 1580 for the major altar of the church of Santa Marta Zitella, the church of the *conservatorio* of the Putte di Santa Marta (Figure 37). Prospero painted the architecture of the image and Christ, while Fontana painted the two women.[183] The *conservatori* or conservatories were known as "Christian reform houses for young girls in Bologna."[184] The *conservatori* were charitable institutions that existed for women at risk of life on the street, and they separated women of different social backgrounds. Some conservatories only accepted the daughters of prostitutes and lower class women (Opera dei Mendicanti), while others like the Putte di Santa Marta (as well as the Poveri Vergognosi and the Barracano) only accepted the young women of nobility or rich merchant families who had lost their fortunes.[185] The young women of the latter *conservatori* were described as *belle e vistose* (beautiful and attractive), and older women would perform inspections to assure their virginity.[186]

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[181] Ibid., 192.
[182] Albert Blankert, et al. Gods, Saints and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1980), 59.
[183] Rocco, *The Devout Hand: Women, Virtue and Visual* Culture, 100
[184] Ibid., 92.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid., 95.

The honour and virtue of the young women was vital to maintain, as it was thought to represent the honour and reputation of Bologna. Paleotti encouraged noblewomen of the laity in Bologna to become involved in conservatories by funding them, as well as by taking an active role in teaching the young women.[187] To occupy the young women and instil virtue, they were taught the craft of embroidery to help them earn funds to accumulate a dowry. The women were exploited and not paid very much for their work, but they did learn a great deal. At the Putte di Santa Marta, they engaged in *punto pittura*, an embroidery style that copied famous artworks.[188] Malvasia's records confirm that Fontana's *Christ in the house of Martha and Mary* was used as an example for an embroidered copy at the Putte di Santa Marta.[189]

Christ in the house of Martha and Mary by the Fontanas serves as a vital example of Lavinia's larger scale commissions as of 1580. The painting equally positions noblewomen of Bologna in their active role of engaging with charitable conservatories. Noblewomen could help protect women of noble bloodlines from life on the streets in moments of tragedy and loss. The female patriciate also became attentive to threats of moral and social decline and they played a significant role in helping reduce prostitution. Most significantly, Fontana's painting is an example of how Bolognese women could interact with an image of the Magdalene as part of their spiritual lives. If we consider the size of the *Noli me Tangere* painting made only one year after *Christ in the house of Martha and Mary,* it is possible that it too could have been a work of art funded by a noblewoman. Although we do not know the original intended location or function of the *Noli me Tangere*, it could have served to instruct young women on virtue and sanctity by

[187] Ibid., 104. One example Rocco points out is that the *Birth of the Virgin* (1590) by Lavinia Fontana was commissioned by the Ghelli Family of Bologna, and around the same time Dorotea Ghelli became a teacher at one of the conservatories.
[188] Ibid., 93.
[189] Ibid., 100.

depicting the redeemed Mary Magdalene, becoming an important follower of Christ.

Since not all young women could be saved from life on the streets, cardinal Gabriele Paleotti issued his first proclamation on the issue of prostitution in Bologna in 1567. Vanessa McCarthy has emphasized that Paleotti "ordered that churches be assigned specifically for the use of prostitutes, courtesans, and female procurers". [190] In Paleotti's words, wayward women should "be able to hear Masses, other holy offices, and sacred preaching, through which they might be freed, by divine grace, from such extreme wickedness and return to the most holy Christian life."[191] Paleotti equally endorsed charitable institutions such as the Convertite house under the Carmelite Rule that was known to reform *meretrice* (sex workers) leading them to a monastic life of poverty and prayer similar to saint Mary Magdalene.[192] Mary Magdalene was the patron saint of the Convertite, and the *Noli me Tangere* scene was ideal to instruct women about physical prohibitions against touching, as well as the etymological connection between the word *tangere* (touch), and *contagio* (contagion).[193] While Paleotti's prostitution reforms in Bologna were short lived due to the power regained by the state in 1571, the state and the church remained concerned over women well into the later sixteenth century.

Since Bologna in the sixteenth century struggled with growing prostitution rates, Magdalene imagery surfaced in print culture to help cleanse the body politic.[194] Popular media

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[190] Vanessa Gillian McCarthy, "Prostitution, Community, and Civic Regulation in Early Modern Bologna," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2015), 97.

[191]Ibid. "Accioche unite che li sieno insieme d'habitatione, si posse deputarli qualque Chiese, dove habbino da udir le Messe, & alter santi Officii, & le sacre Predicationi, mendiati le quali con la gratio divina possano liberarsi da si pessima infermità, & ridursi all'honestissima, & santa vita Christiana."

[192] Ibid. As McCarthy emphasizes, while the Convertite religious institution was composed mainly of reformed unchaste women, the order also attended to *malmaritate* (abandoned and mistreated wives) and young women who were at risk of life on the streets. In that respect, houses like that of the Convertite functioned similar to modern women's shelters.

[193] Laura J. McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice: The Disease That Came to Stay* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 112.

[194] Syphilis early on was described as a sexually transmitted disease, soon after, blame was placed on women and particularly prostitutes for spreading the disease.

began to take on a significant role in prostitution reform, in secular and religious spheres. Moralizing broadsheets emerged for the general public, while on the other end, religious methods of instruction consisted of compact narrative chapbooks (Figures 38 and 39).[195] Broadsheets had moralizing stories of women's lives in the streets or the laments of courtesans and chapbooks illustrated stories of the lives of saints, in the hopes of spiritually reforming wayward women. Many forms of moralistic print media existed at the time, but few remain today as they were often made of inexpensive materials, handed out and quickly disposed of, and/or destroyed. Notably, the historian Pamela Jones conducted a study of the subject matter in chapbooks between 1570-1670. Of the 103 chapbooks, Jones observed twenty dedicated to the Magdalene, making her the most popular female saint in that print genre (Figure 39).[196]

Concerns regarding the control of sexuality and women's bodies were also affected by widespread anxieties about the *French Disease* (otherwise known as syphilis) in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *French Disease* was one of the most lethal sexually transmitted diseases in Europe and Italy in the Renaissance. The historian John Frith notes the disease often began with genital ulcers, and then they:

> progressed to a fever, general rash and joint and muscle pains, then weeks or months later were followed by large, painful and foul-smelling abscesses and sores, or pocks, all over the body. Muscles and bones became painful, especially at night. The sores became ulcers that could eat into bones and destroy the nose, lips and eyes. They often extended into the mouth and throat, and sometimes early death occurred. (Figure 40) [197]

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[195] Rachel Geschwind, "The Printed Penitent: Magdalene Imagery and Prostitution Reform in Early Modern Italian Chapbooks and Broadsheets," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris (Boston: Brill, 2012), 113. Geschwind's article primarily focuses on narrative chapbooks and moralizing broadsheets in the context of early modern Venice, but her research may be applicable to other Italian northern cities such as Bologna since prostitution was also a large concern as well.

[196] Pamela M. Jones, "Female Saints in Early Modern Chapbooks, ca. 1570-1670: Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Catherine of Siena," in *From Rome to Eternity Catholicism and the Arts in Italy ca. 1550-1650*, Ed. Pamela M. Jones and Thomas Worcester (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008), 94-95.

[197] John Frith, "Syphilis - Its Early History and Treatment Until Penicillin, and the Debate on Its Origins," *Journal of Military and Veterans' Health*, History, 20, no. 4 (November 2012), http://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Frith.pdf: 49.

The sole hospital that served patients of the *Mal Francese* or *French Disease* in Bologna was the Hospital of Saint Job, a hospital that continued to grow to the point of new construction in 1587 due to the high volume of patients.[198] Hospitals like that of the Saint Job hospital in Bologna and throughout Italy were often referred to as *ospedale incurabili*, or incurables hospitals. This is not to say that they were incurable diseases, but at the time, the term meant long-term care and/or chronic, endemic illness.[199] While women had access to the incurables hospitals, men were more likely to be treated. As McGough has observed, admission data entries for the Saint James Hospital for the Incurables in Rome during the sixteenth century maintain that only 20% of the total patients were women. [200] With this in mind, it is worth noting that the Magdalene was a subject of penitential spiritual life suited to the piety of men as well as women in the hospitals. Records exist of a musical play by the brothers at the hospital for Incurables in Venice that took place in 1670 to honour the Magdalene as a warrior, endowed with strength to combat sin.[201] However, the budget in Bologna at the hospital of Saint Job was a great concern, which limited social activities. One historical account proves that they spent 3980 *lire* in one year, from the budget of 1482 *lire* and 17 *soldi*, creating a deficit of 2497 *lire* and 3 *soldi.*[202] A vast portion of the budget was used for medicine and crucial heating for patient's rooms. The friars of the hospital of Saint Job reached out to archbishop Gabriele Paleotti to help fund the hospital by means of a letter in the later sixteenth century, which Paleotti transmitted to his priests to fundraise on behalf of the hospital

[198] Sergio Sabbatini, "Il Contagio Luetico a Bologna Nel Cinquecento. L'assistenza Sanitaria E Sociale (Prima Parte)," *Le Infezioni in Medicina*, no. 1 (2006): 54. Sabbatini notes that the hospital of Saint Job was formerly the hospital of Santa Maria dei Guarini, but the name changed upon its reconstruction in 1500. The hospital of Santa Maria dei Guarini had previously been put to use as a charitable institution for the ill during the plague, but the church of Saint Job was solely dedicated to syphilitic patients.
[199] McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice*, 103.
[200] Ibid., 104.
[201] Ibid., 106.
[202] Mario Fanti, "La Confratemita Di Santa Maria Dei Guarini E L'ospedale Di San Giobbe in Bologna," *Il Credito Romagnolo: Fra Storia, Arte E Tradizione* (1985): 395, 398. Fanti provides an example of an annual budget at the St. Job hospital.

during sermons.[203] The centrality of the hospital in Bologna (Figure 41), and the fundraising the hospital demanded, made it all the more likely that Fontana would have not only been aware of the disease, but also of this popular medicinal treatment.

As Laura McGough notes, in the early stages of syphilis in Italy, beginning in 1495, Italians initially blamed the French army for transmitting the disease during the Italian wars (1494-1530), and thus labelled it the *French Disease*.[204] Many countries, in fact, blamed their political enemies for the sexually transmitted disease, and named it after them.[205] It was far from a simple matter, however, for Italians to blame the French for the disease. French soldiers were made up of mercenaries; the French army included Flemish, Gascon, Swiss, Italian, and most importantly Spanish soldiers, some of whom had returned from the New World. Additionally, 800 cooks, medical attendants, and prostitutes accompanied the soldiers. [206] After the war, information regarding the discoveries of the New World emerged, which challenged the Italian belief that French mercenary soldiers were responsible for the disease. One alternate belief identified the "sexually voracious women" of the New World as the root of contagion in Europe, a view supported in part by descriptions of women in the chronicles of the Spanish traveller Amerigo

[203] Ibid., 395. Paleotti noted that the hospital was "very charitable and filled with poor and sick, where from other hospitals they were rejected and abandoned in so far is if they had not been taken in there, they would have easily died in the street, now this hospital is in great need and misery" (My Translation). "Molto charico et pieno di poveri impiagati et dali altri hospitalli reietti et abandonatti di sorte che si in esso non fossero racolti, facilmente potrieno morire per le strade et percìo esso hospitale si trova in estrema necessittà et miseria."
[204] McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice*, 48.
[205] Frith, "Syphilis - Its Early History and Treatment Until Penicillin, and the Debate on Its Origins," 50. As Frith confirms, "The French called it the 'Neapolitan disease', the 'disease of Naples' or the 'Spanish disease', and later *grande verole* or *grosse verole*, the ' great pox', the English and Italians called it the 'French disease', the 'Gallic disease', the *'morbus Gallicus'*, or the 'French pox', the Germans called it the 'French evil', the Scottish called it the '*grandgore*', the Russians called it the 'Polish disease', the Polish and the Persians called it the 'Turkish disease', the Turkish called it the 'Christian disease', the Tahitians called it the 'British disease', in India it was called the 'Portuguese disease', in Japan it was called the 'Chinese pox', and there are some references to it being called the 'Persian fire'."
[206] Ibid., 49.

Vespucci. [207] At that point, the *Mal Francese* was even further associated with the evil of women's bodies and their tempting sexuality, in and outside of the New World. As McGough boldly states:

> the image of the repentant prostitute Magdalene became one of the central images of Counter Reformation Catholicism, partly a response to protestant polemics against the alleged sexual degeneracy of the Catholic Church, and was directly linked to the French Disease via the institutions for repentant prostitutes that developed within French Disease hospitals.[208]

Images of Mary Magdalene by Fontana, like that of the *Christ in the house of Mary and Martha*, as well as *Noli me Tangere* in the later sixteenth century, must be considered within the wider social context of Bologna and Italy. *Noli me Tangere* and Magdalene imagery as a whole played a significant role in efforts to maintain women's virtue, to help reform prostitutes, and to spread awareness of the consequence of illicit sexual behaviour: disease. Jan Vos, a Dutch poet, advocated the power of art in social reform during the later seventeenth century in a poem where he gives "praises to him who can convert the unchaste with the brush".[209] Keeping that statement in mind, we may return to the *Noli me Tangere* painting by Lavinia Fontana, which may be an early example that may evoke not only sexual penitence, but also spiritual and physical nourishment to the unchaste**.**

Section Three: N*oli me Tangere,* Sacred Trees, and Holy Wood

> "With this rich Plant, and wonder'd at its Aid;
> Known now to *France* and neighboring *Germany*
> Cold Scythian Coasts and temp'rate *Italy,*
> To Europe's Bounds all bless the vital Tree" [210]
> –Fra Castoro

[207] McGough, *Gender, Sexuality, and Syphilis in Early Modern Venice*, 55. There are a variety of theories on the origins of syphilis. However, this thesis does not wish to endorse or discuss any particular theory in detail. Instead, my interest lies in how gendered beliefs on disease developed during New World discovery, and how Italians expanded on these ideas in the late sixteenth century.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Albert Blankert, et al. *Gods, Saints and Heroes: Dutch Painting in the Age of Rembrandt* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1980), 59.
[210] Robert S. Munger, "Guaiacum, the Holy Wood from the New World," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* IV, no. 2 (1949): 212.

As in her earlier painting of Saint Francis, Fontana emphasizes the flora that surrounds the *Noli me Tangere* scene. While the trees and leaves on the top left of the image are generic and faintly rendered, the flora surrounding Mary Magdalene and Christ are more detailed and may convey greater importance. While the story of *Noli me Tangere* is set in a natural landscape, not many paintings of the story prior to 1581 display such a significant attention to plants, flowers and trees. Titian's rendering of *Noli me Tangere* (1514) and Correggio's *Noli me Tangere* (1525), for instance, depict a vast landscape behind Christ and the Magdalene, but there are no variations of flowers, leaves, tree stumps or anything similar to Fontana (Figures 42 and 43). Girolamo da Treviso's *Noli me Tangere* (1519), housed in San Giovanni in Monte of Bologna, renders a rather minimalistic field landscape in the foreground and background with one darkened tree on the top right (Figure 44). While artists working in the Flemish style in Bologna, such as Denys Calvaert and his apprentice Francesco Albani, painted their *Noli me Tangere* scenes (Calvaert in 1540, and Albani in 1578) with landscapes that conveyed a sense of atmosphere, the plants remained generic (Figure 35 and 45).

In Fontana's version, a tree stump is prominently placed behind Mary Magdalene, separating the two narrative moments.[211] To include a tree stump in early modern iconography of the *Noli me Tangere* is highly unusual. Similarly unusual is the patch of blue flowers beside Mary's right foot, matching the color of her sandals (Figure 46). While there are many natural specimens in Fontana's *Noli me Tangere,* this thesis will discuss the possible meanings of the tree and these particular blue plants, and the way Fontana may have deliberately used flora to enhance the contemplative potential of the sacred narrative.

As discussed in the previous chapter, images of Saint Francis and his stigmatization often

[211] To my knowledge, while *Noli me Tangere* images have included trees and plants, there are none during the period that include a tree stump similar to Fontana's painting.

included trees symbolic of Christ's life and crucifixion. Depictions of tree stumps, or felled trees, in Renaissance Christian art also held significant symbolic meaning in Fontana's paintings. For instance, Mirella Levi D'Ancona's research on plant life in Renaissance art defines the "strong" and "flourishing tree" as a representation of faith, and the cut tree, a symbol of "the damned, cut by the axe of the Lord's wrath."[212]

The cut tree held profound meaning in the art of Renaissance Florence; one such example is Fra Filippo Lippi's altarpiece of the *Adoration in the Forest* (1460) for the private chapel of the Medici Palace (Figure 47). Counter to tradition, the painting does not depict Mary and the infant Christ in an animal filled manger, nor does it depict Joseph or other visitors. Rather, in Lippi's painting, the sacred event takes place in a flowery grove in the middle of a sacred forest. To the Virgin's right we see a youthful Saint John the Baptist, and in the distance, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux is contemplating what art historians Stephen Campell and Michael Cole have described as the "human and divine generation of Christ, the subject of many of Bernard's sermons."[213] The dual nature of Christ – as both God and man – is rendered in the painting by the inclusion of the iconography of the Trinity, with God the father and the Holy Spirit above Mary and her son.[214] Throughout this mystical rendering of the adoration, Lippi has depicted tree stumps, including one bearing an axe below Saint John's feet and beside Christ's head. The stump recalls the preaching of Saint John the Baptist recorded in the book of Luke 3:9, where he states: "The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."[215] Saint John's words evoke a warning against immorality and sin, reminiscent of

[212] Levi D'Ancona, *The garden of the Renaissance,* 387.
[213] Stephen J. Campbell and Michael Wayne Cole, *Italian Renaissance Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 227.
[214] John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy* (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2012), 261.
[215] Ibid.

the medieval French author Peter Berchorius (1290–1362) who once declared that sinners were like a rotted tree with deep roots, "rooted with avarice, erect with pride, outwardly whole for their hypocrisy, and corrupt with lust inside."[216] As if to underscore the fact that his artistic skill paved the way for the sacred scenery and mystical contemplation, Lippi signed his name on the axe (Figure 48). [217] Lippi's work, therefore, encourages the beholder to retreat to the forest in contemplation, to pray and take on a virtual pilgrimage to a sacred space like the enlightened Saint Bernard.

The tree stump in Fontana's *Noli me Tangere* may thus have engaged with natural symbolism present in the earlier Renaissance art and spirituality. Furthermore, cut trees, or tree stumps may have been particularly relevant to this story. In the fifteenth chapter of the Book of John (15:15), which precedes the *Noli me Tangere* scene, Christ states that "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." [218] With its emphasis on the link between faith and fruition, this passage recalls the earlier warning against immorality by Saint John the Baptist in the book of Luke 3:9 that "every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." If we consider *Noli me Tangere* imagery in the context of the reform of prostitution and prevention of the *French Disease* during the late sixteenth century, Fontana's painting could have been pertinent to female viewers. For instance, a young Bolognese woman, perhaps of noble descent, may have also contemplated the cut tree as a symbolic warning against immorality and sexual sin if the painting was to be viewed in a conservatory. The stump placed behind Mary Magdalene in this case could evoke the sins of her past, which lead to her conversion and glory as the first person to witness

[216] Levi D'Ancona, *The garden of the Renaissance*, 388.
[217] Megan Holmes, *Fra Filippo Lippi the Carmelite Painter* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 180.
[218] John 15:5, http://biblehub.com/john/15-5.htm (accessed July 31, 2018).

Christ after the resurrection.

Additionally, while we know Mary Magdalene was an influential figure in the Church's reform of prostitution in Italy and in Bologna, viewers may have connected the tree stump to a popular medicinal tree from the New World: *guaiacum* (Figure 49). *Guaiacum* or *legno santo* (as Italians referred to it) was the wood of a tree species shipped in logs from the New World to Spain and neighbouring countries as an alternative cure for the *French Disease,* instead of the hazardous primary treatment up until that point: mercury. According to Robert S. Munger, the Spanish learned of the medicinal value of *guaiacum* between 1506-1516, and began to export it to Europe sometime after Columbus had taken over the island of Santo Domingo on the authority of the Spanish crown, naming it Hispaniola.[219] The first importation of *guaiacum* logs from chopped trees dates approximately to 1508 and was lead by Giovanni Consalvo from Spain, who had initially contracted the *Mal Francese* in Naples before undertaking his voyage.[220]

When the *French Disease* had spread throughout Italy, *guaiacum* from the New World became a popular remedy.[221] In Fontana's native city of Bologna, *guaiacum* became the official remedy for the *French Disease* in the second half of the sixteenth century at the Hospital of Saint Job. After 1550, mercury was only used on patients in exceptional cases, as it was highly toxic.[222] Fontana's *Noli me Tangere* painting positions a tree stump prominently in the image, which may have encourage the beholder to connect it with *legno santo*. A widely disseminated print in a series

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[219] Robert S. Munger, "Guaiacum, the Holy Wood from the New World," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* IV, no. 2 (1949): 197.
[220] George Sarton, "The Strange Fame of Demetrio Canevari, Philosopher and Physician, Genoese Patrician (1559–1625)," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 1, no. 3 (1946): 406.
[221] Sergio Sabbatini, "Il Contagio Luetico a Bologna Nel Cinquecento. L'assistenza Sanitaria E Sociale (Prima Parte)," 46. The *French Disease* first spread through Northern Italy during the Battle of Fornovo (6th of July 1945, between the French and Italians) and struck Bologna in 1495, Genova in 1496, as well as Venice, Verona, and Ferrara in 1498. The battle of Fornovo was the first battle to begin the Italian Wars that went on between 1494-1559.
[222] Sergio Sabbatini, "Il Contagio Luetico a Bologna Nel Cinquecento. L'assistenza Sanitaria E Sociale (Seconda Parte)," *Le Infezioni in Medicina*, no. 2 (2006): 104.

known as *Nova Reperta* (New Inventions of Modern Times) by Jan Collaert I (made after a 1580 painting by Stradanus) visualizes the process of preparing *guaiacum* for the benefit of a wealthy patient in his home (Figure 50).[223] On the bottom right of the print, a man is cutting down woodchips from the *guaiacum* log. The two women behind him then use the wood chips over a furnace to create a decoction to be consumed. On the left side of the print, a syphilitic patient is receiving the decoction, while a physician at the edge of the bed shows the patient a miniature model of the sacred tree from the New World. The treatment did include confinement in a warm chamber, fasting, and a strict consummation of the decoction for up to 40 days.[224]

Stradanus' print published in 1570 visually shows the research developments of numerous scholars, physicians, and botanists in Europe throughout the sixteenth century who paved the way to a broader understanding of not only the *French Disease,* but also of the *guaiacum* remedy.[225] For the purpose of this thesis, the Italian medical scholarship will be discussed in further detail, as Fontana may have had access to this information. Francisco Delicado (at times known as Delgado) was a Spanish prelate active in Italy who may have disseminated the earliest Italian knowledge on *guaiacum* through his treatise entitled *El modo de apoperare el legno de India Occidentale [...]*

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[223] Munger, "Guaiacum, the Holy Wood from the New World," 204.

[224] Frith, "Syphilis - Its Early History and Treatment Until Penicillin, and the Debate on Its Origins," 53. In addition, the print includes a painting in the patient's room, which serves a pedagogical purpose. Venus, as depicted in the painting, remains as the root of the man's descent into contagion, leading the popular phrase to emerge that spending "a night with Venus" would cause a "lifetime with mercury", the older most fatal cure used to treat syphilis.

[225] The earliest published works in Europe on the medicinal virtue of *guaiacum* were by German and Austrian physicians, namely Nicholas Pol's treatise *De cura morbi gallici per lihnum guayacanum* (c.1517) and physician Leonard Schmaus' *Lucubratiuncula de morbo gallico et curs ejus noviter reperta cum lingo Indico* (c.1519). Schmaus was the first scholar to imply that if the cure for the *Morbo Gallico* (latin for *French Disease*) came from the New World, it meant that the disease also must have originated there. Although, the most influential work of Northern Europe was that of the humanist poet Ulrich Von Hutten's *De guaiaci medecina et morbo gallico* (1519). Hutten describes his own personal experience of the *French Disease* and the *guaiacum* treatment at length. The book was also published in several vernaculars outside of Latin, expanding readership outside of the scholarly realm. Hutten is most known for his emphasis on the empirical quality of *guaiacum*'s use and his claims against "orthodox" physicians, who spent years questioning the cause of the *French Disease* rather than providing a cure. For a summary of the early history of guaiacum see: George Sarton, "The Strange Fame of Demetrio Canevari, Philosopher and Physician, Genoese Patrician (1559–1625)," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 1, no. 3 (1946): 398-416; and Jon Arrizabalaga, John Henderson, and R. K. French, *The Great Pox: The French Disease in Renaissance Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 100.

(1529, Venice).[226] Historian Bruno Mario Damiani has written that Delicado's work is in five parts.[227] Section one of the work was written in Latin, section two in Italian, and from section three onward in Spanish.

The frontispiece of Delicado's book gives insight into his own struggle with syphilis and his road to recovery through unwavering spiritual devotion, and his medicinal use of *guaiacum* (Figure 51). Manuel de Costas Fontes has analyzed the frontispiece in depth, and has also studied how the use of holy wood to treat syphilis had religious implications.[228] The frontispiece engraving depicts the Virgin Mary as our lady of consolation, standing at the top of a *guaiacum* tree, dividing the picture plane in two. To the right of the Virgin Mary (beholder's left), Delicado kneels before Saint James Major, who holds a pilgrimage staff and stands beside a scallop shell; a well-known attribute of Santiago de Compostella (the cathedral in Spain that houses his relics and tomb). On the Virgin Mary's left (beholders right) we see Saint Martha, identifiable by the inscription above her. Saint Martha (Mary Magdalene's sister) holds an aspersorium in her right hand and the palm of martyrdom in her left arm, but most importantly, her left hand has a rope tied to a dragon that she maintains control of.[229] The dragon is labeled as Tarascurus, a dragon that she was able to "subdue" in France where she converted people in the town of Norluc, alongside the Rhone River.[230] Fontes cites several Spanish scholars who suggest that this engraving is a resume of Delicado's personal experience with syphilis.[231] Delicado's illness was healed through the Virgin

[226] Francisco Delicado, *El Modo De Adoperare El Legno De India Occidentale, Salutifero Remedio a Ogni Piaga Et Mal Incurabile...* (Venice, 1529).
[227] Bruno Mario Damiani, Francisco Delicado (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), 252.
[228] Manuel Da Costa Fontes, *The Art of Subversion in Inquisitorial Spain Rojas and Delicado* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2005), 42.
[229] Fontes, *The Art of Subversion in Inquisitorial Spain*, 42-43.
[230] Ibid.
[231] Ibid. See Francisco Delicado and Giovanni Allegra, *La Lozana Andaluza*, ed. Giovanni Allegra (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1983), 53. And see, Francesco A. Ugolini, Nuovi Dati Intorno Alla Biografia Di Francisco Delicado Desunti Da Una Sua Sconosciuta Operetta (con Cinque Appendici) (Pergia: Università Degli Studi Di Perugia, 1976), 462.

Mary's intercession and the use of holy wood at the Saint James Hospital for the Incurables in Rome. After a full recovery, he embarked on a pilgrimage through France were the blessed Martha lived, and onto Spain and the Shrine of Saint James at Santiago de Compostella. Therefore, in Europe, and particularly in Italy, *guaiacum* was understood as a miraculous alternative medicine from abroad, which grew deeply entrenched in Christianity. At times, *guaiacum* was also hung in churches to be prayed to in the manner of sacred relics.[232] Therefore, as is made clear in the frontispiece, Delicado's successful cure was due to the combination of *guaiacum* and his spiritual devotion.

Similar to Delicado, the Italian writer and physician Fra Castoro discussed *guaiacum* and coined the term syphilis in his epic medical poem *Syphilis Sive Morbus Gallicus* (1530, Verona).[233] The mythological poem, inspired by classical writers like Ovid, follows a shepherd named Syphilis who was the first to contract the disease as a consequence of defying the sun god Apollo. While the piece is poetic, it describes in detail the painful swells of the body and genitals. The second and third sections describe two possible cures for the terrifying disease, mercury and *guaiacum*, the latter of which he deems the most effective. Fra Castoro praises "this rich Plant, and wonder'd at its Aid; Known now to France and neighboring Germany; Cold Scythian coasts and temp'rate Italy, To all Europe's Bounds all bless the vital Tree."[234]

Guaiacum, or holy wood, was sought after and widely studied not only by physicians of the period but also by scholars of natural history. The Spanish botanist and physician from Seville, Nicolas Monardes, established the first garden in Europe to cultivate plants from the New World. Monardes is most known for his three-volume book in Spanish entitled *Historia medicinal de las*

[232] Munger, "Guaiacum, the Holy Wood from the New World", 212.
[233] Girolamo Fracastoro and Geoffrey Eatough, Fracastoro's "Syphilis": Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1984).
[234] Munger, 201.

cosas que se traen de nuestras Indias Occidentales (Medical study of the products imported from our West Indian possessions), which was translated into English and Italian as early as 1575.[235] In a later volume, *Joyfull Newes out of the New-Found Worlde* (1596), Monardes points out in his section on *guaiacum* that: "Our Lorde God would from whence the evill of the Poxe [English term for syphilis] came, from thence should come the remedy for them."[236] According to Monardes, if syphilis came from the New World then its cure would also be found there.

In Bologna, Fontana's family friend Ulisse Aldrovandi was committed to disseminating knowledge of the New World. Arrays of new plant species were included in his manuscripts, his museum and library, as well as his herbarium, and the Botanical Garden of Bologna. Aldrovandi first included New World species in his herbarium as early as 1551-1552, and he also cultivated plant species from the New World in 1568. Later, he would include New World seeds, wood samples (perhaps *guaiacum*), and fruits like papayas in his museum.[237] Historian Mario Cerminati was one of the first scholars to assess how much Aldrovandi's library collections, manuscripts, and letters reveal his interest in New World knowledge.[238] Aldrovandi owned a copy of the first Italian edition of Monardes' *Historia Medicinal* of 1574, and the Italian version of the Jesuit José de Acosta's *Historia Natural y Moral de Las Indias* of 1596, both of which remain in his library

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[235] Nicolás Monardes, *Primera Y Segunda Y Tercera Partes De La Historia Medicinal De Las Cosas Que Se Traen De Nuestras Indias Occidentales, Que Siruen En Medicina: Tratado De La Piedra Bezaar, Y De La Yerua Escuerçonera, Dialogo De Las Grandezas Del Hierro, Y De Sus Virtudes Medicinales; Tratado De La Nieue, Y Del Beuer Frio* (Sevilla: En Casa De Fernando Diaz, 1580).

[236] Nicolás Monardes and Stephen Gaselee, *Joyfull Newes of the Newe Founde Worlde*, trans. John Frampton (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 28. Monardes' description of the *guaiacum* tree indicates that it is a "great tree" and likens it to oak, it is harder than ebony, and it is filled with resin. Monardes does not illustrate *guaiacum* in his book, nor does he spend much time describing its physical characteristics. Instead, he invests several more pages on detailed instructions on how to use the wood to cure syphilis (the decoction, doses, room temperature etc.)

[237] Andrea Ubrizsy Savoia, "La Biodiversità Americana Nell'Opera Di Aldrovandi," ed. Barbara Negroni, in *L'Erbario Dipinto Di Ulisse Aldrovandi: Un Capolavoro Del Rinascimento*, ed. Antonella Maiorino, Marcella Minelli, and Anna Letizia Monti (Vernasca: Ace International, 1995), 79.

[238] Mario Cermenati, *Ulisse Aldrovandi E L'America: Con Frammenti Inediti E Note Esplicative* (Roma: Voghera, 1906).

today.[239] Recent scholarship by Lea Markey has also demonstrated that Aldrovandi collected various editions of other writers on the New World such as Peter Marytr d'Anghiera (1457-1526), Girolamo Benzoni (1519-1570), Pedro Cieza de Léon (1520-1554), López de Gómara (1511-1566), and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478-1557). [240] Manuscripts in the Aldrovandi collection at the University of Bologna also indicate that he had written on several occasions of his goal to visit the New World. As early as 1569, he stated "It has already been ten years that I have entered into this dream of going to the newly discovered Indies, for a universal purpose."[241] In the late 1560s, he also wrote to Phillip II offering to host an expedition to the New World to accumulate knowledge on Mexican flora and fauna.[242] The King of Spain did not fund Aldrovandi, but instead assigned the expedition to Francisco Hernandez in the 1570s. [243] While Aldrovandi did not visit the New World in his lifetime, his passion to accumulate every seed of knowledge possible on the New World remained. Aldrovandi began to compile the information about the New World known throughout Italy, held in the collections of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, Francesco I and Ferdinand I in the 1580s, as well as the Neapolitan Giambattista Della Porta, who had stronger contact with Hernandez and Phillip the II of Spain.[244] Aldrovandi included holy wood (*legno*

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[239] Cermenati, *Ulisse Aldrovandi E L'America*, 30; Guiseppe Olmi. "Parte Seconda: Re-creare il Mondo: 'Magnus Campus: I naturalisti italiani di fronte all'America nel secolo XVI," in *L'inventario del mondo: Catalogazione della natura e luoghi del sapere nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), 227.

[240] Markey, "Aldrovandi's New World Natives in Bologna (Or How to Draw the Unseen *Al Vivo*)," 229. For a wider inventory of Aldrovandi's books on the New World see Raffaella Stasi, "L'interesse di Ulisse Aldrovandi verso la Mesoamerica, collezioni e fonti," (master's thesis: Università degli studi di Bologna: 1997-8), 250-264.

[241] Cermenati, *Ulisse Aldrovandi E L'America*, 51. My Translation. The universal purpose Aldrovandi expresses hinges on Paleotti and his vision of the universal purpose of Christian images to educate and convert.

[242] Olmi, "Parte Seconda: Re-creare il Mondo: 'Magnus Campus: I naturalisti italiani di fronte all'America nel secolo XVI," 247. In manuscript form see BUB, Ms Aldrovandi, 66, c. 360v. "Overo io mi risolverebbe quando piacesse a sua Maestà per publica utilità andare in questie indie occidental havendi l'aiuto d'un tanto Re come el serenessimo Re Catholico e per poter conseguir quanto si desidera bisognorebe haver io meco varij pittori e scrittori per poter presto e con commodo far dipingere e scrivere tutta l'historia di tutte le cose naturali che in india si retirovano." The New World was referred to as the Indies due to Columbus and his error in calculating the distance of Asia in his voyage, later; the New World was referred to as the West Indies.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Cermenati, *Ulisse Aldrovandi E L'America*, 31, 39. For full transcriptions of the letters between Grand Dukes of Tuscany and Aldrovandi see Oreste Mattirolo, "Le lettere di Ulisse Aldrovandi a Francesco I e Ferdinando I Granduchi

santo) on several occasions in his works. Section 221 in volume ten of his Herbarium included *ligni sancti*, though unfortunately this work is now lost.[245] Additionally, in the hopes of receiving further funding, Aldrovandi wrote a discourse (*Discorso naturale*) in 1573 for Giacomo Buoncompagni (Ugo Buoncompagni's illegitimate son), who had taken the prestigious papal role as prefect of the Castelo Sant'Angelo in Rome, as well as the position of Governor General of the Papal militias for the entire period of his father's pontificate.[246] In the *Discorso Naturale,* Aldrovandi emphasizes the utility of the simple remedies of the "Indians" in the New World, which are useful for even the most difficult diseases Europeans struggled against. Aldrovandi praises the virtues of cinnamon, cassia solutiva, holy wood, and incense among other medicinal plants from the Americas.[247]

Given Fontana's connection to Aldrovandi, as well as the array of information circulating on *guaiacum* in Latin and Italian during the later sixteenth century, it is possible that the tree stump in the painting may have been included to allude, not only in a general way to the sin that cuts us off from God, but more specifically – given Mary Magdalene's association with prostitution and sexuality – to the issue of syphilis and the cures available for it. As previously noted, we know that Fontana visited Aldrovandi's museum where she may have been exposed to New World specimens like holy wood. Aldrovandi's *Tavole di animali* volumes in the University of Bologna archives, for instance, equally illustrated some New World plants like cacti and prickly pears, sunflowers,

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di Toscana e a Francesco Maria II Duca di Urbino," in *Memorie della Reale Accademia delle Scienze di Torino*, ser. II, 54 (1903-1904), 355-401.

[245] Andrea Ubrizsy Savoia, "Le Piante Americane Nell'Erbario Di Ulisse Aldrovandi." *Webbia*, no. 48 (1993): 589. https://www.academia.edu/12887387/Le_piante_americane_nellErbario_di_Ulisse_Aldrovandi.

[246] Marinela Haxhiraj, *Ulisse Aldrovandi: Il Museografo (Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2016),* 38.

[247] BUB, *Ulisse Aldrovandi*, ms. 91, c. 503a-559a. "[..]è molto più utile et più laudabile usare semplici delle nostre regioni, massime quei che sono cogniti delle loro facultà, più presto che dell'Indie et altri paesi lontani: parlo di quegli indiani, come radici, gomme et simili, de quali siamo dubbii et incerti -ma, de quegli che siamo certi et che l'esperientia et uso quotidiano mostra giovamento, quegli potiamo usare, et per se soli, et ne composti, per gli morbi misti et difficili, sì come la cannella, cassia solutiva, il legno santo, l'incenso, il been de profumieri, tamarindi, dattili, nardo indico, giunco odorato et simili altri che per brevità taccio."

and pineapples (Figure 52, 53 and 54).[248]

Guaiacum was a main medicinal cure in Bologna for syphilis, and while it was highly written about in print and medical tracts, it was a product that would have also been known to Fontana through broader cultural sources such as churches and hospitals. Fontana, in her own right, was a scholar, unlike the viewers of the painting who may not have been able to read scientific tracts. However, beholders may have also related Fontana's tree stump to *guaiacum* on a broader level since it was highly sought after and discussed throughout Bologna.

Therefore, if we consider how the beholder may have interpreted the tree stump in the *Noli me Tangere*, we find that it had a range of possible meanings appropriate to the story, and that Fontana may have been using plant imagery to enhance the contemplative possibilities of her image. Most commonly, the iconography of tree stumps in Renaissance religious art conveyed the necessity of banishing sin and immorality. On the other hand, tree stumps in the later sixteenth century may have also brought to mind holy wood, the vital cure for syphilis. A penitential Magdalene image warning of the sin of sexuality is much in line with discourses of holy wood. It represented not only a physical cure, but also a return back to purity and rejuvenation, as well as a spiritual rebirth. While it is difficult to claim that the felled tree is without a doubt *guaiacum*, or to argue that Fontana intentionally inserted the tree to explore themes of sin and immorality, it is possible that the tree within the narrative of *Noli me Tangere* may have recalled these concerns in the mind of the contemplative beholder. A beholder may have been a member of the public who may have seen the painting in a church, or possibly a noblewoman. Further, it could have been seen by a woman making ends meet in a *conservatorio*. These women could have prayed to the image repeatedly and would have explored every facet of the image.

[248] Alessandro Alessandrini et al., *Natura Picta Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Bologna: Ed. Compositori, 2007), 152,128, 183.

The second aspect of the *Noli me Tangere* that could have prompted a beholder to consider *guaiacum* in the painting is the group of flowers beside Mary Magdalene's right foot (Figure 46). Just below the tree stump, there is a small patch of periwinkle flowers nearly identical to the color of Mary's sandal, veil, and the pin tied to the side of her head. As previously stated, flowers were uncommon to *Noli me Tangere* imagery. The blue flowers of five petals with yellow at the center in fact recall the flowers that would traditionally bloom on the *guaiacum* tree. Although admittedly the flowers would typically be on the tree itself, Fontana may have instead placed them surrounding the Magdalene as a symbolic visual cue.[249] Unfortunately, we are not aware of an illustration of *guaiacum* by Aldrovandi's workshop to compare it to Fontana's rendering. Instead, there are renderings of the tree by Lydia Byam, an eighteenth-century British botanist that may be used as reference (Figure 55).[250] Both the flowers in the painting and in later botanical illustrations show similar shaped five petal blue flowers with a yellow center.

Though other flowers in Aldrovandi's *Tavole* are somewhat similar to those in Fontana's painting, none resemble Fontana's flowers as much as *guaiacum* does. For instance, flowers like the borage flower (*Borago Officinalis*), the anemone hepatica (*Hepatica Nobilis)*, or the anagallis species, otherwise known as Pimpernels (*Anagallis Coerulea Supra*), appear in Aldrovandi's *Tavole*, and do show some similarities to the flowers in Fontana's painting (Figures 56, 57, and 58). All three species are a blue-mauve tone with some yellow in the center. The borage flower has pointed petals and usually one darkened, almost black petal, the anemone hepatica has white stamens with a yellow-green center, and the anagallis species can be found in different colors; one

[249] It is worth noting that the additional foliage depicted by Fontana below the tree stump is not present in traditional renderings of *guaiacum*. Most often, *guaiacum* trees were not shown with leaves expanding from the bottom as rendered in the painting (for example, see Figure 51), and furthermore, the leaves shown are more circular in form (for example, see Figure 55).

[250] Lydia Byam, A Collection of Exotics from the Island of Antigua (London: White, 1799), Figure III.

of which is a blue-mauve with yellow and fuchsia at the center. Fontana's painting also renders flowers of five petals corresponding to guaiacum, and they have stamens but they are only yellow, like its center.

The peripheral and miniscule details such as flowers held a special role in Renaissance art. Erwin Panofsky once emphasized that "disguised symbolism" was present in the works of northern artists of the period, and it played a significant role in the overall comprehension of images.[251] The complex symbolic visual network in a painting did not simply display the ingenuity of the artist, but it was widely understood by beholders. The northern influence on Fontana's work can be seen in the detailed aspects of the image like the flowers, which would encourage the beholder to contemplate how they may correspond to the overall narrative, while also delighting in their beauty. The flowers, like the tree stump, are Fontana's unique addition to the *Noli me Tangere* scene, and yet they have received no mention in scholarly writing. While we may never know if Fontana intended to depict holy wood or flowers similar to those that grow on the tree, we can be certain that *guaiacum* was highly used in her native city of Bologna and it could have been visually recognizable to part of the population. By association, a beholder may have interpreted the image in the light of circulating information in Bologna on *guaiacum* or *legno santo.*

Recent scholarship by Pamela Jones has explored how Paleotti's art theory was well suited to colonial ideology in the context of New World exploration.[252] If Paleotti's writing can be considered from the point of view of post-colonial study, then it is not only possible, but also

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[251] Erwin Panofsky, "Reality and Symbol in Early Flemish Painting: 'Spiritualia Sub Metamorphis Corporalium,'" in *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character,* vol. I (Cambridge: MA: Harvard UP, 1964), 141-142. To Panofsky, disguised symbolism worked hand in hand with naturalism: "The more the painters rejoiced in the discovery and reproduction of the visible world, the more intensely did they feel the need to saturate all its elements with meaning. Conversely, the harder they strove to express new subtleties and complexities of thought and imagination, the more they did explore new areas of reality."

[252] Pamela M. Jones, "Art Theory as Ideology: Gabriele Paleotti's Hierarchical Notion of Painting's Universality and Reception," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450-1650,* ed. Claire J. Farago, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 127-139.

necessary for scholars to consider the impact of New World knowledge on the visual culture outside of Spain in the sixteenth century. For instance, Byron Ellsworth Hamann's study of *Las Meninas* (1656) by Diego Velázquez has paved the way for my close interpretation of Fontana's *Noli me Tangere*.[253] In "The Mirrors of Las Meninas: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay", Hamann explores how various objects in the painting, such as a clay vase, silverware, and red curtains were products of Indigenous land and of colonial labour in the New World. It is vital to consider not only visual traces of New World objects or plant species in Renaissance art, but also to research how New World knowledge impacted the "perception" of Europeans.[254] Serge Gruzinski notes that "we are little accustomed to deal with the native American past and sixteenth-century Europe in the same way, and even less inclined to look to the indigenous world for keys to a better understanding of the Renaissance."[255]

Similar to previous works discussed in this thesis, with her *Noli me Tangere*, Fontana creates a meaningful image for viewers through her knowledge and understanding of nature. When represented accurately and thoughtfully in sacred art, nature can incite a wider reflection of universal Christian virtues such as penitence, and it can allow a broader contemplation of the most complex societal issues, such as the *French Disease*.

[253] Byron Ellsworth Hamann,"The Mirrors of Las Meninas: Cochineal, Silver, and Clay." (*The Art Bulletin* 92, no. 1-2, 2010): 6-35.
[254] Ibid., 29.
[255] Ibid., 28. Hamann cites Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colinization and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.

Conclusion

Since there is little documentation on her commissions available, it is sometimes challenging to explore Fontana's sacred art using new methodological approaches. Notwithstanding these challenges, this thesis has used post-colonial study, a feminist revisionist perspective, and a contextual art historical method to study Fontana's paintings. In this capacity, we have addressed her intellectual network, focusing particularly on key figures in Bologna. Fontana's paintings of *The Holy Family,* the *Apparition of the Madonna to the Five Saints,* the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis,* and the *Noli me Tangere* have demonstrated her attention to natural history, and her ability to create religious art that would have engaged the beholder with sacred narratives in a highly contemplative and meaningful manner.

In the first chapter, the appearance of the dragon of Bologna and its insertion into the sphere of natural history by Aldrovandi impacted representations of dragons from thereon, as well as the reputation of the newly elected Buoncompagni Pope, Gregory the XIII. Naturalistic representations of dragons are visible in Fontana's renderings of Saint Margaret and her dragon in two paintings, namely the *Holy Family with Saint Margaret and Francis* and the *Apparition of the Madonna to the Five Saints*. The thoughtfully rendered dragons in Fontana's paintings invite beholders to contemplate a seminal moment in Bolognese history, and most importantly, they evoke thoughts relating to Saint Margaret such as strength during conception and childbirth during a period of high infant mortality. The second chapter on the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* addressed flora in the image and how an immense hazy forest landscape captured the precise time of day and location mentioned in Scripture. Further, Fontana's emphasis on nature was discussed as paying respect to a long history of Franciscan praise of nature's bounty, broader theories of Christ's cross, as well the tree of life that outlines Christ's glory. *The Stigmatization of Saint*

Francis thus would have invited beholders to contemplate a flourishing union with Christ through nature. And furthermore, the cypress trees thoughtfully included by Fontana may have further incited a broader reflection of life, death, and regeneration. While Saint Francis remains one of the most important followers of Christ, it was vital to consider an equally iconic female saint: Mary Magdalene. The theme of death and regeneration returns in the final chapter through *Noli Me Tangere*. This chapter, however, takes a more ambitious and controversial route by considering how nature in the image may have induced further penitential responses in female beholders, and possibly even a contemplation of the *French Disease* and its antidote, *guaiacum*.

This thesis in its entirety has posited that by integrating several methodological approaches such as feminist revisionism, contextual history, and post-colonial theory, that a more comprehensive understanding of Fontana's religious images would be possible. The result opens up a new path through which to understand Fontana's dedication to her craft as a pious Christian artist, a *nobiledonna*, and as a scholar in her own right. Until recently, Fontana's religious artworks have not received equal scholarly attention in comparison to her portraits, despite the many sacred artworks in Italian churches. This research has proven that Fontana's religious images may have been informed by her strong Bolognese social and academic network, and that Fontana utilized a combination of skill and knowledge working in the *maniera devota* to create memorable images that could appeal to the beholders' emotions as well as intellect. By studying Fontana's religious images with an attention to her cultural and scholarly network, such as Gabriele Paleotti and Ulisse Aldrovandi, Fontana's religious paintings take on a deeper meaning. Scripture, science, and natural history converge to help comprehend Fontana's variety of religious artworks, a genre typically prohibited from women in the history of art, and what it could have meant to her viewers. It would be desirable for Fontana's sacred art to become more accessible to the greater public to fully

showcase her versatility, rather than be confined to museum storages. Further, while it is a complex task, this thesis has aimed to encourage scholarship to take on a broader global perspective in the study of quintessential "Old World" Christian art in the early modern period by not only men, but also women. Contemporary scholarship on the history of science, such as the writing of Meredith K. Ray, has begun to consider how women in early modern Italy contributed to the development of science in the age of discovery.[256] Women like Fontana would have engaged with emerging scientific and colonial culture in unique circumstances that is often un-documented. Women's empirical knowledge must be newly considered in scholarship as having contributed to the dissolution of strict boundaries between art, science, and religion in the later sixteenth century.

[256] Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Figures

Fig. 1: *Draco Bononiensis*, illustration of the dragon that appeared in the Bolognese countryside on 13 May 1572, from BUB, Aldrovandi, 4, *Tavole di animali*, 130.

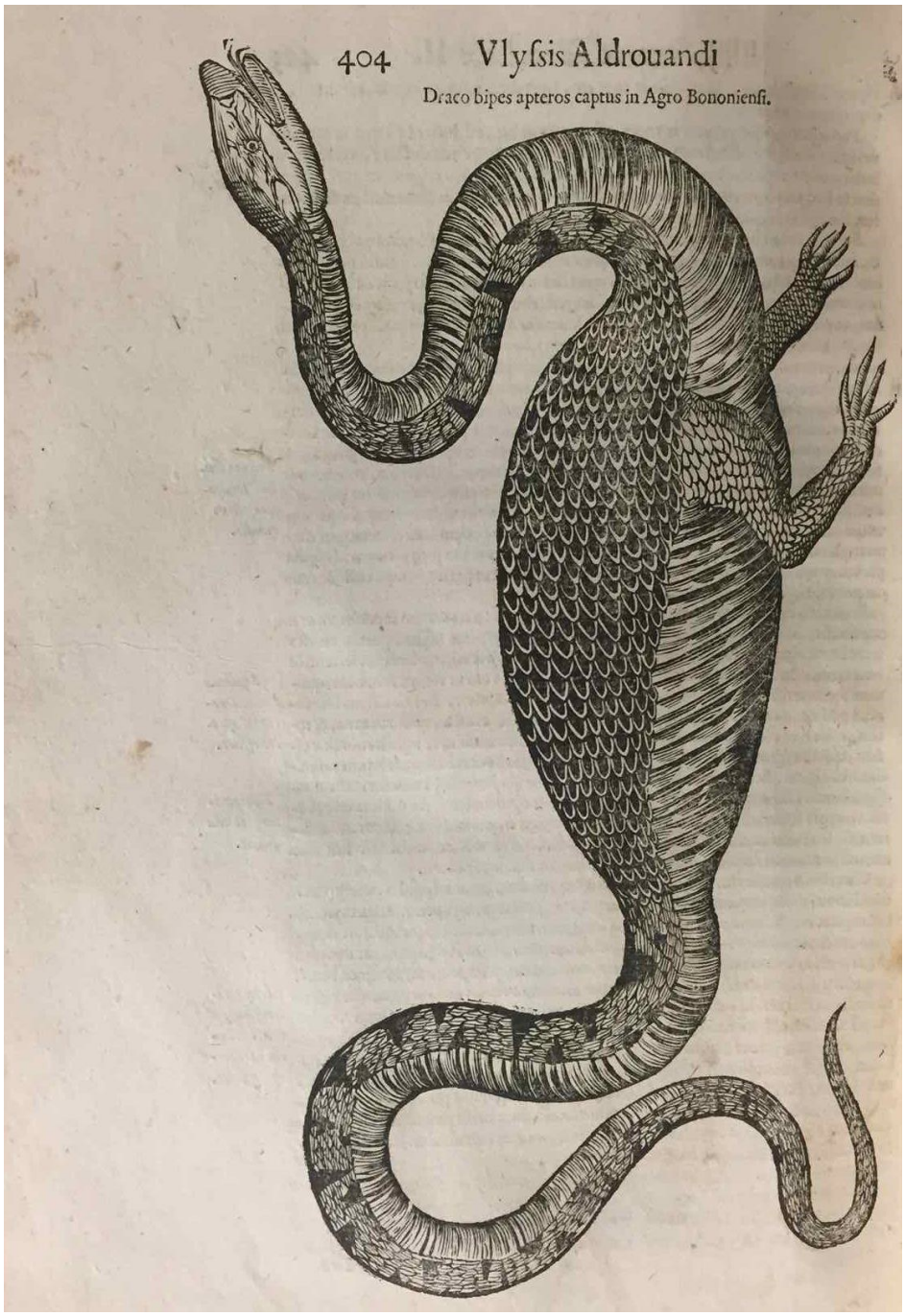

Fig. 2: *Draco Bononiensis*, illustration of the dragon that appeared in the Bolognese countryside on 13 May 1572, from Ulisse Aldrovandi and Bartolommeo Ambrosini, *Serpentum, Et Draconum Historiae Libri Duo*. Bononiae: Bernia, 1640, p. 404, Rare Books and Special Collections, Folio: QL641 A43 1640, McLennan Library Building, McGill University, Montréal, Québec.

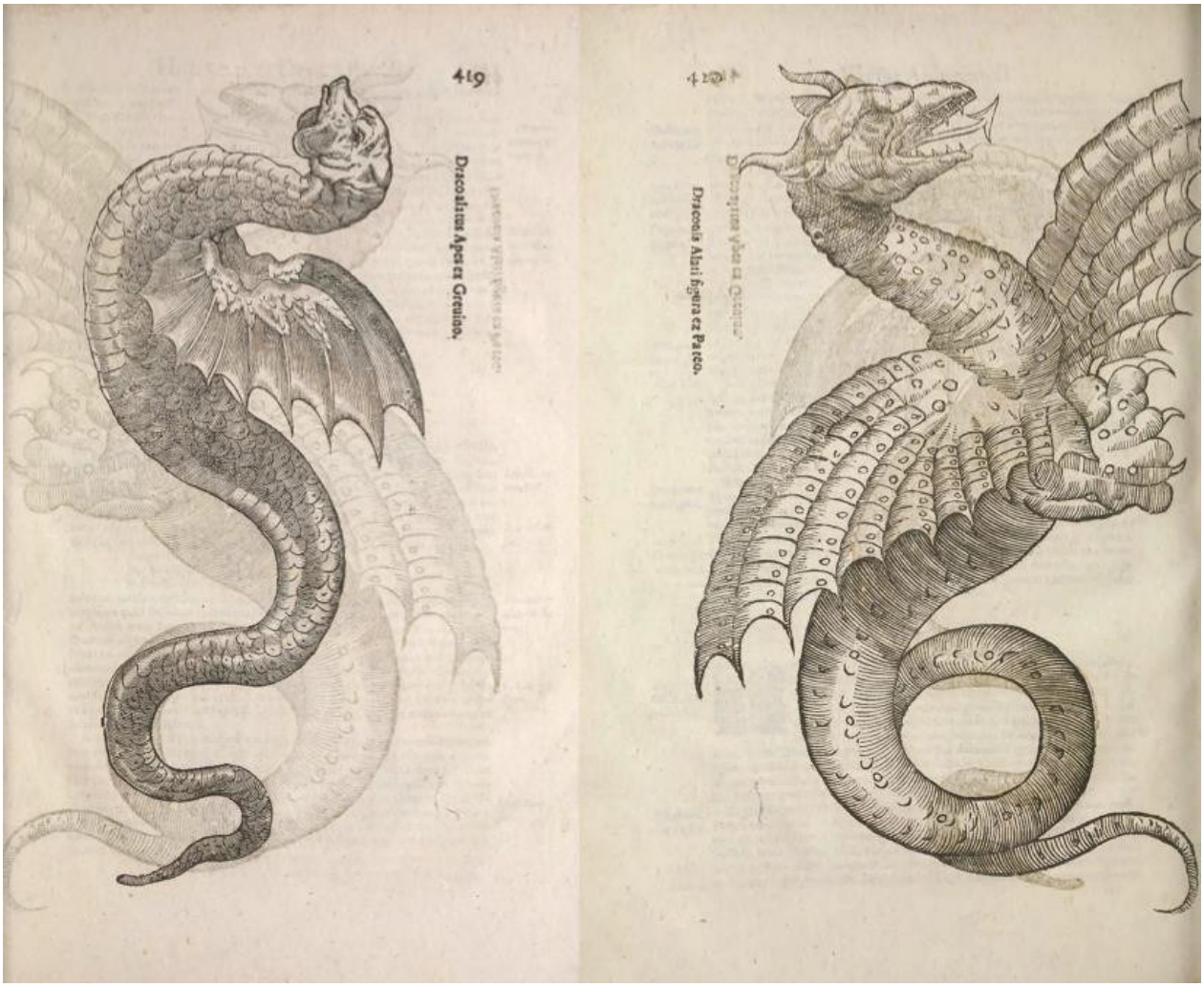

Fig. 3: *Draco Alatus Apes Grevino and Draco Alati Figura ex Pareo* (winged dragons), from Ulisse Aldrovandi and Bartolommeo Ambrosini, *Serpentum, Et Draconum Historiae Libri Duo*. Bononiae: Bernia, 1640, p. 419-420, Rare Books and Special Collections, Folio: QL641 A43 1640, McLennan Library Building, McGill University, Montréal, Québec.

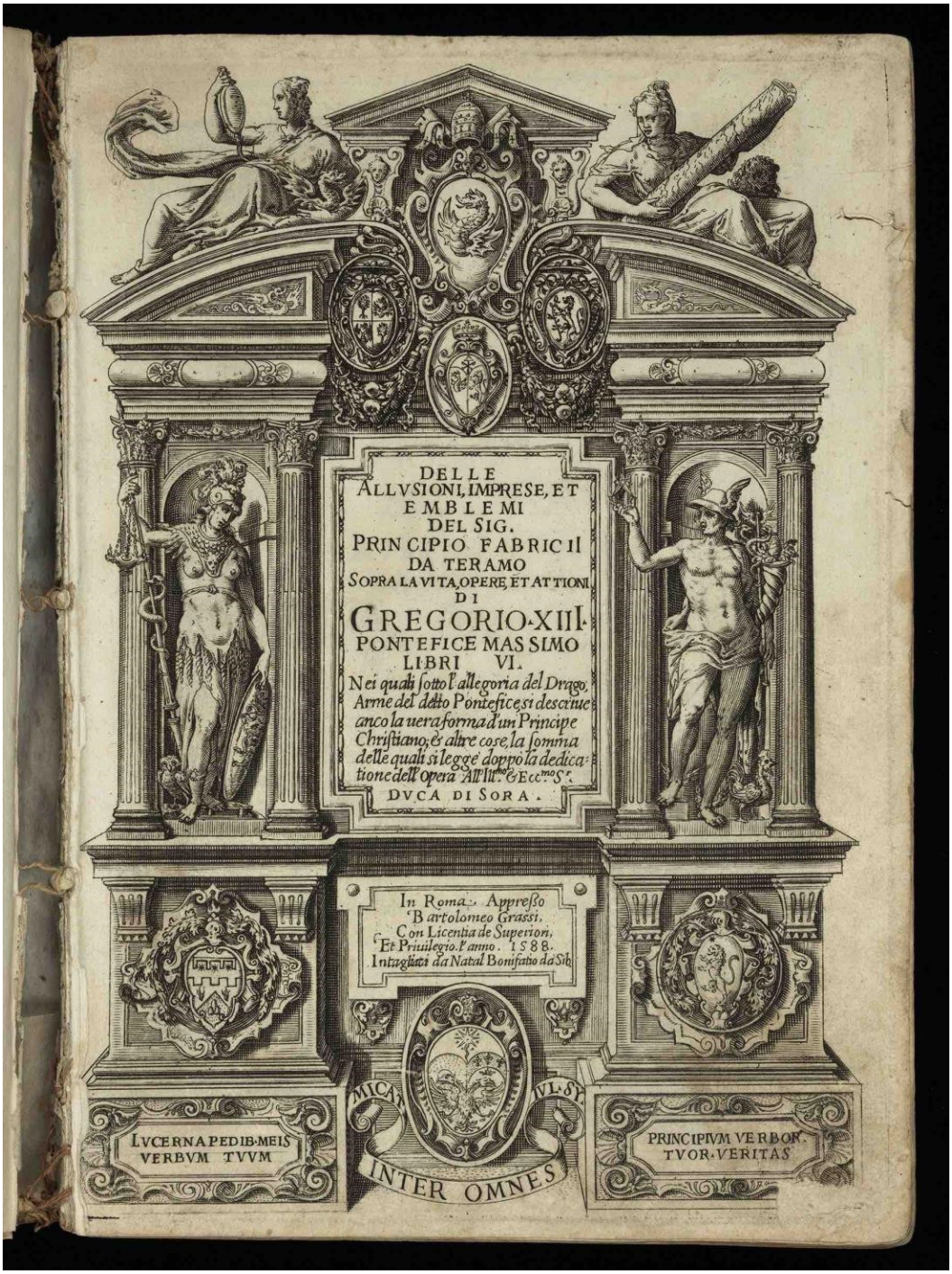

Fig. 4: Fabrizi, Principio. *Delle Allusioni, Imprese, Et Emblemi Del Sig. Principio Fabricii Da Teramo Sopra La Vita, Opere, Et Attioni Di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo Libri VI. Nei Quali Sotto Lallegoria De Drago, Arme Del Detto Dun Principe Christiano; & Altre Cose ...* N. Bonifatio (Frontispiece), 1588. https://archive.org/details/delleallusioniim00fabr.

SPES. LIB. III. TIT. II. ALLVS. VII. 145

FELIX PRAESAGIVM

Apud Ægyptios,& phœnices signũ salutis erat Draco,vt aliàs. Idcirco in Tripode veritatis responsa dabantur. ff. lib.1. titu. 1. allus.18.

XCVII.

Felice incontro, fortunato, e caro,
E di nostr' Alme non pur Guida, e Segno;
Mà d'ogni nostro mal refugio, e pegno,
E gran rimedio d'ogni morso amaro.
Così'l tuò raggio luminoso, e chiaro
Ne guidi al Porto, al desiato Regno,
Oue nostr' Alma da furor' e sdegno
Del graue error' habbi' al suo mal riparo.
Da te Signor (che'l tuo sant'occhio ascende
Soura ogni Ciel di Dio ne l'ampio Seno)
Nostra salute, e nostro ben dipende.
Però di gratie tue fà colmo, e pieno
Nostro voler, che'l mondo abrucia, e'ncende
Senza'l gran Lume tuo viuo, e sereno.

Felicissimi ominis Draconem esse testantur antiquitatũ scriptores, adeò q; multi vel mediocris fortunę milites ad Imperij fastigium eius ostento sunt euecti. vt ff. lib.6 tit. 1.allu.17.

Catholicæ veritatis lubar ad Portũ salutis, ad Regnũ æternum, atq; ad antiqui erroris reparationẽ animas ducit.

Rom. Pont. catholicæ veritatis,ac cœlestium arcanorũ interpres.

Attende locum.

K

Fig. 5: Emblem no. 97, *Felix Praesegium* (Lucky Protector), from Fabrizi, Principio. *Delle Allusioni, Imprese, Et Emblemi Del Sig. Principio Fabricii Da Teramo Sopra La Vita, Opere, Et Attioni Di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo Libri VI. Nei Quali Sotto Lallegoria De Drago, Arme Del Detto Dun Principe Christiano; & Altre Cose* ... N. Bonifatio, 1588, p 145. https://archive.org/details/delleallusioniim00fabr.

Fig. 6: Emblem no. 75, *Potestas in Demones* (Over Devils), from Fabrizi, Principio. *Delle Allusioni, Imprese, Et Emblemi Del Sig. Principio Fabricii Da Teramo Sopra La Vita, Opere, Et Attioni Di Gregorio XIII Pontefice Massimo Libri VI. Nei Quali Sotto Lallegoria De Drago, Arme Del Detto Dun Principe Christiano; & Altre Cose* ... N. Bonifatio, 1588, p 101. https://archive.org/details/delleallusioniim00fabr.

Fig. 7: Gregory XIII's coat of arms, detail of floor decoration, Vatican City, Saint Peter's, Gregorian Chapel, Rome.
Source: Ruffini, Marco. "A DRAGON FOR THE POPE: POLITICS AND EMBLEMATICS AT THE COURT OF GREGORY XIII." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 54 (2009): 83-105, 84.

Fig. 8: Lavinia Fontana, *Holy Family with Saints*, 1578, oil on canvas, 122.5x 92.5 cm, whereabouts unknown.
Source: Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 48.

Fig. 9: Lavinia Fontana, *Holy Family with Saints*, 1578, oil on canvas, 75.5x 61 cm, whereabouts unknown.
Source: Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 48.

Fig. 10: Lavinia Fontana, *Holy Family with Saints Margaret and Francis*, 1578, oil on canvas, 104x 127 cm, Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA, Gift of William and Selma Postar.
Source: https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/holy-family-with-saints-margaret-and-francis/kAHipVJYqgYj1g

Fig. 11: Lavinia Fontana, *Holy Family with Saints Margaret and Francis* (detail), 1578, oil on canvas, 104x 127 cm, Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA, Gift of William and Selma Postar.
Source: https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/holy-family-with-saints-margaret-and-francis/kAHipVJYqgYj1g

Fig. 12: *Draco Aetheopicus* (Ethiopian Dragon), *Tavole di animali*, vol 4 p.140, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

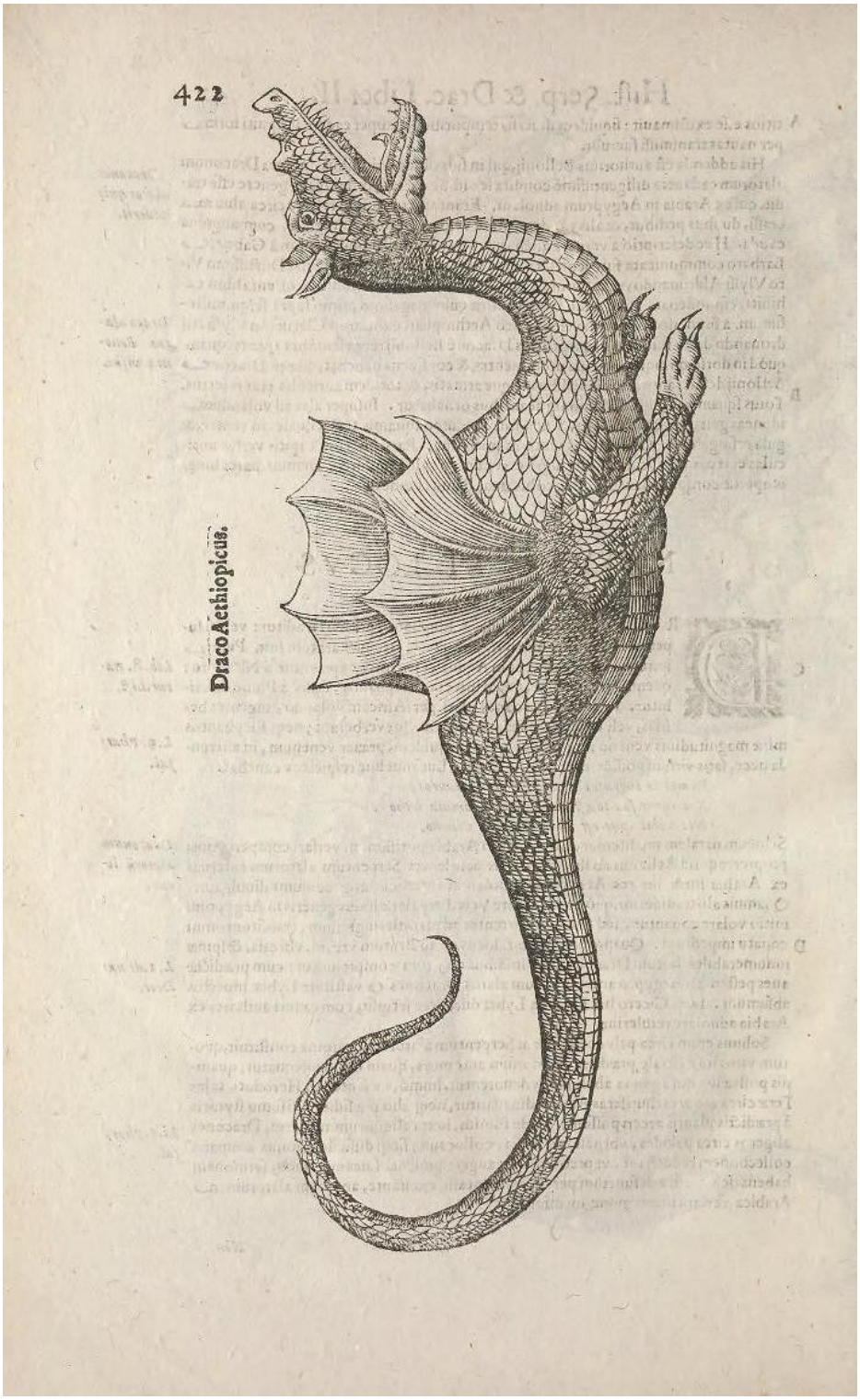

Fig. 13: *Draco Aetheopicus* (Ethiopian Dragon), from Ulisse Aldrovandi and Bartolommeo Ambrosini, *Serpentum, Et Draconum Historiae Libri Duo*. Bononiae: Bernia, 1640, p. 422, Rare Books and Special Collections, Folio: QL641 A43 1640, McLennan Library Building, McGill University, Montréal, Québec.

Fig. 14: Bartolomeo Passaroti, *Drago* (Study of a Dragon), 16th c., Palazzo Rosso, Gabinetto, Disegni e Stampi (Cat. 8), Genova.
Source: Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora Singolare," 1552-1614*. (Milano: Jandi Sapi, 1989), 83.

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Fig. 15: Lavinia Fontana, *Apparition of the Madonna and Child to the Five Saints*, 1601, oil on canvas, 152x108.5 cm, originally housed in the Church of San Michele in Bosco, for the confessional of the Olivetan Monks in Bologna. Now held in the Pinacoteca Nazionale (storage), Bologna.
Source: Caroline P. Murphy, *Lavinia Fontana: A Painter and Her Patrons in Sixteenth-century Bologna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 194.

Fig. 16: Lavinia Fontana, *Self Portrait in Studiolo*, oil on copper, 1579, 15.7cm diameter, Uffizi, Vasarian Corridor, Florence.

Fig. 17: Lavinia Fontana, *Judith with the head of Holofernes,* 1600, oil on canvas, 130x 110 cm, Museo Davia Bargellini, Bologna.

Fig. 18: Lavinia Fontana, *Portrait of a Noblewoman*, ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 35.25 x 45.25 in, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington.
Source: https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/portrait-of-a-noblewoman/pwExuoWPtRugVQ

Fig. 19: Fra Bartolomeo, *Portrait of Girolamo Savonarola as Saint Peter the Martyr,* 1508-1510, 52x 40 cm, Museo Nazionale di San Marco, Florence.

Fig. 20: Lavinia Fontana*, Saint Francis Receives the Stigmata*, 1579, oil on canvas, 63x 75 cm Bologna, Seminario Arcivescovile. Image reproduced courtesy of Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna.

Fig. 21: Albrecht Altdorfer, *Landscape with a shaded cliff*, c.1520-2, etching, 11.5 x 16, cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Source: http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.30724

Fig. 22: Niccolò dell'Abate, *The Death of Eurydice*, about 1552-71, oil on canvas, 189.2 x 237.5 cm, The National Gallery, London.
Source: https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/niccolo-dellabate-the-death-of-eurydice

Fig. 23: Cornelis Cort, *Saint Francis receives the stigmata*, 1567, Etching after the lost fresco by Girolamo Muziano (or Girolamo di Brescia) for the church of Santi Apostoli (The Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles) in Rome, 55.3 x 41.7 cm, Villa Mylius-Vigoni, Menaggio.
Source: http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/stampe/schede/1q030-00140/

Fig. 24: Ignoto, *San Francesco riceve le stigmate* (Saint Francis receives the stigmata),, Pinacoteca Communale, Budrio.
Source: Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora Singolare," 1552-1614*. (Milano: Jandi Sapi, 1989), 93.

Fig. 25: P. Tibaldi, *San Francesco riceve le stigmate* (Saint Francis receives the Stigmata), print. Source: Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora Singolare," 1552-1614*. (Milano: Jandi Sapi, 1989), 93.

Fig. 26: Lavinia Fontana, *S. Francesco riceve le stigmate* (Saint Francis receives the stigmata), 1579, oil on canvas, 76x 60 cm, whereabouts unknown.
Source: Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora Singolare," 1552-1614*. (Milano: Jandi Sapi, 1989), 94.

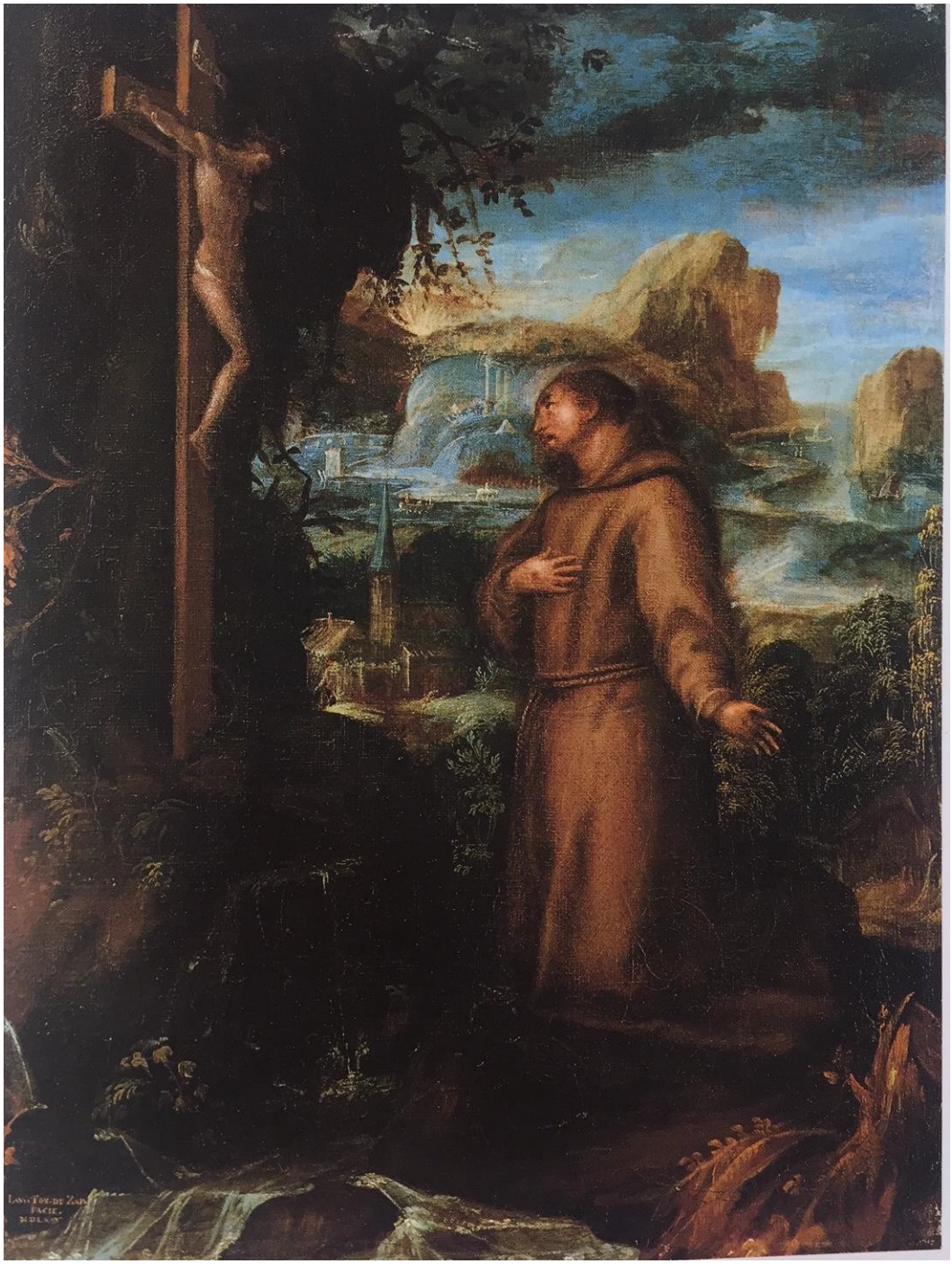

Fig. 27: Lavinia Fontana, *S. Francesco in adorazione del Crocifisso* (Saint Francis in adoration of the crucifix), 1580, oil on canvas, 50x 37 cm, private collection, Milan.
Source: Maria Teresa Cantaro, *Lavinia Fontana, Bolognese: "pittora Singolare," 1552-1614*. (Milano: Jandi Sapi, 1989), 95.

Fig. 28: Giotto Di Bondone, Scenes from the Life of Saint Francis, *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, 1325, fresco, 390 x 370 cm, Bardi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence.

Fig. 29: Lavinia Fontana, *Saint Francis Receives the Stigmata* (detail), 1579, oil on canvas, 63x 75 cm, Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna. Image reproduced courtesy of Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna.

Fig. 30: Lavinia Fontana, *Saint Francis receives the Stigmata* (detail of Fontana's signature and date), 1579, oil on canvas, 75x 63 cm, Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna. Image reproduced courtesy of Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna.

Fig. 31: Lavinia Fontana, *Saint Francis receives the Stigmata* (detail of the seraph), 1579, oil on canvas, 75x 63 cm, Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna. Image reproduced courtesy of Seminario Arcivescovile, Bologna.

Fig. 32: *Cipresso Italus* (Italian Cypress), *Tavole Piante Fiori Frutti,* vol. 8 p. 17*,* Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Fig. 33: Cypress tree, Franciscan monastery cloister, Villa Verucchio. Photographs by Tiziano Rootman Fratus on the 11th of August 2013.
Source: https://www.monumentaltrees.com/en/ita/emiliaromagna/rimini/6971_villaverucchio/

Fig. 34: Lavinia Fontana, *Noli me tangere,* 1581, oil on canvas, 80x 65.5 cm, Uffizi (storage), Florence.

Fig. 35: Denys Calvaert, *Noli me tangere,* c. 1600, oil on canvas, 149x117 cm, National Museum, Warsaw.

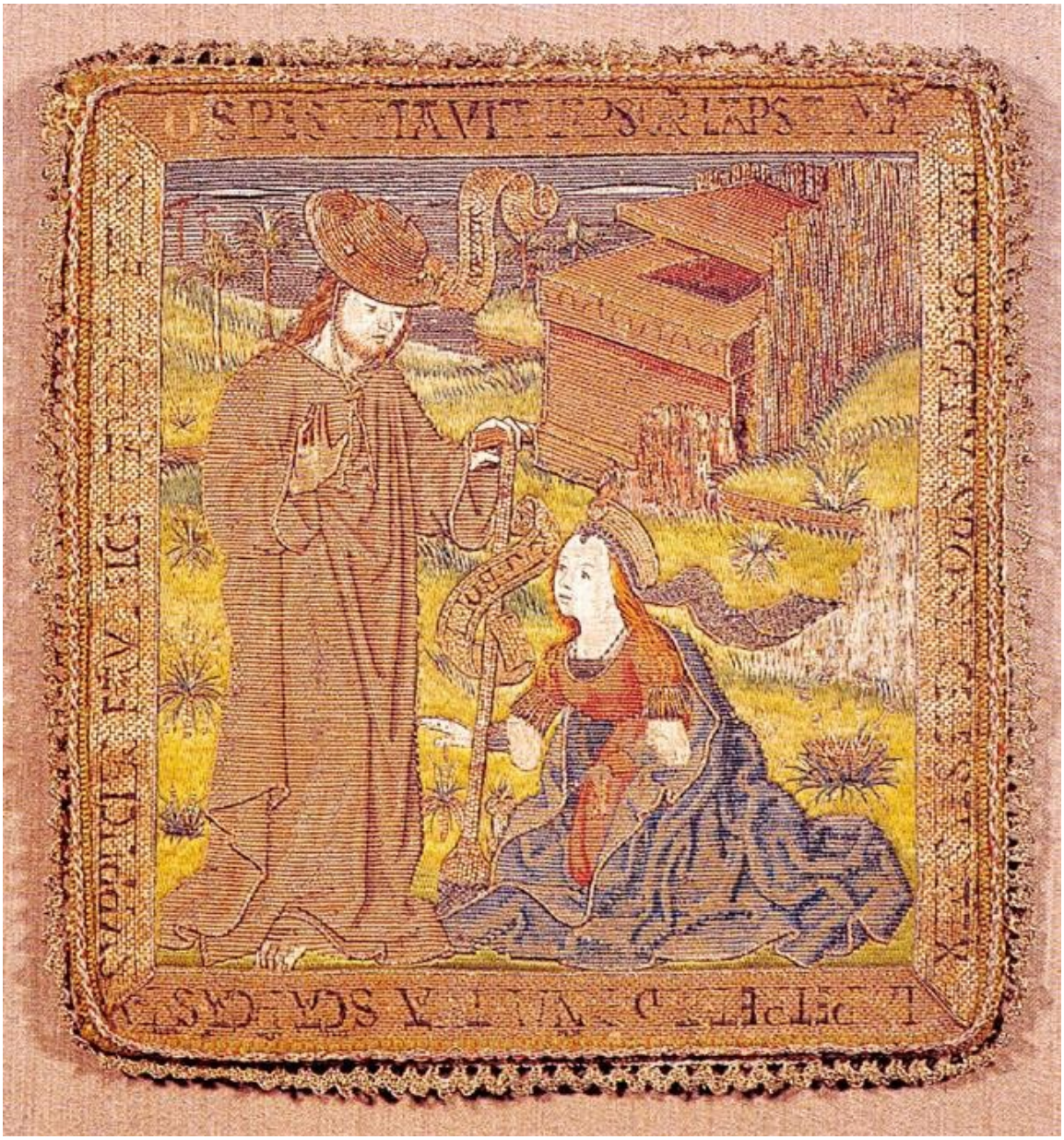

Fig. 36: Noli me Tangere, c. 1525, pall, Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp.
Source: Barbara Baert, "The Gaze in the Garden: Mary Magdalene in Noli me Tangere," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Rachel A. Erhardt (Boston: Brill, 2012), 211.

Fig. 37: Lavinia Fontana and Prospero Fontana, *Christ in the house of Martha and Mary*, 1580, oil on canvas, 220x 170 cm, Bologna Conservatoria di S. Marta (Conservatory of Saint Martha), Opera Pia dei Poveri Vergognosi.

Fig. 38: Roman or Venetian, titlepage of Maestro Andrea's *Purgatory and Lament of the Roman Courtesan*, c. 1530, woodcut.
Source: Rachel Geschwind, "The Printed Penitent: Magdalene Imagery and Prostitution Reform in Early Modern Italian Chapbooks and Broadsheets," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris (Boston: Brill, 2012), 126.

Fig. 39: Anonymous Artist, title page to Marco Rossiglio's *La Conversione di Santa Maria Maddalena*, 1611, woodcut, Biblioteca Vaticano, Vatican city, Rome.
Source: Rachel Geschwind, "The Printed Penitent: Magdalene Imagery and Prostitution Reform in Early Modern Italian Chapbooks and Broadsheets," in *Mary Magdalene, Iconographic Studies from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, ed. Michelle A. Erhardt and Amy M. Morris (Boston: Brill, 2012),118.

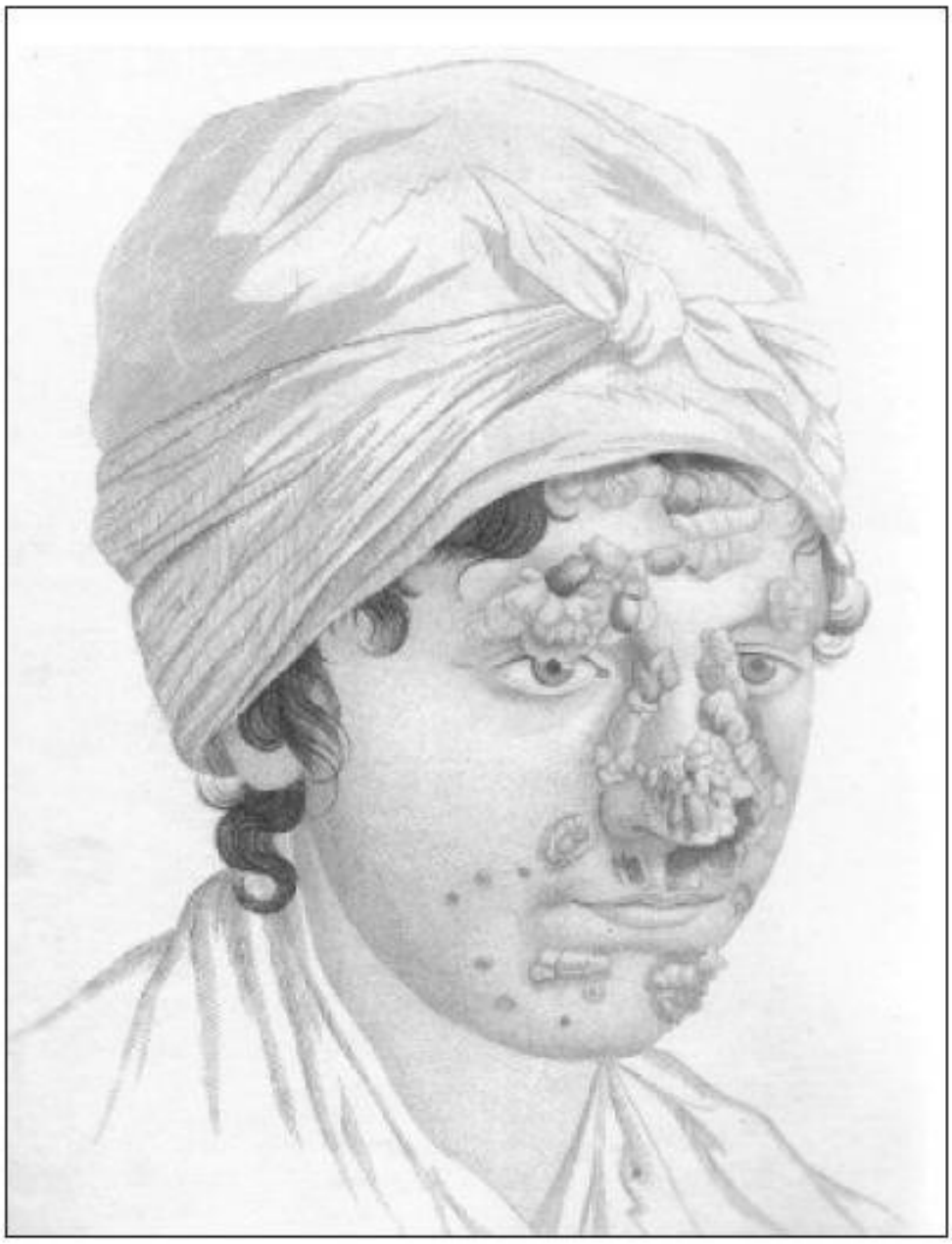

Figura 1 - Volto di donna con sifilide [disegno del XVIII secolo].

Fig. 40: Face of a woman with syphillis, 18th century drawing.
Source: Sabbatini, Sergio. "Il Contagio Luetico a Bologna Nel Cinquecento. L'assistenza Sanitaria E Sociale (Prima Parte)," *Le Infezioni in Medicina*, no. 1 (2006): 47.

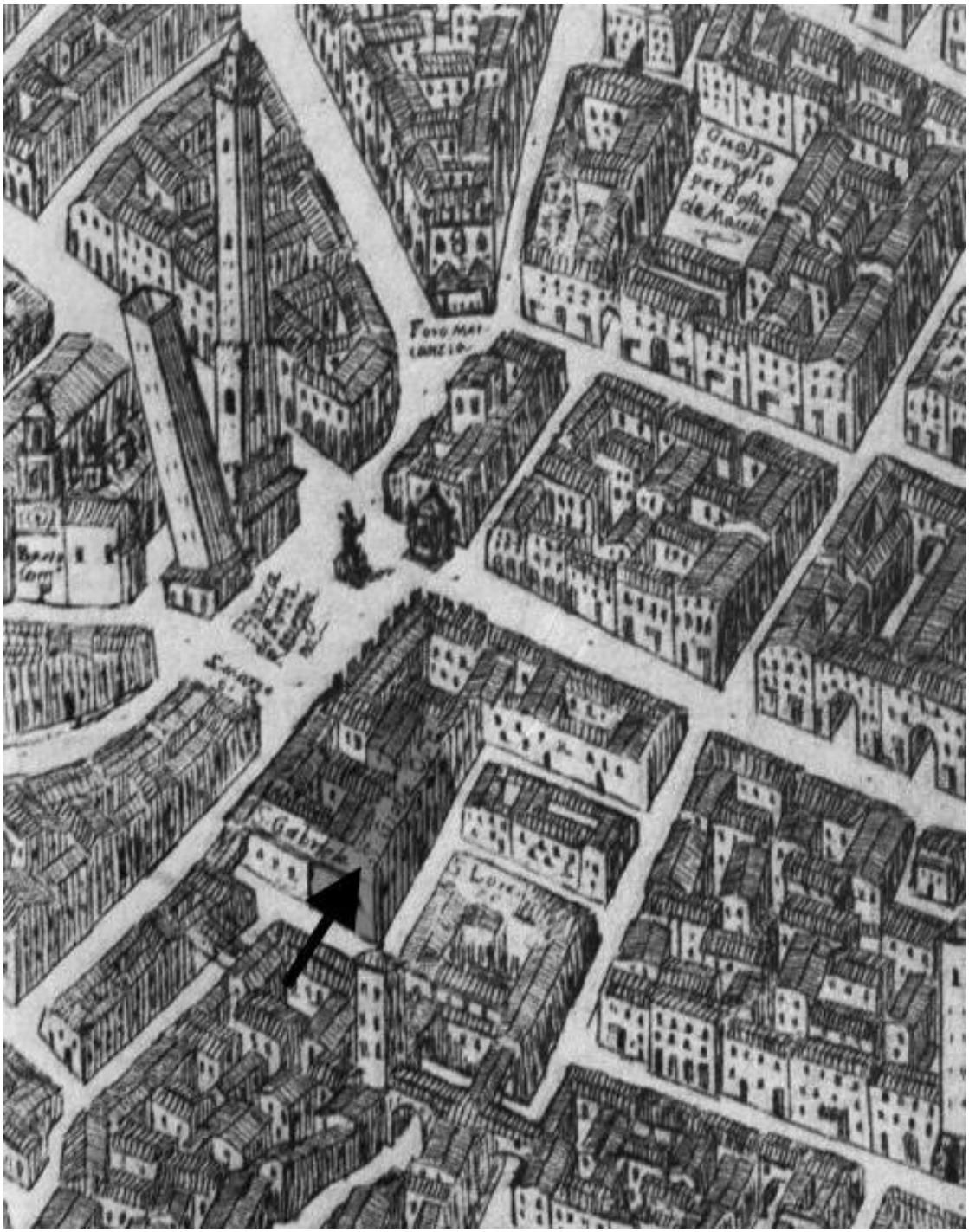

Fig. 41: Map of the piazza di Porta Ravegnana (Arrow added pointing to the hospital of Saint Job) Map of Bologna by Filippo de' Gnudi, in 1702. Source: Fanti, Mario. "La Confratemita Di Santa Maria Dei Guarini E L'ospedale Di San Giobbe in Bologna." In *Il Credito Romagnolo: Fra Storia, Arte E Tradizione* (1985), 357.

Fig. 42: Titian, *Noli me Tangere*, c. 1514, oil on canvas, 110.5 x 91.9 cm, The National Gallery, London.

Fig. 43: Coreggio, *Noli me Tangere,* ca. 1525, oil on canvas, 130x 103 cm, Museo Del Prado, Madrid.

Fig. 44: Girolamo from Treviso, *Noli me tangere,* c. 1519, San Giovanni in Monte, Bologna.

Fig. 45: Francesco Albani, *Noli me Tangere,* 1620, oil on canvas, 19x 14cm, Louvre, Paris.

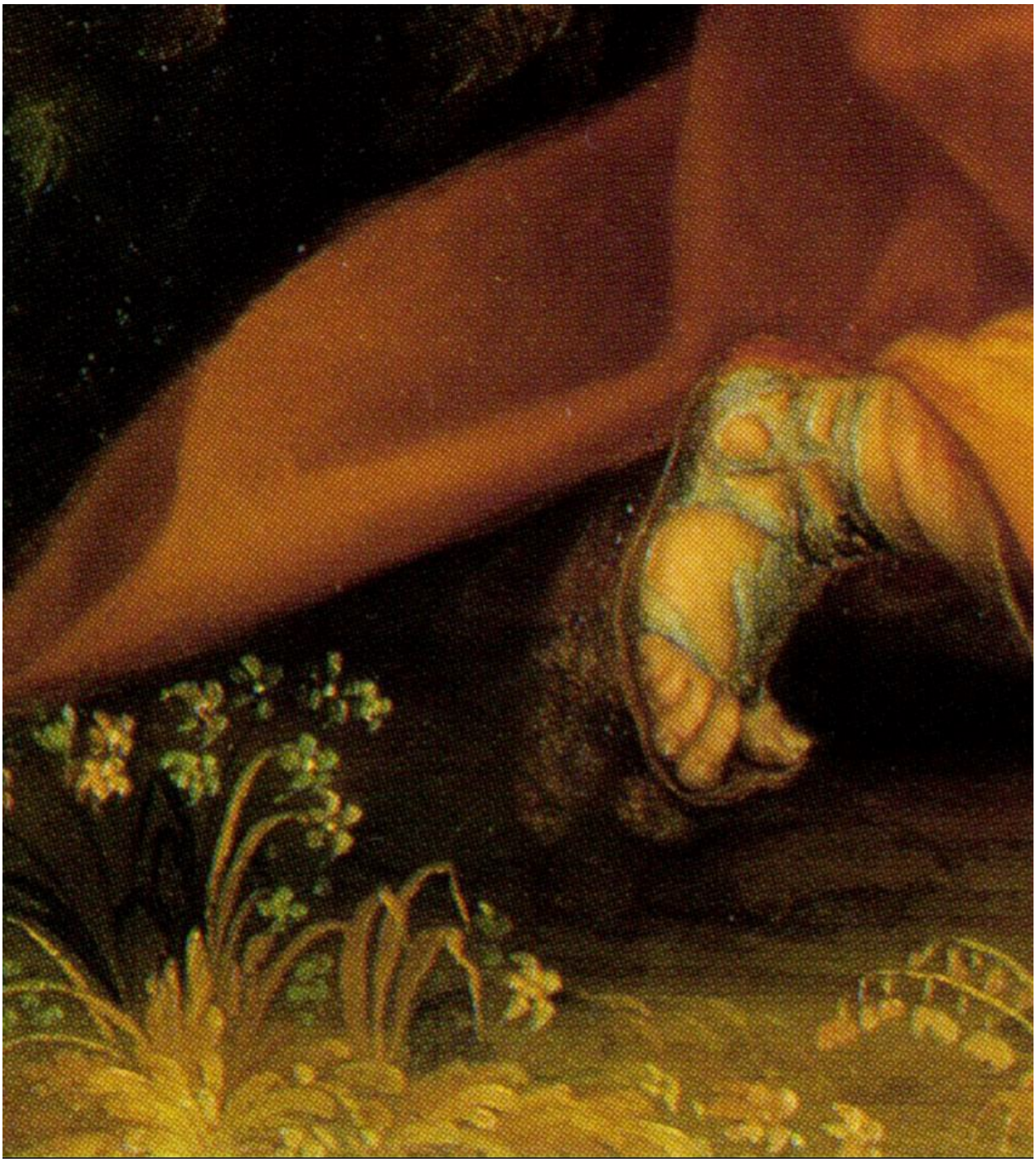

Fig. 46: Lavinia Fontana, *Noli me tangere* (detail)*,* 1581, oil on canvas, 80x 65.5 cm, Uffizi (storage), Florence.

Fig. 47: Fillipo Lippi, *The Adoration in the Forest,* oil on poplar wood, 118.5 x 129.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Fig. 48: Fillipo Lippi, *The Adoration in the Forest* (detail), oil on poplar wood, 118.5 x 129.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Fig. 49 *Guaiacum Sanctum* flower (detail).
Source: http://www.levypreserve.org/Plant-Listings/Guaiacum-sanctum

Fig. 50: Jan Collaert I after Jan van der Straet (Stradanus), *The Discovery of Guaiacum as a Cure for Venereal Infection*, ca. 1600, 27 x 20 cm, Engraving, plate 6 of 19, *Nova Reperta* (New Inventions of Modern Times), published by Philips Galle, Met Museum, New York. Source: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/659697

Con gratia & privilegio: per diece anni.

Fig. 51: Francisco Delicado, *El Modo De Adoperare El Legno De India Occidentale, Salutifero Remedio a Ogni Piaga Et Mal Incurabile...* (Frontispiece), 1529, Venice, a version is now held in the Bibliothèque Mazarin, Paris.

Fig. 52: *Opuntia ficus-indica* (Cactus and Prickly Pear), Tavole di Piante, vol. 2 p.253, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Fig. 53: *Chrysanthemi Peruniani maximus* (Peruvian Chrysanthemum, or Sunflower), Tavole di Piante, vol. I, p.76, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna.

Fig. 54: Pineapple, Tavole di Piante Fiori Frutti, vol. 3 p.196, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Bibliotheca Universiteria di Bologna.

Fig.55: Lydia Byam, *Guaiacum* or *Lignum Vitae, A collection of exotics from the Island of Antigua* (London: White: 1799), no. 3.

Fig. 56: *Borago Officinalis* (Borage), Tavole di Piante, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Bibliotheca Universiteria di Bologna. Source: Alessandro Alessandrini et al. *Natura Picta Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Bologna: Ed. Compositori, 2007), 236.

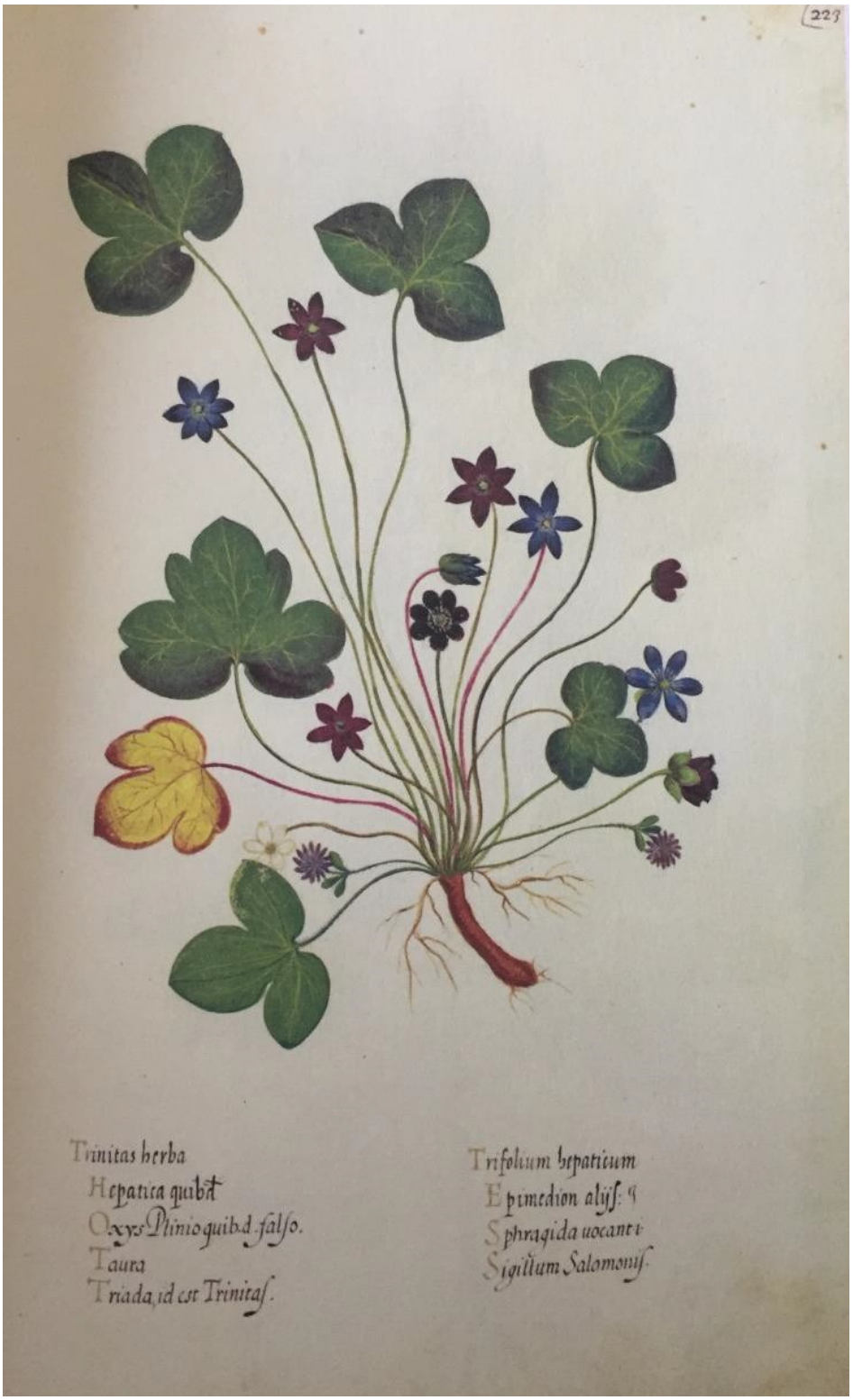

Fig. 57: *Hepatica Nobilis (*Anemone Hepatica), Tavole di Piante, Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Bibliotheca Universiteria di Bologna. Source: Alessandro Alessandrini et al., *Natura Picta Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Bologna: Ed. Compositori, 2007), 227.

Fig. 58: *Anagallis Coerulea Supra* (Anagallis species or Pimpernels), Fondo Ulisse Aldrovandi, Bibliotheca Universiteria di Bologna. Source: Alessandro Alessandrini et al., Natura Picta Ulisse Aldrovandi (Bologna: Ed. Compositori, 2007), 236.

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Ms. 6, vol. 1, c. 63r- 67r, *Del Dragone da duoi piedi monstruoso....*

Ms. 38, vol. 2, t.2, c.173 (Ferrara, 6 July 1572) Alfonso Pancio. *Lettere 69, scritte da Ferrara dal 20 Novembre 1565 al 9 Maggio 1587.*

Ms.41, *Liber in quo virinobilitate, honore et virtute insignes, viso musaeo quod. Excellentissimus Ulyssis Aldrovandus Illustriss. Senatui Bononiensi dono dedit, propria nomina ad perpetuam rei memoriam scribunt* (*Book in Which Men of Extraordinary Virtue Who Have Seen the Musem That the Most Excellent Ulisse Aldrovandi Gave to the Most Illustrious State of Bologna…).*

Ms. 91, c. 516a, *Discorso naturale di Ulisse Aldrovandi. Nel quale si tratta in generale del suo Museo, e delle fatiche da lui usate per raunare de varie parti del mondo, quasi in un Theatro di Natura tutte le cose sublunari, come piante, animali et altre cose minerali. Et parimente vi s' insegna come si de' venir nella certa et necessaria cognitione d'alcuni medicamenti incerti et dubbij, ad utilità grandissima non solo de' medici, ma d'ogni altro studioso. All'Ill.mo et Ecc.mo S.or Giacomo Boncompagni castellano di S. Angelo.*

Ms. 136, vol. 24, c. 21-25, *Catalogus virorum illustrium ex variis diversique nationibus, multorumque Bononiensium, qui visitarunt nostrum naturae oceanum, sed manu propria non subscripserunt, cum tunc temporis, nempe ante millesimum sexagesimum sextum hunc*

morem scribendi non servassem. Praeterea addemus hic etiam eos qui visitarunt nostrum Musaeum post 1566, non subscripserunt tamen.

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