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JOURNAL 52

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Contents

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM **JOURNAL**

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ABBREVIATIONS
MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
MMJ Metropolitan Museum Journal

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

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**ANDREA BAYER AND
MICHAEL GALLAGHER
WITH SILVIA A. CENTENO,
JOHN DELANEY, AND EVAN READ**

Andrea del Sarto's *Borgherini Holy Family* and *Charity*: Two Intertwined Late Works

For Giovanni Borgherini Andrea painted another picture almost exactly like the one of Charity mentioned above, containing a Madonna, a little S. John offering to Christ a globe that represents the world, and a very beautiful head of S. Joseph.[1]
—Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*

TWO PAINTINGS AND THEIR HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since Giorgio Vasari first published his *Vita* of Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530) in 1550, it has been clear that late in his career the artist painted two works that contemporaries saw as closely related, *The Holy Family with the Young Saint John the Baptist* and *Charity* (figs. 1, 2). The former, painted for the Florentine Giovanni Borgherini (1496–1559) and commonly referred to as the *Borgherini Holy Family*, later descended through the Rinuccini and Corsini families in Florence. Charles Fairfax Murray purchased it in 1905, and the panel was sold to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1922.[2] It is among the artist's most admired, studied, and copied compositions

fig. 1 Andrea del Sarto (Italian, 1486–1530). *The Holy Family with the Young Saint John the Baptist*, also known as the *Borgherini Holy Family*, 1528 or 1529. Oil on wood, 53½ × 39⅝ in. (135.9 × 100.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund, 1922 (22.75)

fig. 2 Andrea del Sarto. *Charity*, 1528 or 1529. Oil on wood, 47 × 36½ in. (119.5 × 92.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection (1957.14.5)

fig. 3 Detail of *Charity* (fig. 2) showing the underlying form of the orb depicted in the *Borgherini Holy Family* (fig. 1) emerging from beneath the painted surface

and universally hailed as one of the most significant works of his last years. Vasari tells us that *Charity* was meant for Francis I of France, for whose court Sarto had worked a decade earlier, but it did not reach him.[3] Instead, after Sarto's death in 1530, his widow sold it to the painter Domenico Conti, who in turn sold it to Niccolò Antinori; the painting is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Conservation of the Metropolitan Museum's *Holy Family* in 2013 provided an opportunity to look more closely at these two works and think again about their relationship. As this article will explore, Sarto's two late masterpieces are interwoven at every level, from their conception and making to their meaning, patronage, and place in Florentine history. The strong resemblance between the two, seen when the compositions are side

by side, is made even more palpable by the repetition of the orb at the center. Depicted prominently in *The Holy Family*, the object emerges as a ghostly form in *Charity* (fig. 3). How did the compositions come to be this way?

Sarto painted the *Borgherini Holy Family* and *Charity* between 1528 and 1530—that is, when Florence had declared itself a republic (for the last time) and expelled the Medici family, taking on as adversaries both the Medici pope Clement VII and the Hapsburg emperor Charles V. That tense historical moment is integral to the meaning of both paintings. The rather romantically termed Last Florentine Republic of 1527–30 was a fleeting moment of self-rule in the city—the preface to one new law called it the "present free and popular government"—between a relatively brief period of domination by the Medici family and the family's

return following a disastrous siege of the city in 1529–30.[4] The wealthy patron of *The Holy Family,* Giovanni Borgherini, was at the very center of the republican ferment of those years.[5] His connection with Venice, where he had spent part of his childhood and which was ruled historically as a republic, may have been the basis of his fascination with the ideas of republican rule. In 1525, Borgherini invited the Florentine humanist scholar Donato Giannotti to travel with him to the Veneto, a trip that led up to Giannotti's celebrated dialogue *Della repubblica de' veneziani* (On the Venetian Republic), written that year and the next. Borgherini appears as an interlocutor in the text, receiving instruction on the Venetian constitution and guiding the discussions toward a political theory that would urge Florentines to follow the Venetian model. Giannotti returned to Florence soon after the Medici were expelled in May 1527 and Niccolò Capponi, the opposition leader, was elected gonfalonier.[6] By September, the new government had assigned Giannotti to an important post and asked him to consider the republic's constitution.[7]

Borgherini's ties to the new republican government could hardly have been closer. He was married to Selvaggia Capponi, Niccolò Capponi's daughter, and experienced with her family all the early euphoria and then bitter moments of the following years. For Capponi and his cohort, some of the necessary justification of republican rule—rule not dominated by a single family—had been amply expressed by the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola in Florence in the 1490s. This confluence—of Borgherini, Capponi, and Savonarola—helps explain the iconography of the devotional painting that Sarto painted for the Florentine patriot.

Savonarola had aimed to convince the Florentines that they needed no one but Christ as their king. In one of his last sermons, the defiant reformer had declaimed: "Come on, Florence, what do you want, what leader, what king can give himself to you. . . . God wants to make you happy and give you . . . a king to govern you. . . . Take Christ for your king and live under his law."[8] During the terrible outbreak of plague in 1527, Capponi reminded the members of the Great Council, the city's expanded governing body, of Savonarola's preaching, and early the following year he proposed that Christ be elected king of Florence; the voting in favor was well-nigh unanimous. The Council decided to place an inscription naming the city's new sovereign over the portals of the Palazzo della Signoria; during the republic's brief life, the resolution was celebrated in an annual procession, held on February 9, with all officers of state parading from the Duomo to the church of the

Santissima Annunziata.[9] As the threat to the city deepened, with the Medici pope Clement VII demanding ever greater submission, the Great Council reaffirmed in June 1529 the resolution that Christ alone was Lord and King of Florence.[10] This revival of Savonarola's teachings had unfortunate aspects—the call for the expulsion of Jews from Florence, for example—but the fervor it inspired provided backbone at a time when the emperor's advancing troops, in league with Clement VII, were squeezing the increasingly isolated Florentines.[11]

It is easy to understand how *The Holy Family* would have had particular resonance for Giovanni Borgherini, for the artist carefully wove Savonarolan themes into the structure of the painting. The Virgin tenderly cradles a vigorous, indeed sculptural, Christ Child, who strides across the center of the painting to embrace an orb and cross, the *Globus cruciger*, representing Christ's dominion and often found as part of royal regalia. Its tones of blue contribute to its appearance as representing "the world."[12] The more mature Saint John the Baptist, patron saint of Florence, holds the orb top and bottom. No image could proclaim more vividly the republican belief that Florence belonged under the aegis of its sacred protectors alone. The play of the hand gestures—the Virgin supporting Christ and holding his *cangiante* (changeable in color) cloth across his middle, the three hands straddling the globe—are at the core of the picture's rhythm and draw attention to the affective interplay among these figures, the carriers of the painting's message.

Sarto painted *Charity* believing that it would enter the collection of the French king, Francis I. As will become clear below, the artist reconceived for this new work a panel already well under way with a design matching that of the *Borgherini Holy Family*. We can best understand his decision to change course and embark on a new subject by reviewing the role of the French king in Florentine affairs during these years. Florence's success in throwing off the domination of the Medici family coincided with Pope Clement VII's own political difficulties and his powerlessness to reassert control over his native city. His pontificate had reached a low point in 1527, when troops allied with Emperor Charles V sacked Rome. It was generally assumed that the enmity between pope and emperor would endure thereafter for a long time, but in April 1529 Sir Gregory Casale, an English agent in Rome, wrote the following to Cardinal Wolsey in London: "I have persuaded myself, and have been assured . . . a thousand times, that the Pope would never join the Emperor. Now I should not be surprised if he did, for the persecution of

fig. 4 Andrea del Sarto. *Charity*, 1518. Oil on canvas, transferred from wood, 72⅞ × 54 in. (185 × 137 cm). Signed and dated on sheet depicted at lower left: *ANDREUS. SARTUS. FLORENTINUS. ME PINXIT MDXVIII*. Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris (712)

his [Clement's] friends and relatives will be a great incentive for him to do so. The French ought to prevail on the Florentines to restrain themselves."[13] By this, Casale meant that a future alignment of the papacy and the Hapsburg empire seemed inevitable, and that the French, known as longtime allies of the Florentines, would do well to force the rebellious city to reach a compromise with the pope. Casale's words proved prophetic a few months later, when Charles V entered into

a solemn alliance with Clement. The treaty included a fatal ninth clause in which the emperor pledged to restore Clement's kinsmen to their native city.[14]

Events moved swiftly after the declaration of this alliance. Imperial troops under the command of the professional soldier Philibert de Chalon, Prince of Orange, marched through Tuscany ready to set siege to the city. The Florentine government debated whether to submit or defend themselves, finally deciding that

they would see "Florence in ashes rather than under the Medici."[15] The die was cast, and by October 29, 1529, Philibert's artillery was attacking the Florentine positions at San Miniato.

Artists and artworks were involved in the siege of Florence in a myriad of ways, but perhaps the most significant was the grand project conceived by the Florentine Battista della Palla (1489–1532). He intended to procure significant works of art for Francis I as part of a larger scheme to reinforce the alliance of the French king with the Florentine Republic and inspire him to lend assistance at this critical juncture.[16] Della Palla began his career within Medici circles, but in the early 1520s his allegiances shifted; he began to harbor strong republican sympathies, which he discussed in letters sent from the safety of a residency at the French court. He was adamant that no concession be made to the pope, saying, "He who goes down one step of the ladder must go down all."[17] He believed that he could induce Francis I to support the Florentines, cultivating the king's good will by adding materially to his highly prized collection. A letter from della Palla, then in Florence, to Filippo Strozzi in Lyon in early 1529 set out his objectives: "to provide them [the French] with large quantities of excellent antiquities of whatsoever sort, of marbles and bronzes and medals and paintings by masters worthy of His Majesty, in which things he has delighted all his life, and is now more immersed than ever."[18]

Vasari recounts that della Palla asked Andrea del Sarto to produce for the king two paintings, one depicting the Sacrifice of Isaac, and the other, Charity. We do not know precisely how these subjects were chosen.[19] Charity probably had particular significance for both artist and patron: when, a decade earlier, Sarto worked at the French court, he had painted for Francis I a grand panel of the subject, a work that showed him fully able to compete with the great Italian artists already known to the court (fig. 4). In addition, themes of Christian Virtue were of deep iconographic interest to the Valois court. Among the many references to Charity documented there from these years is a poem of 1515 in which each letter of the king's name was associated with a particular Virtue—C corresponding to Charity: "Of good will is the fifth letter of the noble name of François, powerful king: it shows him flourishing through Charity, who leads and loves him."[20] Sarto would have known the theme was appropriate for the patron and also for this particular moment, given the exhortatory purpose of the commission. He had every reason to wish to produce inspiring works for Francis, having departed

abruptly from the court a decade earlier (an act for which Vasari condemned him), leaving with some monies that were not returned or accounted for.[21] Sarto had attempted to revive the relationship in the early 1520s, without success; here appeared another opportunity to reignite interest in his work beyond the Alps.

UNDERSTANDING SARTO'S ARTISTIC PRACTICE THROUGH TECHNICAL EXAMINATION AND THE ANALYSIS OF DRAWINGS

Technical examination confirms that the painting on the panel of *Charity* began as a slightly smaller version of *The Holy Family*; therefore, the planning for the devotional image must have moved forward first. Comparison of the evidence provided by an array of imaging techniques (infrared reflectography [IRR], X-radiography, multi-spectral imaging, and macro-X-ray fluorescence [MA-XRF] imaging) at the Metropolitan Museum and the National Gallery of Art reveals that the entire Holy Family group was drawn and partially painted on what is now the Charity panel before Sarto morphed the figures to depict an entirely different subject.[22]

Owing to the natural, increased transparency of oil paint as it ages, some of the original compositional elements that Sarto painted over are now partially visible to the naked eye, in particular the abovementioned orb supported by the young Saint John the Baptist and the Christ Child in the Borgherini picture. The figure of the Virgin needed little elaboration to be transformed into the allegorical figure of Charity: the neckline of her garment was simply revised to reveal her breast. By changing the position of Saint John the Baptist's arm and reducing the drapery around his body to a narrow, decorative swag, Sarto converted the figure into an accompanying, almost naked, boy. In contrast, the heroic, frontally facing Christ Child was completely rethought. His body was reduced in size and turned more toward Charity, and his head was turned to direct his gaze toward the boy on the left of the composition. The head of Saint Joseph was replaced entirely with that of a smiling child, who, like Joseph, looks out in order to directly engage the onlooker.

The information provided in the infrared reflectogram of *Charity* is occasionally difficult to decipher, owing to some of the radical changes in composition and consequent proliferation of overlapping forms (fig. 5). However, it seems that much of the preparatory underdrawing concealed beneath the paint layers is freehand: unrefined but bold and confident in its application and evident purpose to anchor forms and resolve contours.

fig. 5 Infrared reflectogram of *Charity* (fig. 2) showing abundance of overlapping forms indicative of compositional changes

fig. 6 Detail of infrared reflectogram in fig. 5 revealing bold, freehand underdrawing

The emphatic reinforcement of certain lines and features and the cursory hatching delineating a fold falling into shadow or the play of light on a limb—elements frequently seen in Sarto's small-scale drawings on paper—are here writ large (fig. 6).[23]

The underdrawing in the *Borgherini Holy Family* is much easier to read but of a fundamentally different character (figs. 7, 8). The rather angular, abbreviated lines—especially evident in the Virgin's drapery—indicate the use of cartoons, full-scale compositional drawings that were transferred to the painting support by placing carbon-black-coated paper underneath the

fig. 7 Infrared reflectogram of
the *Borgherini Holy Family*
(fig. 1)

fig. 8 Detail of infrared reflec-
togram in fig. 7 revealing angu-
lar, abbreviated underdrawing
traced on the ground layer by
means of a cartoon

cartoons and tracing the lines of the design with a stylus.
Use of this technique was widespread in Florentine
Renaissance art but is characteristic of Sarto and his
workshop, as demonstrated in the recent exhibition
"Andrea del Sarto: The Renaissance Workshop in
Action."[24] Exploiting an essentially mechanical process,
the artist created a highly efficient method for generating
new works or revising existing compositions. Details and
variations were frequently added or edited freehand, a
process of revision that continued into the painting stage,
occasionally resulting in compositions that were far dif-
ferent from those transferred from the cartoons.[25]

fig. 9 Detail of fig. 5 (infrared reflectogram of *Charity*, fig. 2) showing freehand repositioning of the underlying Christ Child's proper left leg

fig. 10 Detail of fig. 7 showing repositioning of the Christ Child's proper left leg similar to that in fig. 9

fig. 11 MA-XRF image of lead distribution in the *Borgherini Holy Family* (fig. 1) showing original drapery of the same length as that revealed in fig. 12

fig. 12 MA-XRF image of lead distribution in *Charity* (fig. 2). The red overlay shows the original lower edge of the Christ Child's drapery.

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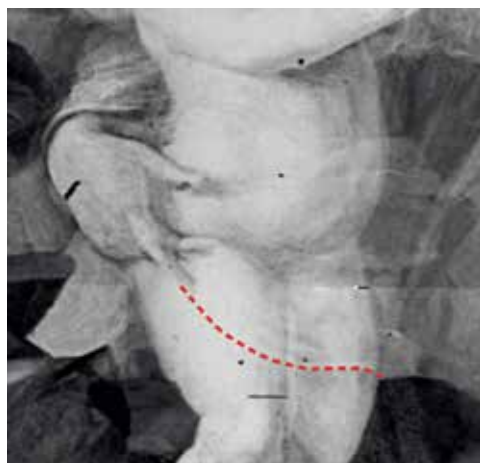
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In the case of *Charity* and the *Borgherini Holy Family*, the relationship between the compositions and their evolution is intriguing, because it is evident that the two panels must have been produced simultaneously, despite the fact that the *Borgherini Holy Family* is eleven percent larger. The evidence lies in the presence on the Borgherini panel of identical pentimenti found in both the underdrawing and initial laying-in of the Holy Family composition beneath *Charity*.[26] The same revision to the position of the Christ Child's outstretched legs can be seen in the underdrawing in both paintings (figs. 9, 10). Similarly, the drapery around the infant's middle initially fell to just above the right knee but later was raised much higher—a significant change that was made at the painting stage in both pictures (figs. 11, 12). And a sacklike cushion corresponding to a preparatory drawing now in the Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (6445F verso), to which we will return below, was also laid-in on each panel and subsequently covered with an expanse of drapery (supplemented in *The Holy Family* with the Baptist's reed cross and in *Charity* with a book) (figs. 13, 14).

It would seem that many features of the composition that underlies *Charity* were only partially or thinly painted prior to Sarto's rethinking of the subject. These paint layers probably correspond to the wash-like applications of diluted color that can be seen in several of the artist's unfinished works, such as *The Sacrifice of Isaac* in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 15).[27] The incomplete and preparatory nature of certain passages perhaps accounts for the intermittency of the information provided by the X-ray and XRF maps of the pentimenti. Still, XRF confirms that the background drapery in the *Borgherini Holy Family* was begun beneath the rock formation in *Charity* (revealing as well the initial placement of Joseph's head) (figs. 16, 17).

How the freehand drawing of the main figures on the *Charity* panel was enlarged for the cartoon remains a matter of speculation. The close correlation between the *Charity* and *Holy Family* compositions and their highly consistent proportional relationship would indicate a method of mechanical scaling. Incised, arcing lines present on several of Sarto's paintings, including *Charity,* support the idea that a proportional compass or similar device may have been deployed.[28] Interestingly, although a significant number of incised lines in *Charity* merit attention, the same cannot be said of the *Borgherini Holy Family*, where the few surface incisions could possibly be attributed to scrapes that occurred during the preparation of the gesso ground. The disparity perhaps suggests that *Charity* bears the marks of measuring and notation that permitted the creation of the scaled-up cartoons.[29]

Of the handful of drawings for these paintings that have come down to us, most relate to the initial

composition of *The Holy Family*, although they continued to be relevant to the elaboration of *Charity*. Our investigation of the panels and the evidence revealed by technical imaging have clarified the function of these preparatory drawings and provide further evidence of Sarto's relentless refinement of the principal figures, their gestures, movements, and relationships. On one side of a sheet in the Louvre, the artist has analyzed in red chalk the Virgin's left arm and hand as she holds Christ's arm; various inflections of her right hand as it will touch his waist (just implied); and the Baptist's fingertips atop the orb (fig. 18). The verso of this drawing is a study for the hanging curtain, with color notes.[30] Four drawings in the Uffizi relate to the paintings.[31] On the recto of one of these (Uffizi 6444F), done in red chalk on rose-tinted paper, the artist delicately drew the Virgin's head and the set of her shoulders, focusing on the fall of light across her neck and the subtle angle of her body. She wears a plain but thick headband resembling the final solution seen in *Charity*.

fig. 16 MA-XRF image of copper distribution in *Charity* (fig. 2) revealing initial inclusion of background curtain

fig. 17 Detail of the *Borgherini Holy Family* (fig. 1) showing background curtain

fig. 18 Andrea del Sarto. Study for the *Borgherini Holy Family*, ca. 1528–29. Red chalk, 6⅛ × 9½ in. (15.7 × 24 cm). Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris (1714A)

fig. 19 Andrea del Sarto. Study for the *Borgherini Holy Family*, ca. 1528–29. Red chalk, 6 × 9 in. (15.3 × 22.9 cm). Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (6445F recto)

The recto of Uffizi 6445 presents another sketch of the Virgin's arm, drapery bunched at the elbow, but most of the sheet is given over to a study of the shadowy face of Saint Joseph, seen in reverse of the painted head (fig. 19). John Shearman believed the head in the drawing was likely a self-portrait, drawn *allo specchio* (in the mirror), which helps to account for the subsequent reversal.[32] It can be argued that the saint appears considerably older than the artist, who died soon thereafter at the age of forty-four, but the sharply defined features are close to those of other known self-portraits, and it may be that the artist was representing the great strain of the historical moment in the hollowed eyes and furrowed brow. Interestingly, a study of this same head but with somewhat softened features and drawn in black and red chalk has recently surfaced; its specific relation to *The Holy Family* cannot yet be determined.[33]

Technical imaging shows that this conception of Joseph was not Sarto's first for the figure. The traced underdrawing lines 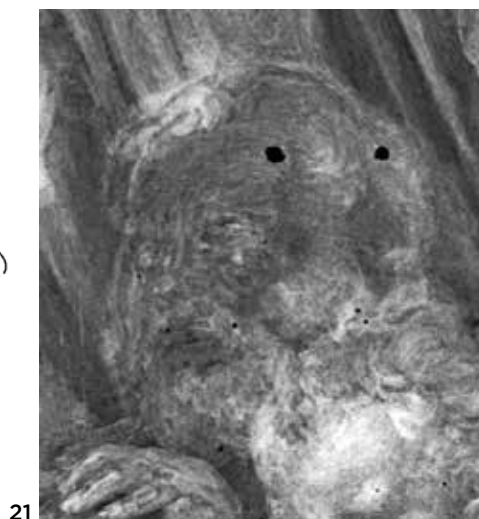and initial laying-in describe a head turned more to the left, gazing across to John the Baptist (figs. 20, 21).[34] The underlying head bears a strong resemblance to a black-chalk head study (fig. 22) for the figure of Joseph in *The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist* of about 1527, in the State Hermitage Museum (fig. 23). This painting also includes a close model for the Baptist depicted in the *Borgherini Holy Family*. In addition, the Christ Child in the Hermitage painting appears to be derived from an earlier red-chalk compositional study, *The Madonna and Child with Saint John*, in the Uffizi (fig. 24). By shifting the diagonal axis of the Christ Child's figure in this drawing to the vertical, a strong affinity emerges with the foreground child in *Charity* (figs. 25, 26).

There are other examples of the characteristic fluid and expedient methods of adaptation and reuse by the artist and his workshop. Two beautiful head studies, one of a child, the other of a woman, were probably prototypes for the heads of John the Baptist and the Virgin in the *Borgherini Holy Family*; each was reused in multiple compositions, including *Charity*.[35] Small but

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fig. 20 Tracing of underdrawing beneath the head of Saint Joseph in the *Borgherini Holy Family* (fig. 1)

fig. 21 MA-XRF image of lead distribution, revealing initial iteration of the head in the *Borgherini Holy Family* (fig. 1).

fig. 22 Andrea del Sarto. Detail of *Head of a Man Looking Up*, ca. 1527. Black chalk, with later red chalk additions, 9¾ × 7 in. (24.7 × 17.7 cm). Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford (WA1944.141)

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fig. 23 Andrea del Sarto. *The Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist*, ca. 1527. Oil on wood, 50⅞ × 39⅜ in. (129 × 100 cm). State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (GE-6680)

significant departures from the drawings were made in the paintings: for example, the painted John the Baptist is considerably older than the figure represented in the drawing. Sarto's willingness to rethink compositional elements well into the painting process is shown by the partial cancellation of the characteristic sacklike cushion sketched in a drawing in the Uffizi and in preparatory layers on both panels, as was illustrated earlier.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Sarto undertook the complex back-and-forth between these two panels so that the one already under way could be transformed from a Holy Family into a Charity. It is intriguing and somewhat frustrating not to know why the artist did not simply finish the Holy Family on the smaller panel and transfer the relevant aspects to the larger panel to create a Charity. The answer could lie in Sarto's

creative preoccupations and the dialogue generated by working on the paintings simultaneously. However, the reason may be more mundane, linked to details of the commission—even to something as basic as cost. Perhaps reworking portions of the Holy Family that was under way on the smaller panel was simply cheaper.

What is certain is that he successfully adapted the composition of the partially completed Holy Family to fit the description of Caritas, called Love by Saint Paul, who considered it the greatest of the three theological virtues—the others being Faith and Hope (1 Corinthians 13). Artists generally represented Caritas as a woman

with three children, one for each of the three Virtues, with a nursing child a symbol of Charity herself and of the nourishment provided by charitable love. Charity is usually attired in red, as Cesare Ripa later affirmed in his *Iconologia* (1611), and on occasion is shown with an aureole, as here.[36] Although Sarto must have had his earlier composition for Francis I in mind when undertaking this work, he made changes that showed off the newer elements of his style: increasingly monumental, broad forms with a strong, sculptural three-dimensionality and a powerfully vibrant palette. He also chose to depart from certain norms in the iconography of the group. A flame—the *ignis caritatis*—is characteristic of the imagery and is usually depicted held by Charity or in a nearby vessel. Instead, Sarto represents the flame as a conflagration burning in the upper right of the composition, at the far end of a claustrophobia-inducing range of towering rocks that cramp the figures in a shallow space in the foreground. Could it be that Sarto meant to suggest the walls of the besieged city, or the conflagration that threatened it? Certainly, he has gone out of his way to distinguish the background from the open, sunny landscape of his earlier version for the king. In these new circumstances, the more threatening imagery might have had some power as an appeal to Francis. Admittedly speculative, this reading, with its emphasis on historic events then taking place, allows us to understand how the two panels can have been so intertwined in the artist's mind. Both were in specific service to the Florentine Republic, with traditional iconographies varied to address the state's vital needs.

Many of the art objects della Palla gathered together for the French king reached their destination, but not all. News of the grand project went quiet in December 1529. Sarto's paintings were never sent, as Florence was conquered the following summer, allowing in soldiers and disease and leading to the artist's death. Vasari's words paint a grim picture: "The siege being finished, Andrea was waiting for matters to mend although with little hope that his French project would succeed, since Giovan Battista della Palla had been taken prisoner, when Florence became filled with soldiers. . . . Among those soldiers were some lansquenets sick with the plague who . . . shortly afterwards left it infected." Sarto's death following a brief illness "was a very great loss to the city and to art."[37] Della Palla had indeed been taken prisoner; he was incarcerated by the Medici in the Fortress of Pisa, where he died, poisoned, in 1532.[38]

Nor did Giovanni Borgherini, owner of *The Holy Family*, escape the turmoil of these events. As a member of the republican government, he had been sent out of the city in August 1529 as part of a delegation and then chose to retreat to Venice, not returning to Florence. Following the fall of the city, and once the Medici had reasserted their authority, Borgherini immediately wrote them pledging his support. He was not punished but never held official position again.[39] These dates suggest that Sarto's work for him is probably to be dated between early 1528 (when Savonarolan themes began to dominate) and the summer of 1529.

Vasari ended his *Vita* of Sarto with a melancholy statement about the artist's truncated career, noting that his loss was great because "he went on always improving from one work to another."[40] In this instance, we have found him indeed moving from one work to another, with energetic purpose. These two paintings, at first glance relatively simple in subject matter and composition, have built into them a complex creative process that gives them a unique place in the history of Florentine art of the period.

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NOTES

1 Vasari 1996, vol. 1, p. 851. For the original Italian, see Vasari (1568) 1976, vol. 4, p. 391: "Fece un altro quadro Andrea quasi simile a quello della Carità già detta, a Giovanni Borgherini, dentrovi una Nostra Donna, un San Giovanni putto che porge a Cristo una palla figurata per il mondo, e una testa di Giuseppo molto bella."

2 For the provenance of the *Borgherini Holy Family*, see www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437609; for *Charity*, see Shapley 1968, vol. 2, pp. 128–29.

3 Vasari 1996, vol. 1, p. 850; Vasari (1568) 1976, vol. 4, pp. 389–90.

4 Roth 1925; Stephens 1983, p. 216; Cecchi 2017.

5 Gilbert 1977, whose text is fundamental for the political meaning explored here.

6 Ibid., p. 284; Starn 1968, pp. 18–19: also in May 1527, Niccolò Capponi requested a report from Giannotti on the Venetian constitution; see Stephens 1983, p. 209.

7 Starn 1968, pp. 20–21; Roth 1925, pp. 92–93.

8 "Orsù, Firenze, che vorresti tu, che capo, che re ti si può dare. . . . Iddio ti vuol contentare e darti . . . uno re che ti governi. E questo è Cristo . . . El Signore ti vuole reggere Lui, se tu vorrai . . . piglia Cristo per tuo re e sta sotto la sua legge"; G. Savonarola, *Prediche italiane ai Fiorentini, I (Novembre e dicembre del 1494)*, excerpted in O'Gorman 1965, p. 503n14, with translation on p. 503. The Savonarolan context of the painting was first explored by James O'Gorman (1965).

9 Roth 1925, pp. 76–77, 197; Stephens 1983, pp. 215, 219.

10 Roth 1925, p. 141.

11 On the treatment of the Jews, see Stephens 1983, pp. 214–25; one skeptical contemporary observer, Baccio Carnescchi, who wrote an account of the Republic, said that it was possible to hold a city down through force or religion, and Florence had opted for religion; see ibid., p. 219.

12 Vasari 1996, vol. 1, p. 851.

13 Gregory Casale to Wolsey, April 21, 1529, in Brewer 1875, p. 2417, doc. 5478, www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol4/pp2414-2427.

14 Roth 1925, pp. 139, 153n44.

15 Ibid., pp. 174, 219n80. Feelings against the Medici ran so high that the governing Council of the Eight received a violent denunciation of Cosimo de' Medici's epitaph as "Pater Patriae" on his tomb in the church of San Lorenzo; see Stephens 1983, p. 234.

16 For the fullest analysis of della Palla's scheme, see Elam 1993; on the broader topic, Cecchi 2017.

17 "Consulte e pratiche 71," September 7, 1529, Archivio di Stato, Florence, as translated in Elam 1993, p. 43.

18 Della Palla to Strozzi, January 21, 1529, Carte Strozziane, sec. V, 1209, fasc. I, no. 24, Archivio di Stato, Florence, as translated in Elam 1993, pp. 47, 88.

19 Vasari 1996, vol. 1, p. 850; Vasari (1568) 1976, vol. 4, pp. 389–90. On the Sacrifice of Isaac, see Brooks 2015 and Steele 2015.

20 Cox-Rearick 1996, pp. 187, 449, no. 142, and, for the original French, no. 143: "De bon vouloir tiens la letter cinquiesme / Du noble nom de François, roy puissant, / Lequel se doibt démonstrer florissant / Par Charité qui le conduict et ayme." For an analysis and overview of the literature on the painting and the theme, see ibid., pp. 185–88, no. V-14.

21 Vasari 1996, vol. 1, pp. 837–38; Vasari (1568) 1976, vol. 4, pp. 367–69. For Sarto's time at the French court, see Delieuvin 2009.

22 At the Metropolitan Museum, infrared reflectography was undertaken using an Indigo Systems Merlin near-infrared camera (InGaAs sensor range: 900–1700 nanometers) with a StingRay Optics macro lens optimized for this range, in conjunction with a National Instruments IMAQ PCI-1422 frame grabber card and IRvista 2.51 software. Macro-X-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF) imaging was carried out using a Bruker M6 Jetstream instrument. The painting was scanned at 90 msec/pixel, with a 400 micron spot size, an 850 micron step size; the X-ray source operated at 50 kV and 500 mA. The spectra were processed using the Bruker® software. At the National Gallery of Art, infrared reflectography was undertaken in the 1500 to 1800 nm spectral band using a novel, near-infrared camera system consisting of an interference filter (1500-1800 nm bandpass), a custom macro near-infrared lens (F/2.3 EFL 50 mm, Stingray Optics, NH), and an Indium Antimonide IR focal plane array (SBF-193, Santa Barbara Focal Plane, CA). The individual images were collected using a computerized easel (SmartDrive, Cambridge UK), and then mosaicked and registered to a reference color image using custom software (Conover, Delaney, and Loew 2015). The MA-XRF imaging was done using a system designed in-house. The X-ray source is a rhodium tube operating at 50 kV and 750 mA (XOS) with polycapillary focusing optics set for a 1 mm spot size. A Vortex-90EX detector (Hitachi High-Technologies Science America, Inc.) operates at a peaking time of 0.1 ms and 13.7 eV sampling. The painting was scanned at 100 msec/pixel using a computer-controlled easel. The element maps were calculated using an in-house semi-empirical fitting procedure. Because the surface of the panel painting deviates from planarity by 2.5 cm, both imaging modalities were collected in vertical zones and mosaicked together.

23 Faietti 2015.

24 J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and Frick Collection, New York, 2015–16. See Brooks, Allen, and Salomon 2015.

25 For other examples, see Keith 2001; Buzzegoli and Kunzelman 2006; and Szafran and Chui 2015.

26 When a digital tracing of the *Holy Family*—reduced by eleven percent—is laid over an image of *Charity*, the outlines of the Virgin and Charity match almost exactly, but the tracing needs to be moved to correspond with other figures and details. It therefore appears that several enlarged cartoons were developed from the composition that lies below *Charity*. The digital tracing and image overlays were executed by Evan Read.

27 Neugebauer et al. 2009, pp. 154–60; Steele 2015, p. 199; Szafran and Chui 2015, pp. 16–17.

28 Szafran and Chui 2015, pp. 14–16; Steele 2015, pp. 198–99.

29 Technical aspects of these processes are explored in the forthcoming article on Andrea del Sarto's *Sacrifice of Isaac* by Marcia Steele, senior conservator of paintings, Cleveland Museum of Art, in *Kermes: La revista del restauro*.

30 Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris, 1714A; Shearman 1965, vol. 2, pp. 377–78; Cordellier 1986, pp. 87–88.

31 Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, nos. 6444F recto and verso; 6445 recto and verso; 631E recto and verso; 653E recto and verso; ibid., pp. 344–45, 350, 354, 355.

32 Ibid., vol. 1, p. 127.

33 Gestas & Carrère, Pau, Cabinet de Bayser, "Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530), Vente d'un dessin inédit," December 17, 2016. The verso of the drawing includes sketches for an unrelated eye and, possibly, lip. The same figure appears in two other paintings by Sarto, the *Panciatichi Assumption*, 1522–25 (Galleria Palatina, Florence, inv. 1912, no. 191) and the *Passerini Assumption*, 1526–28 (Galleria Palatina, Florence, inv. 1890, no. 225). While the importance of this portrait (or self-portrait) to the artist is clear, its reappearance at different moments in the 1520s, and in

both drawing and painting, cannot be fully explained. Only in the *Holy Family* has the direction of the head been flipped.

34   Examination with MA-XRF imaging indicates that Sarto partially painted this figure in.

35   The drawing of the child's head is Uffizi 631E recto; the drawing of the woman's head is Uffizi 653E, as above. On the reuse of 631E, see Brooks, Allen, and Salomon 2015, pp. 137–39, no. 40.

36   Ripa 1611, p. 71. The unusual shape of the aureole is not unlike those found in Benedetto Buglioni's sculptures of the Theological Virtues of Hope and Faith of about 1510–20 (private collection); see Cambareri 2016, p. 166, nos. 86, 87, ill. p. 123.

37   Vasari 1996, vol. 1, p. 852. For the original Italian, see Vasari (1568) 1976, vol. 4, p. 393: "Finito l'assedio, se ne stava Andrea aspettando che le cose si allargassino, se bene con poco speranza che il disegno di Francia gli dovesse riuscire, essendo stato preso Giovambatista della Palla, quando Fiorenza si riempié dei soldati . . . fra i quali soldati essendo alcuni Lanzi appestati . . . e poco appresso la lasciarono infetta. . . . Fu la morte d'Andrea di grandissimo danno alla sua città et all'arte."

38   Elam 1993, p. 71.

39   Starn 1968, p. 106n1.

40   Vasari 1996, vol. 1, p. 852. For the original Italian, see Vasari (1568) 1976, vol. 4, pp. 393–94: "andò sempre di cosa in cosa migliorando di sorte."

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