

The Colonna Altarpiece in the Metropolitan Museum and Problems of the Early Style of Raphael¹

KONRAD OBERHUBER

Curator of Drawings, Fogg Art Museum

A RECENT MONOGRAPH ON RAPHAEL conveniently juxtaposes monochrome illustrations of two of his altarpieces that have always been considered nearly contemporary works.² Both represent the Madonna enthroned with saints. Both follow prototypes in the work of Pietro Perugino. Both were painted for churches in Perugia. Giorgio Vasari described them—and we shall consider his statement later—in a period of Raphael's life devoted to works done after the master's first stay in Florence, usually dated to about 1504/5. One of them, the Madonna Ansidei (Figure 1), in the National Gallery, London, seems to confirm Vasari's placement by a date, 1505, that can be found on the garment of the Virgin.³ The other, the Colonna altarpiece (Figure 2), shows, especially in the drapery of St. Paul, a monumentality of form that convinced all later writers that it had been created under the direct influ-

ence of Fra Bartolomeo, whom Raphael encountered in Florence in 1505.⁴ Some old-fashioned features, however, made them assume a conception of the work around 1504, before Raphael went to the city on the Arno. Sensitive art historians like Crowe and Cavalcaselle seem almost embarrassed by some of the strange traits of the Metropolitan's altarpiece and offer long analyses of features incompatible with the period of 1505 in Raphael's work.⁵

The monograph by Sir John Pope-Hennessy admirably characterizes the panels' differences in spatial conception. In fact, the analysis of these differences could be a good classroom exercise for an undergraduate seminar. While the conventions of arrangement, the figure types, the features, the understanding of form, and the intensity of expression clearly prove that we are dealing here not only with two works of the same tradi-

1. The ideas in this article were first presented in lecture form at Princeton University in January 1975 in a series sponsored jointly with the Institute for Advanced Study. Much of the work was done during my stay as a temporary member of the Institute and with the help of the Marquand and Firestone libraries. I am also grateful to the staff of the European Paintings Department at the Metropolitan Museum, and especially to Katharine Batejer for showing me X-rays of the Colonna altarpiece and discussing its condition. After my article was completed, the altarpiece was cleaned by John M. Brealey, the Museum's Conservator of Paintings. For his comments, see Appendix.

2. John Pope-Hennessy, *Raphael: The Wrightsman Lectures* (New York, 1970) figs. 78, 79, 89.

3. Cecil Gould, *National Gallery Catalogues: The Sixteenth Century Italian Schools (Excluding the Venetian)* (London, 1962) no. 1171, pp. 151–153; Luitpold Dussler, *Raphael* (London-New York, 1971) pp. 13–14.

4. Dussler pp. 14–15. Elizabeth Gardner and Katharine Baetjer kindly allowed me to use the catalogue entry on the painting prepared for the Museum's forthcoming catalogue by Federico Zeri; it will give a complete and useful survey of previous literature and of the painting's provenance.

5. Joseph A. Crowe and Giovanni Cavalcaselle, *Raphael: His Life and Works* (London, 1882–85) I, pp. 217–221, esp. 219–220.

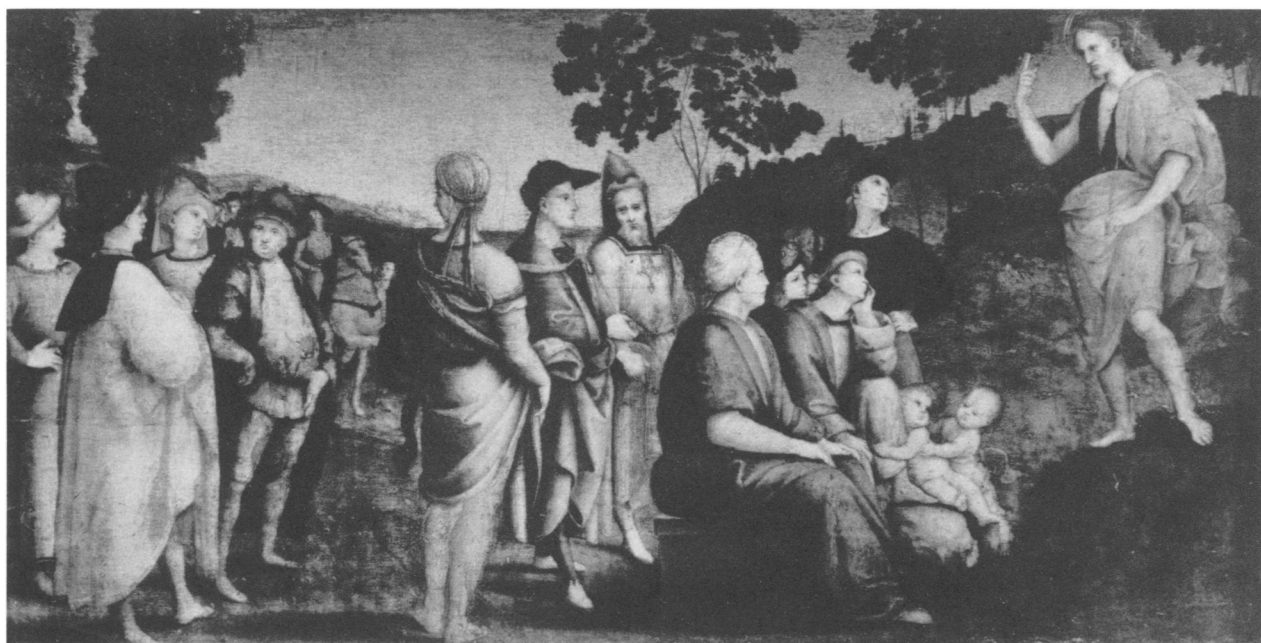


FIGURE 1
Raphael, Madonna Ansidei. National Gallery,
London

FIGURE 2
Raphael, The Virgin and Child with Sts. Cath-
erine and Lucy, Peter and Paul, central panel of
the Colonna altarpiece. The Metropolitan Mu-
seum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 16.30a

tion, but also painted by the same master, the formal intentions could within this limited sphere be hardly more diverse. In the Colonna altarpiece it becomes evident that the artist, in spite of his basic bias for strongly plastic form, is thinking in terms of filling the picture plane according to decorative principles. Little space is left below and above the figures. The large looming baldachin of the Madonna's throne is cut by the frame in such a way that the impact of its rounded form is strongly mitigated. The high horizon helps to flatten its





protruding shape just as it lessens the effect of the foreshortened steps. The landscape, in accordance with the high eye level, is drawn up to the height of the heads of Sts. Peter and Paul and is arranged in obvious strata. The rather squat figures themselves spread out in the plane with large expanding garments. Their gestures and stances mainly extend toward the sides; their faces are either frontal or profile. They are arranged in three flat layers, one behind the other, and in two ranges of height so as to fill a maximum of surface. All the accessories reflect the decorative intent. The throne is ornamented with knotwork and the pattern of the backdrop behind the Virgin stresses the plane. Even the volutes of the throne do not show much foreshortening but rather exist for their ornamental value. The same is true of the garments, above all the dark gown of the Virgin studded with gold. The female saints, although clad in dresses rather sweepingly painted in strong plain colors, have decoratively draped shawls around their shoulders. Large ornamented hems adorn the simpler cloaks of the apostles. The colors are applied in large masses, little broken by lights and shadows.

After these comments, the different character of the *Madonna Ansidei* should be obvious. There is space above and below and around the figures, clearly defined by light-colored architecture that frames the plas-

tically conceived landscape with its lower horizon. The elegant throne towers up with sculptural clarity, its polished elements gleaming in the sharply modeling light. The long-limbed figures move with conscious ease, acting or stepping forward in space. The artist obviously wants to present us with object lessons in successful foreshortening, such as the staff and book of St. Nicholas or the elegant hand of the Virgin. The light makes the features and bodily forms, now freed from the laws of the plane, appear in delicate roundness. It enriches the colors with soft highlights and shadows. The coloring itself has become more refined without losing its depth and glow. There is a greater lightness in the whole.

The sheer advance in technical proficiency in the *Madonna Ansidei* makes it obvious that the *Colonna altarpiece* is considerably less mature both in conception and execution. The technical advance is matched by the progress in the mastery of features, gestures, and expression, which changes from an almost stark intensity, for instance in the head of St. Peter, to a lyrical, even melodious delicacy in the head of St. John.

Whoever may still have some doubts as to the truth of these observations should open Oskar Fischel's *Raphael* at plate 37⁶ to admire at a glance the only re-

6. Oskar Fischel, *Raphael* (Berlin, 1962).

FIGURE 3

Raphael, *The Preaching of the Baptist*, predella panel of the *Madonna Ansdei*. Viscountess Mersey, Pulborough, Sussex



maining panel of the *Ansdei* predella and three of the ones left from the *Colonna* altarpiece.⁷ In the *Preaching of the Baptist* from the *Ansdei* (Figure 3), figures in richly varied attire move and pose elegantly in the extending space, and the eye is led into depth by continuously diminishing shapes and revolving forms. The light plays an important role in giving unity to the intricate grouping of the whole. In the *Procession to Calvary* (Figure 4), once a part of the Metropolitan's altar, the men dragging Christ flatly across the foreground completely block our view into depth. All movements seem to be limited by the laws of the picture plane, even though some slight attempts are made to break away from it. Each form is strongly modeled, colored, and lighted for itself with no overall unity except for the decorative pattern of the procession with its delicate rhythm. An amazing development must have taken place between the two works, and clearly it took longer

7. The *Ansdei* panel is owned by Viscountess Mersey, Pulborough, Sussex; Dussler p. 14. All the predella panels of the *Colonna* altarpiece are extant: the *Procession to Calvary*, National Gallery, London, Gould no. 2919, p. 156, Dussler p. 15; the *Agony in the Garden*, Metropolitan Museum, Dussler p. 16 (to be discussed in the forthcoming catalogue by Federico Zeri and Elizabeth Gardner); *St. Anthony of Padua* and *St. Francis*, both Dulwich College Picture Gallery, London, Dussler p. 16. For a repro-

FIGURE 4

Raphael, *The Procession to Calvary*, predella panel of the *Colonna* altarpiece. National Gallery, London

than a single year, even for the miraculously alive spirit of Raphael.

In 1504 there is indeed no place for such spaceless paintings in Raphael's work. It is the year of the *Sposallizio* (Figure 40) in the Brera, with its delicately moving maidens and suitors rhythmically grouped in front of the wide expanse of the temple's courtyard. Raphael is here clearly a master of foreshortening, and only a small evolutionary step separates this work from the main panel of the *Ansdei* altarpiece.

A look at one of Raphael's early Florentine works, the *Madonna Terranuova*, in Berlin,⁸ may convince us that the tendency toward softly modeled forms in free spaces enlivened by a gleaming light continues in his work after the *Ansdei*. There is no room for the *Colonna* altarpiece in Raphael's later development.

Perhaps we should eliminate all possible last doubts by examining the argument of the Fra Bartolomeo in-

duction of Claudio Inglese Gallo's copy of the complete predella showing its original arrangement, though without the two saints destined for the base of the pilasters, Pope-Hennessy fig. 21.

8. Dussler pp. 16–17. This painting is clearly more advanced in style than the *Madonna Ansdei*, as it already shows very strongly the influence of Leonardo, not yet noticeable in the altarpiece. It is, on the other hand, surely the least mature of Raphael's Florentine Madonnas and has rightly been dated to 1505.

fluence in the garments of the apostles, repeated by every writer on the altar. It is easy enough to show that those large and little-differentiated draperies differ essentially from the work of the Frate, who always employs rich rippling folds and whose impact on Raphael can be found in the precise year of 1505 in the dated fresco in San Severo in Perugia (Figure 5).⁹ Here the large billowing garments of the saints and angels are as close to the work of the Florentine as is the compositional arrangement with its strong perspective and stressed foreshortening. Also influenced by Fra Bartolomeo are the rich light and the free movement of the figures. This work was clearly done after Raphael's first Florentine works, while the Colonna altarpiece and, I think, the Madonna Ansdei, were done before them. It is indeed instructive to compare the heavy and monumental, but rather flatly and decoratively conceived Virgin in the Colonna altarpiece with the more graceful and articulate, but still thoroughly Peruginesque one in the Ansdei; this in turn with the clearly more advanced and Leonardesque Madonna Terranuova, and, finally, with the figure of Christ in the fresco in San Severo, where the Ansdei pose is revised in the light of the Florentine lesson and achieves a new weight and monumentality now combined with spatial freedom and a graceful flow of line.

Should these observations be correct, we would have to conclude that Raphael did not go to Florence at the end of 1504, right after his stay in Urbino, but only in 1505 after he had completed the Madonna Ansdei. He could have stayed only for a few months, since he must have returned filled with new ideas later in the same year to paint the fresco in San Severo. Thus it may be only at the end of 1505 or the beginning of 1506 that his longer stay in Florence began. The date of 1504 for Raphael's first major encounter with the city is based above all on Vasari's account, to be discussed presently,

and on the date October 1, 1504, of the letter written by Giovanna Felicia Feltria della Rovere, duchess of Sora and wife of the Prefect of Rome, recommending Raphael to Pier Soderini, Gonfaloniere of Florence.¹⁰ However, this letter, written in Urbino, proves only that Raphael was in that city in the fall of 1504 and had the intention of going to Florence in the near future. This trip may actually have been undertaken several months later.

However this may be, I think that we can feel certain that the Colonna altarpiece can have no place in Raphael's work of 1504 or 1505, or even after, and that whatever Tuscan influences there might be in it, they differ from those assimilated by the master in that period.

We may now legitimately ask how it came that the picture was ever dated to those years. We already know that the blame lies with Vasari. Reading his story of Raphael's early years, it is easy to discover how he made the mistake.¹¹ One has to proceed carefully with Vasari, constantly aware of the concepts and literary forms that govern his accounts. There are two *concetti* among those that govern Raphael's early life that are of great importance for us: The first is that Raphael proceeds from Urbino to Perugia, from there to Città di Castello, on to Siena, and finally to Florence, the culmination point of his early training. His early works are therefore grouped according to cities in that sequence. The second is the *concetto* of Raphael as the perfect imitator of his teacher Perugino, who slowly broke away from his master. These two ideas alone can explain why, in Vasari's view, the first work of Raphael had to be found in Perugia and had to resemble closely the work of Perugino. When Vasari had to insert his descriptions of Raphael's works in Perugia, which he had apparently not seen or studied before 1550, into the second edition of the *Vite*, the only work that would

9. Dussler p. 68. The main influence is, as was always observed, Fra Bartolomeo's Last Judgment, in San Marco, for composition, drapery style, and figure types, yet there is a noticeable impact of Leonardo's Madonna and St. Anne cartoon in the angel-putto at the left and in the large rounded cheeks of the angels. Dussler and others have tended to regard the inscription with the date 1505 as relevant only for the beginning of the fresco and to see its execution closer to 1507 and 1508. This is untenable, for the fresco contains too many Umbrian reminiscences, especially in the figure of Christ, and fits best stylistically into Raphael's earliest Florentine period,

right after the Madonna Terranuova and just before the slightly more advanced Madonna with the Goldfinch. The spatial freedom and the richness of light, drapery, and emotion in the Madonna del Baldacchino of 1508 are greatly advanced beyond those of the early fresco.

10. Vincenzo Golzio, *Raffaello, nei documenti, nelle testimonianze dei contemporanei e nella letteratura del suo secolo* (Vatican, 1936) pp. 9–10.

11. Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence, 1878–82) IV, pp. 316–325.



FIGURE 5

Raphael, *The Trinity Adored by Saints*. S. Severo, Perugia (photo: Anderson)

fit this previously established concept of the earliest painting was the Coronation of the Virgin, to which he had somewhat vaguely and ambiguously alluded in the 1550 rendering of the story.¹² Yet he also realized that there were two more works in Perugia dated 1505, the *Madonna Ansdei* and the *San Severo* fresco, which made him realize that Raphael must have returned to Perugia in that year. He connected this stay with knowledge of a sojourn of Raphael's in Urbino of around 1504. So Vasari makes the artist go to Florence, return from there to Urbino to reorganize his affairs after the supposed death of his father, and then go to Perugia to paint the works of 1505. To this account he adds, without giving any indication of date, that Raphael was also

commissioned in Perugia by the nuns of Sant'Antonio da Padua to do an altarpiece and then proceeds to carefully describe it. He specifically mentions the dressed Christ child. It struck him as an obviously old-fashioned and strange feature, and he attributed it to the preference of the chaste nuns.

It is quite obvious that Vasari, somewhat bewildered by this beautiful but unusual altarpiece, simply stuck it into his account at this place. It has remained there since, and only one author, the Danish scholar Wanscher, in his curious book on Raphael, raised a voice of doubt, eliminating the altarpiece from Raphael's work altogether.¹³ The reason may simply be that the work was not so easily accessible to European scholars in the

12. Giorgio Vasari, *Le Vite* (Florence, Lorenzo Torrentino, 1550) pp. 636–641; ed. Corrado Ricci (Milan-Rome, n.d.) III, pp. 83–88.

13. V. Wanscher, *Raffaello Santi da Urbino: His Life and Works* (London, 1926) p. 133, no. IV, as Penni in "The Paintings executed in the name of Raffaello da Urbino, but not after his compositions."



FIGURE 6
Raphael, God the
Father and the Virgin
Holding Crowns. Frag-
ments, Museo di
Capodimonte, Naples
(photo: Soprinten-
denza Gallerie)

critical period of the formation of the modern image of Raphael. It was in Spain in the collection of the Duca di Castro in the later nineteenth century and passed via the London and Paris markets to Pierpont Morgan shortly before 1900.¹⁴ Had Berlin succeeded in acquiring the painting in that “early” phase, I am sure that our present understanding of it would be different.

No documents about the commission have turned up to date, but as the late Hanno Hahn used to say, this is lucky, for we are free to place the painting where we wish to in Raphael’s early development, which we will now discuss.

It is highly unfortunate that Raphael’s first documented altarpiece was destroyed by an earthquake in the eighteenth century. He was already a master when he received the commission, together with the older Evangelista da Pian di Meleto, a former helper of his father’s. The contract for the rather large work dedi-

cated to S. Nicola da Tolentino was drawn up December 10, 1500, in Raphael’s eighteenth year.¹⁵ The altarpiece was delivered to the Capella Barocio in Sant’Agostino in Città di Castello September 13, 1501. Drawings and two fragments of the panel (Figure 6) have survived, as has a rather poor copy (Figure 7) of the lower part, in the Museum of Città di Castello.¹⁶ The architectural setting was close to that of the Madonna Ansdei in structure but was covered with decorative detail. The

14. Information about the painting’s history in the files of the Metropolitan Museum.

15. Golzio pp. 7–8.

16. Dussler pp. 1–2. See A. E. Oppé, *Raphael*, ed. Charles Mitchell (London, 1970) figs. 18–21, for the copy, a complete reproduction of the Naples fragments, and for one of the preparatory drawings. For the latter, Oskar Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* (Berlin, 1913–41) I, pls. 5–8. The most important recent study of the altarpiece is Wolfgang Schöne, “Raphaels Krönung des heiligen Nikolaus von Tolentino,” *Eine Gabe der Freunde für Carl Georg Heise zum 28. VI. 1950* (Berlin, 1950) I, pp. 164–166.

idea for it must have come from a drawing by Perugino mentioned in the will of one Angelo Conti, dated December 8, 1500, and surely made somewhat earlier for an altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin, St. Anne, and the Holy Kinship. This altarpiece, painted a little later for Santa Maria degli Angeli in Perugia, is now in Marseilles.¹⁷ The saint in Raphael's lost work was portrayed stepping on the devil. Angels stood around him, and God the Father in a mandorla surrounded by cherubs and the Virgin and St. Augustine appeared bust-length above the saint, holding crowns, a typical manifestation of Umbrian hierarchical and decorative arrangement as Perugino had given it shape. The density of the interlocking figural forms and geometrical shapes is best matched by a work Perugino painted in the year 1500, the magnificent *Virgin in Glory* from Vallombrosa, now in the Accademia in Florence.¹⁸

Raphael, when he worked on this altarpiece in 1501, was obviously aware of the development in design in Perugino's shop of around 1500, and Fischel in an early article specifically compared the fragments with details from the Vallombrosa panel and with other works of Perugino of similar style and date.¹⁹ Yet there is something significantly different from Perugino's work of around 1500 in Raphael's contemporary creations. The columnlike roundness and the smooth curves of Perugino's forms at this moment differ from Raphael's more flatly conceived and angular draperies or even fingers and hands. Raphael's handling of the surface is rougher, the color is less modeled in light and dark and is applied with greater directness. Apart from such features of style, the facial types of the angel and the Virgin, with their oblong and more angular features, differ essentially from the more rounded ones of the same figures in Perugino with their much finer detail. Perugino's Virgins, unless represented mourning, are never shown with the mantle drawn over the head as here, but al-

ways with rich coiffures and a light transparent veil.

Some of these differences may be accounted for by the fact that the Vallombrosa altarpiece is the most extreme example of Perugino's latest development of style about 1500. The character of this can be most easily experienced when one compares the different frescoes by the master in the hall of the Cambio in Perugia, completed in that year.²⁰ For example, the fresco representing Fortitude and Temperance (Figure 8) shows exactly the same style as the *Virgin in Glory* with

FIGURE 7

Copy after Raphael, S. Nicola da Tolentino and Angels. Pinacoteca Comunale, Città di Castello (photo: Brogi)



17. Fiorenzo Canuti, *Il Perugino* (Siena, 1931) I, pp. 164–166, pls. cxxvi, cxxvii. See also Ettore Camesasca, *Tutta la pittura del Perugino* (Milan, 1959) pl. 161, pp. 95–96.

18. Canuti I pp. 132–134, pls. xcvi–cvi; Camesasca pls. 145–150, pp. 90–91.

19. Oskar Fischel, "Raffaels Lehrer," *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 34 (1913) pp. 89–96.

20. Canuti pp. 134–144, pls. civ–cxviii; Camesasca, pls. 109–143, pp. 80–90. See also Lionello Venturi and Giovanni Carandente, *Il Perugino, Gli affreschi del Collegio del Cambio* (Turin, 1955).



FIGURE 8
Pietro Perugino, Fortitude and Temperance. Collegio del Cambio, Sala d'Udienza, Perugia (photo: Alinari)



FIGURE 9
Pietro Perugino, God the Father with Prophets and Sibyls. Collegio del Cambio, Sala d'Udienza, Perugia (photo: Alinari)

its striving for smoothly rounded forms isolated by their strong columnar plasticity. The fresco of God the Father with Sibyls and Prophets (Figure 9), on the other hand, shows greater decorative richness, densely grouped figures moving in the plane, deploying garments with rippling draperies and holding ornamental scrolls. This work must be early within the fresco cycle commissioned in 1496, for it shows the same style as the ceiling, with which, obviously, the decoration was begun. The Sibyls and Prophets may have been painted as early as that year or possibly in 1498, but a clear chronology of the frescoes in the Cambio does not exist, nor, for that matter, does a definite assessment of Perugino's stylistic attitudes in the years when they were painted. This hampers definite solutions for the controversial problems of Raphael's relationship to his teacher. For the moment it must be sufficient to observe that the attire and the draperies of Raphael's angels holding scrolls obviously follows the example of the Sibyls fresco rather than that of the more mature work, although the forms may actually have been more rounded. It thus seems that the young painter did not follow his master all the way in his latest change of style, as he inevitably would have, were it true that he had actually worked on the fresco representing Fortitude, in the Cambio, as many writers have asserted.²¹

Apart from this overwhelming effect of Perugino on Raphael there is yet another influence noticeable in the San Nicola altarpiece, above all in the features of the Virgin and the angel described above, but also in the strongly decorative character of the architecture and of the armor of St. Michael. It is that of Bernardo Pintoricchio of Perugia, who after much work in Rome had settled in Umbria in 1495 and worked in various places around Perugia until 1502 or 1503.²² The fragment of the angel's head in Brescia, for example, may well be compared with similar heads in Pintoricchio's work.²³

Pintoricchio's art can be best understood as that of a master who developed at first along with Perugino up to the early 1480s, when they collaborated in some of the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in Rome. His personality led him to assimilate the more dramatic and the decorative aspects of Perugino's art and to carry these further as he separated from him. His long stays in Rome and his humanist and papal commissions led him to study Roman and early Christian art, especially decorative painting and mosaics, all of which reinforced his striving for ornamental richness and monumental splendor and made him revive hieratic modes of religious representation.²⁴ Typical for him, therefore, are Madonnas with their heads covered by mantles that are often dark according to Byzantine tradition and decorated with gold (Figure 13). His children are usually represented dressed in medieval fashion. The furniture and architecture are covered with rich ornament. The color is luminous and of decorative richness like mosaics. Pintoricchio's art, then, when influencing Raphael, would reinforce those elements in his training with Perugino that were remnants of the master's earlier Roman period, counteracting Perugino's later development toward greater plastic isolation of the figures.

Pintoricchio's influence is even more evident and has often been observed in what most scholars agree to be Raphael's earliest work, the votive banner in the Museum in Città di Castello.²⁵ It is obvious in the saint kneeling at the left of the Cross, with his delicate oblong face, and in the landscape with its large decorative rocks (Figure 10). The much damaged banner, representing on one side the saints Sebastian and Roch praying to the Trinity and the Creation of Eve on the other, has been associated with a plague of 1499 in the city and may have been painted in 1500, certainly close in time to the San Nicola altarpiece. The banner's bright and luminous colors are very similar to the fragments

21. Camesasca pp. 83-84; Dussler p. 68; Luisa Becherucci, "Raphael and Painting," *The Complete Works of Raphael*, ed. M. Salmi (New York, 1969) pp. 23-25. I cannot follow Becherucci in any of her attributions of important parts of Perugino paintings to Raphael, pp. 18-25.

22. Corrado Ricci, *Pintoricchio, His Life, Work, and Time* (London, 1902) pp. 130-161; Enzo Carli, *Il Pintoricchio* (Milan, 1960) pp. 53-63.

23. Carli figs. 63, 81, or 115.

24. Juergen Schulz, "Pintoricchio and the Revival of Antiquity," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 25 (1962) pp. 35-55; Nicole Dacos, *La découverte de la Domus Aurea et la formation des grotesques à la renaissance* (Studies of the Warburg Institute 31) (London, 1969) pp. 62-69.

25. Dussler p. 3.

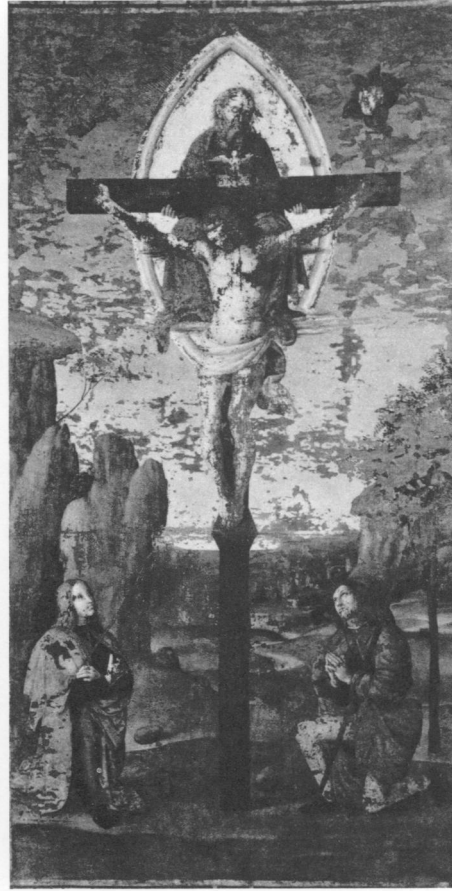


FIGURE 10
Raphael, God the
Father Creating Eve,
and Two Saints Ador-
ing the Trinity. Votive
banner, Pinacoteca
Comunale, Città
di Castello (photos:
Giuseppe Tacchini)

in Naples and Brescia. The facial types, draperies, and the general vocabulary of form are closely related as is the style of the preparatory drawings.²⁶

In the banner as in the altar, in spite of Pintoricchio's influence, the basic idiom remains that of Perugino, again in his style near 1500. The angels in the Creation of Eve are a variation of those above the Sibyls in the Cambio and they have similar rich and brittle draperies.²⁷ The garment of God the Father may be compared with that of King David in the same fresco as it

strives at least for similar expansion in the plane. His facial type is close to that of Moses. The major prototype for this drapery may perhaps be found in a fresco of the Nativity from San Francesco al Monte, datable around 1499 and repeated rather exactly in the Cambio.²⁸ The figure of Adam, as Dussler pointed out, could have been taken from that of Satan as he once lay beneath St. Michael in the altarpiece from the Certosa di Pavia of 1499. This figure, now cut away, can be reconstructed from a copy;²⁹ the essential forms

26. Fischel, *Raphael's Zeichnungen I*, no. 2; Karl T. Parker, *Catalogue of the Collection of Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum 2, Italian Schools* (Oxford, 1956) no. 501; Fischel, *Raphael*, no. 11; Philip Pouncey and John Gere, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Raphael and His Circle* (London, 1962) no. 2r.

27. Raphael seems to combine several features from Perugino-type angels; the bodies and drapery are near to but less sturdy than the Cambio ones. The feet are closer together, and some of the drapery motifs remind one of musical angels, such as those in the fresco of the Madonna in Glory, San Sebastiano, Panicale (Camesasca pl. 152). The wings are outspread as in Perugino's flying an-

gels, for example those in the pala from San Pietro, Lyon (Camesasca pl. 89). Perugino seems to have experimented with similar modification of his standard types after 1500, for example in the Crucifixion in Sant'Agostino, Siena, commissioned August 4, 1502 (Camesasca p. 177B), and in other later works such as the Baptism of Christ, in Foligno (Camesasca pl. 186), usually dated close to 1507. Was Raphael using a prototype, now lost?

28. Camesasca pl. 157. The drapery of the Virgin is close to that of God the Father. St. Joseph and the shepherds may have influenced the poses of St. Stephen and St. Roch.

29. Oskar Fischel, "Die Zeichnungen der Umbrier II," *Beiheft, Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 38 (1917) fig. 125.

can also be found in the 1495 *Pietà* from S. Giusto in Florence, now in the Uffizi.³⁰ Raphael may have modified these figures somewhat in the light of recent experience of Luca Signorelli's works in Città di Castello.

In fact, as Fischel has shown,³¹ figures drawn on a sheet in Oxford that contains a study for the Eternal in the Creation of Eve derive from Signorelli's St. Sebastian in Città di Castello,³² possibly from Pintoricchio, and from a design by Perugino related to the Adoration in the Certosa altarpiece³³ or to the Madonna del Sacco³⁴ in the Palazzo Pitti, closely similar to each other. The drawing of God the Father's drapery looks more Peruginesque than the somewhat coarser drapery in the banner as executed, and this may again prove that Raphael relied on his stock of drawn copies from Perugino rather than on memory of executed works.

In the matter of color and painting technique and also in the largeness of the forms represented, the Madonna del Sacco in the Pitti seems to be closer to the banner than the more mature London Adoration, probably painted in 1499 for the Certosa di Pavia, where the forms are more simplified and rounded.³⁵ This seems to show again Raphael's predilection for the earlier, more decorative manner of Perugino. And yet the matter is more complicated, because the banner clearly also contains elements both in invention and execution—above all the figure of St. Roch with his rounded drapery closely clinging to his body—that reflect Perugino's more advanced style of around 1500 as it becomes most manifest, for example, in the *Fortitude* of the Cambio (Figure 8).

The complicated situation to be deduced from this—and here our uncertainty about Perugino's development prevents definite results—presents itself like this:

30. Camesasca pl. 64.

31. See note 26, above.

32. Pietro Scarpellini, *Luca Signorelli* (Florence, 1964) fig. 34.

33. Camesasca pl. 99.

34. Camesasca pl. 75.

35. I agree with Camesasca pp. 64–65 that the Madonna del Sacco is considerably earlier than the Certosa altarpiece and probably dates from around 1495.

36. For a survey of Perugino's movements, Camesasca pp. 35–38, Canuti pp. 99–134. Raphael's early stay in Florence was recently emphasized by Becherucci, pp. 12–15. The influence of Lorenzo di Credi, and through him of the Verrocchio shop, is of a certain importance but must not be exaggerated. Verrocchiesque material was surely also available in Perugino's workshop in Perugia, at least in copies.

Raphael must have received some decisive impressions from Perugino around 1495–98, where I tend to date the Madonna del Sacco and the Sibyls. He may have gone with Perugino to Florence in 1495 and there again and also to Fano in 1497. He apparently did not follow Perugino on his later trips to Florence in the second half of 1498 and in summer of 1499, but remained in the provincial atmosphere of the Perugia shop, where Perugino continued to work on the commissions received in 1496.³⁶ After Perugino's return in 1499 and 1500 Raphael tried to catch up with him on his latest development of style, keeping, however, his former bias. He leaves him at a moment in the year 1500, before Perugino draws his most radical conclusions, and paints the latest works in the Cambio, for which Raphael may, however, have known the preparatory drawings, as he certainly also did of works done by Perugino on his trips. Even after Raphael left, he never lost contact with his master.

Future research may modify these results, but one thing seems clear, that those who, following Springer, let Raphael enter Perugino's shop only very late, about 1499 or 1500—a theory upheld by such authorities as Sydney Freedberg and Rudolf Wittkower—cannot be right.³⁷ It is much more likely that Raphael entered Perugino's shop either as Vasari would have it, still under the guidance of his father in 1494, or shortly after his father's death in 1495, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle proposed.³⁸ This was, in fact, the view of Oskar Fischel and, because of recent support on the part of Roberto Longhi, it is today the generally held view.³⁹

Our longish discussion of Raphael's earliest known works and problems relating to them has prepared us for a true assessment of the Colonna altarpiece (Figure

37. Anton Springer, *Raphael und Michelangelo* (3rd ed., Leipzig, 1895) p. 52; Sydney Freedberg, *Painting of the High Renaissance in Rome and Florence* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961) p. 62 (Freedberg changed his mind in *Painting in Italy 1500 to 1600*, Pelican History of Art [Harmondsworth-Baltimore, 1970] p. 29); Rudolf Wittkower, "The Young Raphael," *Allen Memorial Art Museum Bulletin* 20 (1962/63) pp. 154–162.

38. Crowe and Cavalcaselle I, pp. 26–44.

39. Oskar Fischel, *Raphael* (London, 1948) p. 20, (Berlin, 1962) p. 16; Roberto Longhi, "Percorso di Raffaello Giovine," *Paragone* 5 (1955) no. 65, pp. 8–23, esp. 12–17; Becherucci p. 12; Creighton Gilbert, "A Miracle by Raphael," *North Carolina Museum of Art Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (1965) p. 16.

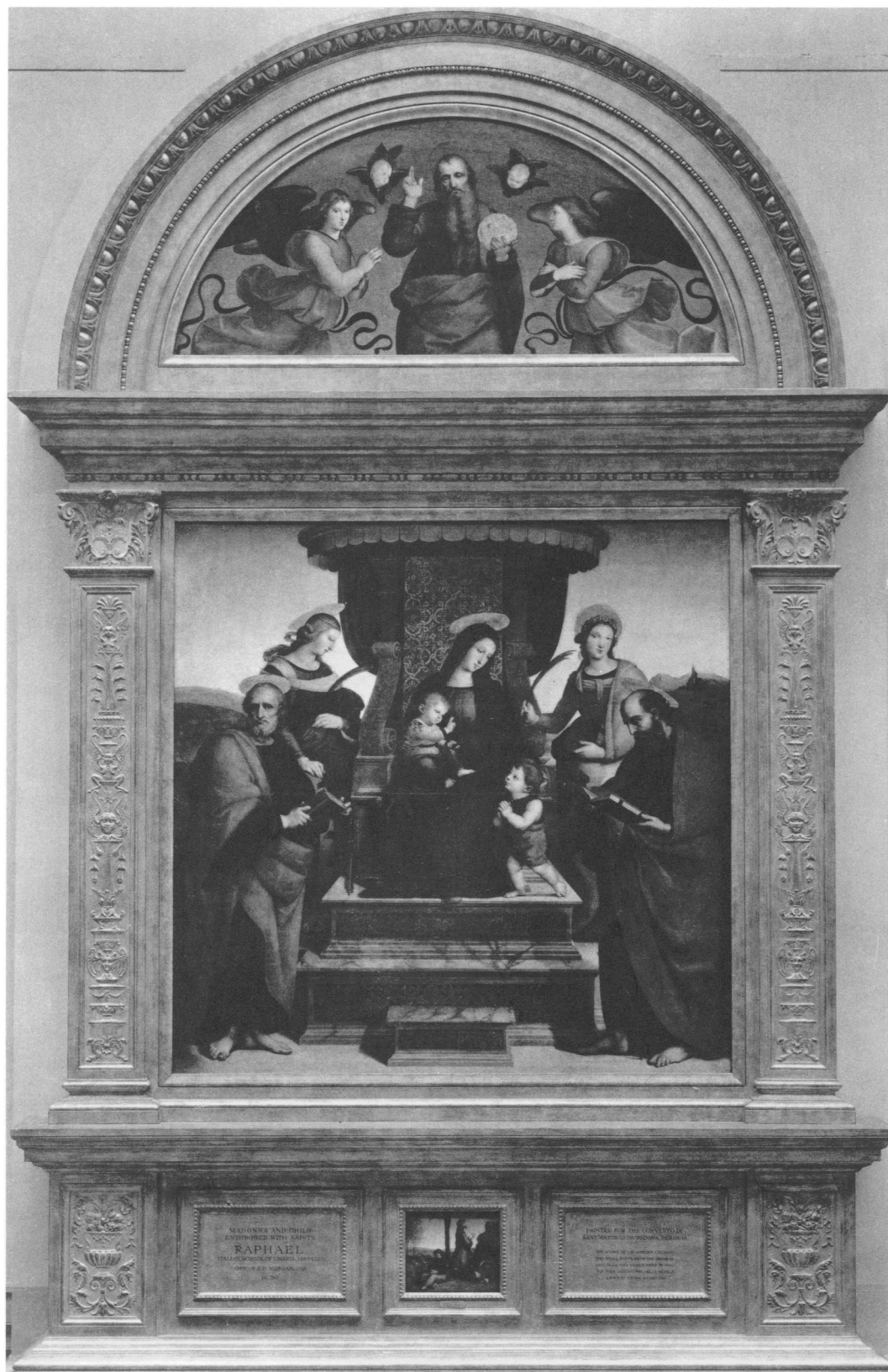


FIGURE 11

The Colonna altarpiece with lunette and predella panel as formerly exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum

11). A monumental work of which even the accessories are still preserved, it can document Raphael's style better than the two early pieces already discussed. It now becomes easy to see that many of the altarpiece's main characteristics, which we analyzed above, correspond precisely to those of the earliest works. The basic form derives again from Perugino. The altarpiece differs from most of his *sacre conversazioni* in that it is placed in front of an open landscape, not into some kind of architecture, and because of the great prominence of the throne. A painting in the Baltimore Museum of Art, usually considered a workshop piece and dated 1500/1 by Van Marle, shows all the features, but on the other hand again the smooth and plastic style typical of the period in Perugino and so foreign to Raphael's contemporary work.⁴⁰ There must, however, have existed an earlier, more decorative version by the master, since there are numerous works of the school that reflect such a lost work, for example the *Madonna with St. Jerome and St. Augustine* in Bordeaux, attributed by some authors to the late Perugino himself,⁴¹ or a painting by Lo Spagna in the Museum of S. Francesco in Assisi.⁴² Eusebio di S. Giorgio's version of 1509,⁴³ in the Galleria Nazionale in Perugia is, on the other hand, clearly inspired by Raphael's painting both in layout and decorative detail, although the figures are translated into a more Peruginesque idiom. It shares, however, two features in common with most of the other examples of this type. The saints in the back are not elevated on a step, as in Raphael's work, and kneeling angels fill the

space above their heads. These must have been characteristics of the early prototype. The lost altarpiece may have already influenced Pintoricchio's allegories of the liberal arts in the Appartamento Borgia of 1492–95, who also sit on rich decorative thrones in an open landscape surrounded by their representatives.⁴⁴ The elaborate throne of *Aritmetica* was later copied in a *sacra conversazione* attributed to Lo Spagna, in the Perugia Gallery, that is otherwise inspired by a painting like the one in Baltimore.⁴⁵ It is fascinating to see how such motifs and compositions passed from one hand to another in the provincial centers of Umbria and central Italy.

The idea to elevate the saints in the back, a common feature in Signorelli's work but going back much further, can be found in another altarpiece by Perugino, known as the *Pala dei Decemviri*, now in the Vatican.⁴⁶ This panel, dating from 1495 and having the most elaborate and decorative throne extant in his work, remained important even for the *Madonna Ansidei*.

Peruginesque is not only the compositional idea of the Colonna altarpiece: many of its basic features are also, such as the handling of paint and the simplicity of the garments, the tendency toward strongly modeled volume apparent especially in the children and the heads of the apostles, the figure types, and much else. Yet we can discern here a strongly Pintoricchiesque flavor as well, perhaps more prominent than in the early works discussed above. The group of the Virgin and children (Figure 12) derives in reverse almost literally from the Perugian's *Virgin and Child with St. John*, in Cambridge (Figure 13), which fits well into a group of his works datable around 1500.⁴⁷ Here one finds the explanation for the old-fashioned features, the dressed children, and the blue gold-studded garment of the Virgin drawn over her head; and, further, one of

40. Henry Barton Jacobs, *The Collection of Mary Frick Jacobs* (Baltimore, 1938) no. 32; Raimond van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting* (The Hague, 1923–27) XIV, p. 372; Camesasca pp. 154–155, fig. 231. Usually listed as a fresco transferred to canvas, the work is so overpainted and in such bad condition that one cannot be sure of its authenticity, date, or authorship, yet it must surely reflect an authentic work of Perugino or his circle.

41. Camesasca pp. 153–154, fig. 228.

42. Van Marle p. 458, fig. 296. Some other examples are a work of the Spagna school, 1530, in the Spoleto Pinacoteca, mentioned van Marle p. 468, Anderson photo 5931; Berto di Giovanni's *Madonna and Saints*, from S. Francesco, Montone, the Queen's col-

lection, Buckingham Palace, van Marle p. 144, ill. in Umberto Gnoli, *Pittori e miniatori nell'Umbria* (Spoleto, 1923) pl. with Berto di Giovanni; Sinibaldo Ibi's *Madonna with Saints*, Rome, S. Francesca Romana, van Marle p. 446, Gnoli pl. with Sinibaldo.

43. Van Marle p. 436, fig. 283, Gnoli pl. with Eusebio. Raphael's composition was important also for Francesco da Città di Castello, known as "il Tifernate"; see his painting in Città di Castello, van Marle p. 449, fig. 291, Gnoli pl. under Francesco.

44. Ricci figs. pp. 119, 121, Carli pls. 86, 87.

45. Van Marle p. 471, fig. 305.

46. Camesasca pl. 62, p. 62.

47. Carli pl. 99, p. 57.

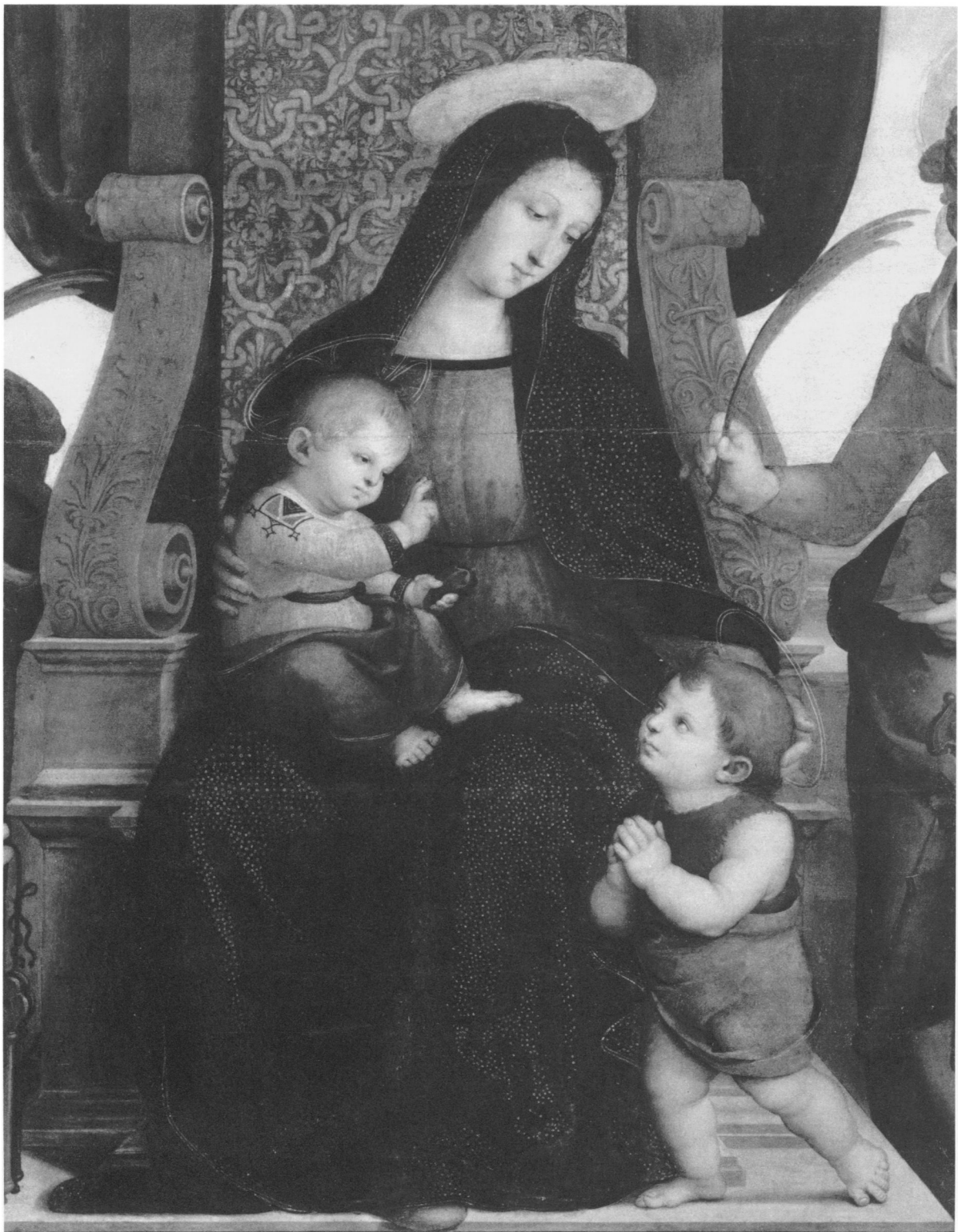


FIGURE 12 Virgin and Child, detail of the Colonna altarpiece



FIGURE 13 Pintoricchio, Virgin and Child with St. John. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge



FIGURE 14
Pintoricchio, St. Joseph, detail of Christ among
the Doctors. Sta. Maria Maggiore, Spello (photo:
Alinari)



FIGURE 15
St. Peter, detail of the Colonna altarpiece

the reasons why the Giovanino—a very uncommon presence in a *sacra conversazione*—may have been included. The facial type of the Virgin is, of course, as close to some of Pintoricchio's Virgins as the one in the San Nicola altarpiece already was. The decorative treatment of the scrolls on the throne can be compared with that of Pintoricchio's Virgin from the Pala dei Fossi of 1495.⁴⁸ It is in that work that one also becomes most aware of that master's sense for extending forms in the picture plane, for example, in the amplitude of the garments, a feature so characteristic also of our work. One finds this same feature equally in a work closer in time to the Colonna altarpiece: Pintoricchio's celebrated fresco in Spello of 1500–01 representing Christ among the Doctors. Even St. Joseph's face in that fresco, with its expressively elongated nose, (Figure 14),⁴⁹ shows strong affinities with that of the Metropolitan's St. Peter (Figure 15).

For the largeness of form and rather broad painting technique in the Colonna altarpiece, one may in a very

general way also think of Luca Signorelli, who certainly interested Raphael in this period. Signorelli also often employed the golden dots on the Virgin's cloak in his works. His influence becomes specific in the head of St. Catherine (Figure 16), which clearly reminds one of the female heads in many of Signorelli's Virgins and female saints. His Madonna and Child in the Metropolitan is a good example (Figure 17).⁵⁰

I think there can be no doubt that the Colonna altarpiece fits into the ambience of Raphael's earliest-known works. A drawing surely rightly regarded as a first idea for the God the Father in the Creation of Eve (Figure 18) was used for the garment of St. Paul with some variations (Figure 19);⁵¹ it shows the progress made after that work toward greater smoothness, simplicity, and volume. The simple grandeur of the treatment of the cope of the Giovanni Guadalberto in Perugino's Valombrosa altarpiece must have helped Raphael in the transformation. Compared with the fragments from the San Nicola altarpiece, the forms seem somewhat more advanced, rounder, and more convincingly modeled with more careful detail. The hard angularity of the hands so evident in the God the Father in Naples (Figure 6) has given way to more organic form in the Metropolitan's work. The Colonna altarpiece was probably started relatively soon after the completion of the lost S. Nicola da Tolentino, at the end of 1501 and the beginning of 1502.

That Raphael was progressing beyond his earliest phase is especially clear in the lunette (Figure 20), which decidedly differs in style from the main panel. Everything is more delicate and combined in a more unified and smoother rhythm, more convincingly modeled, more daringly foreshortened, more refined in color and execution. The heavy substance of the lower part becomes light and transparent. The return to Perugia from provincial Città di Castello (if the commissions brought about a change of place) must have brought Raphael into renewed contact with Perugino. This may have led him to greater technical efforts in order to equal his master's immense skill. He must have

48. Carli pls. 88, 89, p. 53.

49. Carli pls. 113–115, p. 61 for date.

50. Scarpellini pl. 85, see also pls. 19, 36, 43.

51. Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, pl. 11, Pouncey and Gere no. 2.



FIGURE 16
St. Catherine, detail of the Colonna altarpiece

FIGURE 17
Luca Signorelli, Madonna and Child. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Jules S. Bache Collection, 49.7.13



FIGURE 18
Raphael, study for figure of God the Father. British Museum

FIGURE 19
St. Paul, detail of the Colonna altarpiece

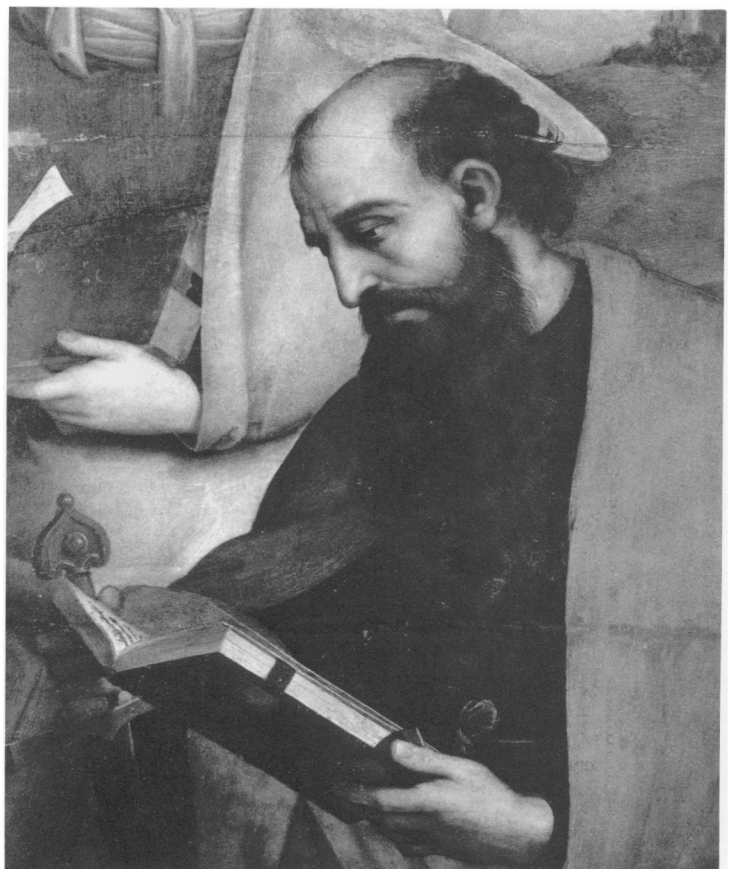




FIGURE 20

Raphael, God the Father Adored by Angels, lunette of the Colonna altarpiece. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 16.30b

also studied what Perugino had painted and drawn meanwhile. Yet his typology remains linked to Perugino's earlier work. The angels are still those of the Sibyls fresco in the Cambio but with fresher faces gazing with stronger intent. The God the Father, with its simple drapery, however, demonstrates a more complete understanding of Perugino's change of style in 1500—an understanding, as we have seen already, that affected the monumental St. Paul of the main panel.

In the predella, probably the last part painted in the altarpiece, Raphael uses figures and compositions (Figures 4, 21) designed by Perugino around 1495 for monumental paintings once in the Florentine convent of S. Giusto.⁵² He adapts them to the new smooth, rounded, almost bulky ideal of form that is inspired by the latest Perugino. This explains the inherent immobility of these tiny pictures, that makes them differ from most other predella panels in Perugino's and Raphael's work. Of the two Franciscan saints (Figures 22, 23) that once formed part of the ensemble and are now in Dulwich College, the St. Anthony of Padua almost rivals, despite his smallness, the monumental bulk of the saints in the Vallombroso altarpiece.

In the predella, however, Raphael's dense substance of form and his fresh and intense colors that speak with

immediacy to the beholder differ considerably from Perugino's works. The expression of his figures is not veiled by Perugino's sweet melancholy but has a drive, directness, and intensity that is hard to notice in reproduction but hits the beholder of the originals in spite of the clumsiness with which it is still rendered. It is one of the strange experiences one has in front of the altar as well as these panels, that while their composition and spatial arrangement are still unresolved and elements may even be badly drawn, one can feel in them a spirit that pushes and drives, clearly striving for more than the artist's present means of expression allow.

The predella panels have usually been associated in style with the small panels representing the Dream of Scipio and the Three Graces by those authors who do not regard them as Raphael's earliest works, around 1500.⁵³ All that can be said here about this problem is that those two pictures are clearly more advanced in style and later in date. They were probably painted at the end of 1504, during Raphael's sojourn in Urbino. To recognize this, one has only to observe the perfect

53. Pope-Hennessy p. 134. For a more extended discussion of different opinions, Gilbert p. 19 but also pp. 7, 14–17, Dussler, pp. 6–7.

FIGURES 22, 23

Raphael, St. Francis (left) and St. Anthony, predella panels of the Colonna altarpiece. College Gallery, Dulwich

52. The Christ in Agony (Camesasca pl. 74) served for both the same subject in Raphael's predella and for the movement of the figures in the Procession to Calvary panel (Figure 4). The Pietà (Camesasca pl. 64) was exemplary for the Lamentation. It has been pointed out that the Metropolitan's panel also has a relationship to the Christ in Agony in the background of the Last Supper, S. Onofrio, Florence (Camesasca pl. 44). Obviously Raphael did not look directly at either of these Florentine works but used stock figures and compositions from the workshop. For a good analysis of the relationship and of the difference between Perugino and Raphael in these works, Pope-Hennessy p. 134.

FIGURE 21

Raphael, The Agony in the Garden, predella panel of the Colonna altarpiece. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Funds from various donors, 32.130.1



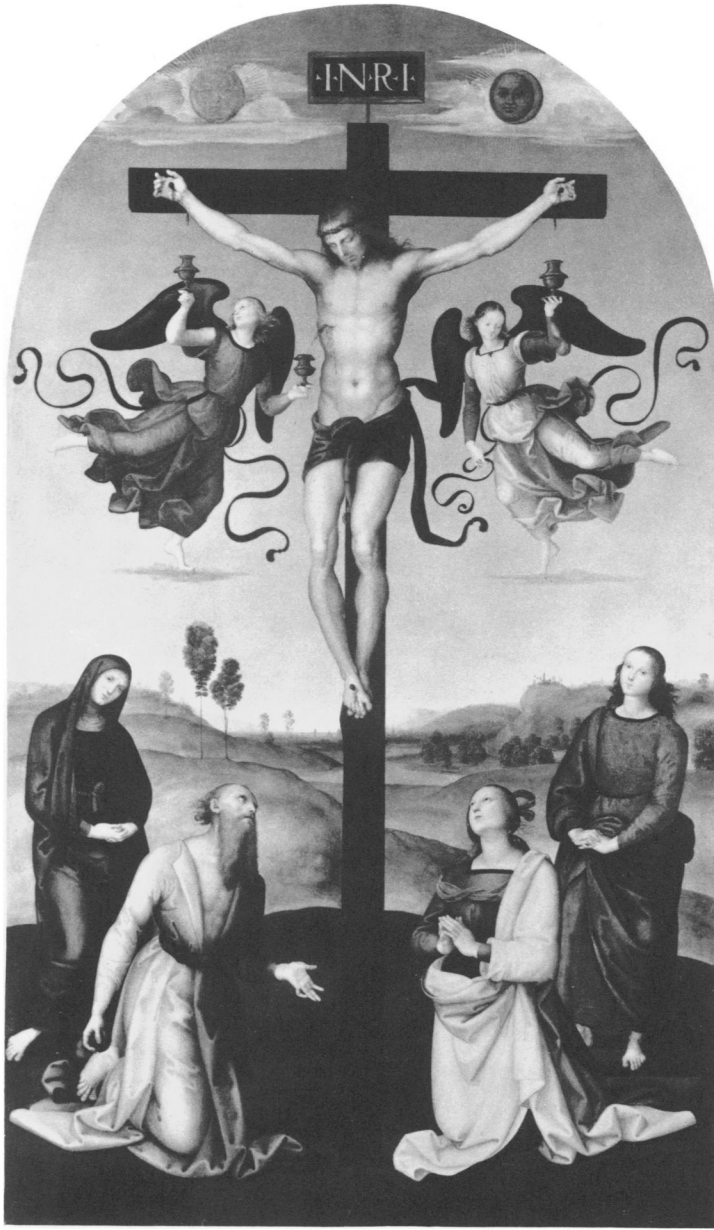


FIGURE 24
Raphael, the Mond Crucifixion. National Gallery, London

foreshortening of the figure of the dreaming Scipio and the spatial force of Virtue's gesture advancing her sword. The figures are much more highly articulated and so is the landscape, differentiated by delicate rocks and buildings influenced by Netherlandish painting.

Even the color scheme is more refined and already close to that of the *Madonna Ansdei*. The difference can most easily be assessed in the National Gallery, London, where the *Dream of Scipio* is usually shown near the *Procession to Calvary* (Figure 4). The small *St. George* in the Louvre, counterpart to an earlier *St. Michael* and often associated with these works, is still later, since it was clearly painted after Raphael's first impressions of Florentine art. The figures move in space with even greater ease, and the composition shows a refinement hitherto unattained by Raphael. The very free and delicate landscape is already similar to that in the background of the *Madonna with the Goldfinch*.⁵⁴ The Florentine-looking princess with her rippling garments in the background is clearly an offspring of Raphael's studies for the left angel in the *S. Severo* fresco.

Dating the *Colonna* altarpiece to 1502 may also put us in conflict with the established chronology of Raphael's major altarpieces. It is usually assumed that the *Mond Crucifixion* (Figure 24) was painted in that year and finished at the beginning of 1503, although that date inscribed on the frame in San Domenico in Città di Castello refers not to the completion but to the commission.⁵⁵ The delicately elongated and highly articulated figures in that work move in ample space. The style of Perugino in the *Vallombrosa* altarpiece is fully absorbed and is evident in the voluminous forms isolated in space. The upturned heads of the *Magdalen* and of one of the angels seem particularly close to similar forms in the altar, but Raphael could have used earlier examples in Perugino's work present in Perugia. Raphael even seems to follow a further and later phase in his master's development, evident in the slim and elongated figures of Perugino's *pala* from *S. Francesco al Monte*, now in the Perugia Gallery, which provided the basic composition and the almost exact position of the *Virgin* and the *St. John*. The *pala* was probably commissioned in 1502.⁵⁶ The *St. Jerome*, on the other

54. For a later dating, Pope-Hennessy p. 127. For other opinions, Dussler pp. 5–6, Gilbert pp. 7, 15–16, 21. The *Saint George*, in Washington, Dussler p. 13, is even slightly more mature and closer in style to the *Madonna* in the *Meadow* of 1506.

55. Gould pp. 158–159, no. 3943, Dussler pp. 8–9. The inscription on the stone frame reads HOC. OPVS. FIERI. FECIT. DNICVS/THOME. DEGAVARIS. MDIII. (Domenico Tommaso dei Gavari had this work made 1503).

56. Camesasca pl. 166, p. 99.

hand, is lifted from Perugino's Pala Tezi, dated 1500.⁵⁷ The Mond Crucifixion is close to the Sposalizio of 1504 (Figure 40) in all aspects of style except that it is somewhat cruder and less assured. It must have been commissioned rather toward the end of 1503 and was perhaps completed only in 1504, the date of the Brera picture. The sequence Mond Crucifixion, Sposalizio, Madonna Ansidei appears as an obvious stylistic unity in Raphael's work, as his most purely Peruginesque works based on the understanding of the latter's development after 1500, in which, on the other hand, Raphael already begins to fully realize his own aims and to find his personality.

Between the Mond Crucifixion and the Sposalizio scholars have tended to date the Coronation of the Virgin (Figure 26), commissioned by Alessandra di Simone degli Oddi for the Oddi chapel in San Francesco in Perugia.⁵⁸ Simone degli Oddi was the leader of that family, chased from Perugia on October 31, 1488, by the triumphant rival family, the Baglioni, when their houses and even the affiliated churches were looted; it

is, therefore, highly unlikely that the altarpiece was commissioned before January 5, 1503, when the victorious Cesare Borgia allowed the outcasts to return to Perugia, which they did only on February 8.⁵⁹ It is also probable that the altar was at least near completion by September 9, 1503, when the Oddi again had to leave the city, as Pope Alexander Borgia had died and Perugia again came under Baglioni rule.⁶⁰ This situation

57. Camesasca pl. 151, p. 91.

58. Dussler p. 10.

59. Simone degli Oddi is mentioned as the most respected senior member of the family at the event of 1488, Louis de Baglion, *Pérouse et les Baglioni* (Paris, 1909) pp. 94–95; he is the representative of the family in 1482, *ibid.* pp. 82–83, note 1; he is the first to be mentioned on the lists of Oddi and other members of their faction banished from Perugia by the papal legate January 22, 1489; see "Cronaca della Città di Perugia dal 1309 al 1491 nota col nome di Diario del Graziani," ed. Ariodante Fabretti, *Archivio storico italiano* XVII (1850) p. 697. Simone and Guido, his son, were to stay in either Tolentino or Camerino, according to their choice. No women are mentioned in the account. From the same chronicle we learn the name of Simone's wife, Leandra (p. 687); Fabretti furnishes the name of one of his daughters, Sueva (p. 668). Walter Bombe, *Geschichte der Peruginer Malerei bis zu Perugino und Pintoricchio* (Berlin, 1912) pp. 204–205, identified Alessandra with Leandra, whose tomb was erected in San Francisco in Perugia, July 1516, after she had become a Franciscan tertiary. However, one should be cautious about this, since Alessandra and Leandra, though close in sound, are Greek names of independent origin.

60. W. Heywood, *A History of Perugia* (London, 1910) p. 309.

FIGURE 25

Raphael, *The Annunciation*, predella panel of *The Coronation of the Virgin*. Vatican Gallery, Rome (photo: Anderson)



alone rules out Wittkower's dating into the year 1500, followed recently by Becherucci.⁶¹ Both mention only the *terminus ante quem* in the fall of 1503, but not the *terminus post* in January or February.

A date in the earlier part of 1503 in fact makes complete sense in the chronology I am trying to establish. It is in the predella panels—the last parts of the work—that Raphael most completely adheres to Perugino's style. He here transforms his master's predella in the Fano altarpiece according to newer principles.⁶² Raphael opens up the space, makes his figures more slender, delicate, and more articulate in their bodies, lets them move with greater ease and relate to each other with more directness. In fact, the basic principles that characterize Raphael's innovations in the *Sposalizio* (Figure 40) begin to become apparent in these tiny panels. The angel in the *Annunciation* (Figure 25), with his delicately articulated form and lightly rippling drapery, corresponds even in details with those in the *Mond Crucifixion*. So does the open and wide landscape, that is strictly Peruginesque, and the sense of architectural space again leads toward the *Sposalizio*. Since the main panel shows still a different style, which we shall consider presently, it becomes clear that these predella panels must have been painted shortly before Raphael began the *Crucifixion*, that is, probably in the second half of 1503.

The *Coronation* (Figure 26) is also highly Peruginesque, as Vasari was the first to observe, and shows many essential features of that master's latest development; for example, as the voluminous forms of the figures begin to assert space. Yet the work essentially clings to Perugino's style of the *Prophets and Sibyls* (Figure 9). From there derive many of the drapery motifs and the rich arrangement of the figures. Compositional ideas are taken from a still earlier work, Perugino's *Ascension*, for S. Pietro in Perugia, now in Lyon,⁶³ rather than from its later variation, the *Coronation of the Virgin*, on the back of the pala for San Francesco al Monte, the front of which inspired the *Mond Crucifixion*.⁶⁴

61. Wittkower pp. 157–159, Becherucci p. 25.

62. Camesasca pl. 82. Longhi p. 14 attributed these panels to Raphael himself and was followed by Becherucci pp. 18–19, but while they surely were of great influence on the young Raphael, their sense of form and articulation is so different from that found in Raphael's earliest works that the attribution is surely not correct.



FIGURE 26
Raphael, *The Coronation of the Virgin*. Vatican Gallery

For a good color reproduction of one of the predella panels, Pietro Zampetti, *La pittura marchigiana da Gentile a Raffaello* (Venice, n.d.) pl. XL, fig. 183. For a good recent analysis of the space in the two predellas, Pope-Hennessy pp. 83–84.

63. Camesasca pl. 89, pp. 71–76.

64. Camesasca pl. 167, p. 99.

In this clearly earlier work Pintoricchio's example is also highly important. It may be from his Assumption, in Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome, that Raphael took the idea of inserting a sarcophagus among the apostles, a motif not known from Perugino's versions of the theme.⁶⁵ It is with him that we find the rather stout figures grouped in decorative density. Even some of the apostles are closer to those of Pintoricchio than to those of Perugino, and so, above all, are the richly rippling draperies breaking geometrically and the decorative use of bright colors, amongst them much green. Even the rich landscape with its many trees is closer to those of Pintoricchio than to those of Perugino.

It is in Pintoricchio's contemporary Coronation of the Virgin (Figure 27), painted for a little town presently known as Umbertide, now in the Vatican, that we find the closest parallels to our work. It was finished in June 1503.⁶⁶ While many of the elements correspond closely, a comparison of the two works shows also to what degree Raphael's command of space but also of technique is already superior to the skills of the older artist. The compact grouping of the apostles around the sarcophagus, creating space and structure, goes already beyond the possibilities even of Perugino, who needs loose open areas and visible ground to achieve space by means of perspective construction. The foreshortening of Raphael's angel with the viola goes beyond anything achieved by the two older Umbrian painters, as does the expression of the angel with the tambourine. The lively composition of Raphael's group of apostles is highly superior to the symmetrical arrangement in Pintoricchio's picture, which incidentally derives from Perugino's altarpiece in the Sistine Chapel from which Pintoricchio even took the musical angels in precise detail.⁶⁷

We know that Raphael's superiority soon began to be recognized. He was already called the best available master in a document of 1503.⁶⁸ It seems that he even tried to help Pintoricchio achieve greater spatial depth in the Vatican panel by giving him drawings for the two saints prominently kneeling in the foreground (Figures 28, 29). Pintoricchio, however, weakened some of

the spatial impact in the execution. The two drawings, once on one sheet, are in the Louvre under the name of Francesco Francia. They contain on the verso (Figures 30, 31), in very faint lines that have much suffered, a first idea for the circumcision in the predella of the Coronation and a putto obviously related to those standing at the foot of the pilasters in the Libreria Piccolomini in Siena and similar to one drawn on a sheet

FIGURE 27

Pintoricchio, The Coronation of the Virgin, Vatican Gallery



65. Carli pl. 64.

66. Ricci pp. 159–161 (ill.).

67. Walter Bombe, *Perugino* (Klassiker der Kunst) (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1914) pl. 18.

68. Golzio pp. 8–9.



FIGURES 28, 29

Raphael, Kneeling Saints. Silverpoint, white heightening on gray prepared paper. Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre, Inv. R.F. 1870-28,962 and 28,963

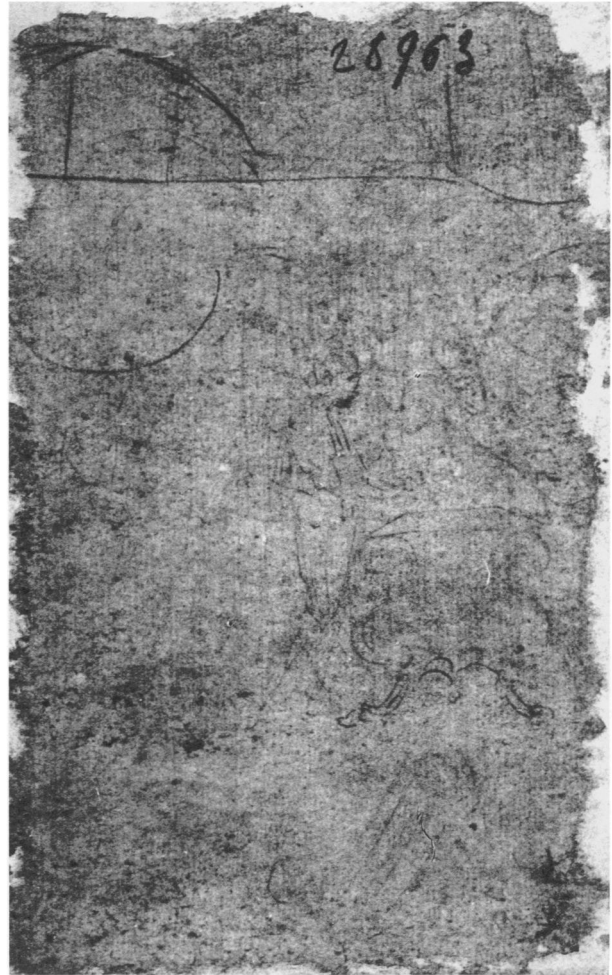
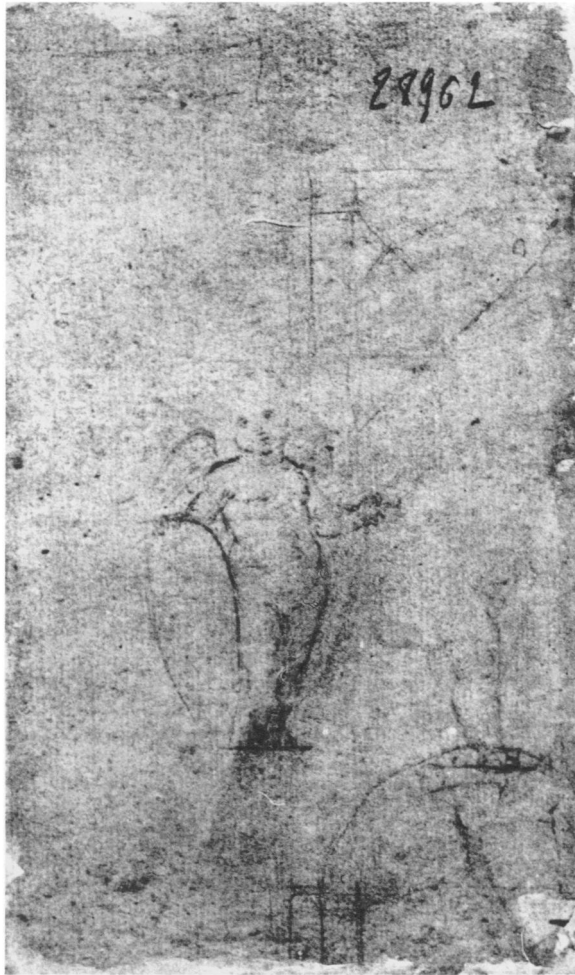
surely from the same batch of gray prepared sheets as one now in Oxford (Figure 38) with other studies for the Libreria frescoes.⁶⁹

The years 1502-03 mark in fact the culmination point of Raphael's relationship with Pintoricchio, the period when the influence became reciprocal and when the older master greatly profited from the work of his gifted young friend whom he may have temporarily engaged for work between commissions.

The Libreria has to be dealt with here briefly, since

in Raphael's work for it we can find the missing link between the highly developed style of the Vatican's Coronation (Figure 26) and the much more primitive style of the Colonna altarpiece. The gap between the two altarpieces is, of course, less wide when one considers the lunette and the predella panels of the earlier work, for they already show many points of contact with the style of the Coronation in the lighter colors, the proportions of the figures, the types, the movement, and even in the draperies. The gap can be completely closed when some of Raphael's drawings for the frescoes in Siena, commissioned from Pintoricchio in June 1502, can be placed between them.

69. Compare Parker no. 510, Fischel, *Raphael's Zeichnungen* I, nos. 63, 64.



FIGURES 30, 31

Versos of Figures 28, 29, Putto with Escutcheon, and sketch for a Circumcision. Pen in brown, black chalk

The fact that Raphael helped Pintoricchio in that grand decoration is known through Vasari, who tells it in the life of both masters, though varying as to the degree of Raphael's involvement, which certainly did not go beyond the drawing stage.⁷⁰ He states that there was a cartoon still in Siena and that he himself had in his possession drawings by Raphael for the Libreria and, indeed, there are four sheets that can be regarded as Raphael's work connected with the project.⁷¹ These were, of course, doubted in the critical period around 1900, but it was Erwin Panofsky who, in a brilliant article, proved by profound analysis of the stylistic principles underlying the drawings and the frescoes

based upon them that the sheets had to be designed and in part certainly drawn by Raphael.⁷² Panofsky concluded that Raphael provided Pintoricchio with finished designs or modelli for two frescoes and with at least some figures for a third fresco of the ten adorning the inside of the library hall and the one on the entrance

70. Vasari even varies the information of the first edition in the second, giving us four different versions of the story, all in Vasari-Milanesi III, p. 525, note 1.

71. Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, nos. 60–65.

72. Erwin Panofsky, "Raffael und die Fresken der Dombibliothek zu Siena," *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 37 (1915) pp. 267–291.



FIGURE 32
Raphael, The Meeting of
Frederick III with His
Bride, Eleonora of Portu-
gal. Private collection

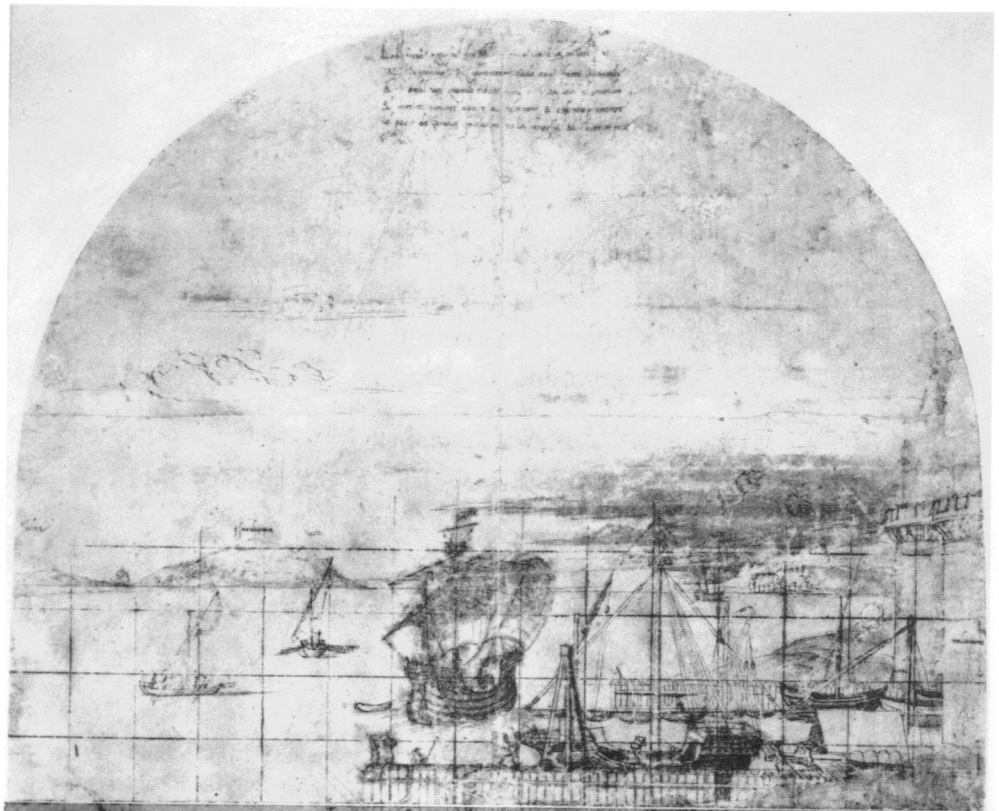
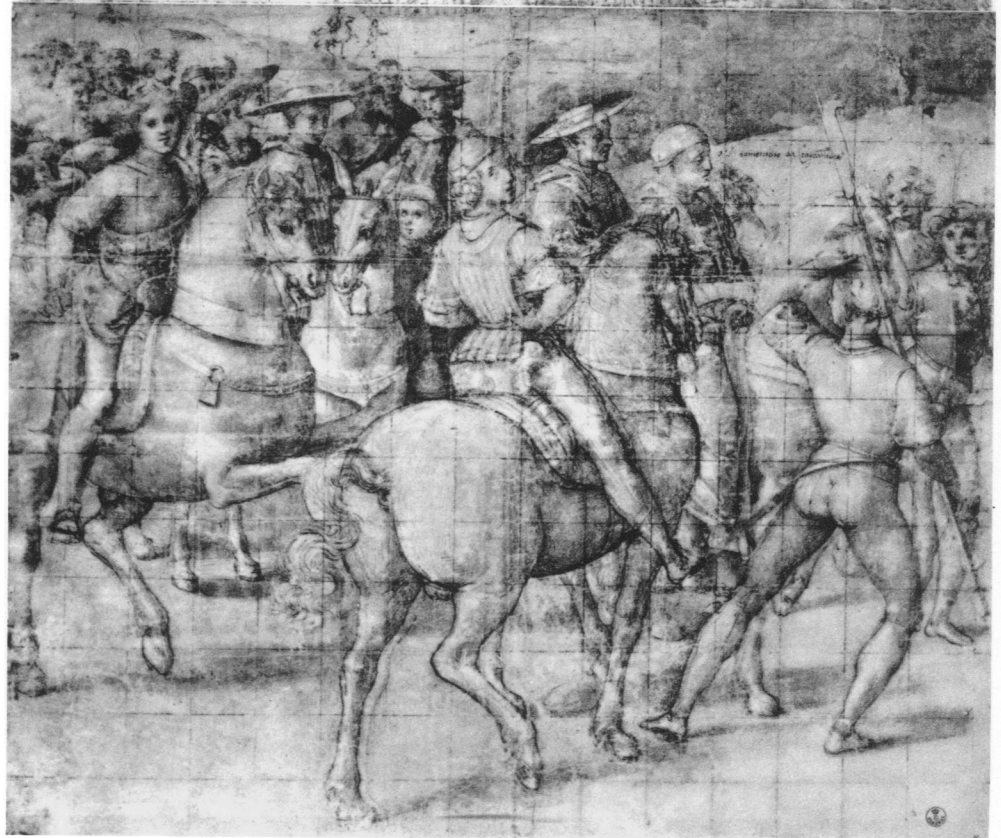


FIGURE 33
Raphael, Departure of
Enea Silvio for the Council
of Basle. Gabinetto Disegni
e Stampe, Uffizi, Florence



wall outside in the north aisle of Siena Cathedral, to which the library is attached. Later scholarship has not gone beyond this, and the latest monograph on Pintoricchio even ignores Panofsky's conclusions.⁷³

I think a consideration of the Libreria in terms of Raphael has still more to offer. Panofsky did not dare to decide whether frescoes for which there were no extant drawings by Raphael could have been designed by him or not. Yet all but two of them show, even after the flattening and decorative execution by Pintoricchio and his collaborators, a sense for space that goes much beyond anything that Pintoricchio ever did before or after. We are here confronted for the first time in Raphael's career with the problem that later is so important, when the school works from his designs, namely the execution of his ideas by somewhat uncongenial hands. Without being able to demonstrate amply my conclusions, I think I can state that Raphael worked on the project both in 1502 and again in 1503, developing his faculties in spatial composition in the meantime. Judgment is, however, difficult, as the impression of the frescoes may vary according to whether Pintoricchio himself executed the work and thus changed Raphael's ideas following his more decorative principles or whether he employed the help of some Perugino pupil like Eusebio di San Giorgio—who is recorded in the documents—for the execution, who then naturally followed Raphael's thoughts more closely.⁷⁴ We are lucky, however, that the few drawings by Raphael for the project were apparently executed at different times and thus demonstrate these ideas. The earliest is clearly the design for the Meeting of Frederick III with His Bride, Eleonora of Portugal, in a private collection (Figure 32).⁷⁵ It is in this finished design that we may detect some elements of style closely related to the Colonna altarpiece. One notes how the four main figures are lined up in the foreground, how their actions and stances are still much governed by the plane, how the cloaks are ample and defined by long floating lines much as that of St. Paul, although some richer folds appear, how the whole composition is built up in space much in terms of layers one above the other. The predella panels are even closer to the drawing because of their livelier movement. Compare, above all, the Procession to Calvary (Figure 4), where many similar figures and actions can be found. The horses in both works are still derived from model books without much obser-

vation from life and thus are strangely human in expression.⁷⁶ It is likely, therefore, that Raphael drew this sheet soon after Pintoricchio got the commission in 1502 and certainly before the Coronation of the Virgin (Figure 26), commissioned, as we have seen, early in 1503. It is the challenge of the large spaces and the need to manipulate crowds of people in the Libreria frescoes that speeded up Raphael's evolution. Even in the drawing just discussed one can already feel the beginning of that sense of space so prominent in the Coronation. Raphael was, in fact, at this point surpassing Pintoricchio, who, as Panofsky shows so clearly, misunderstood Raphael's more advanced intentions in the execution.⁷⁷ About a year later, when the ceiling decorations were finished and the wall frescoes had to be given serious consideration, Raphael must have drawn the large modello in the Uffizi, the Departure of Enea Silvio for the Council of Basle (Figure 33),⁷⁸ for the first fresco in the series of pictures from the life of this eminent humanist and churchman who became Pope Pius II. Even the drawing style has changed and become livelier and freer, stressing the roundness and plasticity of the bodies. This is partly caused by the difference in the use of the pen in the two drawings. In the Departure Raphael uses it often to characterize shadows and form with parallel hatchings, which he completely avoids in the Meeting. What counts above all, however, is the new composition with figures moving diagonally through space on horses that have been observed from life and

73. Carli pp. 69–79.

74. Eusebio may have painted the extremely Peruginesque frescoes representing the Canonization of St. Catherine of Siena (Carli pls. 138, 139, Ricci fig. at p. 205) and Enea Silvio Crowned Poet Laureate by Frederick III (Carli pls. 129, 130, Ricci fig. at p. 185), and he surely helped in others. While the execution of the two works is greatly similar, the design is very different, and they may have been developed at different times.

75. I am grateful to the owner for letting me view the drawing and reproduce a photograph of it following its restoration.

76. Raphael employs, apparently next to the usually static stock horses of Perugino, the rearing horses inspired by antique coins used in the vault of the Cambio (Camesasca pls. 110, 111). There seems to be no sure indication of any knowledge of the bold new experiments made by Leonardo for his Adoration of the Magi, of which, however, Pintoricchio may have had partial knowledge; compare his Adoration, in the Appartamento Borgia, Carli pl. 83, with A. E. Popham, *The Drawings of Leonardo da Vinci* (New York, 1945) pl. 65.

77. Panofsky pp. 278–284. See also Pope-Hennessy p. 88.

78. Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, no. 26.



FIGURE 34
 Raphael, *The Adoration of the Magi*, predella panel of the *Coronation of the Virgin*. Vatican Gallery, Rome

FIGURE 35
 Raphael, *The Adoration of the Magi*. National Museum, Stockholm



are shown in convincing foreshortening. All the figures are compactly grouped, and the new sense of space and plasticity works even in the individual forms that stress the bodies and avoid the large draperies that Pintoricchio afterward again introduced in the execution.

Much of the experience Raphael drew from this work was used in the predella panels of the Coronation. The

foreshortened horses, for example, are reused, somewhat changed, in the Adoration of the Magi (Figure 34). This is the piece in which Raphael also shows the greatest proficiency of composition and arrangement of crowds of figures. However, these predella panels are again slightly more advanced in style toward the greater elegance of the Mond Crucifixion, as can be

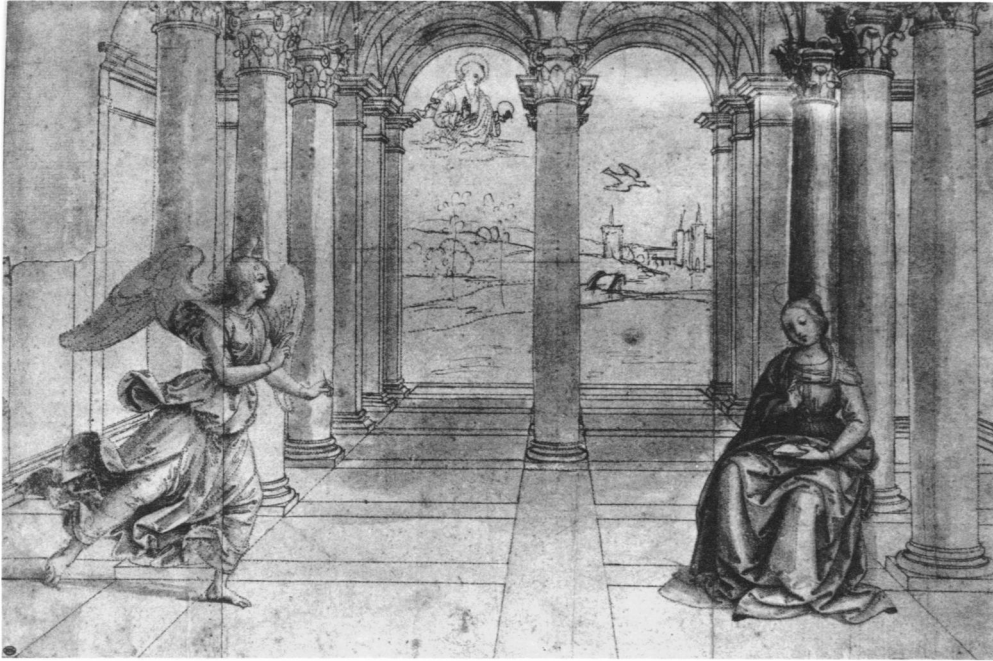


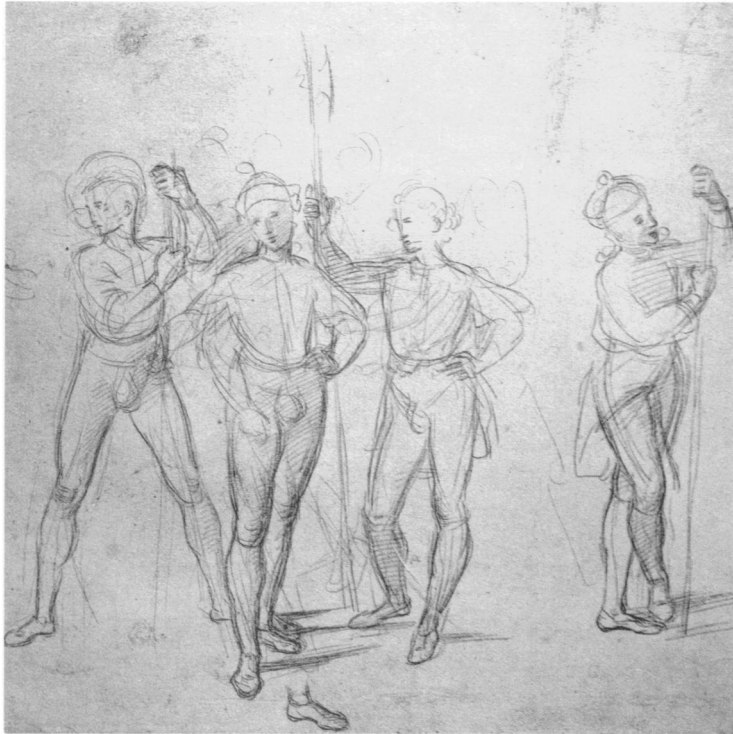
FIGURE 36
Raphael, The Annunciation. Cabinet des
Dessins, Louvre (photo: Giraudon)



FIGURE 37
Raphael, The Agony in the Garden. Pier-
pont Morgan Library, New York

FIGURE 38
Raphael, Standing Figures. Ashmolean Museum,
Oxford

FIGURE 39
Pintoricchio, Enea Silvio Crowned Poet Laureate by Frederick III. Libreria Piccolomini, Cathedral, Siena (photo: Alinari)



clearly seen in the preparatory drawing in Stockholm for this scene (Figure 35).⁷⁹ Incidentally, this is among the most Pintoricchiesque of Raphael's drawings. We can gain additional insight into the character of this latest stylistic progress of Raphael by comparing his finished pen and wash drawing in the Louvre for one of his predella panels, the Annunciation (Figure 36),⁸⁰ with the Meeting of Frederick III and Eleonora of Portugal. On first sight, the similarity of technique and the degree of completion of the two sheets may compel us to see only the strong affinities. Yet after some looking it will become clear how much more articulate the figures are in the Annunciation. Their bodies are no longer seen as large unified shapes, as in the Meeting, but have become mobile in their hips, limbs, and necks;



every fold of their garments is stressed with rich contrasts of light and shade, and they are arranged in almost geometrically controlled layers with a brittle richness. A new clarity and sureness of intent are apparent in the gestures and faces.

If we compare both these drawings to the small cartoon in the Morgan Library (Figure 37) for the Metropolitan's Agony in the Garden,⁸⁰ we can perceive how in this earlier work forms are even larger and simpler. The figures seem almost carved out of one block. While the sheet thus shows a certain affinity with the Meeting,

79. Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, no. 29.

80. Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, no. 28.

81. Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* II, no. 66



FIGURE 40
Raphael, The Marriage of the Virgin, called the Sposalizio. Brera, Milan (photo: Anderson)

it is clearly even closer to Raphael's earlier drawings.⁸²

It is from the period of the predella of the Coronation that, as Panofsky showed, the Oxford drawing (Figure 38) for some of the figures in the fresco of Enea Crowned Poet Laureate by Frederick III must date.⁸³ One of the figures shows the same stance in reverse as one in the Adoration and was drawn from the same model, probably at the same session. The fresco as executed (Figure 39),⁸⁴ probably by Eusebio and thus close to Raphael's

design, could not be richer in spatial arrangement and grouping and clearly leads toward the Sposalizio (Figure 40), and even further to Raphael's late Coronation of Charlemagne.⁸⁵ The elongated, elegantly moving figures with their strongly articulated bodies belong to the period in the second half of 1503.

This fresco shows much similarity to the most ambitious in number of figures of all the works in the Libreria, the Coronation of Pius III (Figure 41),⁸⁶ which could hardly have been designed before September 21, 1503, when Cardinal Francesco Piccolomini, the man who had commissioned the frescoes, was elected pope. It is, of course, conceivable that it was the coronation of Enea Silvio as Pius II that was originally planned in much similar form for that place. The style seems somewhat heavier than that of the fresco just discussed, but that may be due to the execution. Looked at in detail, the figures are slender and much like those in the predella of the Coronation, from which some of the details are taken almost literally. The work may be regarded as Raphael's grandest design of that period. If we compare it with Pintoricchio's Christ among the Doctors,⁸⁷ in Spello, it becomes absolutely clear that the older master could not have conceived anything as densely organized and lively in grouping as this crowd. Even when he had to design two frescoes in the Libreria itself,⁸⁸ not prepared by Raphael, possibly because of the pope's sudden death, October 18, 1503, which led to temporary abandonment of the project, Pintoricchio fell back to his completely planar compositions of earlier times.

Raphael had profited greatly from the chance to collaborate with Pintoricchio, developing skills that his own commissions of altarpieces and the example of Perugino, who like him worked mainly for bourgeois

82. Compare Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, nos. 5, 7, 11, even though the technique is essentially different.

83. Panofsky pp. 270–274; Fischel, *Raphaels Zeichnungen* I, no. 63.

84. Carli pls. 129–130, Ricci fig. at p. 185.

85. It was again Panofsky who, with the insight of genius, discovered that another of these frescoes reappeared in Raphael's late work; see his p. 286.

86. Carli pl. 122.

87. Carli pl. 114.

88. Pope Pius II in Mantua and Pius II in Ancona, Carli pls. 137, 141.



FIGURE 41
 Pintoricchio, The Coronation of Pius III. Libreria Piccolomini, Cathedral, Siena (photo: Alinari)

and small feudal patrons in his later years, could not have taught him. Only much later, when in Rome Raphael had to paint similar frescoes of Church representations, would some of the things he learned in Siena come to full fruition. Yet the command of space he developed in these works—curiously enough in a commission from Pintoricchio, who had first influenced him in the direction of decorative employment of the picture plane—helped him in his contemporary work, especially in the *Sposalizio*. Raphael achieved in this painting the first of those syntheses between opposing directions in art that are so characteristic for him; here, that between Pintoricchio's sense for rich groupings of figures and Perugino's striving for plasticity, bound together by Raphael's very own observation of space.

With this we can bring our survey of Raphael's monumental works between 1500 and 1505 to a close. I think that the new dating of the *Colonna altarpiece* and the resulting new chronology of Raphael's early work brings a better structure to these years. We find the young master starting from a solid basis that he must have formed in the school of Perugino in the years be-

tween about 1494/5 and 1500, when he probably separated from his immediate influence. His work in *Città di Castello* in 1500 and 1501 shows additional influences from Signorelli and Pintoricchio. The latter continue even after a return to Perugia in 1502 to paint the *Colonna altarpiece*, while new observations taken from Perugino's latest work begin to modify his style. In that year and the following the relationship with Pintoricchio culminates in a collaboration on the *Siena frescoes* and even other works like the *Coronation in the Vatican*. Meanwhile Perugino's renewed influence grows and comes out in full force in the three large works done in 1503 to 1505, the *Mond Crucifixion*, the *Sposalizio* for *Città di Castello*, and the *Madonna Ansidei* for Perugia, works in which Raphael achieves at the same time full maturity. Pintoricchio's influence by that time completely fades away but leaves a new sense for spatial freedom and dramatic action developed under the challenge of the *Siena commission*. It is because he had learned from all the eminent artists of Umbria that Raphael was then ready to understand the lessons of Fra Bartolomeo and Leonardo in Florence.

APPENDIX

As the completion of the cleaning stage of the restoration of the Colonna altarpiece coincides with the publication of this article, it is possible to append a note on its state of preservation.

Taking away the heavy veil of grime, overpaint, and oxidized varnish that obscured the original paint surface before cleaning has restored the freshness, clarity, and plasticity that one associates with Raphael at this period. The immense vitality of the brilliant colors and strongly defined forms must have been lying dormant under the semiopaque layers of discoloration for well over a century.

It is exceedingly rare to find the important areas of a painting by a great master to be in better condition than the secondary ones, but it occurs here: the heads, hands, and feet are remarkably well preserved. The delicate nuances of tone in the transitions from light to dark in the modeling of the flesh are almost entirely intact, and even the finest tendrils of hair on the heads are still sharply delineated. St. Lucy, unfortunately, has a break in the panel running through her eyes, and the surrounding area is somewhat rubbed.

The only major change that has upset the balance of the picture is the darkening of the azurite blue used in painting the Virgin's mantle and the robes of Sts. Peter and Paul. Although this change has affected the three

principal figures, the truly monumental simplicity of the strongly defined forms is so assertive everywhere else that the altarpiece still reads well. The copper resinate greens, being unstable, have also changed but not in such a radical way.

Two clumsily executed "embellishments" added to the altarpiece by later hands have now been removed: the veining on the white marble steps of the throne proved to be a later addition because it had been applied over a layer of dirt and varnish going over cracks in the original paint. The orb, held by God the Father in the lunette, is in good state and is marvelously painted by Raphael, but for some inexplicable reason someone had crudely obliterated it by gilding and using oil as a mordant. The original foreshortening of the hand was made to look out of drawing by this inept change.

It is interesting to note that the powerfully characterized heads of the apostles, which stylistically seem at variance with the other more Peruginesque heads, also appear very different when the altarpiece is viewed by ultraviolet light. Surprisingly, the apparently more schematic heads take on the surety of form and grandeur of antique sculpture, whereas the two splendid apostle heads lose much of their plasticity, and with it, their impact.

JOHN M. BREALEY
Conservator of Paintings